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Authority NND 927650By TS NARA Date 5/25/99

credited with two kills while B/3-37 Cav, also on station above the action, accounted for five VC KIA. The cavalry troop also made a Night Search in the Plain of Reeds which resulted in eleven enemy dead.

Infantrymen of the 2d Brigade killed a total of eighteen enemy throughout Kien Hoa Province. In night action B Company, 3-60 Inf, killed two VC by ambush five kilometers southeast of Ben Tre in Base Area 490. Infantrymen from 3-60 Inf also killed seven Viet Cong throughout the day while conducting airmobile operations in the same area. Gunships from D/3-5 Cav, 3-34 Arty, and air strikes were credited with eight kills in support of 3-60 Inf. The brigade suffered seven US wounded, five by one booby trap of unknown type.

3 February 1969

Divisional units killed sixty-five enemy in scattered actions. "Recondo" troops of the 1st Brigade killed thirty-two in a series of actions northwest of Cai Lay. Most of the action involved 2-39 Inf which carried out Checkerboard and airmobile operations and made contact with the enemy at three locations on the fringe of Base Area 470. The ground troops killed fourteen Viet Cong and gun crews from B/3-17 Cav and the 191st AHC picked off three. A Night Hunter operation by the Air Cavalry troop in the Plain of Reeds accounted for thirteen VC KIA. An element of the Brigade, while conducting a reconnaissance-in-force operation, was sweeping across a series of open rice paddies, when it came abruptly under violent automatic weapons and small arms fire from bunkered enemy positions. Seeing the need for immediate action, Captain Gary A. Keevert, commander of the element, valiantly assaulted the closest bunker. Firing his weapon as he charged, Keevert traversed forty meters of open rice paddy to assault the hostile position. Reaching the bunker, he tossed a hand grenade through the gunport and neutralized the obstruction. Suddenly he came under heavy fire from a second bunker on his right flank. Instantaneously responding to the threat, he charged the second bunker, killing one enemy soldier with his rifle and another with a hand grenade. His heroic action inspired his men to follow his brave example and assault into the enemy position, forcing the enemy to break contact and flee in panic from the area.

Twenty-three enemy were killed by the 2d Brigade in scattered action in Kien Hoa Province. Night ambushes by elements of 3-60 Inf accounted for seven enemy bodies in a contact eight kilometers southwest of Ben Tre. The remaining sixteen kills were divided evenly between infantry troops and fire support by artillery and gunships. The 2d Brigade suffered no casualties.

Ten Viet Cong were killed in Long An, all by the gunships of D/3-5 Cav which supported the airmobile operations of 5-60 Inf.

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Snipers with a night ambush patrol from 3-60 Inf, 2d Brigade, engaged and killed nine Viet Cong just before midnight. The battalion's scattered air insertions accounted for another five while an ambush from 3-47 Inf resulted in three enemy dead. Sniper fire, punji pits, and mines killed one and injured seven US soldiers, making this day's operations costly.

First "Recondo" Brigade elements killed sixteen enemy. Almost all of these were attributable to the day and night operations of B/3-17 Cav. Troops from 4-39 Inf combined with the cavalry gunships on a Night Hunter west of VC Island, in the Plain of Reeds, to eliminate eight Viet Cong. Friendly casualties were also high in the 1st Brigade, one killed and eleven wounded. The "Go-Devils" of 3d Brigade also traded relatively high casualties for eleven VC KIA. Enemy small arms fire and booby traps killed one and injured seven.

5 February 1969

Ninth Division Troops killed the relatively small total of twenty-eight. A Night Hunter conducted by the 1st Brigade with B/3-17 Cav was the most successful operation of the day. Ten Viet Cong were killed in the heart of Base Area 470, near the "Wagon Wheel". The extensive airmobile and footmobile operations in 2d and 3d Brigades encountered very few of the enemy.

6 February 1969

Airmobile operations conducted by elements of 2d Brigade, near the "Crossroads", south of Dong Tam, and near Mo Cay accounted for sixteen enemy dead. Soon after inserting in the vicinity of Mo Cay the men of 3-60 Inf came in contact with an enemy force of unknown size. One enemy was killed immediately by the ground forces and airstrikes by F-100 fighters were called in. The jets destroyed sixteen structures and seven enemy bunkers, causing two large secondary explosions that sent white smoke billowing more than a thousand feet into the air. On the heels of the airstrikes the infantrymen swept the area, searching every hut. Five enemy soldiers were dislodged from a bunker and captured. In the course of the sweep the ground troopers killed eight more and D/3-5 Cav gunships added seven to this toll. The contact lasted into the early hours of the 7th when three more Viet Cong were killed.

Twelve enemy were killed in the 1st Brigade area, nine by the gunships of B/3-17 Cav, which supported the airmobile operations of 4-39 Inf. During an attack on the night of 5-6 February on the 1st Brigade Headquarters at Fire Support Base Moore, forty-six 120mm mortar rounds impacted, causing no deaths but injuring nine. Seven of these were from 9th Signal Battalion.

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The enemy launched several mortar attacks in Long An Province also. Thirteen mortar rounds crashed into the 2-47 Inf base camp at Binh Phuoc. An undetermined number of rounds were launched against the Tan Tru base camp of 2-60 Inf and the C/5-60 Command Post came under attack as well. Twenty-two US soldiers were wounded in these attacks.

Troops from 2-60 Inf made an airmobile insertion southeast of Ben Tre late in the day, established contact with a twenty-man force, and killed ten.

#### 7 February 1969

A total of nineteen enemy were killed in Kien Hoa Province by the 2d Brigade. Alpha Company, 3-47 Inf, engaged an enemy platoon five kilometers southeast of Ben Tre with organic weapons fire and killed seven. To support the ground troops "Tamale" forward Air Controllers guided in air strikes that killed three more enemy and destroyed several bunkers. Ten kilometers south of Dong Tam gunships from D/3-5 Cav added two more enemy to the total. Booby traps accounted for all six of the brigade's wounded.

"Recondos" of the 1st Brigade killed seven and the 3d Brigade "Go-Devils" five. Charlie Company, 2-60 Inf, killed three VC and captured two AK-47 rifles in their search operation west of Tan An with the Air Cushion Vehicle Platoon.

#### 8 February 1969

The first highly successful Night Search of the period took place on this day. From 2100 to 2300 hours, B/3-17 Cav, under the control of 1st Brigade, struck deep into the Plain of Reeds to interdict Viet Cong infiltration routes and reported killing twenty-eight enemy along the waterways. The gunships also received credit for four VC KIA while supporting 4-39 Inf earlier in the day. An air strike called in to support 6-31 Inf accounted for four enemy deaths.

In frequent contact by other divisional units brought the day's total to fifty-one enemy killed. A Bushmaster by 3-47 Inf in Kien Hoa detected the movement of two small enemy groups in the early morning and killed six.

#### 9 February 1969

In 1st Brigade action twenty-five enemy were killed. Ten of the enemy dead resulted from a Night Search operation by the troopers of 4-39 Inf and B/3-17 Cav. This team continued to operate in the middle of the Plain of Reeds near Moc Hoa. In ambushes and patrols around the Division Base Camp at Dong Tam 3-39 Inf killed six more. An air strike was credited with three enemy deaths. The Brigade suffered no

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casualties.

A large enemy munitions cache was uncovered by the men of A/2-60 Inf, 3d Brigade. Discovered along the Bo Bo Canal in the Plain of Reeds, the cache contained: 469 RPG-2 rounds, forty-eight RPG-7 rounds, 62,000 rounds of AK-47 ammunition, thirty-eight 75mm recoilless rifle rounds, 590 pounds of various explosives, and twenty-three assorted booby traps.

Soldiers of the 2d Brigade Mobile Riverine Force killed fourteen of the enemy and found eleven enemy bodies from previous contacts. Troopers of 3-47 Inf engaged and killed four VC while conducting ground sweeps one kilometer southeast of Ben Tre and the roving gunships of D/3-5 Cav successfully engaged four more.

#### 10 February 1969

In a day of very little contact with the enemy the Division forces killed thirty-four while suffering nine wounded. The airmobile operations of 3-60 Inf and 162d AHC were most successful, accounting for twelve enemy casualties ten kilometers southeast of Ben Tre in Base Area 490. A footmobile reconnaissance operation by 3-47 Inf increased the enemy's losses in Kien Hoa by six.

#### 11 February 1969

Elements of the Division killed seventy Viet Cong in operations throughout the Upper Delta. The 1st "Recondo" Brigade accounted for twenty-eight VC kills while the 2d Brigade eliminated forty in Kien Hoa Province.

All significant 1st Brigade action occurred during daylight hours. Company B, 2-39 Inf, killed five and captured one hundred pounds of documents five kilometers west of Cai Be. Gunships of the 191st Assault Helicopter Company eliminated eight more Viet Cong while supporting the battalion's airmobile operations. Returning fire from a woodline, B/3-39 Inf killed an enemy soldier near Dong Tam. In the northwest, only nine kilometers from Cambodia, C/4-39 Inf detected and killed three VC. The 1st Brigade losses for the day were one death and twelve injured soldiers, eight of whom were wounded during a mortar attack on Fire Support Base Moore.

In 2d Brigade action, A/2-60 Inf ambushed three large motorized sampans in the night, fifteen kilometers southeast of Ben Tre, and killed twenty-one of the enemy. Elements of 3-47 Inf killed five enemy eight miles southeast of Ben Tre, while supporting artillery fire from 3-34 Arty killed one in the same area. A Long Range Reconnaissance Patrol made contact with an enemy squad seven kilometers southeast of Dong Tam and killed seven. But for four soldiers wounded by booby traps, this would have been a day free of casualties for the 2d Brigade.

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12 February 1969

"River Raider" infantrymen of the 2d Brigade killed eight and found the bodies of four Viet Cong in freshly dug graves. No significant action developed as each of the three infantry battalions, the air cavalry troop, and the assault helicopter company each successfully engaged a tiny group of enemy soldiers.

Continuing to operate in the vicinity of Moc Hoa, not far from the Cambodian border, 4-39 Inf and B/3-17 Cav carried out a Night Search just before midnight and killed fifteen. Elsewhere in the 1st Brigade area an airstrike took the lives of three Viet Cong and a Night Hunter operation by B/3-17 Cav accounted for five enemy dead.

13 February 1969

First Brigade operations on this date were rewarded with twenty-four enemy kills in western Dinh Tuong Province. Eight of these fell to the ground troops of 2-39 Inf and twelve to the supporting gunships of the 191st ABC. The airmobile operation between Cai Be and Giao Duc also resulted in the capture of several small arms and one prisoner. The Battalion Commander of 2-39 Inf was mortally wounded when he attempted to take a prisoner and gain intelligence on the enemy force his troops had contacted.

Third Brigade airmobile operation in Long An Province resulted in six enemy killed. Soldiers of 2-60 Inf killed two enemy twelve kilometers north of Tan An, their gunship support added four to the tally. It was also a day of tiring search and small payoff for the 2d Brigade. Gunships from D/3-5 Cav killed six Viet Cong while supporting the daily airmobile operation.

14 February 1969

The 2d Brigade conducted aquabush, bushmaster, and footmobile operations on the 14th. Direct fire support was provided by the 3-34 Arty and D/3-5 Cav. The major activity of the Brigade occurred when three companies of 3-60 Inf surrounded a Main Force unit estimated to be of company size. This contact five kilometers south of Ben Tre dealt the enemy a hard blow, resulting in forty-eight VC casualties. Contact began early in the afternoon when occupants of the battalion Command and Control helicopter spotted six Viet Cong on a trail. Alpha Company, 3d Battalion, 60th Infantry, was picked up and inserted by helicopter into the location in northern Base Area 490. One enemy was killed immediately. A Forward Air Controller then reported eight enemy crossing a stream near Alpha Company's position. Gunships from Delta Troop, 3d Squadron, 5th Cavalry, were called in and struck down two VC. The Battalion Commander arranged the insertion of another company to block the enemy's flight. Company D, already on an "eagle flight" to another location, was diverted and inserted just north of the stream to close in on the enemy's rear. Delta Company came into

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immediate contact and killed eight more of the fleeing enemy. Company A maneuvered up the stream to assume a blocking position. F-100 jets pounded the area and sealed off possible escape routes to the east. Guided by a "Tomahawk" FAC, two flights of fighters wiped out fifteen more Viet Cong. The air cavalry worked the area continuously, raking the enemy with rockets and "mini-gun" fire. The Forward Air Controller controlled his strikes with skill and derring, as Companies Alpha and Delta were never more than 300 meters apart when the bombs fell. While supporting fires blanketed the area, helicopters lifted Charlie Company from the decks of its troop carrier and inserted the troops west of the fray.

Gunships continued to cover D Company as they drove the enemy towards the stream. Artillery fire from 3-34 Arty killed at least three as the D/3-5 gunships were adding three more VC to their total. After establishing their night positions, alert Infantrymen from Alpha Company spotted and killed ten enemy as they attempted to slip out of the noose. Charlie Company killed six more VC trying to evade the trap and the pounding artillery by crossing a nearby stream under cover of darkness. The Battalion Commander related that the enemy in the area were running for their lives and that the key to the success of the day was staying fluid and being able to adjust to the tactical situation, catching the enemy before he could scatter. Despite the vehemence of the fighting, skillfully executed tactics and accurate supporting fires held the friendly casualties to two, both only slightly wounded.

Very successful operations in Dinh Tuong by the 1st Brigade boosted the day's total VC KIA over 100 for the first time during the cited period. Moving on foot and in helicopters the "Recondos" eliminated fifty-four. The large Brigade total was attributable to another terrifically productive Night Search by 4-39 Inf and B/3-17 Cav. Operating in the same area near Moc Hoa, this deadly team killed twenty-eight at scattered locations in three hours. Air mobility was instrumental in obtaining other Brigade results. The "Jitterbug" operations involving elements of 3-39 Inf, 6-31 Inf, 191st ANC, B/3-17 Cav, and 9th Aviation Battalion accounted for thirteen more enemy dead. On footmobile patrols the men of 2-39 Inf killed seven on the northern fringe of Base Area 470 and found a weapons cache of explosives, small arms ammunition, and rockets.

15 February 1969

The Night Search continued to be a Nemesis for the Viet Cong. Two searches were carried out during the four hours before midnight. The search by troops from 2-39 Inf and B/3-17 Cav resulted in fifteen VC KIA east of Giao Due. Much farther to the north, west of Moc Hoa, 4-39 Inf and C/7-1 Cav teamed to kill ten. The gunners of B/3-17 Cav also killed five while accompanying 6-31 Inf on airmobile operations during the day. A Ranger team ambushed and killed three Viet Cong after dark in Base Area 470.

