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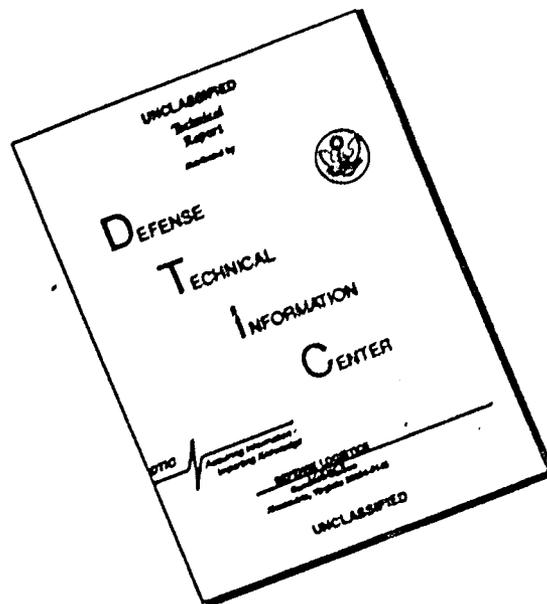
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1ST INFANTRY DIVISION

COMBAT OPERATION AFTER ACTION REPORT

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OPERATION

ABILENE

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DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
HEADQUARTERS, 1ST INFANTRY DIVISION (4) (2)
~~140 San Francisco, California 94115~~

~~COMBAT OPERATIONS AFTER ACTION REPORT~~

6 OPERATION ABILENE

1. NAME AND TYPE OF OPERATION: 1st Infantry Division Operation ABILENE - Search and Destroy. Reference: Maps Vietnam, 1:50,000 Sheets 6343 I, 6443 IV, 6443 I, 6343 III, 6443 II, 6342 I, 6442 IV, 6442 I, 6543 IV, 6543 III, 6542 IV.

2. DATES OF OPERATION: 300630H March 1966 - 151325H April 1966.

3. GENERAL: On 300630H March 1966, MACV directed Operation ABILENE commenced under control of the 1st Infantry Division. Division CPOD 7-66, dated 24 March 1966, specified that the operation was to be conducted in LONG KHANH and PHUOC TUY Provinces. The area was bounded on the west by Highway 15, on the north by Highway 1, on the south by Highway 23, and on the east by NS grid line YS 80 (Annex C, Operation Overlay). The two brigade (reinf) operation was launched to locate and destroy VC forces and base camps in the area of operations. Two reinforced brigades operated in assigned zones, being prepared to move rapidly by helicopter to successive areas of operation to destroy any VC personnel or installations discovered.

a. The reporting officer for this report is Major General William E. DePuy, Commanding General, 1st Infantry Division.

b. Task Organization. Control of the operation was exercised by Headquarters, 1st Infantry Division. Command Group, 1st Infantry Division, comprised of Headquarters and Headquarters Company (-) operated from a tactical command post.

9 Combat operations after action report for period ending Apr 66.

2d Brigade Task Force
HHC 2d Bde (-)
2d Battalion, 16th Infantry
1st Battalion, 18th Infantry
2d Battalion, 18th Infantry
1st Battalion, 7th Artillery

Lt Col William S. Hathaway
Lt Col Karl R. Morton
Lt Col Herbert McChrystal
Lt Col John H. Fye III

11 Apr 66

3d Brigade Task Force
HHC 3d Bde (-)
1st Battalion, 2d Infantry

Col William D. Brodbeck
Maj Ronald T. Theiss (30 Mar-10 Apr)
Lt Col Richard Prillman (10 Apr)

1st Battalion, 16th Infantry
2d Battalion, 28th Infantry
2d Battalion, 33d Artillery (-)
1st Div Arty Tac CP
8th Battalion, 6th Artillery (-)

Lt Col Lee S. Henry
Lt Col Kyle W. Bowie
Lt Col Frank R. Tins
Col Marlin W. Camp
Lt Col Anthony Petrucci (29 Mar-5 Apr)

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1st Engineer Battalion (-)
1st Squadron, 4th Cavalry (-)
1st Battalion RAR
1st Battalion, 26th Infantry
121st Signal Battalion (-)
1st Aviation Battalion
11th Aviation Battalion

Lt Col John R. McGiffert (5 Apr)
Lt Col Howard L. Sargent
Lt Col Paul Fisher
Lt Col A.V. Preece
Lt Col Erskine Smith
Lt Col R.R. Curington
Lt Col Harold G. Keebaugh
Lt Col John W. Lauterbach

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2 4. INTELLIGENCE: a. Intelligence Prior to Operation: The total population of PHUOC TUY Province is 138,000 with approximately 38,000 in the VUNG TAU area (YS 2744). Of the total population, 87,000 live in GVN controlled area, 22,000 live in areas undergoing pacification, 12,000 in areas considered relatively free of VC, and 17,000 are living in VC controlled areas. Major population areas are XUYEN LOC (YS 3861), LONG DIEN (YS 4359) and BINH GIA (YS 4970). A large number of the people live along Route 15. With the exception of very few Montagnards and Chinese, the population is ethnic Vietnamese. A curfew is in effect in the province between 2200 and 0400, but is not rigidly enforced. Approximately 32% of the population is Pro-GVN, 12% Pro-VC, and 56% are neutral. Major religions are Buddhism and Catholicism with the former comprising 70% of the population and the latter 25%. The Catholics are generally anti-Communist. VC Infrastructure is established down to village and hamlet level. In some areas it is clandestine and others the political cadre require armed soldiers to protect them and to insure that the people follow their regulations and policies. The major highways are Route 15 which extends from BIEN HOA (YT 0113) to VUNG TAU (YS 2744), Route 2 which extends from BA RIA (YS 3861) to Route 1 (YT 4305), and Route 23 which extends from BA RIA (YS 3861) to HAM TAN (ZS 0479). Limited light industry consisting of charcoal production, rice milling, and fish processing occupies 20% of the population. Agriculture and fishing are the main occupations. Rice must be imported to feed the population, while the nation-wide inflation has affected PHUOC TUY with the largest price increases for rice. Inflation and other chaotic economic situations resulting from military operations, affords the enemy opportunity to direct the dissatisfaction of the people against GVN and Free World Forces. Through propaganda and terrorism the VC have considerable influence on the population, enabling him to use them as a source of intelligence. He has convinced or ordered them to be uncooperative with friendly troops. We can expect little support from the people without them being convinced that lasting security can be expected against VC reprisals for lending assistance to our forces. Local incidents of rice shortages are expected to occur and refugees are expected to result from operations in the area. Numbers of VC anti-aircraft weapons were unknown, but intense small arms and automatic weapons fire was expected to be directed at aircraft flying at low levels over the BINH BA Plantation (YS 4574) area and the vicinity YS 3577. In addition, low level flights along Route 2 could expect to receive some ground fire.

The enemy has a well established intelligence system for both political and combat intelligence. The VC has a high degree of control over the rural population and has little difficulty moving throughout the province. He is thoroughly familiar with the area and terrain suits his hit and run type campaigns. He has free use of large areas of the province within which he has bases, training areas, and supply caches.

The enemy is, however, dependent on external support and gets much of his manpower, subsistence, and supplies from the people the loss of which would be decisive. The VC logistical system is dependent upon caches for sustained operations and destruction or confiscation of their caches limits VC combat capabilities. He is vulnerable to attack by air and artillery when concentrated and lacks adequate air defense weapons or artillery support. The enemy has a long and intricate infiltration system for war materials and may lack sufficient transport to rapidly resupply. He is vulnerable to chemical agents, sustained combat, and aggressive pursuit.

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The enemy has the capability to attack any target in PHUOC TUY Province with up to two main force regiments supported by company size local force units. He can be expected to reinforce with two main force regiments within four days and defend his base areas with the above forces. Most of his activities will be directed to restricting or denying for limited periods the use of LOC's by interdiction, sabotage, and ambush. He will attempt to ambush friendly units and to conduct harassing mortar fire and sabotage attacks against friendly forces and installations. Any regimental or larger scale attack will probably be of short duration, violently executed, and at a time and place the enemy feels he has achieved tactical surprise as well as numerical superiority. The enemy will defend his base areas with the forces immediately available to him when he feels such bases are critical. He will employ local forces to aid in extricating main force units. He has been in his base areas for several years and has had an opportunity to prepare positions in depth, establish supply caches, and prepare escape routes.

b. Enemy Situation During Operation: There was one large encounter with elements of a main force unit during the operation. On 11 April 1966, in vicinity YS 535855, C Company, 2d Battalion, 16th Infantry made contact with elements of D800 Battalion, killed 41 (BQ) and possibly killed an additional fifty. The majority of remaining VC losses during the period were from guerrilla or local force units. The 5th and 94th Main Force Regiments were not in the province when the operation commenced. The 94th Regiment was moving back into the area when the operation terminated. Except for occasional small arms fire and mining by small local force elements, U.S. forces operated almost without opposition throughout the province. Engineer elements experienced harassment by mines, road cuts, and the demolition of bridges. VC guerrilla forces avoided contact and most VC were killed at night by ambush patrols.

Despite constant surveillance, no significant VC movements were noted during daylight hours. Interrogation of VC captives, translation of captured documents, the engagement of C Company, 2/16 Infantry, and intelligence from MACV indicated that larger main force units were moving back into the province. There were very few returns from airborne sensory devices indicating that the VC has limited means of transportation or chose not to use them. The same sensory devices failed to detect any significant activity in areas long regarded as belonging to the VC.

Base camps and supply facilities were generally found along streams. Relatively few booby traps and mines were encountered. Although material losses to the VC were significant, the losses probably will not have any major adverse effects on future VC plans and operations.

Intelligence for the operation was valid. Major VC forces were out of the province at the start of the operation; and major base areas proved to be located generally as expected. Little information was available on local forces particularly as to locations, strengths, and probable havens. The C20 was encountered in its operational area, BINH BA Plantation, however little was known or has been learned about other local units.

The relocation of people from VC controlled to CVN controlled areas should reduce the civilian labor force available to the VC as

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well as present obstacles to the acquisition of supplies. VC propaganda has suffered a set back by the unrestricted movement of US and GVN troops and officials.

Forces engaged in the operation were D600 Bn of the 94th Regiment, C20, a local force company, probably C4 and C21 local force companies and local guerrillas.

c. Terrain and Weather: The terrain is flat and gently rolling with most elevations under 150 meters. Two hill masses dominate the southwest portion of PHUOC TUY Province, NUI ONG CAU (YS 3666) and NUI THI VAI (YS 2971). The jungle areas are generally dense with trees up to 100 feet and secondary growth up to 20 feet providing good concealment and some cover in most places. The trees in the plantations along Route 2 are from 12 to 20 feet tall and 10 to 15 feet apart providing good concealment from air observation. Ground under the trees is generally clear of brush and undergrowth. The main waterways are the SONG CAI KEP and SONG THI VAI which form the western provincial border and are navigable up to vicinity YS 1683. Other significant waterways are the SONG BA DAP, which flows from YS 4857 to YS 5858, and the SONG DINH, which flows from northeast to southwest, crossing Route 15 vicinity YS 375610. Both are fordable in the dry season. The major highway through the operational area is Route 2, extending from BA NHA (YS 3761) to Route 1 (YT 1305).

Weather was dry, hot, and dusty due to a lack of precipitation. Some relief from the heat was afforded by the shade of the rubber plantations. High humidity was experienced in the early morning, with minimums in the mid afternoon.

d. Counterintelligence: OPORD 7-66 called for the development and execution of a deception plan. A false operation order was published (FRAG Order 33-66) directing a brigade size operation which would focus attention on the HAT DICH area of PHUOC TUY Province and divert attention from the actual area of operation. The false operation order was fully coordinated with ARVN units. Air and artillery support was coordinated with the appropriate DASC and TACC. The deception plan was designed to produce the following results:

- (1) Deceive the VC as to the actual area of operation.
 - (2) Cause the VC to withdraw to the actual area of operation east of Highway 2.
- e. Fortifications varied from simple foxholes and anti-aircraft emplacements to tunnels with a height of 6 feet.

f. CA/PSYOP: The mission directed an aggressive PSYOP program to encourage ralliers and gain information on location of VC; and to conduct a Civic Action program as required, with emphasis on MEDCAP.

During the period 1 to 13 April, approximately 900,000 leaflets were dropped in the area of operation. Annex E depicts the locations and days the drops were made. Some flights were cancelled due to aircraft maintenance and commitments of a higher priority. From April 7 to the completion of the operation, leaflet drops were conducted during daylight hours only. The flights were made by C-47 and B-10 aircraft.

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5 Loudspeaker tapes were utilized during the operation to exploit information obtained from captured VC and VCS. Various Chieu Hoi and harassing tapes were played during the hours of darkness from C-47 aircraft. U-10 aircraft were used between 0900 and 1700 as a means of delivery for taped messages.

Prior to the operation, planning and coordination was made with province and district chiefs for action to be taken with non-combatants. Arrangements were made for the Vietnamese to establish a refugee collection point within the district. Refugees collected by brigades were turned over to ARVN control as soon as possible. ARVN had the responsibility for movement of refugees, with U.S. forces providing any assistance requested.

Approximately 1500 persons treated by MEDCAP teams. Twenty-five tons of commodities were distributed to families within the area of operations. Construction material provided to the village of AP ONG TRINCH (YS 268668) included 3200 sheets of tin and 1300 sacks of cement to repair damage to the houses.

Success of the PSYOPS/CA program can be witnessed by the reports of enemy activity made by Vietnamese nationals.

g. See Annex A for Enemy Order of Battle.

5. MISSION: COMUSMACV assigned the 1st Infantry Division (Reinf) the mission of conducting search and destroy operations in PHUOC TUY Province to locate and destroy elements of the 94th and 5th VC Regiments, their base camps and the MAY TAO Secret Zone.

6. CONCEPT OF OPERATION: Operation ABILENE was to be conducted over a large area, utilizing a series of support bases from which operations throughout PHUOC TUY Province could be mounted. Two brigades would enter initial areas of operation and then be moved to successive areas of operation to employ maximum combat power to destroy VC forces and their base camps. Maximum use of helicopters was planned throughout the operation to move forces to block and destroy VC forces attempting to escape. Fire support planning included artillery, naval gunfire, TAC air, and armed helicopters to be placed on LZ's and to be provided throughout the operation as harassing and interdiction fires or fires on targets of opportunity. Areas of operations were to be adjusted as plans developed during the execution (Annex D).

7. EXECUTION: Commanding General, 1st Infantry Division, received a directive on 2 February to conduct an operation in PHUOC TUY Province to locate and destroy VC forces and their base areas. Code name was CLAY.

On 19 February, MACV directed a two-brigade operation in PHUOC TUY Province to last about 10 days with the objective of locating and destroying elements of two VC regiments reported to be in the area. The directive specified that part of the operation was to be conducted east and north of XUYEN MOC. Plans were formulated for Operation MEMPHIS, later changed to Operation ABILENE, and OPORD 7-65 was issued 24 March. A large area of operation was selected to allow freedom of action and was adjusted as intelligence was received.

D-1 (29 March 1966): The vehicle elements of Hq 1st Infantry Division, 2d Brigade, 3d Brigade, Division Artillery, Support Command, 1st Engineer Battalion, and 1st Squadron, 4th Cavalry assembled via

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Hq II Field Force Vietnam (YT 0509) during the day in preparation for movement to the area of operations. All elements closed into the holding area by 291700H without incidents during the moves.

D-Day (30 March 1966): Operation ABILENE commenced 300630H with the movement by road of Co A, 1st Battalion, Royal Australian Regiment (mounted in APC's of the Prince of Wales Light Horse Troop) and 5 attached tanks of Troop A, 1st Squadron, 4th Cavalry. This task-force arrived at COURTENAY airstrip (YS 4591) and had it secured by 300700H. The remaining Australian elements, including the 161st RENZA Battery, were helilifted by UH-1D and CH-47 aircraft into COURTENAY commencing 301000H. All companies of the RAR had closed by 301050H and the battalion established a perimeter for the defense of the Support Command facilities and Division Tao CP. Saturation patrolling of the area (QUEENSLAND) was conducted throughout the day without VC contact.

2d Brigade initiated its participation in ABILENE 301200H with the airmobile assault of 2d Bn, 18th Inf into LZ NORMAN (YS 3795), and subsequent helilift of 1st Bn, 18th Inf into the same LZ (Annex C). Both battalions closed by 301445H. 2d Bn, 18th Inf commenced its airmobile assault into LZ NATHAN (YS 3986) 301455H and closed 301530H with no VC contact. One battery of 1st Bn, 7th Arty was airlifted by CH-47 into LZ NORMAN closing 301530H. The remainder of the battalion moved by road with the division convoy and closed into LZ NORMAN 301645H. The battalion deployed in intermediate positions at YS 43507 to support the initial landing and convoy movement. 2d Bn, 16th Inf assumed the mission of brigade reserve and artillery base security. The other two infantry battalions began search and destroy operations toward the west with 1st Bn, 18th Inf on the north, and 2d Bn, 18th Inf on the south. The only VC contact during the day was made by 1st Bn, 18th Inf between 301630H and 301730H, when a total of 5 VC were engaged vic YS 340950. Two VC were killed and small arms captured. The units closed for the night with 2d Brigade CP, 2d Bn, 16th Inf, and 1st Bn, 7th Arty at YS 365347; 1st Bn, 18th Inf at YS 345935; and 2d Bn, 18th Inf at YS 360860.

3d Brigade prepositioned all elements (less brigade trains, which moved with the support command convoy to COURTENAY) at VUNG TAU by C-130 airlift commencing 300700H and closing 301625H. 1st Bn, 2d Inf was airlifted from PHUOC VINH to VUNG TAU commencing 300900H and closing 301150H, at which time it came under operational control of 3d Brigade. Battery C, 2d Bn, 13th Arty was airlifted from PHU LOI to VUNG TAU by C-130 to augment 2d Bn, 33d Arty, which had left Battery B in defense of the LAI KHE base camp. The brigade spent the night at VUNG TAU Air Base and prepared for introduction into the area of operations 31 March.

Division Artillery elements, consisting of HHC Div Arty, 9th Bn, 6th Arty (-), and 2 Btry A, 6th Bn, 27th Arty (8" SP) moved from the II Field Force staging area 300900H to an intermediate area at YS 43507 from which to support 2d Brigade and the convoy movement. These units closed at 301130H and began displacement by echelon to Artillery Base 4 (YS 415873 - Annex C) at 301400H. All elements closed into Arty Base 4 by 301730H.

1st Squadron, 4th Cavalry (minus Troop A) provided convoy escort throughout the day without incident. TAC air and armed helicopters covered all convoy movements. The squadron closed into Arty Base 4 301800H and provided security for that installation.

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D+1 (31 March 1966): 310715H the 2d Brigade continued to attack toward the northwest with two battalions abreast, while 2d Bn, 16th Inf continued as brigade reserve and conducted intensive patrolling around the CP area. At 310845H a patrol from Co A, 2d Bn, 16th Inf detained 8 VCS at YS 365956; at 311300H the same patrol detained 3 more VCS at YS 390986. 2d Battalion, 18th Infantry destroyed 750 pounds of bagged rice at YS 373949, and discovered a large base camp 300m by 350m in size at YS 375845. The camp could accommodate 700 personnel and consisted of over 100 bunkers, buildings, and connecting trenches. 31 Chinese grenades were destroyed and numerous documents... evacuated. At 311540H Co C, 2d Bn, 16th Inf was helilifted in two lifts to search the northwest portion of area NEBRASKA. The unit landed vic YS 303960 and commenced patrolling to the north. Co C closed for the night at 311730H vic YS 300985, without contact. 1st Bn, 18th Inf closed for the night in three company perimeters located in Objective MANGY, with Co A at YS 320914; Co B at YS 315918; and Co C at YS 323911. 2d Battalion, 18th Infantry also occupied three company perimeters, Co A at YS 360891; Co B at YS 367847; and Co C at YS 360865.

3d Brigade conducted airmobile assaults into three LZ's in area OREGON and moved its supporting artillery and brigade CP into the area by CH-47 helicopter. The LZ's were prepared by TAC air, general support artillery, naval gunfire, and armed helicopters prior to introduction of the infantry battalions. 310805H the 1st Bn, 2d Inf commenced its assault into LZ PORTLAND (YS 3577 - Annex C), closing by 310900H with negative contact. One battery, 2d Bn, 33d Arty was lifted by CH-47 into LZ PORTLAND starting at 310855H and was ready to fire by 310930H. The first lift of 1st Bn, 16th Inf landed at LZ PHILETON (YS 3571) 310948H. The battalion closed 311035H with negative contact. 311100H 2d Bn, 28th Inf began its assault into LZ SALT (YS 2745) and closed 311155H without VC contact. CH-47 aircraft continued to shuttle the brigade Tac CP and 2d Bn, 33d Arty to LZ PORTLAND. The CP was established at YS 351770 by 311230H. All artillery elements closed 311430H. All units commenced search and destroy operations in zone but made no contact throughout the day. 1st Battalion, 2d Infantry assumed a defensive perimeter around the CP and artillery base; 1st Bn, 16th Inf closed for the night at YS 320726; and 2d Bn, 28th Inf closed for the night at YS 271755. During the day permission was sought and obtained from III Corps, to extend the area of operations to include the hill mass contained in YS 2670 - YS 3062 - YS 3762 - YS 4065 YS 4070. This area was added to OREGON and responsibility for it given to 3d Brigade.

1st Squadron, 4th Cavalry departed the Div Arty Base 310655H to return to the BIEN HOA area to escort Btry A, 2d Bn, 32d Arty (175mm SP) to XUAN LOC (YT 4509) and the remainder of the support command vehicles to COURTENAY. 310735H an M113 was struck by a command detonated mine at YS 447977. The squadron elements reached II FFV headquarters 310916H and started the return trip 310930H. The artillery battery was positioned at XUAN LOC 311130H and the remaining vehicles proceeded to COURTENAY closing at 311315H.

1st Battalion, RAR conducted 5 patrols in area QUEENSLAND while securing the logistical base and CP area. Co C made the only contact during the day at 311300H when a patrol engaged 3 VC via YS 477507 with unknown results. At 312110H, 6th Bn, 6th Arty received 3 mortar rounds within their perimeter. Simultaneously an LP heard sounds of a

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mortar being emplaced at YS 413867. Artillery was called into the area and the firing ceased. No damage or casualties resulted from the mortar fire.

