

C O N F I D E N T I A L

The 11th ACR(-) was responsible for reconnaissance in force missions with two squadrons abreast in the Michelin and conducting B-52 BDA's with one squadron while the other squadron searched and cleared the Michelin.

9. EXECUTION:

a. The 11th Armored Cavalry Regiment received warning orders on 15 March, and, following a II Field Force planning conference on 16 March, received final orders for participation in Operation ATLAS WEDGE. These orders included an AO, objective areas, and the expected commitment of forces, which at this time included one armored cavalry squadron and one infantry battalion. The AO included none of the Michelin Plantation.

b. 17 March 1969: Four OH-6A LOH's and the Air Cavalry Troop command and control ship (UH-1H) began their initial reconnaissance of the Regimental AO on the afternoon of 17 March. It soon became evident that the area was being occupied by a large enemy force. Large groups of North Vietnamese Army forces were seen through the rubber trees. ACT aircraft received heavy ground fire vic XT5953 as they skirted the Michelin and clearance to fire was requested. While waiting for clearance, every LOH, the C&C ship, and even the FAC's flying at high altitude continued to sight large bodies of enemy troops. The enemy made little or no attempt to hide from the helicopters.

After a ninety minute delay, the ACT was given clearance to engage the enemy based on the 1st Division rules of engagement (return fire if fired upon, but in no case commit troops to any contact developed). The ground fire was engaged with LOH and Cobra gunship aircraft.

Additional heavy ground fire was received from within the NE Michelin and permission was requested to place Tac Air on these anti-aircraft positions. After a two and one-half hour delay, permission was granted, and, throughout the remainder of the day, the Air Cavalry Troop Commander directed Tac air-strikes against the enemy. Two cobras remained on station throughout the day and made repeated strikes against the enemy locations. One LOH was damaged by ground fire and flew to LAI KHE for repairs. The three remaining LOH's continued to fly low level reconnaissance missions and to engage groups of enemy soldiers on numerous occasions. A total of nine airstrikes were placed in the NE Michelin. Tac airstrikes and Army aviation accounted for a confirmed 30 KBA (BC), 10 bicycles, 6 tons of rice, and 15 50-lb packs.

Based on the day's action, the requests for AO extensions in the Michelin and a new task organization of two armored cavalry squadrons were approved, and 1st and 3rd Squadrons were alerted for movement into the Michelin.

c. 18 March 1969: The Air Cavalry Troop employed five LOH's, one C&C ship, and two cobras at first light in an attempt to re-establish contact with the enemy. Early indications suggested that the majority of the main force units that were present the previous day had departed the area. Several

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