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14 February 1968

SUBJECT: Combat After Action Report - BATTLE OF DOI MA CREEK, 3d Brigade,
9th Infantry Division, Period 9-11 April 1967 (U)

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2. Information contained in this report is provided to insure appropriate benefits in the future from Lessons Learned during current operations, and may be adapted for use in developing training material.

BY ORDER OF THE SECRETARY OF THE ARMY:

Kenneth G. Wickham

KENNETH G. WICKHAM
Major General, USA
The Adjutant General

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HEADQUARTERS 3D BRIGADE
9th Infantry Division
APO San Francisco 96370

AVDE-BCO

21 April 1967

SUBJECT: Combat Operations After Action Report (Battle of Doi Mh Creek) (U)

TO: Commanding General
9th Infantry Division
ATTN: AVDE-MH
APO San Francisco 96370

1. (U) Date of Operation: 9 - 11 April 1967
2. (U) Location: Rach Kien District, Long An Province
3. (U) Command Headquarters: 3d Brigade, 9th Infantry Division
4. (U) Reporting Officer: Colonel Charles P. Murray, Commanding Officer, 3d Brigade, 9th Infantry Division.
5. (C) Task Organization: Shown below is the task organization during the operation:

2/60 Inf	TF 3/39 Inf	TF 5/60 Inf (M)
Plat C, 15 Engr	3/39 Inf	5/60 Inf (M) (-)
1/4/50 (ARVN)	2/10 Cav (ARVN)	8 3/60 Inf
	Co 1/46 Inf (ARVN)	Plat C 15 Engr
3/60 Inf	Bde Control	
3/60 Inf (-)	2/4 Arty	
	C 15 Engr (-)	

6. (C) Supporting Forces:
 - a. 2/4 Artillery Battalion: Employed in direct support role.
 - b. 9th Division Aviation Battalion and the 145th Aviation Battalion provided the assault aircraft and the armed helicopters in direct support of the brigade.
 - c. 7th Air Division, USAF, flew 35 sorties in support of the operation dropping 57,000 pounds of explosives, 12,000 pounds of napalm and firing 24 pous of air to ground rockets.
7. (C) Intelligence: The operation was a spontaneous reaction following the discovery of a VC element by a preplanned air strike and confirmed by agent reports. The VC element was later identified as a battalion size force consisting of a reinforced company of the 506th VC Bn, 315th Local Force Company, and local guerilla forces.
8. (U) Mission: The 3d Brigade attacked (See Overlay) to locate and destroy the enemy in the objective area and capture or destroy all enemy equipment and supplies located therein.
9. (C) Concept of the Operation: The operation was spontaneous and directed by the Brigade Commander as the tactical situation dictated.
10. (C) Execution:
 - a. On 9 April the 3d Brigade had scheduled one battalion and two company size airmobile assaults. This plan was cancelled when heavy activity was reported in the area of an airstrike conducted in response to an agent report.

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b. The following losses were inflicted on the enemy during the three day operation:

(1) 247 VC KIA (BC).

(2) One wounded POW.

c. The following US losses were sustained during the operation:

(1) Five KHA

(2) One DOW

(3) 31 VHA were injured at the aid station and returned to duty).

12. (C) Commanders Analysis: This operation, more than any other, proves the immediate reaction capability of the brigade. Whenever an operation of this magnitude can be generated and supported with virtually no time to plan, it reflects great ability and initiative on every member of the command. When comparing the losses sustained by the 3d Brigade in comparison with those inflicted on the enemy, the overwhelming fire power of a well trained and disciplined unit is demonstrated beyond any doubt.

