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DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY  
HEADQUARTERS, 1ST BRIGADE  
9TH INFANTRY DIVISION  
APO SAN FRANCISCO 96371

AVDE-BA-M

SUBJECT: Operational Report for Quarterly Period Ending 31 July 1968.  
(RCS/CSFOR-65) (R1)

Commanding General  
9th Infantry Division  
ATTN: AVDE-MH  
APO San Francisco 9370

## SECTION I

### Significant Organizational/Unit Activities

1. (C) INTRODUCTION: During the quarter beginning 1 May and ending 31 July 1968, the First Recondo Brigade made one major geographic relocation from DONG TAM to TAN AN. Operation TRUONG CONG DINH which began on 7 March was concluded on 22 June and in conjunction with the brigade move to LONG AN Province, Operation TOAN THONG II was initiated. Operation TRUONG CONG DINH was actually two operations; the first operation was the security of Hwy 4 from CAI LAY to the intersection of Hwy 4 and 6A (Operation PEOPLE'S ROAD). The second operation which was performed in conjunction with Hwy 4 security consisted of strike operations throughout DINH TUONG Province. On 22 June the First Recondo Brigade moved with its two organic battalions, the 2-39th Inf and the 2-60th Inf, from DINH TUONG Province to LONG AN Province. Upon arrival in LONG AN the First Recondo Brigade established its base at TAN AN. The 2-39th Inf located at RACH KIEM and the 2-60th Inf located at TAN TRU. In conjunction with the move to LONG AN Province the brigade received OPCON of three additional battalions, the 5-60th Inf (M) located at BINH PHUOC, the 6-31st Inf located at BINH CHANH and NHA BE, and the 2-47th Inf (M) located at TAN AN. The mission of the brigade in LONG AN Province has been to conduct strike operations against VC/NVA units, block major infiltration routes through the province, provide road and bridge security along Hwy 4, and reconnoiter the rocket pocket south of SAIGON. To accomplish the many fold tasks of Operation TOAN THONG II, the Recondo Brigade has conducted daily strike operations throughout LONG AN Province utilizing airmobile assets to conduct reconnaissance in force missions, Eagle flights, and to insert night ambush patrols

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along infiltration routes or in the vicinity of recent intelligence targets. On 17 July the brigade changed the normal operation and began using the airmobile assets during the hours of darkness to insert elements on targets obtained by radar fixes or intelligence targets obtained through ARVN or US channels or by spot reports received from other units; however, due to lack of significant finds, normal daytime activities were resumed 23 July. The engineer resources of the brigade have been employed to maintain and upgrade road networks throughout the province, supplement the ARVN engineers on construction projects such as the rebuilding of the BEN LUC Bridge, and upgrade the facilities at TAN AN, TAN AN Airfield, and the battalion base camps. Concurrently with daily operations a varied training program is conducted within the battalions. None of the battalions under CICOM of the Brigade were able to stand down for a week of semiannual refresher training due to combat operations. Battalions have conducted weekly training on a company basis emphasizing small unit tactics, maintenance, zeroing of weapons, and character guidance. The close of the quarter finds the First Recondo Brigade conducting vital activities and operations throughout the area of interest and confidently anticipating completion of another successful quarter.

2. (C) ORGANIZATION: The only major organizational change in the First Recondo Brigade occurred on 22 June when the brigade received OPCON of the 5-60th Inf (M), 6-31st Inf, and 2-47th Inf (M), losing OPCON of the 2-47th Inf (M) two weeks later. During the quarter the brigade has received OPCON of other elements on a mission basis. Throughout the operation in LONG AN Province the brigade has received daily operational support from A trp 3-17th Cav. Headquarters for the maneuver elements are located as follows: 2-39th Inf at RACH KIEM, 2-60th Inf at TAN TRU, 5-60th Inf (M) at BINH PHUOC, and the 6-31st Inf at BINH CHANH with a forward command post located at NHA BE.

b. The following inclosures are attached.

- (1) Inclosure 1, Organizational Structure.
- (2) Inclosure 2, Roster of Key Personnel.
- (3) Inclosure 3, Map of division Tactical Area of Interest (TAOI).

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3. (U) PERSONNEL AND ADMINISTRATION: There have been no significant changes made in the area of personnel and administration since the previous report.

4. (C) INTELLIGENCE:

a. Until 23 June, First Recondo Brigade continued operations THUONG CONG DINH and DUONG CUA DAN in DINH THONG Province. Engagements with elements of the 514A, 514B, and 514C Mobile Provincial Battalions, and the 261A, 261B, 263, and 265 Main Force Battalions have occurred in the general areas surrounding QL4 from the MY THO intersection (XS472478) west to CAI LAY (XS228503) south to the ME CONG River and as far north in the Plain of Reeds as TUYEN NHON (XS294782). Local district companies and hamlet guerillas conducted operations in general support of the 514 and Main Force Battalions. During the period 31 May through 8 June, First Brigade decisively engaged the 261A and 261B battalions initially in the Plain of Reeds (XS332738), pursued and re-engaged in the vicinity of coordinates XS422660, and finally engaged the 261A and 261B reinforced by the 514A in the MY HANG THUNG area (XS270583 and XS237565) resulting in over 400 enemy casualties and the rendering of all three battalions combat ineffective.

b. First Recondo Brigade commenced operations in LONG AN and GIA DINH Provinces on 23 June as the primary participant in Operation TOAN THANG. Elements of the brigade made contact during the period 23 June through 27 June against the 294 NVA battalion in four locations: XS668-735, XS680700, XS608710, and XS605730. During the remainder of the reporting period First Recondo Brigade has engaged elements of the 2nd LONG AN Battalion, the 5th NVA Battalion, and again, the 294 NVA Battalion. In addition to these units the First LONG AN, PHU TOI, DONG NAI, 263, 265, and the 6th Battalions have been reported operating within the Brigade TAOI.

c. Description, evaluation, and recapitulation of the enemy order of battle:

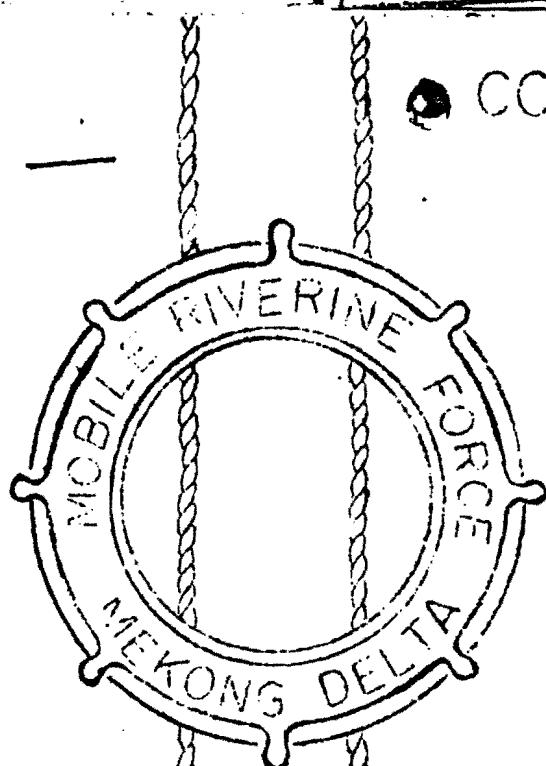
(1) The 514A and 514B Mobile Provincial Battalions are organized as follows:

(a) Three Infantry Companies

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HEADQUARTERS  
2ND BRIGADE  
9TH INFANTRY DIVISION

OPERATIONAL REPORT  
FOR PERIOD ENDING..  
31 JULY 1968

GROUP FOUR  
DOWNGRADE AT THREE YEAR  
INTERVALS DECLASSIFIED  
AFTER TWELVE YEARS

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H-A

1. Operational Report of 2nd Brigade, 9th Infantry Division  
for Period Ending 30 July 1968, Report Control Symbol  
CSFOR-65 (R1)

Sources: The 9th Military Intelligence (MI) Detachment located at Dong Tam, prisoners of war (PW) and sympathizers, 7th ARVN Division Agent Net, 525th MI Detachment, field information reports from Naval Intelligence Liaison Office, spot reports, intelligence summaries and electronic means. In most cases, information and intelligence were not particularly effective because they were not timely.

f. Enemy capabilities and limitations exhibited during the reporting period remain the same. The enemy retains the capability of conducting platoon and company size attacks on outposts and villages as well as battalion size attacks on district and provincial towns and military installations. He can also conduct stand-off mortar and rocket harassing attacks. Indications are infiltration, proselyting and resupply activity will also continue on a large scale, in addition to the interdiction of major lines of communications. His desire to gain control of rural population will continue to be a priority mission, even though he is not capable of maintaining the desired degree of political and military control. Despite his military and political objectives, the enemy remains vulnerable to massed artillery fire, aerial observation and electronic surveillance. Considering the enemy's capabilities it is thought that his possible courses of action will include continued recruitment, training and resupply activities, in addition to the initiation of attacks against minor targets in strength, intensifying harassment of major lines of communications and military installations. If at all feasible, the enemy will initiate an offensive on the same scale as his TET offensive.

5. (C) Combat Operations.

a. Two major operations were conducted during this reporting period, OPERATION TRUONG CONG DINH and OPERATION TOAN THANG. Phase I of the OPERATION TRUONG CONG DINH terminated when the Brigade rotated its maneuver battalions at Dong Tam Base on 2 April 1968. Phase II of OPERATION TRUONG CONG DINH commenced concurrently with the termination of Phase I; to date, Phase II is continuing. The Mobile Riverine Force has participated in 22 significant operations during this reporting period. The majority of which were initiated in continuation of OPERATION TRUONG CONG DINH Phase II. On 15 July, the Brigade was assigned a tactical area of operational interest (TAOI); the TAOI designated was KIEN HOA Province. Concurrent with the assignment of the TAOI, the Brigade was tasked to effect complete military pacification of the province. The mission was to be accomplished by: (1) destroying VC main and local force offensive capability with priority given to those areas which directly effect the pacification Rural development mission, (2) Disrupting enemy replacement, training and regroupment throughout his base area network, (3) providing military support for rural development programs, (4) and providing military assistance to upgrade key RF/PF outposts throughout the TAOI, and in training to local forces whenever possible. Assignment of the TAOI does not restrict the Brigade functioning as a mobile strike force. It is simply an area of

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primary interest into which civic action, psychological operations and rural development efforts will be concentrated.

b. The advent of a second major VC offensive, in the Mekong Delta required the Brigade to temporarily suspend OPERATION TRUONG CONG DINH. The Mobile Riverine Force was tasked to move to LONG AN Province to interdict the infiltration and exfiltration of enemy forces near the Capital Military District of Saigon. When an apparent increase of enemy activities and threats endangered the city of CAN THO, the MRF deployed to PHONG DINH Province and initiated combat operations as directed by the Senior Advisor IV CTZ. The early presence of the MRF reduced the ability of enemy units to assemble and launch an attack against the City of CAN THO. The enemy was compelled to evade the maneuver battalions, and disassemble into small increments. Operations in both LONG AN and PHONG DINH Provinces stressed that effective employment of ground forces, assault support craft, artillery, gunships and tactical airstrikes will defeat a determined enemy force.

c. Combat operations implemented in support of TRUONG CONG DINH Phase II includes those operations conducted during the month of April, which were not inclusive in the previous Operational Report prepared of the Brigade. Significant operations of the MRF during the period are summarized herein. Specific details of each operation are contained in inclosure #4 (Combat Operations After Action Report - TRUONG CONG DINH, Phase II).

(1) Immediately upon completing rotations of the Brigade's Infantry Battalions, the MRF made a major incursion into TRUC GIANG and GIONG TROM Districts, KIEN HOA Province to locate and destroy the 560th LF Company and 516 MF Battalion located in the vicinity of the "Crossroads" on the SONG BA LAI. The operation was launched on 4 April in continuation of OPERATION TRUONG CONG DINH. It was during this operation, that the Brigade and Task Force 117 encountered the fiercest engagement since the VC TET Offensive. As the assault support boats of River Division 92 entered the SONG BA LAI to disembark the 3-47th Infantry, the riverine column was assailed with small arms, automatic weapons and rocket fire. The 3-47th Infantry, upon beaching, assaulted the enemy positions, and the 4-47th Infantry was inserted to reinforce the engagement which continued until the evening hours of 4 April. Subsequent operations were initiated on 5, 6 and 7 April to pursue and destroy the enemy in the marshy tributaries of the SONG BA LAI.

(2) Subsequent operations conducted during the month of April employed the MRF in response to intelligence reports of increased enemy activity. From 10 thru 12 April, enemy forces in DINH TUONG and GO CONG Provinces were targets for the MRF. A two day operation was later conducted on 14 and 15 April in BEN TRE District, KIEN HOA Province against the 550th and 560th DCUs. Another significant engagement occurred on 17 April, when the Brigade was employed in CAI LAY

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District, DINH TUONG Province, were killed at the lost  
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District, DINH TUONG Province against the 514th MF Battalion; 93 enemy were killed at the loss of four U.S. lives. The Brigade, in cooperation with the 2nd Battalion VNMC, continued operations in DINH TUONG Province on 23 and 24 April. The joint operation in GIAO DUC District resulted in 61 VC KIAs of the 501st VC Battalion. The Mobile Riverine Force continued operations in CAI LAY District during the period 27 - 30 April, and redeployed on 2 and 3 May to KIEN HOA Province.