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Action in Kien Hoa was anticlimatic following the previous day's heavy contact. "Jitterbug" operations by 3-60 Inf, 162d AHC, and D/3-5 Cav accounted for six of the Brigade's nine enemy casualties. In Long An the enemy undertook offensive action, attacking the Binh Phuoc base camp of 2-47 Inf with direct and indirect fire. Three US soldiers were killed and twenty-two wounded. Five of the casualties were artillerymen and one was a member of the supporting engineers. Nine enemy bodies were found in a sweep which followed the repulsed attack.

#### 16 February 1969

"River Raiders" of 2d Brigade killed twenty-seven in scattered action. In one contact that involved 4-47 Inf in sporadic fighting all afternoon, the infantrymen killed thirteen and supporting gunships added two. The ground force had been inserted by helicopter and suffered nine wounded in the initial contact. Airmobile assaults were also made by 3-60 Inf and resulted in eight VC KIA at one location, five by the infantry and three by D/3-5 Cav.

Gunships and "slicks" continued to provide the key to 1st Brigade success. Second Battalion, 39th Infantry, made a number of airmobile assaults, transported by the 191st AHC and supported by B/3-17 Cav. At one location west of Vinh Kim the team killed eleven in a brief encounter. In the early morning shortly after midnight the Night Search by 4-39 Inf and C/7-1 Cav continued and killed seven more.

#### 17 February 1969

The enemy was very difficult to locate and only thirty-two fell in the Division's extensive search operations. Ten of these were attributed to the Night Hunter team of 2-39 Inf and B/3-17 Cav just east of Cai Be. Otherwise only the airmobile assaults of 2-60 Inf, 3d Brigade, were relatively successful, as the infantrymen located and killed five enemy, capturing three weapons. US casualties were minimal, three wounded.

#### 18 February 1969

Contact with the enemy increased throughout the Division's tactical area. In Kien Hoa the "Jitterbug" operation of 3-60 Inf, D/3-5 Cav, and the 162d AHC involved several insertions and caused six enemy casualties. Checkerboard patrols and small ambushes by 3-60 Inf killed eight Viet Cong after dark and a Bushmaster by 3-47 Inf eliminated five at dusk near its battalion base camp at Fire Support Base Tiger II.

Of significance in 1st Brigade was an airmobile assault by 4-39 Inf just north of Base Area 470 in the Plain of Reeds. While sweeping the area the troops of C/4-39 Inf killed four enemy and destroyed five booby traps and seventeen bunkers. Providing watchful protection from their

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airborne firing platforms, gunners from C/7-1 Cav picked off eleven enemy as the infantrymen threaded their way through the Viet Cong fortifications. The wide-ranging airmobile insertions of 2-60 Inf also continued to be the most successful means for locating the elusive enemy in Long An. The infantry teamed with A/3-17 Cav to kill nine VC and destroy five sampans in the vicinity of VC Island.

#### 19 February 1969

Contact dropped sharply throughout the entire Division tactical area as enemy troops were able to evade the pressing infantrymen and air cavalry. Four battalions of 1st Brigade were in the field and conducted cordon and search, checkerboard, airmobile and Night Hunter operations, but killed only five of the elusive enemy in the 24-hour period. Four of these were night kills.

Second Brigade Mobile Riverine infantrymen encountered slightly better results, killing fifteen Viet Cong in widely scattered contacts in watery Kien Hoa Province. Although the 2d Brigade suffered no fatalities, eight infantrymen were wounded by booby traps. The 3d Brigade in Long An Province also had three battalions in the paddies. They conducted bushmaster and checkerboard operations, but were able to kill only three enemy soldiers, all of these after dark.

#### 20 February 1969

##### The Battle of Ap Binh Dong

The searching, probing tactics of the 2d Brigade paid big dividends on 20 February when the Mobile Riverine Force brought the 516th Viet Cong Main Force Battalion to bay and laced into them, killing ninety-nine. Action began when Company C, 3-47 Inf, on a combined operation with the 126th Regional Force Company, received sporadic fire as they moved through an area along the Ba Lai River, northwest of Gieng Trom. Shortly thereafter Troop D, 3-5 Cav, brought in a prisoner who said that he was a member of the 516th and that the battalion was deployed in full force along the Ba Lai River. He stated further that the unit was splitting into two groups, one moving north and the other moving east along the river. Company C, 3-47 Inf, immediately undertook a search and destroy mission to interdict the element moving east. No contact was made immediately, so the company decided to push further east. Suddenly they began to receive sniper fire.

At 1115 hours, helicopters from D/3-5 Cav were screening the front of Company C when they received automatic weapons fire from the junction of the Rach Cau Pheng and the Rach Ba Tri Rom (XS696262). Artillery and Air Force jets were called in to support, but the enemy fire persisted, downing one cavalry helicopter.

Company B, 2-60 Inf, made an airmobile assault to the northeast of the stream junction, and the helicopters came under heavy fire as they lifted off following insertion of the infantrymen. Charlie Company, 3-47 Inf, remained in a blocking position west of the stream junction along the Ba Lai River. The 126th RF Company moved along the trail adjacent to Company C, also to set up a blocking position, in this case, to the east.

At 1453 hours, B/3-47 Inf made a heliborne assault to the south of the stream junction and were engaged immediately by heavy automatic weapons fire. It was apparent at this time that the enemy force was of a considerable size. The company commander and one platoon leader were killed shortly after the insertion and the enemy began pumping in 60mm mortar rounds. Realizing their precarious position, the men of Bravo Company returned a heavy volume of fire with their organic weapons and inched toward the enemy entrenchments, eliminating the enemy one by one.

"We were surrounded, so we hit the dikes and canals for cover," said SP4 Phil Barile, Bravo Company radio-telephone operator. "They had snipers all around us, so we started putting out as much M-60 machinegun fire as we could. Then with the help of the Cav, we moved out to get them."

At 1640 hours B/3-60 Inf was reinserted, this time to the left flank of B/3-47 Inf and south of the stream junction. Upon insertion, they also came under heavy enemy fire, but this move sealed off the cordon to the south and west. Company A, 3d Battalion, 47th Infantry, was inserted at 1810 hours to the right flank of B/3-47 to seal off the escape routes to the east along the Rach Ba Tri Rom. Company C, in its blocking position, now became the ready reaction force.

By 1850 hours, all three companies were still in heavy contact with the entrenched enemy, whose defensive line was now defined as running east and west generally along the Rach Cau Pheng and Rach Ba Tri Rom. The enemy, displaying unusually heavy firepower, kept the infantrymen under a blanket of .50 caliber and mortar fire. Although low on ammunition, Bravo Company, 3-47 Inf, continued its fierce close-in combat. They were not intimidated by the enemy's fortifications and the three .50 caliber machineguns which raked their position from no more than fifty meters away. As night fell, however, the enemy positions had been pin-pointed and all friendly fires coordinated. Delta Troop, 3-5 Cav, screened the northern flank of the cordon. Now it was the enemy's lot to feel the sting of artillery, as Battery C, 3-34 Arty, pummeled the center of the cordon all through the night with hundreds of 105mm howitzer rounds. Again and again the enemy tried to break the noose forcefully, but the infantrymen and artillery pushed him back.

At first light on 21 February, the infantrymen swept the area, assaulting the remaining enemy pockets of resistance. Intelligence gathered on the battlefield and reports of the local populace revealed that the enemy force had been composed of the 1st and 2d Companies, 516th Main Force Battalion, and included the Battalion Command Post and a

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reinforced heavy weapons platoon. The base camp of the 516th was also completely obliterated.

The sweep revealed fifty-four enemy bodies, bringing the total of known enemy kills for the action to ninety-nine. Seven 9th Division soldiers lost their lives in the bitter fighting and ten were wounded, almost all of these in the initial stages of the battle.

In actions in Dinh Tuong Province to the north, 1st Brigade troops killed forty-six enemy soldiers on 20 February. With four infantry battalions in the field conducting cordon and search and checkerboard operations, and supported by B/3-17 Cav and 191st Assault Helicopter Company, the "Recondo" Brigade met the enemy across the province in contacts almost as numerous as kills. The Viet Cong units were still splintered to avoid contact with 9th Division troops, who were stalking the enemy now almost man for man.

Third Brigade troops conducting land, water and airmobile operations killed a total of ten enemy soldiers in Long An Province on 20 February in another day of light contact. Three men were wounded by enemy booby traps.

#### 21 February 1969

The Division's combined arms team killed sixty-two Viet Cong, by this time a moderate result for the "Old Reliables". Four US soldiers were wounded, again by some of the thousands of booby traps which lie in treacherous wait for both the wary and unwary. The 1st Brigade fielded all four of its battalions on checkerboard and airmobile operations, supported by B/3-17 Cav gunships. Combat operations for the 24 hour period resulted in twenty-nine enemy killed, twenty-six of these by Night Hunter and night ambush operations.

The 2d Brigade Mobile Riverine Force had three infantry battalions in the rice paddies, conducting checkerboard and eagleflight operations. Twenty-four enemy soldiers were killed by 2d Brigade while the 3d Brigade added six to the Division total for the day.

#### 22 February 1969

Action picked up again, as 9th Division elements killed ninety-five enemy soldiers in night and day actions spread throughout the tactical area of interest. First Brigade elements accounted for forty-seven of the total in actions in Dinh Tuong Province. Showing their mettle as adept night fighters, Brigade units killed thirty-seven of this number during darkness hours. In Night Hunter operations covering a wide area northwest of Cai Be, gunship crews of B/3-17 Cav teamed up with troopers of 4-39 Inf to kill twenty-six Viet Cong. Between 0100 and 0300 hours, a patrol from 2-39 Inf sprang three separate ambushes, killing eleven of the surprised enemy and sinking two sampans. In daylight

airmobile operations 4-39 Inf killed twelve enemy in scattered contact around Cai Lay. Third Brigade elements, with Troop A, 3-17 Cavalry, killed five Viet Cong in another day of infrequent contact with the enemy in Long An Province.

River Raiders of the 2d Brigade's 4-47 Inf accounted for forty-three enemy dead, twenty-six of which resulted when the infantrymen pounced on an estimated Viet Cong company three miles from the brigade's Ben Tre base camp. Action began in mid-morning when Company C killed nine enemy on a sweep southeast of the province capital. Firing in direct support of the infantrymen, artillerymen of the 3-34 Arty killed five enemy soldiers. Company A went ashore from Navy "Tango" boats just north of Company C in an attempt to box in the Viet Cong. Although they ran into an ambush and were pinned down, Company A was able to kill five of the enemy. Contact continued through the afternoon with ground troops and gunship crews of D/3-5 Cav killing ten more enemy. Company D was inserted late in the afternoon to assist in sealing in the enemy, but the Viet Cong were able to slip out under cover of darkness.

Singled out for bravery in this action was WO1 David J. Newkirk of D/3-5 Cav, who blatantly exposed his light observation helicopter to enemy snipers in order to locate their positions. Hovering his light aircraft just above the nipa palm and using the propwash of his blades to separate the foliage, Newkirk located several snipers and silenced them with his mini-guns and grenades. Although his aircraft received numerous hits, he continued these daring tactics until all of the enemy snipers menacing the advancing Riverine infantrymen had been eliminated. He then directed the infantrymen to other enemy positions he had spotted.

When the company he was supporting was unable to reach an area in the dense vegetation suitable for medical evacuation of the wounded, Newkirk volunteered to maneuver his craft through a small opening in the trees to pick up the seriously wounded. Although under enemy automatic weapons fire, the pilot skillfully lowered his helicopter, clipping the heavy foliage with both his main and tail rotors. The enemy fire intensified during the laborious loading process, but Newkirk refused to lift off until as many wounded as he could carry were aboard. After the dustoff, the steely aviator repeated the heroic action a second time. Newkirk's actions typify the helicopter pilots from every cavalry troop and assault helicopter company supporting the 9th Division. Their bravery and esprit are extraordinary and were a major factor in the unprecedented success of the 9th Division's helicopter-infantry team.

23 February 1969

A total of 104 enemy soldiers lost their lives in many contacts with 9th Division elements on 23 February. The 1st Brigade with supporting air cavalry and artillery accounted for seventy-two of the total, well over half of these in night contacts designed to keep the Viet Cong off balance and deny them movement at night. In scattered night incidents northwest

of Cai Be, cavalrymen of B/3-17 Cav killed twenty-eight enemy. Infantrymen of the 2-39 Inf found the bodies of thirteen enemy who had been killed earlier by the howitzers of 1-11 Arty. Riflemen of 6-31 Inf reported eleven enemy soldiers killed by air cavalry in action west of Moc Hoa. The infantrymen also located eight AK-47 rifles, twelve 82mm mortar rounds and twenty-three cases of rifle ammunition. While supporting an airmobile operation north of Cai Be, the 191st Assault Helicopter Company killed fourteen enemy as the supported infantrymen killed five.

Responsible for the success of these many small unit operations were individual acts such as those of Private First Class Gary E. Dunn, a rifleman with Company A, 4-39 Inf. The company was making a reconnaissance-in-force when it came under heavy fire from an estimated enemy company. Dunn's platoon was directed to maneuver to the right to prevent an enemy flanking movement. Dunn volunteered to walk point and was thirty-five meters ahead of his platoon, making his way through the dense nipa, when he spotted an enemy squad setting up an ambush directly in front of him. Reacting quickly, Dunn killed two of the would-be ambushers and other platoon members killed two more as the enemy fled. Without the cool professionalism and bravery of Dunn and thousands of infantrymen, displayed day after day in similar situations, many American soldiers would have died unnecessarily.

Second Brigade elements accounted for nineteen of the division total on the 23d while conducting "Jitterbug" and bushmaster operations in an attempt to locate the elusive Viet Cong. Booby traps and enemy mortars wounded thirteen and killed one 2d Brigade soldier, leaving no mistake that life for the American soldier in the upper Delta is constantly threatened.

The 3d Brigade killed thirteen Viet Cong in scattered Long An Province actions and while repulsing an enemy mortar and rocket attack on the Brigade Headquarters at Tan An. Sergeant First Class Robert F. Baugher demonstrated that feats of heroism are not confined to the rice paddies, but that support troops, too, are capable of valor in the face of the enemy. Baugher, on perimeter guard at Tan An, was one of the first to react to enemy movement spotted outside the berm. When his section of the perimeter received enemy rockets from close range, Baugher went from bunker to bunker encouraging his men, redistributing ammunition and removing the wounded. He personally defended a bunker which had received two hits from the rockets and kept the enemy from penetrating his defense.

