

on Highway 1 in advance of a mid-day convoy from Blackhorse. The convoy escorted by C Troop's 2d platoon arrived at Gia Ray at 1:00 p.m. The troop's 1st Platoon had preceded the convoy and had established a blocking position at Boa Toan 3½ miles east of Tan Phong. During the 2d Platoon's road march a tank hit a mine ten minutes out of Blackhorse.

B Troop's 2d Platoon with 1/2/43 ARVN, and 3d Platoon departed the base camp at 7:00 a.m. to assume their daily road side positions. The 3d platoon established its in the vicinity of the Highway 20 junction while the 2d Platoon and ARVNs proceeded west to secure Fire Support Base 4 where C Battery, 7th Battalion, 9th Artillery [105T] was positioned. The 7th Battalion, 9th Artillery was an element of the 54th Artillery Group. The 2d Platoon would stay at the fire support base as both security and as a ready reaction force. The 1st Platoon then ran the daily convoys without incident.

The Birddogs escorted and secured a MEDCAP team the following day to Hung Nghia and conducted a route reconnaissance as well as their routine daily mission of checking the base camp's perimeter and escorting convoys to and from Xuan loc. At Gia Ray A Troop's 3d Platoon conducted the routine sweep of Route 333 and Highway 1 then established a ready reaction force position at the road junction while the 2d Platoon secured engineers working at the bridge site Cau Gia Leu west of Suoi Cat. During the day the 2d Platoon took one round of sniper fire which caused no casualties. And B Troop continued with its convoy mission. During the day C Troop along with ARVN elements moved onto Highway 1 and established a ready reaction force position at Boa Toan for the 18th ARVN Division. Subsequently C Troop established a blocking position that extended east to Ap Binh Phu.

At early evening one of C Troop's ambush patrol positions saw lights moving to the south and subsequently took them under fire. The patrol was withdrawn. Later in the night C Troop was alerted for a possible movement to assist an ARVN outpost under attack 9 miles south of the base camp. The alert was cancelled an hour later. And at Gia Ray A Troop conducted a thunder run from the quarry to the road junction.

The next day the Birddogs escorted and secured a MEDCAP team to Trung Hung Dao. While out at Gia Ray A Troop routinely swept Route 333 and Highway 1. And B Troop ran the daily convoy to and from Blackhorse. And C Troop carrying ARVN forces swept Route 2 south to Suoi Ca and then established a blocking position for the ARVNs. The 1st Platoon searched Suoi Ca then established a blocking position. Meanwhile, D Troop, less its aerial rifle platoon, went into

action for the first time in support of the Mobile Riverine Force which was operating in the Cam Son base area west of the 2d Brigade's base camp Dong Tam. Intelligence had predicted several enemy battalions in the area prior to the 2d Brigade launching its four day operation in Dinh Tuong Province IV Corps. D Troop had the reconnaissance mission of covering the eastern Cam Son and western Ban Long area of the 2d Brigade's flank. During the day D Troop elements detected a squad of the enemy in the Ban Long area and troop gunships killed five of them.

The next day the Birddogs escorted and secured a MEDCAP team back to Tran Hung Dao. For the 5th Cavalry the day would be spent changing missions. A Troop would move to Blackhorse and assume B Troop's convoy mission. B Troop would take over C Troop's base camp security mission. And C Troop would move to Gia Ray and take over A Troop's security mission there.

At Gia Ray A Troop's 1st Platoon conducted the daily road sweep while the 2d Platoon established a ready reaction force position at the road junction. When the sweep was completed the 1st Platoon relieved the 2d at the road junction who then returned to the quarry. C Troop's 1st and 3d Platoons established ready reaction force positions at Boa Toan and Ap Binh Phu. At mid-morning the 3d Platoon received two RPG rounds that missed their targets. Then at 1:50 p.m. A Troop's 3d Platoon returned to Blackhorse and assumed responsibility for the convoy back to Long Binh later in the afternoon. Relieved at Gia Ray the remainder of A Troop departed the quarry at 2:50 p.m. and was followed in by its 1st Platoon. C Troop's 1st and 3d Platoons then proceeded onto Gia Ray and joined the troop there. At early afternoon a troop element received small arms fire but there were no casualties.

Meantime while its 2d Platoon continued to secure Fire Support Base 4 B Troop's 3d Platoon had established its daily ready reaction force position in the vicinity of the Highway 20 road junction. And the morning convoy with the 1st Platoon in escort reached Blackhorse at 1:10 p.m. A Troop's 3d Platoon would run the convoy back to Long Binh.

