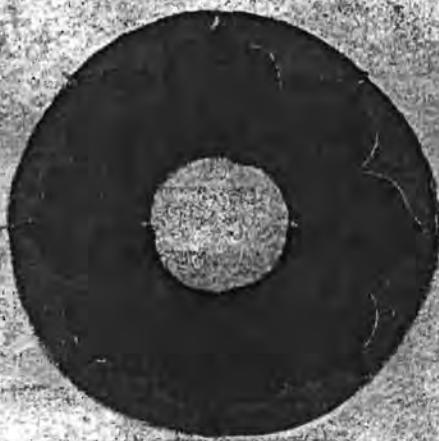


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By TJ NARA Date 6/8/99 Box #5
97th Division G-3 ORLL's

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9TH INF DIV



Part II

ORLL
1 FEB 69
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OPERATIONAL REPORT

RE CONDO

FORCE

1 FEBRUARY 1969 to 30 APRIL 1969

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HEADQUARTERS
1ST BRIGADE
9TH DIVISION

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30 April 1969

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| | | |
|-----------------------|--------|----------------------------|
| ARMOR VEST | 1 | SIGHT AND TUBE FOR 75MM 1 |
| BLASTING CAPS | 15 | FLAMETHROWER 1 |
| CANDLES | 1000 | FLAMETHROWER GUNS 2 |
| POCKET KNIFE | 1 | NOZZLES FOR FLAMETHROWER 3 |
| COMBAT WIRE | 500 ft | FLAMETHROWER TANKS 3 |
| CANTEENS-POUCHES | 1 | 1 HAND OPERATED PUMP |
| AMMO POUCHES AND VEST | 7 | FOR FT 1 |
| MAPS: | 5 | IGNITORS FOR FT 17 BOXES |
| | | ASSORTED TOOLS FOR FT |

5. (C) OPERATIONS: During this reporting period the Recondo Brigade continued Operation Quyet Thang (including Operation Speedy Express) which was initiated on 1 January 1969.

a. DARIA MISSION: The security mission for defense against mortar and rocket attacks on the Dong Tam base was assigned to the 3-39 Infantry at the beginning of this quarter. The 6-31 Infantry assumed that mission on 1 April and continues to operate in AO Kudzu at the close of this period. Although the primary mission of the Kudzu battalion is to conduct saturation patrols and foot mobile reconnaissance in force operations within AO Kudzu, occasionally other tasks such as cordon and search and limited strike operations are assigned. Much of the area in AO Kudzu has been under Viet Cong influence or, at least, contested for the past several years. The area is under an accelerated pacification program at this time and many combined operations have been successful in killing or capturing local guerrillas and communist infrastructure. Continual sapper and mine/booby trap activities around the Dong Tam base as well as indirect fire attacks on the 9th Division base have caused numerous friendly casualties and a continued emphasis is placed on tactical superiority of the area. To accomplish this end, an additional rifle company has been attached (OPCON) to the Kudzu battalion. Additionally, frequent multi-battalion sweep operations are held to thoroughly search the area for weapons sites and enemy personnel.

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b. STRIKE OPERATIONS: The remaining three maneuver battalions conduct air mobile assaults, bushmaster, Recondo checkerboard, riverine, cordon and search, night raid, and base security operations. Each battalion is based in a relatively self supporting fire support base and usually contains its operations within the government district in which it is located. The 4-39 Infantry (located in Giao Duc District) operated from Fire Support Base (FSPB) Danger throughout the reporting period. One company was used primarily as a night ambush company (Gleymore Co.) while the other company missions varied from day to day. The 2-39 Infantry (located in Cai Be District) operated from FSPB Schroeder (NAAMED IN HONOR OF LTC DONALD SCHROEDER, KIA 13 FEBRUARY 1969) throughout the quarter. In addition to conducting air mobile operations within the Recondo Tactical Area of Interest (TAOI), the 2-39 Infantry concentrated on reconnaissance in force operations within Cai Be District and developed a most successful night raid technique using helicopter insertions of re-inforced rifle squads against enemy infrastructure areas. The 3-39 Infantry (located in Cai Lay District) operated from FSPB Moore. In addition to providing security for the Recondo Brigade forward at Moore, the 3-39 conducted air mobile strike missions and a variety of foot mobile reconnaissance in force missions throughout Cai Lay District. The brigade was supported by various army aviation elements daily; one assault helicopter company and an air cavalry troop or team provided the air mobility and aerial firepower for day air mobile operations. Further, an air cavalry troop or team operated almost daily to support night search operations.

c. OPERATIONAL SUMMARY: Due to enemy evasive tactics and fragmentation of main force units, there have been few major contacts during this reporting period. Numerous minor contacts have resulted from the use of target acquisition devices such as radar, air cavalry, airborne personnel detectors, and night observation devices employed in helicopters in the night search role.

On 12 March, D Company 4-39 Infantry while on a night ambush, was attacked by an enemy company. Well planned artillery fires broke up the enemy assault and accounted for many of the 22 enemy killed.

On 23 March, elements of the 261A main force Viet Cong Battalion attacked the night ambush position of a 4-39 company. Although contact was broken, a daylight pursuit found and fixed the enemy. The entire 4-39 was inserted to contain and destroy the enemy. Final results of the contact were 167 enemy killed, 3 PW's captured, and numerous weapons and documents recovered. The battalion commander used maximum TACAIR, AHC gunships, and artillery to destroy the encircled enemy.