During the same attack, Chief Warrant Officer Thomas R. Wie, a pilot in Troop A, 3-17 Cav, showed exceptional valor when he repeatedly flew his Cobra gunship in low passes over the intense automatic weapons and rocket fire. Although his ship received three hits, he continued to rocket and strafe the enemy in this manner until the enemy fire was silenced. His acts were instrumental in preventing the enemy from firing twenty rockets already emplaced just outside the perimeter. Ten 3d Brigade soldiers were wounded, but none was killed.

24 February 1969

Checkerboard, cordon and search, bushmasterp and Night Hunter operations carried out by the four battalions of the 1st Brigade throughout Dinh Tuong Province resulted in forty-five enemy soldiers killed. Two brigade soldiers were wounded by enemy booby traps as the infantrymen and supporting helicopters from B/3-17 Cav and 191st Assault Helicopter Company continued their methodical elimination of the enemy by ones and twos.

Second Brigade elements accounted for thirty-five Viet Cong killed as the Riverinemen ferretted out the VC from their watery, leech-infested and overgrown hideouts in Kien Hoa Province. Thirteen US soldiers were wounded, most of these by booby traps.

The 3d Brigade and supporting elements killed eight enemy soldiers, bringing the Division total for this date to eighty-seven enemy dead. Brigade troops suffered eight wounded.

25 February 1969

"Old Reliable" units killed a total of 117 Viet Cong in another day of scattered actions. The 2-39, 3-39, 4-39 and 6-31 Inf battalions of the 1st Brigade continued to apply their proven formula for finding the VC. Bushmaster, "Jitterbug", and Night Hunter operations netted fifty-six enemy kills. Delta Troop, 3-5 Cav, and B/3-17 Cav provided gunship support while 191st Assault Helicopters flew with their bellies full of infantrymen. Forty of the brigade kills came during widely dispersed night actions as the "Recondos" continued to deny the night to the Viet Cong in Dinh Tuong. Three booby trap incidents caused the Brigade's casualties of six wounded and one killed.

Third Brigade units accounted for thirty-six of the enemy casualties, almost all of these coming from a night ambush by infantrymen of the 2-47 Mechanized Infantry. At about 1000 hours tracks from 2-47 Inf caught an estimated Viet Cong company moving through their night ambush positions five kilometers north of Tan An. Alpha Company's ambush was first to make contact with the enemy. The Viet Cong tried to evade, only to find themselves ensnarled in two other ambushes. By daylight, three enemy bodies had been counted. In addition, five AK-47 rifles, one pistol, one machine-gun, six rocket launchers, eleven grenades, and ten rockets were captured. The mechanized infantryman suffered one man wounded. Four US troops were wounded by three separate booby traps. Although the enemy was painfully and meticulously efficient with his deadly booby traps, he remained unable to inflict losses by offensive actions.

Mobile Riverine troopers with supporting artillery and helicopters conducted checkerboard, bushmaster, and airmobile operations resulting in twenty-five enemy soldiers killed in scattered actions in Kien Hoa Province.

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26 February 1969

The 3-47, 4-47 and 3-60 Inf battalions of 2d Brigade conducted watermobile and airmobile operations, killing thirty-nine enemy in widely scattered contacts. Third Battalion, 34th Artillery and D/3-5 Cav gave the infantrymen protection and provided part of the killing punch while the 162d Assault Helicopter Company ferried the troops during airmobile operations. The price of combat success was higher than normal this day, as booby traps killed three and wounded five US soldiers.

The 1st Brigade, on footmobile and airmobile operations throughout their tactical area, pressed the enemy in many small unit contacts, killing twenty-two and bringing the Division total for 26 February to sixty-one dead. During the course of the day, elements of the Brigade found and destroyed thirty homemade booby traps.

All participants in the combat zone are subject to encountering the enemy. Captain Emile Robert, an artilleryman, distinguished himself by exceptionally gallant actions on 26 February. Artillery liaison officer with 4-39 Inf, Captain Robert was flying with the battalion commander during a night operation when a radio call for help was received from a Long Range Reconnaissance Patrol surrounded by the Viet Cong. All but two of the eighteen LRRP's had been wounded, several of them seriously, and it appeared the team was in a state of near panic as they felt the enemy closing in on them. One helicopter had already been downed in an effort to evacuate the wounded, but Robert and the battalion commander proceeded directly to the site and landed. Perceiving the precariousness of the situation, Robert immediately arranged the less seriously wounded into a defensive perimeter and collected the seriously wounded for evacuation, all the while administering first aid. Unable to call in another dustoff helicopter until the enemy guns had been silenced, Robert used the radio to adjust artillery fire onto the enemy. Standing in full view of the enemy position, now silenced by the artillery fire, Robert guided the medical evacuation helicopter into the small clearing. Because of Captain Robert's alert and cool actions the enemy was unable to overrun the small unit and destroy the downed helicopter. Six enemy soldiers were known to be dead from the contact.

27 February 1969

In another day of scattered contacts 9th Division units racked up eighty-two enemy soldiers killed. During airmobile and footmobile operations in Dinh Tuong Province, 1st Brigade units killed a total of fifty-seven Viet Cong, thirty-eight of these at night. Cited for heroic action in the 1st Brigade on this date was Sergeant William J. Hatfield, a squad leader with Company C, 4-39 Inf. Hatfield's squad was the point element for the platoon as it moved through a heavily vegetated area near a village. Suddenly the sergeant and his men were ambushed by an enemy squad concealed nearby. Hatfield, aware that his squad was in a heavily booby trapped area and that most of his men were new and inexperienced, took the point himself and led his men in a flanking movement around the enemy

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ambush site. When the sergeant sighted two Viet Cong preparing to fire on his squad again, he threw a grenade which wounded the two and caused the ambushers to retreat. Hatfield then secured the equipment abandoned by the fleeing enemy and continued his mission with no casualties.

Elements of the 2d Brigade accounted for seven of the Division total enemy kills in a day of very light contact for the Riverinemen. Third Brigade units and their supporting air cav and artillery killed eighteen Viet Cong, almost all of these resulting from night action.

28 February 1969

Ninth Division troops killed ninety enemy soldiers in a day of scattered and often bizarre combat. The 2d Brigade Mobile Riverine Force accounted for fifty-nine of the total in almost exclusively day-light contacts. The 1st Brigade killed twenty-one enemy, most of these in night actions, and 3d Brigade counted ten enemy bodies. One particularly treacherous 105mm booby trap incident killed two US soldiers and wounded twenty-two others in the 2d Brigade.

In one of the more unusual stories of combat, Specialist Four Jose T. Alejandro was cited for exceptional bravery on 28 February while a rifleman in Company D, 3-47 Inf. Company D was on a reconnaissance-in-force southeast of Ben Tre when smoke grenades were thrown from helicopters flying overhead, indicating suspicious activity to the left of the company's position. Alejandro and six other infantrymen volunteered to investigate. Walking point for the tiny element, Alejandro entered a woodline and came across two Viet Cong attempting to detonate some booby traps they had planted in the area. Since the mines were obviously intended for Alejandro's companions in the rear, he charged the two enemy soldiers and engaged them in hand to hand combat.

During the close combat with the two, Alejandro shattered the butt of his rifle. Undaunted, he took off his steel helmet and swung it like a ball and chain to ward off the enemy. Several other enemy soldiers began firing at him from a nearby bunker complex. Again with utter disregard for his safety, Alejandro charged the bunkers, mortally wounding two of the enemy and chasing the others back into a tunnel. Having exhausted his own supply of ammunition, he picked up one of the enemy's weapons and continued toward the tunnel. Although under fire now from another location, the rifleman moved adroitly to the tunnel entrance and threw in hand grenades. When an enemy soldier who had survived the blast tried to escape the tunnel, Alejandro, still under enemy fire, stood guard at the tunnel entrance to keep him from escaping. As a result of the infantryman's gallantry, nine enemy soldiers were killed and one captured.

1 March 1969

The actions on 1 March gave indication that the staccato pace of enemy contacts established in February would continue. At a time

when a unit of less determination might incline to relax and back in the glow of success, the 9th Infantry Division actually increased the tempo and tenacity of its efforts against the tough, resourceful enemy in the Delta. During day and night actions, 9th Division elements killed 100 Viet Cong in contacts throughout the tactical area.

First Brigade infantrymen and supporting air cavalry killed fifty-seven enemy soldiers, forty-three of these in Night Hunter and night ambush operations. Booby trap incidents continued to be the major source of US casualties as fourteen men were wounded in four separate incidents. By the adroit rotation of manpower and helicopter hours, the 1st Brigade maintained the stinging pressure on the enemy 24 hours a day.

Gallantry and heroic action was frequent throughout the day, but the actions of Captain Gordon DeRoos of Company C, 4-39 Inf, stood apart. DeRoos and his company were on a night ambush patrol near the village of My Trinh in Dinh Tuong Province. As he led his men into position, they came under intense enemy automatic weapons fire. The enemy was ensconced in bunkers along a woodline, not more than 150 meters away. DeRoos and his men returned a heavy base of fire which silenced the enemy temporarily. Having received no fire for thirty minutes, the company prepared to move out, but was pinned down again by fire from the woodline. DeRoos called in artillery, which destroyed two enemy bunkers and again silenced the enemy firing. Shortly after the artillery ceased, the persistent Viet Cong sent out snipers to harass the company while other enemy troops crawled silently toward its position.

Finally the enemy began a heavy barrage of fire with RPG's, M-79's, and automatic weapons, seriously wounding several of DeRoos' men. Disregarding his personal safety, the Captain ran 100 meters under the enemy fire to the positions most critically hit. Finding two men seriously wounded, he administered first aid and pulled them back to a safer position. DeRoos regrouped a small force and led an assault against one of the nearest enemy positions, killing three of the Viet Cong. He then led an element of his company to the enemy's flank in order to catch them in a deadly cross fire. As a result five additional enemy were killed and at least twice that number wounded. The remainder of the enemy force retreated in panic.

Elements of the three battalions of 2d Brigade conducted footmobile and watermobile operations which resulted in twenty-seven enemy killed on 1 March. The highly scattered contacts were supported by D/3-5 Cav and the 162d Assault Helicopter Company. Third Brigade troops with air support from B/3-17 Cav and 240th Assault Helicopter Company added sixteen enemy dead to the total in scattered airmobile and bushmaster actions.

2 March 1969

In another day of grinding action 9th Division units found and eliminated seventy-seven of the harried enemy. First Brigade elements

Five US soldiers were wounded in 1st Brigade actions.

During an airmobile operation, Lieutenant Colonel David H. Hackworth, commanding officer of the 4-39 Inf, displayed gallant leadership in the face of the enemy. Elements of his command were being extracted from a large enemy minefield while under heavy enemy fire. Hackworth made a visual reconnaissance of the area from his command and control helicopter and then proceeded at low altitude to seek the shortest path for his troops to follow. He then directed his helicopter pilot to land so that he might instruct the company commander of his findings. Upon landing, Hackworth discovered that the company commander had been seriously wounded by a mine. With audacious disregard for the enemy fire and the minefield, the battalion commander moved to the company commander and carried him personally to safety. He repeated his actions a second and third time to remove the wounded from the area of contact. Hackworth then took control of the company himself and led them from the minefield to the helicopter pick up zone. He personally guided the medical evacuation helicopter into the tiny open area, still under enemy fire. He remained on the ground until all of the infantrymen were loaded and the last aircraft had extracted. His timely actions and bravery undoubtedly saved numerous American lives and provided an inspiration to his men.

Foot mobile and watermobile operations of the 2d Brigade accounted for eighteen enemy kills on this date and 3d Brigade troops killed six.

5 March 1969

Ninety-five enemy soldiers lost their lives to "Old Reliable" forces using search and pounce tactics. The 1st Brigade killed sixty-one of the total while conducting cordon and search and Night Search operations. A roving Night Search operation involving C/7-1 Cav and 4-39 Inf netted twelve Viet Cong killed and six sampans destroyed as the team searched over the western third of Dinh Tuong Province. Company E, 2-39 Inf, executed a Night Raid on an intelligence target west of Cai Be and killed fifteen enemy. As artillery illumination lit the target area, 9th Aviation Battalion helicopters touched down and the infantrymen quickly diffused into the area. The enemy was taken by complete surprise.

"The minute our presence was known, the whole area was crawling with people," said Major John Purdy, Battalion Operations Officer. "Most of them were running like crazy for the woodline." Ninth Aviation gunships killed seven Viet Cong in the woodline and the infantrymen killed eight. The remaining thirty-five kills by 1st Brigade on 5 March came during small contacts throughout the province.

The 2d Brigade using air and water craft for transport to conduct checkerboard and bushmaster operations, met with less success against the elusive Kien Hoa Viet Cong. Brigade elements killed nineteen enemy while suffering four soldiers wounded by enemy booby traps hidden in the dense vegetation. Checkerboard and airmobile operations in Long An Province by the 3d Brigade resulted in fifteen enemy dead.

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6 March 1969

1st Brigade soldiers killed 107 of the enemy in a day action sharply increased from the already heavy pace for the month. Most of the actions were again scattered and small, but one contact begun by a sharp-eyed 191st Assault Helicopter Company pilot resulted in forty-three enemy dead and disrupted the meeting of the VC Dinh Tuong area command. "We spotted an individual with a weapon in an open rice paddy," said Warrant Officer Mike Holt, the gunship pilot. "At first I thought he might be an ARVN soldier, but when we went down to check him out he jumped into the water. We were only fifty feet away when he fired a burst at us, smashing the chin baffle and sun visor. My doorgunner reacted fast and killed him."

Before the afternoon was over, the gunships had killed thirty-nine Viet Cong and taken nine detainees. Troops of the 6-31 Inf added four more. Holt and one other gunship piloted by Lieutenant Mike Arruti flew on station for two hours until almost all their fuel and all the ammunition had been expended. Prior to departing the scene Holt and his crew captured a Viet Cong company commander of the 514 C Main Force Battalion.

Airmobile, footmobile, and watermobile operations by the 2d Brigade on 6 March turned up only twelve enemy kills in another day of rather light contact for the Riverinemen. Third Brigade units killed a total of nine Viet Cong in scattered contacts in Long An Province while sustaining no casualties.

7 March 1969

Grinding away with their variegated and flexible tactics Division troops searched out and killed a total of 122 Viet Cong. First Brigade infantrymen and supporting artillery and helicopters conducted bushmaster, cordon and search, and Night Hunter operations which located and killed seventy-six of the enemy. Sixty-three of these kills came at night as a result of ambush or Night Search operations.

Sixteen of the thirty-one 2d Brigade killed occurred during the hours of darkness. The 3d Brigade in Long An Province accounted for the remaining fifteen of the Division total.