(3) On 5 May a survey was made of RF/PF outposts in CAI BE District, to determine the extent of damage resulting from enemy attacks. Operations were initiated from 7 thru 11 May against the MR II VC Headquarters in GIAO DUC District, DINH TUONG Province. The Brigade and 2nd Battalion, VNMC, conducted reconnaissance in force operations without establishing any significant contacts; 21 VC KIAs resulted from the operation. Enemy engagements increased during the period 14 thru 16 May, when the MRF was employed in MO CAY District, KIEN HOA Province against the 516th VC Battalion; 57 VC KIAs resulted. The Mobile Riverine Force and elements of the 3rd Brigade, 9th Infantry Division initiated operations from 16 thru 18 May, in THAN DUC District, LONG AN Province. The operation was further conducted in cooperation with III CTZ ARVN Forces to reduce VC/NVA infiltration into the SAIGON area. The two day joint operation resulted in 126 VC KIAs (See inclosure #5 Combat Operations After Action Report - TOAN THANG, Phase I and II). The Brigade continued operations in LONG AN and DINH TUONG Provinces without any significant contact until 26 May. At which time a two day operation was launched to recon-in-force and exploit the area of a B-52 strike in GIONG TROM District, KIEN HOA Province. The two day operation yielded 41 VC KIA at the loss of four U.S. lives. Fifteen VC were also killed in MO CAY and DON NHON Districts when elements of the 540th DCU were targets for the Brigade.

(4) During the month of June the enemy generally avoided contact with the maneuver battalions and intensified his attacks against Naval assault support craft of Task Force 117. On 5 and 6 June the MRF initiated reconnaissance in force operations in SA DEC and DUC TON Districts, VINH LONG Province. Maximum employment was made of the E-8 tactical CS launcher and "ZIPPO" flameboats to dislodge the enemy from fortified positions and suppress his sniper fires. The period 4 thru 8 June saw the MRF conducting operations in the SA DEC and RACH RUONG areas, and KIEN VAN and MY AN Districts, KIEN PHONG Province. Returning to KIEN HOA Province, the MRF initiated operations on 10 June in GIONG TROM and TRUC GIANG Districts. Although ground contacts were not obtainable, B/7-1st Air Cavalry and Naval assault support craft succeeded in destroying 45 VC during the two day operation. On 16 June, the MRF deployed to CAN THO, and initiated operations as directed by the Senior Advisor IV CTZ to prevent a major VC offensive against the city. A four day operation which commenced on 17 June, resulted in 84 VC KIA. The majority of the enemy's losses resulted from A/7-1st Air Cavalry engagements in support of the maneuver battalions.

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for Period Ending 30 July 1968, Report Control Symbol  
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Completing operations in PHONG DINH Province, the MRF deployed to Dong Tam. After a brief period of operations, the MRF proceeded on 26 June to LONG AN Province where it was again employed to interdict infiltration and exfiltration of VC/NVA forces near SAIGON. Contrary to the Brigade's earlier operations in LONG AN Province, the enemy avoided contact with the maneuver battalions for the duration of the month.

(5) The Brigade was tasked to place the 3-60th Infantry Battalion OPCON to the 3rd Brigade, 9th Infantry Division which had established contact in DINH TUONG Province. The battalion remained OPCON to the 3rd Brigade from 2 thru 5 July. During that period, the MRF continued its operations in LONG AN Province until 5 July when it redeployed to Dong Tam. On 6 July the 3-47th Infantry relieved the 4-47th Infantry of its security mission at Dong Tam Base. The Brigade continued combat operations on 7 July in KIEN HOA Province. The target selected was those enemy forces entrenched west of the "Crossroads" where the Brigade participated in its heaviest engagement of this reporting period. The 4-47th Infantry entered the objective area and beached without incident. The 3-60th Infantry conducted airmobile combat assaults to LZs south of the 4-47th beach sites. The only engagements of the day occurred when E/4-47th Infantry killed two VC after receiving sporadic small arms, and D/3-5th Air Cavalry received sporadic automatic weapons fire in the vicinity of XS5237. The absence of enemy activity in the AO was unusual. On 10 July, the MRF initiated operations in KIEN HOA Province to locate and destroy enemy forces and his equipment within HUON MY and MO GAY Districts. Subsequent operations were initiated 11 thru 13 July employing both the 4-47th Infantry and 3-60th Infantry in beach assaults, airmobile and eagle float operations. During the period 15 thru 17 July the MRF continued Operation TRUONG CONG DINH, conducting reconnaissance in force, airmobile and riverine operations in CANG LONG, CHAU THANH Districts, VINH BINH Province. The operation on 15 July in coordination and cooperation with the 9th ARVN Division. During the three day operation, the Brigade and its supporting elements accounted for 62 VC KIAs. Completing operations in VINH BINH Province, the MRF deployed to Dong Tam Base on 18 July. While anchored off Dong Tam, the Brigade employed the 4-47th Infantry, on 20 July, to conduct saturation patrolling and establish night ambushes on the south bank of the MY THO River in the vicinity of XS4740, TRUC GIANG, HAM LONG Districts, KIEN HOA Province. On 21 July the 3-60th Infantry was employed in a cordon and search operation in coordination and cooperation with RF/PF elements on THOI SON Island. Operation TRUONG CONG DINH continued on 23 July in accordance with OPORD 61-68 in GIONG TROM, TRUC GIANG Districts, KIEN HOA Province. The operation was initiated in coordination and cooperation with the 3-10th ARVN and 1-10th ARVN Regiments. On 25 July, the Brigade terminated its operations in KIEN HOA Province, and on 26 July the MRF deployed to VINH LONG Province. After completing final plans and preparation for its transit, the MRF departed its Vinh Long anchorage on 28 July and deployed to PHONG DINH Province, arriving the same day. On 30 July,

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Operations Center

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With the 5th Battalion,  
Districts, CHUNG THIEN  
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The MRF initiated offensive operations in coordination and cooperation with the 5th Battalion, VNMC, in KIEN LONG, KIEN HUNG and DUC LONG Districts, CHUNG THIEN Province. To accomplish its mission, the Brigade debarked the MRB and established its Headquarters and Tactical Operations Center inland in the vicinity of VI THANH. The introduction and operations of the Mobile Riverine Force in the AO marked the first time in the history of the Vietnam War that a major U.S. Force has conducted tactical operations in the southern extremity of the Republic of Vietnam. To date, the operation continues.

d. Combat Support Activities.

(1) Artillery. During the reporting period, the 3-34th Artillery continued its direct support role in MRF operations, employing two of its firing batteries on floating barges. On several occasions the third firing battery was deployed from Dong Tam Base and joined the artillery battalion in support of the Brigade. Since the detachment of the 3-34th Artillery from the Brigade, the Artillery support now provided by ~~the~~ battalion remains unchanged. The 3-34th Artillery performs its mission in the same manner of esprit and professionalism as it did when attached to the Brigade. Throughout the period, the Brigade's 4.2 inch mortars (also mounted on barges) were attached to the 3-34th Artillery. The 4.2 mortars barges travel with the 3-34th Arty, and their fires are coordinated by the battalion's fire direction control center to yield the best and maximum fire support for elements of the Brigade. The mortars were constantly employed on counter mortar missions as well as defensive fires and blocking fires for the infantry battalions. Employment of the mortars in this manner assists the artillery battalion in responding to numerous fire missions, and is quite effective during contact missions and canal entrances preps which are close to the fire support base. Co-locating the mortars with the artillery present minimum quadrant elevation problems for the firing batteries.

(2) Army Aviation. Throughout the reported period, Army aviation assets substantially assisted the MRF in accomplishing its many missions. Aviation support provided, included light fire teams and assault helicopter companies. When air cavalry units were placed in support of the MRF, their employment enhanced the striking power of the force. Tactical plans and operations were occasionally modified when air assets were not available, diverted or withdrawn from the Brigade and re-allocated for high priority missions. Assault helicopter companies played a major role in positioning ground forces to block, engage and destroy the enemy. Beyond any doubt, air cavalry units demonstrated their initiative to seek out and destroy the enemy. All Army aviation support provided was outstanding throughout the reporting period.

(3) Tactical air support. Air support throughout the reporting period was provided by the 7th U.S. Air Force. Tactical air support provided consisted of preplanned and immediate airstrikes which

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were employed against fleeing enemy forces, fortified positions and in preparation of beaching and landing zones. On several occasions "Spooky" flare ships, equipped with miniguns, were employed to support and reinforce elements of the Brigade which were in contact during the hours of darkness.

(4) Naval fire support. All combat operations of the MRF are contingent upon introduction into the AO by river assault craft. It is during these riverine movements that assault support boats and troop laden craft are subjected to be ambushed. To minimize the possibility of being ambushed, Naval craft are continuously reconning by fire in known or suspected ambush areas. In addition, Naval fires are always employed in support of the maneuver battalions with direct or indirect fires in zone. However, the MRF has not been able to fully develop detail fire coordinating techniques for employing Naval fires in direct support of ground forces in contact. Thus far, direct fire is limited to "preping" beaches prior to their assault, and suppressing enemy fire directed at the craft or ships of the MRF. Controlling Naval fires is extremely difficult when troops are within their zone of fire.

## o. Tactics and Techniques.

(1) The ever present problem of achieving tactical surprise is one of the major considerations in planning for riverine assaults. Unless surprise is achieved, the MRF is likely to find either a "dry hole" or encounter an ambush. The problem becomes especially difficult when MRF operations remain localized in a particular area for a period of time. The VC sometimes organize early warning systems which afford an hour or two advance notice of the MRF's deployment and employment within an AO. New techniques to counter this have been instituted. Pre-dawn landings as well as midday landings have been conducted to break the pattern of assaults. Other measures such as deception, radio silence, deceptive movement by river assault craft and "fake" insertions have been planned and executed to deceive the enemy as to our actual operations, and achieve tactical surprise. Areas of operation are cleared with Vietnamese authorities at the last possible moment in order to reduce the possibility of compromising the operation.

(2) As a result of the increased threat of riverine ambushes, the MRF has revised its counter-ambush procedures during riverine movement. Riverine convoys have increased reconnaissance by fire on suspected enemy positions or known ambush sites, where permitted. The installation of the E-8, tactical CS dispenser on river assault craft provides a readily available CS agent for counter-ambush use. The installation of M132 flame turrets on an Armored Troop Carrier ("ZIPPO") provides the MRF with a riverine flamethrower. The tactical CS dispenser and the "ZIPPO" formed an effective combination for defeating an ambush in conjunction with other fires. The light helicopter fire team (LHTF) providing overhead cover and advanced reconnaissance is in a

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6. (C) Training;

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and the ZIPPO formed with other fire  
ambush in conjunction with other fire  
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position to effectively engage the enemy flushed out by the "ZIPPO" and the CS agent.

6. (C) Training:

a. Individual and unit training was conducted in those areas requiring improvement as determined from previous operations. During the reporting quarter, there were few specified/designated periods for training. The majority of training was conducted during brief periods, when the Brigade rotated its maneuver battalions and/or prepared for future combat operations.

b. During the month of June, a special presentation was made to officers and NCOs who are responsible for planning and initiating airlift resupply operations. A two hour class on "The techniques of sling loading" was presented to S-4 representatives of the Brigade staff and each maneuver battalion. The scope of the material presented was to familiarize personnel concerned with procedures for resupplying units by air, and new techniques of preparing supplies and equipment for movement by light lift aircraft.

c. Another special training program was conducted in response to increased command emphasis on care and maintenance of individual and crew served weapons. An item of particular interest was the buffer assembly of the M16 rifle. All elements of the Brigade conducted training in care, cleaning, maintenance and inspection of the M16 rifle, and all M16 rifles were provided with new buffers, if required. Subordinate units' weapons training included zeroing of individual weapons, and zeroing, boresighting and familiarization firing of other organic weapons.

d. Other training conducted by the maneuver battalions included critiques of previous combat operations and classes on:

Communications

River/Stream crossing techniques

Fire and maneuver

Preparation of night resupply kits

Safety

Land navigation

Airmobile operations

Perimeter defense

Medical evacuation

Navy customs and courtesy

7. (C) Logistics:

a. No significant logistical activities occurred during this

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DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY  
HEADQUARTERS, 3D BRIGADE, 9TH INFANTRY DIVISION  
APO San Francisco 96373

AVDE-BCO

30 April 1968

SUBJECT: Operational Report-Lessons Learned Period Ending 30 April 1968  
(RCS/CSFOR-65 R-1) (U)Commanding General  
9th Infantry Division  
ATTN: AVDE-MH  
APO San Francisco 96370

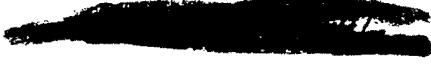
## Section 1 Significant Organizational/Unit Activities

## 1. (C) Introduction:

a. During the reporting period the 3d Brigade concluded Operation ENTERPRISE, which had been conducted continuously since February 1967, and participated in two other major tactical operations, implemented in reaction to the TET attacks on Saigon. Missions assigned to the brigade during this period were tailored to meet the growing threat inherent in the presence of both VC and NVA forces in the Capitol Military District south of Saigon while maintaining pressure on the enemy in Long An Province and interdicting his resupply and infiltration routes.

b. During Operation ENTERPRISE the brigade was primarily concerned with achieving military pacification of Long An Province in close coordination and cooperation with Province and District Chiefs. Toward this end the brigade conducted consolidation operations to destroy the enemy, his infrastructure, installations, supply caches, and lines of communication, and supported the extension of GVN control through the Revolutionary Development Program. The ENTERPRISE Mission received primary emphasis in the districts of Binh Phuoc, Tan Tru, and Rach Kien, however, extensive operations were also continued in Can Giuoc and Can Duoc Districts in accordance with the expansion of the brigade area of operation into those districts during the last reporting period. In addition the brigade also directed the operation that returned the city of Ben Tre (XS 510315) in Kien Hoa Province to GVN control during the aftermath of the TET Offensive, and extended operations into Binh Chanh and Nha Be Districts to locate and destroy VC/NVA forces that had participated in the attacks on Saigon. From the beginning of the reporting period, the 5th Bn, 60th Inf (M)(-) operated

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outside the brigade THOI, under operational control (OPCON) initially to Capitol Military District and later to the 1st Brigade where they were committed in the vicinity of the Phuoc Racetrack and participated in Operation DUONG CUA DAN (People's Road) respectively. One company remained under brigade control and was employed on convoy security missions on highway QL 4 and as the brigade RRF. The 2d Bn, 60th Inf (-) was placed OPCON to 1st Brigade on 4 March 1968 with one company remaining under 3d Brigade control to secure the battalion basecamp at Tan Tru.

