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Authority AWD 941373

by 88 NARA Date 4-11-01

OPERATION
QUYET THANG
"RESOLVED TO WIN"

957
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957-68

1 March
— 12 April
1968



3rd SQUADRON 11th ARMORED CAVALRY

MACJ 3-01
B-1526

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

2 June 1968

1. Period: 1 Mar 68 - 10 Apr 68.

2. Mission: The 3rd Squadron, 11th Armored Cavalry Regiment, was placed in direct support of the 25th Inf Div (ARVN) to conduct extensive Reconnaissance in Force Operations in Hau Nghia Province with the 49th Inf Regt (ARVN) to locate and destroy main force VC/NVA Units.

3. Participating Units:

a. US: 3/11 ACR; Air Cav Trp, 11th ACR: 2/919th Engr Co; TACP - 11th ACR; IPW Tm 541st MID.

b. ARVN: 49th Inf Regt; 10th Cav Regt(-); 51st Ranger Bn; 34th Ranger Bn, 25th Recon Co; Duc Hoa RF Co.

4. Terrain: The area of operations was Duc Hoa District which lies in the Southern portion of Hau Nghia Province. The area is bounded by the Vam Co Dong (Oriental) River on the Southwest; by the Cau An Ha Canal on the South and East; by the Thay Cai Canal on the North; and by the district boundary on the Northwest.

There is little dominant terrain within the area of operations. The land is characterized by rice paddies and hamlet complexes. The hamlets are surrounded by heavy bamboo thickets. The Southeastern corner of the area consists of abandoned pineapple plantations. With the exception of the area immediately adjacent to the river bed and the canals the area is trafficable for both tracked and wheeled vehicles. (Dry season only).

The two major population center's are Bao Trai, the Province Capital, and Duc Hoa, the District Capital. Both of these towns are garrisoned by ARVN Troops.

The principal highways in the area are highway 10, which runs from Northwest to Southeast, through the AO; highway 9A which connects Duc Hoa and Hoc Mon; highway 8A between Bao Trai and Cu Chi; and highway 7A between Hiep Hoa and Phu Heip. These roads are generally all weather dirt/latterite roads. There are several secondary roads and foot trails throughout the area.

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The chief industry of the area is agriculture; The predominant wet season crop being rice. During the dry season the chief crops are tobacco and vegetables.

There was no rainfall in the area of operations while the squadron was participating in Operation Quyet Thang.

5. Intelligence: The enemy situation in the area of operations as of 1 March was rather vague. The following enemy units were identified as being in the area; 267th MF Bn, 269th MF Bn, 506th LF Bn, D-16th LF Bn and the C2 Duc Hoa District Company. However the S2 had no firm holdings on any of these units. At the onset of Quyet Thang there were no reported main force NVA Units located in our area of operations.

Most of the hamlets were fortified with extensive bunker and trench complexes. These complexes were usually dug into the paddy dike adjacent to the hamlet and were concealed by bamboo hedgerows.

There was no definite information on mines, however the 25th Div (ARVN) C2 felt the main roads were mined to some extent. It was further felt that with the arrival of the squadron we could expect an increase in the number of mine incidents.

6. Operations:

On 1 March the squadron moved from Vinh Long to the vicinity of Duc Hoa and established Fire Support Base (FSB) Buffalo, approximately 4 km west of Duc Hoa. The Provisional Mortar Platoon was placed in Duc Hoa in order to provide mutual support for the FSB.

The first few days of March were spent in terrain orientation, ARVN training, and improving the FSB. The squadron CP was mortared on the night of 2 - 3 March. Counter mortar fires were placed on the suspected mortar positions with unknown results.

In an attempt to gain contact with the enemy the squadron devised a plan whereby units would be in the operational area 24 hrs a day. This plan called for two (2) troops/teams to conduct joint reconnaissance in force operations; a third troop would establish a separate NDP in conjunction with an ARVN Infantry Company and establish a minimum of three platoon size ambush positions; the remaining troop secured the squadron fire support base, and conducted what maintenance it could. This program proved successful in that contact was made on several occasions with small Viet Cong units; However, the squadron was unable to make contact with a major enemy force.

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On 11 March the squadron was directed to place a troop team CFCN to the 2nd Squadron for operations in the Tan Uyen area. Troop K(-), with an attached tank platoon was sent on this mission. The loss of this maneuver unit was felt by the squadron in its future operations. Tm K did not return to squadron control until 10 April.