13. (C) Lessons Learned:

a. The brigade must maintain the flexibility to divert planned operations against lucrative targets produced by hard intelligence.

b. Upon initiation of an unscheduled operation, plans must be formulated as maneuver elements are being committed to the objective area.

c. Fire support, reinforcement and extraction contingency planning must parallel operational planning to react to unforeseen situations emerging from vague, incomplete and imprecise intelligence.

d. Division and higher headquarters must be alert to shift resources from unremunerative operations to one that appears to offer lucrative results, whether the battle be a planned operation or not.

e. Units must relentlessly pursue a fleeing enemy with the aid of air, artillery, and gunships. Spooky flare ships are invaluable in this endeavor to illuminate the area at night when the VC attempt to slip away.

f. Air Power and artillery are most effective when ground pressure has placed a fleeing enemy in open terrain. Additionally, air power should be available, one strike following another, to prevent the enemy from taking cover or escaping.

g. The VC fear APC's, their firepower and mobility. The use of APC's has been invaluable in the area of operations of Long An Province, particularly as a complement to air lifted forces.

h. The brigade has an inadequate number of trained personnel and insufficient storage capability to properly refuel airborne companies. Lack of refueling resources at Tan An airstrip delayed airlifts, in one case, from the 2nd to the 3rd day of the operation. This meant that blocking forces to fill gaps were not placed in position when desired and may have permitted enemy forces to slip out. The Tan An airstrip should be equipped, as a minimum, with 10 each 10,000 gallon rubber fuel tanks with 5 miniport systems allowing 20 refueling points and 1 each 5,000 gallon tank truck for transferring fuel from reserve tanks to operational tanks.

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b. B/3-39 Inf was airlifted into an LZ (XS685694) at 1130 hours. C/3-39 Inf was airlifted into an LZ (XS685694) at 1220 hours. Both companies encountered heavy SA and AW fire upon entering their landing zone. Simultaneous with the first airlift 2-10 Cav (ARVN) moved west from their base blocking position via XS 699690. C/3-39 Inf fought their way to objectives via XS 699690 and XS 695691 and established blocking positions. Recon/3-39 Inf was airlifted to via XS 696677, swept objectives via XS 694667 and XS 600695 and established a blocking position in the southern portion of the AO via XS 695680. The western portion of the objective was blocked by B/2-60 Inf from via XS 665679. At approximately 1600 the brigade RRP, C/2-60 Inf, was airlifted into an LZ via XS 713690 and moved along the south bank of the river and established a blocking position. The encirclement was completed when C/3-60 Inf was airlifted to an LZ via XS 687713 and moved to a blocking position on the northern portion of the AO via XS 686705.

c. During the evening hours of 9 April numerous engagements occurred as the VC tried to break out of the encirclement. The entire objective was effectively illuminated throughout the night by Spooky flare ship sorties. TF Hq 5-60 Inf (M) and B/5-60 Inf (M) were moved from Binh Phuoc to Rach Kien arriving at 2020 hours. At midnight B/5-60 Inf (M) was committed to fill a gap via XS 692704 between C/3-60 Inf and 2-10 Cav (ARVN). At this point all forces north of the river were placed under OPCON TF 5-60 Inf (M). By first light enemy contacts had been reduced to sporadic fire fights.

d. Based on the probability that some VC had succeeded in escaping to the west of the objective, the brigade commander ordered TF Hq 5-60 (M) with B/5-60 Inf (M) and C/3-60 Inf into AO Strike via XS 660707 and XS 670698 at 0730 hours on 10 April. C/3-60 Inf was heavily engaged upon entering this area and as they swept to via XS 660687. B/3-39 Inf was airlifted from its blocking position to via XS 663701 to reinforce TF 5-60 Inf (M). From the LZ B/3-39 Inf and B/5-60 Inf (M) were heavily engaged as they swept south to via C/3-60 Inf.

e. At this point it became obvious that the VC had moved west from the area of the initial engagement. TF 3-39 Inf with C/2-60 Inf, C/3-39 Inf and 2-10 Cav (ARVN) began sweeping to the east toward Rach Kien.

f. During the early afternoon of 10 April, the brigade commander request additional forces to preclude further enemy movement to the north-east. 3-60 Inf (-) was moved by convoy from Dong Tam (PALM BEACH) to the Tan An airstrip. At 1740 hours A/3-60 Inf was airlifted to via XS 663729 and B/3-60 Inf into via XS 634729 at 1802 hours. Upon landing, both companies initiated a sweeping operation to the south, which continued into the night of the 10th toward blocking positions occupied by TF 5-60 Inf (M).