Operations in the Capitol Military District were conducted with two infantry battalions placed OPCON to the brigade during the TET Offensive and remaining under brigade control throughout the reporting period.

The Enterprise Mission in its modified form was regarded as having a two-fold purpose. Of an immediate nature were the strike operations conducted in coordination with the 5th Ranger Group (ARVN) and CMD Forces in Binh Chanh and Nha Be Districts to locate and destroy the VC/NVA forces that withdrew to the outer edge of Saigon after the initial TET attacks. Within the scope of the operations in Nha Be and Binh Chanh Districts, a company size force was positioned in AO Robbie (XS 9788) to secure Cat Lai from attack by fire from the east bank of the Song Nha Be River and protect waterway traffic in the area. Simultaneously the brigade continued pacification operations in Long An Province with particular emphasis along the Gia Dinh Province boundary and on interdiction of major LOC's. The success of Operation Enterprise must be considered from the standpoint of the two-part mission. In Long An Province the military pacification effort has resulted in the return of significant portions of the population and resources to GVN control. The operations conducted in Gia Dinh Province were successful in fragmenting the VC/NVA forces that assembled there after being driven from the Capital City and in securing critical installations and supply lines from any major attack.

c. Operation QUYET THANG was conducted from 11 March - 7 April 1968. The 3d Brigade mission was to conduct offensive operations to clear assigned areas of operation within the Capitol Military District and to destroy VC/NVA forces operating in Long An Province in close coordination and cooperation with 46th Infantry Regiment (ARVN), 50th Infantry Regiment (ARVN), and 5th Ranger Group (ARVN). The 2d Battalion, 3d Infantry conducted clearing operations in Binh Chanh District to locate and destroy VC/NVA forces with emphasis on the 506th Bn. The 4th Battalion, 39th Infantry conducted clearing operations in Nha Be and Nhon Trach Districts and secured main water lines of communication in the vicinity of Cat Lai. The 3d Battalion, 39th Infantry secured basecamps at Rach Kien, French Fort, An Nhut Tan, and Binh Phuoc and continued offensive operations in Long An Province with emphasis on western Rach Kien District. The 2d Battalion, 60th Infantry (-) and 5th Battalion, 60th Infantry (Mechanized) (-)

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remained OPCON to 1st Brigade. QUYET THANG was marked by a series of small-scale contacts with both VC and NVA forces usually in well-constructed bunkers with adequate overhead cover. From these positions the enemy often displayed a willingness to engage friendly forces within the effective range of small arms weapons, and was dislodged only after repeated airstrikes and artillery fires had been called in on the target. Despite the VC/NVA attempt to capitalize on newly acquired equipment and techniques, Operation Quyet Thang succeeded in fragmenting the forces that had attacked Saigon during the TET Offensive and prevented their reorganization at a significant cost to the enemy in terms of casualties inflicted and material captured and/or destroyed. In addition the constant interdiction of LOC's and infiltration routes in both Long An and Gia Dinh Provinces severely hampered resupply activities and restricted enemy units to small-scale operations thereby substantially reducing the immediate threat to the Saigon area.

d. During Operation TOAN THANG, initiated on 8 April 1968, the brigade's mission became more detailed as specific enemy units were identified and the disposition of VC/NVA forces was revealed. Still charged with responsibility for conducting combined offensive operations in the CMD, emphasis was now placed on completing destruction of enemy battalion and company sized units, blocking infiltration routes through Long An Province to Saigon, and continue assisting in the defense of critical installations with priority to the Cat Lai and Nha Be complexes. Brigade forces were already in position to accomplish the assigned mission at the conclusion of Operation QUYET THANG. Except for minor changes in boundaries that occurred as ARVN forces pushed outward from the Saigon periphery, maneuver battalions continued operations within previously designated AO's. On 14 April 1968, the company of 2d Battalion, 60th Infantry that had remained under 3d Brigade control was placed OPCON to the 1st Brigade, thereby completing the deployment of the battalion to the 1st Brigade TAOI. In addition the 5th Battalion, 60th Infantry (Mechanized)(-) was retained to brigade control with one company and the scout platoon remaining OPCON to the 1st Brigade. Operation TOAN THANG continues as of the end of the reporting period and enemy losses are mounting. Ammunition and weapons caches continue to be discovered on a regular basis and significant contacts have been established with sizeable VC/NVA forces in both Long An and Gia Dinh Provinces. There is some indication of an enemy build-up southwest of Saigon and combat operations have been concentrated in the area. To date the Toan Thang has succeeded in maintaining constant pressure on the enemy, cutting his supply and infiltration routes, and preventing any major attacks on critical installations. (See Inclosure 3, Brigade TAOI, for Areas of Operation.)

e. During the reporting period the brigade was involved in ninety days of combat operations. The operations, conducted in reaction to the TET Offensive and other high priority commitments, precluded the conduct of any training other than that required for replacement orientation.

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f. Several major organizational changes have occurred within the brigade during the reporting period. The 2d Battalion, 3d Infantry and 4th Battalion, 39th Infantry were placed under operational control (OPCON) of 3d Brigade on 18 February 1968. The 2d Battalion, 60th Infantry was removed from OPCON of the brigade on 14 April 1968 and the 5th Battalion, 60th Infantry (Mechanized)(-) was returned to OPCON of the brigade on the same day. The 6th Battalion, 31st Infantry became OPCON to the brigade on 27 April 1968. These changes are discussed in Paragraph 2 below.

g. On 4 February 1968, Colonel George C. Benson replaced Colonel George W. Everett as Commanding Officer, 3d Brigade (Inclosure 2, Roster of Key Personnel).

2. (C) Organization:

a. In addition to the assigned maneuver battalion, one of which is mechanized, and an organic Headquarters and Headquarters Company, the brigade has two additional infantry battalions under its operational control. The 2d Battalion, 4th Artillery, in a direct support role, has stationed one battery in each assigned maneuver battalion area. Normal service units also support the brigade. (See Inclosure 1, Organizational Structure)

b. The changes in unit dispositions and the expansion of the brigade TAOI into the Capitol Military District after the TET Offensive resulted in the following major organizational changes:

(1) The 2d Bn, 3d Inf and 4th Bn, 39th Inf became OPCON to 3d Brigade on 18 February 1968 for the purpose of conducting operations in Binh Chanh and Nha Be Districts, Gia Dinh Province to locate and destroy VC/NVA forces believed to have withdrawn to the area after the TET attacks on Saigon.

(2) The 2d Bn, 60th Inf was removed from OPCON of the brigade and placed OPCON to 1st Brigade on 14 April 1968. The Bn(-) had been OPCON to 1st Brigade since 7 March 1968.

(3) The 5th Bn, 60th Inf(-) was returned to OPCON of the brigade on 14 April 1968. One company and the scout platoon remained OPCON to the 1st Bde. The Bn(-) had been OPCON to CMD and 1st Bde since 1 February 1968.

(4) The 6th Bn, 31st Inf was placed OPCON to the brigade on 27 April 1968 to be employed as a Ready Reaction Force (RRF) in either CMD or Long An Province.

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c. The resultant impact on the 3d Brigade is as follows:

(1) A requirement to establish liaison with CMD on a twenty-four hour a day basis in order to coordinate indirect fire and airstrike clearances. Present liaison team consists of two officers and two enlisted personnel.

(2) A reduced capability to conduct combat operations in the TAOI by requiring the 4th Bn, 39th Inf to assume responsibility for 2d Bn, 60th Inf's AO which lies within Tan Tru District, while continuing regularly assigned missions in Nha Be and Nhon Trach Districts. Co C, 3-39 Inf has been placed OPCON to 4-39 Inf to accomplish these missions. Consequently, 3-39 Inf's availability for combat operations has also been reduced since the security of An Nhut Tan is a recurring mission for the battalion.

(3) A reduction in convoy movement and security on Highway QL 4. The 5th Bn, 60th Inf (M)(-) with two companies available for employment must be assigned recurring missions sparingly. In addition any commitment for an extended period of time would also require that an element from another unit be tasked with the mission of providing security for the FS/PB (Fire Support/Patrol Base) at Binh Phuoc.

(4) An increased capability to react swiftly and in force to VC/NVA attacks in the TAOI. The 6-31 Inf with no permanent AO or fixed base for its maneuver elements is available for commitment in either the CMD or Long An Province with minimum delay. In addition the Bn can establish the maximum number of ambushes nightly along major land and water LOC's leading to Saigon.

d. Location of major subordinate units:

3-39 Inf	- Rach Kien (XS 739695)
4-39 Inf	- Tan Thanh (XS 655623)
5-60 Inf (M)(-)	- Binh Phuoc (XS 612544)
2-3 Inf	- FS/PB Smoke (XS 767765)
6-31 Inf	- No assigned location. Temporary FS/PB at Binh Chanh (XS 715793)
HHC, 3d Bde	- Tan An (XS 546649)

3. (C) Personnel and Administration:

a. Strength: During the reporting period, 3d Brigade Officer strength levels were generally good with 98.1 per cent assigned versus authorized and 90.1 present for duty versus authorized levels maintained on the average. At the present time the officer strength percentages are 97.5 and 92.4 per cent respectively. Enlisted strength figures averaged 95.2 per cent assigned versus authorized and 81.8 per cent present for

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duty versus authorized. Present enlisted strength figures are 96 and 86.5 per cent respectively.

b. Casualties during the period were as follows:

- (1) KIA - 59
- (2) DOW - 14
- (3) NHD -- 1
- (4) WHA - 639
- (5) Misc- 28
- (6) RTD - 243

c. Discipline, Law and Order:

- (1) Article 15's imposed - 56
- (2) Summary Courts-Martial - 3
- (3) Special Courts-Martial - 12
- (4) General Courts-Martial - 1

d. Maintenance of Morale:

(1) One of the biggest morale factors remains the establishment of a MARS radio station in the 3d Brigade area.

(2) R & R:

	AUTH	UTILIZED
Out of Country	615	609
In-Country	133	133

(3) Religious services totaled 271 for the period with 7424 personnel attending. The Brigade Chaplains also conducted 15 memorial services, made 105 hospital visits, 2 visits to confinement facility, and held 702 interviews.

e. Medical: US personnel treated in 3d Brigade dispensaries totaled 5633.

f. Military Police activities:

(1) The 3d Brigade had 23 incidents requiring a serious incident report (SRI).

(a) Eight traffic accidents.

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(b) Seven shooting incidents.

(c) Two narcotic violations.

(d) Six miscellaneous

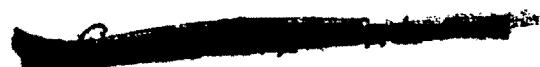
(2) Fifty-one (51) traffic accidents occurred involving 3d Brigade vehicles not requiring serious incident reports.

4. (C) Intelligence: Significant changes affected several aspects of intelligence and counterintelligence activities throughout the 3d Brigade TAOI during the reporting period.

a. Order of Battle: The Order of Battle of VC forces, operational in the Long An - Binh Chanh - Nha Be area was altered by the addition of the NVA Phu Loi II Battalion and a new Main Force Battalion, the 265th. Also a temporary NVA Battalion designated K3, operated briefly in Long An Province in February. As a result of the VC TET Offensive, the enemy was forced to re-group and alter units and base areas. The Order of Battle in the Brigade TAOI is still undergoing transition as the in-province replacement system produced limited results, and the enemy was forced to strip local force units, upgrade guerrilla forces, impress young men and infiltrate NVA personnel.