D+2 (1 April 1966): 2d Brigade continued Operation ABILONE with 1st and 2d Bns, 18th Inf pushing further west in their respective zones. 010835H Co C, 2d Bn, 18th Inf received 15 rounds of AW fire from YS 356865 as a unit searched toward that area. No casualties resulted and a search of the area yielded negative results. Company C, 2d Battalion, 16th Infantry departed its overnight position via YS 300985 and searched to the southeast. The unit reached a pickup zone via YS 322988 at 011200H and commenced extraction 011230H, closing back into the brigade CP 031310H. 011407H Co A, 2d Bn, 18th Inf located 200M of trenches at YS 345857 and a base camp at YS 341857. At 011450H the same unit discovered another base camp containing 18 bunkers at YS 340857. All appeared to be of recent construction but were unoccupied. 011437H Co A and recon platoon, 2d Bn, 16th Inf were dispatched to search the area via YS 4193 from which a convoy had received recoilless rifle fire at 011355H. Recon platoon made contact with 3 CP at YS 415935 with unknown results. The task force returned to the CP area leaving one platoon behind as an ambush force. Co A while returning discovered a fresh tunnel complex at YS 352950, consisting of 175 meters of tunnels and trenches. 011535H Co C, 2d Bn, 18th Inf destroyed a $\frac{1}{2}$ ton tractor and trailer at YS 342870. By 011800H brigade elements had closed as follows: 1st Bn, 18th Inf - Co A at YS 284933; Co B at YS 289930; Co C at YS 289923; 2d Bn, 18th Inf - Co A at YS 338868; Co B at YS 340870; Co C at YS 348862.

3d Brigade elements continued operations in zone at first light. 1st Battalion, 2d Infantry conducted 5 combat patrols out from the CP area.

1st Battalion, 16th Infantry began searching to the west at first light. No contact was made until 011600H when Co B received 2 60mm mortar rounds via YS 293715. 011640H the battalion started to receive SA, AW, and mortar fire from YS 287717. Artillery and air strikes were called and the enemy fire ceased; 4 WIA were sustained but none required evacuation. Co's A and C searched the area and found 7 destroyed huts. The battalion closed with Co B at YS 292710 and remaining elements at YS 279720.

2d Bn, 28th Inf searched north from its overnight positions and investigated the extensive trails and streams in the area of YS 2679 - YS 2780. The battalion had no contact during the day and closed in the following areas: Co A at YS 278808; Co B and command group at YS 279791; Co C at YS 262797, and recon platoon at YS 264803.

1st Squadron, 4th Cavalry escorted the 2d Brigade trains from Hq II Field Force Vietnam to the division base at COURTESAY. The escort elements departed Arty Base 4 010700H and reached Hq II Field Force Vietnam 011130H. The return trip started 011145H. 011335H 3 rounds of recoilless rifle fire were received from YS 436947. No casualties or damage resulted. Fire was returned with .50 cal MB, 90mm cannon, and armed helicopters, but results were unknown.

1st Battalion, MAR, conducted intensive patrolling of the division base area but made no contact during the day.

011200H division FRAG Order 37-66 was issued to all units, detailing the plan for displacement of all elements except 3d Brigade to new

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areas of operation. 2d Brigade was directed to move to area TEXAS; Div Arty to move to vic BINH GIA (YS 4678); and the division log base and CP to move to Log Base 1 at BINH BA (YS 4474).

9 D+3 (2 April 1966): The main activity of the day consisted of the relocation of 2d Brigade, Div Arty, and the division base to the southern portions of the area of operations. The movement started at 020644H with the departure of Troop C, 1st Squadron, 4th Cavalry from its position at Arty Base 4 (YS 4187) to the 2d Brigade CP area to escort HHC 2d Brigade, 1st Bn, 7th Arty (-), and Btry B, 6th Bn, 6th Arty to new positions. 020700H the tank elements of Troop A departed Arty Base 4 to rendezvous with the PWLH Troop and Co B, 1st Bn, RAR at COURTENAY. This task force departed COURTENAY 020745H and reached BINH BA 020840H. 020845H Co C, 1st Bn, RAR was lifted to BINH BA 020840H. 020845H Co C, 1st Bn, RAR was lifted to BINH BA and the area was reported secured by 020910H.

Troop C and the 2d Brigade elements departed the old 2d Brigade CP (YS 462948) at 020745H and followed the Australian task force south. The two batteries of the 7th Artillery moved directly to firing positions at YS 465478, closing 020940H, while the remaining elements stopped temporarily at COURTENAY. After these elements had all cleared Route 2 (020930H), Troop B, 1st Squadron, 4th Cavalry commenced escorting Hq Div Arty, 8th Bn, 6th Arty (-), and the 4th Cavalry trains to their new base vic BINH GIA (YS 463785), closing 021043H. Troop B replaced Troop C as security at the new artillery base allowing Troop C to return to COURTENAY to escort the division base to BINH BA. At 021140H HHC, 1st Inf Div, Support Command, 2d Brigade trains, 3d Brigade trains, and the land tail of 1st Bn, RAR departed COURTENAY. Companies A and D, 1st Battalion, RAR, Btry B, 8th Bn, 6th Arty, the Kiwi (161st) Btry, and a small division Tac CP remained. The Division CP closed at COURTENAY and opened at BINH BA (YS 435741) 021350H; all elements closed into BINH BA by 021600H. Troop C, with attached Troop A tanks, then replaced Troop B at the Div Arty Base by 021610H, whereupon Troop B returned to COURTENAY for the remaining wheeled elements. These units departed COURTENAY 021640H; Btry B, 8th Bn, 6th Arty, closed div arty position 021715H, and the Kiwi Btry closed BINH BA 021730H. The two remaining companies of the 1st Bn, RAR, were helilifted from COURTENAY to BINH BA and closed 021807H.

After the establishment of the artillery in temporary positions, 2d Brigade began its airmobile displacement. Following TAC air and artillery preparations, 1st Bn, 18th Inf conducted an airmobile assault on LZ TERRY (YS 530770 - Annex C). No contact was made and the battalion began to move southwest, with Co C remaining temporarily to secure the LZ. 021145H the battalion found a small base camp at YS 550760 and killed one VC trying to escape. 021620H the battalion engaged 3 VC at YS 551762 sustaining one WIA from an M-79 round. The VC fled with no losses.

021207H the brigade Tac CP and Btry A, 1st Bn, 7th Arty were lifted by CH-47 to LZ TERRY. TAC air, artillery, and naval gunfire prepared LZ TOM (YS 584724). The last battalion (2d Bn, 18th Inf) was lifted from area NEBRASKA using UH-1D and CH-47 aircraft commencing 021230H and closing 021420H. Upon arrival the battalion became brigade rapid reaction and CP security force. The wheeled elements of brigade headquarters moved from COURTENAY with the division base elements closing LZ TERRY 021400H; 1st Bn, 7th Arty (-) displaced by echelon from its temporary positions to the new CP area and closed 021600H.

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021300H 2d Bn, 28th Inf, was alerted for attachment to 2d Brigade, and to conduct an airmobile assault into an LZ at YS 560780, with the mission of blocking VC escape to the south between YS 571691 and YS 710589. The attachment became effective 021430H and following a TAC air and artillery preparation. The battalion closed on the LZ 021735H and deployed in blocking positions between YS 570690 and YS 581701 without VC contact. Between 021800H and 021900H the 2d Brigade battalions closed in the following locations: 2d Bn, 16th Inf - Co A at YS 567717; Co B at YS 569719; Co C at YS 562720; 1st Bn, 18th Inf - Co A at YS 553757; Co B at YS 550750; Co C at YS 543750; 2d Bn, 18th Inf - Co A at YS 521770; Co B at YS 517771; and Co C at YS 525781.

3d Brigade continued to conduct search and destroy operations in the three battalion sectors. Company A, 1st Battalion, 2d Infantry (reinforced with one platoon of Co G) conducted an airmobile assault into LZ QUEEN (YS 385758) commencing 020800H. The unit closed on the ground 020846H and deployed to block VC fleeing the BINH BA area to the west. A patrol from Co B, 1st Bn, 2d Inf made contact with an estimated VC squad at 020930H via YS 359781. The patrol maintained contact and at 021000H Co A was instructed to move north to intercept any VC attempting to flee in that direction. 021300H Co A located a regimental sized supply point at YS 382768. The supply point had been recently evacuated.

2d Battalion, 28th Infantry moved from previous positions to a pickup zone at YS 2479 from which it was extracted. 1st Battalion, 16th Infantry continued pushing to the west without incident, closing 021730H with Co A at YS 256707; Co B at YS 255714; and Co C at YS 263691.

020745H Btry A, 2d Bn, 33d Arty started movement by CH-47 aircraft to a RF compound at ONG TRINH (YS 269669) from which it could support 1st Bn, 16th Inf. The unit closed 020850H ready to fire.

1st Battalion, 16th Inf sustained two wounded 020830H from a dud on the COURTENAY airstrip. 021000H the pilot of an OH-13 helicopter carrying the battalion commander was wounded by ground fire from YS 456850, but he succeeded in landing safely. The battalion made several contacts while securing the BINH BA airstrip. Company B fired on two VC (believed KIA) and captured two SA at 021000H via YS 461743. Simultaneously Co F engaged three VC at YS 424748 capturing one VC. 021030H Co's B and C made contact with a VC platoon at YS 461743 resulting in 2 VC KIA (BC) and one possible KIA. 021200H an unknown number of VC were engaged at YS 445945 resulting in two VC KIA (BC). 021715H Co G engaged five VC at YS 426763 resulting in five VCO. The battalion established a perimeter around the BINH BA area by 021730H and dispatched ambush patrols during the night.

D-4 (3 April 1966): 020715H 2d Bn, 16th Inf, and 1st Bn, 16th Inf continued to attack to the southwest in their respective zones. During the morning Co B, 2d Bn, 18th Inf conducted a patrol south of the brigade CP area. 2d Battalion, 28th Infantry remained in blocking positions previously established and conducted small-unit patrols out from that location. 030824H Co C, 1st Bn, 18th Inf engaged and killed one VC at YS 554745 and recovered his weapon. 031120H intelligence sources indicated the presence of a high-level VC headquarters and a battalion sized force via YS 5271. A steady stream of TAC air, artillery, naval gunfire, and armed helicopter fires was placed in the area throughout the afternoon, and HAI fires were placed in the area during the night. 031330 Co A, 2d Bn, 16th Inf located a large VC base camp at YS 365705

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containing 15 barracks and classroom buildings. The installation was destroyed. 031400H Co C, 2d Bn, 16th Inf found a supply dump at YS 567697 containing 222 tons of rice, which was destroyed by dousing in JP4 and burning. 031400H 2d Bn, 18th Inf was alerted to move two companies by helicopter to blocking positions via YS 5168 to prevent the suspected VC battalion from escaping during the night. The first lift of Co's A and C reached the LZ (YS 515685) at 021645H, and completed at 031730H. 031715H two VC fired at an armed helicopter team; fire was returned killing both VC. Another fire team drew heavy AW fire 031730H from YS 502723. An air strike was placed on the area and the firing ceased.

2d Battalion, 28th Infantry located numerous small camps, tunnels, and storage areas along the SONG RAI River while patrolling out from its blocking positions between YS 574690 and YS 587708. A total of three tons of rice and five structures were destroyed during the day.

Between 031800H and 031900H the 2d Brigade elements closed into positions as follows: 2d Bn, 16th Inf - Co A at YS 568691; Co B at YS 567688; Co C at YS 564690; 1st Bn, 18th Inf - Co A at YS 537740; Co B at YS 549741; Co C (-) at YS 552727, one platoon of Co C at YS 540727; 2d Bn, 18th Inf - Co A at YS 502690; Co B at YS 520775 (brigade CP); Co C at YS 521680; recon platoon and command group at YS 522684; 2d Bn, 28th Inf deployed along a line between YS 5769 and YS 5971.

3d Brigade continued search and destroy operations in area OREGON with two infantry battalions. 1st Battalion, 2d Infantry conducted three platoon size patrols from the brigade CP during the day. 030909H Co B conducted an airmobile assault into an LZ at YS 377792, following air and artillery preparations. The unit made no contact on the LZ and commenced search and destroy operations to the north. 031031H a Co A patrol exchanged fire with a small VC force at YS 355771. The VC fled and the area was searched. Many tunnels and foxholes were found but no evidence of VC casualties was apparent.

1st Battalion, 16th Infantry completed its push west toward Route 15 during the day, starting at 030820H by searching south from its overnight position. 031120H the battalion received heavy SA fire from a village at YS 268669. Fire was returned with SA and mortars and several explosions occurred in houses that caught fire. At 031220H it was determined that there were friendly civilians and PF Troops in the village. The battalion moved into the village to give medical aid to six wounded civilians and assist in extinguishing the fires that had been started. The battalion remained in that area for the remainder of the day. 031700H it was alerted for possible commitment to the 2d Brigade. The battalion established overnight location as follows: Co A at YS 276665; Co B at YS 274661; and Co C at YS 271663.

1st Squadron, 4th Cavalry maintained security positions around the Div Arty Base. One platoon of Troop B escorted an engineer work party to a damaged bridge at YS 435693. 1st Engineer Battalion personnel repaired the bridge by 030830H. All squadron elements closed by 031755H.

031030H a vehicle from 8th Bn, 6th Arty, while on a water run, made a wrong turn onto Route 2 from the div arty base. It proceeded north to YS 462822 where it received SA fire, killing the two personnel on board. A mounted patrol from Troop C, 1st Squadron, 4th Cavalry was dispatched to the area and recovered the bodies and vehicle.

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1st Battalion, RAR, continued patrolling area VICTORIA. Co A, in conjunction with ARVN and National Police, searched the village of BINH BA and interrogated 1200 villagers. A patrol from Co B discovered 350-120lbs bags of rice at YS 405730, 031115H. The rice was evacuated.

D+5 (4 April 1966): The division continued Operation ABILENE with 2d Brigade conducting a detailed search of base camps and supply caches discovered 3 April, and 3d Brigade displacing to area KANSAS.

2d Brigade searched the area where the large VC force had been reported 3 April but without significant VC contact. At first light 2d Bn, 16th Inf displaced to occupy blocking positions between YS 523683 and YS 550688, from which the battalion sent small unit patrols to the north. The battalion found numerous base camps and destroyed over 350 tons of rice, SA ammunition, and miscellaneous supplies. The battalion closed for the night with Co A at YS 547688; Co B at YS 535687; and Co C at YS 542678.

2d Battalion, 18th Infantry (less Co B) blocked between YS 523683 and YS 492702 while sending patrols to the north and northeast. Patrols during the day found several small base camps. 041545H Co C located an ammunition cache at YS 511676 and destroyed 150 rounds of SA ammo, 100 mortar fuses and a machine gun barrel. The battalion made no further contact and closed with Co A at YS 493698; Co B at YS 520775; Co C at YS 520680; and recon platoon with the command group at YS 522687.

2d Battalion, 28th Infantry blocked between YS 550688 and YS 575690 and sent patrols to the north to complete the destruction of base camps found 3 April by 2d Bn, 16th Inf. Company C at 041140H, while moving to the rice cache at YS 567697, engaged in a firefight with an unknown number of VC at YS 566688. 1st Bn, 18th Inf continued attacking southwest along an axis between YS 5675 and YS 5271. Company B found a base camp at YS 537727 at 041210H and destroyed six huts containing a PA set, printing press, some rice, and SA ammunition. At 041325H Co B chased several VC into a tunnel complex at YS 537727. CS was used to flush the VC. In the ensuing firefight one VC was killed, one captured, and a Russian carbine recovered. 041830H the unit closed into positions with Co A at YS 523716; Co B at YS 531724; and Co C at YS 526710.

041000H Troop B, 1st Squadron, 4th Cavalry was attached to the brigade and given the mission of blocking south and west of LONG TAN village between YS 4668 to YS 5265. The troop closed this area at 041800H and established its CP at YS 485655.

3d Brigade repositioned 1st Bn, 16th Inf, 2d Bn, 33d Arty (less attached Btry C, 2d Bn, 13th Arty), and the brigade CP into area KANSAS. 1st Battalion, 16th Inf was extracted to via XUYEN MOC (YS 6767) from its positions via YS 2766, closing XUYEN MOC 041030H. The battalion formed a perimeter for the defense of the artillery and CP, the CH-47 lift of which started 040915H. Due to mechanical failures and enemy action the lift was not completed until 042030H. The brigade CP reopened at YS 668675, 041330H. One CH-47 was struck by ground fire at 041730H while extracting, but landed safely in the old CP area where it remained overnight.

1st Battalion, 2d Infantry conducted five patrols from its base at YS 355802 while securing the extraction of the remaining 3d Brigade elements.

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Div arty elements and 1st Sqdn, 4th Cav displaced by echelon to the east to provide support for 3d Brigade. These elements closed into new positions vic YS 521773 at 041400H.

Company A, 1st Battalion, RAR captured one VC at 040800H vic YS 423712. The VC had an M1 rifle and was believed to be one that Co A had engaged the previous night.

During the day permission was requested of the PHUOC TUY Province Chief to extend the area of operations south from YS 5365 to the ocean and from that point east along the coast to YS 5865. This permission was granted 041740H to take effect 050800H, and the area was added to areas TEXAS and KANSAS.

D+6 (5 April 1966): No significant VC contact developed during the day. 2d Brigade completed its search of the hill mass and jungle area vic YS-5271. Commencing 051610H 1st Bn, 18th Inf was extracted by CH-47 and UH-1D aircraft to the brigade CP at YS 520777, upon arrival it became brigade reserve.

2d Battalion, 16th Infantry conducted patrols from their blocking positions between YS 523683 and YS 550688. During the day the battalion adjusted its positions to the stream line between YS 551683 and YS 545675. At 051205H two $\frac{1}{2}$ ton tractors with trailers were captured at YS 540680. The trailers and 500 lbs of sugar were destroyed and the tractors evacuated by CH-47. 051420H recon platoon engaged three VC at YS 536677 killing one and capturing one carbine. The battalion closed 051800H with Co A at YS 543672; Co B at YS 536680; and Co C at YS 522679.

2d Battalion, 18th Infantry (-) conducted extensive patrolling from its blocking positions between YS 523683. 051545H recon platoon found 20 tons of rice and a spare machine gun barrel at YS 515688, all of which were destroyed. 051600H Co B was lifted from the brigade CP to join the rest of the battalion, closing at YS 536680 by 051630H. The remainder of the battalion closed into overnight positions by 051800H; with Co A at YS 510687; Co C at YS 518687; and recon platoon with the command group at YS 515687.

2d Battalion, 28th Infantry received SA fire at 050814H from an estimated VC squad at YS 568690. Fire was returned and the VC fled. 050853H operational control of the battalions reverted to 3d Brigade.

Troop B continued its mission of blocking and screening the west and south of LONG TAN village, by establishing outposts and roving patrols. The unit maintained positions during the night along a line YS 4668 - 4665 - 5265.

3d Brigade relinquished control of 1st Bn, 2d Inf 050800H when the battalion came under OPCOM 1st Infantry Division. Upon returning to 3d Brigade control, 2d Bn, 28th Inf started sweeping southeast from its position vic YS 5767. No contact was made during the day and at 051715H the battalion closed into positions west of the brigade CP with Co A at YS 597640; Co B and command group at YS 651641; and Co C at YS 601638.

1st Battalion, 16th Infantry conducted a one company airmobile assault in LZ ORANGE (YS 632616). The company closed in three lifts by 051352H and began to search southeast toward the ocean. After the landing of Co A naval gunfire preparation of LZ GREEN (YS 740650) commenced, and three lifts of UH-1D helicopters landed in the rear, but no troops were discharged. Empty C ration boxes were thrown from

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14 the helicopters in an effort to deceive the VC into believing US forces had passed through the area. Company A made no contact during the day and closed 051700 at YS 675584. The remainder of the battalion secured the brigade CP.

1st Battalion, 2d Infantry (with Btry C, 2d Bn, 13th Arty) remained in position vic YS 3575 and conducted small unit patrolling to the south and east with one minor contact.

1st Battalion, RAR conducted five platoon size patrols during the day, locating a total of five base camps and 700 pounds of rice. 052130H an ambush patrol from Co A made contact with four VC at YS 426765 resulting in two possible VC KIA. 052300H a Co C patrol engaged five VC at YS 408736 killing one and possibly killing two more VC.

D+7 (6 April 1966): The 2d Brigade continued operations with 2d Bn, 16th Inf conducting a search to the south and southwest with three companies on line from YS 515682 to YS 545675. The 2d Bn, 18th Inf conducted a similar operation along a line from YS 490698 to YS 515684. These operations were conducted in support of an LR search and evacuation mission in the village of XA LONG TAN (YS 4865). Both battalions were extracted by helicopters at 1620. Battalion base areas were established by 2d Bn, 16th Inf vicinity YS 512678 and 2d Bn, 18th Inf vicinity YS 508785. 1st Battalion, 18th Infantry remained in a base area vicinity YS 520777 and conducted saturation patrols. Troop B, 1st Squadron, 4th Cavalry remained under OPCON 2d Bde and continued to occupy blocking positions south of XA LONG TAN (YS 4865) along a line YS 4668 - YS 4665 - YS 5265. Enemy activity during the day was limited to scattered small arms fire and ground fire against aircraft. The only exception was an 82mm mortar and recoilless rifle attack which started at 0245 against Co A, 2d Bn, 16th Inf at YS 543672. Twenty-nine rounds of both types were received before the attack ended at 0645, resulting in two US KIA and three WIA. Battery A, 1st Battalion, 7th Artillery moved to position vicinity YS 435702 to support 2d Bn, 18th Inf in their attack to the southwest and returned to YS 521773 upon completion of the mission.

3d Brigade continued operations with an airborne assault by Co C, 1st Bn, 16th Inf to the south. Naval gunfire began the preparation of LZ B (YS 625610) and was followed by air, artillery and gunship preparations. C Company swept to the west and south and linked-up with A Company. 2d Battalion, 28th Infantry swept to the northeast with negative contact and closed into overnight position vicinity YS 631674. 1st Battalion, 16th Infantry CP was located at YS 652672. A Battery, 2d Battalion, 33d Artillery supported C Co, 1st Bn, 16th Inf and C Btry, 2d Bn, 13th Arty departed area OREGON by CH-47 and closed into the brigade CP at 1130.

1st Battalion, 2d Infantry (-) was extracted from area OREGON commencing at 1112 from LZ vicinity YS 438741 to YS 443748. C Company stayed behind at YS 350755 and A Company at YS 373772 to conduct ambushes against VC returning to the area. A total of 42 helicopter sorties were flown to give the appearance that the entire battalion had extracted.

D+8 (7 April 1966): 2d Brigade moved 2d Bn, 16th Inf by road to BINH BA (YS 438740) to conduct searches of the villages in that area on 8 April. 1st Battalion, 18th Infantry and 2d Bn, 18th Inf remained in their base camps (YS 520777 and YS 508785 respectively) and conducted saturation patrols and prepared for future operations. No significant contact was made on 7 April.

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3d Brigade continued operations with an airmobile assault by Co B, 1st Bn, 16th Inf into LZ C (YS 595605), swept to the south and was extracted by air from LZ D (YS 585593). The remaining companies 1st Bn, 16th Inf conducted search and destroy operations to the NE from YS 638620. 2d Battalion, 28th Infantry conducted local security operations without contact. Troop B, 1st Squadron, 4th Cavalry came under OPCON 3d Bde at 1535.

Companies A and C, 1st Battalion, 2d Infantry conducted ambush patrols from their stay behind sites. C Company ambushed 13 VC who were returning to scavenge trash left in the area. Three VC were killed (BC) and two others possibly killed. B Company conducted security operations in vicinity the battalion base camp.

1st Squadron, 4th Cavalry elements continued security and reconnaissance missions.

1st Battalion, RAR continued to secure the division CP with no significant contact.