g. A platoon size stay behind patrol from A/3-39 Inf was inserted in the original area of operations via XS 604688 on 10 April. At 2020 hours the patrol was heavily engaged by SA and AW fire from their south. A Spooky flare ship illuminated the area as artillery fire was called in on the suspected VC position. In addition, C/3-39 Inf and 2-10 Cav (ARVN) displaced from Rach Kien to reinforce the patrol. However, the enemy broke contact prior to arrival of the reinforcement.

h. On the morning of 11 April, A/2-60 Inf and 1/A-50 Inf (ARVN) were airlifted to blocking positions via XS 644692 and XS 650687.

i. By early afternoon on the 11th, contact with the enemy was broken and committed elements were returned to their respective base areas. Results of the operation were 247 VC KIA (BC).

11. (C) Results:

a. The 3d Brigade, 5th Infantry Division, was highly successful in its operations against the 506th VC Bn.

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i. Dustoff aircraft are often not available because of transmission ranges. Use of ordinary slicks decreases airlift and resupply capability for engaged forces and does not provide optimum efficiency in medevac operations. Dustoff aircraft must be always responsive. To effect this, dustoffs must be located at Tan An airstrip. (A brigade clearing hospital is at Tan An).

j. Had it not been for the airmobile company being immediately available, albeit for another planned operation, this golden opportunity based on hard intelligence would have been lost. All major successes to date have been the result of ambushes and immediate air lifts in response to very recent intelligence reports. Preplanned operations involving large air lifts into a known VC way station have not produced fruitful results, for the enemy has invariably moved.

k. The operation can proceed swiftly when few, if any, casualties are taken at the onset. When casualties are taken, the tendency of small units is to stop forward progress, to terminate enemy contact, and to get the wounded "DUSTED OFF" before proceeding. Further, when initial success is attained, there is a great psychological reaction that creates a drive to continue the pursuit of the enemy.

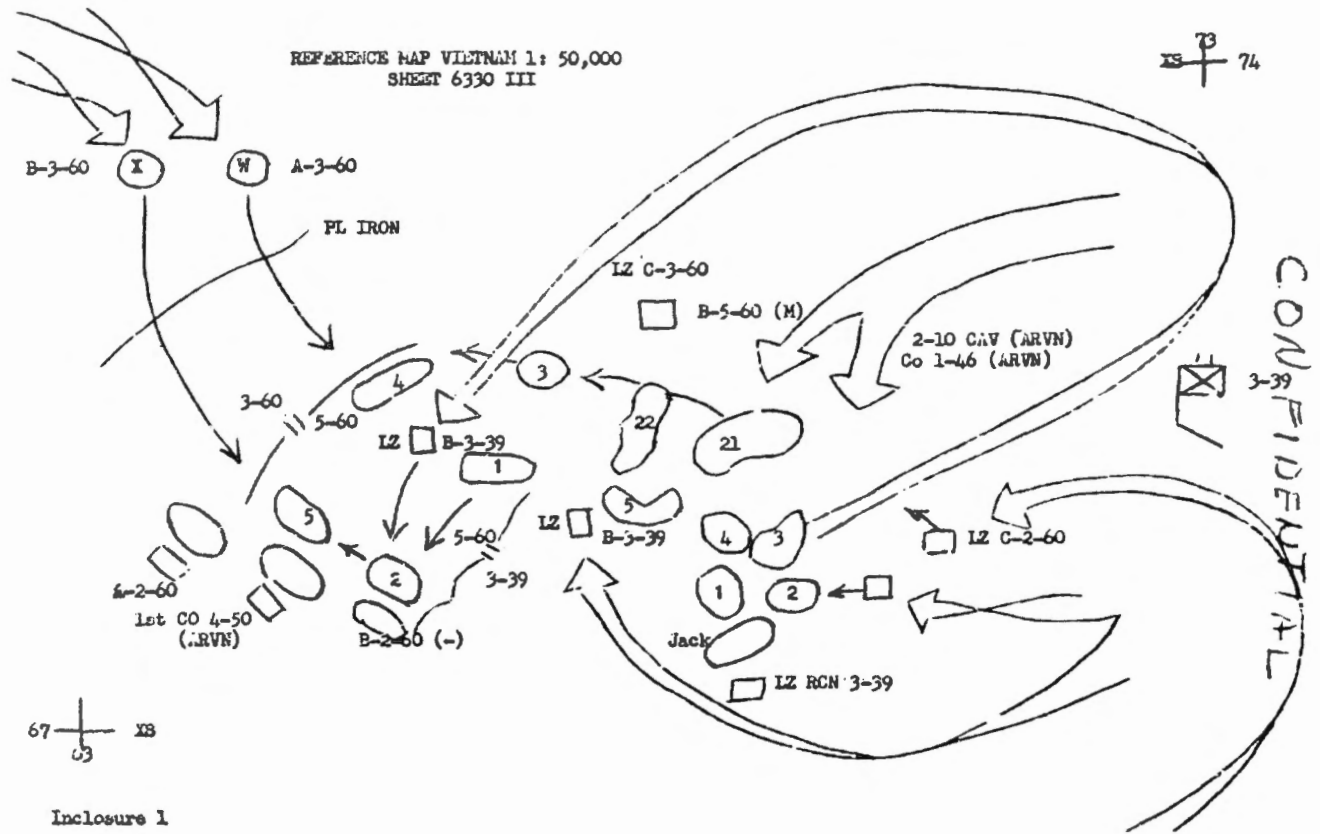
l. Aerial surveillance of the area of the initial strike was invaluable in identifying the VC force which had been located and which precipitated the operation.