(1) The Phu Loi II Battalion entered VC Long An Province approximately 5 January 1968, and around 28 January 1968, infiltrated south along the Vam Co Dong River, crossed Highway 4 and passed through Rach Kien into the Binh Chanh - Can Giuoc border area. The battalion apparently did not participate in the attack on Saigon and was assigned the mission of protecting areas in Binh Chanh District centering on Hung Long Village. Constant contact with 3d Bde units and airstrikes reduced the strength and effectiveness of the battalion 50 per cent. POW's stated that from the original four (4) companies (5th, 6th, 7th, and 8th), only two were left with the battalion (6th and 8th) in mid-March. The other two companies were detached as replacements to other battalions. By the end of March, the 2-3 Infantry had reduced the 6th Company of the Phu Loi II Battalion to platoon size and forced the remainder of the battalion into dispersed hiding areas throughout the Binh Chanh - Can Giuoc border area. POW's have shown that the Phu Loi II follows the standard pattern of having assigned a limited number of VC to assist in familiarization with the area. The POW's confirmed the internal conflict between NVA and VC personnel.

(2) The 265th Battalion is a possible addition to the Order of Battle. Numerous agent reports have placed the battalion in the base areas of the 2nd Independent Battalion in western Rach Kien and northern



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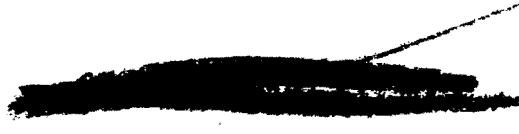
Tan Tru. A Chieu Hoi from the battalion rallied on 15 April 1968, giving the first positive evidence of the battalion's existence. The Chieu Hoi reported the battalion was formed from personnel from the 261st and 263d Battalions and 200 new recruits. The addition of the battalion confirms the increased emphasis placed on Long An by the VC. The battalion's position is significant in that it threatens Ben Luc and is in position to reinforce anywhere in Long An.

(3) The 2d Independent Battalion was engaged in the Cholon area at the start of the reporting period. Continued contacts traced its movement to northern Binh Chanh, where in mid-March it went into hiding at less than 50 per cent strength. A recent Chieu Hoi has stated the battalion has gained replacements and is still in the northwestern Binh Chanh area avoiding contact with regular US/ARVN forces. The battalion had developed sufficient strength by early April to participate in a series of attacks on RF/PF outposts in Nha Be District. The battalion's performance in the attacks indicate that despite new replacements, the command structure, although weakened during the TET Offensive, is still functional.

(4) The 506th Battalion had been indentified in several widely dispersed areas since the TET Offensive. The most recent Chieu Hoi indicates the presence of the battalion minus the heavy weapons company in southern Can Giuoc. Other elements have been reported in the old base area in the Pineapple Plantation north of Ben Luc as well as south of Highway 4. Apparently elements of the 506th were severely hurt during TET and used to supplement other forces. The bulk of the battalion has not been fixed by friendly forces.

(5) The 5th Nha Be Battalion participated in the TET Offensive and was last contacted on 10 February 1968 withdrawing from the immediate Saigon area. Since then, the 5th Nha Be has not been located. Recent reports has placed the battalion in dispersed locations along the VC supply routes in Can Giuoc. It is reasonable to assume the battalion, although ineffective for the last six months, suffered losses during the TET Offensive and had be completely rebuilt. By the end of April, only the Heavy Weapons Company on the Nha Be - Can Giuoc border appeared capable of any offensive action.

(6) The district companies continue to operate strictly within their district boundaries, however, the companies have cooperated in operations along their border areas. After TET the VC reorganization affected the districts by requiring each district to increase their forces from one company to one battalion. Thus far only the VC Ben Thu District reorganization has been confirmed. The 312 Company (120 personnel) split and by upgrading local intravillage squads, formed the C1 Company (60 personnel), C2 Company (40-60 personnel) and C3 Company (75-90 personnel).



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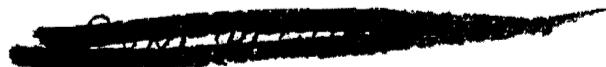
The companies have been reinforced with a weapons platoon of the 8th Bn consisting of VC and some NVA personnel. The remainder of the local district companies have been identified as remaining in their normal areas: The 313 Company (100 personnel) in Binh Phuoc; the 314th Company (120 personnel) in Tan Tru; the 315th Company (40-60 personnel) in VC Can Duoc; and the 316th Company (100 personnel) in Can Giuoc. At the end of the reporting period, contact with the 315th Company resulted in 26 VC KIA (USBC) and effectively eliminated at least one of the two marginally combat effective platoons in the company. The district companies have sustained a major loss of personnel to the mobile battalions and main force units. Agent reports of NVA personnel replacements in the district companies appears confirmed by a noticeable change in the response of these units to contacts. The local forces are now breaking in the open in an effort to disengage and are often sighted moving in the daylight as well as reacting to aircraft in such a way as to disclose their positions. Local guerrilla units were stripped as replacements and intensive recruiting has replaced most of the losses, however, the quality has suffered greatly.

b. Enemy Tactics and Techniques:

(1) The VC in Long An Province used February and March to disengage their major units from the Saigon area and to rebuild them. During this period they were subjected to intensive attacks by friendly forces. Initially the enemy attempted to avoid contact and retain their position in Saigon peripheral area in an offensive posture. Finally the major units were dislodged by our operations and attempted to hide in fragmented groups still within the general area. Continued operations destroyed over 50 per cent of the 2d Independent and 506th Battalions, and both battalions began the process of rebuilding in late February. It became obvious the second offensive would not take place immediately and propaganda build-up began for late April or May. The local guerrilla and district forces were stripped of personnel to rebuild the battalions, but this and the intensive proselyting were insufficient. The VC in Long An were forced to use NVA filler personnel down to district companies in order to regain an offensive capability.

(2) In mid-February the VC attempted to resupply their units around Saigon, however, due to our interdiction efforts, they were unable to do so until early April, and it appeared that the enemy had succeeded in resupplying and reinforcing only their major units and a few district companies.

(3) The enemy reorganization of the VC Long An Province into what appears to be two tactical sub-regions was accomplished prior to TET and has remained in effect. The sub-region south of Hwy 4 has had the major realignment of forces. The original local force battalions were reinforced with the Phu Loi II Battalion initially and later the 265th Battalion.



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In addition to the command element, in late April it appeared that the weapons elements had been combined into a Heavy Weapons Unit and reinforced with other heavy weapons units.

(4) VC tactics have changed during the reporting period. The enemy remains along the river lines, but they are now digging their bunkers in the first rice paddy dike out from the nippa palm line rather than the edge of the nippa palm as they did previously. This was in response to our past practice of placing our airstrikes in the edge of the nippa palm. The enemy has shown a marked reluctance to make contact with US forces. They avoid contact unless we actually enter their bunker line, then they will defend at all costs until darkness when they will disperse in small groups from the area often dressed in civilian clothing over their uniforms. The major change is that the defense is stubborn and involves the whole unit rather than rear guard actions as in the past. The VC have continued harassment of RF/PP outposts and mortaring of major US/GVN installations.

c. Enemy losses during the reporting period numbered 864 VC body count, 26 prisoners of war, and 40 rallied under the Chieu Hoi Program. Enemy equipment losses during the period includes 38 crew-served weapons, 132 small arms, 1862 rounds of 81/82mm mortar, 351,831 rounds of small arms ammunition, 1179 rounds of B-40 and B-41 ammunition and 280 rounds of 60mm mortar. (See para 5 for detailed losses)

d. The quality of intelligence varies greatly among the many agencies available here in Long An, but all have made significant contributions to the 3d Brigade intelligence effort. The most valuable agencies continue to be the 149th MI, the 525th MI, the 9th MI, and the Combined Operations Intelligence Center (COIC), which is the Long An Sector - US Advisory collection agency. These agencies provide the most assistance because of the timeliness and the accuracy of their reports. The Police Special Branch (PSB), in conjunction with the Police Interrogation Center, provides valuable information on infrastructure and in-depth studies of VC techniques and objectives. District Operations and Intelligence Coordinating Centers (DOICC) are operational and functioning in five of the seven districts. These joint US/ARVN centers, operating under the District Chiefs and the District Advisor, acquire, analyze and disseminate intelligence at district level. The DOICC's have proven their value for acquiring intelligence and reacting to both military and infrastructure targets.

Casual sources, frequently Vietnamese civilians, have proven very valuable during the past months in locating mines, booby traps and caches. Every effort is being made to encourage this kind of assistance.

The rapport and cooperation between Long An Sector and the 3d Brigade is excellent. In addition to daily contacts with COIC, S-2, 3d Brigade maintains liaison with the numerous agencies at Sector by liaison officers.

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DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY  
3D BRIGADE, 9TH INFANTRY DIVISION  
APO SAN FRANCISCO 96373

AVDE-BCO

11 August 1968

SUBJECT: Combat Operations After Action Report (MACV/RCS/J3/32) (U)

THRU: Command Channels

TO: Commander  
U. S. Military Assistance Command, Vietnam  
ATTN: J343  
APO 96243

1. Name or Identity and/or Type of Operation: Combat operation to defend southern approaches to Saigon-CMD area and defend key installations in southern Saigon-CMD area.

2. Dates of Operation: 6 May - 13 May 1968.

3. Location: Gia Dinh Province, Nha Be and Binh Chanh Districts.

4. Control or Command Headquarters: Headquarters, 3d Brigade, 9th Infantry Division in coordination with CG, CMD.

5. Reporting Officer: Colonel George C. Benson, Commanding Officer, 3d Bde, 9th Inf Div; Lieutenant Colonel Joseph H. Schmalherst, Commanding Officer, 6th Battalion, 31st Infantry; Lieutenant Colonel Anthony P. Deluca, Commanding Officer, 3d Battalion, 39th Infantry; Lieutenant Colonel Robert L. Adcock, Commanding Officer, 4th Battalion, 39th Infantry; Lieutenant Colonel John B. Tower, Commanding Officer, 2d Battalion, 47th Infantry; Lieutenant Colonel Eric F. Antilla, Commanding Officer, 5th Battalion (Mechanized), 60th Infantry.

6. Task Organization:

a. U. S. Forces:

(1) Maneuver Battalions:

6-31 Inf  
3-39 Inf  
4-39 Inf  
2-47 Inf (eff 09 May 68)  
5-60 Inf (M) (-)

(2) Brigade Control:

B Trp, 7-1 Cav (7-13 May 68)  
D Trp, 3-5 Cav (8-13 May 68)  
HHC, 3d Bde, 9th Inf Div  
2-4 Arty(-) DS  
Btry B, 7-8 Arty (8 in and 175mm) FS Reinforcing  
Btry C, 1-84 Arty (155mm) Reinforcing  
Btry B(-), 1-84 Arty (155mm) Reinforcing  
3d Plt, 9th MP Co (Spt)  
3d Plt, Co C, 9th Sig Bn (Spt)

Co D, 709th Maint Bn (Spt)  
Co C, 15th Engr Bn (DS)  
Co C, 9th Med Bn (Spt)  
Tm, 9th MI Det (Spt)  
3d Plt, 335 RRC (Spt)  
Sec, 4th AA Plt, 2d CA Co (Spt)  
AV Fld Tm, 246th PSYOPS Co (Spt)  
2d Plt, C Btry, 5-2 Arty (DS)  
2d Plt, H Btry, 29th Arty (DS)

b. Vietnamese forces operating in close coordination and cooperation with 3d Brigade units:

30th River Assault Group (RAG) (ARVN)  
RF/PF Forces, Gia Dinh Province  
Nha Be and Binh Chanh District Forces  
Capitol Military District Forces

7. Supporting Forces:

II Field Forces Aviation Units  
7th USAF  
1st Log Cmd

8. Intelligence: Enemy situation prior to the May (2d) Offensive:

Reporting Period: 1 April to 11 May 1968

During this period all enemy activity in sub-region 3 indicated massive efforts to resupply, train and provide recruits to all VC/NVA units suffering from the heavy losses sustained during the TET Offensive. At the same time, the enemy continued harassment of Allied and ARVN installations throughout the TAOI concentrating on attacks by fire and avoiding contact except where their base areas were challenged. It was obvious during this period that the enemy's rebuilding efforts were pointing towards a second offensive in the Saigon area.