On 12 March in the vicinity of Bao Chanh (XT563006) at approximately 1230 hrs, Tm M, with an attached RF Platoon from Duc Hoa District, made contact with an estimated VC/NVA Battalion. Artillery, Tactical Air and Helicopter Gunships supported the contact. Tm I immediately moved from the FSB to reinforce Tm M. At 1700 hrs, the 51st Ranger Bn(-) (ARVN), moved to the contact area to support Tm's M and I. The VC broke contact at 2135 hrs. A sweep of the area on the following day revealed 36 VC/NVA bodies. The enemy units in contact were identified as elements of the 267th and 269th Mobile Force Bn's. Friendly losses were 2 KIA.

On 15 March in the vicinity of AP TAN HOA (XT595070) Tm M and the 49th Reconnaissance Company made contact with an estimated VC/NVA Battalion. The contact was initiated at 1030 hrs; by 1130 hrs Trp L had reinforced. Artillery, TAC Air and gun ships supported the fight. At 1230 hrs the 1st Trp 10th Cav (ARVN) and the 2nd Bn 49th Inf (ARVN) reinforced the units in contact. With additional support of a flame track the combined force succeeded in penetrating the hamlet complex and routed the entrenched enemy. A total of 81 VC/NVA bodies were found in the sweep of the battlefield. In addition 25 weapons were captured in this action. There were six (6) US WIA sustained in the contact. Captured documents revealed that the squadron had been in contact with elements of the 272nd VC Regt.

On 16 March Tms L and I conducted a reconnaissance in force operation with the 51st Ranger Bn. At 1130 hrs, contact was made with a VC Battalion in the vicinity of AP TRAM LAC (XT632018). Artillery was on target within four (4) minutes: TAC Air and gun ships were on station within 15 minutes. The supporting weapons were used to saturate the area of contact. The combined Armor-Infantry Task Force then swept over the objective taking a minimum of casualties. This sweep resulted in 95 NVA killed and 18 weapons captured. There was one (1) prisoner captured. He identified his unit as an element of the 272nd VC Regiment. There were no US casualties.

The following day, 17 March, the 49th Regt (-) and Tms I and M conducted reconnaissance in force operations between MY HANH (XT635025) and HAU HOA (XT580055). At approximately 1500 hrs Tm M made contact with an unknown size enemy force in the vicinity of XOM GIONG SEN (1) (XT599035). The 2nd 49th Inf (ARVN) immediately moved into the area of contact. The remainder of the task force also redeployed into the battle area. Artillery, TAC Air and Armed Helicopters provided immediate fire support. The subsequent sweep of the battle area resulted in a body count of 50 VC/NVA KIA. Again the squadron casualties were light, as only 7 WIA required medical evacuation. Documents revealed that the squadron had again made contact with elements of the 272nd Regt of the 9th VC Division.

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The three major contacts during the period 15 - 17 March with elements of the 272nd Regiment indicated that perhaps a major move thru HAU NGHIA Province was underway. Consequently the surveillance effort over the AO was increased with emphasis on night operations. Firefly missions were scheduled over the known infiltration routes and the night ambushes were intensified in an attempt to pick up the movement of infiltration groups. However the squadron was unable to develop a major contact.

On 20 March in the vicinity TAN HOA (XT601062) Tm L came under heavy automatic weapons and anti-tank fire. Tm M and 3rd Bn 49th Inf (ARVN) immediately reinforced the contact. TAC Air, Artillery, and LFT's again provided immediate and responsive supporting fires. By late afternoon the combined force had succeeded in overrunning the fortified enemy positions. (142) enemy soldiers were killed in this battle, and (10) weapons were captured. The squadron sustained 1 KIA and 8 WIA. Again the enemy was identified as a Bn of the 272nd VC Regiment.

On 28 March a combined task force consisting of Tm's L and M, the 1st and 2nd Bns 49th Inf, 34th Ranger Bn and the 1st Trp 10th Cav (Regt) conducted a reconnaissance in force in the vicinity of HIEP HOA. At 1230 hrs contact was established with an estimated reinforced VC Battalion in the vicinity of BAC THAU (XT441125). Savage fighting followed until approximately 2100 hrs. TAC Air, Artillery, and armed helicopters provided close fire support. To insure adequate artillery support the squadron howitzer battery had been displaced forward to the vicinity of SC D (XT519072). This enabled the battery to support both the contact area and the squadron NDP. A sweep of the contact area resulted in (57) VC/NVA KIA by body count. Eight (8) weapons were captured in this engagement. The squadron suffered 1 KIA and 8 WIA in this engagement.

