

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 routin 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 routin 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 positons 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 The patrol was withdrawn.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'Connor¹³ 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 Cavalry¹⁴ 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 A0.

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 A0 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

operational control and would remain so for the operation.

The next day the 5th Cavalry attacked eastward on Highway 1 with A Troop attacking at 6:55 a.m. The troop advanced eastward to Fire Support/Patrol Base Alleycat which was located 11 miles due east of Wildcat. The squadron's tactical operations center was established at Alleycat. Fifty minutes later C Troop attacked up the highway to a position adjacent to the road 5 miles east of Alleycat and outposted along the highway. At Wildcat B Troop conducted local patrolling in addition to its primary mission of guarding Wildcat, and during the day the platoon at Leopard returned to Wildcat. At late morning a D Troop light scout team sighted an individual pushing a bicycle loaded with food and sighted in the same area along Sông Sinh 3½ miles southwest of Alleycat a camp site.

On 2 December as A Troop continued to secure Alleycat and outpost the highway it conducted local patrolling also. A Troop would secure Alleycat through the squadron's participation in Operation Santa Fe III. During the day C Troop continued to outpost the highway and moved a platoon up to the bridge site slightly south of Fire Support/Patrol Base Tomcat, a move of 13/4 miles to the east of the troop's current location. At early evening a C Troop element received small arms fire near Ap Da Mai [2] 2 miles west of Alleycat. During the day A Company had conducted roadrunner operations between Phase Line Jane and Alleycat and during the afternoon had taken one round of RPG fire which caused no casualties or damage. Presently Tomcat was being secured by the 43d ARVN Regiment. During the day B Troop conducted local patrolling.

The next day A Troop conducted a reconnaissance of Route 2B south to Ham Tan on the South China Sea without contact. A Troop continued to secure Alleycat, and conduct local patrolling also. In addition to outposting the highway, C Troop also secured engineers repairing bridges south of Tomcat. Finally at 6:55 p.m. they moved across the obstacle and linked up with the ARVNs at Tomcat. And B Troop conducted local patrolling.

The following day 4 December in addition to its security mission and outposting mission A Troop also conducted roadrunner operations. And C Troop continued to outpost along the highway also secured the engineers working on the highway. C Troop also conducted combined search and destroy operations with the ARVNs east to the II Corps boundary. And A Company which had relocated adjacent to the highway ½ mile west of Alleycat outposted the highway and conducted local patrolling in addition to conducting roadrunner operations. And

B Troop continued to conduct local patrolling in addition to securing Wildcat.

The next day A Troop continued its previous day's missions. And C Troop relocating its command post $4\frac{1}{4}$ miles east of Tomcat established a fire support/patrol base with one platoon from the 1st Battalion, 11th Artillery [105T]. And the troop also conducted search and destroy operations. During the day A Company relocated its command post to the east of Tomcat and conducted local patrolling and outposted and secured the highway. At late afternoon the company detained two males without identification. They were evacuated for interrogation. The next day squadron forces continued their missions. During the day A Company moved its command post to the west of Tomcat and continued with its mission.

The following day 7 December A Troop while still securing Alleycat and Highway 1 conducted patrols in zone 1,000 meters to the north and south of the highway. While C Troop secured Highway 1 from just east of Tomcat on east to Ap Phu Minh in II Corps and outposted all critical points along the highway in zone. While A Company securing Highway 1 in zone and secured bridge sites 8 and 9. The company also provided one company to assist the 1st Battalion, 43d ARVN Regiment in securing Tomcat. B Troop still securing Wildcat also secured Highway 1 and engineer clearing operations. In addition the troop conducted local patrolling without contact. The next day A Troop's mission varied from the previous day by the addition of roadrunner operations. The remainder of the squadron carried on with their previous day's activities. The following day 8 December B Troop at Wildcat had a change in its activities. B Troop conducted search and destroy operations north of Highway 1 in the vicinity of Song Oi without contact. And B Troop provided the brigade's ready reaction force. But it was not committed. The next day squadron activities continued unchanged.

The following day 11 December the squadron patrolled actively. A Troop conducted patrols to the north and south of Highway 1 without contact. And C Troop patrolled approximately 2 miles to the northwest of its position. During the day one of its platoons received one round of RPG fire-but incurred no casualties or damage. Artillery engaged the enemy with unknown results. During the day A Company patrolled to the northwest into Tan Linh District and located several trail markers and other signs of activity. While B Troop patrolled to the north of Highway 1 without contact. The following day A Troop accounted for one female detainee who was evacuated to Blackhorse. While C Troop patrolling $2\frac{1}{4}$ miles to the northwest found and destroyed two bicycles,

a small bag of rice and noted evidence of a fire approximately two days old. And A Company patrolled to the Ham Tan-Tanh Linh District boundary.

On 13 December A Troop continued to secure Alleycat and outpost Highway 1 in zone. The troop also secured the engineers clearing and upgrading Route 2B without incident. C Troop continued to secure Highway 1 and the engineers clearing and upgrading the highway in zone. The troop also conducted a patrol to the north of the highway. While A Company secured Highway 1 in zone and conducted a patrol to the north of the highway with one find. The company found and destroyed 2 bunkers and 1 hut. While B Troop continued to secure Wildcat and Highway 1 in zone and conducted patrolling. The next day A Troop continued to secure engineer cutting operations along Route 2B. While C Troop patrolling 23/4 miles south of its position made one find. Its 2d Platoon found and destroyed 4 bunkers and 2 huts. And A Company patrolled to the south of the highway. While B Troop patrolled to both the north and south of Highway 1.

The next day 15 December was the squadron's last full day of participation in Operation Santa Fe III. A Troop continued to secure Alleycat and outpost Highway 1 in zone. The troop also secured engineer clearing and upgrading of Highway 1 and Route 2B. C Troop secured Highway 1 and engineer clearing of the highway in zone. The troop also conducted patrolling 1½ miles southwest of its position adjacent to Route 341. While A Company secured Tomcat and engineer clearing and upgrading of Highway 1 in zone. During a patrol 2 miles west of the highway the company found 2 small punji pits, 2 huts, and a 150 pound rice grinding machine which were all destroyed. B Troop secured Wildcat and outposted Highway 1 in zone. The troop also conducted patrolling to the south of the highway.

On 16 December the 5th Cavalry continued to secure Highway 1 in zone until relieved by the 2d Battalion, 47th Infantry [M] and ARVN Task Force Binh Tuy at 1:33 p.m. The 2d Battalion, 47th Infantry [M] moved its command post to Tomcat and assumed responsibility for the eastern portion of the 1st Brigade's A0. And the 35th ARVN Ranger Battalion relieved the 5th Cavalry of security at Alleycat. The squadron then moved to a position east of Wildcat until 4:00 p.m. when it started its roadmarch back to Bearcat. The 1st Brigade released the 5th Cavalry to the operational control of Task Force Forsyth upon its closing at Bearcat.

With its return to Bearcat the squadron commenced Operation Reindeer in Long Thanh District of Bien Hoa Province. The 5th Cavalry's mission was to interdict east-west lines of communications across Highway 15 from the Phu My

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airstrip in the south to Long Thanh in the north. It was to provide ready reaction force to Nhon Trach, Long Thanh, Binh Son, and the Bearcat area. It was also to conduct strike operations into AO Cambridge. For the operation the squadron established a fire support base north of Thai Thien near the location of its Akron III fire support base. At the fire support base was located B Battery, 2d Battalion, 35th Artillery [155SP].