On 30 July the Birddogs escorted and secured a MEDCAP team to Ap Nui Tung. While at Gia Ray C Troop conducted a dismounted patrol to the northwest of the quarry. And at Blackhorse A Troop's 1st and 2d Platoons moved up onto Highway 1 to establish the daily ready reaction force positions in advance of the daily convoy from Long Binh to Blackhorse and back. The 2d Platoon established its position adjacent to the Highway 20 road junction while the

1st Platoon continued onto Fire Support Base 4 and relieved B Troop's 2d Platoon there. And A Troop's 3d Platoon ran the daily convoy without incident. Meantime at mid-morning B Troop's 1st and 3d Platoons with ARVN elements moved south into Phuoc Tuy Province. The 3d Platoon established a blocking position alongside the road in the vicinity of the Courtenay airstrip. While the 1st Platoon and ARVNs who had moved to the west started sweeping back to the east.

The following day the Birddogs escorted and secured a MEDCAP team to Hung Nghia. And at Gia Ray C Troop's 1st and 3d Platoons following the morning road sweep outposted the road for an ARVN convoy. While A Troop's 2d Platoon departed Blackhorse and established its daily position near the Highway 20 road junction. After the morning convoy to Blackhorse had passed the 1st Platoon escorted C Battery from Fire Support Base 4 to Long Binh then returned and established its ready reaction force position at the site. During the movement to Long Binh they had taken sniper fire. Meantime B Troop conducted a reconnaissance to the east of Blackhorse then southward to Cam My.

The following day 1 August the Birddogs escorted and secured a MEDCAP team to Thoi Giao. While at Gia Ray C Troop's 1st and 3d Platoons completed the daily road sweep to Cau Gia Leu where the 1st Platoon established a ready reaction force position while the 2d Platoon continued onto Tan Phong to pick up a platoon vehicle at the road junction that the Birddogs had escorted there. While A Troop continued with its daily convoy mission. And B Troop's 1st and 3d Platoons with two ARVN platoons conducted a route reconnaissance to Cam Tam then followed Routes 321 and 25 to Xa Dau Giay located on Highway 1.

On 2 August the Birddogs escorted and secured a MEDCAP team to Suoi Tre. At Gia Ray C Troop in addition to its daily road sweep ran a dismounted patrol to the south of the quarry. And A Troop continued with its convoy mission. And when its 1st Platoon returned to the base camp that evening it escorted some 11th Cavalry vehicles from the Highway 20 road junction on to the base camp. Meanwhile at mid-morning B Troop's 1st Platoon swept Route 2 north to Xa Thoi Giao. The platoon was followed by engineers who would repair mine damage to the road. Earlier in the morning a low boy being escorted by a 919th Engineer Company tank hit a mine 1½ miles north of the base camp and the tank had taken small arms fire. In the mine incident two men had been wounded. And during the day the ARVNs had conducted two reconnaissance patrols.

The following day the Birddogs escorted and secured a MEDCAP to Cam My.

While at Gia Ray C Troop conducted its routine road sweep. And then after the perimeter at the quarry was fired on the troop sent a patrol to the northwest to investigate. And A Troop ran its daily convoys without incident. And when its 1st Platoon returned to Blackhorse that evening it escorted seven 86th Engineer Battalion [Combat] vehicles with it from the Highway 20 road junction. During the night B Troop's 2d Platoon had conducted an all night patrol of Route 2 and Highway 1 between Blackhorse and Xuan Loc, and made runs at 1:45 a.m. and 4:15 a.m.

During the morning B Troop's 1st and 3d Platoons with ARVN elements conducted a reconnaissance 9 miles south of the base camp. In one Viet Cong complex 16 bunkers, 4 mortar positions, and 2 machine gun positions were destroyed. And a second complex was destroyed as well. At 6:45 p.m. B Troop's 3d Platoon was sent to secure a downed 11th Cavalry helicopter 5 miles northwest of Xuan Loc. And subsequently the Birddogs escorted a Headquarters Troop VTR to the 3d Platoon's location to assist in the evacuation of a tank then returned to Blackhorse. The 3d Platoon then RONed with the downed helicopter.

The following day 4 August the Birddogs escorted and secured a MEDCAP to Cap Rung. At Gia Ray C Troop's 1st Platoon conducted the daily road sweep then outposted the road. The troop was relieved by the 1st Squadron, 11th Cavalry at 11:00 a.m. then road marched back to Blackhorse and stood down for maintenance and future missions.

