

HEADQUARTERS  
1ST BATTALION (AIRBORNE) 9TH CAVALRY  
1ST CAVALRY DIVISION (AIRMOBILE)  
APO San Francisco, California 96490

AVCIC-00

14 July 1966

SUBJECT: Combat Operations After Action Report (MAOV/HCS/J3/32)

TO: Commanding Officer  
3rd Brigade  
1st Cav Div (AM)  
ATTN: S3  
APO US Forces 96490

1. NAME AND TYPE OPERATION:

- a. Name: NATHAN HALE
- b. Type: Search and Destroy

2. DATE OF OPERATION: 000630 June 1966 - 011830 July 1966

3. LOCATION: Reference Map, Vietnam 1:50,000 Sheets 6850 IV, 6850 III, 6850 I.

4. COMMAND HEADQUARTERS: 3rd Brigade

5. REPORTING OFFICER: Lt Col Levin B. Broughton

6. TASK ORGANIZATION:

A 1/8

B 1/8

Bn Control  
PT Team

C 1/8

D 1/8

7. TAC Air and ARA were used extensively in close combat support roles when contact was made with the enemy and in the preparation of LZ's. Air Cavalry was used sparingly each day at first light and last light to screen throughout the Bn sector and when contact was made to try to locate enemy positions and routes of withdrawal.

8. INTELLIGENCE: Intelligence reports received through various sources o/a 20 June revealed there was a large VC/NVA force operating north of Tuy Hoa. Initial reports on 19 June indicated also that the 2nd Bn, 327th Inf (101st Abn Div) elements, already in contact, were engaged with a battalion (+) size unit. The 1/8 Cav was committed on the afternoon of 20 June to reinforce the 2nd Bn, 327 Inf elements.

By 201700 June the 1/8 Cav closed at Tuy Hoa South airfield and immediately thereafter, Co's C and B were airlifted into LZ Axe (CQ 986722) with negative enemy contact. On the morning of the 21st, Co B, 1/8 Cav, linked up with Co B, 2/327 Inf, which then became OPCON to 1/8 Cav.

On 21 June, Co B, 1/8 captured, via CQ 984713, one (1) .30 Cal US type machine gun, and a large crate of small arms ammunition consisting of several thousand rounds. At 1100 hrs Co B, 2/327 reached objective (Hill 258) finding 1 Russian made machine gun and 5 VC bodies in a shallow booby-trap.

Immediately 1535 hrs Co B, 1/8 Cav moved overland a short distance into LZ Eagle via CQ 984705 to join forces with Co C, 2/327 Inf and became OPCON to the 2/327. At approximately 2315 hrs Co B in LZ Eagle began receiving heavy mortar and RF fire, resulting in 4 KIA's.

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On The morning of the 22nd, Co B, with Co C, 2/327 conducted a mad minute and immediately came under heavy ground attack from the NW, W and SW by an estimated two (2) companies of NVA. At one point the enemy was assaulting to within 6 feet of the US perimeter at Pan Eagle. This area was frequently used by US elements. The two units were engaged with the enemy for approximately four hours. ARA and TAC Air were called in and the enemy withdrew from the battle area. At no time was the perimeter penetrated. Again at 0820 hours Co B became engaged with the enemy at close range, and asked for commitment of the reserve company (Co L, 1/8 Cav). On or about 0917 hours Co B reported holding but began receiving heavy 82mm and 60mm mortar fire. At 1030 hrs Co B and Co C, 2/327 reported the situation well in hand, with a large VC body count in front of their positions. Co C, 2/327 captured one (1) VC at approximately 1045 hrs, and initial interrogation revealed the following information: (1) He was a 1/Lt from the 1st Plat, 3rd Co, 2nd Bn, 66th Regt, of the 302nd Div; (2) His platoon consisted of 30 personnel armed w/3 submachine guns and 27 rifles; (3) Two other Bn's were a one day walk from place of capture (vic LZ Eagle).