8 March 1969

1st Brigade and supporting forces killed sixty-three enemy soldiers out of a total of 111 for the whole Division. The only large contact came when "Bounty Hunter" gunships of the 191st Assault Helicopter Company teamed with 4-39 Inf to kill seventeen Viet Cong twelve miles northwest of Cai Be in Dinh Tuong Province. As the infantrymen searched the muddy nipa palm line the helicopters flying close support killed eleven of the seventeen Viet Cong.

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"Considering the heavy action we've been having for the past seven days, this is a break today," said Major Alvin B. Morris, 1st Brigade Intelligence Officer. "The VC seem to be back in earnest to their tactics of avoiding contact with us."

The 2d Brigade Mobile Riverine Force, on bushmaster and checkerboard operations killed forty-six enemy soldiers. The contacts were widely scattered as usual. Four miles south of Ben Tre, two Viet Cong swimmers tried to mine a boat from the 1097th Transportation Company (Medium Boat). On board were two howitzers of 3-34 Arty, the Riverine Artillery. "When I saw a bush with a face under it floating near our Mike boat, I was suspicious," said Specialist Jay Thrower. "I threw a concussion grenade and that took care of both of them, but the current was so swift that we never recover their bodies.

Elements of the three battalions of 3d Brigade conducted airmobile and bushmaster operations against a virtually invisible enemy in Long An Province, killing only two Viet Cong.

9 March 1969

A total of eighty-five enemy died as 9th Infantry Division units continued to break down into platoon and squad size elements to root out or entice the Viet Cong to fight. The result in terms of enemy body count is indisputable evidence of the success of these tactics, but this simple statistic subsumes the multitudinous, often heroic individual efforts which made the tactics work. A noteworthy example occurred on this date as 1st Brigade eliminated thirty-nine enemy, twenty-five at night. Sergeant Nolton J. Richard, a platoon sergeant with Company B, 4-39 Infantry, was cited for gallantry in action when his company was pinned down by intense fire from Viet Cong in bunkers. Richard located two enemy positions from which his unit was receiving particularly heavy fire. In this precarious situation Richard immediately took the initiative. The sergeant grabbed two light Anti-Tank Weapons (LAW's) and ran across more than seventy-five meters of open area under heavy enemy fire. Assuming an exposed firing position directly in line with two enemy bunkers, he took aim and destroyed both bunkered positions. Sergeant Richard's action broke the back of the enemy defense and undoubtedly saved man of his men's lives.

The 2d Brigade accounted for thirty-one kills on this date with footmobile and airmobile operations throughout Kien Hoa. Checkerboard, bushmaster and airmobile operations by units of the 3d Brigade added fifteen enemy bodies to the Division total.

10 March 1969

This was another day of footmobile, watermobile, and airmobile operations which blanketed the three provinces and brought about widely scattered contact with small enemy bands. Body count for the whole Division was seventy-nine, now a relatively low figure.

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The team of infantry, artillery, and Army aviation in Kien Hoa Province eliminated thirty-seven by using the whole bag of tactical tricks. Two battalions were deployed on checkerboard operations and one operated with the Brigade's air assets. Two companies from 3-47 Inf were inserted by air to exploit fresh intelligence and killed five Viet Cong, discovering an extensive bunker complex in the process. Southeast of Ben Tre a well-laid ambush was the downfall of fifteen of the enemy during the night.

Recondo troopers of the 1st Brigade killed thirty-three. A bushmaster operation by 2-39 Inf resulted in contact with an enemy force of unknown size, of which six were killed. The infantrymen also ambushed two sampans navigating a canal at night and dispatched the four occupants during a brief engagement. A Night Hunter by 4-39 Inf and A/7-1 Cav tallied fifteen VC KIA during darkness hours in western Dinh Tuong Province. Nine enemy fell to the "Go-Devil" Brigade in Long An during checkerboard and airmobile operations. Over 100 pounds of medical supplies were captured by 5-60 Inf near Rach Kien.

11 March 1969

#### Battle of Thanh Phu

This was a big day for 1st Brigade and an especially active one for 2-39 Inf. A bushmaster by 2-39 resulted in eleven enemy dead during the early morning hours before daybreak and at first light the battalion redeployed to conduct cordon and search and airmobile operations. While sweeping the ground following one insertion C/2-39 Inf contacted an enemy force, later determined to be the 261B Main Force Battalion, in fortified positions. Before the day ended 1st Brigade had executed the biggest encirclement of the cited period and provided a classic example of the "seal" and enemy destruction which were the goal of all 9th Division air and footmobile search tactics. In action lasting into the early morning of 12 March the Brigade Commander, Colonel Ira A. Hunt, Jr., directed the air insertion of eight infantry companies and commanded a combined arms effort which reduced the Viet Cong battalion to combat ineffectiveness.

Prior to mid-day C/2-39 Inf had not been able to establish contact with the enemy during "Jitterbug" insertions. Several intelligence targets had been checked out and found devoid of enemy when the battalion commander decided to investigate an area along the Kinh Tong Doc Luc Canal near the hamlet of My Phuoc Tay. The airborne personnel detector, or "People Sniffer", in the air cavalry troop command and control helicopter had obtained a significantly high reading over the area. CS gas was used to flush out the enemy but no movement was detected, so a platoon from the company was inserted and moved cautiously toward a line of bunkers. Cobra gunships engaged a few Viet Cong in the bunkers, but started a grass fire which grew and, rekindled elsewhere by subsequent rockets and airstrikes, lasted all day. In the later stages of the battle the smoke and fire detracted from the ability of gunship pilots and forward air controllers to support the ground troops, whose forward locations were often invisible to the pilots. The platoon approached through a booby-trapped

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area to within fifteen meters of the bunkers before coming under a fusillade of enemy fire. The enemy force was obviously too large for the infantry platoon, which attempted to withdraw. Several men of the platoon were injured during this withdrawal through booby traps and mines. The gunships were unable to suppress the enemy fire because the action was now taking place under a cloud of smoke. Another platoon from C/2-39 Inf was inserted to the south of the first and assisted in the withdrawal of the beleaguered platoon and the evacuation of its casualties. Because of the smoke, casualties, and confusion, the decision was made to extract the elements of C/2-39 Inf, but in the meantime instructions had been given to ready several other companies for insertion around the enemy position. Artillery pieces were being moved into position to support the ground troops and Air Force forward air controllers were in position to guide air strikes.

The immediate goal was to encircle the enemy positions, to seal him in a "doughnut" of American troops. Artillery, air strikes, and gunships could then be used to pound the center. Insertions were planned, accordingly, to cut off the enemy escape routes. This meant, first, the placement of troops either side of the bunkered positions, which lay along an east-west canal. As the insertions took place, artillery and gunship fire and air strikes were placed all around the enemy to contain him. South of the canal B/2-39 Inf was placed on the ground at 1415 hours to block the canal on the east. Ten utility helicopters inserted A/2-39 Inf on the west at 1511 hours. Shortly after 1630 hours C/6-31 Inf was air-lifted into the center, where the initial contact had been made. All three companies moved toward positions along the canal, but found the going very tough. Mines and booby traps were everywhere and the Viet Cong reacted with well-placed fire from small arms, automatic weapons, and mortars. Some timely airstrikes assisted the advance greatly, however, by leveling the area to the front and causing many of the booby traps to detonate prematurely.

Attention was then shifted to the north of the canal. Though relatively wide and deep, the canal could not be considered a natural barrier and, unless prevented, the Viet Cong could be expected to make their escape to the north. Three companies were inserted on the north side: A/4-39 Inf at 1720 hours in the center, A/6-31 Inf at 1742 hours on the west, and C/4-39 Inf at 1912 hours on the east. At some time during the night all of these companies engaged Viet Cong attempting to escape the encirclement. Because of the great distance between the left and right flanks of the blocking force on the south of the canal, two additional companies were inserted after dark to complete the seal. At 2031 hours A/3-39 Inf was placed in the center, to the rear of C/6-31 Inf, and passed to the left to fill the gap between C/6-31 and A/2-39. Charlie Company, 2-39 Inf, by this time refreshed, was placed at 2100 hours between B/2-39 Inf on the east and the center.

Sporadic contact continued until 0200 hours on 12 March. Illumination was provided by Air Force "Spooky" flare ships and artillery. A sweep of the battlefield began at 0400 hours and the results coupled with earlier observations, indicated a total enemy body count of seventy-two. This disappointed expectations, as did the number of weapons which

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were found. Both counts were low because troops making the sweep were tired and the dense vegetation along the canal still concealed numerous mines and booby traps. The conviction that more damage had been done the Viet Cong force was substantiated by the testimony of a prisoner taken one month later. The PW had been Adjutant of the 261B Battalion and revealed that the Viet Cong casualties had numbered 203. His credibility was enhanced by his description of the action, including the number of helicopter insertions, which agreed closely with the sequence recorded in US journals.

Acts of individual bravery were legion in the contact with an unusually large Viet Cong Force. The enemy fire was intense and disciplined. Booby traps and mines made foot movement hazardous, particularly through that part of the battle area which was covered with smoke from the grass fires. Three US soldiers were killed in the action and twenty more were wounded.

Elsewhere in Dinh Tuong on the 11th the 9th Aviation Battalion displayed its flexibility as its helicopters assumed the dual role of air cavalry and assault support. Helicopter gunners downed ten Viet Cong during a Night Raid in the early morning hours and killed another twelve on a Night Search shortly before midnight. A participant in the Night Raid, 1LT Robert Walker, commented on the success of this tactic, "They just don't expect to be hit at such a late hour. It's unheard of to have a batch of crazy GI's running around killing VC at 4:00 AM."

In the 3d Brigade's area of responsibility elements of 2-47 Inf and 5-60 Inf combined with RF/PF troops on a successful cordon and search operation. The US forces surrounded a hamlet (XS 6157) where Viet Cong activity had been reported and the Vietnamese swept the area. A small enemy unit was entrapped and lost fifteen to the 2-47 Inf while attempting to escape. Firing 312 rounds in support of the operation, 2-4 Arty was credited with five additional kills.

Second Brigade "River Raiders" experienced very little contact with the enemy on the 11th. A checkerboard operation by 3-47 Inf accounted for eight enemy deaths. In the late afternoon the men of B Battery, 3-34 Arty, ward off an enemy attack which inflicted wounds on five of the artillerymen.

12 March 1969

After elements of all four battalions had swept the area of the previous night's battle, airmobile and bushmaster operations were conducted in the 1st Brigade. Practically no contact with the enemy was made by the infantry units, although several US soldiers were wounded during the sweep by the ubiquitous booby traps. Alpha Troop, 7-1 Cav, killed eighteen Viet Cong while participating in a Night Search which lasted three hours.

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The 2d Brigade matched the "Recondos" in body count by contributing thirty-four to the Division's total of ninety-eight. On a cordon and search 3-47 Inf engaged several Viet Cong in a bunker complex and killed eight. A "Jitterbug" was conducted by 3-60 Inf, D/3-5 Cav, and the 162d Assault Helicopter Company and produced a body count of twenty-five, distributed among the three units in groups of fifteen, five, and five, respectively.

Results in 3d Brigade's area were due principally to the success of a Night Search conducted by B/3-17 Cav which located and killed fifteen of the enemy over a wide area. The efficiency of the Division's snipers was demonstrated by a two-man team from 2-60 Inf which picked off four VC in a short space of twenty minutes after dusk.

13 March 1969

In a big day for the division, 2d Brigade forces eliminated sixty-nine Viet Cong out of a total of 135. On a bushmaster 3-47 Inf wiped out fifteen of the enemy and 4-47 Inf killed nine on a reconnaissance and search mission following a watermobile assault. Third Battalion, 60th Infantry, participated with D/3-5 Cav in a highly successful airmobile operation. The infantrymen killed ten and the air cavalry twenty-four. Two combat engineers from D Company, 15th Engineer Battalion, in support of 2d Brigade, were wounded by booby traps.

First Brigade continued to have the greatest success in contacting Viet Cong units of more than squad size. In the early morning darkness the night position of B/4-39 Inf, twenty kilometers northwest of Cai Be, was attacked by an enemy force estimated to be two platoons. The Viet Cong assaulted with small arms, automatic weapons, and rocket propelled grenades, killing two and wounding thirteen US soldiers. Air Force "Spooky" flare ship a light fire team of Cobras, and artillery supported, enabling the defenders to repulse the attack. At least seventeen VC were killed, four by the artillery. Contact lasted two hours until the defending company, reinforced by Bravo Company, pursued the fleeing enemy. Two more Viet Cong were killed by the infantry and several weapons and one VC Medic captured during the chase. Said the Battalion Commander of the valiant defenders: "I think they did a real fine job considering the enemy hit them from three sides and managed to get right up to the perimeter." The pursuit continued into the night. Tracker dogs followed the scent on the ground and Light Observation Helicopter accompanied overhead, killing four VC. The enemy was encircled finally and air strikes, artillery, and gunship fire directed onto the helpless foe. By the morning of the 14th, eleven more enemy had been killed, as revealed by a sweep of the area.

In Long An fourteen Viet Cong were eliminated by 3d Brigade troops on this date. Nine different airmobile insertions by 2-60 Inf were indicative of the determination to find the enemy, but resulted in only two VC KIA. That the enemy was still present was evidenced by an attack on the base camp of 2-60 Inf at Tan Tru. Several rounds from 82 mm mortars and 75 mm

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recoilless rifles impacted in the area at night.

14 March 1969

Ninth Division units killed a total of ninety-two enemy soldiers throughout the Delta tactical area. The 2d Brigade accounted for forty-eight of the total, thirty-five of these during the hours of darkness. In one of the 2d Brigade's contacts, a medic with 4-47 Inf was cited for extraordinary courage and devotion to duty, Specialist Don L. Ebersole. He was with the 2d Platoon of Company A when the platoon came under heavy enemy small arms fire. Three men were wounded seriously in the initial encounter and the medic dashed through a hail of bullets to reach each of them. Ebersole administered life-saving first aid, then moved the men bodily and singlehandedly to a clear area for medical evacuation. In the clearing he exposed himself to enemy fire while giving signals to the dustoff helicopter for a safe landing. His actions saved the lives of at least two of the infantrymen with critical wounds.

First Brigade infantrymen with supporting 9th Aviation helicopters killed thirty-three enemy soldiers while scattered contacts during cordon and search and airmobile operations in the 3d Brigade's area accounted for eleven enemy dead.