On the night of 20 December the fire support base was attacked by the Viet Cong. And in the heat of the fighting A and C Troops and artillery received an emergency resupply of ammunition. The resupply was conducted by D Troop with its UH1-D's and the 200th Assault Helicopter Company "Pachyderms" with their CH-47's. The 200th was also Bearcat based. In the fighting C Troop had 4 men killed and collectively there were 15 wounded. In addition 1 APC was destroyed and 1 tank damaged by RPG fire. The Viet Cong sustained 21 killed, 2 wounded, and 2 captured.

The 5th Cavalry less C Troop which would be a ready reaction force at Long Binh until the squadron moved to Blackhorse, returned to Bearcat on 22 December in preparation for the squadron's resumption of Operation Kittyhawk, which the squadron was suppose to assume responsibility for on 26 December. But the squadron was notified it would not be assuming Operation Kittyhawk until 28 December 1967. And the squadron's participation in Reindeer continued until the 26th of December. Meantime, D Troop was conducting Operation Akron IV a continuing overflight watch of AO Akron.

THE LAST KITTYHAWK

On 28 December the 5th Cavalry roadmarched back to Blackhorse and relieved the 3d Squadron, 11th Cavalry, and assumed responsibility for Operation Kittyhawk. Upon its relief the 3d Squadron rejoined its parent regiment which was under the operational control of II Field Force and deployed in the 1st Infantry Division's area of operation. With the squadron's assumption of Operation Kittyhawk came the various missions that made up Kittyhawk. Since its last participation in the operation in August the security mission at Gia Ray had been reduced to a platoon size mission.

With the squadron's assumption of Operation Kittyhawk came the responsibility for the squadron to run the third of three convoys from Vung Tau to Blackhorse. Originally the squadron was to have assumed the Kittyhawk mission on 26 December and would have run the convoy on the 27th as well as on the 31st. But because of the two day delay in the squadron moving to Blackhorse the 3d Squadron, 11th Cavalry ran the 27th's convoy. And because of the delay the requirement for the 5th Cavalry running the 31st convoy became subordinated to the ongoing activities of the squadron leading to its final move to Blackhorse.

And it was only after the squadron's move to Blackhorse that the squadron's operations officer was reminded of the squadron's requirement to escort the 31 December convoy by the staff of the 9th Infantry Division over an unsecured telephone¹⁵. C Troop which had the mission was given the requirements of the escort mission. The operations officer going on rest and recuperation leave turned it over to his assistant. The assistant was aware only that the reminder had come over the regular telephone, saw no reason to be secretive about the remaining arrangements and made a number of additional calls to discuss the details of the convoy mission with the various effected parties. Having given the mission back to C Troop, the assistant operations officer backed out of the problem, assuming that some previously approved plan would be implemented. He also assumed that the renewed convoy assignment must have been passed along to all of the staff; he therefore, did not include it in the first operations briefing that he ran on 30 December after the operation officers departure.

Consequently not even the squadron commander was aware of the convoy mission. Given the mission C Troop's commander because of his familiarity with the area from previous operations believed the sector to be relatively quiet. When in fact there had been no combat operations conducted in the area for over thirty days. He planned to make a routine tactical night roadmarch to Vung Tau,

37 miles to the south, to rendezvous with the convoy at 9:00 a.m. on the 31st. Two platoon size elements were to make the march while the troop commander remained at Blackhorse with the third platoon ready to assist if needed. The platoons were to leave the base camp at 3:30 a.m. and march south on Route 2. One platoon was to stop along Route 2 about a third of the way to Vung Tau, and spend the night running the road to Blackhorse to prevent enemy interference on the route. The second platoon would continue onto Vung Tau and pick up the convoy and escort it to Blackhorse. It would be joined enroute by the platoon which had been running the road. But there were no designated check points for the platoons to report their progress of their march to the squadron's operations center. And there had been no arranged for on call artillery fire layed on in case there would be a need for it.

At 3:30 a.m. on 31 December the column moved out as planned with only the assistant operations officer knowing about it. The lead platoon, commanded by the 2d platoon leader, consisted of one tank from the 3d Platoon, two ACAV's from the 2d, the troop commander's APC and the maintenance section's APC, which were being employed as ACAV's. The next platoon, commanded by the 3d Platoon leader consisted of one tank from the 2d Platoon, two ACAV's from the 3d Platoon, two from the 1st, and the 1st Platoon mortar carrier without its mortar. The two tanks intermittenly used their driving lights to illuminate and observe the sides of the road as they lead their respective platoons down Route 2.

About 5.6 miles south of Blackhorse, Route 2 crested a slight rise, then ran streight south for 1.2 miles and then crested another rise. The flanks had been cleared out to about 330 feet. As the lead tank started up the southmost rise at 4:10 p.m. the last vehicle in the convoy, the mortar carrier, was leveling off on the streight stretch 1.2 miles to the rear. Suddenly a rocket propelled grenade hit the lead tank, killing the driver and stopping the tank in the middle of the road. An ambush then erupted along the entire 1.2 mile stretch of the road. A hail of grenades quickly set the remaining vehicles of the lead platoon on fire. As the trailing platoon directed his platoon into a herring-bone, the mortar carrier was hit by a command detonated mine and exploding mortar ammunition destroyed the carrier. The lead tank was hit by a rocket propelled grenade, and ran off the road, blew up and burned. The surprise was so complete that no organized fire was returned. When individual vehicles attempted to return fire, the Viet Cong firing in a deadfall some fifteen meters off the road, concentrated on that vehicle until it stopped firing. Within ten minutes the fight was over.

At daybreak the devastating results of the ambush was apparent in the battered and burned out hulks that lay scattered along the road. Collectively, C Troop suffered 42 casualties: 7 killed in action, 3 died from their wounds, 29 were wounded in action, and 3 men were missing in action. And the troop had 2 tanks, 5 APC's [APC and ACAVs], and 1 mortar carrier damaged or destroyed in the ambush. There were no apparent casualties inflicted upon the estimated two platoons of Viet Cong who had ambushed C Troop. By evening all the vehicles except one tank had been retrieved and returned to Blackhorse. C Troop had been hurt and had to be rebuilt and reorganized before it would again be combat capable. New men and vehicles would be brought to Blackhorse to fill C Troop's depleted ranks. For nearly two weeks following the ambush C Troop rising like the fabled Phoenix from the ashes of ambush gradually began to reemerge as a combat effective unit. The troop became responsible for both the security of Blackhorse and the engineer quarry at Gia Ray. As the base camp security force C Troop undertook daytime missions as well as securing MEDCAPS. Following the ambush Colonel Fuller turned the command of the 5th Cavalry over to Lieutenant Colonel Hugh J. Bartley.

Then on 11 January 1968 A Troop was sent back to Bien Hoa Province to participate in Operation Akron V in southwestern Long Thanh District. The troop roadmarched from Xuan Loc to the vicinity of Landing Zone Pliers in the jungle 10 miles east of Highway 15 and secured the landing zone. A Company [-], 4th Battalion, 39th Infantry air assaulted into Pliers and went under A Troop's operational control. The troop then screened in zone and went under the operational control of Task Force 2d Battalion, 47th Infantry [M]. The following day D Troop while supporting the task force engaged 3 Viet Cong and killed 1 of them. During the day and on to the 13th of January A Troop and A Company [-] continued their screening operations in zone without contact.

The next day 14 January A Troop swept to the southwest and received sniper fire at 11:45 a.m. from an unknown size Viet Cong force which caused no casualties. At the same time a troop element while escorting an AVLB received RPG, small arms, and automatic weapons fire, that resulted in 2 wounded and 1 ACAV destroyed. And at mid-afternoon the troop found a partially destroyed Mauser rifle. While A Company [-] continued to maintain screening/blocking position along the engineer trail on the northern boundary of the AO.