The Bn (-) was moved into LZ Eagle and coiled for the night. Co C 2/327 became OPCON 1/8 Cav and remained as reserve. Intelligence reports revealed a possible two battalion attack on LZ Eagle during the night. Total friendly casualties for B Co's action was 7 WIA. At the close of the day enemy losses were as follows: VC KIA (BC) - 97; KIA (EST) - 150; VC WIA (EST) - 45; HMG (7.69) - 1; M-47 (SMG) - 11; LMG (RPG) - 4; Pistol (7.62) - 4; grenades - 250; medical aid kit - 1; rocket launcher rds - 4; small arms ammo - 10,000 rds; VCC - 7; VOS - 2; uniforms and web gear - 300 lbs; documents - 20 lbs.

The days activities for 23 June began at 0530 at LZ Eagle (CQ 984705) with a mad minute. This action resulted in 1 VC KIA by Co L, and 1 VCC via coord CQ 984705. Aggressive patrolling was conducted throughout the day. Vicinity coord 958626, Recon Platoon (OPCON 1/9 Cav) engaged an estimated VC squad, wearing black PJ's, armed w/rifles, which resulted in 2 VC KIA (BC), 1 KIA (EST), captured 3 M-47 (SMG), 1 LMG, 8 boxes MG ammo, 7 packs, 1 satchel charge, 10 hand grenades, 100 lbs of rice and one (1) 60mm mortar w/bipod. On the afternoon of the 23rd Recon Platoon again made contact with an estimated reinforced VC squad w/2 MG's via CQ 962618. The VC withdrew hurriedly, with negative casualties. During company sweep operations throughout the day, more bodies from the

22 June action were found, as well as miscellaneous type weapons. Most of the bodies were dressed in khaki uniforms and web gear. Summary of the days activities are as follows: VC KIA (BC) - 19; VCC - 1; individual weapons - 5; crew-served weapons - 5; grenades - 27; small arms ammo - 400 rds, rice 6000 lbs, corn - 100 lbs; documents - 10 lbs, uniforms and equipment - 20 lbs. Intelligence sources received during the day indicated a possible VC Bn was operating west of our present location (LZ Eagle) and the Bn was alerted to be prepared to move into blocking pens across routes of possible withdrawal.

24 June began with companies conducting local sweeps and air assaults in respective areas near LZ Eagle. In vic LZ Snow (CQ 995681) B Co engaged an estimated squad and captured 1 rallier. Later in the day Co C and Co B were airlifted into LZ Apple (CQ 959666), and began to receive heavy fire from the west and northwest upon landing. Sporadic sniper fire and MW fire continued throughout the day and night at the LZ location. Light contact with the enemy continued throughout the day ending in negative

On the morning of 25 June light, sporadic, sniper fire was received by Co C via LZ Apple (CQ 959666). During the day several long range patrols were dispatched. 15 bodies, 100 rds of SA ammo, 10 lbs of equipment and uniforms and some documents were found by AT Platoon at coord CQ 988708. Co A sighted 1 VC running NW, who dropped 3 rds 82mm mortar ammo, a map sack and box via CQ 978708. Several VCS were picked up and evacuated for questioning during the day. Intelligence sources revealed

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Identification of enemy units by radio on the 1st Regiment, believed to be split up in small groups, skimming in all directions within our AO.

26 June began with Co B receiving several sniper rounds from creek bed west of their perimeter at LZ Eagle. Co A also became engaged with several VC in hedgerow west of their position at LZ Eagle. Commencing 0935 hours Co B air assaulted into LZ Peach (CQ 043650) receiving sniper fire from the east. Upon closing at LZ Peach and moving south, sniper fire increased. Small bands of VC were sighted moving in all directions. While patrolling to the SE of LZ Eagle, Recon Platoon discovered numerous bolts of cloth and bloody clothing with medical supplies in a cave at CQ 018722. These were destroyed. Several discoveries and sightings were reported throughout the day, the most significant being at approximately 1510 hrs when B Co made contact with 5 VC, killing 2, captured 5 wpns, 4 AK-47's and a Chinese carbine via coord CQ 047643. The Bn (-) air assaulted into LZ Grape (CQ 110675) during the day with rifle companies moving south to establish blocking positions and Recon Platoon to the west at LZ #2 (CQ 015677).