D-9 (8 April 1966) 2d Brigade: At 0001, 2d Bn, 16th Inf moved on foot with two companies from the division CP (YS 4474) to search the villages at YS 437690, YS 440690, and YS 470717 in conjunction with ARVN personnel. 2d Battalion, 18th Infantry sent two companies by foot from the brigade base at YS 520775 to surround a village at YS 4679 for a similar search. During the search a total of five confirmed VC, 28 VC suspects, and three Lambrettas were found. Two companies from 1st Bn, 18th Inf moved to vicinity of the village at YS 6181 to prepare for a search on 9 April. The remaining company secured the engineer bridge work-site at YS 593769. Troop B, 1st Squadron, 4th Cavalry was placed under OPCON of 2d Brigade at 1500. At 1500, brigade CP, 2d Bn, 16th Inf (-) and 1st Bn, 7th Arty departed base area YS 520775 and moved by road to YS 575778. 2d Battalion, 18th Infantry, one company 2d Bn, 16th Inf, and one battery 1st Bn, 7th Arty remained vicinity YS 520775 in preparation for operations on 9 April.

3d Brigade: At 0804 C Co, 1st Bn, 16th Inf began a sweep east and north to vicinity Objective 1 (YS 718704) and Objective 3 (YS 713715) with negative results. Companies A and B conducted search and destroy operations vicinity YS 690695 and YS 660655. An AO spotted a Vietnamese driving an oxcart who gave the prearranged signal that VC were in the area. Arrangements had been made with the district chief that personnel leaving XUYEN NOC (YS 6568) would be wearing hats and when they spotted VC in the area or were stopped at a tax collection point, they would remove the hat. B Company, 1st Battalion, 16th Infantry, conducted platoon airmobile assaults into the area and link-up vicinity YS 563617. C Company searched Objectives 1 and 3 with negative results and remained at YS 718704 for the night the battalion (-) remained overnight vicinity YS 6767. 2d Battalion, 28th Infantry units conducted patrols. Company A was transported on the vehicles of Troop D, 1st Sqdn, 4th Cav as they moved to 2d Brigade area. At YS 612710, the company was secretly dropped off and moved to an assembly area vicinity YS 630698 where they remained for the night. Battalion (-) remained vicinity YS 6666.

1st Battalion, 2d Infantry, Companies A and C, which had occupied stay behind positions returned to BINH DA (YS 4474) without further contact.

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Troop C, 1st Squadron, 4th Cavalry searched a village vicinity YS 460820 where 70 - 80 VC were reported. Twenty VCS were detained.

1st Battalion, RAR made contact with 5 VC vicinity YS 465745 resulting in one VC WIA captured. One battalion patrol engaged seven VC at YS 469748 and killed one (BC) and captured one small arm. Land tail elements of the battalion conducted a tactical road march from BINH BA to BIEN HOA without incident.

The division artillery forward CP received ten rounds of mortar fire between 0406 and 0410 with negative casualties or damages. At 0730 A Btry, 1st Bn, 7th Arty closed the division artillery CP.

D+10 (9 April 1966) 2d Brigade: Brigade CP, 1st Bn, 7th Arty (-) and one battery of the 8th Bn, 6th Arty moved from YS 5777 to vicinity YS 605824 without incident. 1st Battalion, 18th Infantry with attached C Troop, 1st Sqdn, 4th Cav conducted road clearing operations between YS 572774 and the new base area. The village at YS 6181 was searched and one company secured the bridge at YS 592769. At 1210, the battalion reverted to brigade rapid reaction force. Troop B captured a VC at YS 606803 and A Company apprehended six VCS at YS 612824. 2d Battalion, 18th Infantry conducted an airmobile assault vicinity YS 582898. Search and destroy operations were conducted in an area bounded by YS 531883 - YS 687869 - YS 610953 - YS 560950. 2d Battalion, 16th Infantry moved on foot to conduct search and destroy operations in an area bounded by YS 482810 - YS 566785 - YS 585800 - YS 587869 - YS 631883, with the major effort devoted to stream lines. Company B located an abandoned small arms ammunition factory at YS 575807. All 13 weapons were in poor condition.

3d Brigade: C Company, 1st Battalion, 16th Infantry departed overnight position and moved to search the area vicinity Objective 2 (YS 705700). A visit by the brigade commander to XUYEN MOC (YS 6568) revealed that two VCS apprehended on 8 April were identified by villagers as VC tax collectors. All elements returned to the battalion CP vicinity YS 6767 with negative contact. Company A, 2d Battalion, 28th Infantry continued to operate secretly in Area DONNA (YS 630780 - YS 660770 - YS 660680 - YS 620680). They reported one VC killed during the night and one weapon captured. The battalion (-) conducted search and destroy operation southwest to the vicinity of the village at YS 6363. A base camp was discovered, by B Company containing many foxholes, tunnels, and punji pits. The tunnels were destroyed. 1st Battalion, 26th Infantry was airlifted from PHUOC VINH by C-130 aircraft to VUNG TAU and came under OPCON 3d Brigade at 1330. A Company conducted an airmobile assault into LZ PARK (YS 716755) to secure the LZ for the 1st Bn, 26th Inf (-) that was lifted in by CH-47 helicopters. 1st Battalion, 26th Infantry closed LZ PARK 1415. Naval gunfire, air, artillery, and gunships prepared the LZ. Companies B and C conducted local patrols to the east and south of the LZ without contact. Locations of the 1st Bn, 26th Inf (-) for the night was YS 716755 and A Company was located at YS 696768.

1st Battalion, 2d Infantry provided security for the logistics area at BINH BA relieving 1st Bn, RAR effective 0700. Three VCS were apprehended by B Company at YS 460770.

1st Battalion, RAR (-) returned to BIEN HOA commencing 0700. Elements were lifted to VUNG TAU by CH-47 and to BINH HOA by C-130 aircraft.

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1st Squadron, 4th Cavalry: From 0800 to 1700 C Troop provided convoy escort for 1st Bn, 26th Inf from VUNG TAU to BINH BA without incident. A helicopter from D Troop crashed on take off at XUAN LOC killing three and injuring six.

Div Arty Forward: A Btry, 8th Bn, 6th Arty and 1st Bn, 5th Arty (-) closed new artillery base area vicinity YS 602827 at 1145. C Battery, 1st Battalion, 7th Artillery closed vicinity YS 501899.

D+11 (10 April 1966) 2d Brigade: The brigade continued to experience isolated contacts with small VC groups. It was becoming apparent that local force units presently operating in the area were scattered and disorganized with little capability to mount effective operations. 2d Battalion, 16th Infantry continued aggressive search of stream lines to the northwest in zone (center of mass YS 550810). 1st Battalion, 18th Infantry remained at the brigade base area and conducted extensive patrols. 2d Battalion, 18th Infantry maintained a battalion base with C Battery, 1st Bn, 7th Arty at YS 583897. C Company killed one (BC) and captured a wounded VC. Two weapons were recovered and a TA312 telephone. A Company engaged a VC at YS 589924, killed him and recovered an automatic weapon. B Troop, 1st Squadron, 4th Cavalry, conducted mounted patrols along the road and trail north of the brigade base area.

3d Brigade: Extensive company and platoon size patrols were conducted. Brigade CP remained at YS 670678. 1st Battalion, 16th Infantry continued extensive patrols and conducted two airborne assaults. LZ LEE (YS 761680) was assaulted by A Company following a preparation by naval gunfire, artillery, and air. Search and destroy operations were conducted in vicinity of the LZ and closed back to the battalion base without contact. 1st Battalion, 26th Infantry conducted search and destroy operations north and northeast of the battalion base camp area. Company C remained in reserve. Company A, 2d Battalion, 28th Infantry, returned from their mission in area DONNA. The battalion conducted training in assault techniques using CH-47 helicopters with ladders.

1st Battalion, 2d Infantry: Battalion continued extensive patrolling around the logistical base.

1st Squadron, 4th Cavalry: Troop D deployed to PHU LOI from XUAN LOC, closing 1930.

D+12 (11 April 1966) 2d Brigade: The 2d Battalion, 16th Infantry made what was to be the most significant contact of the operation. Most of the day was spent with aggressive patrolling by small units. At 1355, C Company engaged a platoon of VC at YS 535855. The engagement resulted in five VC KIA (BC), two US KIA and 12 US WIA. The VC attempted to break contact at 1525 and moved to the northwest. C Company pursued, maintaining contact and at 1525 halted to evacuate casualties. Although unknown at this time, the position selected was approximately 100 to 200 meters from a battalion base camp. Dense jungle growth restricted visibility to 15 meters and prevented the company from finding the VC installations. At 1735 the company began receiving heavy mortar fire, automatic weapons fire (including .50 cal MG), small arms fire from all directions and fire and grenades from snipers in firing positions in trees. The company held its position (YS 535855) and successfully repulsed three major attempts by an estimated VC battalion to overrun the company. Artillery fired 1086 rounds of artillery during the night of 11 - 12 April on defensive concentrations and likely routes of VC withdrawal. Flare ships were used to illuminate the area throughout the night. It was determined

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that C Company had engaged D600 Battalion and killed 41 (BC) and possibly killed 50 additional VC. Company A, 2d Battalion, 16th Infantry and Co B, 2d Bn, 18th Inf effected linkup with C Company at 0730 on 12 April. At 111900, D Company located a base camp at YS 529849 and engaged an unknown number of VC, possibly killing two. 1st Battalion, 18th Infantry began extraction by CH-47 helicopters at 0830 for return to BEAR CAT. The last element closed at 1200. 2d Battalion, 18th Infantry continued search and destroy operations in zone, moving to the northwest. 1st Battalion, 26th Infantry came under OPCON 2d Brigade at 0900 upon arrival at COURTENAY (YS 455915). The battalion secured LZ at YS 465925 for arrival of C Battery, 1st Bn, 7th Arty and HHC 2d Bn, 16th Inf. Upon completion, the battalion (-) moved north with two companies to YS 502965. The remaining company acted as brigade rapid reaction force.

3d Brigade: The brigade continued to search out VC forces by conducting an airmobile assault into Area MONTANA. The initial assault was conducted using UH-1D helicopters after an air and artillery preparation of the LZ. After the LZ was secured, direct support artillery and brigade CP moved into the area by CH-47's. The CP was located at YS 675845. 1st Battalion, 16th Infantry secured LZ vicinity YS 673675 for extraction of 2d Battalion, 33d Artillery and brigade CP. At 1436 the first elements of the battalion assaulted LZ BUTTE (YS 647912). The battalion closed into the LZ at 1605 with negative contact. After resupply was completed, B Company moved to blocking position vicinity YS 629908, Company C moved to blocking position vicinity YS 652890. A Company remained as reserve at LZ BUTTE with battalion CP. 1st Battalion, 26th Infantry moved by UH-1D from YS 718755 to LZ SIMNEY (YS 455915). Upon arrival, the battalion was placed under OPCON 2d Brigade. 2d Battalion, 28th Infantry was lifted from YS 649673 into LZ SALINA (YS 673845) following air and artillery preparations. The LZ was secured for the arrival of brigade CP and 2d Bn, 33d Arty. Upon closure C Company occupied a blocking position vicinity YS 663857.

1st Battalion, 2d Infantry: Battalion remained under division control and provided security for the logistics base. A B Company patrol made contact with approximately 14 VC in fortified positions which were assaulted and overrun. There was evidence that possibly four VC were KIA. Friendly losses were three KIA and three WIA.

1st Squadron, 4th Cavalry: Troop B remained attached 2d Brigade. Troop C provided security for local VN officials to relocate villagers from YS 610820 to BA RIA (YS 376607).

D+13 (12 April 1966) 2d Brigade: At 0001 B Company, 2d Battalion, 16th Infantry, battalion command group and B Company, 2d Bn, 18th Inf were moving to link up with C Company, 2d Bn, 16th Inf. The link up was made at 0730. Medics and a team of engineers were airlifted to the area by CH-47 and descended ladders through the jungle canopy. Engineers cut an LZ and the first evacuation helicopter landed at 1100 hours. By 1300 all elements of C Company had been evacuated. C Company, 1st Battalion, 2d Infantry was reinforced with a reconnaissance element and placed under OPCON 2d Brigade. Upon completion of the evacuation, the link up elements swept northeast, without further contact. 2d Battalion, 18th Infantry continued localized patrols vicinity YS 500890 with negative contact. 1st Battalion, 26th Infantry, moved south along Highway 2 and established blocking positions between TS 4688 and YS 4683 to prevent VC movement out of the area to the west. C Company, 1st Battalion, 2d Infantry joined the battalion and extended the block south to YS 4779.

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3d Brigade: B Company, (YS 628912) and C Company (YS 652892) 1st Bn, 16th Inf moved from their overnight positions with B Company sweeping southwest along a stream and C Company searching to the north-east along a trail. A Company patrolled around the battalion CP and acted as reserve. At 1100 hours, B Company returned to the battalion CP and the battalion (-) conducted search and destroy operations to the east with A company in the lead, followed by battalion CP and B Company. All battalion units moved to overnight positions vicinity YS 704942. 2d Battalion, 28th Infantry continued to secure brigade CP and artillery base and remained in reserve to assist 1st Bn, 16th Inf if necessary. Local sweeps and patrols were conducted without contact. At 0925, the battalion was placed on 50 minute alert for possible commitment to the 2d Brigade area. The battalion closed for the night vicinity 3d Brigade CP (YS 675845).

1st Battalion, 2d Infantry continued to provide security for the logistics base by extensive patrolling and establishing ambushes. Two VC were discovered trying to mine the road at YS 461830 and one was killed in the ensuing firefight. At 0517, six VC were sighted moving south at YS 455850. They were taken under fire resulting in five VC KIA (BC) and two weapons were recovered.

1st Squadron, 4th Cavalry: Troop B remained attached to 2d Brigade. C Troop assisted ARVN in completing relocation of civilians to YS 376607.

D+14 (13 April 1966) 2d Brigade: 2d Battalion, 16th Infantry moved west, searching in zone to new overnight positions between YS 460027 and YS 456880. Base camps and a bunker complex (YS 535863) littered with bloody bandages were discovered, but no VC were encountered. 2d Battalion, 18th Infantry moved west searching in zone to new positions between YS 480880 and YS 433930. Four VCS were apprehended vicinity YS 430994. 1st Battalion, 26th Infantry and Company C, 1st Bn, 2d Inf, remained in blocking positions along Highway 2. At 1300, C Company reverted to OPCON 3d Brigade.

The brigade CP move by road at 0930 to vicinity YS 470922. The command post was accompanied by 1st Bn, 7th Arty (-) and B Troop, 1st Sqdn, 4th Cav.

3d Brigade: Commencing at 0700, 1st Bn, 16th Infantry conducted search and destroy operations as they swept with two companies to Objective 3 (YS 7090). Company C remained in reserve to secure engineer work parties. 2d Battalion, 28th Infantry, remained in reserve at the brigade CP and conducted saturation patrols without contact.

1st Battalion, 2d Infantry continued the mission of security for the logistics base with extensive patrols and ambushes. C Company returned to the battalion at BINH BA, closing at 1710 hours.

D+15 (14 April 1966) 2d Brigade: 2d Battalion, 16th Infantry and 2d Battalion, 18th Infantry conducted extensive saturation patrols along Highway 2 in preparation for movement of the division convoy. Brigade elements at BINH BA commenced moving at 0640 enroute to BEAR CAT. The brigade headquarters joined the convoy at COURTHAY and 1st Bn, 7th Arty (-) at YS 437950. The convoy closed BEAR CAT at 1432 without incident. Brigade CP became operational at BEAR CAT (YT 165000). After passage of the convoy, the battalion was airlifted out of COURTHAY using 17 CV-2 sorties. The battalion was extracted from vicinity YS 437960, utilizing 9 OH-47 and 22 UH-1D helicopters. The lift was completed 1630 hours. 1st Battalion, 26th Infantry (-) was

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airlifted to PHUOC VINH by CV-2, closing 1445. The battalion reverted to OPCON 1st Brigade. Land tail elements of the battalion closed DI AN and remained overnight. Eight CH-47's were used to extract C Battery, 1st Bn, 7th Arty, which had remained in firing position at COURTENAY.

3d Brigade: 2d Battalion, 33d Artillery and brigade CP began extracting from LZ BILLINGS (YS 675845) by CH-47 and moved to AN LOC. From AN LOC, 2d Bn, 33d Arty (-) was extracted using UH-1D's, and lifted to LAI KHE. C Battery extracted from AN LOC by CH-47 and was lifted to PHU LOI, closing 1927 hours. Elements of the brigade CP moved from AN LOC to LAI KHE by C-123. Extraction of the brigade CP was completed without incident. 1st Battalion, 16th Infantry commenced extraction from LZ HELENA (YS 713941) by UH-1D and closed AN LOC at 0950 hours. From AN LOC the battalion was lifted by C-123 to LAI KHE. 2d Battalion, 28th Infantry commenced airlift to AN LOC by UH-1D at 1300. The lift to LAI KHE was accomplished with C-123 aircraft with the battalion closing at 1927.

1st Battalion, 2d Infantry reverted to OPCON 1st Brigade at 1445 hours. The extraction from BINH BA to PHUOC VINH was made with CV-2 aircraft. The land tail elements moved to DI AN and remained overnight.

1st Squadron, 4th Cavalry (-) provided security for passage of division convoys.

Headquarters Battery, 8th Bn, 6th Arty, and C Battery, 2d Bn, 13th Arty closed to PHU LOI.

D-16 (15 April 1966): Land tail elements from 1st and 3d Brigade elements closed to their base camps. The Division Forward CP moved from XUAN LOC to DI AN. With the close of the convoy to DI AN at 1325 hours, Operation ABILENE terminated.

6. SUPPORTING FORCES: a. Artillery.

(1) Size of Forces:

<u>Organization</u>	<u>Commanders</u>
1st Inf Div Arty Tac CP	Col Marlin W Camp
1st Bn, 7th Arty (105mm) DS 2d Bde	Lt Col John H Pyle III
2d Bn, 33d Arty (105mm) (-) Atch	
C Btry, 2d Bn, 13th Arty (105mm)	Lt Col Frank R Tins
DS 3d Bde	
8th Bn, 6th Arty (155mm) (-) Atch	
C Btry, 6th Bn, 27th Arty (8") GS	Lt Col Anthony Petrucci (29 Mar - 5 Apr)
	Lt Col John R McSiffert (5 Apr 66)
161st New Zealand Arty Btry DS RAR	Capt Murphy (Acting)
A Btry, 2d Bn, 32d Arty (175mm) GS	Capt Savoy

(2) How and When Employed: On 29 March 1966, Div Arty TAG CP, 1/7 Arty, 8/6 Arty, A Btry 6/27 Arty moved to an assembly area vicinity Hq, II PFOUCEV (YP 059118). A Btry, 2/32d Arty had previously closed into this area on 28 Mar. 2d Battalion, 33d Artillery was airlifted from LAI KHE to VUNG TAU on 30 Mar. C Battery, 2/13 Arty was airlifted to VUNG TAU from PHU LOI and was attached to 2/33 Arty for the duration of Operation ABILENE. The artillery assembled at Hq, II PFOUCEV, conducted a tactical motor march and closed the artillery base (YS 435975)

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at 1118 on 30 Mar. The New Zealand Artillery air landed with the 1st Battalion, RAR to secure the Log Base at COURTENAY. Arty preparations were not required during this period. By 1745 hours, the Div Arty Tac CP and 8/6 Arty had displaced to the artillery base at YS 411876. B Battery, 8/6 Arty was attached to 1/7 Arty, effective 1200 hours. On 2 April, division artillery elements executed a highly complex fire support plan in support of a tactical movement of selected 2d Brigade elements to forward position south. (The tactical movement was phased in several increments to varying position areas and the fire support plan included artillery preparations on two LZ's)

Artillery fire support was continuous throughout the operation except for cease fires imposed during RED HAZE missions, airborne Starlight Scope operations, and resupply flights in and out of logistics bases and forward areas. However, maneuver elements requiring immediate response got the same priority as missions fired when infantry was in contact. Artillery units fired preparation, harassing and interdiction, counter mortar, and anti-personnel, equipment and installation missions. Continuous artillery coverage was provided an engineer work party at the bridge site vicinity YS 443736 from 030730 for the duration of Operation ABILENE. At 1250, on 3 April, a report was received from S3, 1/7 Arty that a VC transmitter was located at YS 518708. Naval gunfire (5") and fire from A Battery, 6/27 Arty was adjusted on the area by an air observer, following an air strike. The transmissions ceased. During the heavy engagement on 11 April by 2/16 Inf, division artillery units expended a total of 1742 rounds of 105mm, 155mm, and 8" HE, WP, and illumination. Division artillery also provided an airborne relay throughout the night to maintain communications with the forward observers on the ground with 2/16 Inf.

Commanding Officer, 8th Battalion, 6th Artillery was responsible for coordination of the division artillery base security. The battalion established night foot and ambush patrols. Commanding Officer, 1st Squadron, 4th Cavalry was responsible for the security of the artillery base.

Artillery liaison officers and forward observers were provided as follows:

1/7th Arty	2d Brigade
2/33d Arty	3d Brigade
2/13th Arty	1/4 Cavalry (2 FO's and 1 LNO)

Liaison teams were provided by the New Zealand Battery and 10th ARVN Division. Initially these teams were located with 1/7 Arty, but were brought to division artillery on 30 April and remained with that element for the duration of the operation.

Boundaries between areas of operation were established as fire coordination lines.

Meteorological data was broadcast daily at 0200, 0800, 1400, and 2000 hours from PHU LOI and PHUOC VINH. Division artillery rear provided metro data by phone to the Tac CP for dissemination on request.

A total of 4,274 missions were conducted, firing 25,034 rounds of artillery as follows:

105mm	18,646 rds
155mm	4,966 rds
8"	1,189 rds
175mm	233 rds
	23,034 Total Rounds

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b. Naval Gunfire: Task Force 70.8 furnished the naval gunfire support and represented the first time naval gunfire had been utilized in support of division operations. Captain Dorsett, USMC, was the gunfire team chief. Naval gunfire support was on station at 0600 on 31 March. Naval gunfire teams were attached to division artillery, each brigade, each infantry battalion, and the cavalry squadron. On 31 March, naval gunfire assisted in the preparation of LZ's in area OREGON. From 1030 to 1130 on 2 April, USS CANBERRA adjusted fire on LZ TOM (YS 5872) in coordination with artillery units. A combined arms strike consisting of air and naval gunfire was requested from YS 583573 along SONG RAI River south to where it empties into the sea. Air strikes were approved, but naval participation was cancelled. During the period 0001 to 1800 hours on 8 April naval gunfire activity consisted of the following:

USS SEARCH PARTY - 305 rounds against 12 targets in the 3d Brigade area.

USS PARKLAND - 85 rounds against five targets in the 3d Brigade area.

The naval gunfire team chief notified that H&I type missions would not be fired by the ships in the future. Only observed missions and confirmed enemy locations would be engaged.