On 1 April Team I was conducting a reconnaissance in force mission east of AP TAN HOA: The 2nd Bn, 49th Regt (ARVN) and 1st Trp 10th Cav Regt, were working with team I on this combined operation. At 1500 hrs the combined task force made contact with a reinforced VC/NVA Bn. TAC Air, Artillery, and helicopter gunships provided immediate fire support. By 1645 hrs team I and the 2/49th ARVNS had succeeded in gaining a foothold in the western portion of the objective area. Repeated thrusts by team I and the 1/10th Cav soon forced the enemy to withdraw from his positions. Consequently the entire objective area was overrun by 2130 hrs that night. Armed C-47 flare ships (SPOCKY) supported the night contact. A subsequent sweep of the contact area resulted in (40) VC/NVA KIA (BC) and (16) weapons captured. Five (5) POW's were captured and identified their unit as an element of the 272nd VC Regt. The Squadron was unable to develop another major contact. Consequently the squadron was released from its DS mission on 10 April and on 11 April conducted a night road march from DUC HOA to Blackhorse base camp without incident.

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During Operation QUYET THANG, 48 air strikes (102 sorties were flown in support of the squadron.

7. Observations and lessons learned:

a. Attack on fortified hamlets.

When conducting an attack on a fortified Viet Cong Hamlet, the squadron has followed step by step procedure which has been quite successful.

(1) Attempt to locate the enemy defensive positions with recon parties or at most, a platoon size force.

(2) Fix the enemy in position with suppressive fire from both tanks and ACAV's.

(3) Extract the recon party from the enemy position.

(4) Employ TAC Air, artillery, and gunships to destroy the enemy's fighting positions. The use of 750 lb bombs and Napalm are particularly effective munitions against a heavily entrenched enemy.

(5) Light Fire Teams are employed on the flanks to prevent withdrawal from the area of contact.

(6) Following the massive air and artillery strikes, the combined infantry and armor task force assault the fortified hamlet at its weakest point.

(7) The squadron flame tracks are employed against the first hedgerow in order to assist the infantry in gaining access to the fortified hamlet.

(8) As the infantry move through the hamlet, the artillery fires are shifted and close in blocking fires are laid on the routes of withdrawal.

This tactic was successfully employed by the squadron on 7 different occasions during Operation QUYET THANG.

b. Battlefield combat service support.

When fighting the VC in fixed-set piece battles, the squadron found it advantageous to use the following scheme in providing immediate battlefield combat service support. Each day a platoon from the perimeter security troop was assigned the mission of escorting the squadron surgeon, the flame track service units, the M-88 (VTR), which was also used as a MCGAS resupply source for the service unit, and ammo resupply vehicles from the Fire Support

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Base to the area of contact. Upon arrival at the area of contact, the platoon would secure an LZ. The platoon leader was assigned the mission of controlling Dustoff air-craft coming into the area. The Squadron Forward Command Group also positioned itself in this area. This technique allowed the ground commander to use all of his organic elements for maneuver.

c. Intelligence indicators:

There are several indicators available to the aerial observer in determining whether a fortified hamlet is occupied by the Viet Cong. Included among these indicators are:

- (1) The presence of civilians in the area. General absence of civilians indicates the presence of VC in the hamlet.
- (2) The lack of cattle around the hamlet indicates the presence of VC.
- (3) The appearance of make shift, temporary houses in the paddies indicates that the civilians have been evicted from their hamlet.
- (4) The presence of chickens in a hamlet without people indicates that there may be VC in the bunkers in the hedgerows.

d. Use of the AVLB in the dry season.

During the dry season, there is little use for the organic AVLB's. However the squadron utilized the bridges and the launchers in a unique manner. A bridge and its launcher were placed forward with the squadron CP. The bridge was dropped to provide overhead cover for the Squadron TUC which was underground. This eliminated the need to carry large quantities of fortification materials. The launcher was then equipped with a tow bar and used to assist in the battlefield recovery of disabled vehicles, thus allowing the maximum complement of fighting vehicles to remain in the battle area.

Additionally a launcher was employed to lead the squadron resupply convoy between DUC HCA and TAN SON NHUT. It was used in this manner as the intelligence indicated that any mines encountered would be small but sufficient to destroy a wheeled vehicle. Thus the launcher would detonate the mine with minimum damage.

e. The Trp/Co size combined night ambush.