On 27 June numerous sightings and light contact was made by all units. Numerous VCC and VCS were picked up in the AO including 70 civilians who were evacuated for interrogation at Tuy Hoa (North). Results of enemy contact during the day as follows: VC KIA (BG) - 3; VC KIA (EST) - 2; VCC - 1; VCS - 75.

Only two significant contacts with the enemy were made on 28 June. Recon Platoon engaged seven (7) VC, killing one and capturing one (1) Mousor Rifle at G1 072687, while moving into blocking position north of LZ Grape. Co A engaged estimated squad size VC unit, resulting in two (2) enemy WIA at OQ 084648.

Co B had light contact on 29 June on their sweep south along Hwy 1 (Area November) at CQ 091627, with estimated platoon size element and also at CQ 198613. One VCS previously captured by 1/9 Cav was delivered to the 1/8 CP location who claimed to have knowledge of rice caches and location of guerrilla forces in 1/8 AO.

Light contact was again made on 30 June with B Co engaging approximately 8 VC searing khaki uniforms at CQ 034650. Co A reported finding a quantity of .50 Cal type ammo and 10 VC KIA bodies, one being female at CQ 985666. Area appeared to be a field hospital. Co C became engaged with approximately 6 VC at coord CQ 016651 during the night resulting in two (2) enemy KIA (BC), 4 KIA (EST), and 2 wpns captured.

Commencing at 010910 July all companies reported engaging small groups of VC within the AO with several VCC, VCS and equipment captured throughout the day. Beginning at 1500 hours all companies began movement into Tuy Hoa South for 24 hour standdown.

9. MISSION: 1/8 Cav moved to Tuy Hoa South to reinforce and assist 2nd Bn, 327th Inf, 101st Abn Div in contact with estimated NVA battalion 1 and conduct search and destroy operations within assigned AO.
10. CONCEPT OF OPERATION: The 1/8 Cav under OOA of the 3rd Bde planned to place two rifle companies into the AO before dark on 20 June. C and B Companies 1/8 were to air assault into LZ Axe, (BQ 986722) a hill overlooking the mouth of a river. 101st Abn Div link up with B 2/327 near LZ Axe, and the following day (the 21st) conduct a two company sweep to the south relieving pressure on C and B 2/327 in the valley below.

11. EXECUTION: Beginning 201930 June Co C air assaulted into LZ Axe (BQ 986722) following a tube artillery preparation. Following Co C, Co B assaulted into the LZ. Both Companies reported negative contact and closed LZ Axe at 2335 hours. B 2/327 came under OCA 1/8 upon. Bn forces entering the AO. Bn CP airlifted to Pan Crossroads (CQ 071714) at 202000 June.

Commencing at 210125 June, Co B 1/8 moved a short distance overland and linked up with B 2/327 at 0200 hrs. At 210915 B 2/327 assaulted his 258 with negative contact, finding several graves and weapons. Shortly after this action B 2/327 was extracted and reverted to control of its parent unit. Co B 1/8 moved at 1117 to the south to Pan Eagle (CQ 984705) closing at 1535 with negative contact. At Pan Eagle Co B linked up with Co C 2/327 and came under OCA of the 2/327. Co C 1/8 moved at 1100 hours to link up with A 2/327 at CQ 000697 making contact enroute via 997708 with an estimated VC squad. ARA was called in and Co C moved to Pan Horne (CQ 000697) closing at 2025 hours. Co A 2/327 then became OCA to the 1/8 Cav. Negative activity was reported throughout the night. At 2315 Co B and C 2/327 began receiving heavy mortar and recoilless rifle fire at Pan Eagle.

Commencing 22054 Co B and C 2/327 conducted a mad minute at Pan Eagle which was believed to cause an estimated VC battalion to commence an all out attack on Pan Eagle. The attack was from the west lasting over four hours in which the NVA force twice closed to within 6 feet of Co B's perimeter. TAC Air, ARA and tube artillery were employed throughout the engagement. The area under heaviest engagement was vacated by elements of C 2/327 causing Co B 1/8 to commit their reserve and restore the perimeter. Co A was alerted to move from Tuy Hoa South Field to an area near Pan Eagle for reinforcement if necessary. Co A closed Pan Crossroads at 0935 hours. The engagement at Pan Eagle ended at 1025 hours. Co A air assaulted into an area west of Eagle and commenced ground movement closing Eagle at 1716 hours. Co C was airlifted from their location into Pan Eagle at 1600 and the battalion CP followed, closing at 1640 hours. The Bn mission was to invite an attack on Pan Eagle. Elements securing Eagle for the night were A, B, C 1/8 with C 2/327 held in reserve. A 2/327 returned to OCA of the 2/327. Negative contact occurred throughout the night.

