

As soon as tactical air support became available, the jet aircraft showered the dug-in Viet Cong positions with rockets, cluster bomb units and 500-pound ordnance. Twenty six accurate sorties broke the back of the enemy pressing from the southeast. By 3:15 a.m. the battle area was cleared to a depth of 800 meters around the perimeter, allowing the most seriously wounded to be dusted off.

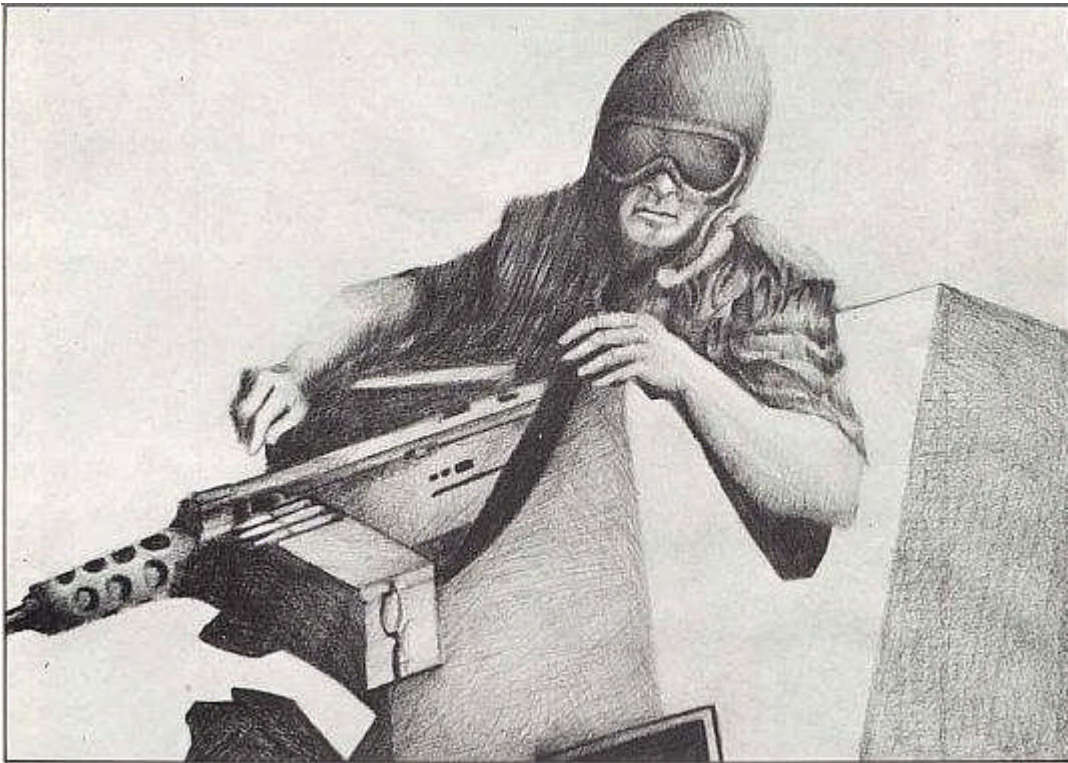
The Air Force continued to strafe the area as the cavalymen began a series of counterattacks from the perimeter, pushing through and destroying "Charlie."

Each enemy probe, apparently to recover weapons and bodies, was met by a violent counterattack. About 5:30 a.m.

ammunition for the cavalymen had become critical. They had expended most of their basic load and even the honeycombs in the hull had been drained of their precious nectar, the main gun rounds.

As night became day, the count began. In the boiling wake of a six-hour firefight, the Viet Cong broke contact and withdrew. The 273d Viet Cong Main Force Regiment, an estimated 1,000 strong, had suffered a staggering defeat in their clash with the 3rd Squadron, 5th Cavalry.

The superiority of the cavalry troopers was firmly established. They sustained only four killed in action and 67 wounded in leading the 9th Infantry Division through its first major victory in Vietnam.



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COMBAT ARTISTS

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