USS SEARCH PARTY participated in the preparation of LZ's (YS 761887 and 768687) in conjunction with 2/33 Arty on 10 April. The naval gunfire team was released from Operation ABILENE at 1400 hours on 11 April. Two armored personnel carriers escorted the team to BINH BA where they were airlifted to TAN SON NHUT.

c. Engineers: D Company (-), 1st Engineer Battalion, was placed in direct support of the operation. The two platoons from D Company had attached to them one platoon from B Company, a bridge element from E Company, a heavy equipment element from Headquarters Company, an armored vehicular-launched bridge (AVLB) section from Company E, 65th Engineer Battalion, 25th Infantry Division (US), and a water supply element from Headquarters Company.

On 30 March, the engineer task force moved with the Log Base to COURTENAY Airfield. Water points were established at YS 460914 and the artillery base. The Log Base water point was relocated at YS 429742 and due to a lack of water sources, this location served all units. On 3 April, one squad augmented with two tank dozers, a loader, and the AVLB constructed a bypass at YS 437692. During the duration of the operation engineers were involved in road and bridge construction, mine clearing, demolition, and LZ clearing. Two dump trucks were included in a Civic Action relocation of refugees. Four squads with chain saws constructed an LZ for the evacuation and extraction of C Company, 2/16 Inf on 12 April.

d. Signal:

(1) Signal Forces:

A Company	Captain J.J. Barrow
E Company	Captain R.C. Baugh
C Company	Captain A.O. Holsted
2d Fwd Signal Platoon	
3d Fwd Signal Platoon	

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(2) How and When Employed: The battalion provided VHF, HF, and FM radio, and secure on-line teletype service to advance division TOC, 2d and 3d Infantry Brigades (Fwd) and division artillery forward. Company C had the mission of providing communications for the division TOC (advance) and division artillery forward. A reinforced platoon was deployed with the following items of equipment:

<u>EQUIPMENT</u>	<u>QUANTITY</u>	<u>PURPOSE</u>
AN/MRC-69	3	72 VHA channels for forward and rear telephone service.
AN/MSC-29	1	Secure Comm Center facility.
AN/GRC-26	1	Secure radio teletype communication forward and rear.
AN/VRQ-3	3	FM Radio-wire integration.
AN/MRC-69	1	Support div arty fwd with 24 channels telephone service.
AN/MRC-69 and AN/MRC-54	1	Provide capability for relay of 24 channels to division rear. Two circuits established from forward log base to 1st Log Command at VUNG TAU.
AN/VRC-49	1	FM retransmission from VUNG TAU monitor.

On 28 March, the two VHF relays, FM retransmission equipment, and generators were airlifted by three CH-47 sorties to VUNG TAU. The 39th Signal Battalion provided vehicular support to move the equipment to the peak of VUNG TAU Mountain (YS 2627), elevation 1100 feet. VHF contact was established at 1900 hours. VHF contact was established between COURTENAY and BEAR CAT at 1624 and to division rear at 1710 on 30 March.

The 2d Forward Signal Platoon, B Company provided communication support to the 2d Brigade as follows:

<u>EQUIPMENT</u>	<u>QUANTITY</u>	<u>PURPOSE</u>
AN/MRC-69	2	Provide 36 VHF channels for telephone service with spare equipment for additional 12 channels.
AN/MGC-17	1	Provide secure teletype service to division TOC (adv)
AN/GRC-46	1	Provide secure radio teletype access to Division NET #1.
AN/VRC-49	1	Provide FM radio-wire integration service to 2d Brigade.

Communication (VHF) was established to COURTENAY at 1830, and VUNG TAU relay at 1910, on 30 March and 3d Brigade Forward at 1700 on 31 March.

The 3d Forward Signal Platoon, B Company moved by air with the 3d Brigade to provide the following support:

<u>EQUIPMENT</u>	<u>QUANTITY</u>	<u>PURPOSE</u>
AN/MRC-69	2	Provide 24 VHF channels for telephone service with spare equipment for an additional 24 channels.
AN/MGC-17	1	Provide secure teletype service to division TOC (adv).

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<u>EQUIPMENT</u>	<u>QUANTITY</u>	<u>PURPOSE</u>
AN/GRC-46	1	Provide secure radio teletype access to Division NET #1.
24 AN/VRQ-3	1	Provide FM radio-wire integration service to 3d Brigade.

The platoon (-) deployed from LAI KHE to VUNG TAU by C-123, 30 March. On 31 March, three CH-47 sorties were utilized to lift one AN/MRC-69, one AN/MGC-17, one AN/GRC-46, and a pair of trailer mounted generators into the 3d Brigade LZ. VHF communication was established to COURTENAY and 2d Brigade Forward at 1700 hours.

Forward communication systems were terminated at division rear by A Company. All communication facilities of division rear were duplicated forward, to a slightly lesser extent. All systems to brigade size elements were controlled by the forward signal center as opposed to normal procedures of control by division rear. The forward platoon included signal, generator, and motor maintenance technicians. Prompt evacuation and repair of critical items of signal equipment was effected by an H-13 assigned to the signal officer.

FM radio sets were remoted to provide immediate communication until VHF systems were installed, lines laid, and channels aligned.

Telephone circuits provided:

(a) Sole-user circuits terminated at each headquarters:

Division TOC (adv)	10
Division TOC (rear)	4
2d Bde Fwd	4
3d Bde Fwd	4
Div Arty Fwd	7
Div Arty Rear	1
IIFFORCEV	2
III Corps	2

(b) Common-user telephone services:

Division rear to division forward	4
Division forward to 2d Bde forward	2
Division forward to 3d Bde forward	2
Division forward to Div Arty forward	2
2d Bde forward to 2d Bde rear	1
3d Bde forward to 3d Bde rear	1
2d Bde forward to 3d Bde forward	2

e. U.S. Air Force Close Air Support:

(1) Size of Force. During Operation ABILENE, a total of 605 TAC air sorties were flown in support of 1st Infantry Division elements as follows:

<u>DATE</u>	<u>TOTAL SORTIES</u>	<u>PRE-STRIKE</u>	<u>AIR COVER</u>	<u>INTERDICTION/DESTRUCTION</u>	<u>IMMEDIATE</u>
30 Mar	27	7	8	12	0
31 Mar	43	9	4	28	2 (LZ Cover)
1 Apr	36	8	3	33	1 (Cover)

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DATE	TOTAL SORTIES	LZ PRE-STRIKE	AIR COVER	INTERDICTION/DESTRUCTION	IMMEDIATE
25 2 Apr	63	12	13	35	3 (Cover)
3 Apr	41	0	0	35	6 (Cover)
4 Apr	46	9	0	37	0
5 Apr	46	9	4	33	0
6 Apr	38	6	0	32	0
7 Apr	40	0	0	40	0
8 Apr	25	0	6	17	2 (LZ)
9 Apr	21	0	8	9	4 (Cover)
10 Apr	27	2	0	25	0
11 Apr	37	0	0	25	12 (4 CAS 8 Cover)
12 Apr	38	0	0	34	4 (Cover)
13 Apr	32	0	0	32	0
14 Apr	39	0	22	11	0
15 Apr	6	0	6	0	0
Total Sorties	605	54	74	438	34

The 7th USAF had the mission of providing air support for the operation. The following assets of the Air Force and Navy were used.

TYPE AIRCRAFT	SORTIES
F100	220
F4	113
A1H	102
F5	92
A4	35
A6	17
F4C	15
F4B	6
F8	5
	<u>605</u>

(2) How and When Employed: Initial air support priority was established for the neutralization of enemy forces and obstacles in and around landing zones. Upon completion of deployment phases, the following priorities were established:

- (a) Enemy forces in contact with friendly forces. Known enemy locations.
- (b) Interdiction of VC routes of reinforcement, withdrawal, and supply.
- (c) Suspected VC concentrations and base camps.
- (d) Known and suspected storage areas.

The greatest number of missions were flown against the second, third, and fourth priority type targets.

Control was established through the use of no fire lines along TAOR boundaries. All targets developed outside TAOR's were passed to the division TASE immediately for coordination and clearance to strike. All fighters were controlled by airborne FAC's. 3d Brigade FAC's worked out of the XUAN LOC airstrip and 2d Brigade FAC's from BEAR CAT.

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Preplanned requests were received from the brigade forward CP (S3-AIR/ALO) by division forward CP. These requests were forwarded to G-3 Air at II FFORCEV and monitored by G-3 Air division rear. Immediate CAS requests were transmitted by radio from the airborne FAC to division rear and then passed to III Corps DASC. These requests were monitored by division forward.

(3) Results: Excellent. Effectiveness cannot be adequately judged due to the nature of the targets attacked. Damage assessment by FAC's included; 52 buildings destroyed, 9 secondary explosions, five bridges on supply routes out, 25 KBA (est), and 6 KBA (DC).

Average time from request of immediate air off ground alert to the time over target was 19 minutes. Totals and types of ordnance expended included; 221 tons of high explosive, 298 tons of napalm, 94 tons of fragmentation bombs, 6.5 tons of white phosphorus, 1,326 rockets, and 100 canisters of CBU.

f. Three B-52 strikes were expended during Operation ABILENE. Two of these strikes were on the eastern edge of the area of operations and one on the southern tip.

g. U.S. Army Aviation:

(1) Size of Forces:

1st Aviation Battalion
 11th Aviation Battalion
 116th Aviation Company
 128th Aviation Company
 162d Aviation Company
 147th Aviation Company (Med)
 178th Aviation Company (Med)
 A/501st Aviation Company

(2) How and When Employed:

(a) 1st Aviation Battalion. The battalion planned and coordinated airmobile operations for the 3d Brigade; provided Air Traffic Control personnel with OIC for aircraft advisory on artillery fires, and provided general aviation support for 1st Infantry Division. Six airmobile operations were conducted in support of 3d Brigade, 1st Battalion, RAR, and redeployment of participating forces to base camps. A Company was provided to 3d Brigade for the duration of Operation ABILENE. In addition, UH-1D command and control helicopters were provided to division CP and 3d Brigade and four LOH's to division CP. On 30 March, the battalion was reinforced by 128th and 121st Aviation Companies to airlift elements of the 1st RAR from BIEN HOA to COURTENAY. In addition to forty UH-1D's to lift 452 personnel, 10 UH-1D(A), 1 C&C, Dustoff, and maintenance aircraft supported the lift. On 31 March, the battalion airlifted the 3d Brigade on a combat assault from VUNG TAU to LZ's vicinity of YB 350780, YB 360710, and YB 255748. A total of 1,467 troops and 16 tons of equipment were moved utilizing 47 UH-1D's and 20 UH-1B(A)'s. One artillery battalion and 1,500 rounds of ammunition were moved to LZ YB 350780 utilizing 84 sorties of attached CH-47's. A total of 75 sorties were flown during the airmobile assault on 4 April. Approximately 470 troops were moved and 30 UH-1D's and six UH-1B(A)'s were utilized on the three lifts. To lift the 3d Brigade and a supporting artillery battery for an assault on 6 April, 15 UH-1D's, 6 UH-1D(A)'s, and 4 CH-47's were used. Sixty-two sorties

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27 moved 340 troops, while 18 sorties were required to displace the artillery. Aircraft requirements for the airmobile assault on 11 April included; 27 UH-1D's, 5 UH-1B(A)'s, and 8 CH-47's. Three hundred twenty-six sorties were used to lift the troops and 63 to move the artillery. For the extraction phase on 14 April, the 11th Aviation Battalion, less the CH-47 aircraft, and the 61st Aviation Company (FW) reinforced the 1st Aviation Battalion. Two hundred UH-1D and 70 CV-2 sorties were required.

A Company, 1st Aviation Battalion, was placed under the OPCON 3d Brigade for the duration of the operation. Aircraft for this company flew 2,590 sorties totaling 1,198.7 hours.

B Company, 1st Aviation Battalion, provided general support for the division. In addition to 2 UH-1D's for the Commanding General, one UH-1D and four OH-13's were provided daily to the Tac CP.

(b) 11th Aviation Battalion. The battalion provided troop carriers, armed helicopters, cargo helicopters, and command and control aircraft in support of the division. On 30 March, airmobile operations were conducted with 2d Brigade. Infantry and artillery were lifted by UH-1D and CH-47 aircraft from BEAR CAT into the area of operation (L: SCOTT YS 353947). Upon completion of the initial combat assaults, 128th Aviation Company was placed in direct support of the brigade for the duration of the operation. CH-47's were provided on a daily average of eight for continued support. These aircraft carried the bulk of the division's resupply and conducted repositioning operations through extraction from pick-up zones and executing combat assaults. The 128th Aviation Company supported 2d Brigade by flying a total of 1,114 hours.

The battalion's CH-47's were involved in the extraction of C Company, 2d Battalion, 16th Infantry on 12 April. Engineers and medical personnel were lowered into the dense jungle by ladders extending from a hovering CH-47. Due to the height of the trees, the helicopters had to press down into the tops to allow the troops descending the ladder to drop the last six feet to the ground. After the landing zone was cleared, CH-47's assisted in the evacuation of dead and wounded.

(3) Division Tactical Airstrip Operations. The establishment of the division base at COURTENAY and BINH BA South represented the first time the division had set up and operated from a forward airfield. Initially, there were problems in traffic control and logistics delivery into the airstrip. This was overcome when a Traffic Control Team from the 125th ATC Company established a control tower at BINH BA South. These personnel in conjunction with pilots and ground crew from the 1st Aviation Battalion provided the positive air and ground control necessary to enable the division to operate the forward airfield without incident. During the operation, over 16,000 landings and take-offs were recorded, 12,932 at BINH BA South, and 3,511 at COURTENAY. On one day at BINH BA South, 1,570 landing and take-offs were completed. Traffic included C-123, CV-2, OH-13, UH-1, O-1, U-1, and CH-47 aircraft. Nine thousand artillery advisories were provided through the control team.

(4) Summary of Operations. During Operation ABILENE, the following Army aviation support and techniques were employed.

(a) Airmobile assault by UH-1D and CH-47 helicopters with gunship escort.

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(b) Movement of artillery by CH-47 sling load into the area of operation.

(c) Internal and external cargo resupply day and night by UH-1D and CH-47.

(d) Emergency evacuation of KIA's and WIA's by both Dustoff and Chinooks.

(e) Ladder injection of combat engineers and medics from CH-47's.

(f) Cargo resupply by OV-2's.

(g) Command post and radio relay using U1A.

(h) Artillery adjustment and radio relay using O1's and OH-13's.

(i) Command and liaison using UH-1D and OH-13 helicopters.

(j) Aerial photo and radar surveillance by OV1's.

(k) Ammo resupply using "free fall" technique from helicopters.

(l) Psywar loudspeaker and leaflet drop missions by U10 and UH-1D aircraft.

(m) Route reconnaissance and classification by OH-13 and UH-1D and convoy control by O1's, OH-13's, and UH-1D's.

(n) Long Range Patrol emplacement (day and night) by UH-1D and gun ships.

(o) Reconnaissance by fire using the scout platoons of D Troop (Air).

h. U.S. Air Force Tactical Airlift: The following is a summary of the Air Force airlift support for Operation ABILENE:

(1) Deployment:

30 March 1966

PHU LOI to VUNG TAU - 4 C-130 sorties

1 - 105mm howitzer battery

100,000 pounds

60 passengers

PHUOC VINH to VUNG TAU - 6 C-130 sorties

1 - Infantry battalion

10,000 pounds

500 passengers

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LAI KHE to VUNG TAU - 33 C-130 sorties

- 2 - Infantry battalions
- 1 - 105mm howitzer battery

757,965 pounds

1,381 passengers

9 April 1966

PHUOC VINH to VUNG TAU - 12 C-130, 6 C-123 sorties

- 1 - Infantry battalion

274,500 pounds

607 passengers

VUNG TAU to BIEN HOA - 4 C-130 sorties

300 passengers

(2) Resupply:

3 - 13 April 1966

To BINH BA South - 117 C-123 sorties

1,080,855 pounds

To XUAN LOC - 34 C-123 sorties

372,367 pounds

(3) Redeployment:

14 April 1966

AN LOC to LAI KHE - 45 C-123 sorties

- 2 - Infantry battalions
- 2 - 105mm howitzer batteries

306,256 pounds

1,290 passengers

(4) Totals: Sorties - C-130 59
 C-123 202
 Weight - 2,811,943 pounds
 Passengers - 4,138

9. RESULTS: a. Friendly losses:

	<u>US</u>	<u>FWOP</u>
KIA	48	0
WIA	135	3
MIA	0	0

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Equipment lost - 30 M-16 Rifles
 10 Cal .45 Pistols
 10 M-79 Grenade Launchers
 2 M-60 Machineguns
 2 AN/PRC-25 Radios

Equipment destroyed - 1 UH-1D

Equipment damaged - 1 CH-47
 2 UH-1D
 1 OH-13
 2 M-113 APC
 1 105mm Howitzer
 2 M48A3 Tanks

b. Enemy Losses:

KIA (PC)	32
MIA (Poss)	96
VCC	20
VCS	121

Equipment captured or destroyed - 1,241 Tons of Rice
 59 Tons of Salt
 54 Base Camps
 36 Small Arms
 2 Mortars (60mm)
 12 Rds RR (57mm)
 14 Rds Mortar (81mm)
 84 Grenades
 845 Rds Small Arms
 3 Tractors
 1 Printing Press
 1 Small Arms Factory
 5,000 Gals Kerosene

10. ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS: a. Preparation. Upon review of proposed tactical concepts of Operation ABILENE, coordination was made between the division G-4, and Division Support Command to determine the best methods available to provide units with adequate logistical support. Assessment of daily resupply requirements, expected consumption of supplies, refueling requirements, and other areas of logistical concern were studied to determine the most efficient procedures to be used. In view of the size of the task force and the area of operation, coordination was also effected with the Commanding Officer of Support Command, VUNG TAU. As a result of this coordination, arrangements were made to resupply Classes I, III and V from VUNG TAU. This was to be the first time that support would be provided by other than division personnel. VUNG TAU was found to have sufficient stockage of supplies to meet division requirements. Initially, units would deploy with sufficient Class I, II & IV, III and V to meet requirements for the first three days of the operation. Subsequently, resupply would be by air, and use of road networks. Aerial resupply would be primarily from VUNG TAU to the brigade trains and Division Support Command located at COURTENAY (initially) and then later as the operation progressed at the BINH BA Airstrip. Medical evacuation was to be aero-medical aircraft in direct support of the division, and located on a standby basis at COURTENAY (initially) and later at the BINH BA Airstrip.

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Upon completion of final arrangements and resupply schedules, administrative instructions were published to units in the form of the Administrative Annex to OPOD 7-66, Operation ABILENE.

31 b. Execution. As Operation ABILENE commenced, logistical support was rapidly provided to meet requirements. Supply, maintenance, medical, transportation, laundry and graves registration support was provided to 1st Infantry Division units through the joint efforts of Division Support Command, 1st Log Command, Support Command (VUNG TAU area), and the United States Air Force. Detailed data on the support provided is contained below:

(1) Supply. In order to effect resupply of Classes I, II and IV, III and V, it was necessary to arrange for aerial resupply from the supply points at VUNG TAU to the brigade trains and Division Support Command locations at BINH BA Airstrip:

(a) Class I. VUNG TAU was unable to provide "A" rations due to limited cold storage capacity at that location. There was a total of two requests submitted for "B" rations for a total of 42,000 rations. In addition, 10 shipments of MCI rations were made for a total of 37,512 rations. All shipments of rations were palletized. The support provided by the VUNG TAU support personnel was outstanding. Of particular note was the exceptionally fine job preparing and delivering rations to the cargo loading airstrips.

1. The 1st Supply & Transport Battalion elements supported a daily average of 6,000 to 6,600 U.S. Troops during the operation. Support was also provided to 690 personnel of the RAR.

2. Supply point distribution was used in that brigade trains were in the same location as the Supply and Transport Battalion elements. Depending upon the unit locations and operational status they were fed modified "B" ration breakfasts to include fresh eggs and fresh meats, a straight "B" ration lunch, and a "B" ration supper with a fresh meat item. The "A" ration items were issued daily, one day prior to use, "B" ration items were issued daily, two days prior to use. This method of issue afforded the unit one day of reserve in case of displacement. (For daily consumption, see Annex B).

(b) Class II and IV. Very limited amounts of Class II and IV were provided from VUNG TAU, as units had deployed with sufficient items to last for the period of the operation. The small amount that was necessary consisted of fatigues, wire and sandbags. Other mixed items were carried as replacement issues by the 1st Supply and Transport Battalion element, but were not required as emergency issues.

(c) Class III.

1. Supply support, consisting of the following POL products: AVGAS, MCGAS, JP-4, and diesel, in addition to a limited amount of packaged products, was provided. Average daily shipments and totals were as follows:

<u>AVERAGE DAILY SHIPMENT</u>		<u>TOTAL FOR OPERATION</u>
JP-4	12,400 gallons	203,825 gallons
AVGAS	945 gallons	12,652 gallons
MCGAS	2,140 gallons	27,722 gallons
Diesel	1,335 gallons	17,335 gallons
	<u>16,820 gallons</u>	<u>261,534 gallons</u>

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32 2. During the first 3-days of the operation, on-hand stocks and replenishment issues from DI AN were used. Later, use was made of division prestocked fuels at XUAN LOC. SKYBOLT assets of JP-4, at XUAN LOC, were also used.

3. Occasional problems in handling occurred when approximately 25 or 30 each 500 gallon drums developed splits or leaks during movement and refueling operations. Leaky 55 gallon drums of fuel were also found, but were transported in slings lifted by CH-47 aircraft.

4. The primary source of resupply of Class III products was by ALOC utilizing the 500 gallon collapsible drum. When supplies of these gave out or could not be refilled fast enough at VUNG TAU, 55 gallon drums were used. Resupply of JP-4 and like products in 55 gallon drums was unsatisfactory as they could not be decanted fast enough to meet demands.

5. The Miniport systems used are presently the best equipment on hand; however, a closed type system with heavy duty pumps would be more effective. (For daily consumption of each product, see Annex B).

6. Refueling at VUNG TAU, of the 500 gallon drums with JP-4, was slow during the early stages of the operation; however, the refueling area was later moved to the airstrip and eventually consisted of 3 each 5,000 gallon tankers, each rigged with hoses to refill 500 gallon drums. This worked very well and should be used in similar future operations, if space permits.

(d) Class V. Units were adequately supported with sufficient amounts of Class V. A total of 345.06 short tons were expended during operations. Resupply was effected to units from VUNG TAU to unit forward and brigade trains locations. A total of 68.06 short tons were moved by air and 277.0 were moved by vehicle convoys from VUNG TAU to unit areas and brigade trains locations.

(2) Maintenance. During Operation ABILENE maintenance support was provided each brigade by a contact team from the brigade forward support maintenance company. The logistical base and the artillery base was supported by a contact team provided by the Main Support Company. Aircraft support was furnished from PHU LOI and was accomplished by use of contact teams and recovery teams. Repairs which could not be accomplished on site were returned to PHU LOI for repairs. Organic aircraft of the 701st Maintenance Battalion flew 34.5 hours transporting 34 passengers and 36 short tons of repair parts.

The following number of job orders were accomplished during the operations:

Automotive	39	Small Arms	17
Electronic	89	Engineer	9
Instrument	20	Aircraft	46
Artillery	36		

(3) Medical. Medical support provided during Operation ABILENE consisted of division level medical service, and unit level medical service, as required. A limited amount of laboratory service was available in the field. Two "Dustoff" aircraft were on stand-by each day at the division logistical base. At night, one "Dustoff" aircraft was available. An orbiting "Dustoff" aircraft was used during convoy movements to and from the operations area.