1 Incl
Overlay of AO

/S/ CHARLES P. MURRAY
CHARLES P. MURRAY
Colonel, Infantry
Commanding

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a LZ XS 813835, reacting to the 5-60 Inf (H) contact. From the LZ, the units moved west to the woodland then southwest to XS 304827. Both companies established a block oriented to the east at this location. The block had negative results. The final disposition of the units at nightfall was: HHC, Co's B, D, and E at PS/PB Smoke (XS 789769); Co A at XS 794029; and Co C at XS 814822.

The 3-39 Inf conducted footmobile recon in force operations with Co's A and B via XS 841892. At 0930H Co B departed its night location (XS 845885) and began moving to the northwest. At 1005H via XS 841892, the company began receiving RPG and automatic weapons fire. The company reacted with helicopter gunships from Troop B/7-1 Cav, TAC Air and arty. At 1100H Co A departed its night location (XS 842880) to support the contact and entered into the engagement at 1255H. At 1300H Recon/3-39 Inf also reinforced the contact. The three units kept the enemy force contained in their bunkers and used arty and airstrikes on the enemy while Troop D/3-5 Cav screened and provided gunship support. The contact continued until 1930H when Co's A and B swept into the area of contact. The action resulted in 65 VC body count, 5 US KIA and 27 US WHA.

The 4-39 Inf conducted waterborne (airboats) screening operations, waterborne assaults and footmobile recon in force operations in northern Nha Be District (via XS 865885). During the night (0040H, 0225H, and 0254H), Co C/3-39 Inf (OPCON to 4-39 Inf), in an ambush position via XS 341790, engaged a total of 7 sampans heading north toward Saigon. The area of ambush was swept at first light and 8 VC bodies were found along with enough canned goods and rice to feed 100 men approximately two days. Co C/4-39 screened in the airboats between XS 865815 and XS 855882. At 1230H the company beached at XS 857849. While searching an airstrike area (XS 857849), the company found a total of 18 VC bodies killed by TAC Air, arty and small arms. The disposition of units at nightfall was: HHC and Co's C and E at Nha Be (XS 916822); Co B at XS 858800; and Co C/3-39 (OPCON 4-39 Inf) at XS 893802.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

The 2-47 Inf (M) conducted local patrols from the vicinity of its night locations with negative results. The disposition of units at nightfall was: HHC at XS 810872; Co B at XS 790841; and Co C at XS 854887.