15 March 1969

The continuous footmobile, airmobile, and watermobile operations, conducted by squads, platoons, and companies both day and night, paid off handsomely for the Division on this date. No large contact was involved as 159 of the enemy fell to units under divisional control; rather this day was ideally successful for the small unit tactics. Each of the infantry battalions in 1st Brigade made contact with the enemy. Fifteen Viet Cong were killed by 2-39 Inf during an airmobile operation. Responsible for the area of operations surrounding Dong Tam, 3-39 Inf rooted out a small group of guerrillas and killed five. During a footmobile operation, 4-39 Inf eliminated thirteen Viet Cong, but demonstrated again that the infantryman in the Delta faces extreme danger daily as seven men were wounded by booby traps. Charlie Company, 6-31 Inf, and a Ranger team from E Company, 75th Infantry, killed one each during the day. Gunships from C/7-1 Cav picked off three enemy during the afternoon and conducted a remunerative Night Search in the evening, killing sixteen. Twelve bodies were credited to 1st Battalion, 11th Artillery.

The results in 2d Brigade were also attributable to the whole combined arms team. A footmobile search by 3-47 Inf netted fourteen body

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count, an especially happy outcome as no casualties were incurred. Fourth Battalion, 47 Infantry, was inserted into an area by boat and made contact with a force of about average size. Two hundred and twenty rounds were fired by 3-34 Arty in support and killed eleven of the enemy. Snipers had a tremendous day. The team with 4-47 Inf on the operation above killed seven Viet Cong with seven rounds at a distance of 300 meters. As the day began, right after midnight, snipers in a night position with 3-60 Inf had engaged and killed six enemy with six rounds, this time at a distance of 200 meters.

In Long An the base camp of 2-60 Inf at Tan Tru was once again the target of an enemy mortar attack. The men of 2-60 made retribution, however, killing eleven in scattered contacts during an airmobile operation. Bravo Troop, 3-17 Cav, added eight bodies while supporting the infantrymen. Captain John B. Harrington, commander of D/2-60 Inf, displayed conspicuous gallantry during these actions. His company was inserted into an enemy-infested area near Binh Thanh, deployed and made a sweep of the location. Suddenly the company was pinned down by intense fire from a bunker complex and Captain Harrington crawled forward to gain a better vantage point from which to control the action. He fired tracer rounds to mark the target for helicopter gunships and adjusted artillery fire onto the enemy bunkers from his exposed position. Harrington's courage saved the lives of his men and brought about the destruction of the enemy.

16 March 1969

Most of the action took place in Dinh Tuong Province where the "Recondos" obtained a body count of seventy-three, the bulk of those being the result of two actions. Shortly after midnight the snipers working with the 2-39 Inf killed twelve and 1-11 Arty, supporting the footmobile operation while firing 123 rounds. An airmobile "Jitterbug" operation by 4-39 Inf and 191st Assault Helicopter Company accounted for twenty-nine Viet Cong bodies, sixteen for the Infantry and thirteen for the helicopter gunships. Altogether, elements of 1st Brigade eliminated forty-seven of the enemy in night action, continuing to make the enemy's lines of communication and infiltration through Dinh Tuong nearly impassable.

A contact by B/4-47 Inf with the enemy was considerably more costly than usual, causing six casualties to the friendly force, which nonetheless killed five of the enemy. Elsewhere in the battalion four Viet Cong were felled. Early morning action also resulted in six injured troops in 3-60 Inf, an element of which conducted a highly successful Night Raid in the evening, however. In the Raid on a fresh intelligence target, six enemy were killed and five detained. Delta Troop, 3-5 Cav, contributed four Viet Cong dead to the 2d Brigade total. In light action 3d Brigade units killed ten enemy, eight during the hours of darkness.

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17 March 1969

Second Battalion, 39th Infantry, sought out the enemy in a flurry of activity, and succeeded in locating and eliminating sixteen. During the day the companies of the battalion were involved in bushmaster, footmobile reconnaissance and search, and Night Raid operations. Sixteen enemy were killed in these many activities, thirteen on the Night Raid in which the battalion suffered three casualties, two of them deaths, when some of its troops were inserted into a "hot" LZ. A bushmaster operation by 4-39 Inf netted eight enemy dead in the early morning hours and the battalion's snipers picked off another six in mid-afternoon. Addition to the 1st Brigade's enemy body count were made by 6-31 Inf, 1-11 Arty, A/7-1 Cav, and 191st AMC, the last contributing nine in support of airmobile operations by 6-31 Inf.

In the Mobile Riverine Force 3-47 Inf conducted a bushmaster operation during the night and killed eight Viet Cong. Three members of the battalion were wounded by booby traps, as this "occupational hazard" continued to cause the most US casualties. Checkerboard and footmobile reconnaissance and search tactics of 4-47 Inf resulted in a body count of seven, three by the battalion snipers. The AN/PYB-55 radar site operated by the battalion's Headquarters Company was attacked with B-40 rocket rounds which caused injuries to three of the radarmen. Three enemy fell to Air Force airstrikes and four to the gunships of D/3-5 Cav.

Ten Viet Cong were eliminated by 3d Brigade units as the enemy still had greater success in avoiding detection in Long An Province. Men from 2-60 Inf made nine airmobile insertions in a day of exhaustive search, but were able to locate only one Viet Cong. A company aboard a Navy boat was ambushed later in the day and suffered seven wounded, illustrating again that no place is safe from the hidden enemy. A light fire team from B/3-17 Cav reacted quickly to the ambush and was able to kill at least one of the attackers.

18 March 1969

The continuous probes and searches of 3d Brigade troopers were rewarded with greater success on this date. The "jitterbug" operations of 2-60 Inf were especially remunerative. The companies of the battalion made nine insertions, no more than usual, and killed nineteen of the enemy while the air cavalry supporting the operation added sixteen. The contacts all occurred in the vicinity of the Bo Bo Canal in the Plain of the Reeds, a major Viet Cong and NVA infiltration route. At one location seven enemy were killed and several detainees apprehended. Altogether, several weapons and a large quantity of ammunition were captured: 137 B-40 rockets, four AK-47 rifles, ten 107mm rocket rounds, five 57mm recoilless rifle rounds, and ninety-two chicom grenades. Checkerboard ambushes of 5-60 Inf added three to the Brigade's body count.

First Brigade operations maintained the intense pressure on Viet Cong activity in Dinh Tuong. Ten insertions by 2-39 Inf resulted in five bodies.

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Air cavalry and assault helicopters supporting the airmobile operations added fourteen more to the total. Blanketing a large area with footmobile reconnaissance and search operations and ambush patrols, 4-39 Inf felled eighteen of the enemy. River Raiders of 2d Brigade eliminated nineteen, divided about evenly between 3-47 and 4-47 Inf. The former wiped out eight using bushmaster and checkerboard tactics and the latter killed ten while conducting cloverleaf patrols following an insertion by Navy assault craft eight kilometers north of Ben Tre.

19 March 1969

Ninety Viet Cong were killed by units organic to and supporting the 9th Infantry Division, making this an average day from the standpoint of body count. The day was distinguished, however, by the large amount of enemy materiel which was captured. During the 2-60 Inf actions on 18 March an estimated forty sampans had been spotted from the air. The sampans, some containing 55 gallon drums, had been sunk in the Bo Bo Canal to prevent detection. A thorough search of the surrounding area was made on the 19th and one of the largest caches ever found in the area was uncovered. Distributed in clusters over 400 meters, the cache contained: 400 Chicom grenades, 24,000 rounds of AK-47 ammunition, forty-seven 107mm rockets, twenty-five 57mm recoilless rifle rounds, ten 75mm RR rounds, 600 82mm mortar rounds, and forty B-40 rocket fuzes. The most prolific confirmed killer in the 3d Brigade area on this date was 2-4 Arty which was credited with sixteen Viet Cong bodies, six coming during a mission fired in support of the 2-60 Inf airmobile operation.

This day was unusual for 1st Brigade in that elements of each infantry battalion participated at some time in airmobile operations. It was also distinguished by the fact that each member of the team contributed to the unrelenting bloodletting in the enemy's ranks that proceeded apace in Dinh Tuong and was further marked by capture of valuable enemy equipment. Fifty Viet Cong were killed by the infantry, artillery, Air Force strikes, and helicopter gunships. Gunships were most proficient in dislodging and eliminating the enemy, however, as A/7-1 Cav accounted for fourteen and the 191st Assault Helicopter Company for twenty-three. Five members of 2-39 Inf were wounded when their company was inserted by air into a heavily-mined area. The minefield was covered by fire and all five were wounded by small arms fire. The "Recondo" troopers netted six Viet Cong in spite of the dangerous situation. The remainder of the battalion was on a cordon and search operation and uncovered caches comprising 200 Chicom grenades, two RPG's, 1500 rounds of Chicom ammunition, 101 B-40 rockets with charges, one 15 pound shaped charge, eight rifle grenades, two 10 cc syringes, and 500,000 units of liquid penicillin. At about the same time but at another location A/4-39 found ten B-40 rounds, six 57mm RR rounds, one RPG, eighty-three Chicom grenades, forty-one rifle grenades, several mortar rounds, some gunpowder, and eight Bangalore torpedoes.

In Kien Hoa eighteen Viet Cong were killed in roughly equal numbers by the three infantry battalions and the air cavalry troop.

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20 March 1969

Enemy body count for the Division turned up sharply, due mainly to increased activity in 2d Brigade. Using the normal ground, water, and air transportation means, the three infantry battalions conducted checkerboard and reconnaissance and search operations which resulted in nineteen, nine, and ten VC KIA for 3-47 Inf, 4-47 Inf, and 3-60 Inf, respectively. Kills were also obtained by 3-34 Arty, the Rangers of E Company, 75th Infantry, and D/3-5 Cav.

In Dinh Tuong Province, 1-11 Arty was credited with five kills while providing supporting fires for 4-39 Inf, which eliminated five itself during a bushmaster operation. Earlier, snipers from 4-39 had killed five. Four enemy dead were added to the tally by 2-39 Inf, but the largest contribution was made by A/7-1 Cav which scattered thirty dead Viet Cong over a wide area during a Night Search lasting a little over three hours.

Seven of the ten enemy killed in the 3d Brigade area were downed by 2-47 Inf in a contact shortly after nightfall. Airmobile operations by 5-60 Inf continued to uncover caches of enemy materiel. On this date 496 pounds of plastic explosive, twenty-nine cases of TNT, 130 rounds of .50 caliber ammunition, nine 82mm mortar rounds, and 300 rounds of AK-47 ammunition were found. Speaking of the caches discovered over a period of three days, the Battalion Commander of 5-60 Inf declared, "I think we have found enough arms to supply a VC regiment in sustained action for a week. However, we know that the VC will not fight a sustained action, so in the long run we removed a month's supply from VC hands."

21 March 1969

In widely scattered, but unusually heavy contacts, 9th Division units killed 155 Viet Cong. Eighty of the enemy fell to the infantry and supporting arms in 2d Brigade's tactical area, where 4-47 Inf became embroiled in particularly fierce fighting. Action began just as night fell and Company A was moving into a night position following a daytime sweep of an area believed to be the base for fifty to sixty Viet Cong. A Tiger Scout assigned to 3d Platoon spotted three enemy soldiers and engaged them, whereupon the enemy retaliated with grenades, mortars, and rockets. It became suddenly apparent that the whole company was in an L-shaped ambush and was taking fire from three sides. The enemy then launched suicidal attacks with human waves. The company commander quickly adjusted artillery fire and directed gunships onto the attackers catching them in the open. The withering fire soon caused the attacks to subside and left forty dead enemy strewn about the battlefield. Friendly losses were only one killed and nine wounded. Said one of the US soldiers, "That night was worse than any movie I've ever seen. The enemy charged right up to our positions and threw grenades, but we finally beat them back. It was pretty near daylight before any of us got any sleep out there in the mud."

Most of the sixty-three kills in 1st Brigade were obtained during the day and resulted from airmobile operations. The Night Search was also very

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productive. An infantryman from 4-39 Inf, airborne with the Night Search force, gave a clue to the success of this tactic: "The Viet Cong seemed to be all over. We used tracer ammunition to mark them for the Cobra gunships. We found them in the open, on the rivers, running from hooches, in sampans, and everywhere we went." Airmobile and checkerboard operations by 3d Brigade units accounted for twelve deaths among the elusive enemy.

22 March 1969

The aggressive, small-unit tactics of 9th Division inflicted another large toll in enemy bodies. Seventy-seven of the Division's total of 137 were obtained by 2d Brigade, although no large single contacts were involved. Most significant was the immensely successful Night Search carried out by 3-60 Inf and D/3-5 Cav which resulted in thirty-eight bodies, twenty-five of which were attributed to the infantry marksmen. A Night Search by C/7-1 Cav in Dinh Tuong was also quite effective, killing eighteen. Airmobile operations by 4-39 Inf resulted in thirteen VC KIA, six of these by snipers assigned to the battalion. Infantry, artillery, and air cavalry made roughly equal contributions to the 3d Brigade total of nineteen enemy dead for the day.

23 March 1969

In terms of enemy eliminated this was the biggest day for the Division during the cited period. Two hundred and eighteen were killed, 155 by the 1st Brigade alone. Most of these were the result of the largest single battle which occurred from 25 January through 26 April. This action illustrated the rapidity with which a small unit can be reinforced and demonstrated that well-coordinated firepower can be substituted for the lives of infantrymen. This was the essence of 9th Infantry Division tactics and explains the tremendous kill ratio, 42:1, that characterized the entire cited period.

The Battle of Thanh Hung

The action in Dinh Tuong, on the fringe of Base Area 470, began at about 0400 hours when two companies from the 261A Viet Cong Main Force Battalion launched an attack against the night ambush positions occupied by two platoons of Company D, 4-39 Inf. The enemy onslaught was supported with heavy fire from rocket launchers and light machine guns. The defenders were not taken by surprise, however. The attackers had been spotted by the alert listening posts as the former had slipped into their attack positions. Thus, the artillery forward observer had called in a fire mission and the ambush patrol leaders had brought their men to a state of complete readiness.

As the Viet Cong approached their positions, men at the listening posts detonated Claymore mines. "They ran into one of our listening posts and got chewed up," said Staff Sergeant Michael Kidd. "Then they backed off and ran into my listening post. We waited until they were nearly on us, then we

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really shot them up." The exploding Claymores were the signal for the men manning the defensive perimeter to open fire. The enemy advance through the dense undergrowth was riddled with small arms and machine gun fire from the defenders, supplemented by effective artillery rounds. The ensuing enemy flight from the scene was hastened by rocket and minigun fire from 9th Aviation Battalion gunships. Captain Edward Cler, Commander of Company D, declared that the enemy had initiated a planned, coordinated attack, but had completely surrendered the initiative when hit with the mines. "They started yelling and screaming and it gave away their positions."