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(a) Volume of medical operations is indicated by the following casualty statistics:

33	Battle casualties	123
	Non-Battle casualties	59
	Sick call	415
	Air evacuation	206

In addition, a total of 49 deceased persons were processed and evacuated.

(4) Transportation.

(a) Land transportation was used once from VUNG TAU to haul POL and general cargo. Cargo consisted primarily of bulk POL; however, due to bridge limitations, only 2,000 gallons could be transported in each 5,000 gallon tanker. Road convoys were used to effect routine ammunition resupply from VUNG TAU to the logistical base areas throughout the operation.

(b) CH-47 helicopters were used mainly for sling loads; although, they were also utilized for carrying internal loads of 55 gallon drums and rations. CV-2 fixed wing were used on a limited basis. It was found that these aircraft were not capable of carrying an ample payload for the loading time involved (i.e., 1 each 500 gallon per CV-2, 2 each 500 gallon drums per CH-47, and 3 to 4 500 gallons drums per C-123). Sling loading of 500 gallon drums by CH-47 proved very effective. C-123 aircraft were used each day, first to carry rations and when this was completed to carry POL. Sling loading of drums by CH-47 and loading of the C-123's were separated to avoid air traffic congestion at VUNG TAU. The refueling of the 500 gallon JP-4 drums at VUNG TAU was accomplished between the two loading areas available.

(c) A Courier run was established using a Caribou (CV-2) aircraft as the mode of transportation. This aircraft was to move personnel and/or equipment to and from the division forward location on a scheduled basis. Actual operation of this carrier run was not as satisfactory as planned due to diversion of the aircraft from its original courier schedule to perform other missions.

(5) Services.

(a) Laundry. During the operation, approximately 550 bundles of laundry were processed. This service can be provided if additional personnel are furnished to the Supply and Service Battalion (Prov) (DS) to assist in laundry operations. For this operation, one NCO and 10 EM were furnished from the Replacement Detachment.

(b) Graves Registration. A total of 49 deceased persons were processed and evacuated during Operation ABILENE. The following lists the number of remains processed per day.

MARCH 1966			APRIL 1966													
29	30	31	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
0	0	1	0	1	2	1	0	2	1	0	2	0	0	3	0	0

c. Comments. Upon conclusion of Operation ABILENE, evaluation was made of the logistical support provided. Support provided was considered adequate and no major problems effecting the conduct of tactical operations occurred. Minor problems occurring were:

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(1) At the start of the operation crews of helicopters delivering ammunition to airmobile units refused to back-haul residue from expended ammunition. This matter was resolved and ceased to be a problem by the end of the operation.

(2) Using units experienced difficulties in accurately predicting their ammunition requirements for the following day. Significant changes in quantities of ammunition requirements for the next day were received by DAO after aircraft lifts had been allocated. This caused several late night reshuffles of aircraft allocations, disrupting plans of organizations and supply activities. This problem was never eliminated but was reduced to manageable portions during the last few days of the operation.

(3) Direct support maintenance units did not bring an adequate quantity of repair parts. This resulted in equipment being non-operational for 2 - 3 days.

d. Administrative matters for 2d and 3d Brigades are included in Annexes F and G.

11. SPECIAL EQUIPMENT AND TECHNIQUES: The use of ladders to discharge personnel from CH-47 aircraft was conducted for the first time in the division combat operations. On 12 April, engineers and medics were lowered into the heavy jungle to prepare an LZ for extraction of C Company, 2d Battalion, 16th Infantry. This proved to be an effective operation and saved valuable time in preparing an LZ suitable for receipt of Dustoff aircraft.

12. COMMANDER'S ANALYSIS: Operation ABILENE demonstrated conclusively that the 1st Infantry Division can move - and move rapidly - by airmobile assault operations. In a period of 16 days, the major land area of PHUOC TUY Province was covered with sufficient thoroughness to provide assurance that the 5th and 94th VC Regiments were not present in strength. Utilizing a series of artillery and support bases, two brigades, of three battalions each, plus their direct support artillery battalions moved to successive operational areas almost exclusively by UH-1D and CH-47 aircraft. For the first time, the 1st Infantry Division made extensive use of the CH-47 in sling loading howitzers and portions of their basic loads. A number of lessons were learned particularly in the field of airmobile operations. Initially, coordination between the airmobile task force commander and the supporting airlift commander was poor, with the attendant result that pick up zone activities and combat assaults into landing zones were invariably ragged. As Operation ABILENE progressed, improvement was observed. Ground commanders became aware of the necessity for detailed backward planning, while air mission commanders recognized the requirement for the establishment of early and continuous liaison with the lifted force. Noticeable strides were made by air assault commanders in the effective preparation of landing zones utilizing all available artillery and air weapons systems. In the closing phases of the operation, air and artillery continued during the helicopter landings without periodic gaps in available supporting fire. Techniques in clearing landing zones, introducing and extracting forces by ladders from CH-47, and in calling in quickly and accurately massive supporting fires require additional refinement and will be improved. Company size units must patrol more actively and must fully employ all available security measures to protect themselves by locating nearby VC forces.

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Communications improved during the operation, especially on the Command FM Net after the administrative traffic was removed. The operation revealed that a signal center in support of a forward TOC may reduce considerably the amount of circuiting required to the rear. The usefulness of an AN/VRC-69 in supporting a brigade engaged in air assault operations must be carefully analyzed. The bulk and weight of the equipment poses a serious problem in mobility and flexibility. A minimum of two CH-47 sorties are required to lift the equipment. Initial performance of the AN/VRC-12 series FM radio was encouraging.

Planning of logistical support for Operation ABILENE was extremely thorough. The single logistical base concept proved to be an improvement over multiple brigade bases. The direct shipment of ammunition from the ASP to airmobile battery positions was particularly effective.

In summary, the major VC units expected to be in the operational area were not found. However, the VC have suffered a tremendous loss of prestige in PHUOC TUY Province by failing to oppose U.S. Forces. Material losses as a result of the operation were significant. Losses of the magnitude experienced during Operation ABILENE will have a serious impact on VC morale, create food shortages, and reduce combat effectiveness of the VC forces in the area for a long period of time. The VC of necessity must impose higher taxes, serving to further alienate civilians. An encouraging facet of the operation was the willingness of the people from time to time to provide information on the location of VC and obstacles. The relocation of civilians has enabled SVN to regain a degree of control over more of the population. Relocations reduced the civilian labor force available to the VC and removed some sources of taxes, food, and recruits, as well as affecting the size of the audience available for communist propaganda. The VC propaganda and political effort in PHUOC TUY Province suffered at least a temporary setback with the capture of a VC political headquarters and propaganda facility. The division operated with a great deal of flexibility and the support system proved sound.

13. LESSONS LEARNED: a. When a unit becomes engaged, commanders and staffs must be continually alert to assist the engaged commander in bringing to bear all available combat power. The engaged ground commander is preoccupied in maneuvering his forces during the heat of battle; it is at this time that higher commanders and staffs must insure that all available artillery, air, and other supporting arms are made available and are actually utilized.

b. Air mobile assault operations require the closest coordination between the assaulting ground commander and the supporting air lift commander. The more detailed the backward planning, the more effective will be the combat air assault. One hour is considered the very minimum time to insure coordination. In this connection, the close and continued association of an airmobile company with a particular brigade facilitates coordination and greatly enhances operational effectiveness.

c. The reconnaissance and selection of landing zones in jungle vegetation should include engineer reconnaissance, sufficiently in advance to permit planning of the required engineer work. Engineer detachments can be effectively utilized in rapid construction and improvement of landing zones, but engineers must be augmented by infantry to help in clearing trees and brush from the LZ.

d. When a unit becomes engaged, commanders are often reluctant to use all available fire support because of the difficulty in identifying

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their own friendly front line positions. Commanders must, nevertheless, continue to call on available air and artillery to block enemy routes of withdrawal or reinforcement and to strike probable VC rallying points.

e. Small (company and platoon) stay-behind forces can be effectively employed after departure of larger U.S. forces from an operational area. It is observed that VC elements move back into areas after major U.S. forces have departed to scavenge for useful items and to survey damage inflicted on their base camps. Stay behind ambush forces have achieved excellent results by these ambushes and by directing artillery fire and air strikes on returning VC.

f. It is necessary to train individuals and units in the use of ladder ascent and descent from the CH-47 (Chinook) Helicopter. There are occasions when this is the only method by which troops may be introduced or extracted from dense jungle areas.

g. Units requiring external lift of equipment should have their location and in their possession the necessary slings and nets. Personnel in the lifted unit must be trained in safe rigging and hook-up for external loads, thus avoiding complete dependance on pathfinders to perform these tasks.

h. When heavy use of POL is anticipated in the conduct of tactical operations, plans must include resupply by large bulk containers rather than 55 gallon drums. Resupply by road can be accomplished through the use of 5,000 gallon tankers. When resupply is by ALOC, it should be accomplished using 500 gallon drums and/or 2,000 gallon bladders.

i. Medical clearing stations should be located away from heavily used landing strips to minimize the effects of dirt, dust, and debris created by aircraft. Ideally, medical clearing facilities should have a landing area for medical evacuation aircraft only.

j. A courier service should be established on a firm schedule and not diverted from this primary mission except under emergency conditions. Strict adherence to the schedule will permit movement of small quantities of critical cargo when required in addition to routine courier missions.

k. Without the VHF relay from VUNG TAU Mountain, communication between BINH BA and DI AN would have been marginal at best. The operation plan indicated that the communication system over a distance of approximately thirty-five miles would be favorable. The direct system proved to be erratic and marginal due to serious signal attenuation by jungle growth. The forty-five mile system between DI AN and VUNG TAU produced excellent quality.

l. The usefulness of the AN/MHC-69 in support of a brigade engaged in air assault operations requires review. The bulk and weight of the equipment poses a serious problem in mobility and flexibility. A minimum of two CH-47 sorties are required to displace the equipment with its component generator set. Once the shelter is displaced, it loses mobility and must be operated in close proximity to the LZ.

m. Rapid air evacuation of deadlined signal equipment to rear signal maintenance facilities is a key to the compromise between

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spare equipment deployed and weight limitations. This also helps alleviate the problems of a low density of float spare equipment.

- 37 n. The armored vehicle launched bridge provides a simple crossing means in place of complicated construction for quick passage of convoys and cavalry elements during dry weather.

ANNEXES:

- A - Enemy Order of Battle
- B - Consumption Data
- C - Operations Overlay Operation ABILENE
- D - TAOR Revisions
- E - PSYOPS Leaflet Drop Areas
- F - After Action Report 2d Brigade
- G - After Action Report 3d Brigade

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ANNEX A
ENEMY ORDER OF BATTLE

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ANNEX A to Combat Operations After Action Report, Operation ABILENE Enemy Order of Battle (Intelligence Estimate)

UNIT	OC DE NAMES	STATUS	OPERATIONAL AREA	PROP PRES LOC	STR	WEAPONS	SUB UNITS	REMARKS
060 Bn	C 860 D 445 445	C-IP	Northern Phuoc Tay	YS 4475 C/S	500	3-61mm Mtr 1-60mm Mtr 2-75mm HR 2-57mm HR 8-30 Cal MB 12-AR's		Unk
310 Bn	C 310 D310	P-IP	Northern Phuoc Tay		350	3-60mm Mtr 3-50 Cal MB 3-30 Cal MB 18-AR's		Unk
C22 Plt	C 92	C-IP	vic YS 3582		22			Unk Security guard unit for the Pravines.
C25 Co.	Unk	C-IP	Long Det (YS 4851)		60			Unk
C26 Plt	Unk	C-IP	Chau Thanh (YS 3970)		30			Unk
C12 Plt	Unk	C-IP	Yung Dau (YS 2558)		25			Unk
C23 Plt	Unk	C-IP	Xu Yen Moc (YS 7664)		55			Unk
060 Su	Unk	C-IP	YS 5484		30			Unk

* C-MF (Confirmed Main Force Unit)
 C-IP (Confirmed Local Force Unit)
 P-IP (Possible Local Force Unit)

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ANNEX A to Combat Operations and Action Report, Operation Report, Operation ALLIANCE (Part of ... to Intelligence Estimate)(Conf)

UNIT CODE NAME SIG UNIT OPERATIONAL NAME FOR PERIOD FROM TO

5th Regt	Q765	C-MP	Northern Phuoc Tuy	YS 5424 (P/S)	1850	6-31mm Mtr 16-60mm Mtr 10-57mm RR 2-44 MG 12-12.7 MG 18-50 Cal MG 8-30 Cal MG 63-AR's 225-SMG 60-Carbine	1st Bn 2nd Bn 3rd Bn Bnk AA Co
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94th Regt	Dong Nai	C-MP	Northern Phuoc Tuy	YS 3777 (C/S)	2000	3-81mm Mtr 9-60mm Mtr 9-75mm RR 6-57mm RR 9-44 MG 6-50 Cal MG 108-AR's 250-SMG 651-RM71e/CMB 50-Pistols 9-M79 3-Plane Throwers	800 Bn 306 Bn 265 Bn
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TOTALS: 2 Regiments C-MP 4900
 1 Battalion C-IP
 1 Battalion P-IP
 1 Company C-IP
 5 Platoons C-IP

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ANNEX B
CONSUMPTION DATA

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ANNEX B to Combat Operations After Action Report, Operation ABILENE, Consumption Data

	31 Mar	1 Apr	2 Apr	3 Apr	4 Apr	5 Apr	6 Apr	7 Apr	8 Apr	9 Apr	10 Apr	11 Apr	12 Apr	13 Apr
C L A S S I														
"B" RATIONS	3313	2068	3743	7520	3121	3988	3721	4846	4846	3546	3500	2990	3305	
"C" RATIONS	2991	1560	2560	6168	3556	3552	4428	1656	1656	2356	4816	1800	1556	
C L A S S III														
"A" RATIONS	3313	2068	3743	7520	3121	3988	3721	4846	4846	3546	3500	2990	3305	
MOGAS	3260	3400	None	5621	1750	3400	3113	7113	765	2000	None	2765	5420	
DIESEL	3147	1400	None	3260	1825	2500	3400	3025	820	None	670	625	2625	
AVGAS	220	660	440	875	930	880	1980	880	825	1060	1070	1050	1385	
JP-4	1215	5661	1472	10125	12140	11125	14800	7330	7312	10588	6425	3525	21600	

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ANNEX C
OPERATIONS OVERLAY OPERATION ABILENE

CONFIDENTIAL

DELAWARE

LOG
BASE

FLORIDA

0
+90

1

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ANNEX C TO COMMENT OPN AFTER
ACTION REPORT OPN ABILENE
SHEET 1 OF 5 SHEETS (ORN O'LAY)

GEORGIA

WARE

ALT. LZ NELSON

LZ NORMAN

NANCY

1/18

2/18

NADINE

ALT LZ

LZ NATHAN

2

ENTIAL

ANNEX C TO COMBAT OPN AFTER ACTION
OPN ABILENE (OPN O'LAY)

LOG
BASE
4

SHEET 2 OF 5 SHEETS

WILLIAMS

ARTY
BASE
3

IDAHO

40
+ 92

LOG
BASE
3

ACTION REPORT

60

10

SHEETS

WASHINGTON

OBJ
3

ENTIAL

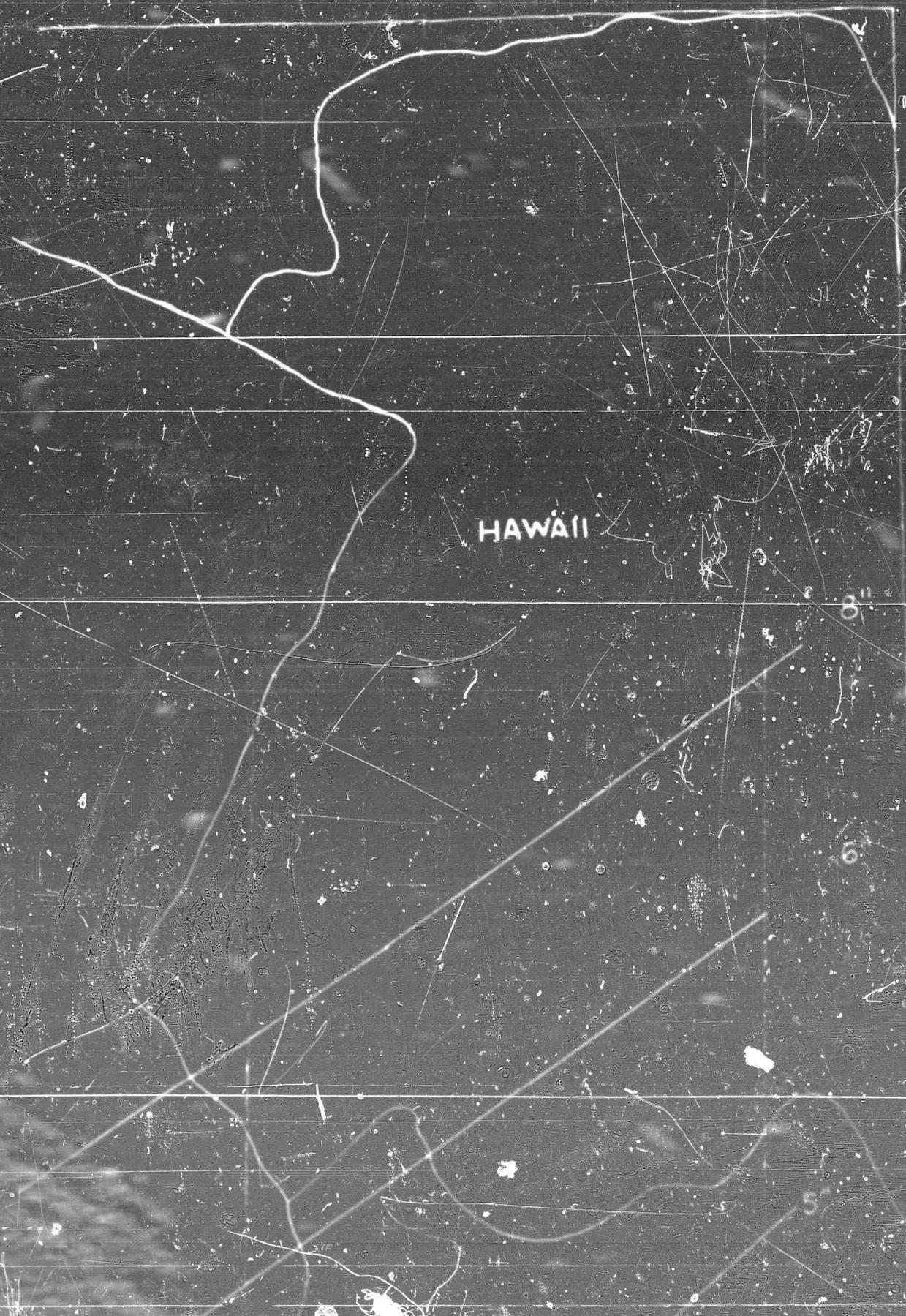
MONTANA

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ANNEX C TO COMBAT ORN AFTER ACTION REPORT
ORN ABILENE (ORN OVERLAY)

SHEET 3 OF 5 SHEETS



HAWAII

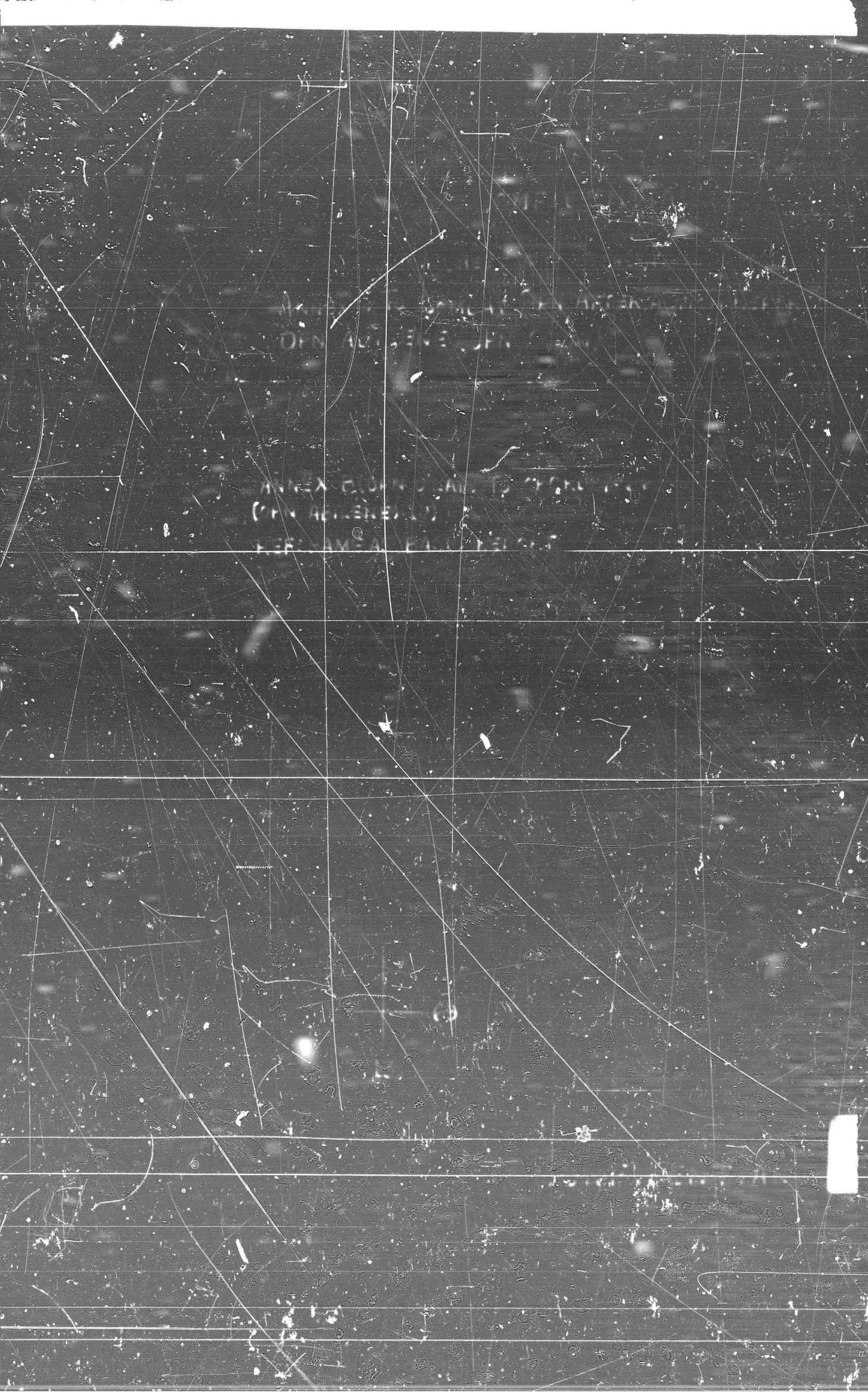
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SAS