The 5-60 Inf (M) conducted local patrols from its night location south of Saigon with negative results. The disposition of units at nightfall was: HHC and Co A at XS 819877; and Co B at XS 817872.

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

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

g. 12 May 1968: The 6-31 Inf conducted airmobile assaults and footmobile recon in force operations in southern Binh Cham District with negative results. The disposition of units at nightfall was: HHC, Co's A and E at FS/PB Smoke (XS 789769); Co B at XS 847876; Co C(-) at XS 845785; and 1/46-31 Inf at XS 804775.

The 3-39 Inf and attached units had sporadic contact in the area of the 11 May contact with groups of VC varying in size from a fire team to a platoon. The groups were spread and appeared to be the remnants of the units engaged 11 May. The battalion field CP received a total of 23 rounds of 75mm recoilless rifle fire from an unknown size VC force. There were no casualties and the counter-mortar fire produced unknown results. At 0830H via XS 828874, Co A found 20 VC KIA, 20 B-40 rounds, 1 RPG-7 launcher, 8 AK-47's, 2 AK-50's, and some web gear. At 1030H via XS 842882, Co B began receiving sniper fire from a hippopalm area. The company attacked the area, engaging and killing 5 VC and capturing 1 AK-47. The company continued to search in the area. At 1630H via XS 841881, Co B engaged a VC platoon killing 15 VC. At 1440H Co B/2-47 (OPCON to 3-39 Inf) engaged an estimated squad killing 11 VC and capturing a small amount of small arms ammo. The contact for all units was sporadic all day. The totals for the days action were: 89 VC KIA, 8 AK-47's, 2 AK-50's, 1 RPG-7 launcher, 300 rds of AK-47 ammo, 190 US 1:50,000 maps of Saigon, 20 B-40 rds, and 5 RPG-7 rds. The disposition of the battalion was: HHC, Recon/3-39 Inf and Recon/2-47 Inf at XS 845884; Co A at XS 841876 to XS 891879; Co B at XS 846878; and Co C at XS 843873.

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The 4-39 Inf conducted airmobile assaults and footmobile recon in force operations with Co's B and C in western Nha B District (XS 857849). At 1300H via XS 857830, Co B discovered 3 VC killed by arty, 1 B-40 rd, 15 munition dumps, 2 AK-47's and a small bag of ammo. The rest of the operation had negative results. The disposition of the battalion at nightfall was: HHC, Co's C and E at Nha B (XS 916822); Co B at XS 869777.

The 2-47 Inf conducted mechanized recon in force operations via XS 857886 with negative results. The disposition of the battalion at nightfall was: HHC at XS 875336; Co B at XS 843873; Co C at XS 854887; and Sen Plt at XS 843973.

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

Troop D/3-5 Cav and Troop B/7-1 Cav supported 3-35 contracts with D/3-5 Cav killing 1 VC.

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

The 3-39 Inf conducted mop-up operations south of Saigon with Co's A (via XS 845875), B (via XS 846876), B/6-31 (via XS 847878), B/3-39 and B/2-47 (via XS 842880 and west). All body counts and equipment captured were a result of previous actions except for 1 VC KIA by B/6-31 Inf via XS 849877 at 1345H, and 1 POW captured by B/2-47 via XS 844882 at 1000H. The totals for the day were: Co A/3-39 - 16 VC KIA, Co B/3-39 - 14 VC KIA, B/6-31 - 15 VC KIA, Sen/3-39 - 1 VC KIA, B/2-47 - 1 POW captured. Equipment captured for the day was: 13 AK-47's, 2 AK-30's, 27 B-40 rockets, 3750 7.62 rds, 1 Cal 38 pistol, 1 Cal 45 pistol, 7 chicom grenades, 1 VC flag, 1 VC map with markings. Co A was moved from south of Saigon to Rach Kien in the afternoon. The disposition of units at nightfall was: HHC, B/3-39, B/6-31 and Sen/3-39 via XS 845882.