Continued aggressive tactics by the 1st Brigade kept the enemy off balance and denied him the opportunity to mass his forces, establish fixed bases or develop routes of communication.

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(2) HELICOPTER GUNSHIP SUPPORT: During the reporting period the following air cavalry troops provided helicopter gunship support to the 1st Reconno Brigade: B Troop-3/17 Cav, A and C Troops-7/1 Cav, and D Troop-3/5 Cav. The Air Cavalry, working in harmony with the air mobile infantry elements, have greatly reduced the enemy force within Dinh Tuong Province. Additionally, the air cavalry has realized its full potential in the night search technique; and during daylight pure cavalry missions have been most effectively executed in the Plain of Reeds area.

(3) TACTICAL AIR SUPPORT:

(a) Pre-planned Air Strikes:

| | | |
|-----|--------------------------|------|
| 1 | Strikes Requested | unk |
| 2 | Strikes Approved | 556 |
| 3 | Diverted Away | 21 |
| 4 | Diverted To | 25 |
| 5 | Strikes Delivered | 556 |
| 6 | Ground Aborts | 4 |
| 7 | Air Aborts | 2 |
| 8 | Aircraft Utilized | |
| | F 100 | 487 |
| | A 37 | 47 |
| | B 57 | 39 |
| | F4C | 20 |
| | A1E | 10 |
| 9 | Ordnance Expended | |
| | 1000 Lb Bomb | none |
| | 750 Lb Bomb | 1620 |
| | 500 Lb Bomb | 1478 |
| | 250 Lb Bomb | 32 |
| | Napalm | 986 |
| | Rocket Pods | 42 |
| | CMU pods | 90 |
| | 20 mm | unk |
| 10 | Targets Engaged | |
| | Troops in contact | 50 |
| | VC in open | 17 |
| | Base Camps & Troop Areas | 419 |
| | River Traffic | 2 |
| (b) | Immediate Air Strikes | 59 |
| | Total Strikes Requested | unk |
| | Total Strikes Approved | 681 |
| | Total Strikes Delivered | 681 |
| | Total Air Aborts | 11 |
| | Total Ground Aborts | 7 |
| | Diverted Away | 27 |
| | Diverted To | 31 |

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(c) Total Bomb Damage Assessment:

| | | |
|---|----------------------|------|
| 1 | Bunkers | 1827 |
| | Destroyed | 531 |
| | Damaged | |
| 2 | Sampans | |
| | Destroyed | 217 |
| | Damaged | 68 |
| 3 | Structures | |
| | Destroyed | 274 |
| | Damaged | 154 |
| 4 | Confirmed REA | 113 |
| 5 | Secondary Explosions | 32 |
| 6 | Secondary Fires | 27 |

(d) A total of pre-planned and immediate air strikes were delivered in support of the 1st Brigade during the period 1 Feb-30 Apr 1969. 659

(4) STRATEGIC AIR SUPPORT: One B-52 strike (requested by 4-39 Inf) was flown 021130 April 1969. The target area was XS0351 - XS0348. The results were: 5 military structures destroyed, 8 military structures damaged, 2 sampans destroyed, 7 sampans damaged, 85 bunkers destroyed, 15 bunkers damaged. The following secondary effects were reported: XS029495-50ft flame and 600ft explosion, XS030468-300ft flame and 500ft explosion, XS029501-300ft of flame and 600ft explosion.

(5) TAVLA FIRE SUPPORT: N/A

(6) CHEMICAL SUPPORT: Althogh almost daily use was made of the airborne personnel detector (People Sniffer), no use of tactical CS was reported. (Quite possibly, small amounts of CS were dropped by supporting air cavalry elements or ground units with negative results.)

6. (C) TRAINING: Operational commitments have restricted training in the maneuver battalions to a great extent. Refresher training was conducted on a weekly basis and inspected by commanders and staff representatives to insure that emphasis was being placed on combat techniques as directed by the Brigade Commander. Lack of formal training schedules and reports have increased the amount of beneficial training and eliminated the previous false reporting system.

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7. (U) LOGISTICS: During the period of 1 February through 30 April, the 1st Reconno Brigade operated in Dinh Tuong, Kinh Tuong, Go Cong and Kinh Phung Provinces.

a. Supply: All supplies were drawn from the 9th Division base camp at Dong Tam. Class I-IV supplies were drawn from the 9th SCT Battalion while Class V and Class V-a supplies were drawn from the 9th Division Ammunition Office.

During this period, three of the brigade's four battalions operated under the supply point distribution plan while the other was sustained by the unit distribution plan under the Division Support Command.

Transportation for these supplies was furnished by the Division Transportation Office supported by Company E, 9th SCT Battalion for truck assets and the Division Army Aircraft Element for CH-47 and UH-1D assets. Mike-8 boats were supplied by the 1097th Boat Company. Whenever possible the 1st Brigade units provided their own transportation from their organic assets.