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AD TEL. COUNCIL

LOG MAP CO

PLAN

PREP. DIV

16

REVISION

GENERAL

NAVAL SURF. FIRE LINE

LOG
BASE

ARTY
BASE

TEXAS

VICTORIA

ANNEX C TO COMBAT AFTER ACTION REPORT
OPN ABILENE (OPN O'LAY)

SHEET 5 OF 5 SHEETS

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

70
84

ARTY
BASE
2

UTAH

OBJ
2

ARTY
BASE
1

AS

OBJ
1

KAN

2

CONFIDENTIAL

28

ANNEX D
TACR REVISIONS

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ANNEX D TO C
ACTION REPORT
REVISED TAC
SHEET 1 OF 1

40

00

QUEENSLAND

TAOR I/RAR

1

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ANNEX D TO COMBAT OPN AFTER
ACTION REPORT, OPN ABILENE
REVISED TAOR
SHEET 1 OF 3 SHEETS

SLAND

RAR

COLORADO

58

86

TAOR. I/PAR

TEXAS

CONFIDENTIAL

TEXAS

AREA
DONNA

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

ANNEX D TO COMBAT OPN AFTER ACTION REPORT
OPN ABILENE
REVISED TAOR
SHEET 2 OF 3 SHEETS

AREA
DONNA

TEXAS



CONFIDENTIAL

PORT

LA
MNA

KANSAS

CONFIDENTIAL

Anti
Act
Re
SH

70

LZ BUTTE

06J
3

MONTANA

LZ BILLINGS

CONFIDENTIAL

ANNEX D TO COMBAT OPN AFTER
ACTION REPORT, OPN ABILENE
REVISED TAOR
SHEET 3 OF 3 SHEETS

2

HAWAII

06J
3

MONTANA

LZ BILLINGS

PZ TOPEKA

LZ PARK

KANSAS

CONFIDENTIAL

PZ SALINA

HAWAII

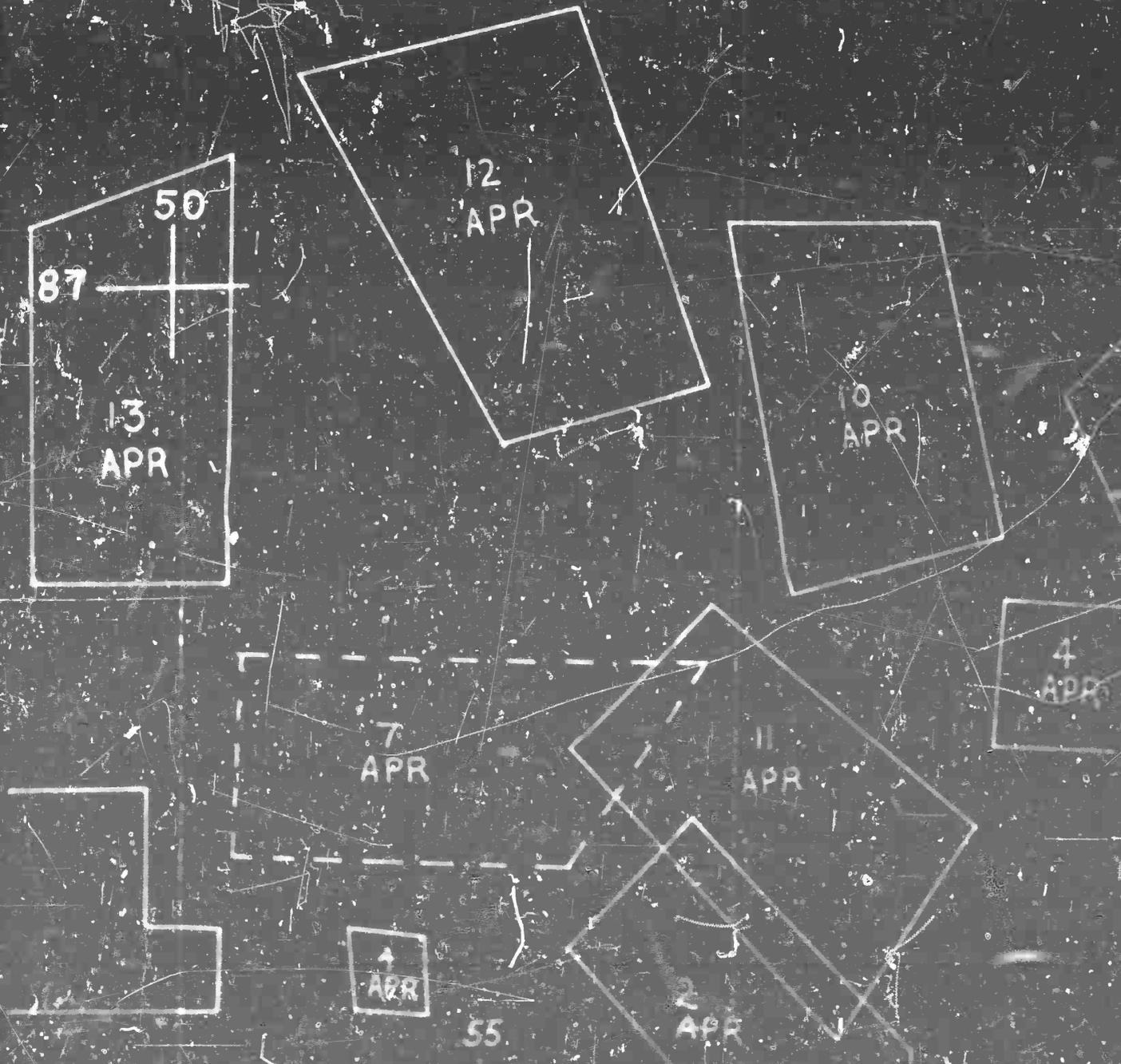
3
HOPEKA
LZ PARK

SAS CONFIDENTIAL

ANNEX E TO COMBAT OPERATIO
OPERATION ABILENE
PSY OPS OVERLAY
SHEET 1 OF 2 SHEETS



ANNEX E TO COMBAT OPERATIONS AFTER ACTION REPORT
OPERATION ABILENE
SY OPS OVERLAY
SHEET 1 OF 2 SHEETS



12
APR

50

87

13
APR

7
APR

4
APR

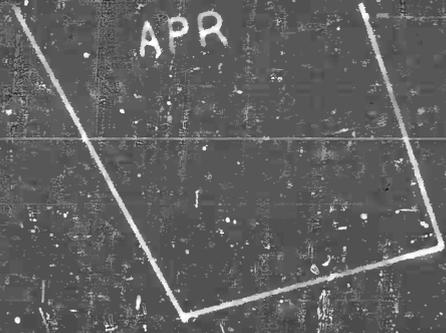
APR

4
APR

55

76

— FLOWN
- - - CANCELLED



— FLOWN
— CANCELLED

ANNEX E
OPN ABILENE

SHEET 2 OF 2 SHEETS

1



8
APR

70
85

5
APR

3
APR

4
APR

8
APR

10
APR

2

3

70

85

5
APR

5
APR

68

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ANNEX E
PSYOPS LIAISON DROP AREAS

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ANNEX F
AFTER ACTION REPORT 2D BRIGADE

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DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
HEADQUARTERS 2D BRIGADE 1ST INFANTRY DIVISION
APO U.S. FORCES 96345

26 April 1966

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SUBJECT: Combat After Action Report (MACV/RCS/J3/32)(Operation ABILENE)(U)

THRU: Commanding General
1st Infantry Division
ATTN: AVID-T
APO U.S. Forces 96345

TO: Commander
US Military Assistance Command, Vietnam
ATTN: J321
APO U.S. Forces 96243

1. (U) NAME AND TYPE OF OPERATION: Operation ABILENE, a Brigade Search and Destroy operation.
2. (U) DATES OF OPERATION: Operation ABILENE began 301245H March 1966 and terminated 141755H April 1966.
3. (C) GENERAL: Operation ABILENE was initiated by 1st Infantry Division OPRD 7-66 dated 241200H March 1966. 2d Brigade OPRD 7-66 was published 281200H March 1966. The operation was conducted in PHUOC TUY and LONG KHANH Provinces of the 10th ARVN Division DTA. The tactical plan called for a series of heliborne assaults to be conducted over a wide area. The Brigade maintained a Rapid Reaction Force that would be employed in the event an element of the Brigade made contact with a major VC Force. The Direct Support Artillery Battalion provided continuous fire support. The operation was conducted in five distinct phases, each phase being initiated by a FRAO O, see para 6. The operation was conducted under 1st Infantry Division control in conjunction with the 3rd Brigade, 1st Infantry Division, which was conducting similar type operations in the same general area.

a. Reporting Officer: Colonel A.E. Milloy

b. Task Organisation: (Initial)

2/16 Inf: Lt Col W.S. Hathaway Commanding

2 ARVN Dog Teams

1/18 Inf: Lt Col K.R.M. Merton Commanding

2 ARVN Dog Teams

2/18 Inf: Lt Col N. McCrystal Commanding

2 ARVN Dog Teams

1/7 Arty (DS): Lt Col J. Fye Commanding

BRIGADE TROOPS:

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HHC 2d Bde
2d Plt 1st MP Co
2d Plt B Co 121st Sig. Bn
2d Plt 11th RRU
Recon Plt 1/18 Inf

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4. (C) INTELLIGENCE:

a. Available information prior to commencement of Operation ABILENE indicated that the VC had roughly two Battalions as well as many local guerrillas within the operational area. The VC 5th and 9th Regiments were both reported to be out of the operational area, but within reinforcement range. The VC local force Battalion 860 was reported generally in the center of the operational area.

b. Some of the more significant VC facilities uncovered during the operation includes:

(1) A large well made tunnel and bunker complex vic YS-359951. Destroyed.

(2) A large base camp vic YS375845. Camp contained 100 bunkers with overhead shelters, 430 trenches and buildings. Camp could hold 700-800 personnel. Destroyed.

(3) A large base camp/tunnel complex vic YS608824. The entire area was interwoven with tunnels and had approximately 12 large bunkers and many underground bomb shelters. The village had evidently been VC controlled and was later evacuated by ARVN. The tunnels and bunkers were destroyed, the village was scheduled for air strikes.

c. Significant Incidents:

(1) A recording was made of an intercepted Chinese message. The tape and information was processed through RRU channels. No significant intelligence information was obtained.

(2) A 2/16 Inf engaged an estimated VC platoon vic YS-525813. Many small squad and platoon sized units were encountered throughout the day (10 April) vic YS527814, YS547798, YS552818 and YS556926.

(3) C 2/15 Inf engaged an unknown number of VC vic YS535-856. This engagement developed into the most significant contact during the operation. There were 41 VC KIA (BC) and an additional 50 VC KIA (probable). VCC and documents captured indicate that this was VC Bn D800, a main force Bn subordinate to the VC 9th Regiment. The main force Regiments 9th and 5th that normally operate in this area were out of the province prior to commencement of the operation, however, the 9th Regiment was reported moving back into the area at the termination of Operation ABILENE.

d. General: Base camps and supply facilities were generally found near streams. There were few booby traps encountered during this operation, probably due to the fact that the area previously had been considered safe by the VC, and few operations had penetrated the HOT DINH SECRET ZONE.

5. (C) MISSION: 2d Brigade conducts airmobile assault on designated LZs on 30 March 1966. Attacks and destroys VC Forces and base camps in assigned areas of operations and moves to conduct search and destroy operations in subsequent areas of operations.

6. (C) CONCEPT OF OPERATIONS:

a. Maneuver: This operation was conducted in five distinct phases, each phase being initiated by a FRAO O:

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PHASE I: FRAG 0 1 to OPORD 7-66 (Operation ABILENE) dated 291400H Mar 66. On D-day H-hour, the Bde conducted a 3 Bn airmobile assault on LZs NORMAN and NATHAN. Tac air and Artillery were on call. The assault included a Battery of Arty landing on LZ NORMAN to support assault on LZ NATHAN. Upon completion of the air assault, 2 inf bns attacked to the SW to clear objectives NANCY, NADINE and NELLIE, while the 3rd inf bn conducted search and destroy operations in vic of LZ NORMAN. A land tail consisting of the Hqs elements and DS Arty Bn (-) linked up with the Reserve Bn on LZ NORMAN. Phase I of the operation terminated when the objectives had been cleared.

PHASE II: FRAG 0 2 to OPORD 7-66 (Operation ABILENE) dated 011500H Apr 66. At 021100H Apr, the Bde conducted an airmobile assault on LZs TOM and TERRY, utilizing 3 Inf Bns and one Arty Btry (-). This assault was supported by Tac air, Arty and Naval Gun Fire. Upon completion of the assault, 2 inf bns attacked to the SW destroying VC forces and base camps in zone. The Bde Hqs elements and Direct Support Artillery Bn were relocated on LZ TERRY. This phase of the operation terminated at 061800H Apr, when the maneuver Bns were extracted from an LZ vic LONG TAN to LZ MIKE.

PHASE III: A Verbal Order issued on 7 Apr, initiated this phase of the operation. 2 inf bns, supported by Provincial National Policemen, conducted a village search operation along Highway 2 while the 3rd inf bn reinforced with a cav bat cleared the area east of BINH GIA in preparation for the next phase of the operation. This phase terminated at 081800H Apr, when the inf bn clearing the area arrived in position just south of THUA TICH.

PHASE IV: FRAG 0 3 to OPORD 7-66 (Operation ABILENE) dated 071900H Apr 66. One infantry battalion operated in separate company size zones along stream lines in Area A and B, one infantry battalion reinforced with an artillery battery, conducted an air mobile assault on LZ WILLD, followed by company sized operations in Area C and P, while the 3rd infantry battalion reinforced with a cav troop conducted a village search of THUA TICH and secured the Brigade Base Area.

PHASE V: FRAG 0 4 to OPORD 7-66 (Operation ABILENE) dated 101700H Apr 66. One infantry battalion was extracted to the Brigade Base Camp. One infantry battalion continued operations in Area L, M and C and secured Route PURPLE in Area C for convoy movement. The Brigade received OPCON of an infantry battalion from 3rd Brigade. This unit conducted airmobile assault on an LZ vic COURTESY and conducted search and destroy operations in Area L and secured Route PURPLE in zone to assist passage of Division convoy. The 3rd infantry battalion conducted search and destroy operations in Areas N, O and P and secured Route PURPLE in zone to assist passage of Division convoy. This phase of the operation terminated with the extraction of all elements from the operational area on 14 Apr 66.

b. Fire Support: Fire Support was provided by Artillery, Tac air, UTTs and Naval Gun Fire. These elements were used to prepare LZs, provide on call fires, interdict VC concentrations and route of withdrawal. The Direct Support Artillery Battalion was reinforced with either a 155mm or 8" Btry during most of the operation. Naval Gun Fire was coordinated and controlled by an Angloic Team attached to the Bde. The Brigade maintained at least one helicopter Fire Team on standby at the Brigade CP to escort resupply and Dustoff missions, provide air cap for convoy moves, perform armed recon and conduct experimental night recon flights with the aid of Starlight Scopes.

7. (C) EXECUTIVE:

a. Chronology:

25 Mar - 2d Brigade received 1st Infantry Division OPORD 7-66 and began planning for Operation ABILENE.

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28 Mar - 2d Brigade published OPORD 7-66 (Operation ABILENE).

29 Mar - 2d Brigade published FRAG 0 1 to OPORD 7-66 (Operation ABILENE). Vehicle elements of the Brigade CP rendezvoused with the 1st Infantry Division Convoy vic of Highway 1A and Highway 15 and prepared for subsequent move to operational area.

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30 Mar - At 300900H, 2/18 Infantry departed their base camp arriving at PZ vic BEARCAT at 301045H. At 300945H, the Brigade CP and vehicle elements crossed the SP enroute to the operational area. At 301115H, 2/18 Infantry departed Battalion base camp arriving at PZ at 301145H. At 301215H, Pathfinders landed on LZ NORMAN. At 301245H, 1st lift of 2/16 Infantry arrived LZ NORMAN. The LZ was cold and dry. At 301315H, remainder of 2/16 and initial elements of 1/18 Infantry arrived LZ NORMAN. At 301330H, A 1/7 Artillery arrived LZ NORMAN. At 301345H, remainder of 1/18 Infantry landed LZ NORMAN. At 301450H, 1st lift of 2/18 Infantry arrived LZ NATHAN. There was no contact on the LZ, however, the lift aircraft received fire upon departure which was suppressed by Fire Team. At 301530H, the remainder of 2/18 Infantry arrives LZ NATHAN. Upon landing, 1/18 and 2/18 Infantry began moving to the SW in their respective zones. At 301540H, the Brigade CP Convoy closed LZ NORMAN. Contact during the day was light. The maneuver elements found and destroyed several small bunkers. Late in the evening, 1/18 Infantry killed 2 VC capturing 2 small arms and a crossbow. The Brigade Base, 2/16 Infantry, found a large tunnel complex in vic of LZ NORMAN, the tunnel was turned over to the Tunnel Rats who subsequently destroyed the complex. The villagers living near the tunnel complex were interrogated, subjected to a Psy War program and treated by a medical patrol. During the night, the maneuver Battalions established company sized perimeters and ambushed extensively.

31 Mar - The 1/18 and 2/18 Infantry continued to attack to the SW toward objectives NELLIE, NANCY and NADINE. Contact was light with the maneuver elements encountering only light scattered small arms fire. The 2/18 Infantry located a large recently occupied base camp (700-800 person capacity) with 100 air raid type bunkers and 20 permanent type buildings. The buildings were destroyed. Documents and F. Chicom grenades found in the camp were evacuated. 2/18 was air lifted to an LZ about 6 km north of LZ NATHAN and began patrolling to the north. The 2/16 Inf, Brigade Rapid Reaction Force, patrolling to the west of LZ NATHAN, apprehended 14 VCS. During the hours of darkness, the maneuver units established company sized bases from which they sent out night patrols.

1 Apr - The 1/18 Infantry continued to move to the SW direction while the 2/18 Infantry moved to NW. C 2/18 Infantry moved to an LZ and was extracted to the Brigade Base at 011445H. Brigade trains departed Brigade base camp (BEARCAT) at 011445H and closed the Division Logistic base at 011445H. During the day, the maneuver elements exchanged fire with several small groups of VC. One US slightly wounded. An element of 1/4 Cav received fire on Route PURPLE. A Co and Recon Plt 2/16 Infantry were dispatched to the site. Recon 2/16 made contact with 4 VC in the vic of the ambush. The VC were exchanged and the VC fled. One Plt of A 2/16 stayed behind and ambushed the area, during the night while the remainder of the Rapid Reaction Force returned to the Brigade Base. An extension of the tunnel complex found earlier in the vic of the Brigade base was located and scheduled for destruction on 2 April. During the day, 2/18 Inf located fresh entrenchments, destroyed an inoperative tractor, a 1/4 ton trailer and a small base camp. The maneuver Battalions established company sized bases at dark in the vic of PZs from which a mobile assault operations were launched on 2 Apr.

2 Apr - Brigade conducted a 1 Battalion airmobile assault on 3 LZs, utilizing Tac air, Artillery and Naval Gun Fire for LZ preparations. The operation was initiated when the 1/7 Artillery (-) reinforced with 1 Battery of 8/6 Artillery, moved to a location along Route PURPLE from which it could support LZ TERRY. The Brigade CP vehicles aimed

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the Tac CP, departed for a new area at 020800H. At 021107H, following an Arty and Tac air preparation, the 1/18 Inf landed in two lifts on LZ TERRY. There was no contact and the unit minus one company, which was utilized to secure LZ TERRY until the arrival of the 2/18 Inf attacked to the SW. At 020830H, one light Btry 1/7 Arty and the Tac CP landed LZ TERRY. The 2/16 Inf conducted an airmobile assault on LZ TOM following Arty, Tac air and Naval Gun Fire preparation. There was no contact on the LZ. The Bn closed on the LZ at 021325H and immediately began attacking to the SW. The 2/18 Inf, Bde RRF, closed on LZ TERRY at 021420H, utilizing a combination of CH-47 and HU-1D air support. The company from the 1/18 Inf, that had been securing LZ TERRY, was released to the 1/18 at that time. At 021430H, the 2/28 Inf was placed under OPCON 2d Bde. The 2/28 Inf made an airmobile assault on an LZ vic YS580-700 following a Tac air and Arty preparation. The Bn closed at 021637H and took up blocking positions to the north along the river vic of the LZ. During the afternoon, the maneuver Bns met light resistance. The 1/18 Inf killed a VC attempting to escape from a small base camp they had located. The 2/18 Inf RRF found approximately 65 freshly dug graves about 1 km east of LZ TERRY. Subsequent investigation revealed the occupants of the graves to be Vietnamese civilians. The 2 maneuver Bns closed into company sized perimeters at dark while the 2/28 Inf continued to block to the north.

3 Apr - The 2/16 and 1/18 Inf continued to attack to the SW in zone while the 2/28 Inf continued to block along the 2/16 Inf southern boundary. The action during the day was characterized by almost continuous small engagements with the enemy. Helicopters supporting the Bde drew fire on 7 occasions. On one occasion, the VC engaged a Fire Team from the 128th Avn Co which resulted in 2 VC KIA (BC). During the day, the 1/18 Inf killed one VC, with weapon and destroyed 2 base camps. The 2/16 Inf located and destroyed 200 tons of rice, a large VC base camp (probably a training center) and killed 1 VC. The 2/18 Inf located several small base camps with small amounts of rice and many documents. The airborne Arty Observer engaged a group of VC with Artillery resulting in 1 VC KIA (BC). At approximately noon, the RRU Detachment with the 2/16 Inf, intercepted a radio transmission in a foreign language (later identified as Chinese) on an azimuth of 270 degrees. The intercepted station was under attack at the time of the interception. A Bde Fac at the same time was conducting an airstrike on an mountain which plotted on the azimuth the RRU had reported. Continuous fires consisting of Arty, Tac air, Naval Gun Fire and UTT was placed on the suspected transmitter site, while a major position (Bn (-)) of the RRF Battalion was alerted and moved by helicopter to a blocking position to the south of the suspected transmitter location.

4 Apr - The 1/18 Inf continued to attack to the SW while the other maneuver Bns set up blocking positions and patrolled extensively in order to prevent escape of the VC. B 1/4 Cav was placed under OPCON 2d Bde and set up blocking positions south of LONG TAN Village. The action during the day was again characterized by short engagements with small VC units, which resulted in 2 VC KIA (BC) and 1 VCC and 5 VC WIA. Elements of the Bde destroyed 6 base camps including one which contained a printing press, a PA set and a Switch board. The Bde destroyed 665 tons of rice and one ton of salt, while capturing a rice separating machine, 50 Chicom grenades and 12 75mm Chicom RR rds. A Starlight mission flew during the night sighted camp fires which were engaged with arty fire.