The following day A Company [-] was extracted from LZ Pliers and returned to Bearcat at midmorning. And A Troop was released from the operational control of Task Force 2d Battalion, 47th Infantry [M] at 1:00 p.m. and roadmarched back

to Blackhorse. In assessing the operation the 1st Brigade wrote in its combat operations after action report that D Troop performed admirably its over-flight mission [Akron IV] and gathered valuable intelligence, but did not possess the troops to curtail Viet Cong movement and operations. The brigade wrote the airmobile and ground assaults of the 2d Battalion, 39th Infantry and 2d Battalion, 47th Infantry [M], and the sweep east toward the 1st Australian Task Force and 3d Squadron, 5th Cavalry block, trapped several elements of the 274th Regiment. This was verified by the moderately heavy contacts and enemy delaying actions encountered in base camp locations. The contacts succeeded in fragmenting the VC/NVA elements, eliminating several of their coveted base locations, and sharply altered their plans. Though A Troop terminated its participation on the 15th the operation continued until 21 January.

On 29 January 1968 the 5th Cavalry made its final dispositions in advance of the 36-hour Lunar New Years Tet Cease Fire. 1968 was the year of the monkey and the cease fire was set to start in all but South Vietnam's I Corps where it had been cancelled, at 6:00 p.m. that evening. A Troop was guarding Fire Support Base Apple near the site of old Fire Support Base 4, where A Battery, 1st Battalion, 11th Artillery [105T] was positioned. B Troop was at Blackhorse. C Troop with its 2d Platoon at Gia Ray was located on Highway 1 at Boa Toan with the mission of securing Highway 1 from Tan Phong to Gia Ray. And D Troop was at Bearcat under the 1st Brigade's operational control.

At midmorning the next day the Allies Tet cease fire was cancelled because of the severity of the communist attacks in both I and II corps. They had launched attacks against Nha Trang, Ban Me Thout, Kontum, Qui Nhon, and Pleiku in II Corps. And they had launched attacks against Da Nang and Hoi An in I Corps. With the cancellation of the cease fire American forces were put on a high state of alert. During the day C Troop's 3d Platoon which had been outposting Highway 1 during the night proceeded onto Gia Ray and relieved the 2d Platoon which then rejoined the troop at Boa Toan. The troop's three mortar carriers were in battery at Gia Ray. Activity continued routinely until 8:00 p.m. when C Troop was notified of the cease fire cancellation nearly eleven hours after it had occurred.

The next morning 31 January A Troop at 7:00 a.m. was ordered to leave its 3d Platoon at Fire Support Base Apple for security, and proceed towards Bien Hoa. The troop commander was to be briefed on the move by the squadron commander. Presently the 5th Viet Cong Division was mounting major attacks in the Bien

Hoa-Long Binh area. As A Troop was advancing the 9th Infantry Division's, 2d Battalion, 47th Infantry [M] as part of Operation Riley had been acting as a reactionary force at Long Binh, already had elements in action at the Long Binh ammo dump and the South Vietnamese III Corps Headquarters and III Corps Prisoner Of War camp.

As A Troop entered the village of Trang Bom it was met by a company size ambush which lasted only ten minutes as the troop still moving, concentrated its fire along the roadside and rode through the ambush. The troop received sporadic fire as it advanced west on Highway 1 to the concrete bridge at Suoi Dai 11 miles east of Bien Hoa. After the first tank had crossed the bridge a thunderous explosion dropped the span into the stream. While the troop's ACAV's had no trouble fording the stream the remainder of the troop's tanks had to be left at the bridge.

Now out of radio range with both the squadron headquarters and Bien Hoa A Troop continued onto the city of Bien Hoa only to find the square filled with two companies of Viet Cong and North Vietnamese soldiers. The 1st Platoon charged through the enemy not realizing who they were. But by the time the troop commander arrived, the enemy forces had dispersed and opened fire disabling 2 ACAV's. The 2d Platoon pushed them aside and entered the square in a hail of machine gun fire. A Troop was now down to one tank and eight ACAV's.

Continuing on the move the troop was joined by the squadron commander in a light observation helicopter who from the air directed the troop to the Bien Hoa Air Base. As he flew over the troop Colonel Bartley spotted an enemy ambush just outside the air base, with several hundred Viet Cong and North Vietnamese in ditches near the southeast entrance to the base. The troop quickly moved off the road, some thirty to forty meters behind the ambush, firing as they went, destroying the enemy force on one side of the road. The 5th Viet Cong Division's 274th Regiment was attacking the Bien Hoa Air Base, while its 275th Regiment was attacking at Long Binh.

Upon entering the air base A Troop was attached to the 101st Airborne Division's, 2d Battalion, 506th Infantry, which was attempting to reduce enemy forces on the base perimeter. The paratroopers had been flown in from Phuoc Vinh in response to the 274th Regiment's attack on the Bien Hoa Air Base. A Troop was then split between two companies of paratroopers attacking an enemy position at the southeast corner of the base. The fighting lasted most of the day, and culminated in a breakout attempt by the enemy that was stopped short by A Troop. In this fighting the troop lost 2 ACAV's and the lone tank lost

two crews and took nineteen hits from rocket propelled grenades but stayed in the fighting. For the remainder of the day A Troop was the reaction force for the air base defense. During the days fighting A Troop had 6 men killed and 24 wounded. And the troop was credited with 40 Viet Cong kills while the 2d Battalion, 506th Infantry claimed 100.

Meantime action remained heavy in the Long Binh area also. In response to the 275th attack on the II Field Force Headquarters elements of the 2d Battalion, 47th Infantry [M] and an element of the 4th Battalion, 39th Infantry, engaged Viet Cong in Widows Village across the street from II Field Force Headquarters. And the 47th Infantry also had an element fighting with elements of the 199th Light Infantry Brigade near the village of Ho Nai.

As the fighting had raged in the Bien Hoa-Long Binh area the 11th Cavalry which had been conducting operations in the thick jungles of War Zone C, pulled out during the morning, consolidated, and then moved 62 miles to Bien Hoa in just eight hours. By 9:00 p.m. the regiment had cycled the Bien Hoa-Long Binh complex with armor.

Meantime back in Long Khanh Province C Troop had been pulled off of Highway 1 and sent into Xuan Loc at mid-afternoon. The next morning 1 February C Troop leaving its wheeled vehicles and one APC for security at its position next to the 54th Artillery Group's headquarters compound, moved up to Fire Support Base Apple to reinforce A Troop which returned to Apple that morning. The next day 2 February C Troop moved west into Bien Hoa Province to recover damaged A Troop vehicles. While its elements in Xuan Loc moved up to Apple during the morning. Through the afternoon sighting reports of groups of people on the move in the vicinity of Xuan Loc were received. As these reports continued to come in the situation at Xuan Loc became more ominous. But it was not until late afternoon, after an AVLB bridge at Suoi Dai had been taken up, that C Troop reached Fire Support Base Apple. To facilitate refueling, tankers had been positioned alongside the highway to refuel the vehicles as they passed by them on the highway. Without refueling an advance guard under the command of the troop's executive officer sped back into Xuan Loc to secure the troop's position before the main bodies arrival back in the provincial capital.

Though it was positioned inside the provincial capital nearly surrounded on all sides by United States Army and South Vietnamese Army compounds, guard was maintained on all the troop vehicles upon their arrival back in Xuan Loc. At approximately 11:00 p.m. the darkened sky over C Troop cracked with the sounds of small arms fire. While to the northwest the sky over the cities west gate

was alive with tracers as Viet Cong ¹⁶ gunners pumped mortar fire into the city of Xuan Loc. The Viet Cong launched their assault on the city from the Don Dien de An loc Rubber Plantation on the northwest side of Xuan Loc. Against the weight of the Viet Cong attack the ARVN defenders were unable to contain the attacking Viet Cong who fought their way into the provincial capital, and pressed their attack against the police station-government complex. At the same time other Viet Cong established an ambush to counteract a reactionary force response to their attack.