Intelligence indicated that there were numerous VC resupply activities at night. It was determined that an aggressive ambush plan might deter this activity.

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The technique employed was to position an ACAV troop and an ARVN infantry company astride the known resupply routes. This force would not move into position until dusk. Upon arrival at the pre-selected patrol base, the ARVN infantry would immediately establish three (3) platoon sized ambush positions. An ACAV platoon would be assigned as a reaction force for each ambush. Four to six US personnel would be sent with each ambush platoon. These personnel were equipped with an AN/PRC-25 Radio, to maintain US communications with the patrol base, and with a starlight scope.

This technique proved quite successful as contact was made on 9 different occasions. It is felt that this aggressive ambush plan served as a deterrent for any possible VC mortar attacks against either the squadron FSB or DUC HCA.

8. Commander's analysis:


The squadron accomplished its assigned mission of locating and destroying main force VC/NVA units in close coordination and cooperation with the 49th Inf Regt (ARVN) in a highly professional manner.

The repeated success of the squadron during the period 12 March to 1 April probably spoiled any attack that the 9th VC Division might have been planning against SAIGON. However the principal result of the QUYET THANG Campaign was the close degree of harmony achieved between the 3rd Squadron and the 49th Inf Regt (ARVN). The successful combined combat operations were instrumental in transforming this regiment into one of the finest in the Vietnamese Army.

The results are best summed up by the words of Gen Creighton W. Abrams, CG US Army Military Assistance Command Vietnam, who said in an interview with a New York Times Reporter, "There has never been a period like the last 20 days in the history of the 49th Regiment. Supported by the men, equipment, and fire power of the 11th Cavalry they achieved unparalleled victories over the Viet Cong".

3 Incl:

1. Operations Overlay
2. Statistical Results
3. Logistical Support


NEAL CREIGHTON
LTC Armor
Commanding

*Blueprint
Large Map follow*

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STATISTICAL RESULTS

1. Enemy:

a. Personnel Losses:

KIA - 509
POW - 25

b. Material Losses:

AK-47's	61
AK-50	1
CARBINE, SKS	4
9MM PISTOL	3
RPG-2	5
RPG-7	3
RPD LMG	6
BAR	1
B-40 ROCKET	81 (DESTROYED)
B-41 ROCKET	32 (DESTROYED)
82MM MORTAR RNDs	13 (DESTROYED)
CHICOM CLAYMORE	3 (DESTROYED)
CHICOM GRENADES	21 (DESTROYED)
AT MINES	15 (DESTROYED)
TNT	2,065 lbs (DESTROYED)
RICE	2,000 lbs
SAMPANS	23 (DESTROYED)
BUNKERS	767 (DESTROYED)
BUILDINGS	47 (DESTROYED)

2. Friendly:

a. Personnel Losses:

KIA - 7
WIA - 79

b. Equipment Losses:

M113A1 (ACAV)	2
M548	1
3/4 TON TRUCK	1

3. Kill Ratio (Friendly/Enemy): 1 to 73

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LOGISTICAL SUPPORT

1. Class III:

DIESEL	120,330 Gal
KUGAS	23,610
AVGAS	4,590
SOLVENT	625
CE-10	795
CE-30	1,225
CE-50	485
CE-90	35
JP-4	550

2. Class V:

5.56 BALL	74,160
.45 Cal BALL	800
40MM HE	7,046
90MM CANNISTER (BEEHIVE)	84
90MM CANNISTER (STD)	362
90MM HE	561
90MM WP	134
90MM HEAT	16
155MM HE	5,236
155MM WP	180
155MM ILLUM	682
4.2 HE	3,089
4.2 ILLUM	92
7.62MM MLB	306,520
.50 Cal MLB	322,780
GRENADE, HAND FRAG	2,480
GRENADE, SMOKE	694
60MM LAW	195
2.75MM ROCKETS	48
CLAYMORE MINES	120
TNT	2,000 lbs
C-4	1,900
M-1 FLAME THICKENER	920 cans
E-8 CS DISPENSERS	16

3. Air Force Ordnance Expended:

MK-81	(250 lbs)	28
MK-82	(500 lbs)	158
MK-117	(750 lbs)	16
KAPALM		112
ROCKETS		10
20MM		31,200

Inclosure 3

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