During the period of 13 February through 29 February, 4th Battalion 39th Infantry was involved in an operation at Moc Hoa, Kien Tuong Province. Supplies for this unit were drawn from a forward support element of the 9th SCT Battalion located at the Moc Hoa air field. Class I supplies were flown in from Dong Tam by CH-47 aircraft. Class III and V supplies were flown from Bien Hoa and Cam Ranh Bay by C-130 fixed wing aircraft. Class IV was flown from Eien Duc air field at My Tho by C-123 and C-7 aircraft.

b. Support: During this operational period the 1st Reconno Brigade was supported by A Company, 15th Engineer Battalion. The Engineers worked on the general upgrading of the brigade's three fire support bases; FSB Moore, FSB Schroeder, and FSB Danger. In addition, they worked on projects at the My Phuoc Tay rearm/refuel point, the Long Dinh bridge, and Highway #4.

The brigade received medical support from B Company, 9th Medical Battalion at Dong Tam while the more serious casualties were sent to the 3rd Surgical Hospital also located at Dong Tam. Dustoff support was provided by the 247th Helicopter Ambulance detachment.

Graves Registration support was furnished by Company A, 9th SCT Battalion.

Company A, 9th SCT Battalion operated the helicopter rearm/refuel point at My Phuoc Tay. This point dispensed an average of 16,000 gallons of JP-4 daily.

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HEADQUARTERS
2ND BRIGADE
9TH INFANTRY DIVISION

MICROFILMED
Project CHECO

OPERATIONAL REPORT
FOR PERIOD ENDING
30 APR 1969

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AVDE-BB-T

1 May 1969

SUBJECT: Operational Report of 2nd Brigade, 9th Infantry Division for Period Ending 30 April 1969, ICS CSPOR-65 (U)

off and conduct mortar and rocket harassing attacks. This capability is limited as it exposes him to airstrikes, artillery fire and electronic surveillance.

e. A continuous effort was made by the 2nd Brigade to coordinate and use all intelligence sources available. ARVN, Vietnamese National Police and Police Special Branch contributed to the intelligence effort in the Brigade T401. 2nd Platoon/335th Radio Research Unit, Naval Intelligence Liaison Officers at Can Tho, My Tho and Ben Tre and from G2, 9th Inf Div.

5. (C) Combat Operations:

a. The MRF and 2nd Brigade continue to conduct watermobile, airmobile, and footmobile operations predominantly in Kien Hoa Province with emphasis in Giong Trom, Truc Giang, Ham Long, Ho Cay and Don Nhon Districts.

b. Cordon and search operations and raids are conducted regularly in close cooperation with 7th ARVN and provincial forces targeted against VC/NLF infrastructure.

c. Increased support is provided province and district forces assisting in upgrading RF/PF proficiency and facilities.

d. ICAP/MEDCAP/NITECAP operations have been intensified resulting in a significant increase in the quantity and quality of the intelligence received from target hamlets in Kien Hoa Province.

e. Lines of communication, both civilian and military, have been kept open to traffic allowing commerce to increase appreciably.

f. The VC forces in the province are kept under constant pressure, which has forced them to maintain a wholly defensive posture. He has not been able to initiate any significant offensive operation other than scattered standoff mortar attacks.

g. VC Losses: (3,007) KIA

h. Friendly Losses: (49) KIA

i. Combat Support Activities:

(1) Artillery. During the reporting period, the 3rd Bn 34th Arty continued its' direct support role in MRF operations, employing its' firing batteries from floating barges and rice paddy platforms.

(2) Army Aviation. From the period 1 February 1969 - 30 April 1969, the units of the 2nd Brigade conducted 372 company sized airmobile operations. Air

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(3) A division claims disaster procedure was established. Under this program settlements of major losses of personal property due to enemy action were made, with immediate assistance given to individual soldiers who wished to file claims for their lost or damaged property.

(4) The Manual for Courts-Martial, United States, 1969, became effective 1 January 1969. During this period the Staff Judge Advocate, by staff visits to all subordinate units, provided a smooth transition from the use of the old manual to the use of the new manual. In addition, supplies of the new manual were obtained and distributed in sufficient quantities to all units to enable them to continue the administration of military justice without undue interruption.

(5) The Chief, Military Affairs, Office of the Staff Judge Advocate, through utilization of the SJA Bulletin, individual counseling, and staff visits to various units materially contributed to the more expeditious processing of various administrative actions such as line of duty investigations, reports of survey, and investigations by boards of officers.

(6) Initial studies and preparations were made for the implementation of the Military Justice Act of 1968. While this act does not become effective until 1 August 1969, a great deal of prior planning and coordination, training, and instruction are necessary due to major changes in military justice which will be effected by the new act. The SJA in conjunction with commanders, executive officers, and adjutants of divisional units, prepared a basic plan of implementation, made requisitions for new personnel, and trained court reporters and legal clerks as needed.

d. (C) Intelligence

(1) Discussion

(a) General: This reporting period includes three distinct phases of enemy activity. The first phase was a continuation of a period of increased infiltration and build-up which began January 1969. This phase was terminated on 22 February with the initiation of widespread offensive activity known as the Post-Tet Offensive. There were continuing high points of enemy activity until the end of March. This is generally accepted as the date of the close of the enemy's Winter-Campaign which began in early December 1968. The third phase, which has extended from the beginning of April to the present, could be classified as a near stand-down. During this period of decreased contact, agent and PW/Hoi Chanh reports have indicated that the enemy has entered a period of re-evaluation and self-critique for his failure to achieve established goals. Indications have been received that the enemy is planning now for another offensive. Since the initiation of discussions in Paris, the enemy has continually geared his activity toward operations having the most political impact such as capturing US servicemen, attacking weaker Vietnamese outposts, con-