A Troop's 1st and 2d Platoons left the base camp and established their daily ready reaction force positions as the 3d Platoon ran the morning convoy to Blackhorse. Both the 1st and 2d platoons were placed under the operational control of the 11th Cavalry at 12:00 p.m. as the 1st Squadron relieved A Troop of its convoy mission. The return convoy to Long Binh would be run by the 1st Squadron. And at early evening the 1st and 2d Platoons returned to Blackhorse and stood down.

B Troop continued to secure the base camp until relieved at 12:00 p.m. by the 1st Squadron. The troop's 3d Platoon secured the downed helicopter until it was evacuated at mid-morning. And the troop's 1st Platoon with one platoon of ARVNs and elements of the 27th Engineers conducted a reconnaissance of Route 2 south to the Courtenay airstrip. The troop also stood down as its missions were completed. The next day the 5th Cavalry continued its stand down. But at 7:50 a.m. B Troop's 1st Platoon departed the base camp and moved south into AO Mustang where the platoon secured landing zones for

reconnaissance by unit commanders along Route 2 south of the Courtenay Rubber Plantation.

The 5th Cavalry moved south on Route 2 the next day 6 August into Phuoc Tuy Province and AO Mustang. A Troop moving as the first march unit departed the base camp escorting the other squadron elements and ARVN quartering parties. The Birddogs carrying the 11th Cavalry LRRP's moved with A Troop also. A Troop established a troop perimeter 9 miles south of Blackhorse and secured the landing zone for the ARVNs on the west side of the road. B Troop escorting the squadron's tactical operations center and one platoon of the 919th Engineers established a fire support base and squadron command post approximately 2 miles northwest of A Troop's position. While C Troop marching as the third and final march order escorted A Battery, 7th Battalion, 9th Artillery [105T] and the squadron trains to the fire support base then moved and established a perimeter 3/4 of a mile to the north. All 5th Cavalry elements were in the field by late morning.

During the afternoon both A and C Troop's sent platoons out on reconnaissance missions. A Troop's 2d Platoon conducted its reconnaissance a mile west of the fire support base. And C Troop's 3d Platoon conducted its to the northwest and investigated a base camp area inside the Courtenay Rubber Plantation. B Troop's 3d Platoon moved onto Route 2 and established a ready reaction force position on the road as the troop's 1st Platoon escorted a convoy to Blackhorse and back. And during the day the ARVNs were airlifted into the field.

The following day the Birddogs linking up with the 11th Cavalry LRRP's on the southern edge of the rubber plantation during the afternoon then it secured two landing zones before returning to the fire support base. During the afternoon Assistant Division Commander, Brigadier General Morgan G. Roseborough visited with the 5th Cavalry at the fire support base.

At early morning A Troop commenced a reconnaissance mission and the troop's 2d Platoon found 4 huts with bunkers and 5 graves-two bodies about a month old. At mid-day the 1st Platoon heard hand generated transmissions in a foreign language but were unsuccessful in locating its origin. Then in early afternoon the troop's 3d Platoon found 100 pounds of food. During the day B Troop's 3d Platoon ran two convoys to Blackhorse and back while the 1st Platoon occupied a ready reaction force position near the Courtenay airstrip. At mid-afternoon B Troop's 2d Platoon went under C Troop's operational control for several hours. During the morning C Troop's 3d Platoon found

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800 pounds of rice less than a mile from the fire support base and later found a 55 gallon drum filled with rice. At late morning the troop's 2d Platoon found what appeared to be a Viet Cong rest area and the 1st Platoon had contact with an estimated 7 Viet Cong in fortified positions a mile east of Route 2 with unknown results. And at mid-afternoon the 2d Platoon received light fire in a base area 7/10 of a mile northwest of the fire support base. B Troop's 2d Platoon coming under C Troop's operational control set up a blocking position. At early evening a patrol received enemy fire and troop elements moved against it with unknown results. During the day ARVN forces conducted a reconnaissance mission and found 2 bunkers about a mile west of their position and a little later received enemy small arms fire and observed 2 Viet Cong moving south.