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

The 2-47 Inf (M) conducted local security patrols from the vic of their night locations. The disposition of units at nightfall was: HHC and Sen Plt at XS 884893; Co B at XS 792803; and Co C at XS 846885.

The 5-60 Inf (M) conducted mechanized recon in force operations via XS 7978 with Co's B and C. At 1330H via XS 790780, Co B established contact with an estimated VC platoon in a heavily bunkered area. Troop D/3-5 Cav, T&C ar, arty and organic weapons supported the contact. At 1600H Co B was joined from the west by Co C/5-60 Inf. The contact continued until 2000H and resulted in 6 US KIA, 8 US MIA and 30 VC KIA. Troop D/3-5 Cav also killed 15 VC while supporting the 5-60 Inf. The disposition of the unit at nightfall was: HHC and Co C at XS 710796; and Co B at XS 744773.

Troop D/3-5 Cav screened the Bde 40 south of Saigon and supported the 5-60 Inf contact.

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12. Results:

a. Friendly losses during the operation were:

- (1) US KIA: 43
- (2) US MIA: 253

b. Enemy losses during the operation were:

(1) Personnel:

- (a) VC KIA: 876
- (b) POW: 9

(2) Equipment Captured:

Small Arms	88
Crew-Served Weapons	24
Hi Ammo	185 rds
PAC-25 Radio	1
Small Arms Ammo	5300 rds
Web Carr	30 lbs (approx)
Clothes	25 lbs (approx)
Documents	12 lbs (approx)

(3) Equipment Destroyed:

Sampans	44
Bunkers	426
Grenades	23
122mm Rocket Launchers	2
Structures	295

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

13. Administrative Matters:

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

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

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

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

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

14. Special Equipment and Techniques:

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

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

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

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

15. Commander's Analysis:

During the eight-day period, the 3d Bde was heavily engaged with the equivalent of six VC battalions attempting to infiltrate Saigon from the south. To counter the threat, highly mobile defensive positions composed of five (5) battalions were positioned across the southern side of the city. From company to battalion-size base area elements of the Bde conducted recon in force operations to the south neutralizing enemy VC/NVA forces before they could reach the defensive positions south of Saigon. Operations of this type were made possible through extensive use of Assault Helicopter Companies (AHC) and riverine operations. The battalions were able to rapidly adapt to either mode of transportation, and quickly switch from one to the other without loss of momentum or time. Operations were conducted over widely varying terrain ranging from rice paddies to built-up areas. To reduce the high casualty rate normally experienced when neutralizing an entrenched enemy in house-to-house fighting, tactical airstrikes were used extensively. The effectiveness of the 99 airstrikes delivered in support of Bde operations during the period is reflected in the final casualty ratio 20.3/1. Because of the heavy vegetation along the numerous waterways south of Saigon, a major problem facing friendly forces was locating the enemy both during his attempt to infiltrate and exfiltrate the city. Two of the most effective means of locating enemy troops was through the use of air cav troops, and ambushes (ambushes along waterways). Ambushes placed along the various waterways in the AD provided valuable information on enemy withdrawal routes and posed a constant threat to enemy movement conducted primarily during hours of reduced visibility. Air cav troops were most effective during daylight hours when they conducted aerial recon and, when the situation warranted, recon in force operations with their organic airtroop scout platoon. The air cav troops recon large areas of terrain in short periods of time which made them ideal for our operations. Action conducted during this period clearly demonstrated the effectiveness of a flexible defense and aggressive pursuit of enemy forces.

16. Recommendations:

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

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

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

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

e. Continued emphasis must be placed on the major VC infiltration and supply routes that lead through the Plain of Reeds into Long An Province and subsequently into Saigon. Night VR missions as well as SLAR and R&D H² missions in the Plain of Reeds must be continued in conjunction with daylight missions.

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

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

FO: THE COMMANDER:

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