At Xuan Loc ARVN Brigadier General Do Ke Giai's 18th ARVN Division had its 43d Regiment with its 1st and 2d Battalions, stationed with it at Xuan Loc. Also the division's 52d ARVN Ranger Battalion and 5th Armored Cavalry Group were also stationed at Xuan Loc. While the United States Army's 54th Artillery Group had C Battery, 7th Battalion, 9th Artillery [105T] located in Headquarters, 2d Battalion, 35th Artillery's [155SP] compound. And C Battery, 1st Battalion, 83d Artillery [175-8" SP] was located in its compound near Xuan Loc's airstrip.

Initially C Troop was held in reserve as the attack developed. Then the troop was ordered into action. With its 2d Platoon leading C Troop started its movement back down the street toward the scene of the fighting. Stopping briefly in front of the provincial headquarters compound the troop commander ran his wheeled vehicles and most of his Headquarters Platoon tracked vehicles inside the walled compound. The tracked vehicles were moved right up against the wall so their .50-caliber machine guns could be brought to bear against any assault on the compound. Continuing with its 2d Platoon leading and Headquarters elements in the middle, and the 1st Platoon in the rear, C Troop reached Highway 1, then advanced up the street toward the besieged police station-government complex.

Suddenly the lead tank's commander caught sight of a Viet Cong off to the side of his tank pointing an RPG point blank at his tank. But a burst from the platoon sergeant's grease gun cut the Viet Cong down before he could fire. Instantly RPG's hit the troop commander's APC and two other Headquarters Platoon vehicles at mid-column. But none faltered. And C Troop fought its way up the street and attacked headlong into the Viet Cong who now became the hunted. Blunted the Viet Cong's attack on the police station-government complex ceased and the troop then attacked out beyond the cities west gate. Reaching the rubber plantation the troop regrouped and launched a sweep of Xuan Loc's outskirts for more Viet Cong.

After completing its sweep C Troop started back for its position within the

city but stopped briefly in front of the MACV compound so casualties could be taken to the dispensary inside the compound. During the fighting C Troop had 1 man killed and 10 wounded. Combined US/ARVN forces killed 125 Viet Cong of which C Troop was credited with killing 49 of them. Though some of C Troop's vehicles had sustained damage none of them were immobilized in the fighting. And with the arrival of daylight and morning C Troop's commander established three strong points within the city. Vehicles were sent to both the west and south gates to the city as well as into the provincial headquarters compound.

While A Troop had been fighting at the Bien Hoa Air Base and C Troop at Xuan Loc, Gia Ray though tense from anticipation had remained unmolested, as the Viet Cong shooting it all went for more lucrative larger targets. At the quarry in addition to C Troop's 3d Platoon, was A Company, 36th Engineer Battalion [Construction] which operated the quarry. And C Company, 27th Engineer Battalion [Combat] was at Gia Ray while upgrading Highway 1.

On 4 February C Troop was given the mission of clearing Highway 1 from Tan Phong east to Gia Ray. Starting at early morning progress was slow and tedious but the troop finally reached the intersection with Route 333 at late afternoon. 3d Platoon elements advancing from the quarry linked up with the troop at the road junction. At this point C Troop was ordered to return to Xuan Loc and reoccupy its strong points without delay as another Viet Cong attack on the city was expected. 3d Platoon elements accompanied the troop nearly to Suoi Cat where they secured three ARVN trucks that had been ambushed just east of the village. Then without incident C Troop roadmarched onto Xuan Loc and reoccupied its three strong points. The Viet Cong launched their attack against the city's west gate at 9:00 p.m. Again combining their ground attack with a mortar attack the Viet Cong attempted to fight their way into the city. But this time the combined Cavalry-ARVN fire power stopped them cold outside the city's perimeter where helicopter gunships rocketed and minnie gunned them. At least one cavalryman was wounded at the provincial headquarters compound during the mortar attack. This attack was a pale imitation of their 2-3 February attack and was over shortly after it had started.

For the 5th Cavalry Tet had been a time of heavy fighting. Both A and C Troops would receive Valorous Unit Awards for their respective actions at the Bien Hoa Air Base and at Xuan Loc. And B Troop had had three consecutive nights of contact during the offensive while on route security operations on Route 2 between Blackhorse and Xuan Loc. And C Troop was not withdrawn from

Feb. 21, 1968

THE OLD RELIABLE

Near Bien Hoa, Xuan Loc

Page 3

2d-5th Cav turns back six enemy attacks

By SP5 Bruce McIlhenny
Staff Writer

LONG THANH—The Division's 3d Squadron, 5th Armored Cavalry Regiment charged to the rescue of two important military bases—Bien Hoa and Xuan Loc—during the week of Jan. 31-Feb. 6.

Troops A and C were employed in turning the tables on six separate Viet Cong attacks. **FIRE SUPPORT BASE AP-1**—Early Jan. 31, Troop A was ordered to relieve Bien Hoa Air Force Base, under assault by a 10-man VC demolition force.

The 1st and 2d platoons, led by the troop commander, rolled down Highway 15 with a force of 12 Armored Personnel Carriers and two tanks. Waiting along their route to Bien Hoa were three VC attacks. The force had traveled five miles to the village of Trang Hom when the lead tank, driven by Private First Class Joseph L. Evans, 21, of Eric, Pa., was struck by a rifle grenade.

"The grenade hit the right front fender, tore on through and hit my helmet," said Evans. "It drove my head back against the turret so hard that the helmet cracked. I was pretty dizzy, but in a while I was able to drive straight through." At the first enemy attack, the column turned a herring bone

pattern on the village road and flanked enemy positions with all of its arsenal.

While the 50 cal and M-60 machineguns pinned down the enemy, 90mm cannon fire from the tanks eliminated pockets of resistance.

The column continued on to a Vietnamese Regional Forces outpost near the Air Force base where they were told of a VC position 500 meters down the road.

"Instead of driving into the attack, we flanked it," explained Captain Ralph Garretson, 28, of Columbus, Ga., troop commander.

"They were in spider holes all over the place," recalled Private First Class Raymond A. Broussard 22, of Houston, Tex. "I had a lot of targets. My track commander would spot a VC and yell 'there he goes', and I'd get him. We killed about 10 of them."

After smothering the attack, the column screamed into the village of Bien Hoa, with the tank leading.

"Small groups of villagers motioned for us to stop and go back," said Garretson. "We appreciated their sympathy, but we waved them aside and went on." Right in the middle of town, a rifle really unloaded every thing at us," Garretson con-

tinued.

Staff Sergeant Johnnie C. Branch, 26, of Hollis, Okla., spotted a line of firing positions along a road and maneuvered his tank for a clear shot at them.

"We fired two rounds from the main gun, then an RPG-2 rocket hit the front of the turret and blew me off," said Branch. "I'd just about climbed back on when another rocket hit the side and blew me off again."

Branch was evacuated on the troop commander's APC.

"One of the things I've taught my men is to stand toe to toe and slug it out in an attack," said Garretson. "The volume of fire you put out in the first 15 minutes of a fight is the most important. Our quick reactions really pulled us through that one."

An hour later the fight slacked off to sporadic sniper fire; enemy bodies surrounded the 3d/5th vehicles.

At the Air Force Base two companies of the 11st Airborne Division joined the Old Reliables to sweep wooded sections adjacent to a runway.