Major battalion-sized elements in our AO became increasingly difficult to engage. For apparent security purposes, traditional enemy unit base areas were abandoned with only token LF representation, movement patterns seemed erratic as the enemy attempted to cover their subsequent movement into attack positions south of Saigon. In addition, information was received that some LF and MF company-size elements, normally operating separately, were uniting in an effort to bolster the attack strength of the larger MF units. LF elements in the 3d Bde's immediate area of interest around US installations, began coordinated attacks in order to cover the maneuver of the Saigon attack forces. Increasing VC command emphasis was placed on terrorist activities, interdiction of lines of communication, sabotage of Route 4 and attacks by fire on all strategic points in sub-region 3. Interdiction along Route 4 was especially heavy between Tan An and Binh Chanh. Specially formed sapper elements initiated more frequent route-severing attempts along secondary roads leading to and from all US subordinate installations. Attacks by fire increased on ARVN, RF/PF OP's throughout sub-region 3. In an attempt to hamper reinforcement efforts by Allied and ARVN units, combined LF elements put ever increasing pressure on the Tan An and Ben Luc Bridges. At various times both locations came under rocket, mortar, ground and probing attacks. During this reporting period, especially in the last two weeks of April, pressure was exerted on all major Allied and ARVN installations in Can Duoc, Can Giuoc, and Nha Be Districts as a diversion to the maneuvering of the attack elements into positions south of Saigon.

The bulk of the offensive from the south was to be borne by the 3d Independent, 506th LF, and Phu Loi II battalions with the aid of supporting elements from the 5th Nha Be Bn

The enemy's overall plan for the attack in the southern region had the 2d Ind, 506th, Phu Loi II and supporting elements from the 5th Nha Be attacking and occupying the 7th, 8th and 9th Precincts along Saigon's southern extremities. The D-16 LF and the 263 Bn's with supporting rear elements were to provide diversion by attacking from the southwest into the Cholon - Phu Lam area.

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9. Missions:

- a. Deploy the 3d Bde south of Saigon to deny VC/NVA forces access to the city.
- b. Defend key installations south of Saigon.
- c. Be prepared to reinforce US and ARVN units in Saigon-CMD area.

10. Concept of Operation:

a. The general concept of operations was to move four maneuver battalions by airlift and vehicle to positions along suspected routes of infiltration into the southern Saigon-CMD area.

b. Conduct extensive combat operations in Binh Chanh and Nha Be Districts to locate and destroy VC/NVA units staging to attack the Saigon-CMD area.

11. Execution:

a. 6 May 1968: The disposition of forces in Gia Dinh Province on 6 May was the 4-39 Inf at Nha Be (XS 916823) and the 6-31 Inf at FS/PB Smoke (XS 789769). Because of the buildup of intelligence, the 5-60 Inf(M) was moved from Binh Phuoc (XS 615550) to XS 815868 south of Saigon. At nightfall on the 6th, the complete disposition of units was: 6-31 Inf (Co's A and D) at FS/PB Smoke, XS 789769; 4-39 Inf had Co B at Cat Lai (XS 956895), Co C at XS 880853, Co E and HHC at Nha Be (XS 916823), Co C/3-39 Inf (OPCON to 4-39) at Nha Be (XS 916823); the 5-60 Inf (M) had HHC and Co A at XS 815868, 2d Plt of Co A at XS 984878 (OPCON to 4-39 Inf), and Co C elements at XS 875868, XS 814875, and XS 853887.

b. 7 May 1968: The 6-31 Inf moved Co's B and C from Binh Chanh to FS/PB Smoke and conducted company-sized airmobile assaults and recon in force operations east of Binh Chanh. The operations had negative results and at nightfall the disposition of the battalion was HHC and Co C at FS/PB Smoke, Co A at XS 808865, Co B at XS 819866, Co C had one plt at the Ben Luc Bridge (XS 618748) and one plt OPCON to 5-60 Inf (XS 816874) and one plt at XS 775842.

The 3-39 Inf conducted local security patrols vic Rach Kien until the afternoon. Beginning at 1400H, the Bn Hqs and Co's A and B were airlifted to positions south of Saigon. The final disposition of the battalion was: HHC and Co B at XS 838869, Co A at XS 828868, Co C (OPCON to 4-39 Inf) at XS 880870. Co's A and B of 3-60 Inf became OPCON to 3-39 Inf to defend base-camps at An Nhut Tan (XS 665674), Rach Kien (XS 740669), and the French Fort (XS 896616).

The 4-39 Inf conducted riverine and footmobile recon in force operations west and northwest of Nha Be with three companies. The operations had negative results and the disposition of the battalion at nightfall was: HHC, Co C and Co E at Nha Be (XS 916823); Co A at Tan Tru (XS 654623); Co B at Cat Lai (XS 956895); Co C/3-39 (OPCON to 4-39 Inf) at XS 880870; and one plt of 5-60 Inf(M) (OPCON to 4-39 Inf) at XS 896873.

The 5-60 Inf (M) conducted recon in force operations with Co's A and C. The field CP of Co C/5-60 Inf (M) came under mortar attack at 0345H. The company received a total of 80 rounds of 82mm mortar fire. Fire was returned using organic weapons, arty and a light fire team. The CP received 8 to 10 RPG rounds at 0515H. The same support was used for this contact. There were no casualties from either contact and the VC losses are unknown. The 3d Bde received a call at 0545H that an ARVN outpost at XS 827875 was under a ground attack from an estimated VC company. The 2d Plt of Co C departed its night location (XS 845885) to reinforce the outpost. At 0610H at XS 827875, the platoon established contact with an unknown size VC force. The platoon was joined by the rest of Co C at 0642H. The company remained in contact until 2000H when the enemy withdrew to the south. Co C was joined at 1030H by Co A/5-60 Inf (M) at XS 829876. The two units were supported by

and killed 26 VC. The final disposition of units at nightfall was: HHC, Co's D and E at FS/PB Smoke (XS 787789); Co A at XS 865874; Co B OPCON to 3-39 Inf; and Co C at XS 867874. The Bn of 3-39 Inf flew a continuous VR south of Saigon during the night of 8-9 May 68. Using a starlight scope, he spotted several sampans and one group of 10 VC during the night. Using helicopter gunships and arty, he killed 6 VC vic XS 713710 and sank 3 sampans vic XS 846655. At 0225H the battalion field CP (XS 845885) began receiving a mortar attack. The camp received a total of 50 rounds of 82mm before the attack ceased at 0255H. At 0345H, the camp came under a mortar and ground attack by an estimated VC battalion. The attack continued until 0630H when the VC withdrew to the south and west. The contact was supported by helicopter gunships, USAF C-47 Spooky flares and gunships, arty and organic weapons. US casualties from the attack were 2 KHA and 67 WHA. Enemy losses were 4 VC KIA. During the day Co A conducted recon in force operations in the vic of the battalion basecamp with negative results. Co B conducted recon in force southwest of the battalion basecamp in pursuit of the attacking force. The company received sniper fire three different times between 0700H and 1400H with no casualties. At 1430H vic XS 843878, Co B established contact with an unknown size VC force. The action continued until 1700H with the enemy fire fluctuating between heavy to sporadic. The action was supported with helicopter gunships, TAC Air, arty and organic weapons. The action resulted in 12 VC body count and 1 US WHA. The 3-39 Inf received OPCON of B/6-31 Inf at 1400H to support the B/3-39 Inf contact. When the company approached the area of contact, they began receiving sporadic sniper fire. The company established a block to the southwest of the contact area. The sporadic sniper fire continued until 1700H and resulted in 9 US WHA. The action resulted in 10 VC KIA for Co B/6-31 Inf. Rcn/2-47 Inf (OPCON 3-39 Inf) conducted local patrols in the vic of the battalion basecamp (XS 845886). The patrols sustained 1 US WHA from sniper fire at 1500H vic XS 844855. The disposition of units at nightfall was: HHC, Co B, Rcn/3-39 and Rcn/2-47 at XS 845885; Co A at XS 842883; and Co C OPCON to 4-39 Inf.

The 4-39 Inf conducted recon in force operations with Co's C/4-39 Inf and C/3-39 Inf. The units moved from XS 860800 to the south to a village located at XS 853784. Prior to reaching the village at XS 857790, the units established contact with an estimated company. The action was supported by helicopter gunships, TAC Air, arty and organic weapons and resulted in 2 US WHA and 34 VC body count. The disposition of the battalion at nightfall was: HHC and Co's C and E at Nha Be (XS 916822); Co B at XS 977853; and Co C/3-39 Inf at XS 842794.

The 5-60 Inf (M) conducted recon in force operations with Co's A and C from XS 804868 towards the 3-39 Inf basecamp (XS 845886). At 1300H vic XS 833877, both companies established contact with an estimated VC company. The units killed 5 VC in the action which continued for one hour and sustained 9 US WHA. The disposition of the battalion at nightfall was: HHC and Co C at XS 810877; and Co A(-) at XS 797865.

The 2-47 Inf (M) became OPCON to the 3d Bde at 1130H and conducted recon in force operations vic XS 860880. At 1550H the battalion established contact with an estimated VC battalion. The action continued until 1830H when the VC withdrew to the south. The action was supported by helicopter gunships, TAC Air, arty and organic weapons and resulted in 61 VC body count, 7 AK-47's, 2 RPG-2 launchers and 2 RPG-56 machineguns captured. The unit sustained 18 US KHA and 36 US WHA. The battalion established a battalion field location at XS 872886 with all units co-located at this location.

Troop D/3-5 Cav supported contacts of 5-60 Inf, 3-39 Inf, and 6-31 Inf during the day and killed 7 VC, sank 6 sampans, destroyed 28 structures and caused 8 secondary explosions.

Troop B/7-1 Cav supported the 2-47 Inf and 4-39 Inf contacts killing 30 VC and destroying 1 ea 122mm rocket launcher vic XS 836852.

e. 10 May 1968: The 6-31 Inf conducted footmobile recon in force operations during the morning vic XS 860874 with Co's A and C. The operation had negative results. At 1440H Co A and Co C conducted airmobile assaults into

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at LZ XS 813835, reacting to the 5-60 Inf (M) contact. From the LZ, the units moved west to the woodline then southwest to XS 804827. Both companies established a block oriented to the east at this location. The block had negative results. The final disposition of the units at nightfall was: HHC, Co's B, D, and E at FS/PB Smoke (XS 789769); Co A at XS 794829; and Co C at XS 814822.

The 3-39 Inf conducted footmobile recon in force operations with Co's A and B vic XS 841832. At 0930H Co B departed its night location (XS 845885) and began moving to the northwest. At 1005H vic XS 841832, the company began receiving RPG and automatic weapons fire. The company reacted with helicopter gunships from Troop B/7-1 Cav, TAC Air and arty. At 1100H Co A departed its night location (XS 842880) to support the contact and entered into the engagement at 1255H. At 1300H Recon/3-39 Inf also reinforced the contact. The three units kept the enemy force contained in their bunkers and used arty and airstrikes on the enemy while Troop D/3-5 Cav screened and provided gunship support. The contact continued until 1930H when Co's A and B swept into the area of contact. The action resulted in 65 VC body count, 5 US KHA and 27 US WHA.

The 4-39 Inf conducted waterborne (airboats) screening operations, waterborne assaults and footmobile recon in force operations in northern Nha Be District (vic XS 865885). During the night (0040H, 0225H, and 0254H), Co C/3-39 Inf (OPCON to 4-39 Inf), in an ambush position vic XS 841790, engaged a total of 7 sampans heading north toward Saigon. The area of ambush was swept at first light and 8 VC bodies were found along with enough canned goods and rice to feed 100 men approximately two days. Co C/4-39 screened in the airboats between XS 865885 and XS 855882. At 1230H the company beached at XS 857849. While searching an airstrike area (XS 857849), the company found a total of 18 VC bodies killed by TAC Air, arty and small arms. The disposition of units at nightfall was: HHC and Co's C and E at Nha Be (XS 916822); Co B at XS 858800; and Co C/3-39 (OPCON 4-39 Inf) at XS 893802.

The 2-47 Inf (M) conducted mechanized recon in force operations with Co's A and C from XS 873884 to the west with negative results. The battalion established a battalion field location at XS 810872 with seven platoon-size ambushes in that general vicinity.

The 5-60 Inf (M) conducted mechanized recon in force operations with Co's A and C. The companies departed their night locations and moved south to reinforce an ARVN outpost which was under attack (XS 813825). At 1120H vic XS 813828, Co A established contact with an estimated VC company in heavily fortified bunkers. Co C moved to the east flank and two companies from the 6-31 (A and C) were inserted on the west. All units battered the VC all day until 2000H when the contact was broken. Helicopter gunships from Troop D/3-5 Cav, TAC Air, arty and organic weapons supported the contact. The action resulted in 4 US KHA, 28 US WHA and 20 VC KIA and 3 VC POW's. The final disposition for the battalion was: HHC and Co C at XS 810863; Co A(-) at XS 815876; and 1/A/5-60 Inf at XS 820870.

Troop B/7-1 Cav supported the 3-39 Inf in its contact during the day. Totals for the action were 5 VC KIA.