Commencing 230540 the Bn (-) conducted a mad minute at Pan Eagle resulting in one VC KIA. Throughout the day patrols were dispatched throughout the area around Pan Eagle. Numerous bodies and equipment were still found as a result of the 22 June battle. At 0910 Co D (-) moved to Pan Eagle from Tuy Hoa South Field. Co A 1st Plt conducted an air assault into an LZ via coord 968703 with negative contact. The Plt was to conduct further patrols near Pan Eagle. At 1345, 3rd Bde ordered 1/8 Cav to have one company ready to assist 1/9 Cav. Co A was given the mission and 1st Platoon Co A was airlifted back to Pan Eagle. The Bn (-) remained at Eagle with negative further contact throughout the night.

Commencing first light 24 June, Co A departed LZ Eagle to sweep the high ground to the south of Pan Eagle. Numerous items of NVA equipment were found and one (1) VCS was apprehended at 0935. Co B air assaulted into LZ Snow via CQ 996681 with the mission of sweeping North to Eagle. A change of mission required Co B to return to LZ Snow for air extraction. B Co made contact upon return to LZ Snow and pursued the enemy (est squad) to the East to LZ Joe (CQ 987677). Results were 1 VC KIA, 1 VCC. The Bn was then ordered to establish blocking positions with two companies South of Pan Eagle via CQ 958663. Co B and Co C were given the mission and commencing 1856 Co C air assaulted into LZ Apple CQ 959669. The second lift came under heavy fire from the NE and West. Lift ships closing Co C and B Co became scattered and as a result one element of Co C was landed at the wrong LZ. The Battalion Commander

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decided not to deliver any more troops to the LZ and to have Co's B and C link up and coil for the night. At 2400 hours sporadic contact was still made around the LZ with everyone accounted for except 6 men in Co B, believed to have been on a helicopter as it crashed North of LZ Apple. Shortly after midnight action ceased in LZ Apple and no further contact was made during the night.

Commencing 250725 June, Co C began receiving sniper fire from the NE. Artillery was called in silencing all small arms fire. At 0830 Co's B and C moved South to via 985665 to establish blocking positions for 2/7 which was attacking to the North. Positions were established by 0920. A 1/9 ground team became OCA to the LZ at 0840 and secured the downed aircraft Northwest of LZ Apple. At 1005 hours Co C began moving to the Northwest to destroy all enemy elements between their blocking position and the downed aircraft. Co C arrived at the crash site at 1245 hours with negative contact. The 1/9 element was extracted shortly thereafter. At 1055 hours two Pony Teams from 2/8 were attached to the 1/8 and entered the AO for reconnaissance missions East of Eagle. Both teams were extracted to Pan Eagle for resupply and then ordered back into the AO by the CO 3rd Bde for night mission. Team #2 landed at LZ 5 (000610) with negative contact throughout the night. Team #3 landed at an LZ 013642 and became engaged with a dug-in estimated VC platoon with a machine gun and mortar positioned 500 meters to the Northeast. Arty was called in and Bn AT Platoon was committed to assist the team at 1750. The 2nd Platoon Co C was also moved into the area at 1845 with the mission of conducting recon and night ambushes. Negative further contact was made throughout the night.