Just before dawn a sweep of the area was made, revealing thirty-five bodies and numerous weapons. The Battalion Commander made preparations to pursue the fleeing enemy. Combat tracker dogs were brought in to follow blood trails left by the enemy force, now estimated to be at least two companies. At first light the infantrymen moved out of their positions and began the chase. Contact was shortly established with a small group, from which a prisoner was taken. Battlefield interrogation by a Tiger Scout disclosed the enemy's withdrawal plan. The tracker dogs and "Recondo" troopers, supported overhead by C/7-1 Cav, pursued the enemy relentlessly through the ever-thickening nipa palm. More abandoned equipment and bodies were found. Artillery was repositioned to support the expected contact and additional infantry companies were alerted for a reinforcement mission.

At 1115 hours an aerial observer from the air cavalry observed the enemy soldiers moving hurriedly into prepared defensive bunkers. It appeared that the Viet Cong had retreated into their battalion base. Within minutes the Division Forward Air Controller guided Air Force jet strikes onto the bunker complex. Company D, 4-39 Inf, sealed off one side of the position. Companies A and C were inserted by air to the north and south, while A/6-31 Inf was moved in to seal the position on the east. Air strikes and artillery continued to pound the center of the "doughnut".

Eventually the bombs and artillery rounds began to break down the enemy fortifications and many of the enemy soldiers attempted to break and run. One enemy platoon ran headlong into Delta Company, but was unable to breach the encirclement. Other small groups were caught in the open on the south and wiped out by minigun and rocket fire from gunships. By nightfall the seal of the area was complete. Supporting fires poured into the position throughout the night as small bands of Viet Cong tried repeatedly to break out. Company D killed twenty-two of the enemy, defeating five separate escape attempts, and Company A, 4-39 Inf, killed a like number.

At first light on the 24th infantrymen moved cautiously into the devastated battle area, but no enemy remained alive to fight. Total body count for the two-day action was 168. In addition, much materiel was captured, including seven machine guns, sixty individual weapons, and parts of mortars, recoilless rifles, radios, and other equipment.

Action in the 3d Brigade's tactical area on the 23d resulted in thirty-six enemy dead. Twenty-one of these were felled by 2-47 Inf during a checkerboard operation. Scattered contact in Kien Hoa Province involving 2d Brigade units contributed twenty-seven to the Division's extraordinary total

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of enemy killed for the day. Fourteen VC KIA were netted by the 3-47 Inf footmobile operations.

24 March 1969

Action fell off from the previous day as the scattered 1st Brigade contacts in particular were somewhat anticlimactic. Second Brigade units took the largest toll of the enemy, forty-six. Footmobile checkerboard and bushmaster operations conducted by 3-47 Inf eliminated twenty of the enemy in Kien Hoa and a Night Hunter by 3-60 Inf and D/3-5 Cav netted twenty-one. Infrequent contact by 3d Brigade units in Long An resulted in thirteen VC KIA.

25 March 1969

Overall, the results of operations were below the recent average. In the 3d Brigade area they were higher, as airmobile and footmobile tactics brought on more than the usual amount of contact with the enemy and resulted in thirty-nine VC KIA. Although all units had a hand in the action, the airmobile operations of 2-60 Inf were most productive. The infantrymen were credited with seven enemy kills while the six cavalry, B/3-17 Cav, supporting the operation eliminated thirteen.

The same mix of tactics and transport means were employed in Dinh Tuong and Kien Hoa, but less contact developed and 1st and 2d Brigades contributed eighteen and twenty-seven enemy dead, respectively.

26 March 1969

Early in the morning "Old Reliabes" living in the Dong Tam base camp were roused out of bed by one more of the frequent enemy mortar attacks. This one took a very serious turn when a mortar touched off a tremendous explosion in the base ammunition dump. The explosion, which shook buildings as much as a mile and a half away, destroyed close to 500 tons of ammunition, and caused fifty-eight casualties, most of whom were Navy personnel living near the dump.

As the stockpiled munitions exploded, Sergeant John Robinson, NCOIC of the berm guard, mounted a jeep with the Officer in Charge and a duty driver. Even as the shrapnel from the explosions fell all around them, the three men moved from bunker to bunker along the sector nearest the dump, first checking for injured men and then instructing those on guard to move back to the command bunker as their positions were no longer safe from the increasing number of secondary explosions. The efforts of these men surely prevented several casualties, if not loss of life.

While the Viet Cong harassed Dong Tam with mortar fire, the Division played havoc with the enemy's night operations. "Old Reliabes" dropped 117 men from the enemy rolls, seventy of them during the night. Topping the list

were the infantrymen of 2d Brigade, who killed sixty-one of the enemy in Kien Hoa. In the largest night skirmish, Company B of 3d Battalion, 47th Infantry, moved into an area six miles southeast of Ben Tre in search of the elusive enemy. Intelligence reports which prompted the move proved to be accurate as the enemy was found in a thick coconut grove and twenty-two of his number killed during a night of sporadic fighting.

Eight of the 3d Brigade's twenty-nine kills came at night when an ambush from Company B, 5th Battalion, 60th Infantry, wiped out an entire 8-man enemy squad eight miles east of Tan An, capturing their weapons and eight B-40 rockets. Reconnoirs of the First Brigade picked off twenty-nine of the enemy, working with gunships of the 162d Assault Helicopter Company.

An engineer mine-clearing team discovered a new type of Viet Cong booby trap northeast of My Tho when they found two coconuts, each with a snake inside, in the middle of the road. Reportedly the snakes appeared to be drugged and ready to strike at anything.

#### 27 March 1969

Scattered, small contacts continued to be the rule as March drew to a close. One hundred and three Viet Cong were felled by the 9th Division on this day, but in almost all cases they were killed in groups of less than five. The three brigades shared equally in the day's toll, which was almost evenly divided between day and night kills.

Action throughout the day and night reiterated the pattern of enemy and friendly tactics already so damaging to the enemy. It also underlined the value of the division's air cavalry support as gunships from D/3-5 Cav, B/3-17 Cav, 9th Aviation Battalion, and the assault helicopter companies picked off enemy soldiers attempting to flee a contact area.

#### 28 March 1969

The combined arms team in 1st Brigade accounted for sixty-five of the Division total of 122. Forty-six of the Brigade kills came at night, due largely to a Night Search operation by A/7-1 Cav, which netted twenty-six. Of significance also were the actions of 3-39 Inf and a Ranger team. Shortly after occupation of its night positions, B/3-39 Inf was engaged by a Viet Cong platoon and killed six of the enemy before the contact broke. A five man reconnaissance team from Company E, 75th Rangers, had established a position in an abandoned bunker complex when they detected noise in front of their position. They sighted a number of Viet Cong approaching in a low crawl and engaged them at close range with M-16 fire, hand grenades, and grenade launchers. The enemy was forced to retreat, leaving twelve dead.

Second Brigade action was initiated by an airstrike which levelled a coconut grove and killed nine of the enemy. The four companies of 3-47 Inf conducted footmobile checkerboard and bushmaster operations and contributed to the battalion's body count of seventeen. The remaining fifteen of the

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Brigade's kills were spread thinly throughout the tactical area.

Third Brigade "Go-Devils" scattered sixteen enemy bodies throughout Long An Province but dealt a hard blow to the enemy staying power by the capture of thirteen tons of rice. An element of 2-47 Inf found the rice in a hut during a sweep of a heavily-booby trapped area.

29 March 1969

Contact with the enemy dropped off considerably, particularly in Long An where 3d Brigade forces killed only seven in scattered actions. Footmobile and airmobile operations produced more significant results in the 1st and 2d Brigade areas. Of the forty-two body count in the former, thirty-three were attributable to operations utilizing the Brigade's air assets. Infantrymen from 2-39 Inf killed nine in the late afternoon following an airmobile operation by 4-39 Inf which had netted eight Viet Cong. Alpha Troop, 7-1 Cav, was credited with sixteen kills during a Night Hunter which took place prior to midnight.

In Kien Hoa, no longer the exclusive domain of the Viet Cong, the most significant action was another highly successful Night Raid. Acting on a fresh bit of intelligence, infantrymen from 3-60 Inf eliminated eleven of the enemy. Gunships from D/3-5 Cav accounted for three while covering the ground element from above. Elsewhere in 2d Brigade, a bushmaster operation carried out by 3-47 Inf resulted in a body count of seven.

30 March 1969

Although the Division was able to eliminate over one hundred of the enemy, no large contacts were involved. Of significance in the 1st Brigade area was the especially large percentage of night kills, attributable mainly to a Night Hunter carried out by A/7-1 Cav. Forty-seven of the Brigade's sixty-four kills occurred at night and thirty-seven of these occurred during the four-hour Night Hunter which ended at midnight. Airmobile operations figured prominently in the results obtained by the other two brigades, also. In Kien Hoa 3-60 Inf killed thirteen during a number of insertions. Watermobile operations by 3-47 Inf added nine Viet Cong bodies to the Brigade total. The same pattern of "Jitterbug" operations took place in the 3d Brigade area. Infantrymen inserted into a rice paddy, found the Viet Cong in a nearby tree-line and flushed them out, engaged them with small arms and set them up as an easy target for the helicopter gunships. In Long An this tactic, executed by 2-60 Inf and the 240th Assault Helicopter Company, accounted for fourteen dead.

31 March 1969

The tempo quickened noticeably in Kien Hoa and Dinh Tuong Provinces. Action in both locales was marked by contact with unusually large Viet Cong forces. The action in Dinh Tuong involving 2-39 Inf began when the battalion command and control helicopter flew close to the ground to investigate a man

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behaving suspiciously. The ship immediately was taken under fire from a nearby treeline and the battalion commander directed the insertion of two platoons to cut off escape routes for whatever force might be concealed in the heavy nipa palm and underbrush. The battalion commander behaved courageously in instructing the helicopter pilot to remain over the contact area at very low altitude so that he might better control the action on the ground. His adroit handling of the friendly forces caused the elimination of thirty-four Viet Cong without the loss of a single US soldier. As the action waned, the commander detected several enemy attempting an escape from the area, caused his command and control ship to land, and personally captured four prisoners. He performed a similar act a short time later, this time capturing a Viet Cong who was fleeing in a sampan.

In other, scatter actions 4-39 Inf added eight enemy dead to the Brigade's total for the day of seventy-eight. A Night Hunter operation by A/7-1 Cav contributed twenty more.

Third Battalion, 47th Infantry, came into contact with a Viet Cong Company while conducting ambush patrols northeast of Ben Tre. The infantrymen killed twenty-seven in this night action while incurring no casualties. Earlier in the day the battalion had eliminated nine. During the day's airmobile insertions, carried out by 3-60 Inf and the 162d Assault Helicopter Company, eighteen enemy were killed, fifteen by the infantry. At other locations within the 2d Brigade's tactical area 4-47 Inf killed six and D/3-5 Cav picked off nine. Another day of very light contact with the enemy in Long An resulted in seven kills by 3d Brigade forces.

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1 April 1969

Enemy losses to 9th Infantry Division operations were 115, slightly more than the average daily body count. These were divided about equally between day and night kills and were amassed, in descending order of their contribution by forces under the control of 1st, 2d, and 3d Brigades. The same assortment of tactics that had proven so successful in the past weeks was used, enabling the Division to locate and destroy by bits and pieces the highly dispersed Viet Cong. Assault troops were transported by helicopter, armored personnel carrier, air cushion vehicle, and watercraft. Many, of course, fought their way on foot through mud, water, heavy vegetation, and booby traps.

The success obtained by 4-39 Inf in the 1st Brigade tactical area was typical of that which might befall any one of the infantry battalions on any given day. The infantrymen killed twenty-seven while conducting footmobile bushmaster and checkerboard, and airmobile "Jitterbug" operations. The largest single group of enemy found and destroyed contained only five Viet Cong. Six members of the battalion were wounded by booby traps. Aviation support for the Brigade made its usual hefty contribution to the final result: C/7-1 Cav killed ten enemy during a Night Search and the gunships of 191st Assault Helicopter Company eliminated seven while participating in the day's airmobile operations.

Most of the VC KIA in 2d Brigade were attributed to the infantry. Third Battalion, 47th Infantry, engaged and killed fifteen, 3-60 Inf wiped out twelve, and 4-47 Inf accounted for seven, five of which were picked off by snipers. In Long An 2-60 Inf of 3d Brigade rooted out and killed nine during a checkerboard operation. The remaining kills in this area were attributed, in ones and twos, to the other infantry battalions, airstrikes, direct support and reinforcing artillery, and air cavalry.

2 April 1969

The Division total of 138 enemy killed made this another highly successful day, although it was not distinguished by any large contacts. Most productive on this date were the operations by 2d Brigade in Kien Hoa, where sixty-four of the enemy fell. All three infantry battalions participated during the day in airmobile operations and these together with footmobile tactics resulted in thirteen, twelve, and eleven VC KIA for 3-47 Inf, 4-47 Inf, and 3-60 Inf, respectively. Men from 3-60 Inf added six kills during a Night Search. Others of the battalion, sweeping an area after an airmobile insertion, came upon a mass grave containing the bodies of nineteen Viet Cong.

Scattered, small contacts between US infantrymen and the enemy in Dinh Tuong left sixteen of the enemy dead. In the evening C/7-1 Cav executed another of the deadly Night Searches, killing twenty. Activity in Long An began to pick up and 3d Brigade actions there downed twenty-five of the enemy. Troops from 2-47 Inf executed a Raid on an intelligence target and killed seven while a supporting air strike took the lives of four. The target area

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was blanketed with booby traps, however, all three separate incidents took the life of one US soldier and wounded six others. Airmobile operations of 2-60 Inf added seven to the Brigade total and B/3-17 Cav, the supporting air cavalry troop, contributed an additional six.

3 April 1969

This was the first of four days of slackened activity and light contact with the enemy within the Division TAOI. Eighty-four enemy were killed, forty of them by 3d Brigade forces. Most fruitful were the operations of 2-60 Inf which began the day by engaging successfully five Viet Cong shortly after midnight. The battalion conducted extensive airmobile operations during the day with B/3-17 Cav and the 240th Assault Helicopter Company. Twenty-nine of the enemy were eliminated, nineteen by the infantry, and five each by the two aviation units. While supporting the ground force during one of the insertions, 2-4 Arty accounted for an additional five.

The small unit tactics employed by the 9th Infantry Division during the cited period were designed to cover large areas quickly and increase the probability of contact with the enemy. That they were tremendously successful overall cannot be questioned, but contact on any one day was never guaranteed. In the 1st Brigade area, where contact with the enemy was usually frequent, only a few small, widely scattered contacts occurred and resulted in eleven enemy dead, but the cost was high as nine "Recondos" were wounded by booby traps and one by small arms fire.