The following day 8 August the Viet Cong had made their presence felt in the early morning hours when they first fired on a B Troop ambush patrol position causing no casualties and next fired two rounds of mortar fire and employed a claymore and small arms against ARVN forces that resulted in one casualty. During the morning both A and C Troop with two ARVN platoons each conducted search and destroy operations in designated areas then returned. A Troop then conducted reconaissance patrols around the troop's perimeter. During the afternoon C Troop's 2d and 3d Platoons returned to the base camp the 2d Platoon had found the previous day. While the 1st Platoon conducted a reconnaissance farther to the northwest. During the day B Troop ran the daily convoys between the fire support base and Blackhorse. And the troop sent its 3d Platoon to secure engineers improving a regional force outpost

The following day the 5th Cavalry moving its operations away from the road sent its three line platoons with ARVN forces to the west into the area the 11th Cavalry had operated in in June during Operation Akron. The squadron's westward movement was a three axis advance. The squadron's tactical operations center, A Battery, 7th Battalion, 9th Artillery, and 919th Engineers all remained at the fire support base secured by A Troop's 1st Platoon, B Troop's 2d Platoon, and one company of ARVNs. With three light observation helicopters D Troop was participating in the operation. During the morning the division's Commanding General, Major General George G. O'Connor<sup>13</sup> and an aide visited the squadron at mid-morning.

A Troop, less its 1st Platoon, with one company of ARVNs departed its position at 8:10 a.m. and advanced west along axis White heading for objective Cat 4½ miles to the west of Route 2. B Troop departing at 7:33 a.m. advanced

west on axis Blue for objective Dog 5 miles west of the road. A Troop dropped the ARVNs off and they continued their movement along the northern portion of axis White and found a base camp during their movement. And C Troop departing at 7:15 a.m. advanced on axis Red for objective Rat  $5\frac{1}{2}$  miles to the west of the road. C Troop too found a base camp but their's was a fairly old one. During the night the ARVNs closed for the night with A Troop's 2d Platoon.

During the day one of D Troop's helicopters was hit by small arms fire and forced to land at the fire support base. The helicopter was later flown on to Bearcat. Also, B Troop's 2d Platoon ran two convoys to Blackhorse and back during the day.

The next day 10 August A Troop continuing its advance seized objective Cat by mid-morning. While B Troop continued its mission in objective Dog area. And C Troop continued to secure blocking position in vicinity of objective Rat. During the day the troop conducted a composite dismounted patrol to the southeast. While the ARVNs secured the blocking position near objective Cat.

Back at the fire support base A Troop's 1st Platoon conducted an afternoon reconnaissance to the vicinity of Ap Hean and found a suitcase with black pajamas and a notebook. Later the platoon discovered a tunnel with overhead cover. And B Troop's 2d Platoon ran two convoys to Blackhorse. While the Birdgogs escorted a tank from A Troop to the fire support base. And D Troop provided two light observation helicopters for command and control purposes for the day.

The following day the squadron command post moved  $2\frac{3}{4}$  miles to the north and established a new fire support base at that location. D Troop again provided two light helicopters for command and control purposes to the squadron. A Troop conducted a dismounted patrol during the morning and found an ammunition factory just north of objective Cat. Also the troop secured the landing zone for the extraction of the ARVNs. And the troop's 3d Platoon had to RON at the location it had shared with the ARVNs because of a vehicle with track trouble. A Troop then moved its command post to a new location  $1\frac{1}{2}$  miles northwest of the new fire support base. B Troop conducted a dismounted patrol before moving to its new location slightly northwest of A Troop's new location. During the day C Troop was quite active. Its dismounted patrol reported automatic weapons fire then spotted 9 Viet Cong, and followed a blood trail with negative results. And its 1st Platoon fired at an unknown number of Viet Cong. By mid-afternoon C Troop completed filling a tunnel with CS gas



then moved to a new position slightly southwest of A Troop's new position. And the ARVNs were airlifted to the new fire support base where they provided security for the base.

The following day both A and C Troop's each with two platoons of ARVNs conducted search and destroy operations. While D Troop provided three helicopters for command and control purposes. And A Troop responding to a report that a 1st Australian Task Force forward air observer had been fired at near Ap Hean searched the suspected area and found some expended brass. During the afternoon A Troop spotted a group of Viet Cong carrying supplies and gave chase. The Viet Cong discarded their supplies and the troop captured 1 POW who claimed to be an ARVN who had been taken prisoner by the Viet Cong in 1966. The POW stated a Viet Cong company that was later identified as one company of the D445 Battalion had been operating in the vicinity of Ap Binh Gia. The area was checked with negative results. And the POW was turned over to the 541st Military Intelligence Detachment at Blackhorse.

In addition to its search and destroy mission C Troop later in the day prepared to provide a rapid reaction force to the Xa Bang regional force outpost. Later the troop relieved B Troop of security for the fire support base. And the ARVNs in addition to working with A and C Troops also found 6 United States grenades and a chicom claymore near its command post.