Troop D/3-5 Cav supported the 5-60 Inf (M) and 6-31 Inf contact all through the day. Totals for the action were 11 VC KIA, 1 VC WIA, 16 sampans destroyed, and 39 structures destroyed.

f. 11 May 1968: The 6-31 Inf conducted airmobile and recon in force operations with Co's A and C. At first light the two units began sweeping the area of yesterday's contact (XS 814820). During the sweep at XS 815823, Co A discovered 3 VC KIA, 2 RPG-2 launchers, 13 B-40 rockets, 3 AK-47's, 2 AK-47 bandoliers, 10 chicom grenades, 15 lbs of clothing and 1 lb of documents. The company also destroyed 12 bunkers in the same area. Co C in the same area found 3 B-40 rockets, 1 K-50, 1 RPG-2 launcher, 1 SKS rifle, 1 9mm pistol, 1 AK-47, 1 AK-50, 1 chicom radio and some web gear. From this area Co C continued operations to the south. At 1515H vic XS 823797, the company engaged an estimated VC platoon. The contact was supported by Troop D/3-5 Cav and

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arty and broke at 1600H. The action resulted in 4 US WHA and the enemy casualties are unknown. The disposition of the battalion at nightfall was: HHC, Co's A and E at FS/PB Smoke (XS 789769); Co B at XS 845878; Co C at XS 808808 and Co D at XS 886770.

The 3-39 Inf conducted recon in force operations with Co's A and initially. Co A conducted footmobile operations from XS 826864 to the northeast. At 1115H vic XS 836875, the company started receiving RPG, automatic weapons, and small arms fire from an estimated 50 VC. The company reacted with Troop 1 3-5 Cav gunships, arty and TAC Air. Rcn/2-47 Inf (M) was positioned to the north of the contact in a blocking position. At 1200H, the platoon came under heavy automatic and small arms fire from the VC force attempting to withdraw to the north. The two units pounded the enemy from both sides all during the day until the VC broke contact at 1830H. The units sustained 5 US WHA as a result of the contact and killed 27 VC. Co B conducted recon in force operations from XS 843883 to the south. At 0930H vic XS 845879, the company established contact with an estimated reinforced VC company. Co B/6-31 Inf was placed OPCON to the 3-39 Inf and moved from XS 850880 west to the point of contact establishing contact and blocking from the east at 1100H. Co B/2-47 Inf (M) was placed OPCON to the 3-39 Inf at 0930H and began moving south to the point of contact at 1000H. At 1100H Co B/2-47 Inf established a block oriented north at XS 846880. At 1105H the unit began receiving SA fire. All of the units involved pounded the enemy with TAC Air and organic weapons until 2000H when the contact broke. The action resulted in 9 US WHA and 21 VC body count. The final disposition of the battalion was: HHC at XS 845884; Co A at XS 834876; Co B at XS 842882; and Co C at XS 847872.

The 4-39 Inf conducted airmobile and recon in force operations northeast of Nha Be. The operation had negative results and the disposition of the battalion at nightfall was: HHC, Co's B and E at Nha Be (XS 916822); and Co C at XS 886772.

The 2-47 Inf (M) conducted local patrols from the vicinity of its night locations with negative results. The disposition of units at nightfall was: HHC at XS 810872; Co B at XS 780841; and Co C at XS 854887.

The 5-60 Inf (N) conducted local patrols from its night location south of Saigon with negative results. The disposition of units at nightfall was: HHC and Co A at XS 815877; and Co B at XS 817872.

Troop B/7-1 Cav supported the 3-39 Inf and 6-31 Inf contacts killing 6 VC.

Troop D/3-5 Cav also supported both contacts with negative results.

g. 12 May 1968: The 6-31 Inf conducted airmobile assaults and footmobile recon in force operations in southern Binh Chanh District with negative results. The disposition of units at nightfall was: HHC, Co's A and E at FS/PB Smoke (XS 789769); Co B at XS 847876; Co C(-) at XS 845785; and 1/6-31 Inf at XS 804775.

The 3-39 Inf and attached units had sporadic contact in the area of the 11 May contact with groups of VC varying in size from a fire team to a platoon. The groups were spread and appeared to be the remnants of the units engaged 11 May. The battalion field CP received a total of 23 rounds of 75mm recoilless rifle fire from an unknown size VC force. There were no casualties and the counter-mortar fire produced unknown results. At 0830H vic XS 828874, Co A found 20 VC KIA, 20 B-40 rounds, 1 RPG-7 launcher, 8 AK-47's, 2 AK-50's, and some web gear. At 1050H vic XS 842882, Co B began receiving sniper fire from a nippapalm area. The company attacked the area, engaging and killing 5 VC and capturing 1 AK-47. The company continued to search in the area. At 1630H vic XS 841881, Co B engaged a VC platoon killing 15 VC. At 1440H Co B/2-47 (OPCON to 3-39 Inf) engaged an estimated squad killing 11 VC and capturing a small amount of small arms ammo. The contact for all units was sporadic all day. The totals for the day's action were: 89 VC KIA, 8 AK-47's, 2 AK-50's, 1 RPG-7 launcher, 300 rds of AK-47 ammo, 150 US 1:50,000 maps of Saigon, 20 B-40 rds, and 5 RPG-7 rds. The disposition of the battalion was: HHC, Rcn/3-39 Inf and Rcn/2-47 Inf at XS 845884; Co A at XS 841876 to XS 891879; Co B at XS 846878; and Co C at XS 843873.

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The 4-39 Inf conducted airmobile assaults and footmobile recon in force operations with Co's B and C in western Nha Be District (XS 857849). At 1300H vic XS 857850, Co B discovered 3 VC killed by arty, 1 B-40 rd, 15 sunken sampans, 2 AK-47's and a small bag of AK ammo. The rest of the operation had negative results. The disposition of the battalion at nightfall was: HHC, Co's C and E at Nha Be (XS 916822); Co B at XS 869777.

The 2-47 Inf conducted mechanized recon in force operations vic XS 857886 with negative results. The disposition of the battalion at nightfall was: HHC at XS 875886; Co B at XS 843883; Co C at XS 854887; and Rcn Plt at XS 843873.

The 5-60 Inf (M) conducted local patrols with negative results. The disposition of the battalion at nightfall was: HHC and Co C at XS 877872; Co B at XS 815876 and XS 896864.

Troop D/3-5 Cav and Troop B/7-1 Cav supported 3-39 contacts with D/3-5 Cav killing 1 VC.

h. 13 May 1968: The 6-31 Inf conducted airmobile assaults and footmobile recon in force operations with Co's A, C, and D in southern Binh Chanh District. At 1630H vic XS 799838, Co D found 1 VC KIA and two hand grenade booby traps. The company destroyed 13 bunkers in the area. At 1640H the company had 1 US WMA from a booby trap. The battalion S-3, airborne over XS 814774, spotted 3 VC KIA floating in the river. All other operations had negative results. The disposition of the battalion at nightfall was: HHC, Co's A, C, and E at FS/PB Smoke (XS 789769); Co B OPCON to 3-39 Inf; Co D at XS 790835.

The 3-39 Inf conducted mop-up operations south of Saigon with Co's A (vic XS 845875), C (vic XS 846876), B/6-31 (vic XS 847878), B/3-39 and B/2-47 (vic XS 842880 and west). All body counts and equipment captured were a result of previous actions except for 1 VC KIA by B/6-31 Inf vic XS 849877 at 1345H, and 1 POW captured by B/2-47 vic XS 844882 at 1000H. The totals for the day were: Co A/3-39 - 16 VC KIA, Co B/3-39 - 14 VC KIA, B/6-31 - 15 VC KIA, Rcn/3-39 - 1 VC KIA, B/2-47 - 1 POW captured. Equipment captured for the day was: 13 AK-47's, 2 AK-50's, 27 B-40 rockets, 3750 7.62 rds, 1 Cal 38 pistol, 1 Cal 45 pistol, 7 chicom grenades, 1 VC flag, 1 VC map with markings. Co A was moved from south of Saigon to Rach Kien in the afternoon. The disposition of units at nightfall was: HHC, B/3-39, B/6-31 and Rcn/3-39 vic XS 845882.

The 4-39 Inf conducted airmobile assaults and recon in force operations northwest of Nha Be with negative results. Two men from Co B were wounded by a grenade booby trap. The disposition of the battalion at nightfall was: HHC, Co's B, E, and C/3-39 at Nha Be (XS 916822); Co C/4-39 at XS 847786.

The 2-47 Inf (M) conducted local security patrols from the vic of their night locations. The disposition of units at nightfall was: HHC and Rcn Plt at XS 884893; Co B at XS 793803; and Co C at XS 846885.

The 5-60 Inf (M) conducted mechanized recon in force operations vic XS 7578 with Co's B and C. At 1330H vic XS 750780, Co B established contact with an estimated VC platoon in a heavily bunkered area. Troop D/3-5 Cav, TAC Air, arty and organic weapons supported the contact. At 1600H Co B was joined from the west by Co C/5-60 Inf. The contact continued until 2000H and resulted in 6 US KIA, 8 US WMA and 30 VC KIA. Troop D/3-5 Cav also killed 15 VC while supporting the 5-60 Inf. The disposition of the unit at nightfall was: HHC and Co C at XS 710796; and Co B at XS 744773.

Troop D/3-5 Cav screened the Bde AO south of Saigon and supported the 5-60 Inf contact.

12. Results:

a. Friendly losses during the operation were:

(1) US KHA: 43

(2) US WHA: 253

b. Enemy losses during the operation were:

(1) Personnel:

(a) VC KIA: 876

(b) POW: 9

(2) Equipment Captured:

Small Arms 88

Crew-Served Weapons 24

HE Ammo 185 rds

PRC-25 Radio 1

Small Arms Ammo 5300 rds

Web Gear 80 lbs (approx)

Clothes 25 lbs (approx)

Documents 12 lbs (approx)

(3) Equipment Destroyed:

Sampans 44

Bunkers 426

Grenades 23

122mm Rocket Launchers 2

Structures 295

c. Tactical Air Support: During the operation the 7th USAF supported the 3d Bde "Go Devils" with 37 preplanned and 52 immediate airstrikes. Approximately 90% of the airstrikes were followed by sweeps of the target area by ground troops.

13. Administrative Matters:

a. No significant problems were encountered in providing logistical support to Bde units during the operation. The 4-39 Inf and 6-31 Inf were resupplied by air and vehicle from their FS/PB's at Nha Be and FS/PB Smoke respectively. The 3-39 Inf, 2-47 Inf (M), and 5-60 Inf (M) were resupplied by air and from battalion forward trains locations in Saigon/Long Binh by vehicles.

b. Communications throughout the operation were provided by FM and RTT. Both RTT and UHF were provided by the communications platoon, HHC, 3d Bde and the 9th Signal Bn. The 3d Bde Forward Tactical Operations Center was provided with "hot" lines to the 9th Division at Bearcat, RVN and CMD in Saigon.

c. Medical support was provided by Co D, 9th Medical Bn located at Can Dot Airstrip, Tan An, RVN. No problem areas developed during the operations and dust offs were conducted in a highly efficient and professional manner.

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d. The continued contact created some minor problems in the maintenance of equipment, but command emphasis on the performance of preventive maintenance at every available moment remedied the situation.

e. The problem of refugees was handled primarily by refugee centers established in Saigon by CMD personnel. All refugees collected were afforded transportation by the Bde to these centers.

#### 14. Special Equipment and Techniques:

a. A technique used at night was the use of a UH1D helicopter and/or O-1 Birddog-type aircraft with observers aboard with light intensification devices to conduct visual reconnaissance of the waterways and LOC's south of Saigon. This denied the enemy the use of the waterways as LOC's.

b. Finding the enemy located in built-up or heavily-fortified areas necessitated the frequent use of tactical air support, artillery and helicopter gunships. In addition to killing the enemy, this allowed time for reorganization of units in contact to the most favorable attack position and pinned the enemy down long enough for reinforcements to arrive.

c. The technique of house-to-house fighting, first seen in the TET Offensive, once again had to be used to rout the enemy from positions in built-up areas.

d. The Boston Whaler boats attached to the 4-39 Inf were used on two occasions to reinforce units in contact. After beaching troops, the boats were used to screen waterways.

#### 15. Commander's Analysis:

During the eight-day period, the 3d Bde was heavily engaged with the equivalent of six VC battalions attempting to infiltrate Saigon from the south. To counter the threat, highly mobile defensive positions composed of five (5) battalions were positioned across the southern side of the city. From company to battalion-size base area elements of the Bde conducted recon in force operations to the south neutralizing many VC/NVA forces before they could reach the defensive positions south of Saigon. Operations of this type were made possible through extensive use of Assault Helicopter Companies (AHC) and riverine operations. The battalions were able to rapidly adapt to either mode of transportation, and quickly switch from one to the other without loss of momentum or time. Operations were conducted over widely varying terrain ranging from rice paddies to built-up areas. To reduce the high casualty rate normally experienced when neutralizing an entrenched enemy in house-to-house fighting, tactical airstrikes were used extensively. The effectiveness of the 89 airstrikes delivered in support of Bde operations during the period is reflected in the final casualty ratio 20.3/1. Because of the heavy vegetation along the numerous waterways south of Saigon, a major problem facing friendly forces was locating the enemy both during his attempt to infiltrate and exfiltrate the city. Two of the most effective means of locating enemy troops was through the use of air cav troops, and aquabushes (ambushes along waterways). Aquabushes placed along the various waterways in the AO provided valuable information on enemy withdrawal routes and posed a constant threat to enemy movement conducted primarily during hours of reduced visibility. Air cav troops were most effective during daylight hours when they conducted aerial recon and, when the situation warranted, recon in force operations with their organic aerb scout platoon. The air cav troops recon large areas of terrain in short periods of time which made them ideal for our operations. Action conducted during this period clearly demonstrated the effectiveness of a flexible defense and aggressive pursuit of enemy forces.