Commencing at 260120, Pan Eagle received several rounds of sniper fire in the creek bed running E and W through the perimeter. Both A and B Co engaged several VC in this area; however, no bodies were found. At 0700 extensive patrolling began around Pan Eagle by Co A. To the South numerous items of VC equipment were found including several 82mm mortar rounds. Co 2 closed at 1130 hours to act as 1/8 reaction force within 1/8 AO. At 0935 Co B air assaulted into LZ Peach CQ 043650 receiving sniper fire from the West. B Company closed at 1020 and the fire ceased. Co B began moving to the South experiencing sporadic sniper fire and reported small groups of VC moving in all directions in what appeared as an attempt at exfiltration. Co B established a patrol base at 052641 and began platoon size patrolling. Negative further contact was reported by Co B throughout the day or night. Co C (-) remained via of the downed aircraft via 916675 in search of B Co's MIA's until 1300 at which time an order to move to the South was given. Co C (-) was extracted from LZ Apple and landed LZ Pear at 1510 hours. Co C moved South and established blocking positions orientated to the South via 025642 and reported sporadic activity throughout the day and night. At 1455 hours Co A lifted from Eagle to LZ Orange 073655 with negative contact. Their man was to block as B and C Co moved to the South. Co A established pens via 095645. To enhance control the Bn CP moved with Co D at 1610 to LZ Grape coord 110675. AT Platoon and Recon Platoon were extracted from the NEAO at 1650 and used as security at Pan Grape. Co C engaged a VC squad at 1930 hrs with unknown results. No further activity was reported throughout the night.

Commencing 270840 June, Bn Recon Platoon departed LZ Grape and air assaulted into LZ 2 (CQ 015677) with negative contact. Recon Platoon killed 1 VC carrying a weapon and documents at 1655. The remainder of the Battalion remained relatively static throughout the day and night with the Co's evacuating 70 VCs to 3rd Bde reg. Negative contact with enemy armed forces was reported. At noon the 27th the 1/8 reverted to 1st Bde control.

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Beginning the morning of 28 June 1966, plans dictated shifting all elements of the battalion. Co's A and B were to move overland to Area November. The general plan required a sweep to the Southwest of Hwy 1. Co C was to move North overland to blocking position 036685 and block for an attack by Co L, 3/5 Marines to the South. Recon Plt was to be airlifted into an attack position at 072687 from their position at coord 003668. The Recon Plt would attack the North into the blocking posn of K Co, 3/5 Marines at coord 073702 during the morning of the 29th. All moves were complete at 1830 hours with Recon Plt killing 1 VC and capturing one M1 Garand Rifle via their attack position. Final coordination was effected with 3/5 Marines and negative further contact was made throughout the night.

Commencing 290715 June, Co's A and B began their sweeps to the South with Co B coming under sniper fire at 0800 hrs. To prevent possible escape of enemy forces from B Co's area of maneuver, Bn AT Plt was airlifted to a blocking position via coord 095598. At 1010 hours Co B was engaged by a platoon of VC at vic 095592. Co B halted their attack and fired heavy artillery concentrations into the area. Contact was broken shortly after 1100 hrs. Beginning at 1150 hrs and after TAC Air strikes, Recon Plt started their attack to the North with negative contact. Attack terminated at 1400 hrs and Recon was airlifted back to LZ Grape. Co C was airlifted back to LZ Grape after the Marines made contact with them. AT Plt was returned to LZ Grape by air. At 1800 hrs 1/8 became OOA to the 3rd Bde for operations to the North, East, and South of Pan Ngia. Co A and B coiled for the night in Area November with negative further contact.

On 30 June the Bn commenced operations within their AO with men of conducting platoon also B and D operations. At 0100 Recon Plt became OOA to 1/9 Cav at 0700 hrs. Commencing 300710 Hms, Frag Order was issued to all units directing re-entry into previous AO for a second sweep. The Order was executed at 0930 as Co C air-assaulted from LZ Grape to LZ Pear (023637) with negative contact. At 1023 hrs Bn AT Plt lifted to LZ Mike (008667) also landing with negative enemy contact. At 1110 hrs Co B lifted a platoon to a downed aircraft via 087632. Co B (-) was then airlifted to LZ Grape as the Bn reserve. At 1415 Co B air assaulted into LZ Cherry (038660) with negative contact. Platoons were dispatched from all company bases to begin search and destroy ops within the AO. Sporadic contact was reported throughout the day. Co's remained in the general areas of their LZ and negative further contact was reported that night.