The 1st Platoon, using two APCs and the tank for its psychological warfare, came upon a small hamlet where the fourth fight occurred.

There was fire from every building," said Specialist Four Richard M. Hobar, 19, of Jack-

son Heights, Queens, New York City." Platoon leader 1st Lieutenant Ernie Freeman, 23, of San Antonio, Tex., ordered his track crew to support the other track in trouble and rushed to the side of the platoon medic, who was helping the wounded.

"We put the wounded on my track," said Freeman, "and were about to pull back when the 2d Platoon arrived. They covered our withdrawal and shot up those Charlies pretty well." It was early evening and

Troop A was finished fighting for the day. The troop is credited with blunting the main VC thrust through the Bien Hoa area.

"The main thing that saved us," said Private First Class Donald W. Bador, 20, of Sacramento, Calif., "is that we kept firing and firing."

"My men are credited with killing 40 VC they actually saw fall," said Garretson, "but there is no telling how many they did not see fall."

Troop C, ARVNs defend Xuan Loc

XUAN LOC—Two platoons of Troop C, 3d Squadron, 5th Cavalry, helped ARVN defenders to take control of this city on Feb. 2-3.

The 9th Division cavalrymen were called both days to aid a police station-government complex under intense ground attacks.

In the early hours of Feb. 2, the 1st and 2d platoons rode out of the MACV compound here on their "thunder mission." The 2d platoon's tank, commanded by Sergeant First Class Isaac Lane, 39, of Philadelphia, was leading.

"We were rolling through the center of town," said Lane, "when I spotted a VC in the gutter aiming an RPG-2 rocket at the tank's magazine. When he looked up and saw my 'grease gun' (M-3 sub-machinegun) and

our main gun trained at him, he shot wild."

At the same time, Lane fired accurately and killed the VC.

Suddenly every vehicle in the formation was unleashing fire as hordes of VC began appearing everywhere.

In an attempt to split the U.S. Armored Personnel Carriers in the mid-column. But the force ran the gamut of fire without losing a vehicle.

Minutes later, the column charged into the fight near the police station. It drove through the enemy attackers until reaching the rubber plantations at the border of the city. When they returned, the cavalry swept the outskirts of the city. At least 125 VC were killed throughout the fight for Xuan Loc.

Xuan Loc until the morning of 15 February when it marched back to Blackhorse and rejoined the squadron. Upon its relief the next morning the 5th Cavalry would be roadmarching back to Bearcat. And with the end of its participation in Operation Kittyhawk the 5th Cavalry was completing its final ground combat operation of the Vietnam War in the III Corps Tactical Zone. Because the squadron had been ordered by Headquarters, United States Army, Vietnam to deploy to I Corps.

The next morning the 5th Cavalry sat mounted waiting the arrival of the relieving 11th Cavalry squadron so the squadron could start its return roadmarch back to Bearcat. A Troop accompanied by C Troop's 2d Platoon had departed earlier in the morning heading for the Army's port facility, New Port, on the Saigon River outside Saigon for embarkation. For its transfer to I Corps the 5th Cavalry was going to be sealifted out of III Corps and moved north to Da Nang in central I Corps. While A Troop was marching directly to New Port the remainder of the squadron would be returning to Bearcat from where they would be called forward for embarkation from. As the 5th Cavalry ended its participation in Operation Kittyhawk so too did the over year long operation also end.

It was a clear cool morning as the relieving 1st Squadron, 11th Cavalry, returning to Blackhorse was greeted by enthusiastic, smiling-waving Red Cross Doughnut Dollies who stood by the gate through the birm oblivious to the swirling dust being kicked up by the passing tracked vehicles. Once the last 1st Squadron vehicle was inside the base camp the command was given for the 5th Cavalry to move out. And slowly the vehicles passed through the birm to an equally enthusiastic farewell from the Doughnut Dollies, and out onto Route 2, where for the final time the squadron turned north heading back to Bearcat.

Relieved and waiting at Tan Phong C Troop's 3d Platoon from Gia Ray fell into the passing column as it moved onto Highway 1. But back in Bien Hoa Province the roadmarch which up to then had been uneventful was mared when C Troop's 1st Platoon's, Infantry Section's APC unexplainably veered of the side of the highway and turned over killing its commander and driver plus injuring one crewman. Once the track was righted and the medical dust-off completed the vehicle continued onto Bearcat under its own power.

NOTES

1. At the outbreak of the Civil War in 1861 the mounted forces of the Regular Army consisted of six regiments [1st and 2d Dragoons; Regiment of Mounted Riflemen; 1st, 2d, and 3d Cavalry], still bearing their different names-dragoons, riflemen, and cavalry, and still considered three distinct arms. In August 1861 all six regular horse regiments were redesignated cavalry and numbered 1st through 6th in order, according to their respective dates of organization.
2. At the outbreak of the Spanish-American War Lee offered his services and was appointed a major general of volunteers. He commanded the VII Corps, intended but never required for combat in Cuba, and in January 1899 was made military governor of Havana and of Pinar del Rio Province. Lee was one of only three former Confederate generals [Lee, Joseph Wheeler, Thomas Rosser] to hold the rank during the war. In March 1899, under a new volunteer service act, he became brigadier general of volunteers, and he later commanded the Department of the Missouri for a time. He retired from the Army in March 1901.
3. Thomas was on a leave of absence from November 1860 until he returned to active duty as a lieutenant colonel in April 1861 and took command of Carlisle Barracks, Pennsylvania of the remains of his regiment. In May 1861 he was promoted to colonel of the 2d Cavalry.
4. On the morning of 21 July just before the start of the battle of Bull Run, Second Lieutenant George A. Custer joined the 2d Cavalry in the field, and as a member of Company G he took part in the fighting. While Custer would achieve high rank within the volunteer forces, he never rose above captain in the Regular Army.
5. The 9th Infantry Division's, Operational Report-Lessons Learned for quarterly period February 1966-January 1967, provided information on the division's activation and the events associated with it, through its arrival in Vietnam. Additional insight on the division's activation can be found in Major General William B. Fulton's, Vietnam Studies entitled: Riverine Operations 1966-1969.
6. The 9th Infantry Division's, Operational Report-Lessons Learned for quarterly period February-April 1967, states that the 15th Engineer Battalion was to have been supplemented by the 35th Engineer Battalion in November 1966, however, support of the engineer battalion was withdrawn prior to its arrival.
7. The organization of the 5th Cavalry was taken from the undated publication entitled: Fort Riley Kansas, The Story Of The 9th "The Old Reliables" Infantry Division.
8. Riverine Operations, 1966-1969, op. cit., provides insight into the basing of the 9th Infantry Division in Vietnam.
9. The 3d Marine Division also conducted an operation Hastings in 1966. The division's operation was conducted in northern Quang Tri Province by Task Force Delta between 15 July and 3 August 1966.
10. The southeast movement of the 5th Cavalry was stated in the 3d Brigade, 1st Infantry Division's, Operational Report-Lessons Learned for quarterly period February-April 1967. 2. Part II. Narrative of tactical operations: (2) Operation Tucson D [15-21 February 1967].
11. The identification of this fire support base was derived from the 1st Infantry Division's, Operational Report-Lessons Learned for quarterly period February-April 1967. D. Combat operations: Operation Junction City. This is in contradiction to General Roger's Vietnam Studies account of the battle I have used. In the July-August 1968 edition of

- ARMOR magazine First Lieutenant Roger A. Festa's article entitled: The Second Battle Of Ap Bau Bang appeared. This is the only known published account of the battle by one of its participants to appear since the battle. But there is no identification of the fire support base in his article.
12. Upon its arrival in Vietnam the 11th Armored Cavalry was stationed successively at Bien Hoa then Long Binh before moving to Blackhorse in February 1967.
 13. General O'Connor assumed command of the 9th Infantry Division on 1 June 1967.
 14. Composition of Task Force 3-5 Cavalry was not indicated in the scant information available on Operation Akron III in the 9th Infantry Division's, Operational Report-Lessons Learned for quarterly period August-October 1967.
 15. In Michael Mahler's book entitled: Ringed In Iron, the events leading up to the 31 December ambush are well chronicled. On 31 December then Major Mahler was the squadron's executive officer, thus making his reconstruction of the events leading up to the ambush highly informative. Therefore, I have drawn heavily from his account of the ambush. I also drew upon the Vietnam Studies entitled: Mounted Combat In Vietnam, and, 9th Infantry Division and 5th Cavalry, Operational Reports-Lessons Learned, for quarterly period November 1967-January 1968.
 16. No identification has been found for the Viet Cong unit responsible for the attack on Xuan Loc.