The following day 13 August A Troop conducted a search and destroy mission along a trail to the east with no significant results. While B Troop in conjunction with two companies of ARVNs, National Police, and an IPW team conducted a cordon and search of Cam My, 3 miles south of the Courtenay airstrip Route 2. The village was sealed by 3:59 a.m. and the search began at full light. And C Troop provided escort and security for convoys traveling between Blackhorse and the fire support base. During the day squadron medics conducted MEDCAPs at both Cam My and Xa Bang. And the ARVNs conducted local patrolling from their base.

D Troop performed visual reconnaissance of IP#2 and surrounding area of Ap Hean [conducted two Eagle Flights, one in the vicinity of Hung Sa and the other in the vicinity of Suoi Ca]. At mid-morning the troop received automatic weapons fire just outside of Hung Sa and the Aero Rifle Platoon was inserted and swept the area with no significant results. Following their extraction the troop received machine gun fire southeast of Hung Sa and in response 63 rounds of artillery was fired into the area. And at early afternoon the aerial rifles were inserted near Suoi Ca for a reconnaissance of the

area. One Viet Cong was observed fleeing the area and an M79 was fired at him, with negative results. But the Aero Rifle Platoon leader was slightly wounded due to the detonation of an M79 round fired at the enemy.

The next day 14 August the squadron conducted a MEDCAP in Cam My adjacent to the Courtenary airstrip. And the Birddogs found and destroyed 5 tunnels with rooms and 6 bunkers close to Route 2. All were old. During the day A Troop with two platoons of ARVNs moved to the west for the day and discovered an old worn trail and a well used trail that an estimated company had traveled over approximately twelve hour before. Further search of the area was conducted with negative results. And B Troop with two platoons of ARVNs had also been sent to the west and found a trail that had been used within the past twenty-four hours. D Troop provided two light observation helicopters for command and control purposes. And a light scout section performed visual reconnaissance throughout AO Mustang and covered the movements of A and B Troops with negative enemy contact. And C Troop in addition to running convoys back to Blackhorse was also prepared to provide rapid reaction force for the Xa Bang regional force outpost if needed.

The next day the 5th Cavalry terminated its participation in Operation Kittyhawk and conducted a tactical road march back to Blackhorse. During the morning B Troop acting as advance guard outposted Route 2 from the fire support base to the Courtenay airstrip. And D Troop performed visual reconnaissance of the march route and provided cover utilizing aero scouts for advance, rear, and flank reconnaissance during the road march and had one light fire team on strip alert for the duration of the road march. In addition the troop also provided one light observation helicopter for command and control purposes.

C Troop with the squadron's command group in escort reached Blackhorse by 11:20 a.m. The Birddogs escorted Headquarters and Headquarters Troop wheel vehicles. As A Troop escorting the ARVNs, provided security for the artillery, and acted as rear guard reached the base camp at 11:55 a.m. And B Troop's outposting elements closed five minutes later. During the afternoon B Troop sent one platoon for escort and security of the ARVNs as they returned to Xuan Loc. Upon its return to Blackhorse on 15 August the 5th Cavalry stood down for maintenance of vehicles and equipment for its forthcoming move back to Bearcat on 17 August. During the stand down D Troop provided one light observation helicopter for Colonel Fuller's use.

Finally on 17 August the 5th Cavalry left Blackhorse with D Troop provid-

ing column cover and maintaining one light fire team on strip alert for the duration of the road march in addition to providing one light observation helicopter for command and control purposes. C Troop was the lead element with a starting point time of 12:42 p.m. and a closing time at Bearcat of 4:05 p.m. A Troop was second with a starting point time of 1:00 p.m. and a closing time of 4:15 p.m. Headquarters and Headquarters Troop was third with a starting time of 1:10 p.m. and a closing time of 5:03 p.m. And B Troop was the fourth element with a starting point time of 1:25 p.m. and a closing time of 5:07 p.m.

LATE SUMMER THROUGH EARLY WINTER OPERATIONS

Following the termination of Operation Kittyhawk and its return to Bearcat found the 5th Cavalry returning to familiar ground that it had initially worked in February and March. Over the next two months the squadron would be engaged in combat operations against the ever threatening 1,650 man 274th Main Force Viet Cong Regiment in Long Thanh District and adjacent Phuoc Tuy Province while under the operational control of the division's 1st Brigade. The first operation was launched by the 1st Brigade on 22 August in response to intelligence indicating the presence of the 274th Regiment in southern Long Khanh and northern Phuoc Tuy Provinces. Brigade forces consisted of the 5th Cavalry, 2d Battalion, 47th Infantry [M], and 2d and 4th Battalions, 39th Infantry.