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ducting acts of terrorism, and interdicting communication routes. During the first stage of the Winter-Spring Campaign in Long An, it was obvious that the enemy was attempting to lay the ground work for another attack on Saigon, and other population centers within the province. Their main objectives were to tie down US forces and to disrupt successful pacification efforts. The principal Communist goal within Dinh Tuong and Kien Hoa Provinces was to inflict maximum losses on US forces. Some specifically stated objectives were to attack My Tho, Cai Lay, Cai Be, Ben Tre, and Mo Cay cities and to interdict the "People's Road" (Highway 4). Captured enemy documents stated the enemy's overall objectives within the division TAOI were "to annihilate 60 per cent of the enemy troops and destroy 50 per cent of the enemy outposts, to liberate half of the district seats and province capitals and destroy the remaining half so that we can eventually control them all." An NLFSVN message, dated 29 January 1969, urged a strong Winter-Spring Campaign in order to strengthen the VC bargaining position at the Paris Peace Talks. Intelligence indicated that the Viet Cong considered a major military effort essential in order to support his peace delegation in Paris.

(b) Long An Province: Activity remained relatively moderate during the first two weeks of February with isolated attacks by fire comprising the enemy's main effort. However, indications continued to be received reflecting a major enemy buildup. On 1 and 2 February 1969, the 2d Battalion, 60th Infantry, made contact with a new infiltration group, the 4010, north of Thu Thua. The contact resulted in 55 NVA killed, four PWs captured and two Hoi Chanh. The prisoners stated that they had been sent to SR-III to reinforce units for the coming offensive. Enemy activity continued to increase and there appeared to be little question that the enemy was planning a show of force following his self-imposed, though often violated Tet Truce. On the night of 14 - 15 February, the enemy attacked Binh Phuoc with 107mm rockets, mortars, RPGs, automatic weapons, and small arms fire which resulted in two US KIA, 22 US WIA, and 9 VC KIA. On 19 February a Hoi Chanh rallied to Military Advisory Team Number 69. He reported that he was the political officer for the 6th Battalion of SR-II and stated that the general offensive would begin on 22 February at 2200H. As predicted, a surge of activity in the form of intense mortar and rocket attacks on military installations and population centers throughout South Vietnam on the night of 22 - 23 February marked the start of the final phase of the Winter-Spring Campaign. The most significant attack within the province on that evening was the attack on Tan An City in which 22 107mm rockets were fired into the city. On 24 February a Hoi Chanh from the 1st Long An Battalion stated that his unit's mission was to move into Saigon and attack the "Y" Bridge. On the following day, 25 February, elements of 2-47 Infantry and 6-31 Infantry engaged an estimated VC company approximately five kms SW of Thu Thua resulting in 31 VC KIA. The following week activity decreased, but reports continued to indicate that the 2d Long An Battalion would move against Saigon during this offensive period. On

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11 March 1969, approximately 2 kms north of Binh Phuoc, A/2-47 Inf contacted an unidentified VC force and killed 20. On 24 February, C/5-60 Inf apprehended 22 detainees, 10 of whom were classified PW. Three of the PWs were believed to be from the 2d Long An Battalion, one from the Dong Phu Battalion, one from the 901 Sapper Battalion and one from a 220 Battalion. The number of prisoners from different units indicated the importance still attached to the area by the enemy. During the first two weeks of March, the enemy continued to suffer heavy losses while awaiting orders from COSVN to start the final "Peak or Pulse" of activity. These losses the VC could ill afford. High ranking members of the main and local force battalions were beginning to rally to the side of the government, a sure sign of deterioration of VC morale. A key member of the SR-III Rear Services Organization (Moui Hung) was killed during this period. Large caches were uncovered, some containing new weapons and supplies which further hampered the VC effort. There were indications that his goals remained the same as before, to make a show of force. Infiltration of replacements and supplies continued. On 18 - 19 March, 13 kms north of VC Island, elements of the 3d Brigade contacted an unknown size unit attempting to move along the Bo Bo Canal into Long An. Following this contact, 41 VC bodies littered the battlefield. On 16 and 18 March, PWs were captured from the K-5 and K-4 Battalions, 1st NVA Regiment, confirming the location of all three battalions of that unit in Long An. On 25 March, approximately 7 kms southwest of Can Duoc, 3d Brigade contacted VC elements of the 514B Battalion with results of 22 VC KIA and 1 PW captured. On 3 April, 5 kms south of Ben Lao, the 2d Battalion, 50th ARVN Regiment made contact with the K-5 Battalion of the 1st NVA Regiment. This contact resulted in 36 VC KIA. Weapons captured included two RPGs, one RPG-2 RL, one 12.7 MMG, and four AK-47s. Although activity within Long An greatly decreased within the third period of the quarter, the enemy gave ground reluctantly. On 8 April, the 2-47 Infantry Battalion contacted the K4 Battalion, killing 47 VC/NVA. Prisoners of War captured during this period continued to report that several SR-III and NVA units were located within the Gia Dinh and Long An border area, however, major units were reported widely dispersed and attempting to avoid contact. Between 1 and 18 April, 17 107mm rockets were captured. The enemy fired another 18 on US and ARVN positions. On 14 April, the enemy initiated overt offensive action against allied forces when the K4 Battalion, 1st NVA Regiment attacked the 4th Battalion, 50th ARVN Regiment, killing 18 ARVN and wounding 22 ARVN and 20 civilians. There were subsequent attacks with the K5 and K6 Battalions on the 18th and 26th of April respectively, however, enemy initiated activity decreased noticeably. As the reporting period drew to a close, intelligence continued to be received which indicated that increased activity has been scheduled for the period between April and mid-July. Any increased activity allegedly depends on the Paris Peace Talks.