5 Apr - Action during the day was limited to a few short engagements with small guerrilla units. During the night, 2/18 Inf continued to ambush extensively from its blocking positions. The 2/28 Inf was placed under OPCON 3rd Bde at 050845H. The 2/16 Inf moved its patrol base 2 km to the SW. Both the 2/16 and 2/18 Inf continued to conduct saturation patrols during daylight hours and ambush extensively after dark. The 1/18 Inf conducted a detailed search of the mountain that was suspected of containing a VC Hqs with negative results. The 1/18 Inf was extracted to the Bde base late in the afternoon and became the Brigade Rapid Reaction Force. At the same time, B 2/18 Inf

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was released from the RRF Mission and returned to Battalion control. C 1/4 Cav continued its screening mission south and west of LONG TAN. 20 tons of rice, 3 base camps and a way station were located and destroyed. 2 VC tractors and trailers were captured and 1 VC was killed (BC).

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6 Apr - Action during the day was limited to a few exchanges of SA fire with the exception of A 2/16 who received 29 rds of 82mm mortar and RR fire during early morning hours which resulted in 2 friendly KIA and 3 WIA. C 1/4 Cav continued to block, patrol and screen south and west of LONG TAN while the 2/16 Inf and 2/18 Inf moved SW toward LONG TAN. Upon arrival at LONG TAN, the Battalions took up blocking positions north and east of town while ARVN elements completed evacuation of LONG TAN Village. The 2/16 and 2/18 Inf were extracted to Brigade base late in the afternoon to rest and prepare for future operations. During the day, elements of the Brigade destroyed 105 tons of rice and 8.5 tons of salt, while killing one VC (BC) and capturing 105 bolts of plastic cloth. B 1/4 Cav was returned to control of 1/4 Cav at 061955H.

7 Apr - The elements of the Brigade rested and prepared for future operations. 2/16 Inf plus Btry A 1/7 Artillery, were repositioned at BINH BA. The 2/16 Inf launched a village search from that location on 8 April. Recon 1/18 provided security for a Engineer detail erecting a bridge 8 km east of BINH GIA. First Platoon C 1/4 Cav was placed under OPCON 2d Bde at 072100H and assigned a security mission at the bridge being erected by 1st Engineer Battalion.

8 Apr - During the night of 7-8 Apr, 2/16 and 2/18 Inf surrounded 4 villages along Highway 2. At first light, the units in conjunction with ARVN personnel, conducted a detailed search of the villages. A total of 5 confirmed VC and 28 suspects were captured as a result of this operation. The 1/18 Infantry cleared the road east of BINH GIA to a position from which a search of THUA TICH Village was launched on 9 April. During the day, the Bn found and neutralized a command detonated mine and met scattered resistance. During the night of 7-8 Apr, the Brigade base received 24 rds of 81mm mortar fire with insignificant damage or casualties. Counter battery radar was unable to detect the location of the enemy mortars, however, artillery was placed on all suspected mortar sites within range of the Brigade location with unknown results. B 1/4 Cav was placed under OPCON 2d Brigade at 081500H and was attached to the 1/18 Infantry. The Troop took up a position 1 km east of the bridge. First Platoon C 1/4 Cav attached to 1/18, continued the security mission at the bridge while C 1/18 Infantry conducted extensive ambush patrols in that vicinity. Late in the afternoon, the Brigade CP and 1/7 Artillery Battalion (-) reinforced, displaced to a location 2 km west of the bridge. A pilot from the Avn Section of the Brigade was slightly wounded while flying a Recon mission in vic of B 1/4 Cav.

9 Apr - During the morning hours, the 1/18 Infantry with B 1/4 Cav attached, cleared the road to THUA TICH and conducted a village search. The Battalion reverted to Brigade Rapid Reaction Force when the Brigade CP and 1/7 Artillery closed into new location vic THUA TICH. 2/18 Infantry and one Battery 1/7 Artillery, were lifted from PZ MIKE and conducted an airmobile assault on LZ WILLIE. After the clearing of LZ WILLIE, 2/18 Infantry initiated a search and destroy operation to the west from that location. PZ MIKE was secured by A 2/16 Infantry during the lift. 2/16 Infantry initiated search operations into Areas A and B, concentrating on the stream lines in those areas. During the day, elements of the Brigade engaged several small groups of VC units, destroyed 9.15 tons of rice, 3 base camps and a SA factory; captured 14 small arms, 2 VC and 11 VCS, while killing 1 VC (BC) and 1 VC (probable). First Platoon C 1/4 Cav was returned to control of parent unit at 091130H.

10 Apr - The 2/16 and 2/18 Infantry continued to conduct company sized clearing operations in zone while the 1/18 Infantry remained as Brigade Rapid Reaction Force and patrolled extensively in THUA TICH area. Recon Platoon 2/16 Infantry assumed security of the bridge when C 1/18 returned to Brigade base. The maneuver elements of the

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Brigade engaged numerous small groups of VC during the day resulting in 9 VC KIA (BC), 2 VC KIA (Probable), 1 VCC, 5 SA recovered and 3 base camps destroyed while Friendly forces had 1 KIA and 6 WIA.

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11 Apr - 1/18 Infantry was extracted from the Operational Area to its base camp vic BINH HOA, utilizing CH-47 aircraft. At 11-0900H, 1/26 Infantry was placed under OPCON 2d Brigade and lifted to an LZ vic COURTENAY Airfield. B 1/26 Infantry, Brigade Rapid Reaction Force, secured the LZ while HHC 2/18 Infantry and C 1/7 Arty were extracted from LZ WILLIE to vic COURTENAY Airfield. The 1/26 Inf (-) conducted search and destroy operations east of Highway 2 into Area L. 2/18 Inf (-) continued to move in a westerly direction with negligible contact during the day. The 2/16 Inf continued to move NW and clear the stream lines in Area A and B. The Battalion engaged several small groups of VC throughout the day. At 111355H, C 2/16 Infantry engaged a Platoon of VC, killing 5 (BC), while having 2 US KIA and 12 US KIA. The VC broke contact. At 111735H, the company began receiving mortar fire and heavy automatic weapons fire from all directions. B 2/16 with the Battalion Command Group and B 2/18 Infantry attached to the 2/16 Infantry at 111800H began moving to reinforce C 2/16 Infantry. A continuous barrage of Artillery Fire was placed around the C 2/16 Infantry during the battle, inflicting heavy casualties on the enemy. The VC broke contact at 111930H. Air Force flare ships maintained continuous illumination of the battle area throughout the night while Artillery continued to place concentrated fires 25 meters from the company perimeter and interdict the VC route of withdrawal.

12 Apr - B 2/18 and B 2/16 Infantry were in position to reinforce C 2/16 during the night of 11-12 Apr, but waited outside of C 2/16 perimeter until the 1st light. At 120700H, a CH-47 lowered medical personnel to treat casualties and a Engineer Team to clear an LZ into the C 2/16 battle area. At 111300H, C 2/16 was extracted by air to BINH BA where they were further extracted to Battalion base camp at BEARCAT. The VC suffered 41 KIA (BC) and 50 VC (probable) in this encounter. Friendly casualties were 34 KIA and 72 WIA. The battle field was policed and B 2/16 and B 2/18 moved to the NE in an effort to locate the remnants of the VC Battalion. The 2/18 (-) moved south to Area C in an attempt to locate the retreating VC. 1/26 Inf (-) moved into blocking positions along Highway 2 in Area C. At 121645H, C 1/2 Infantry reinforced with a Cav Plat was placed under OPCON 2d Brigade. The Company was placed under OPCON 1/26 Infantry with a mission of blocking to the east in the area above BINH GIA. There was only minor contact during the day that resulted in 5 VC KIA (BC) and 2 VC KIA (prob).

13 Apr - 2/16 and 2/18 Infantry continued to move to the west searching in zone. 1/26 Infantry continued to block along Highway 2. At 131330H, C 1/2 Infantry was returned to parent unit control. The Brigade CP, 1/7 Artillery (-) and B 1/4 Cav displaced to vic COURTENAY Airfield. The 2/16 and 2/18 Infantry closed on Highway 2 and took up positions in zone. The Bde prepared to clear Highway 2 and assist passage of the Division Convoy on 14 Apr. At the same time the Battalions were moving into position, B 2/18 Infantry and A 2/16 Infantry were returned to control of parent unit. B 1/4 Cav was returned to control of 1/4 Cav at 131834H. 1/7 Artillery (-) moved into a position west of Highway 2 and 4 km north of COURTENAY. During the day, contact was negligible, however, a great deal of blood and many bloody bandages found along trails indicated that the VC engaged by C 2/16 Infantry on 11 Apr were carrying a large number of wounded VC.

14 Apr - The Battalions along Highway 2 cleared that road in zone early in the morning in preparation for the passage of the Division Convoy. Brigade trains elements from BINH BA began moving by road at 140840H with Brigade CP elements joining the convoy at 141100H. The Infantry Battalions were assembled at individual PZs and moved to their respective base camps, utilizing a combination of aircraft. C 1/7 Artillery was left in position to support the extraction operation, upon completion of the extraction, the Battery was returned to BEARCAT base camp by CH-47 helicopters, closing at 141745H.

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b. Employment of Rapid Reaction Force and Resources:

64 (1) On 6 Apr, the Brigade utilized the Rapid Reaction Force to make an air assault and assume blocking position in the vic of a suspected major VC Hqs which one of the maneuver Battalions was assaulting. The Rapid Reaction Force was alerted and moved while Tac air, Artillery, Naval Gun Fire and UTTs kept the suspected location under continuous fire.

(2) On 11 Apr, C 2/16 Infantry became heavily engaged with a VC Battalion. The Brigade immediately moved B 2/16 and B 2/18 Infantry to reinforce the embattled company while Artillery placed a continuous band of fire around C 2/16. The 1/26 Infantry was moved into blocking positions while 2/18 Infantry initiated search operations for the retreating enemy.

8. (C) SUPPORTING FORCES:

a. Artillery: The Direct Support Artillery Battalion was reinforced with a Battery of 155mm or 8" Artillery throughout most of the operation. The vast area in which the Brigade operated dictated that a 105 Battery be placed in Direct Support of a maneuver Battalion on several occasions. This technique allowed the Brigade to engage targets over an extended area.

b. Naval Gun Fire Support: Naval Gun Fire was employed on two occasions. The first when it fired LZ preparation during Phase II and the second when it fired in conjunction with the Brigade Direct Support Artillery on a suspected VC Hqs while the Rapid Reaction Force was being committed. Ground elements entering the impact area after the preparation reported that the target was well covered by preparatory fires.

c. Air Force:

(1) Tac air was employed on both preplanned and immediate targets. The Brigade ALO processed all air requests for the Brigade and encountered no problems on obtaining Tac air support. The results of the Tac air are difficult to evaluate as ground troops did not enter all the areas struck. Delays in planned LZs time, made it difficult for the Air Force to prepare their portion of the LZ with appropriate clearance. Most of the delays were due to unavailability of aircraft for lift. This difficulty could be overcome by providing more advance notice when lift aircraft will be late. The Air Force encountered difficulty in striking known and suspected VC installations prior to the Brigade moving into an area of operation. This problem can be overcome by assigning the Brigade responsibility for the next area of operations one or two days prior to the Brigade committing troops into the new area of operations.

(2) Medical Evacuation: Air Force rescue helicopters with winch capabilities were utilized on 2 occasions. The crews of these aircraft were responsive, cooperative and professional in the services rendered.

(3) Illumination: The mission of providing continuous illumination during the night of 11-12 Apr, was assigned to the Air Force. It was accomplished using 5 US Air Force and VNAF Aircraft. There were no language problems encountered with the VN. Ground haze had obscured the ground and made it difficult for the flare ship to maintain orientation. A technique of firing an occasional round of Artillery illumination to assist the flare ship in maintaining its position on station was used effectively.

d. Cav: Cav elements were placed under OPCON 2d Brigade several times. These forces were effectively used on road clearing, escort, and blocking missions. The Cav elements experienced difficulty in negotiating jungle terrain and for the most part were confined to roads and trails.

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e. Army Aviation: The techniques of stationing lift helicopters and Fire Teams at the Brigade base overnight provided immediate response to any requirement and developed a closer working relationship with air crews and Brigade personnel while eliminating the aircraft flight time consumed by the aircraft going to their home station every night and returning the following morning.

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9. (C) RESULTS:

a. Enemy Losses:

KIA (BC): 67	Plastic Ground Cloth: 105 bolts plus 700ft
KIA (Prob): 61	Grease Pump: 1
VCC: 5	Barbed Wire: 4 roles
VCS: 67	Small Arms: 32 (and 2 M3 Barrles)
Base Camps: 33	Portable Radio: 1
Wells: 3	Cross Bows: 2
Bunkers: 223	Telephone Wire: 1 km
Bunker Complexes: 2	Grenades: 91 Chicom
Individual Tunnels: 10	Booby Traps: 9
Way Stations: 5	75mm RR Rds: 12
Rice: 845.115 tons	81mm Mort Rds: 14
Salt: 9.476 tons	Rice Separating Machine: 1
Sugar: 300lbs	Tractors & Trailers: 3 ea
Peanuts: 198lbs	Ox Carts: 1
TA 312 Telephone: 3	Cloth: 100m
EEB Telephone: 1	Compressor: 1
POL Tanker: 1	Miscellaneous clothing, medical supplies,
Switch Board: 1	Tools, documents and livestock.
SA Ammo: 3,122 rds	

b. Friendly Losses:

KHA: 39
WHA: 97
MIA: 0

c. Other: One USAF Para Medic was killed by SA fire.

10. (C) ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS:

a. Personnel:

(1) Strength:

Unit:	Rear Detachments:	Combat Strengths:					
		Prior to Opns:			After Opns:		
		O	WO	EM	O	WO	EM
RHC 2d Bde	102 to 109	27	5	112	26	6	118
2/16 Inf	147 to 197	34	1	749	29	1	719
1/18 Inf	182 to 203	34	2	693	36	2	843
2/18 Inf	130 to 202	33	2	690	33	2	801
1/7 Arty	73 to 87	39	5	432	43	3	429

b. Administrative Plans: Administrative plans and procedures continue to be adequate.

c. Logistics: The Brigade Trains consisted of Brigade S-4, C 1st Medical Battalion, Contact Team B 701st Maintenance Battalion and attached Battalion Trains:

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(1) Medical: The concept of the forward clearing station consisting of a Surgical and Treatment Section of C 1st Med Bn and a small section of each Infantry Battalion aid station, was extremely successful in supporting the Brigade. All casualties were initially evacuated to this forward clearing station for triage and emergency treatment; also definite medical treatment for minor wounds was performed. Only those casualties with serious wounds were evacuated out of the Brigade area. A Dustoff helicopter was on a standby basis, 24 hours daily and provided very rapid and efficient evacuation of casualties.

(2) Maintenance: Contact Teams of Signal, Automotive, Armament and Small Arms adequately fulfilled all repair requirements.

(3) Supply: Prescribed loads were adequate.

(4) Transportation: Once the Division Logistical Base was established, resupply within the Brigade was conducted utilizing air delivery techniques. The Division conducted convoys at the beginning and end of the operation were led by a armored security force. The march units following the security force experienced considerable difficulty in maintaining the rate of march set by the security force. Slowing the security force or giving the following march units a fixed rate of march would correct this difficulty.

(5) Class III: The aircraft refueling maintained by the Support Battalion was operated during daylight hours only. This caused a hardship among the Brigade S4 personnel who had to refuel Brigade aircraft that were being utilized on night missions.

d. Communications:

(1) During this operation, the method for moving was to shut down and move all elements at the same time, rather than normal jump or echelon method. This method caused longer circuit outage, but afforded greater economy of force, since no additional security force was required to protect the rear echelon or clear the road a second time.

(2) Circuit outage was excessive during the first half of the operation. The time required to get from one carrier to another carrier was average, but from subscriber to subscriber, took much too long. Later in the operation, this was greatly reduced. The reduction in time required to re-establish circuits after a move can be directly linked to two facts (1) all operators had gained experience and (2) circuit patching was less complicated and much more direct.

e. Psy War:

(1) Psy War effort included use of helicopter for radio appeals, aircraft for dissemination of printed matter and ground vehicle for audio appeals and visual contact.

(2) Psy War personnel accompanied the Civic Action Team on visits to civilian communities and succeeded in establishing a friendly atmosphere. U.S. aims and reasons for being in Vietnam were explained to villagers.

(3) Evacuation of THUA TICH (YS616811) to Government controlled area was assisted by Psy War Team working in conjunction with the District Chief.

(4) A message from the Province Chief of PHUOC TUY Province to the villagers was taped and broadcast throughout the Provincial area.

(5) Four loudspeaker missions were flown for a total of 6 hours and 15 minutes broadcast time.

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(6) Leaflets dropped on Operation ABILENE were as follows:

<u>TYPE:</u>	<u>AMOUNT:</u>
JUSPAO Safe Conduct Passes	77,000
#45	55,700
#146	40,000
#092	15,000
#103	10,000
#148	7,000
#115	5,000
#SP688	<u>400</u>
	210,100 Total

(7) Areas of drop and type leaflet used are on file at this Headquarters.

f. Civil Affairs: During the operation the Brigade Civic Action Team accomplished the following tasks:

(1) Medical treatment administered to 259 persons throughout operational area. One boy with a broken leg was evacuated to PHUOC THY Province hospital. A tour of local health facilities was conducted in every area visited and advice given on sanitation, cleanliness and storage procedures. Information on how to request medical supplies was also given.

(2) Existing facilities were repaired where feasible. A generator providing electricity for a church was repaired and a village gate and fence was fixed.

(3) Ten cases of soap were distributed to villages in the area; instructions on use and sanitation also rendered.

(4) Civic Action Team toured village defense installations and offered advice on constructions of fortifications.

(5) Six cases of assorted foodstuffs and 54 gallons of soybean oil were distributed in destitute areas.

(6) Assisted in evacuation of 45 families in THUA TICH to Government controlled area. Transportation and escort was provided by Brigade and Division. One family inadvertently missed the convoy and was airlifted to join their neighbors. This action provided for the relocation of one entire hamlet from a Viet Cong area of influence into a Government controlled new life hamlet.

11. (C) SPECIAL EQUIPMENT AND TECHNIQUES:

a. The requirement to render medical aid to a large number of casualties in a remote jungle area without suitable LZ was satisfied by having medical and Engineer personnel descend a ladder suspended from a CH-47 helicopter. The medical personnel immediately began treating casualties while the Engineers prepared a suitable LZ for extraction of the casualties. This techniques could also be used to reinforce an engaged unit by dropping troops a few hundred meters from the engagement.

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b. The Brigade S-2 initiated a nightly VR program throughout the Brigade Area of Operations, utilizing Starlight Scope. A knowledgeable person from the S-2 Section, who could grant permission to engage targets, accompanied the person operating the Starlight Scope. Upon identifying a target, the person operating the scope would mark the target with tracer ammunition and/or WP Grenade and trip flares for a helicopter Fire Team that was following the Starlight aircraft by approximately 1,000 meters. Air and Artillery also were employed where feasible.

12. (C) COMMANDERS ANALYSIS:

a. A Major VC supply facility complex containing over 845 tons of rice, 9.5 tons of salt and other food commodities was located and destroyed. This contained enough rice to feed 7,300 men, VC Battalions for 1 year. A loss of this magnitude will have a serious effect on morale, create food shortages and reduce combat effectiveness of the VC forces in the area for a long period of time as well as necessitating higher VC tax thus serving to alienate civilians from the VC cause.

b. The Brigade assisted ARVN authorities in re-location of two villages during the course of Operation ABILENE. Returning these families to an area controlled by the Government which would deny the enemy a source of labor, taxes, food and recruits, as well as an audience for communist propaganda.

c. The VC propaganda and political effort in PHUOC TUY Province suffered at least a temporary set back when the Brigade captured a VC political headquarters and propaganda facility, destroying its reproduction equipment and supplies.

d. The knowledge of the terrain gained and contacts made with government officials in PHUOC TUY and LONG THANH Provinces, will be a valuable asset to the Brigade during future operations in this area.

e. In summary, the considerable loss of supplies, the destruction of 33 base camps, the temporary disruption of the Viet Cong political and military organizations of the area, and the Psychological impact (on friend, foe and neutral) of observing the military power of friendly forces ranging throughout the area at will is bound to have an adverse effect on enemy activities throughout PHUOC TUY Province for an extended period of time.

13. (C) CONCLUSIONS AND LESSONS LEARNED:

a. Search and destroy operations should be considered in two phases. The first phase to engage or drive out major VC forces. The second phase is a detailed search to locate and destroy VC facilities not found on the initial sweep. Time phasing should be flexible enough to allow a unit sufficient time to completely destroy all VC facilities.

b. The tactic of maneuvering small elements along stream lines has been extremely effective. When utilizing this method, it is essential that a reaction force, capable of reinforcing any element, is available within a reasonable length of time.

c. Generally the size of areas capable of supporting vehicular traffic during the rainy season are extremely small. This fact dictates that commanders reduce to the absolute minimum number of vehicles that accompany the land tail convoys during this season.

d. The limited road network, condition and capacity of bridges and small areas that Artillery units must occupy, imposes a severe restriction on Artillery units. In view of the above restrictions, it will be necessary during the rainy season to move light Artillery units by air as a normal procedure.

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e. Employment of a starlight scope from a airborne platform provides a substantial amount of intelligence and serves to increase pressure on the enemy during the hours of darkness.