Operation Akron II started with a B52 strike which landed on or near the 274th's regimental command post area. Following the B52 strike were mechanized and airmobile assaults into the area of operation. As the operations progressed only light contact was made with enemy forces until the termination of the operation on 27 August. A major accomplishment of the operation was the disorganization and dispersal of the 274th Regiment prior to the South Vietnamese presidential election on 3 September 1967.

A month later the 1st Brigade launched Operation Akron III, a reconnaissance in force operation into the Hat Dich [Base Area 303] on 26 September. Between the termination of Akron II and the start of Akron III the 11th Cavalry had conducted Operation Arkansas City in the same targeted area. Brigade forces consisted of the 5th Cavalry, 2d and 4th Battalions, 39th Infantry, B Company, 2d Battalion, 47th Infantry [M], 48th ARVN Regiment and 52d ARVN Ranger Battalion both 18th ARVN Division units. These forces were again being sent into the jungle with a two fold mission. First, they were to try and locate elements of the 274th Viet Cong Regiment and their supplies and installations. Second, they were to clear trails through the jungle to reduce future Viet Cong use of the area.

On 8 October Task Force 3-5 Cavalry<sup>14</sup> found a weapons and ammunition cache in Phuoc Tuy Province 7½ miles east of Highway 15. This find lead to several other weapons cache of small arms, crew served weapons, and artillery. The artillery pieces were the first taken from the Viet Cong by United States forces. As the find was explored the weapons were brought back to Fire Support Base Brown adjacent to Highway 15 ½ mile north of Thai Thien. The 5th Cavalry's tactical operations center and supporting artillery were located at Brown. As the magnitude of the weapons cache increased General Westmoreland and his Viet-

name counterpart General Cao Van Vien visited the fire support base to see the cache for themselves.

The area of the find spanned a 2,200 yard area and an intricate subterranean system containing chambers as deep as 35 feet, with three to five levels, and ceilings from four to six feet high. The cache included 1,022 small arms, 125 crew served weapons, almost 95,000 rounds of small arms ammunition, 3,364 recoilless rifle shells, and 452 mortar rounds. The haul also included four 75mm Howitzers. Also captured during the lengthy underground exploration were 1,335 pounds of medical supplies which were enough to treat 1,000 patients for a month.

In addition large quantities of rice, clothing and supplies were captured along with maps, medical records, tax collector sheets, book keeping logs, duty rosters and Viet Cong unit citations. Once the search was completed demolition experts destroyed the vast underground network.

During Akron III units made many contacts with the Viet Cong who chose to remain dispersed and not to engage the operational forces. During the operation 1,357.6 acres of jungle were cleared. And most important was the 5th Cavalry's discovery of the largest land-based cache found in Vietnam to date in the Vietnam War. On 20 October the 5th Cavalry returned to Bearcat and stood down. Following the termination of Akron III a squadron element participated in Operation Coronado VIII conducted by the Mobile Riverine Force in the southern Nhon Trach and northern Rung Sat Secret Zone in coordination with squadron elements and the Royal Thai "Queen's Cobras" Regiment. There were few encounters during Operation Coronado VIII that was conducted between 27-29 October.

As the ground forces were busy in the jungles D Troop had been supporting all three division brigades. It was also supporting LRRP insertions and extractions. And the troop was providing one light fire team for counter mortar/rocket standby alternately between Tan An and Dong Tam base camps. The LRRP and counter mortar/rocket standby missions would be ongoing for D Troop.

On 4 November the 5th Cavalry returned to the field for participation in Operation Santa Fe a 1st Brigade operation. Operation Santa Fe's objectives were to locate and destroy elements of the 5th Viet Cong Division in the May Tao Secret Zone. To provide security for the 15th and 86th Engineer Battalions building bridges and clearing jungle along Highway 1 from Gia Ray to the II Corps boundary. And to open that route and clear trails along Route 331 and 2B to provide ready access to the May Tao Secret Zone and the villages of Ham Tam

and Ham Tan.

The high point of the operation would be the security and upgrading operations along Highway 1 and Route 2B. These major routes of communication had not been used since 1962 due to the destruction of most of the eleven bridges in the brigade's AO.