In the 2d Brigade results were moderate. Eight Viet Cong were killed by 3-47 Inf during airmobile and checkerboard operations while 4-47 Inf eliminated five. In a Night Raid D/3-5 Cav eliminated eight enemy and 3-60 Inf killed seven on an airmobile operation, also at night.

Airmobile operations at night are particularly hazardous. Coordination and control of the helicopters and ground troops, if an insertion takes place, is especially difficult. Aggressiveness and individual courage are essential if such tactics are to be successful and not involve large friendly casualties. An important reason that the 9th Division infantrymen demonstrated these qualities so consistently was the fearless leadership which they followed. The actions of Captain William Perkins during the Night Search by 3-60 Inf illustrate this. His small force encountered only very light contact after an insertion and a "slick" was called in to pick up the group. The ship received a sudden burst of heavy fire as it touched down and in the rush to complete the pick-up, left one man on the ground. Captain Perkins directed the pilot to land again in the dark. During the descent the pilot was wounded in the leg and hand, and though he struggled to control the ship, it crashed, pinning Perkins beneath it. Freed from the wreckage and painfully wounded, the Captain directed the firefight and controlled the extraction of every member of his force. He departed the area on the last chopper.

4 April 1969

This was another day of relatively light action. Third Battalion, 47th Infantry, covered a lot of ground in Kien Hoa with footmobile operations and flushed out a number of Viet Cong, killing twenty-two. The artillerymen from 3-34 Arty supported the men on foot and were credited with two VC KIA during one fire mission. Footmobile and watermobile operations of 4-47 Inf netted thirteen enemy bodies. Eight men in the Brigade were wounded by booby traps. The evasive tactics of the enemy in Long An were more successful, as infantry, artillery, air cavalry, and assault helicopter gunships shared about equally in eliminating only sixteen.

In Dinh Tuong snipers from 3-39 Inf picked off three Viet Cong, checkerboard patrols of 4-39 Inf killed twelve, and a Ranger team eliminated eight. The Night Search by D/3-5 Cav increased the total by six. An element from 4-39 Inf demonstrated the initiative and zeal which made so many night operations successful. Captain Edward Clark was moving with his company headquarters section into a night position when a reinforced enemy squad was observed entering a woodline fifty meters away. With no time to spare for mustering a larger force, Clark formed his small band into a hasty ambush. An initial volley of fire downed five of the enemy and forced the remainder to take cover. Captain Clark organized and led an immediate assault against the enemy position, causing the Viet Cong to flee but killing two more.

5 April 1969

The seventy-four VC KIA obtained by the Division was the lowest daily total in thirty-seven days, since late February. Only 2d Brigade operations were rewarded with something near the usual success, thirty-six. Checkerboard, bushmaster, and cordon and search operations by 3-47 Inf and 4-47 Inf were responsible for the elimination of twenty-two. Air cavalry from D/3-5 Cav and infantrymen from 3-60 Inf carried out a Night Raid which killed eight enemy and destroyed several structures. Airmobility figured prominently in the "Reconde" and "Go-Devil" actions. Ninth Aviation Battalion gunships, in support of 1st Brigade, killed ten on a Night Search in Dinh Tuong Province. In Long An troops from 2-60 Inf, inserted by helicopter, killed ten.

6 April 1969

Relatively frequent contact with the enemy resumed. In the 2d Brigade 4-47 Inf searched a large area on foot and made one watermobile assault. Although the battalion killed thirteen in the day's actions, this latter assault proved costly. Charlie Company was able to kill seven of the enemy, but fifteen of its men were wounded. Twelve were victims of several explosive devices emplaced in a "Daisy Chain". The importance of operating within range of supporting artillery was demonstrated during this contact, as supporting fires from 3-34 Arty took the lives of four of the enemy. Third Battalion, 60th Infantry, conducted airmobile operations and killed eleven during the day. Men from the battalion combined with crews from the 9th Aviation Battalion on a Night Raid in the evening. This operation resulted

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in eleven enemy dead and the destruction of eight sampans.

Very little contact developed in the 3d Brigade tactical area. Three enemy were killed by 2-60 Inf following airmobile insertions and gunships from E/3-17 Cav and the 240th AHC felled six more. Several Viet Cong were surprised and killed by ambushes carried out by 1st Brigade units. From their ambush positions along waterways of Viet Cong infiltration and communication routes infantrymen from 2-39 Inf and 4-39 Inf killed fourteen and destroyed four sampans. Other scattered contact resulted in eighteen enemy dead, eight of which were attributable to the gunships from D/3-5 Cav and the 191st AHC.

A vital ingredient in the "infantryman-helicopter team", whose teamwork was indispensable to the Division's success, is the light observation helicopter. This small craft "flies point" on "Jitterbug" and Eagle Flight operations and the alert eyes of its pilot are often the first to see the enemy. This pilot has a dangerous mission, flying very close to the ground, and valor is a way of life for him. A LOH team from D/3-5 Cav was reconnoitering an area when the enemy was suddenly spotted in a fortified bunker line. The lead ship was immediately enveloped by heavy ground fire and crashed. Acting quickly and with disregard for his own safety, 1Lt Hubert McMinn placed fire from his trail ship onto the enemy position in a deliberate attempt to draw fire away from the downed ship and its crew. He then landed his LOH between the crippled ship and the enemy, picked up the wounded men, and piloted his overloaded craft back to base.

7 April 1969

The total of enemy eliminated by the Division climbed back over 100, reaching 118 on this date. Substantial contacts developed in all three Brigade areas. Two battalions, 3-47 Inf and 4-47 Inf, of 2d Brigade continued their footmobile and watermobile search operations. Together they killed twenty-four Viet Cong. Airmobile insertions at several locations were carried out during the day by 3-60 Inf, which also struck an intelligence target after dark. The Night Raid accounted for seven enemy dead. Additional enemy fell to the air cavalry, artillery, airstrikes, and assault helicopters.

Contact in Long An increased and was highlighted by a very successful search operation by the mechanized infantry of 2-47 Inf. Lasting most of the afternoon, the search resulted in twelve enemy bodies. The "Jitterbug" employed by elements of 1st Brigade was especially productive on this day. The airborne personnel detector led the 3-39 Inf into an action that resulted in thirty enemy dead and several valuable prisoners. "We got some people sniffer readings and were ready to insert when my operations officer spotted five VC and that started the whole thing," explained the battalion commander. Several insertions were made to block escape routes of the force estimated to be a company. The airmobile team was self-reinforcing as 3-39 Inf killed eight, 6-31 Inf seven, B/3-17 Cav three, and the 191st AHC twelve.

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8 April 1969

The most significant action took place in Long An, southeast of Ben Luc. A company from 2-47 Inf had established night ambush positions near a location of a substantial weapons cache which had been discovered in late March. An enemy force estimated to consist of seventy-five men returned to the area, apparently to resupply, and in a two hour period beginning at 2050 hours, A/2-47 Inf killed forty-two and captured one. The enemy force was identified as part of the North Vietnamese Army K4 Battalion. A platoon sergeant, whose ambush patrol was within 200 meters of the cache site, described the detection of the NVA force: "They moved right by our position, some as close as five meters. We let them pass before opening up. They had begun to poke around where the cache had been hidden." Another sergeant commented that the enemy force had been well-disciplined and maintained, but the surprise and ferocity of the ambush had routed the force completely. An element from 4-50 ARVN Regiment reinforced the US company and added five enemy bodies to the toll. No Americans were killed in the action.

The familiar 9th Infantry Division tactics were employed in the other two Brigade areas. They resulted in little success in Kien Hoa, where only fourteen enemy were hunted down, but brought about the death of thirty-eight Viet Cong in the 1st Brigade's area of Dinh Tuong. The distribution was typical: nineteen for the infantry on footmobile and airmobile operations, ten for the 191st AHC in support, three for D/3-5 Cav, and six for 9th Aviation Battalion gunships during a Night Search.

9 April 1969

The preponderance of this day's kills was obtained in day action and was mainly the result of airmobile operations. In the 1st Brigade the air assets were employed by 2-39 Inf and the combination accounted for thirty-eight VC KIA. The bulk of these were downed by the gunships of 191st Assault Helicopter Company, and most were in a single group later identified as an element of the Kien Tuong 504 Battalion. The ground operations of 3-47 Inf and 4-47 Inf weighed more heavily in the 2d Brigade's results, contributing twenty-one, but the airmobile team of 3-60 Inf and 162d AHC downed nine of the enemy and a Night Search by D/3-5 Cav killed six. Similarly, 2-60 Inf and the 240th Assault Helicopter Company eliminated twelve in Long An Province.

10 April 1969

Activity fluctuated over a greater range during the remaining seventeen days of the period. On the night of 10-11 April numerous incidents were initiated by the enemy throughout III and IV Corps Tactical Zones. Twenty of these occurred in the 9th Infantry Division's TAOL, ten being attacks by indirect fire. Nonetheless, it became increasingly more difficult to locate and eliminate the many small bands of Viet Cong. This was particularly noticeable in the relative decline in the number of night kills, a sign that

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the enemy had realized he could no longer move about with impunity during the hours of darkness. Thus, the remainder of the cited period contains several days of proportionately low body count, intermingled with some days on which it was possible to trap larger enemy forces.

This day was marked only by successful operations against the foe in Kien Hoa. The constant probing by small friendly units moving on foot and with watercraft resulted in fifteen VC KIA for 3-47 Inf and fourteen for 4-47 Inf. Airmobile operations by 3-60 Inf accounted for seven and 3-34 Arty was credited with seven while firing in support of all three battalions. A ranger team from E Company, 75th Infantry, operated in the area and wiped out six of the enemy.

Forces under control of 1st Brigade eliminated thirty-two. These were scattered over the whole tactical area more widely than usual. The day's "take" was costly to the infantrymen combing the rice paddies and nipa palm along canals: one was killed and twelve were wounded by booby traps. All the enemy killed in the 3d Brigade area were attributable to supporting fires, seven to air strikes and four to 2-4 Arty.

That psychological operations have an immediate operational payoff as well as long-run benefits was demonstrated again in Kien Hoa. Two Ho Chi Minh led elements of 3-47 Inf to a 55-gallon drum which was filled with surgical instruments and medical supplies. The two rascals then proceeded with the Americans to a laboratory and bunkered hospital complex. Two Viet Cong were killed and several weapons captured.

#### 11 April 1969

After a night in which he had attacked several military installations and populated areas with mortars, the enemy kept well-concealed. He lost only seventy to the 9th Division on this day. The mortar attack on a company base camp near Vinh Kim, west of Dong Tam, was an unusually big success for the Viet Cong. Two Americans were killed and nineteen wounded, all from 6-31 Inf. Checkerboard operations by the battalion during the day resulted in death for six of the enemy, and a bushmaster by 4-39 Inf netted ten. The airmobile team of 2-39 Inf and the 191st Assault Helicopter Company added another nine to the 1st Brigade total. Second Brigade forces farcd even more poorly, suffering twelve wounded, mostly by booby traps, while killing only thirteen. The airmobile operation in Long An, carried out by 2-60 Inf and the 240th AHC, was more remunerative, eliminating sixteen.

#### 12 April 1969

For the second day in a row Division operations met with relatively meager success. Thirty-three of the sixty-two "Old Reliable" kills came in Kien Hoa. Third Battalion, 47th Infantry, killed eleven during a checkerboard and suffered no casualties. Elsewhere booby traps and

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enemy small arms fire mitigated the success of footmobile and airmobile operations. Using the air assets during the day, 3-60 Inf killed three, but encountered a booby trap on one insertion that wounded four of its men. A Night Search resulted in five VC KIA without mishap, however. A few more Viet Cong fell to the fires of 3-34 Arty and 9th Aviation Battalion gunships. Men from the 1097th Boat Company and 9th Signal Battalion were injured by small arms fire while supporting the 2d Brigade.

In Dinh Tuong 4-39 Inf moved on foot during a bushmaster and a checkerboard. The "Hard Core Reconos" killed eleven with no friendly casualties. Answering their call for fire, 1-11 Arty was credited with one Viet Cong killed by body count. Gunships from 191st AHC downed four enemy while supporting the airmobile operation of 3-39 Inf. Scattered, email contacts by 3d Brigade troops resulted in eleven enemy dead, but this small success was marred by Viet Cong booby traps, road mines, and small arms fire, which killed two and wounded ten US soldiers.

#### 13 April 1969

The enemy fell more than doubled from the previous day, mounting to 160. This was mainly the result of contact in 1st and 2d Brigade areas with enemy elements of larger than normal size. Searching in Base Area 470 Infantrymen of 4-39 Inf came upon a force of unknown size and identity, called upon artillery and air cavalry support, and initiated an action that wiped out forty-one Viet Cong. These were distributed among 4-39 Inf, 1-11 Arty, and B/3-17 Cav in groups of twenty-six, eleven, and four, respectively. Aggressive infantry tactics and liberal use of firepower proved effective again in minimizing friendly losses; only three infantrymen were wounded by small arms fire. In other 1st Brigade actions, 2-39 Inf killed six throughout the day, having begun the day shortly after midnight during a mortar attack on its base camp at Fire Support Base Schroeder. Combing the area adjacent to Dong Tam, an area with many booby traps but few Viet Cong, 6-31 Inf killed six.

Another unidentified unit was contacted by 4-47 Inf five kilometers northeast of Ben Tre. In seven hours of mid-day fighting, the infantrymen killed fifteen, 3-34 Arty six, and airstrikes seven. Footmobile search operations by 3-47 Inf accounted for twelve VC KIA, and airmobile operations by 3-60 Inf increased the total by twenty-five. Nine of these were obtained at night on a Night Search. Delta Troop, 3-5 Cav, supported this Search and killed three. The "Go-Devil" airmobile combination of 2-60 Inf, B/3-17 Cav, and 9th Aviation Battalion helicopters killed nine over a wide area.

#### 14 April 1969

Operations this date were not marked by significant developments, as the enemy body count of ninety-three was by now only average. No

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contact with a sizesble force occurred. Footmobile operations by 4-39 Inf were most productive in 1st Brigade. The foot soldiers on a bushmaster and checkerboard patrols killed fourteen and called on 1-11 Arty for support. The artillarymen added eight to the body count. The "River Raiders" in 3-47 Inf and 4-47 Inf operated on foot and eliminated twenty-two Viet Cong, fifteen by the latter battalion alone. Airmobile operations in the 2d Brigade were effective, also, as 3-60 Inf chased down thirteen of the enemy. Nine of these were successfully engaged by the battalion snipers. Alpha Troop, 7-1 Cav, supported 2d Brigade and killed seven on a Night Search.