(c) Dinh Tuong Province: Enemy activity decreased slightly in Dinh Tuong during the first week of February. Scattered contacts throughout the

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province, during that week failed to locate major enemy units, however, documents captured approximately 10 kms NW of Cai Lay on 10 February provided information of planned attacks on Cai Be and Cai Lay District Towns, the 514C Battalion being the major unit mentioned. An "Official Message" from the VC My Tho Center, dated 10 February, directed all forces in Dinh Tuong to be prepared to attack My Tho and US base camps in Dinh Tuong as follows: (1) To mortar My Tho and American bases on 15 and 16 February; (2) To attack Cai Lay on 21 February and other district towns on or after that date; and (3) to destroy and kill all GVN and Americans. The VC self-imposed truce started on 15-16 February. On 20-21 February Dong Tam had three separate attacks by fire with only light friendly casualties. Then on 22-23 February enemy offensive attacks by fire erupted throughout the province and Division TAOI with Dong Tam and My Tho receiving 84 and 100 rounds of mortar fire respectively. According to a Hoi Chanh and a PW from the 267B Battalion, elements of the Dong Thap I and II Regiments, which were to participate in an attack on My Tho that night, had their plans disrupted by friendly operations. Another PW reported that the 550 Battalion had crossed the My Tho River into Dinh Tuong and joined with the 514A and the 263 Battalions for that attack. The preemptive operations conducted by the 9th Infantry Division and the 7th ARVN Division north and northwest of My Tho are believed to have thwarted the enemy attacks. Even as these plans were set aside, however, the enemy continued to resupply and regroup for further offensive operations. On 6 March north of Cai Lay contact developed with the 4th Company of the 514C Battalion and 43 of the enemy were killed. The 1st Brigade continued to press the enemy and several contacts developed which resulted in significant enemy casualties. On 11-12 March 1969, 1st Brigade contacted elements of the 261B Battalion near Thanh Phu Village. Originally this contact was believed to have resulted in 57 VC KIA, but according to a prisoner of war captured by elements of the 7th ARVN Division in April, the battalion (with a strength of 200) suffered 100 KIA and 20 WIA and another 20 deserted or were missing. In addition, most of the unit's heavy weapons were lost. The unit reportedly withdrew into Kien Phong Province at this time to regroup and recruit new members. Another large contact occurred on 16 March when 32 VC were killed 6 kms west of Cai Lay. The 4th Battalion, 39th Infantry pounded the 261A mercilessly on 23-24 March. A sweep of the battle area revealed over 140 enemy bodies. On 31 March, 11 kms east of the Wagon Wheel, the 1st Brigade contacted scattered VC elements and killed 34 of the enemy. Throughout this period intelligence reports were received which indicated that the enemy was entering a period of increased activity and a reorganization and re-evaluation phase. As the month of March drew to a close, it became less likely that the enemy could initiate a final "high point" to close out his campaign. Likewise, it appeared unlikely that a coming "large scale" Summer Offensive would develop. More credible were Agent Reports which indicated a resumption of "Post May 68" evasive tactics (referred to as the "Tmc Decision") coupled with an attempt to inflict maximum casualties on US personnel and damage the GVN's cause as much as possible. On 9 April 1969, contact was made with the Kien Tuong 504 Battalion seven kms northwest of My Phuoc Tay which resulted

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in 31 VC killed. This was the last contact with a major unit in Dinh Tuong during the reporting period. One of the most significant developments of this period was the reorganization and realignment of enemy forces. Documents and PWs confirmed the reassignment of the 267B Battalion to the Dong Thap II Regiment. Although the exact date of this organization is not known, it probably took place early in February 1969 in preparation for the Post Tet Offensive (PWs have also reported that the 5140 Provincial Battalion has been upgraded and made part of the Dong Thap I Regiment; however, there is no corroborating evidence at this time). Equally significant as to enemy intentions was the consolidation of MR-II artillery units under the Binh Duc Artillery Unit and the formation of a Binh Duc front in the Dong Tam area. A similar consolidation was effected by the organization of the 341 MF Sapper Battalion of MR-II with the 332X, 334X, and 338X Sapper Companies forming subordinate elements. The lack of contacts with major units and the significantly decreased activity further confirmed reports that this phase of the offensive was one of a near stand down. Enemy forces remained generally dispersed in company size or smaller units attempting to avoid contact.