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Octofoil. 9th Infantry Division In Vietnam. Volume 2/April May June/Number 2
9th Infantry Division 1918-1968
9th Infantry Division Vietnam 1968: Combat Art Vietnam 1968

Operational Records

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9th Infantry Division, Operational Report-Lessons Learned for quarterly periods 1 February 1966-31 January 1967; 1 February-30 April 1967; 1 May-31 July 1967; 1 August-31 October 1967; 1 November 1967-31 January 1968; 1 February-30 April 1968
3d Squadron, 5th Cavalry, Operational Report-Lessons Learned for quarterly periods 1 November 1967-31 January 1968 [earliest ORLL located]; 1 February-30 April 1968
11th Armored Cavalry Regiment, Operational Report-Lessons Learned for quarterly period 1 May-31 July 1967. The use of regiment in its designation in Vietnam was unauthorized
54th Artillery Group, Operational Report-Lessons Learned for quarterly periods 1 August-31 October 1967; 1 February-30 April 1968
34th Engineer Group [Construction], Operational Report-Lessons Learned for quarterly period 1 November 1967-31 January 1968

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Operation Colby/Iola, dated 1 April 1967
Operation Colby: 20-26 January 1967
Operation Iola: 27-31 January 1967
Operation Santa Fe I, II, III: 3 November 1967-5 January 1968, dated 20 January 1968
Operation Akron V: 11-21 January 1968, dated 5 February 1968
3d Squadron, 5th Cavalry
Operation Paddington: 8-16 July 1967, dated 18 July 1967
Operation Kittyhawk: 20 July-17 August 1967, dated 25 August 1967

Non-Operational Records

3d Squadron, 5th Cavalry
AGO Form 016 History Card

Maps

In the preparation of this history I utilized primarily two official military maps to identify location names and to measure distances on.

Defense Mapping Agency. Selected L7014 1:50,000 scale topographical map sheets
Special Southeast Asia Tactical VFR Charts. 1:500,000 scale, dated 12 October 1972, VFR charts 3 and 4 were utilized

-04-

As a secondary reference I used 1:150,000 scale maps of Bien Hoa, Long Khanh, and Phuoc Tuy Provinces. The maps were printed in 1971 by the National Geographic Directorate in Vietnam.

Vietnam Studies And Other Sources Of Maps Used In The History

Pg. 17 Airmobility 1961-1971
Pg. 18 U.S. Army Engineers 1965-1970
Pg. 21 Top: Riverine Operations 1966-1969. Bottom: derived from a map
 in Mounted Combat In Vietnam
Pg. 22 Author
Pg. 25 Cedar Falls-Junction City: A Turing Point
Pg. 26 Ibid.
Pg. 30 Ibid.
Pg. 37 Author
Pg. 45 Author
Pg. 46 11th Cavalry Veterans Of Vietnam And Cambodia newsletter
Pg.63 Author

Telephone Conversations

Murphy, Colonel Ernest, USA [Ret.], Junction City, Kansas, 26 January 1990.
Colonel Murphy was the chief of staff for both Fort Riley and the 9th Infantry Division before the staffs were seperated on 1 July 1967 by General Eckhardt. I discussed the formation of the 9th Infantry Division at Fort Riley with Colonel Murphy.

GLOSSARY

AAA: Antiaircraft artillery
AO: Area of operation
AW: Automatic weapons
AIT: Advanced individual training
APC: Armored Personnel carrier
ATT: Army training test
ACAV: Armored cavalry assault vehicle
ARVN: Army of the Republic of Vietnam
AVLB: Armored vehicle launched bridge
BCT: Basic combat training
CS: Riot control gas agent
C7: Twin-engine, utility aircraft for short landing and take-offs, from unimproved landing areas
CARS: Combat Arms Regimental System
Class
 I: Food
 II: Clothing and equipment
 III: Fuel
 IV: Barrier and construction material
 V: Ammunition
CMMI: Command maintenance management inspection
CONARC: Continental Army Command
Eagle Flight: Airmobile force used to temporarily secure either a key piece of ground or on air or ground alert to perform rapid reaction force missions

Engineers
 Combat: Are equipped to perform area construction, obstacle preparation, demolition work, and to fight as infantry
 Construction: Perform basic heavy construction tasks including construction of bases, structures, roads, bridges and pipelines, paving operations and construction of major facilities

LRRP: Long range reconnaissance patrol
LTL: Interprovincial route
LZ: Landing zone
[M]: Mechanized
MACV: Military Assistance Command, Vietnam
MEDCAP: Medical civic action program
MTOE: Modified table of organization and equipment
POW: Prisoner of war
QL: National highway
ROAD: Reorganized Army Objective Divisions
RON: Remain overnight position
SP: Self-propelled
T: Towed
TL: Provincial route
TOE: Table of organization and equipment
USARV: United States Army, Vietnam
USNS: United States Naval Ship

ADDENDUM

EX:

Operations

Kien Giang 1-9: 64

Silver Lake: 20

Peneo, Specialist Fourth Class Allelardo: 34

OPERATION AKRON III:

Following the completion of this historical project in November 1992 additional information was received from Ron Quezada, President of the Black Knights, in the middle of December. Significant was a photocopy of the 9th Infantry Division, Volume 1, Number 42, of the Old Reliable newspaper, dated October 25, 1967. The newspaper contained significant information on the weapons cache that was discovered on 8 October 1967. The newspaper coverage fleshes out the division's operational report-lessons learned account of the operation and the weapons cache discovery. The newspaper accounts are must reading for those interested in the 3d Squadron's Vietnam War history as well as those who participated in operation Akron III itself.



DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
Lineage and Honors

3d SQUADRON, 5th CAVALRY
 (BLACK KNIGHTS)

Constituted 3 March 1855 as Company C, 2d Cavalry

Organized May - June 1855 at Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania

Redesignated 3 August 1861 as Company C, 5th Cavalry

(Cavalry companies officially designated as troops in 1883)

(5th Cavalry assigned to 15th Cavalry Division December 1917 -
 May 1918; assigned 18 December 1922 to 1st Cavalry Division. Dismounted
 28 February 1943 and reorganized 4 December 1943 partly under cavalry
 and partly under infantry tables of organization. Reorganized wholly
 as infantry 20 July 1945 but retained cavalry designations)

Inactivated 1 February 1928 at Fort Clark, Texas

Activated 1 August 1940 at Fort Clark, Texas

Redesignated 25 March 1949 as Company C, 5th Cavalry

Inactivated 15 November 1957 in Japan

Redesignated 15 April 1958 as Headquarters and Headquarters Troop,
 3d Reconnaissance Squadron, 5th Cavalry

Activated 1 July 1958 as an element of the 9th Infantry Division
 at Fort Carson, Colorado (organic elements constituted 15 April 1958
 and activated 1 July 1958 at Fort Carson, Colorado)

Inactivated 31 January 1962 at Fort Carson, Colorado

Activated 1 February 1966 at Fort Riley, Kansas; concurrently
 redesignated as 3d Squadron, 5th Cavalry

Incl 1

3d SQUADRON, 5th CAVALRY
(BLACK KNIGHTS)

CAMPAIGN PARTICIPATION CREDIT

Indian Wars

*Comanches
*Apaches
*Little Big Horn
Nez Perces
Bannocks
Cheyennes
Utes
*Texas 1856
Texas 1860
Oklahoma 1858
*Oklahoma 1859
*Arizona 1872
Arizona 1874

Civil War

Bull Run
*Peninsula
*Antietam
*Fredericksburg
*Chancellorsville
*Gettysburg
*Wilderness
*Spotsylvania
*Cold Harbor
*Petersburg
*Shenandoah
*Appomattox
*Virginia 1861
*Virginia 1862
*Virginia 1863
*Virginia 1864
*Maryland 1863

Philippine Insurrection

*Without inscription

Mexican Expedition

Mexico 1916 - 1917

World War II

*New Guinea
*Bismarck Archipelago
(with arrowhead)
*Leyte (with arrowhead)
*Luzon

Korean War

*UN defensive
*UN offensive
*CCF intervention
*First UN counteroffensive
*CCF spring offensive
*UN summer-fall offensive
*Second Korean winter
*Third Korean winter

Vietnam

*Counteroffensive, Phase II
*Counteroffensive, Phase III
*Tet Counteroffensive
*Counteroffensive, Phase IV
*Counteroffensive, Phase V
*Counteroffensive, Phase VI
*Tet 69/Counteroffensive
*Summer-fall 1969
*Winter-spring 1970
*Sanctuary Counteroffensive
*Counteroffensive, Phase VII
*Consolidation I

3d SQUADRON, 5th CAVALRY
(BLACK KNIGHTS)

DECORATIONS

- *Presidential Unit Citation (Army), Streamer embroidered LOS NEGROS ISLAND
- *Presidential Unit Citation (Army), Streamer embroidered DONG AP BIA MOUNTAIN
- *Valorous Unit Award, Streamer embroidered QUANG TRI
- *Philippine Presidential Unit Citation, Streamer embroidered 17 OCTOBER
1944 TO 4 JULY 1945
- *Republic of Korea Presidential Unit Citation, Streamer embroidered WAEGWAN-TAEGU
- *Republic of Korea Presidential Unit Citation, Streamer embroidered KOREA
- *Chryssoun Aristion Andrias (Bravery Gold Medal of Greece), Streamer
embroidered KOREA
- *Vietnamese Cross of Gallantry with Palm, Streamer embroidered VIETNAM 1966 - 1968
- *Vietnamese Civil Action Honor Medal, First Class, Streamer embroidered VIETNAM
1966 - 1968

Troop A additionally entitled to:

- Presidential Unit Citation (Army), Streamer embroidered AP BAU BANG
- Valorous Unit Award, Streamer embroidered BIEN HOA AIR BASE

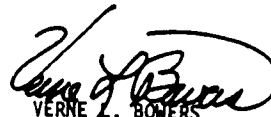
Troop C additionally entitled to:

- Valorous Unit Award, Streamer embroidered XUAN LOC

Troop D additionally entitled to:

- Valorous Unit Award, Streamer embroidered SAIGON
- Vietnamese Cross of Gallantry with Palm, Streamer embroidered VIETNAM 1969
- Vietnamese Cross of Gallantry with Palm, Streamer embroidered VIETNAM
1969 - 1970
- Vietnamese Civil Action Honor Medal, First Class, Streamer embroidered
VIETNAM 1968 - 1969

BY ORDER OF THE SECRETARY OF THE ARMY:


VERNE L. BOWERS
Major General, USA
The Adjutant General

7 NOV 1973

GENERAL ORDERS

Office of the Chief

HEADQUARTERS
DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
WASHINGTON, D.C., 10 January 1969

No. 3

PRESIDENTIAL UNIT CITATION—Award.....	Section I
VALOROUS UNIT AWARD—Award.....	II
MERITORIOUS UNIT COMMENDATION—Award.....	III

I. THE PRESIDENTIAL UNIT CITATION (ARMY). Award of the Presidential Unit Citation (Army) by the President of the United States of America to the following unit of the Armed Forces of the United States is confirmed in accordance with paragraph 194, AR 672-5-1. The text of the citation, signed by President Lyndon B. Johnson, 3 December 1968, reads as follows:

By virtue of the authority vested in me as President of the United States and as Commander in Chief of the Armed Forces of the United States I have today awarded the Presidential Unit Citation (Army) for extraordinary heroism to:

TROOP A, 3D SQUADRON, 5TH CAVALRY

X 1ST PLATOON, TROOP B, 3D SQUADRON, 5TH CAVALRY

X 3D PLATOON, TROOP C, 3D SQUADRON, 5TH CAVALRY

X HEADQUARTERS SECTION, HEADQUARTERS TROOP,
3D SQUADRON, 5TH CAVALRY

X GROUND SURVEILLANCE SECTION, HEADQUARTERS TROOP,
3D SQUADRON, 5TH CAVALRY

X MEDICAL PLATOON, HEADQUARTERS TROOP, 3D SQUADRON,
5TH CAVALRY, OF THE 9TH INFANTRY DIVISION

AND TO

BATTERY B, 7TH BATTALION, 99TH ARTILLERY

UNITED STATES ARMY

The foregoing units distinguished themselves by gallantry in action while engaged in military operations against a heavily armed enemy on the night of 19-20 March 1967 in the second battle of Ap Bau Bang, Republic of Vietnam. Although initially outnumbered more than ten to one and completely surrounded, Troop A tenaciously contained the fierce Viet Cong attack. As the enemy pressed its coordinated attack with mortars, automatic weapons, recoilless rifles and anti-tank rockets, the courageous defenders of the artillery fire support base at Ap Bau Bang sustained many direct hits on their combat vehicles, destroying two of the vehicles and wounding over half the troopers. With dauntless courage, ignoring their wounds, they struck back at the fanatical enemy, breaking up the enemy's repeated assaults. In violently executed moves, the besieged Troop A perimeter was reinforced by elements of Troop B, C, and Headquarters Troop, to relieve pressure on the defenders and destroy the Viet Cong forces. As the armored reinforcing columns raced to the battle area, they broke through the Viet Cong ambushes prepared for them, continued on to the

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embattled perimeter under intense fire, charged through the heavy enemy concentrations, and accomplished the first successful night reinforcement by armored units of a perimeter under heavy Viet Cong attack in the Vietnamese conflict. Massed fires of the cavalrymen and supporting artillery, armed helicopters, and tactical air fires poured into the enemy masses, as the troopers conducted successive counterattacks to complete the rout of the 273d Viet Cong Regiment. As dawn broke, after the 6-hour battle, enemy dead covered the battlefield. The indomitable fighting spirit and gallantry of the cavalry troopers achieved a signal victory at Ap Bau Bang which contributed significantly to the success of Operation Junction City in the Vietnamese campaign. The gallantry and heroism of the troopers was in keeping with the highest traditions of the cavalry and the United States Army.

