

TROOP D
3d Squadron, 5th Cavalry

Throughout the period 1 January 1970 to 31 December 1970, D Troop (Air), 3d Squadron, 5th Cavalry was under the operational control of the 7th Squadron, 1st Air Cavalry in direct combat support of the 7th, 9th, 21st ARVN Divisions and the 44th Special Tactical Zone.

The troop's typical mission was reconnaissance-in-force using the unit's organic Scout (OH-6A), Gun (AH-16) and Lift (UH-1H) platoons. Normal mission requirements were two Scout teams, two light fire teams, three slicks and a Command and Control aircraft. The Command and Control aircraft, a Scout team and a light fire team would make visual reconnaissance of suspected enemy locations with the Aero Scouts and Cobra gunships engaging the enemy. The lift element stood by with a ready reaction force if heavy contact was made.

During March 1970, Lighthorse elements located the 1st NVA Battalion in the 9th ARVN Division's Tram area. On the second day of contact, 99 NVA KBA's were confirmed for Lighthorse along with the discovery of three 50 caliber machine guns, twenty 30 caliber machine guns, and numerous small arms weapons.

The Cambodian operation was initiated on the 29th of April with D Troop, 3d Squadron, 5th Cavalry spearheading the entire operation, being the unconfirmed first unit to enter Cambodia. Throughout May and June, Lighthorse supported ARVN units working in Cambodia, and taking maximum advantage of Visual reconnaissance missions and accurate gun strikes, Lighthorse compiled a total of 229 KBA's for the operation.

"Delta" Troop, 3d Squadron, 5th Cavalry took an active part in the Seven Mountains operation near Chi Lang in October 1970. Lighthorse supported the 9th ARVN Division in their efforts to secure the major objectives of Nui Cau, Nui Giai, and Nui Coto. With the help of Lighthorse air support, this once safe enemy sanctuary was almost completely pacified by the 9th ARVN Division's troops.

Lighthorse continued to support the ARVN Delta units through the end of 1970. The following is a breakdown of the ARVN units supported in the "Delta" and Cambodia for the year 1970.

44th STZ

January 13-16, 19-31
February 1-3, 25-30
March 1-3
April 1-3, 23-30
May 1, 2, 13, 14, 17-21, 23, 27-30
June 1, 4-7, 21-27
August 19, 21, 22, 24, 25, 29
October 7, 20
November 25
December 6, 12, 15-17, 21-23, 28

AREA OF OPERATIONS

Under operational control of 7th Squadron, 1st Air Cavalry, the area of operations ranged throughout IV Corps. With the mission of supporting major ARVN Divisions, D Troop, 3d Squadron, 5th Cavalry changed area of operations frequently. Terrain varied from the abrupt mountains near Chi Lang and the Cambodian border to the nippapalm lined paddies between the mouths of the Mekong to the heavily forested and densely shrubbed U Minh Forest. Frequently used staging areas were the Tra Vinh, Ben Tre, Dong Tam, Muc Hoa, Cao Lanh, Vi Thanh, Ca Mau, Thoi Binh, Rach Soi, Chi Lang and the Cement Plant.