Airmobility was responsible for the bulk of the kills in Long An. During several insertions the men from 2-60 Inf killed four, the supporting air cavalry nine, and gunships from 240th AHC one.

#### 15 April 1969

Although there was no lull in friendly operations, another lull in contact did occur. Each element of the Division's combined arms team contributed a few to the total body count of seventy-five. While footmobile operations were most effective in Dinh Tuong and Kien Hoa, the airmobile force continued to be most productive in Long An. Moving exclusively on foot in the area southeast of Ben Tre, 3-47 Inf made this another long day for the Viet Cong. Of the battalion's twenty-six kills, nine were by snipers. Coupled with the three sniper kills in 1st Brigade, this provided more vivid evidence of the value of the Division's sniper training.

An incident on this day also left no doubt about the extremely hazardous nature of the mission assigned to the infantry-helicopter team. Two men were killed and six wounded during an insertion of troops from 3-60 Inf when the helicopter struck a booby-trapped mine.

#### 16 April 1969

Daily body count fluctuated wildly in mid-April. The figure increased from seventy-five on this date to 127 and was destined to fall back to seventy-seven on the following day. Most impressive were the results in Kien Hoa Province. Conducting airmobile operations in one of the strongest of the Viet Cong strongholds, the area around Mo Cay, 3-60 Inf killed twenty-eight. In fighting that lasted all afternoon, men from three companies rooted the enemy out of dense vegetation along streams and canals, while exposing themselves to booby traps and small arms fire. Observing the action from the battalion Command and Control helicopter, the air operations officer described the action: "Kills weren't easy to come by. Our people were pushing through some very thick nipa palm and kept getting sniper fire all day. They moved quickly and were able to kill them in two's and three's." In other Brigade action 3-47 Inf conducted search operations on foot and eliminated sixteen Viet Cong. Operating from boats, 4-47 Inf was equally successful, killing

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eleven. Airstrikes added to the heavy toll in Kien Hoa. Air Force jets wiped out eight and artillery fire from 3-34 Arty six.

The remaining Division kills were scattered thinly and about equally over the 1st and 3d Brigade tactical areas. The only significant single operation was Night Search by 9th Aviation Battalion which sought out and killed twelve in Dinh Tuong.

17 April 1969

Moderate contact with the Viet Cong was made by 1st and 2d Brigade units, but airmobile and footmobile searches in Long An found nothing but "dry holes". In Dinh Tuong most of the infantry kills were made by 4-39 Inf, which maintained its relentless search in western Dinh Tuong by checkerboard, bushmaster, and cordon and search operations. The result was sixteen enemy dead. Fire support activities were effective, as well. Four Viet Cong were killed by the fires of 1-11 Arty, five by B/3-17 Cav, and seven by the 191st AHC.

In the 2d Brigade a flurry of air and ground movements by 3-60 Inf accounted for seven Viet Cong bodies during the day and a Night Raid in partnership with D/3-5 Cav added seven more. Snipers with 3-47 Inf picked off four enemy soldiers while 4-47 Infantrymen accounted for seven and an airstrike for four.

18 April 1969

This was a day of great success in Dinh Tuong and Kien Hoa and also the first of a two-day contact by 3d Brigade forces with another NVA battalion in Long An. This latter action illustrates the interrelation of psychological, intelligence, and tactical operations. This operation actually commenced on 5 April when a Hoi Chanh, under interrogation by the 9th MI Detachment, revealed what he believed to be the location of a NVA battalion headquarters complex. This lead was further substantiated by the reports of local agents and a program of discreet reconnaissance was initiated.

In the early afternoon of the 18th B/2-47 Inf was inserted by air to the south of the target, located east of Highway 4 between Ben Luc and Tan An. Charlie Company moved in armored personnel carriers to block on the north. Under heavy fire from small arms and RPG's the battalion commander maneuvered his forces to complete a "seal". Movement was tough and dangerous, especially for the airmobile force. "I was watching the ground for booby traps when bullets started hitting the ground around my feet," said a squad leader. "If the VC had waited a few more minutes, they would have caught us in a heavily booby trapped area because later on we found ten booby traps set six feet apart." Rather than attack the fortified positions before dark, the battalion commander called on airstrikes and artillery to soften them and illuminate the area throughout the night to prevent escapes. "Spooky" and "Shadow"

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aircraft were on station continuously and seventeen secondary explosions were observed. A sweep of the area on the morning of the 19th revealed thirty-one enemy bodies, several weapons, and twenty-five pounds of documents. One prisoner was identified as the finance officer of the K5 NVA Battalion. One hundred and twenty bunkers with overhead cover had been destroyed. Only one US soldier had been killed and two wounded.

Sixty-three enemy were eliminated by 1st Brigade forces on the 18th, seventeen of these by snipers operating with 2-39, 4-39, and 6-31 Inf. The Brigade's airmobile operation found several groups of Viet Cong along the streams and canals and accounted for forty-two enemy dead, twenty-two by 4-39 Inf, nine by 1-11 Arty, five by D/3-5 Cav, and six by the 191st Assault Helicopter Company.

In Kien Hoa footmobile operations by 3-47 Inf dispatched ten of the enemy and 4-47 Inf, also moving on foot, killed six. Ninth Aviation Battalion crews and men from 3-60 Inf executed a Night Search which reaped an additional nineteen and destroyed eleven sampans. After an airmobile insertion an element of 3-47 Inf discovered a cache containing twenty-one Chinese carbines, thirteen revolvers, fifty-nine submachine guns, one .30 caliber machine gun, and one 60mm mortar.

#### 19 April 1969

Counting several bodies from the 3d Brigade action already described, Division troops killed ninety-nine of the enemy on this date. This was truly an example of "salami" tactics, however, as no operation was able to make contact with a sizeable Viet Cong force. Virtually every combat arm contributed a few kills to the Recendo Brigade total. The ground troops of 4-39 Inf were most successful, eliminating seventeen, six of which were victims of deadly sniper fire. Besides other infantry troops, the following killed Viet Cong in groups ranging in size from one to seven: airstrikes, 1-11 Arty, 191st AHC, C/7-1 Cav, and E/75th Rangers. Worthy of note in Kien Hoa action is the Night Raid by 3-60 Inf and 9th Aviation Battalion. This accounted for nine of 2d Brigade's total of twenty-three.

#### 20 April 1969

Night ambuskers and helicopter night tactics accounted for thirty-eight of 1st Brigade's forty-eight kills. Once the tactic most frequently used by the Viet Cong against American troops, the ambush has been employed by the 9th Division to great advantage. Each night several ambushes are established by small units along water routes known to be Viet Cong lines of communication. The effect has been to greatly impede the flow of men and equipment into and through the Division TAOI. Such an ambush established late on the 19th along a small stream west of Giao Duc affords a good example of the piecemeal elimination of the enemy that characterized 9th Division operations. At 0125 hours a sampan moved stealthily along the stream and was engaged with hand grenades when it came abreast of the

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Authority NNO 927650By TS NARA Date 5/25/99DAILY ENEMY CASUALTIES FROM 9TH INFANTRY DIVISION OPERATIONS

<u>Date</u>	<u>VC KIA (BC)</u>			<u>Date</u>	<u>VC KIA (BC)</u>		
	<u>Day</u>	<u>Night</u>	<u>Total</u>		<u>Day</u>	<u>Night</u>	<u>Total</u>
25 Jan	54	6	60	12 Mar	44	54	98
26 Jan	63	19	82	13 Mar	55	80	135
27 Jan	42	25	67	14 Mar	32	60	92
28 Jan	22	11	33	15 Mar	59	100	159
29 Jan	12	6	18	16 Mar	39	67	106
30 Jan	39	47	86	17 Mar	48	40	88
31 Jan	16	41	57	18 Mar	71	20	91
1 Feb	21	21	42	19 Mar	76	14	90
2 Feb	69	18	87	20 Mar	42	64	106
3 Feb	41	24	65	21 Mar	75	80	155
4 Feb	18	25	43	22 Mar	66	71	137
5 Feb	13	15	28	23 Mar	118	100	218
6 Feb	25	23	48	24 Mar	43	44	87
7 Feb	20	11	31	25 Mar	68	16	84
8 Feb	14	37	51	26 Mar	47	70	117
9 Feb	34	22	56	27 Mar	55	48	103
10 Feb	25	9	34	28 Mar	49	73	122
11 Feb	43	27	70	29 Mar	53	37	90
12 Feb	16	19	35	30 Mar	48	61	109
13 Feb	30	9	39	31 Mar	88	70	158
14 Feb	71	55	126	1 Apr	52	63	115
15 Feb	16	36	52	2 Apr	94	44	138
16 Feb	41	8	49	3 Apr	49	35	84
17 Feb	15	17	32	4 Apr	42	45	87
18 Feb	45	20	65	5 Apr	39	35	74
19 Feb	7	10	17	6 Apr	49	42	91
20 Feb	111	21	132	7 Apr	77	41	118
21 Feb	34	28	62	8 Apr	37	71	108
22 Feb	52	43	95	9 Apr	84	23	107
23 Feb	55	49	104	10 Apr	59	32	91
24 Feb	79	8	87	11 Apr	55	15	70
25 Feb	43	74	117	12 Apr	45	17	62
26 Feb	29	32	61	13 Apr	102	58	160
27 Feb	26	56	82	14 Apr	49	44	93
28 Feb	62	28	90	15 Apr	43	32	75
1 Mar	50	50	100	16 Apr	83	44	127
2 Mar	54	23	77	17 Apr	46	31	77
3 Mar	103	38	141	18 Apr	87	39	126
4 Mar	57	37	94	19 Apr	64	35	99
5 Mar	60	35	95	20 Apr	54	55	109
6 Mar	52	79	131	21 Apr	67	43	110
7 Mar	43	79	122	22 Apr	57	34	91
8 Mar	53	58	111	23 Apr	48	57	105
9 Mar	45	40	85	24 Apr	97	61	158
10 Mar	52	27	79	25 Apr	46	60	106
11 Mar	57	67	124	26 Apr	116	11	127
				Totals	4746	3669	8415

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## ENEMY ELIMINATED\*

	<u>25 Jan-28 Feb</u>	<u>1-31 Mar</u>	<u>1-26 Apr</u>	<u>Total</u>
Day Inf	846	1141	1003	2990
Night Inf	322	845	530	1697
Day Cav	415	572	380	1367
Night Cav	455	580	299	1334
Snipers	124	211	297	632
Other (Arty, AF, etc)	212	377	378	967
Total	2374	3727	2887	8988

\*Includes KIA, PW, HoI Chanh, and VCI

9TH INF DIV

DIVISION DAY OPERATIONS

FOR THE PERIOD 27 MAR - 26 APR

OPERATION	SQUAD	PLAT	CO	BN	REMARKS
AMBUSH	0	78	85	129	
RIF	3	424	274	431	
CHECKERBOARD	2	70	76	17	
BUSHMASTER	2	106	69	48	
PILE ON	0	2	1	0	
PATROL	8	128	15	0	
RAID	5	9	0		
SEARCH	0	17	8	0	
TOTAL	0	40	41	6	EQUIVALENT PLATOONS MANEUVER ELEMENTS
OFFENSE	15	365	569	631	2574
INSTAL DEFENSE	8	76	74	6	669
OTHER	0	447	0	0	650
TOTAL	0	371	93	0	3893/721
	15	1683	736	637	
	8	76			

KEY: (1) 3 SQUADS = 1 EQUIVALENT PLATOON

(2) 1 COMPANY = 3 EQUIVALENT PLATOONS

UNITS	CONTACTS
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9TH INF DIV

DIVISION NIGHT OPERATIONS

FOR THE PERIOD 27 MAR - 26 APR

OPERATION	SQUAD	PLAT	CO	BN	REMARKS
AMBUSH	1070 53	686 119	0 0		
RIF	0 0	0 0	0 0		
CHECKERBOARD	0 0	0 0	61 38		
BUSHMASTER	0 0	0 0	296 91		
PILE ON	0 0	0 0	0 0		
PATRCL	0 1	1 0	0 0		
RAID	0 2	4 2	0 0		
SEARCH	5 99	0 0	0 0		EQUIVALENT PLATOONS MANEUVER ELEMENTS
TOTAL OFFENSE	1075 155	691 121	357 129		2121
INSTAL DEFENSE	142 0	699 61	0 0		746
OTHER	40 0	1014 0	0 0		1026
TOTAL	1257 155	2404 182	357 129		3893/339

KEY: (1) 3 SQUADS = 1 EQUIVALENT PLATOON

(2) 1 COMPANY = 3 EQUIVALENT PLATOONS

UNITS	CONTACTS
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9TH INF DIV

TOTAL DIVISION OPERATIONS

FOR THE PERIOD 27 MAR - 26 APR

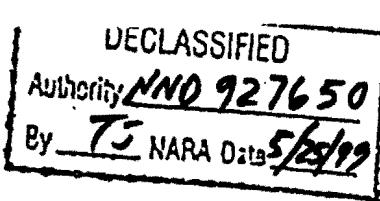
OPERATION	SQUAD	PLAT	CO	BN	REMARKS
AMBUSH	1070 53	764 130	85 129		
RIF	3 3	424 39	274 431		
CHECKERBOARD	2 0	70 2	137 55		
BUSHMASTER	2 0	106 10	365 139		
PILE ON	0 0	2 0	1 0		
PATROL	8 6	129 9	15 0		
RAID	0 2	21 4	8 0		
SEARCH	5 99	40 3	41 6		EQUIVALENT PLATOONS MANEUVER ELEMENTS
TOTAL OFFENSE	1090 163	1556 197	926 760		4695
INSTAL DEFENSE	142 0	1146 61	74 6		1415
OTHER	40 0	485 0	93 0		1676
TOTAL	1272 163	3187 258	1093 766		7786/1060

KEY: (1) 3 SQUADS = 1 EQUIVALENT PLATOON

(2) 1 COMPANY = 3 EQUIVALENT PLATOONS

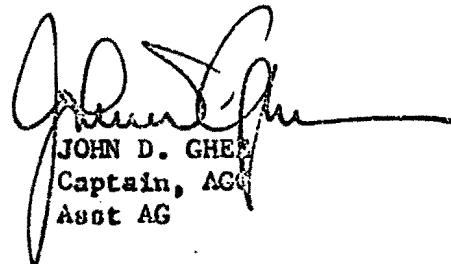
UNITS  
CONTACTS

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This inclosure contains twenty-nine photographs which were taken of 9th Infantry Division operations during the period 25 January through 26 April 1969. An authenticating signature is on the back of each photograph.

FOR THE COMMANDER:



JOHN D. GHEE  
Captain, AG  
Asst AG