II. VALOROUS UNIT AWARD. By direction of the Secretary of the Army, under the provisions of paragraph 202.1, AR 672-5-1, the Valorous Unit Award is awarded the following unit of the Republic of Vietnam for extraordinary heroism while engaged in military operations during the period indicated:

The citation reads as follows:
 The Valorous Unit Award is awarded by direction of the Secretary of the Army to:

THE 43D RANGER BATTALION

for extraordinary heroism:

The 43d Ranger Battalion distinguished itself by extraordinary heroism while engaged in military operations against the Viet Cong on Operation LONG PHI 955, on the 11th and 12th of February 1966, in the Republic of Vietnam. While acting as the Reserve Force of the 9th Infantry Division, Army of the Republic of Vietnam, the 43d Ranger Battalion was committed at 1200 hours on the 11th of February to relieve the 2d Battalion of the 15th Infantry Regiment and the 2d and 3d Troops of the 2d Armored Cavalry Squadron which were pinned down and receiving heavy casualties. At 1215 hours, the commander of the Ranger Battalion called for air strikes and artillery support and attempted to organize a coordinated attack with the 15th Infantry Regiment and the 2d Armored Cavalry Squadron; however, after the artillery and air cover was lifted, the Viet Cong fire was just as intense, and it was apparent to the Ranger Battalion Commander that there was not enough time to launch a completely coordinated attack. He ordered the 43d Rangers to advance on their own. The attack was led by the 4th Ranger Company which penetrated the enemy position, the 2d Ranger Company was immediately ordered to reinforce the 4th Ranger Company, and the 1st Ranger Company was ordered to flank the enemy's position on the east to relieve the pressure on the 4th and 2d Ranger Companies. When the 4th Company reported that they had captured a 75mm Recoilless Rifle, the Battalion Commander knew that they were facing a much stronger enemy than was estimated. When the 2d Ranger Company also reported capturing a 75mm Recoilless Rifle, the 43d Ranger Battalion was obviously facing a reinforced main force Viet Cong Battalion, armed with the latest model weapons and deeply entrenched in well-prepared defensive positions. At this time the magnitude of the operation became apparent. The 3d Ranger Company, which had been sent to reinforce the 2d Armored Cavalry and attack the west flank, had taken heavy losses; however, they had succeeded

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developed a major portion of all targets successfully destroyed by the Division throughout the period. The aggressiveness, determination, enthusiasm, and exemplary courage under fire demonstrated by all members of the 1st Squadron, 9th Cavalry, reflect great credit on the organization and stand in keeping with the highest traditions of the military service.

II. VALOROUS UNIT AWARD. By direction of the Secretary of the Army, under the provisions of paragraph 202.1, AR 672-5-1, the Valorous Unit Award is awarded the following-named units of the United States Army for extraordinary heroism while engaged in military operations during the periods indicated:

The citations read as follows:

1. TROOP A, 3D SQUADRON, 5TH CAVALRY.

TROOP A, 3D SQUADRON, 5TH CAVALRY distinguished itself by extraordinary heroism while engaged in military operations on 31 January 1968 in defense of the Bien Hoa Air Base in the Republic of Vietnam. Given the extremely hazardous mission of traveling along enemy infested Highway 1 to the besieged airfield, the cavalrymen were the object of three well-coordinated and effectively executed enemy ambushes along the route. The determined Viet Cong assailants directed deadly fires of antitank rockets, automatic weapons and small arms at the troopers from point blank range. With indomitable courage and relentless determination, the Black Knights repelled all attacks by saturating the area with devastating machinegun, grenade and rifle fire. When the men of TROOP A, 3D SQUADRON, 5TH CAVALRY reached their final objective, they moved out on a sweep of the area. A short time later, they clashed with two reinforced companies of Viet Cong and, although fighting against seemingly insurmountable odds, the troopers refused to leave their positions, swerving perseverance, exemplary bravery and tactical proficiency, the troop's members contributed immeasurably to the successful defense of the Bien Hoa Air Base. The men of TROOP A, 3D SQUADRON, 5TH CAVALRY displayed extraordinary heroism and devotion to duty which are in keeping with the highest traditions of the military service and reflect distinct credit upon themselves and the Armed Forces of the United States.

2. THE 4TH BATTALION, 31ST INFANTRY, 196TH LIGHT INFANTRY BRIGADE, AMERICAL DIVISION.

The 4TH BATTALION, 31ST INFANTRY, 196TH LIGHT INFANTRY BRIGADE, AMERICAL DIVISION distinguished itself by extraordinary heroism while engaged in military operations during the period 15 November 1967 to 3 February 1968 in the Que Son and Hiep Duc Districts of the Republic of Vietnam. Initially participating in Operation WHEELER/WAL-LOWA in the Que Son District, the battalion's personnel demonstrated exemplary courage and relentless determination in conducting highly successful search, destroy and interdiction missions. On 22 November 1967, they were committed to an assault upon a large North Vietnamese Army force in the vicinity of the Dong Son hamlet. Because of the voluminous firepower and aggressiveness of the unit's members during three consecutive days of fierce fighting, the enemy was forced to break contact and the battle was held as an overwhelming victory for the fighting men of the 4TH BATTALION, 31ST INFANTRY, 196TH LIGHT INFANTRY BRIGADE, AMERICAL DIVISION. Subsequently operating in the Hiep Duc District, the battalion's mem-

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DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
HEADQUARTERS, UNITED STATES ARMY VIETNAM
APO San Francisco 96375GENERAL ORDERS
NUMBER 5496

29 November 1968

VALOROUS UNIT AWARD

1. TC 320. The following AWARD is announced.

By direction of the Secretary of the Army, under the provisions of paragraph 202.1g(2), AR 672-5-1, the Valorous Unit Award is awarded the following named unit of the United States Army for extraordinary heroism while engaged in military operations during the period indicated:

The citation reads as follows:

TROOP C, 3D SQUADRON, 5TH CAVALRY, 9TH INFANTRY DIVISION distinguished itself by extraordinary heroism while engaged in military operations on 2 and 3 February 1968 in defense of Xuan Loc, the Provincial Capitol of Long Khanh Province in the Republic of Vietnam. When the enemy launched a three pronged attack against the city of Xuan Loc during the joint North Vietnamese/Viet Cong TET Offensive, the troop was deployed to the police station which was bearing the brunt of the assault. While traveling along the city's streets, lethal volleys of enemy fire rained upon the entire armored column. Unable to utilize their mounted weapons because of the narrowness of the roads, the undaunted members of TROOP C, 3D SQUADRON, 5TH CAVALRY, 9TH INFANTRY DIVISION fought tenaciously with their personal weapons and reached their objective without losing a single vehicle. They demonstrated exemplary courage and steadfast determination in driving the enemy force from the station before the communists could inflict many casualties upon the Army of the Republic of Vietnam soldiers. The cavalymen regrouped and set up three strong points, at the north and south gates and in the center of the city. When the assailants attacked again, the fearless troopers saturated the area with a devastating volume of suppressive fire, driving the foe from the battlefield and wreaking death and destruction among the enemy's ranks. Through their relentless perseverance, singular bravery and tactical proficiency, the troop's members were instrumental in the successful defense of the city of Xuan Loc. The men of TROOP C, 3D SQUADRON, 5TH CAVALRY, 9TH INFANTRY DIVISION displayed extraordinary heroism and devotion to duty which are in keeping with the highest traditions of the military service and reflect distinct credit upon themselves and the Armed Forces of the United States.

Encl 2

GENERAL ORDERS NUMBER 5496, dated 29 November 1968, DA, HEADQUARTERS
UNITED STATES ARMY VIETNAM, APO San Francisco 96375 (Cont)

FOR THE COMMANDER:



LEO R. JONES
Brigadier General, US Army
Chief of Staff

CARL V. CASH
Colonel, AGC
Adjutant General

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