#### 16. Recommendations:

a. Operations in Binh Chanh, Nha Be and Capitol Military Districts should continue until that area is cleared of all VC units that participated in the 2d Offensive on Saigon. Future operations should be concentrated on infiltration routes for supplies and equipment into the Saigon area to prevent another buildup and attack on the city.

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b. While a great deal of importance must be placed on the Saigon area, large-scale operations must be conducted more frequently in Long An and other provinces. During the long period of time that the bulk of the Brigade forces were in the Saigon area only limited operations and local security-type operations could be conducted in other areas. Lack of brigade operations in Long An and elsewhere permitted the VC to construct new base areas and move additional elements and supplies into outlying provinces.

c. Increased importance must be placed on the security of bridges along Hwy 4. The highway is a vital link between the capitol city of Saigon and the delta region and is the main artery for commercial as well as military traffic moving in and out of the Delta. It was clearly demonstrated during the 2d Offensive on Saigon that the highway and bridges must be trafficable at all times in order for forces in Long An and other provinces to rapidly react to VC activities in the Saigon area.

d. Continued emphasis must be placed on RF/PF outposts in the Saigon area and upgrading the effectiveness of these vital installations. US and RVN forces must continue to work in close coordination in order to insure that RF/PF outposts are provided with all necessary materials and weapons. A system to allow quicker reinforcement of RF/PF outposts by US and RVN forces must be developed in order to protect these positions from numerically superior forces. At present this is difficult to accomplish due to remote locations of outposts communications and transportation problems.

e. Continued emphasis must be placed on the major VC infiltration and supply routes that lead through the Plain of Reeds into Long An Province and subsequently into Saigon. Night VR missions as well as SLAR and RED HAZE missions in the Plain of Reeds must be continued in conjunction with daylight missions.

f. Replacing of obsolete equipment currently being used by RVN forces must continue at as rapid a rate as possible. In this regard, the issue of M-16 rifles to RVN units has not only increased the fire power and effectiveness of the ARVN soldiers, but has given increased confidence to their ever-growing aggressive attitude.

g. Civic actions programs should be given added emphasis and expanded. Projects should be conducted under the control of GVN and given all possible support by US. It must become more of a program of the Vietnamese for the Vietnamese.

FOR THE COMMANDER:

*Jerry L. Burt*  
JERRY L. BURT  
MAJ INF  
ADJUTANT

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nine airstrikes and artillery all during the day. US casualties were: 2 KHA, 48 WHA (28 required dust off). The VC losses were 213 VC body count (A/5-60 - 80, C/5-60 - 35, B/7-1 Cav - 58, Arty - 10, and airstrikes - 30). Enemy equipment captured included: 19 AK-47's, 5 RPG-2 launchers, 1 RPD-56 machine gun, 63 B-40 rockets, 3 B-41 rockets, and an unknown amount of loose small arms ammo. The final disposition of units was: HHC and Recon/2-47 Inf (OPCON 5-60 eff 071800H) at XS 845879, Co A(-) at XS 825872, Co C at XS 835876.

B Troop, 7-1 Cav supported the 5-60 Inf (M) (-) in its contacts between 0700H - 2000H.

c. 8 May 1968: The 6-31 Inf conducted local security patrols around their night location with negative results. The disposition of the unit at nightfall was: HHC, Co's A, D, and E at FS/PB Smoke (XS 789769). Co C conducted three platoon-sized ambushes vic XS 815775, XS 815823 and XS 615755.

The 3-39 Inf conducted recon in force operations with Co A (reinforced by Recon/2-47 Inf) and Co B. Co A established contact with an unknown size VC force at XS 834875 at 1200H. The company received RPG, AW and SA fire and reacted with gunships, TAC Air, arty and organic weapons. Co A was reinforced by Rcn/2-47 Inf at 1245H. The contact continued at the same coordinates throughout the day breaking at 2000H. The casualties for Co A for the day were 3 WHA. A total of 10 VC were killed by Co A. Co B established contact with an unknown size VC force at XS 834878 at 1445H. Co B was supported by helicopter gunships, TAC Air, arty and organic weapons. The contact continued until 2000H at the same coordinates. Total casualties for Co B were: 4 KHA and 4 WHA. The VC losses were 37 killed by Co B and 20 killed by supporting gunships. Rcn/2-47 Inf sustained 7 WHA and one track damaged by a RPG-2 round while supporting Co A. The disposition of the battalion at nightfall was: HHC and Recon at XS 845884; Co A at XS 839881; Co B at XS 834882; Rcn/2-47 Inf (OPCON to 3-39 Inf) at XS 845885.

The 4-39 Inf reacted to contact initiated by D Troop, 3-5 Cav. At 1040H, 2/A/5-60 Inf departed its night location and linked up with an ARVN plt at XS 852783. Both units established contact with an unknown size VC force immediately. Co C departed Nha Be in trucks and airboats to reinforce the contact arriving in the area at 1245H. The units in contact received RPG, AW and SA fire. The units were supported by helicopter gunships from D Trp, 3-5 Cav, TAC Air, arty and organic weapons. The contact continued at the same coordinates until 1930H when the VC broke contact and withdrew to the southwest. Total casualties for US units for the day were 12 WHA. The VC losses were 42 VC BC. The disposition of the battalion at nightfall was: HHC, Co E and Co C/3-39 at Nha Be (XS 917823); Co B at Cat Lai (XS 958897); Co C at XS 861800; and 2/A/5-60 Inf at XS 896873.

The 5-60 Inf (M) (-) conducted extensive patrols in the area of the contact on 7 May and around its night location and acted as a RRF for the 3-39 Inf and 4-39 Inf. The daylight patrols had negative results and the disposition of units at nightfall was: HHC and Co C(-) at XS 802870; Co A at XS 810868; Co B/6-31 Inf (OPCON to 5-60 Inf) at XS 802866, XS 795865, and XS 788868.

B Troop/7-1 Cav conducted screening missions south of Saigon from 0700H to 1830H. The unit killed 8 VC in isolated cases throughout the day. D Troop/3-5 Cav supported the 4-39 Inf from 0700H to 1930H and killed 25 VC in the area of contact (XS 852873). The 3d Bde losses for the day were: 4 KHA and 19 WHA. VC losses were 112 VC BC.

d. 9 May 1968: The 6-31 Inf conducted recon in force operations with Co's A and C. At 0819H FS/PB Smoke (AS 989769) received 15 rounds of 82mm mortar fire. The counter-mortar fires resulted in 1 VC KIA with negative friendly damage or casualties. The battalion conducted recon in force operations during the day with Co's A and C. The units were airlifted to vic XS 896874 with Co A inserting first followed by Co C. From the LZ the units moved to the west with Co A in the lead. At 1500H both companies established contact with an estimated company-size force. The units used helicopter gunships, TAC Air, arty and organic weapons to support their contact which continued until 1900H. During the contact, the two companies sustained 15 WHA

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DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY  
3D BRIGADE, 9TH INFANTRY DIVISION  
APO SAN FRANCISCO 96373

..VDE-BCO

20 August 1968

SUBJECT: Combat Operations After Action Report (MACV/RCS/J3/32) (U)

THM: Command Channels

TO: Commander  
U. S. Military Assistance Command, Vietnam  
ATTN: J343  
APO 96243

1. Name or Identity and/or Type of Operation: TOAN THING
2. Dates of Operation: 8 April - 23 June 1968
3. Location: Long An Province, Binh Chanh and Nha Be Districts, Gia Lai Province.
4. Control or Command Headquarters: Headquarters, 3d Brigade, 9th Infantry Division located at Tan An (AS 546649).
5. Reporting Officer: Colonel George C. Benson, Commanding Officer, 3d Brigade, 9th Infantry Division.
6. Task Organization:

## a. U. S. Forces:

## (1) Maneuver Battalions.

2d Battalion, 3d Infantry (until 7 May)  
 6th Battalion, 31st Infantry (effective 27 April)  
 3d Battalion, 39th Infantry  
 4th Battalion, 39th Infantry  
 2nd Battalion, 47th Infantry (09 May - 20 May 68)  
 5th Battalion, 60th Infantry (19 April - 16 June) (20 June - 23 June)  
 3d Squadron, 11th Armored Cavalry (30 Apr - 5 May 68)

## (2) Brigade Control:

HHC, 3d Bde, 9th Inf Div  
 2-4 Arty (-) DS  
 Btry E, 7-8 Arty (8 in and 175mm) GS reinforcing  
 Btry C 1-84 Arty (155mm) reinforcing  
 Btry B (-), 1-84 Arty (155mm) reinforcing  
 3d Plt, 9th MP Co (SPT)  
 3d Plt, Co C, 9th Sig Bn (SPT)  
 Co D, 709th Maint Bn (DS)  
 Co C, 15th Engr Bn (DS)  
 Co C, 9th Med Bn (SPT)  
 TM, 9th MI Det (SPT)  
 3d Plt, 335 m C (SPT)  
 Sec, 4th AA Plt, 2d AA Co (SPT)  
 2d Plt, 46th Roto Co (SPT)  
 2d Plt, C Btry, 5-2 Arty (DS)  
 2d Plt, H Btry, 2d Arty (DS)

b. Vietnamese forces operating in close coordination and cooperation with 3d Brigade units:

46th Inf Regt (ARVN)  
50th Inf Regt (ARVN)  
30th RAG  
RF/PF Forces, Long An Province  
Nha Be and Binh Chanh District Forces  
5th Ranger Group  
Capitol Military District Forces

7. Supporting Forces:

II Field Forces Aviation Units  
7th USAF  
1st Log CMD

8. Intelligence:

a. Enemy situation during operation TOAN THANG

(1) Early in Operation TOAN THANG, VC/NVA Forces in sub-region 3 concentrated on resupply and recruitment in preparation for their second offensive in the Saigon area. During this period in early and late April, enemy forces avoided contact except where their troop base areas and logistical installations were threatened. Enemy initiated activity early in TOAN THANG was concentrated on harassing and probing type attacks on RF/PF outposts and ARVN-allied base areas. Emphasis was placed on the severing of route #4 and major bridges along route #4 and route #5A. Leading up to the enemy's initiation of the 2d offensive, concerted effort was placed on the aforementioned enemy activities in an attempt to cover maneuvering of the attack forces into the CMD area immediately south of Saigon. There was evidence that the enemy, attempting to bolster its elements, began a significant shifting and dividing in order to render the rearward supporting elements more effective. This was evidenced for example with the C/312th LF Co. C/312 normally operated as a support company to the MF element entering Long An on the northwest commo-liaison route. The 312th was unable, because of inherent responsibilities, to conduct coordinated sizable attacks. All of their attacks were strictly harassing and probing in nature. However, they initiated this dividing trend breaking from one company to three (C1, C2, and C3). This division enabled C/312 to expand its area by some 20 K's, and it rendered them capable of coordinated attacks throughout the Tan An area. It also gave them the capability to function throughout the Thu Thua area and a portion of the Ben Luc area. It was obvious that the enemy was increasing impetus on all fronts for maximum support during the offensive. It was during this period that their propaganda, sabotage and military proselyting efforts were significantly increased.

(2) The 3d Bde, realizing the significance of this increased impetus, deployed all of its military resources in an attempt to nullify the enemy's effectiveness. The enemy's efforts were thus thwarted in their 2d offensive. The enemy's thrust from the south, with elements of the 2d Ind, Phu Loi II, and 506th Bns, was a dismal failure and cost him the equivalent of three bns. Immediately following this period, the enemy avoided contact utilizing loc's for movement out of the Saigon area. Significantly, the enemy failed to make use of his artillery or commence heavy mortar attacks to recoup his position. All attacks during this period were cover for MF movement. This was noted particularly with the frequent attacks on Rach Kien. Contacts established around this time indicated the presence of enemy units in the post TET base areas. The only threats during this time were evidenced in the Ben Luc area with the brigades as a target. The enemy maintained a lesser but possible threat with positions of at least two battalions along the southern Long An border. The 261 Bn was consistently reported in the area vic XS 4565, and the 514 Bn and another has been reported in the general area vic XS 5857.

(3) The local force elements supporting the offensive remained relatively in-

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(4) The remainder of TOAN THANG was spent ferreting out what remained of enemy units in the southern Saigon area.

(5) The enemy concentrated at this point on replacements, resupply and avoiding of contact in preparation for a possible 3d offensive.

(6) The enemy maintained pressure on the cities and towns by threats, harassments and attacks by fire in accordance with his policy of strangling the cities and consolidating his control of the countryside.