Commencing 010910 July Co B extracted from LZ Cherry and air assaulted into LZ Camel via 995680 with negative contact. All other companies reported engaging small groups of VC within the AO with several VCC, VCS, and equipment captured throughout the day. At 1445 hrs orders were received from 3rd Bde CO to commence closing of the 1/8 to Tuy Hoa South. Operations were to cease at 1500 hrs and Companies D, C, A, and B, in that order, closed the rear base area at Tuy Hoa South by 1830 hrs.

## 12. RESULTS:

a. Enemy: VC KIA (BC) - 159, VC KIA (EST) - 168, VC WIA (EST) - 47,  
VCC - 20, VCS - 16, MIA - 12,470,  
Documents - 37 lbs, Uniforms and Equipment - 500 lbs, Gradates - 289,  
Corn - 300 lbs, Rice - 10,000 lbs, 82mm Mortar Rds - 3, Rocket  
Launcher Rds - 4.

b. Friendly: KIA - 7, WIA - 29, MIA - 1.

c. US Equipment destroyed during operations: None

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13. ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS:

- a. Resupply was effected with no difficulty except when due to tactical operations, changes had to be made during resupply. On several occasions mortar units had to be moved from one location to another when the mortar platoons would be detached from parent units on short notice. Two aircraft are normally used for resupply but again due to tactical operations, resupply would be held up until dark and as many as six (6) aircraft would have to be used to complete unit requirements.
- b. Med Evac was used with very good results. Med Evac aircraft would be airborne within 5-10 minutes after being called.

14. COMMANDERS ANALYSIS:

- a. The most significant action of this operation was the defense of Pen Eagle by Co B, 1/8 and Co C, 2/327 on 22 June 1966. This action which was directed by the CO, Co B, 1/8, in a most outstanding manner, was successful for several reasons.
  - (1) Co B, 1/8, infiltrated into Pen Eagle to link up with Co C, 2/327. This infiltration was apparently undetected by the enemy who, according to PW reports, believed Pen Eagle to be defended by one under strength US Company.
  - (2) The CO, Co B, correctly evaluated the essentialities of holding the "table top" the highest piece of terrain and the key to Pen Eagle. He denied the request of the CO, Co C, 2/327 to withdraw from this position and committed his reserve to strengthen their position. This action on the part of the CO, Co B, 1/8 resulted in a favorable outcome to this engagement.
  - (3) Defensive positions were well dug and the men remained in their holes. As a result Co B suffered no KIA.
  - (4) The "mad minute" apparently convinced the enemy that he had been detected and probable triggered his attack prematurely.
- b. The value of returning to an AO to destroy any enemy who might infiltrate back in was proven in this operation.
- c. Commanders should always consider the reaction time required by subordinate units to execute their orders. Insufficient reaction was allowed for the air assault on LZ Apple to brief all the flight leaders. As a result elements of Companies B and C were landed in the wrong place. Additionally, changes in orders were received after the initial order was being executed. Such changes may be dictated by intelligence but in two instances this was, to the best of my knowledge, not the case.
- d. Written Frag Orders should be issued if possible. In one instance I received an oral order which did not cover the subject of a reserve reaction force. I maintained a rifle company as a reaction force for eight platoons operating independently in the AO. After this plan had been executed, I received instructions to commit my reserve into the AO because brigade would provide a reaction force.
- e. PSYWAR operations proved effective. Coverage via Pen Eagle from 22-26 June resulted in three VC turning themselves in and one NVA soldier turned himself into B 1/8 on 24 June via LZ Snow.
- f. Aerial VR assisted greatly in locating enemy activity and in assisting company commanders to maneuver effectively against the enemy.
- g. Brigade headquarters promptly reported significant intelligence to this battalion.

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14. COMMANDER'S RECOMMENDATIONS:

- a. That commanders be asked how many helicopters they can effectively use before being allocated a certain number. The size of LZ's and PZ's and the flight time between them may make a smaller number soft more effective than a larger one.
- b. That PSYWAR operations be habitually incorporated into tactical opns.
- c. That Frag Orders be issued to reduce possibility of misunderstanding.
- d. That the sudden return of friendly forces to an AO previously used by the enemy is an indication of the possibilities of enemy forces moving back into the area.

LEVIN B. BROUGHTON

Lt Col, Infantry  
Commanding