For the first phase of the operation the 5th Cavalry was sent back into central Phuoc Tuy Province where it had operated in during Operations Portsea II and Paddington. The 5th Cavalry's mission was to locate and interdict Viet Cong and North Vietnamese Army supply lines. To emplace and secure two AVLB bridges at Song Rai on Route 327 which had been designated bridge site Chunky. Secure the bridge site for the crossing of allied forces and secure Fire Support Bases Lion and Tiger plus elements of the 18th ARVN Division. Provide indirect fire support and escort logistical convoys from Blackhorse to Xuan Loc. Logistical support for the squadron was from the 506th Supply and Service Detachment at Blackhorse. Maintenance support was to be provided by a contact team from the division's A Company, 709th Maintenance Battalion.

On 3 November the 1st Brigade launching Operation Santa Fe conducted both airmobile assaults and tactical road marches into the brigade's operational area. While the brigade's ground movement was escorted by the 2d Battalion, 47th Infantry [M], D Troop provided light fire team support during the 70 mile road march from Bearcat to Fire Support/Patrol Base Wildcat at Ap Rung La on the Long Khanh-Binh Tuy Province border, and screened to the northeast in zone. At late afternoon on the 3d the Aero Rifle Platoon was inserted north of the Sung Dinh 6½ miles southeast of Wildcat and found several old trails. A check of the area was made with negative results.

On 4 November as the ground elements were moving to their operational area D Troop conducted search and destroy operations 2½ miles east of Wildcat with the troop's Aero Rifle Platoon without contact. The air cavalrymen also provided air screen in zone and inserted the LRRPs into AO Bluejay I and II without sighting or contact.

On the 4th B Troop was successful with the assistance of the 1st Australian Task Force in laying the two AVLB bridges from E Company, 15th Engineer Battalion at bridge site Chunky. The troop also secured Fire Support Base Lion and Tiger. Lion was located adjacent to Route 328 3 miles north of its junction with Route 327 between former Paddington fire support base sites George and Mike. While Fire Support Base Tiger was situated 6 miles north of

and Ham Tan.

The high point of the operation would be the security and upgrading operations along Highway 1 and Route 2B. These major routes of communication had not been used since 1962 due to the destruction of most of the eleven bridges in the brigade's AO.

For the first phase of the operation the 5th Cavalry was sent back into central Phuoc Tuy Province where it had operated in during Operations Portsea II and Paddington. The 5th Cavalry's mission was to locate and interdict Viet Cong and North Vietnamese Army supply lines. To emplace and secure two AVLB bridges at Song Rai on Route 327 which had been designated bridge site Chunky. Secure the bridge site for the crossing of allied forces and secure Fire Support Bases Lion and Tiger plus elements of the 18th ARVN Division. Provide indirect fire support and escort logistical convoys from Blackhorse to Xuan Loc. Logistical support for the squadron was from the 506th Supply and Service Detachment at Blackhorse. Maintenance support was to be provided by a contact team from the division's A Company, 709th Maintenance Battalion.

On 3 November the 1st Brigade launching Operation Santa Fe conducted both airmobile assaults and tactical road marches into the brigade's operational area. While the brigade's ground movement was escorted by the 2d Battalion, 47th Infantry [M], D Troop provided light fire team support during the 70 mile road march from Bearcat to Fire Support/Patrol Base Wildcat at Ap Rung La on the Long Khanh-Binh Tuy Province border, and screened to the northeast in zone. At late afternoon on the 3d the Aero Rifle Platoon was inserted north of the Sung Dinh 6½ miles southeast of Wildcat and found several old trails. A check of the area was made with negative results.

On 4 November as the ground elements were moving to their operational area D Troop conducted search and destroy operations 2½ miles east of Wildcat with the troop's Aero Rifle Platoon without contact. The air cavalrymen also provided air screen in zone and inserted the LRRPs into AO Bluejay I and II without sighting or contact.

On the 4th B Troop was successful with the assistance of the 1st Australian Task Force in laying the two AVLB bridges from E Company, 15th Engineer Battalion at bridge site Chunky. The troop also secured Fire Support Base Lion and Tiger. Lion was located adjacent to Route 328 3 miles north of its junction with Route 327 between former Paddington fire support base sites George and Mike. While Fire Support Base Tiger was situated 6 miles north of

of Lion on Route 330. Route 330 and 328 converged between the two fire support bases. Fire support for the operation was provided by A Battery, 2d Battalion, 35th Artillery [155SP] which was stationed at Fire Support Base Tiger. Also participating in the 5th Cavalry's area of operation were elements of the 1st Australian Task Force and the 27th Engineer Battalion.