(7) Toward the end of May and early June, prior to the 3d Bde move south, the enemy was geared heavily toward propaganda goals. The enemy maintained pressure on the cities and LOC's. Saigon was attacked on a continuing basis as were the major routes into the city. Within Long An Province the cities were subjected to attacks by fire and ground attacks on a limited scale. Significantly, the attacks within Long An were conducted by local forces rather than major units. Continuing reports of resupply and replacement activity along the Vam Co Dong and Vam Co Tay LOC's pointed to a hurried building of the enemy major forces.

(8) Two bn size replacement groups crossed route #4 from north to south.

(9) Agent reports during this period noted an eastward shift of the enemy's major forces in Long An to a more central position and a resupplying of areas of operation for Major units.

(10) Enemy activity increased in all areas for a massive offensive prior to late August. They maintained this attitude at the time of 3d Brigade's departure from Tan An to Dong Tam.

9. Mission: 3d Bde in close coordination and cooperation with 46th Inf Regt (ARVN), 50th Inf Regt (ARVN), and 5th Ranger Gp (ARVN) conducts offensive operations to clear assigned AO within the Capital Military District, Binh Chanh and Nha Be Districts and to destroy VC/NVA forces operating in Long An Province.

10. Concept: The 3rd Bde in close coordination with the 46th Inf Regt (ARVN), 50th Inf Regt (ARVN), 5 th Ranger Group (ARVN), and Long An Sector forces conducted airmobile assaults, water born assaults, reconnaissance in force, cordon and search, night patrolling, and ambush operations within Binh Chanh, and Nha Be Districts and Long An Province to clear designated AO's of VC/NVA forces and destroy their base areas and LOC's. The brigade employed from three to five battalions as maneuver forces to accomplish assigned missions. The 3-39 Inf conducted reconnaissance in force operations in northern Long An Province and within the CMD to locate and destroy VC/NVA forces. The 5-60 Inf conducted reconnaissance in force operations in CMD, Binh Phuoc, and Binh Chanh Districts to destroy VC/NVA forces. The Bn also secured the Ben Luc Bridge with one company. The 2-3 Inf conducted reconnaissance in force operations in Binh Chanh District to provide security for highway 4 and destroy VC/NVA forces operating within the district. The 4-39 Inf conducted clearing operations in Nha Be District to locate and destroy VC/NVA forces and continued maintaining a company base at Cat Lai to secure main water LOC's in the area. The 6-31 Inf conducted reconnaissance in force operations in Binh Chanh district and CMD to locate and destroy VC/NVA forces. The 2-47 Inf conducted reconnaissance in force operations within the CMD to locate and destroy VC/NVA forces attempting to enter Saigon.

11. Execution: Early in Operation TOAN THANG, contact with VC/NVA forces was limited to small-scale operations except where combat was forced by friendly forces or enemy weapons/ammunition caches were discovered. During this period the brigade directed its efforts toward locating and destroying the VC/NVA forces known to be infiltrating into Binh Chanh and Nha Be districts prior to the second Saigon offensive. The second week of May represented a peak in enemy operations when the second Saigon offensive was initiated and VC/NVA forces attempted to enter the city from the south. The offensive culminated in devastating defeat for enemy forces followed by a period of VC/NVA withdrawal back into the southern portions of Binh Chanh and Nha Be to regroup, regroup units and effect resupply.

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During this time, until Operation TOAN THANG was discontinued, 3d Bde operations were directed toward pursuing and destroying VC/NVA forces as they attempted to withdraw south. In Long An Province, brigade units secured vital installations, conducted offensive operations against known or suspected VC base areas, and reacted to current intelligence reports.

Typical of the action marking the early stages of Operation TOAN THANG occurred on 13 April 1968 while Co A 2-60 Inf was conducting airmobile assaults and recon in force operations southeast of Tan Tru (vic XS 703589). At 1530H while searching an area known to be used by VC forces as a staging area, the company came under fire from small arms and B-40 rockets by an unknown size VC force. Co A immediately returned fire using their organic weapons and received gunship support from D 3-5 Air Cav. During the initial exchange of fire, Co A sustained 5 WIA. Contact continued throughout the afternoon at varying tempo until 1810H when the enemy was finally able to break contact and withdraw. A search of the battle area confirmed 8 VC had been killed by Co A and 9 killed by D 3-5 Cav.

The enemy's logistical buildup prior to the 2d Saigon offensive enable friendly forces to locate and capture or destroy large quantities of arms and supplies prepositioned along avenues of approach and withdrawal. On 2 May 1968 at 1530H, one such cache was found by Co B 3-39 Inf while on a recon in force operation southeast of Ben Luc (XS 634713). The arms and munitions found included four (4) cases of 50- cal ammunition, 46 60MM mortar rounds, 50 120MM mortar rounds, 30 RPG-7 rounds, four (4) cases of AK-47 ammunition, one (1) 75MM recoilless rifle round, one (1) RPG-2 launcher, 77 RPG-2 rounds, 200 RPG-2 and 7 propellant charges, 50 120MM mortar fuses, 65 61MM mortar fuses and three (3) 107MM rocket rounds. The most significant aspect of the find was the presence of 120MM mortar and 107MM rocket rounds. This marked the first time heavy indirect fire weapons had been found in Long An Province. Three days later, at 050400H, Ben Luc came under a combined mortar and 107MM rocket attack.

On 6 May 1968 with the beginning of the 2d Saigon offensive, the 3d Bde was charged with defending the southern side of Saigon and destroying VC local and main force elements attempting to infiltrate through Nha Be and Binh Chanh Districts. The devastating effectiveness of the brigade's operation during the offensive (6 May - 13 May 68) resulted in the equivalent of 3 VC battalions being destroyed (See Inclosure 1, Combat After Action Report from 6 May - 13 May 1968).

Following the offensive until 23 June, when the conduct of operation TOAN THANG was assumed by the 1st Bde, contact with VC/NVA was extremely light as the enemy attempted to withdraw.

Night activities during Operation TOAN THANG were aimed at interdiction of water LOC's and the destruction of enemy sampans carrying supplies and equipment. Most of the 238 sampans destroyed during the operation were engaged by aquabuses or night reconnaissance aircraft flying in support of the brigade. Operations of this type were highly successful and forced the enemy to rely on other more difficult means of transportation in addition to destroying and/or capturing a significant amount of material.

Operation TOAN THANG was successful from several standpoints. The VC and NVA forces second attempt to enter Saigon from the south was a dismal failure and resulted in devastating defeat for them. Their loss of men during the 86 day period Operation TOAN THANG was conducted totaled 1363 KIA and 19 POW's. The enemy was also prevented from gaining control of any significant LOC's or population centers. Operations in Long An Province were somewhat limited by the small number of forces available, however, the brigade continued to interdict enemy infiltration routes and conducted small-scale recon in force operations. Employment of airboats and night river patrols continued to ensure the security of major waterways in the vic of Cat Lai. One Mechanized platoon was located at the Ben Luc bridge sightly during TOAN THANG to augment ARVN security forces. Combined opa [REDACTED] Vietnamese 11th River assault Group

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were conducted using the boats both for troop movement and as a screening force along inland waterways. The successfulness of Operation TOAN THANG is the result of coordination and team work between air and ground forces creating a highly effective fighting force.

12. Results:

a. Friendly losses for Operation TOAN THANG were as follows:

- (1) US KIA: 82
- (2) US WIA: 439
- (3) US MLA: 0

b. Enemy losses during Operation TOAN THANG were as follows:

(1) Personnel:

- (a) VC/NVA KIA: 1363
- (b) POW: 19

(2) Equipment Captured:

Small Arms	225
Crew-Served Weapons	58
Ammo, HE	852 rds
Ammo, SA	143290 rds
Waive	57 lbs
Rockets (122 rl)	2
Grenades	437
Radios	3
Gas Mask	17
NVN Currency	76700
AK-47 Drums	38
M-79 Wds	46
Medical Supplies	130 lbs (Approx)
Documents	185 lbs (Approx)

(3) Equipment Destroyed:

Bunkers	3342
Structures	623
Foxholes	237
Punji Pits	176
Sampans	238
APG-2 Prop Charges	157
APG-7 Prop Charges	140
Booby Traps	89
Roadblocks	89
Homemade Bombs	58

c. Tactical Air Support; During Operation TOAN THANG, the 7th Tactical USAF supported the 3d Brigade "Go Devils" with 326 preplanned and 105 immediate airstrikes in addition to conducting four combat sky spots. Approximately 375 of the strikes were followed up with recon in force operations in the target area by ground troops.

13. Administrative Matters

a. Combat service support of Operation TOAN THANG was timely and adequate with few exceptions.

b. Transportation of troops and supplies was primarily conducted by air and organic vehicle. However, because of the terrain, boats were used in increasing numbers for the same purpose.

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c. There were short periods of time when failure of pump units at the Tan An Airfield resulted in excessive ground time for aircraft attempting to refuel, thus denying the ground commander maximum use of this extremely valuable asset.

d. Medical support was provided by Company D, 9th Medical Battalion located at Tan An Airfield. There were no problem areas in the Medical Field. Evacuation of wounded personnel by helicopter was conducted in an outstanding professional manner, often under extreme conditions.

e. Continuous operations over long periods of time created minor maintenance problems with equipment. Increased emphasis placed on preventive maintenance and equipment rotation systems between base camps and units in the field alleviated the problem.

#### 14. Special Equipment and Techniques

a. To combat increased VC/NVA movement during hours of darkness, UH1D helicopters and/or O-1 birddog type aircraft with observers aboard using light intensification devices conducted visual night reconnaissance along waterways and LOC's.

b. To minimize the high casualty rate normally experienced when engaging an entrenched enemy in house-to-house fighting, tactical airstrikes were used to neutralize enemy forces and/or pin the enemy down allowing friendly forces time to move into more favorable attack positions.

c. As in the first Saigon offensive, waterway security was increased through the use of aquabuses and river patrols on airboats.

d. The brigade was supported by both D 3-5 Cav and B 7-1 Cav during operation TOAN THANG. The use of Air Cav Troops proved extremely effective in maintaining surveillance over the large AO assigned to the 3d Brigade. Many successful operations were developed around sightings made by the Cav within a designated AO prior to insertion of ground forces.

#### 15. Commander's Analysis

During the early portion of Operation TOAN THANG, it was apparent that VC/NVA Forces were rebuilding following the earlier TET offensive in preparation for renewed offensive operations in the Saigon area. Local and main force units avoided contact with friendly forces except when forced to fight because of friendly initiated operations. Once engaged, VC/NVA Forces attempted to break contact as soon as possible remaining to fight only to protect base areas or arms caches.

Brigade operations during this period were conducted primarily in northern Long An Province and Binh Chanh and Nha Be Districts to disrupt VC/NVA LOC's and neutralize enemy forces before they could reach the CMD. Because of the VC/NVA logistical buildup necessary to support their forthcoming offensive, brigade forces were very successful in capturing large quantities of arms and ammunition found in caches located along enemy LOC's.

By early May, VC/NVA forces had moved the equivalent of six battalions into Binh Chanh and Nha Be Districts in an attempt to infiltrate them into Saigon during the second offensive. To counter the growing threat to Saigon, brigade forces moved into positions south of the city in CMD, Binh Chanh and Nha Be Districts. From company and battalion basecamps established along the Kinh Doi Canal, brigade forces continued offensive operations to the south neutralizing enemy forces before they could reach Saigon. Several enemy units managed to move into built-up areas on the south side of the city causing the brigade to conduct house-to-house fighting. Close air support provided by gunships and tactical air greatly reduced the brigades casualty rate which would normally have been much higher in house-to-house fighting. The enemy's attempt to enter Saigon from the south was a dismal failure in every respect and by 13 May, VC/NVA forces were withdrawing south as quickly as possible in an ~~SECRET~~ break contact.

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During the remainder of Operation TOWN THING, contact with enemy forces was extremely light as VC/NVA forces began reorganization and supply of forces.

16. Recommendations:

- a. Against a well-entrenched enemy, airstrikes are very effective in neutralizing "hard" targets, however, care should be taken not to withdraw friendly forces from the target area too soon prior to the airstrike, and allow the enemy time to withdraw.
- b. In the past enemy fortified positions have been built into the edge of tree lines to afford occupants maximum concealment and visibility. Recently, however, VC/NVA Forces have been encountered in bunkers located well forward of tree lines in an attempt to avoid airstrikes and artillery. When approaching a line of trees or nipa palm, careful study should be made of terrain up to 200 meters forward of the tree line to avoid "walking into" bunkers.
- c. The use of Air Cav in locating enemy forces prior to inserting ground troops will save several hours of needless searching in "dry holes". An excellent compliment to the reconnaissance capability of an Air Cav Troop is the "People Sniffer" readings obtained from this instrument can be exploited by gunships or by dropping "CS" in the form of A-158M2 cluster canisters to flush enemy from concealment.
- d. Often VC/NVA Forces engage friendly forces just prior to darkness in the belief extraction by helicopter will occur before dark. If airmobile operations for the day are begun at 0900H or 1000H, this will allow time to exploit late contacts.

FOR THE COMMANDER:

*John L. Butcher*  
John L. BUTCHER  
MAJ INF  
ADJUTANT

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By *JL* NARA Date *6/1/97*  
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