(d) Kien Hoa Province: As the first phase of the reporting period began, reports were received from Kien Hoa that civilian laborers were being forced to assist the VC units in their pre-offensive movement of supplies. Reports indicated that the 516, 560, and 550 Battalions and the 550 LF Company would be used in an attack on Ben Tre City. Me Cay was also reported to be a major target of the VC. On 11 February, a 120 - 200 man unit of an NVA Battalion was reported four kms southwest of Dong Tam. A report was received which indicated that the VC were massing for an attack scheduled to begin before Tet and last until 29 February. On 20 February 1969, elements of 3-47 Infantry operating in northwestern Gieng Trom District contacted an unidentified enemy force of unknown size. Contact continued for five hours resulting in 9 US KIA, 10 US WHA, and 90 VC KIA. It was later determined that the contact had been with the main body of the 516 Battalion. Interrogation of PWs revealed that the 516 Battalion, on contacting US forces, had been completely surprised in its movement toward Ben Tre for the offensive which was to begin 22-23 February. The 580 LF Company which had come into the area to support the 516th withdrew into its own area of operations (Binh Dai District) because, as a PW later stated, the 516 Battalion fled to the west along the Ba Lai River and another moved to the southwest in an attempt to avoid the 2d Brigade, 9th Infantry Division. Reports continued to be received, however, that the enemy, with a new front organization of the 1st Battle Group, was continuing plans for the final phase of the Winter-Spring Offensive. Intelligence reports continued throughout March to indicate the presence of several new units in Kien Hoa Province. The C66 Artillery Company was one new unit mentioned. In this area enemy contact was at an all-time low; however sporadic contacts continued throughout the area. Prisoners of War, almost all of whom were local guerrillas, indicated that a major attack upon Ben Tre was imminent; however, this attack failed to materialize.

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15 May 1969

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In Kien Hoa, as the second phase ended and the third began, terrorism again became the major enemy tactic. Ben Tre City experienced several acts of terrorism during late March and early April. A bomb planted on a bicycle was discovered by an ARVN sergeant near the fence which protected the helipad and C/1-84 Artillery Headquarters. As the bicycle was thrown into a nearby ditch it exploded, injuring a small child. Later, near the lake in front of the Second Brigade Command Post, another bicycle loaded with C-4 was found. On 21 March, the 2d Brigade contacted a VC element north of Ben Tre along the Ba Lai River which resulted in 40 VC KIA. It is believed that the unit contacted was the 516 Battalion. On 22 and 24 March 2d Brigade elements contacted VC elements which resulted in 40 and 17 VC KIA respectively. No unit was identified. As the second phase ended on 31 March, 3-47 Infantry killed 27 VC in sporadic contacts northeast of Ben Tre near the Ba Lai River. On 9 April 1969, a command detonated 750 pound bomb mine exploded only minutes after US elements passed over it on Route 175 in Truc Giang District. No one was injured. Reports indicated that the enemy would avoid contact while continuing his harassment against US and GVN forces. After 1 April 1969, there were no major units contacted. During the week of 14 April intelligence reports were received placing the 516 Battalion in Giang Trom District with the mission to harass small outposts and disrupt US river traffic. On 25 April, RF elements moving along a road in Ham Long District were ambushed by an estimated 300 VC. Results of the contact were as follows: 1 US Advisor KIA, 25 RF KIA, 55 RF WIA. Friendly losses were one 60mm mortar, 6 radios, and 37 individual weapons. Enemy losses were 14 VC KIA and one machine gun captured. The enemy continued to choose the place, the time, and the conditions of battle.

(e) Go Cong Province: Go Cong Province was relatively quiet at the beginning of the reporting period. Reports were received that the 263B Battalion and the 514B Battalion were operating with local forces, with the mission of attacking district capitals and ARVN outposts. On 22-23 February, Vinh Binh received 22 rounds of 82mm mortar fire. Mortar fire and small arms fire as well as automatic weapons fire were received by numerous PF outposts throughout the province on that night. Throughout the remainder of February and the first of March, reports continued to indicate Hoa Dong District as a principal target for the VC. On 21 March six rounds of 82mm mortar again fell on Vinh Binh. Countermortar was fired, killing five VC. Two PWs from the 514B Provincial Battalion were captured. They stated that the unit was understrength and had only 150 men. On 8 April 1969, a VC platoon attacked a Popular Forces outpost at Kien Hoang Su (w) resulting in 9 PF killed, four wounded and two Vietnamese civilians killed. One of the dead civilians had been a village chief. On 13 April 1969, 2d Brigade inserted into the Coconut Grove in Hoa Dong District. In a series of contacts, US elements accounted for 12 VC KIA. Operations continued for two days in Hoa Dong District by elements of the 2d Brigade. The month closed without significant enemy offensive operations. The enemy continued to harass small outposts and use direct fire weapons against stronger positions.

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(f) Vinh Binh Province: Elements of the 9th Infantry Division entered base area 487 on 31 March. This operation was in response to intelligence which indicated that the 501 and 510 Battalions were refitting and resting for further operations. Contact which was sporadic and lacked firm identification continued through the next few days without decisive engagement. Operations continued intermittently through April with total estimated 130 body count. Intelligence reports continue to indicate that the 501 and 510 Battalions and several unidentified guerrilla units operate in Vinh Binh Province.