Both A and C Troops were deployed to the east of Route 2 in intensive reconnaissance in force operations. Because of the number of mines found on the access routes to their locations all resupply was conducted by air. And elements attempting to recover damaged vehicles had to be accompanied by a mine sweep team and a security party. During their operations both troops were successful and found large bunker complexes, small quantities of weapons, documents, and small arms ammunition.

On 5 November after D Troop had extracted the LRRPs from the area of operation without incident it was released by the 1st Brigade to the operational control of Task Force Forsyth at Bearcat. A provisional organization Task Force Forsyth in the absence of the 1st Brigade Headquarters was provided operational control of sufficient forces to secure the division base camp and to conduct limited strike operations [Operation Riley] around Bearcat.

On 16 November the squadron concluded its participation in the first phase of Operation Santa Fe. During its participation there had been 4 men killed and 9 wounded. In addition, 3 tanks and 1 ACAV, and 2 Rome plows had been damaged by RPGs and mines. B Troop was left under the operational control of the sector advisor, 43d ARVN Regiment, and would continue its participation in Operation Santa Fe. Upon the completion of its participation in Santa Fe the squadron returned to Bearcat in preparation for its movement to Tan An and participation in the ongoing 3d Brigade's Operation Enterprise in Long An Province.

Leaving its heavy armored vehicles at Bearcat the 5th Cavalry proceeded onto the 3d Brigade's base camp. On the 15th of November the brigade's command post had displaced to Dong Tam as the brigade began Operation Kien Giang 1-9 with the 2d Brigade along the border of Kien Phuong and Dinh Tuong Province in Base Area 470. The brigade would not return to Long An Province until 19 November.

The 5th Cavalry came under the 3d Brigade's operational control. At Tan An A and C Troops maintained security of the brigade's base camp and conducted periodic roadrunner and convoy escort operations. While the Birdogs conducted limited mounted reconnaissance operations and convoy escort between Tan Thuan [Tan Tru] where the brigade's 2d Battalion, 60th Infantry and Binh



Phuoc where the 5th Battalion, 60th Infantry [M] were stationed. Both Battalions were on operation with the brigade.

On 21 November the squadron completed its participation in Operation Enterprise and returned to Bearcat. During the five days the squadron participated in the operation it had 2 men wounded in action. Meantime, B Troop had been placed under the 11th Cavalry's operational control on the 21st. The troop was located at Fire Support Base Tiger.

The next day the 5th Cavalry commenced Operation Witch. The squadron's mission was to conduct search and destroy operations. Secure the tactical transphibian tree crusher. Provide security for Task Force Forsyth's MEDCAPs. Provide indirect fire support for ARVN operations. And provide ready reaction forces for Binh Son and Highway 15 in the vicinity of Bearcat. Supporting forces in the operation included A Battery, 1st Battalion, 11th Artillery [105T], and B Company, 2d Battalion, 39th Infantry.

The most intriguing aspect of Operation Witch were two mammoth 93-ton transphibian tactical tree crushers that the Army had leased from Le Tourneau and were testing in Vietnam. They were operated by the Tree Crusher Detachment [Provisional] who were attached to the 34th Engineer Group and further attached to the 93d Engineer Battalion [Construction] for operational control, support, and evaluation. The 9th Infantry Division had operational control of the crushers. On firm ground they could clear ten acres in one hour. They could fell large trees and cut moderate size timber into sticks which were pressed into the ground. The operation concluded on 26 November. During the operation 2 members of B Company, 2d Battalion, 39th Infantry were wounded in action. And 2 M-1 rifles, 1 German Mauser, and 1 75mm recoilless rifle were captured. At the same time B Troop moved from Fire Support Base Tiger up to Fire Support/Patrol Base Wildcat and came under the 1st Brigade's operational control. B Troop relieved B Company, 2d Battalion, 47th Infantry [M] of its security mission at Wildcat.

On 30 November the 5th Cavalry rejoining Operation Santa Fe now in its third phase road marched to Wildcat. Upon their arrival A and C Troops prepared for future operations. At mid-morning B Troop had been placed under the operational control of the 2d Battalion, 47th Infantry [M] and would remain so throughout the 5th Cavalry's participation in the operation. During the day the troop had sent a platoon to Fire Support/Patrol Base Leopard. Since its arrival at Wildcat B Troop had also conducted local patrolling. At the same time A Company, 2d Battalion, 47th Infantry [M] was placed under the 5th Cavalry's

