

NARRATIVE OF BRIDGE 514-3 ATTACK

One infantry squad and a duster were defending the bridge (total of 13 personnel)

The new wooden bridge parallels and is immediately adjacent to the old blown concrete bridge.

The force defended the bridge by deploying to both sides of the creek with the duster located at the west end of the wooden bridge and the infantry located at the east end of both bridges.

At about 2220 hours, one member of the infantry element detected movement. As he was warning the others, the enemy started firing. The size of the enemy force is estimated at 15 - 25 personnel probably members of the 304th Sapper Co.

The enemy attacked using grenades, M-79, AK-47, Carbine and B-40 rocket fire. The US unit returned the fire using M-16, grenades, M-79, claymore mine, two M-60 machine guns and the duster. The infantry PRC-25 radio was hit at the beginning of the engagement and the duster radio was not used as the duster was heavily engaged and soon was hit in the turret by a B-40 rocket. Thus there was no communications link between the bridge and the control Headquarters at LZ WILLIE.

Preplanned artillery concentrations, to include illumination, were fired around the bridge approximately ten minutes after the attack commenced and were continued until ARA and gun ships took over the fire support mission at about 2250 hours. In addition, mortar illumination rounds were fired from LZ WILLIE within 5 minutes of the outbreak of firing at the bridge.

Although unknown to the battalion commander due to the lack of communications, the force on the bridge had repelled the initial enemy attack and were still defending the bridge. The battalion commander reached the bridge area in his C and C ship at about 2255 hours and soon thereafter (2259) had the ship land at the west end of the bridge. He debarked alone and sent the ship with the S3 and Arty LSN Officer to LZ Willie to get a radio.

After landing, LTC Jenkins took charge of the defensive force and killed one enemy with his pistol. The ship soon returned and the Arty LSN Officer with a radio joined LTC Jenkins on the ground while the S3 stayed in the air and controlled from there. The Arty LSN Officer killed two enemy as he was moving to join LTC Jenkins. The radio at the bridge was used to bring in a continuous stream of ARA and gun ships firing within 10 meters of the bridge.

A reinforcing platoon from LZ ENGLISH was air assaulted west of the bridge at 2335H and linked up with the bridge elements about 20 minutes later.

Two members of the infantry squad was KIA. Both were hit by small arms fire -- one as he was moving from one position to another and the other as he raised up to throw a grenade.

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Eight others were WIA -- three members of the duster crew when it was hit by the B-40 rocket, four infantrymen during the firefight and LTC Jenkins as he was moving about reorganizing the defense. None of the WIA were serious. Four were moderate and four were light.

In Summary. The bridge was attacked by a well armed enemy force of 15-25 men. The attacking force was discovered and launched its attack prematurely (primarily from the wouth) but with great force. The US force successfully defended the bridge against the superior force and killed eight of the enemy by body count and captured two weapons (AK-47s) and one B-40 rocket in addition to numerous (approximately 50) AK-47 magazines, many hand grenades, and some webbing and medical supplies.

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North

Road to
LZ WILLIE



Wooden Bridge

Duster

Blown
Concrete Bridge

Infantry Squad

*Bridges each about 10-12
meters long

**Distance between bridges
about 3-5 meters.

Direction
of enemy
attack

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