(2) Recapitulation

| UNIT | LAST LOCATION | STRENGTH | COMBAT EFFECTIVENESS |
|---------------------|--------------------------|----------|-------------------------|
| 9th VC Div | | | |
| 271 Regt | NW of Angel's Wing | 1200 | MCE |
| 272 Regt | Vic of Angel's Wing | 1250 | MCE |
| 273 Regt | SW of Tay Ninh City | 1300 | CE |
| 1st Ind Regt | | | |
| K4 Bn | W of Rach Kien City | 320 | CE |
| K5 Bn | Eastern Thu Thua | 270 | MCE |
| K6 Bn | Binh Phuoc (D) | 310 | CE |
| SR-II | | | |
| 2642 Bn | Vic of Sugar Cane | 275 | MCE |
| 6th Bn | N of Duc Hoa City | 275 | MCE |
| 267 Bn | Southeast of Tra Cu City | 225 | MCE |
| 308 Bn | Southern Pineapple | 275 | MCE |
| 269 Bn | N of Tra Cu City | 225 | MCE |
| SR-III | | | |
| 1st Bn (506) | NW of Rach Kien | 250 | MCE |
| 2d Bn (508) | Long An-Gia Dinh Border | 250 | CE |

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| UNIT | LAST LOCATION | STRENGTH | COMBAT EFFECTIVENESS |
|---------------------|------------------------------------|----------|-------------------------|
| SR-III (cont) | | | |
| Dong Phu Bn | Long An-Gia Dinh Border | 300 | CE |
| 265 Bn | SE of Can Giuoc City | 200 | MCE |
| 520 Bn | Southern Tan Tru | 200 | MCE |
| DINH TUONG PROVINCE | | | |
| 1st Regt | Southern Base Area 470 | 200 | MCE |
| 261A Bn | Eastern Base Area 470 | 150 | MCE |
| 261B Bn | N of Cai Ley City | 150 | MCE |
| 514C Bn (Poss) | | | |
| 2d Regt | | | |
| 263 Bn | N of My Tho City | 300 | CE |
| 514A Bn | NE of My Tho City | 200 | MCE |
| 267B Bn | NW of My Tho City | 250 | MCE |
| Binh Duc Arty Bn | Western Sam Giang and Ham Long (D) | 350 | CE |
| GO CONG PROVINCE | | | |
| 514B Bn | Go Cong Tri Border Area | 150 | MCE |
| KIEN HOA PROVINCE | | | |
| 516 Bn | Giong Trom (D) | 250 | MCE |
| 518 Bn | Co sized elements in Kien Hoa | 200 | MCE |
| 550 Bn | SE of Ben Tre City | 200 | MCE |
| 560 Bn | Mo Cay (D) | 175 | MCE |

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1 May 1969

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cavalry troop support was used for reconnaissance and reaction missions.

(3) Tactical Air Support. Tactical air support, provided by 7th USAF, consisted of preplanned and immediate airstrikes employed against enemy forces in the open and in fortified positions. It was also used to prepare landing beaches and landing zones. "Spooky" gunships flew missions in support of brigade elements in contact.

(4) Naval Fire Support. The organic weapons of the Navy river divisions provide direct and indirect fire support for all water movements. In movements through approved fire areas Navy elements conduct reconnaissance by fire of known and suspected ambush sites. Naval gunfire is used in conjunction with airstrikes and artillery fires in beach preparation missions.

f. Tactics and Techniques:

(1) Basic operational techniques of the 2nd Brigade continue to combine watermobile and airmobile assets to obtain maximum flexibility of mobility means which provides a capability of gaining contact with enemy forces, regardless of the nature of the terrain in which they have established base or operational areas. Heavy vegetation throughout Kien Hoa Province severely limits availability of suitable helicopter landing zones and necessitates fire preparation and landing suppression of those used.

(2) The so-called "Jitterbug" technique of assault helicopter operations, effective in the delta areas in which vegetation is sparse and limited to small areas, requires modification in the Kien Hoa area. VC elements seeking to avoid contact have the advantage of coconut palm areas ranging in depth and breadth up to nine kilometers in which to fall back or go to ground. Such areas are not readily isolated with available forces. Thus, following significant air cavalry sensings, or based on intelligence targeting, platoon sized elements are inserted over wide (4 km) areas under company control and conduct extensive foot reconnaissance operations deep into the vegetation. Artillery and airstrikes are used to disrupt enemy forward of the converging (or cloverleafing) infantry elements.

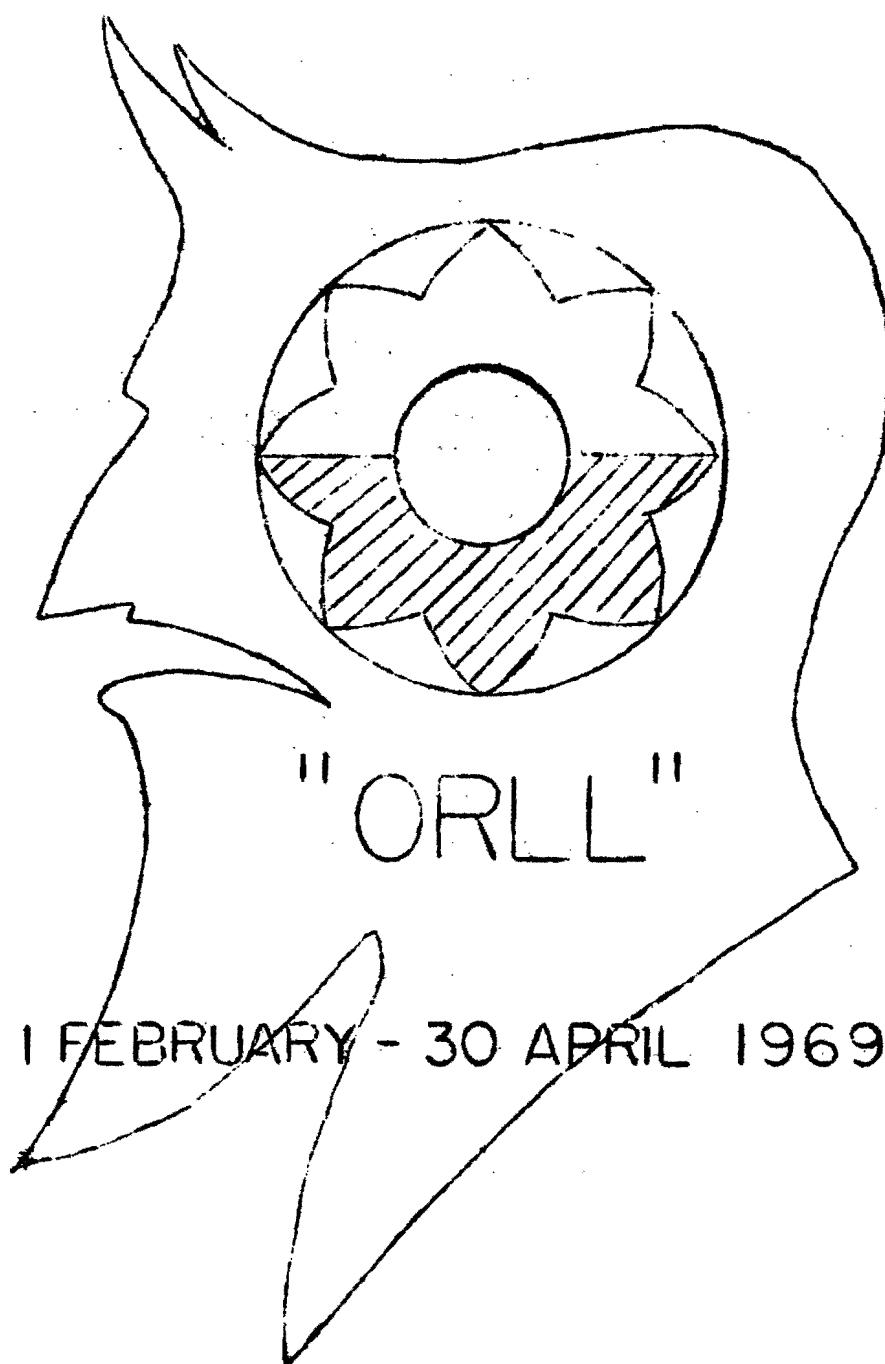
(3) The 2nd Brigade employed three new tactical techniques during this reporting period:

(a) Night Raider: The night raid was instituted to provide a rapid means of exploiting intelligence without committing large forces during periods of darkness. The raid party consists of an airborne C&C element, assault elements of up to twelve men, and aerial fire support elements. USAF/VNAF "Moonshine" ships or artillery provide illumination. After identification of the target, the area is illuminated and the assault element is immediately inserted to close with and make contact with the enemy. Concurrently, the aerial support element screens the area with the mission of observing hostile movement and

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3RD BRIGADE



1 FEBRUARY - 30 APRIL 1969

9TH INFANTRY DIVISION

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DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
HEADQUARTERS, 3D BRIGADE, 9TH INFANTRY DIVISION
APO San Francisco 96371

AVDE-BCO

30 April 1969

SUBJECT: Operational Report-Lessons Learned (OPRL) for Period
ending 30 April 1969Commanding General
9th Infantry Division
ATTN: AVDE-MH
APO San Francisco 96370

Section I: Significant Organizational/Unit Activities

1. (C) Introduction:

a. During the reporting period, the 3rd Brigade continued operations in Long An Province with the Brigade Headquarters located at Tan An. Operation Toan Thang (Phase II) was completed on 16 February 1969 and the Brigade commenced Phase III of Operation Toan Thang on 17 February 1969 and continued to the end of the reporting period. Operation Toan Thang's objective is to conduct aggressive combined operations in Long An Province, to seek out the enemy in his base areas; to cut his communications and liaison routes and to prevent his stockpiling of men and equipment for the Spring offensive. A measure of Toan Thang's success was that during the reporting period, the enemy remained in small groups and had not been able to mount a major offensive.

b. During the reporting period, the 3rd Brigade was involved in 89 days of combat operations. Refresher training for the individual soldier and small units was conducted during periods of standdown and when combat conditions allowed.

2. (C) Organization:

a. As of the end of the reporting period, the Go Devil Brigade has three maneuver battalions attached, 2-47 Inf (M), 2-60 Inf. and the 3-60 Inf. A/3-17 Cav supported the Brigade through 26 February 1969, the remaining support throughout the rest of the reporting period was provided by 1/3-17 Cav. Direct artillery support was provided by the 2-4 Arty. Normal combat service support units also supported the Brigade. A breakdown of the organizational structure is included in Inclosure 1.

GROUP 4
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