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FOR THE COMMANDER:

- 3 Inclosures:
1 - O/L-Phase I
2 - O/L-Phase II
3 - O/L-Phase III & IV

Edmund K. Daley Jr.
EDMUND K. DALEY JR.
Major, Infantry
Adjutant

DISTRIBUTION:

- 20 - G3, 1st Inf Div
1 - 2/16 Inf
1 - 1/18 Inf
1 - 2/18 Inf
1 - 1/7 Arty
1 - B 1/4 Cav
6 - S3 Files

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PHASE II OPN ABILENE

BINH GIA

LZ MIKE

LZ TERRY

BRIDGE

LZ TOM

LZ 2/28

LANG TAN

INCLOSURE 2

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

1

PHASE III - IV

ROUTE PURPLE

11 APR
1/26



COURTENAY

N

C

A

B

2/18

2/18
2/16

12/14

1/500

50
02

02

13-14 APR

14 APR

6

0.000

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0.000

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0.000

CONFIDENTIAL

PHASE III-IV OPN ABILENE

13-14 APR

O

13-14 APR

P

Z

A

B

Y

ROI

N

3-14 APR

O

2/18
2/16

C/A
B/A
26

14 APR

COURTENAY

C

131400
12/16
11
26

B 2/16
B 2/18

C 2/16 EXT 2A

A

12-14

131500

12
2/18
2/16

B

102000

B 102000

26

A 2/16
011000

102000

C 1/2

A 7
8-14 APR

BINH GIA

PZ 1 MIKE

INCLOSURE 3

CONFIDENTIAL

14 APR
O

P

Z

B 2/6
B 2/18
C 2/6 EXT 12 APR

A

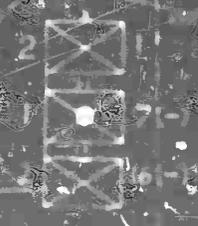


B

Y

THUA
TICH

GIA
PZ MIKE



NIGHT

X

BRIDGE

SURE
CONFIDENTIAL

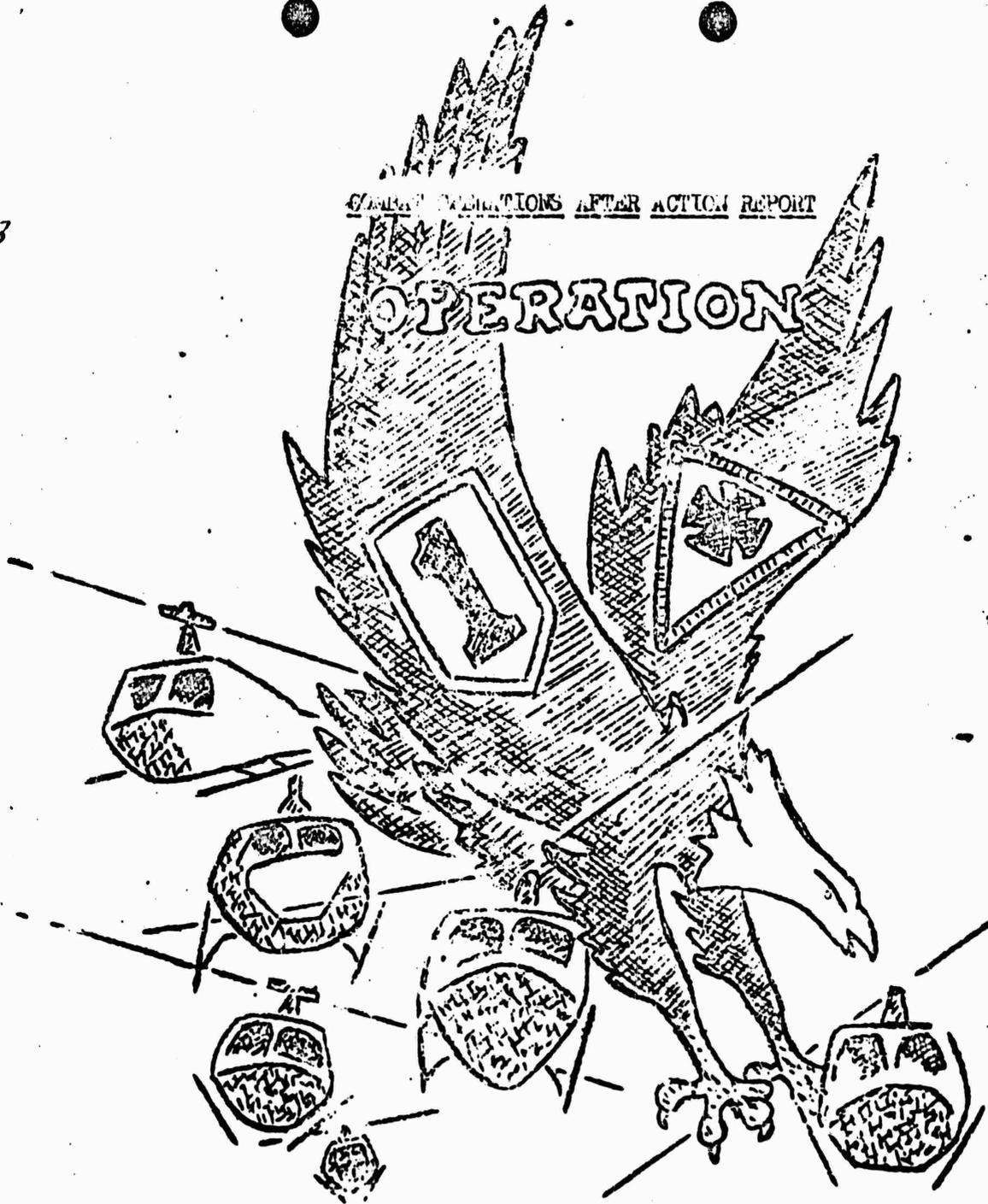
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ANNEX C
AFTER ACTION REPORT 3D BRIGADE

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GENERAL OPERATIONS AFTER ACTION REPORT

OPERATION



ABILENE

3D BRIGADE
1st Infantry Division

WILLIAM D BROWNACK
Colonel, Infantry
Commanding

HEADQUARTERS 3D BRIGADE
1st Infantry Division
APO US Forces 96345

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AFD-AD-C

27 April 1966

SUBJECT: Combat Operations after Action Report (MNCV/RCS/J3/32)

THRU: Commanding General
1st Infantry Division
ATTN: G3
APO US Forces 96345

TO: Commander
US Military Assistance Command Vietnam
ATTN: J321
APO US Forces 96243

1. NAME AND TYPE OF OPERATION: Operation ABILENE - Search and Destroy.
2. DATE OF OPERATION: 300700 March 1966 - 142000 April 1966.
3. LOCATION: PHUOC TUY Province (See 1st Inf Div OPOW 7-66 - Operation ABILENE Annex A - Overlay)
4. COMMAND HEADQUARTERS: Headquarters 3d Brigade 1st Infantry Division.
5. UNIT COMMANDERS:
Colonel William D Brodbeck, CO 3d Brigade
Lt Col Kyle W Bowie, CO 2/28 Infantry
Lt Col Lee S Henry, Jr, CO 1/16 Infantry
Maj Ronald T Theise, CO 1/2 Infantry
Lt Col Frank R Tins, CO 2/33 Artillery
Lt Col Erskine Smith, CO 1/26 Infantry
6. Task ORGANIZATION:

Headquarters 3d Brigade
2/28 Infantry
1/16 Infantry
1/2 Infantry
1/26 Infantry

27 April 1966

SUBJECT: Combat Operations After Action Report (LAV/ACB /Ja/32)

7. SUPPORTING FORCES:

75 a. 2/33 Artillery:

(1) Size of Force: 3 six gun 105mm howitzer batteries and Headquarters Battery (-) in direct support of the 3d Brigade Task Force. One of the six gun batteries was attached from the 2/13 artillery throughout Operation ABILAND. Headquarters Battery (-), 1 six gun 105mm howitzer battery, 1 eight inch howitzer battery and one 175mm gun battery in support of LAI AWB base camp.

(2) How and when Deployed:

(a) 2/33 artillery (-) moved by C-130 aircraft from LAI AWB to a staging area at WUNG TAU. The battalion (-) was moved from WUNG TAU to the operational area by CH-47 aircraft.

(b) During Operation ABILAND the battalion fired a total of 9,243 rounds in support of the 3d Brigade Task Force.

(3) Results of Effectiveness: Throughout Operation ABILAND the fires of the battalion were accurate and violent. The battalion helped prepare LZ's in conjunction with the Air Force and naval gun fire. TOT's were fired on suspected VC forces in the area of operation and defensive concentrations around the Brigade CP were accomplished quickly and professionally. The battalion or elements thereof were moved several times by CH-47 which helped perfect our air-lift procedures.

b. Air Force: During Operation ABILAND the Air Force flew 235 close air sorties in support of the 3d Brigade Task Force. Of the total sorties flown, 38 were in preparation for 11 landing zones. Fighter sorties were as follows:

31 March 1966	22 sorties
1 April 1966	19 sorties
2 April 1966	28 sorties
3 April 1966	16 sorties
4 April 1966	7 sorties
5 April 1966	10 sorties
6 April 1966	18 sorties
7 April 1966	23 sorties
8 April 1966	15 sorties
9 April 1966	10 sorties
10 April 1966	12 sorties
11 April 1966	14 sorties
12 April 1966	13 sorties
13 April 1966	19 sorties
14 April 1966	9 sorties
TOTAL	235 sorties

SUBJECT: Combat Operations After Action Report (LAV/ROO/33/32)

76 On 13 April at approximately 1200 hours the airborne F4C noted that tax collectors had established a collection point via 16592642. The F4C called for immediate airstrike when he noted the tax collectors running off the road and into the surrounding bushes. The attack began at 1215 hours with the F4C firing his marking rocket. About 9 VC bolted from the area of the marking rocket and began running for a house. The fighters spotted the VC running and began their passes. The VC made it to the house but shortly thereafter the lead fighter released two cans of napalm scoring a direct hit. By accounting for the timely delivery of the napalm on the house the Air Force assumes 5 VC KIA.

c. Army Air Support: During Operation ABLEARD the 3d Brigade Aviation Section flew 387 missions for a total of 306 hours. The section operated a forward maintenance section at the Brigade Trains location to accomplish daily maintenance. In addition a scheduled maintenance crew performed 9 intermediate and 3 periodic inspections at LAI KHS.

The Brigade Aviation Section scheduled 3 H-13's daily in support of the operation, with 2 of them supporting the numerous operations and one supporting the 3d Brigade (-). On future operations a minimum of one H-13 for each Infantry battalion and one H-13 for the 3d Brigade OP will be required. The 3d Brigade Aviation Section cannot support this requirement with current resources.

Operational problem areas encountered during Operation ABLEARD were as follows:

(a) The 115/145 AVGS refueling point at Division Trains was located too close to the JP-4 refueling resulting in at least one ground handling incident in which the main rotor blade of an OH-13 was flexed into the tailboom by the rotor wash of a UH-1 hovering in the area for refueling. Recommend that separate refueling areas be established with a minimum of two hours at the 115/145 AVGS refueling point.

(b) On the day prior to the start of the operation the FI air control frequencies were changed by a confidential TFC from 2nd Inf. to resupply helicopters and light five teams supporting 3d Brigade. 2nd Inf. received the new frequencies and cluttered up the Brigade Command Net with requests for artillery advisories and landing instructions.

(c) The UHF radio in the OH-13's is crystal tuned. COMSIN Forward was assigned UHF Frequency 242.440. This is not a frequency included in the standard OH-13's channelization; consequently, 3d Brigade helicopters could not use their UHF which was the primary radio for air control. Standard channelization for the IAC 45 radio in the OH-13 includes the following frequencies:

- (1) 236.6
- (2) 241.0
- (3) 243.0

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- (4) 255.4
- (5) 257.8
- (6) 272.7
- (7) 275.8
- (8) 301.4
- (9) 340.2
- (10) 344.6
- (11) 348.6

Recommend that primary air control UHF frequencies used during 1st Infantry Division operations be selected from the above.

d. Navy: Naval gun fire was used whenever elements of the 3d Brigade were within the range of the 8 inch, 6 inch or 5 inch naval guns. Fires were called for and received for LZ preparation and suspected VC troop concentrations. This added dimension was a new experience for the Brigade having never used naval gun fire in support of previous operations. The effectiveness of the gun fire proved to be of great help during Operation ABLE.

8. INTELLIGENCE:

a. Estimate of VC Strength: Prior to the operation the total estimated VC strength in the operational area was believed to be around 4,920. The order of battle appeared to be the 94th Regiment (LONG BINH Regiment) with an estimated strength of 2,000 men occupying the northwest portion of PHOUC TUY Province; the 860th Battalion with a strength of 500 men occupying the north central portion of PHOUC TUY Province; the 310th Battalion consisting of 350 troops and a possible local force (1000 men) in the northern area of PHOUC TUY Province. Other units were 5 local force companies with a total strength of 2070 men believed to be in the area.

b. Source of Intelligence Received Prior to the Operation: Headquarters 1st Infantry Division was the source of all information received prior to Operation ABLE and the primary source throughout the operation. Some intelligence information was received from province officials and advisors in B. RL as well as district officials in XUYEN HOC District.

c. Situation Anticipated During the Operation: The Brigade Commander felt that with such a large force being deployed into the area the VC would not stand and fight unless trapped by US troops, or to protect a vital base camp area. The tactics that he felt the VC would use would be to harass US troops with mines, booby traps and snipers and avoid a heavy engagement if at all possible.

d. Situation encountered During the Operation: No major contact or engagement was made with VC forces. VC contact consisted of sniper action and mortar and small arms engagements by up to reinforced squad size guerrilla elements characterized by a sudden flurry of fire. Mines and booby traps were not

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SUBJECT: Combat Operations after Action Report (MUCV/RCW/J3/32)

used as extensively by VC forces as has been experienced in previous operations. Small base camps and rice storage areas were discovered and in several instances gave signs of having been recently vacated by care taker personnel.

7) e. Terrain Features, Obstacles and Weather: The largest portion of terrain in the operational area was flat to gently rolling with most elevations below one hundred fifty meters. Two large hill masses, MUI OAG C.U and MUI THI VAI, rising abruptly in the southwest portion and MUI MUY T.O in the northeast portion presented dominating terrain. Jungle areas were thick, rising in some cases to a height of one hundred feet with a twenty foot undergrowth hindered movement of US troops and afforded the VC excellent cover and concealment for their hit and run tactic. The weather during the period was extremely hot and dry with only one rain during the operation. Weather did not preclude any operations. Moonlight during the period provided excellent light at night with a full moon on 5 April. There were no obstacles in the operational area.

f. Psychological Warfare: A total of 155,000 leaflets were distributed by aircraft. The themes used were: (1) GVN-US Air Superiority; (2) The 1st Infantry Division is Here to Help You; (3) VC Tax Collection.

g. MI and IPW activities During the Operation: The only civilian population encountered was in the District Capital of XUYEN KOC. These people were very friendly and cooperative in aiding US troops against the VC who held them within a two kilometer radius of XUYEN KOC and taxed them heavily. IPW teams worked with MOPAP teams in the village interviewing villagers. Although no valuable information was obtained, this employment of IPW teams could prove to be profitable on future operations. The IPW team interrogated two suspects who were later turned over to the District Chief of XUYEN KOC who later confirmed them to be VC tax collectors. There were a total of one hundred eleven documents discovered.

9. MISSION: From 1st Infantry Division OPORD 7-66 (Operation ABLE) (U), dated 241200 March 1966:

1st Infantry Division conducts search and destroy operations in PHUOC TUY Province to locate and destroy elements of the 9th and 5th VC Regiments, their Base Camps and the MUY TAO Secret Zone.

d. 3rd Brigade

- (1) Attached: D Troop 1st Cav effective on order.
1 Inf Bn, 1st Bde effective 30 Mar 66.
- (2) JPOW one airmobile co effective 31 Mar 66.
- (3) Conduct airmobile assault on designated LZ on 31 Mar 66.
- (4) Conduct search and destroy operations in assigned AO.
- (5) On order conduct search and destroy operation in subsequent

AO's.

SUBJECT: Combat Operations After Action Report (LAV/RC/33/32)

k. Coordinating Instructions

(1) Detailed instructions on initial LZs and AO's will be issued by Frag Order on 29 Mar 66.

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(2) AMGLICO teams will be provided to each Bn and Bde size unit to coordinate Naval gunfire support. Teams will report to units on 29 Mar 66.

(3) Authority granted to Brigade Commanders to employ A.C. in accordance with current instructions.

10. CONCEPT OF OPERATION: From 3d Brigade OROU 6-66 (Operation BLISS) (U):

3. EXECUTION:

a. Concept of Operation: 3d Brigade Task Force moves by C130 aircraft on H-HOUR 30 March 1966 to VUNG TAU to stage; prepares to conduct air-
mobile operations with 1 battalion to secure artillery base and LZ's for re-
maining battalions. Thereafter, 2 battalions will conduct search and destroy
operations within assigned AO; 3d battalion secures artillery base, acts as
brigade reserve. Infantry battalions deploy armed and equipped for movement
by UH1D helicopter on short notice. Artillery battalion and Brigade CP deploy
armed and equipped for movement by CH47 helicopters. Fire support will be
provided by 2/33 Arty, Division Artillery, 2d AO and Naval gunfire using on
call fires to the maximum and pre-planned fires to the minimum. Rapid dis-
placement and reaction is the key.

b. 1/2 Inf:

c. 2/2 Inf: L.I KHE base camp security force

d. 1/16 Inf:

e. 2/28 Inf:

f. D Trp 1/4 Cav:

g. 2/33 Arty: DS.

h. D Co 1st Engr Bn: Provide Engr demo teams to each infantry
battalion L. KHE base camp security force.

i. Trains: Annex D, Administration and Logistics.

j. Coordinating Instructions:

(1) Reference check point system, Annex H.

(2) Areas of operation and FCL's to be announced.

(3) The 2/28 Inf and 1/16 Inf will leave behind at L.I KHE
a minimum of one 81mm mortar tube and crew and all 4.2 inch mortars.

(4) Departing units submit their stay-behind foxhole strength
to the Brigade S3 MLT 291200 March 1966.

(5) All personnel will carry protective masks.

(6) When VC contact is made, all efforts will be made to fix
and destroy the enemy force.

(7) All support units remaining at L.I KHE be prepared to can
the brigade perimeter and conduct patrols.

(8) Emergency lifting of friendly fires will be red star
cluster.

(9) Emergency helicopter pad will be marked with ca "H" using
orange panels.

SUBJECT: Combat Operations after action Report (MACV/RCS/J3/32)

11. EXECUTION:

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The 3d Brigade Task Force initiated Operation ABILAND at 300700 March 1966 with the 1/16 Inf, 2/28 Inf, 1/2 Inf and 2/33 Artillery. The 3d Bde was airlifted by C130 aircraft from LAI HHE to a staging area vic VUNG T.U. The 1/2 Inf was airlifted from PHUOC V.L.H to VUNG T.U closing at 301150 March 1966. All units closed VUNG T.U by 301615 March 1966. 2/2 Inf defended the LAI HHE perimeter during Operation ABILAND.

On 31 March 1966 the 1/2 Inf conducted an airmobile assault starting at 0805 hours into LZ PORTLAND (XS3577). All elements were in by 0900 hours with negative contact. At 0855 hours the 2/33 Artillery began being lifted into LZ PORTLAND and the first battery was ready to fire by 0930 hours. At 0948 hours the 1/16 Inf began airmobile assaults into LZ PASLINGTON (XS3571) and was completed by 1035 hours with negative contact. At 1100 hours 2/28 Inf began airmobile operations into LZ SILLI (XS2575) and completed the assault by 1155 hours with no VC contact.

On 1 April 1966 the 1/16 Inf conducted S&D operations to the west suffering 4 WIA during the day with light contact throughout the day. The 2/28 Inf conducted local S&D patrolling during the day with negative contact. The 1/2 Inf conducted local patrolling around the Brigade CP with negative contact.

On 2 April 1966 the 1/2 Inf conducted local operations around the Brigade CP (XS351770) making light contact throughout the day. A Company 1/2 Infantry conducted an airmobile assault into LZ QUINN (XS391758) beginning at 0814 hours. B Company 1/2 Inf engaged a VC squad vic XS25762 and suffered 2 WIA. At 1335 hours A Company 1/2 Inf found a base camp (XS6327) including a dispensary. The base camp was destroyed by burning and calling in artillery. 1/16 Inf conducted S&D operations throughout the day with negative contact but suffering 1 WIA and 7 KIA from a booby trap vic XS283718. The battalion exited at XS256707 and XS26507. The 2/28 Inf continued to S&D in the vic of their ROK position (XS271755). At 1315 hours a warning order was issued to the 2/28 Inf to move to XS241790 for air movement to area T&S and be attached to the 2d Brigade. At 1620 hours the battalion came under the control of the 2d Bde.

On 3 April 1966 B Company 1/2 Inf was airlifted from the Brigade CP to LZ ASD (XS377792) with negative contact. Other elements of 1/2 Inf conducted platoon size patrols throughout the day resulting in light contact with no confirmed VC KIA. The 1/16 Inf conducted S&D operations with 3 companies making no contact with the VC during the day. The 1/16 Inf had 3 ROK positions: A Company 1/16 Inf XS276665, B Company 1/16 Inf XS274661, C Company 1/16 Inf and Battalion CP XS271668. The 2/28 Inf continued under the operational control of 2d Brigade.

On 4 April 1966 the 1/2 Inf conducted care and cleaning of equipment with only patrolling actions around the Brigade CP. At 1010 hours the reconnaissance platoon 1/2 Inf suffered 1 WIA from sniper fire. At 1735 hours a

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SUBJECT: Combat Operations After Action Report (AFCV/RS/32/32)

CH47 helicopter was hit by ground fire (YS352765) as it departed the 1/2 Inf area and had to return to the 1/2 Inf position. 1/16 Inf was airlifted from YS2766 to LZ BLUE (YS6767) and established a defensive perimeter for the Brigade CP and 2/33 artillery which closed by 1850 hours.

On 5 April 1966 A Company 1/16 Inf was airlifted into LZ ORANGE (YS632615) with negative VC contact. A deception plan also went into effect at this time with naval gunfire preparing LZ GREEN (YS740650) and empty helicopters simulating the landing of troops on LZ GREEN. A Company 1/16 Inf had negative contact for the remainder of the day and closed into their POW position vicinity YS675584. The 1/16 Inf (-) remained with the Brigade CP. The 2/28 Inf returned to the operational control of the Brigade at 0853 hours and conducted S&D operations to the southeast from vic YS5767 with negative contact. The battalion set up three separate perimeters for the night: A Company 2/28 Inf YS597640, B Company 2/28 Inf and Battalion CP YS651641, and C Company 2/28 Inf YS601631. At 0800 hours the 1/2 Inf came under the operational control of the 1st Infantry Division for division reserve.

On 6 April 1966 at 0730 hours naval gunfire began preparing LZ B (YS625610) for an air assault by C Company 1/16 Inf. The naval preparation ceased at 0745 hours and artillery and the Air Force began preparing LZ B. C Company 1/16 Inf was on the LZ by 0822 hours with negative contact. The company began S&D operations west and south from the LZ. A Company 1/16 Inf conducted S&D to the west from their POW position. At 1035 hours C Company 1/16 Inf found a rice cache vic YS603535 consisting of 165 bags (200 lbs each) of rice and 100 sheets of tin which was destroyed. At 1315 hours C Company 1/16 Inf found a base camp and destroyed same except for documents and a pair of binoculars which were evacuated. At the same location 30 tons of rice were destroyed. The 1/16 Inf remained as the Brigade CP security. The 2/28 Inf conducted S&D to the northeast of their overnight position with negative contact. The 2/28 Inf was located at YS651671 for the night. The 2/33 artillery moved a Battery from the Brigade CP location to YS651671 to support C Company 1/16 Inf. At 0800 hours C Btry 2/15 Army (attached to the 2/33 Arty during Operation ABILIS) moved by CH47 helicopter from area OREGON and closed into the Brigade CP (YS6767) by 1130 hours.

On 7 April 1966 B Company 1/16 Inf conducted an airborne assault into LZ C (YS595605) after it had been prepared by naval gunfire, artillery fire and airstrikes. The company conducted S&D south from this location for the remainder of the day and was extracted from LZ D (YS585593) back to the Brigade CP area. The 1/16 Inf (-) conducted S&D receiving sporadic small arms throughout the day with negative results. The battalion (-) closed into the area of the Brigade CP by 1620 hours. The 2/28 Inf conducted care and maintenance of equipment throughout the day. The battalion (-) was located at YS650672 with C Company in the Brigade CP area. At 1335 hours B Trp 1/4 Cav joined the 3d Brigade and was attached to 2/28 Infantry.

On 8 April 1966 C Company 1/16 Inf conducted S&D to the east to YS719671 and then north to YS716704 with negative contact. Patrols from A and B companies had negative VC contact during the day. Two platoons of B Company

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 1/16 Infantry were airlifted into XS5662 when a Vietnamese farmer gave a pre-arranged signal that VC tax collectors were in the area. The platoons were able to capture 2 VC tax collectors. At 1308 hours B Company 1/16 Inf received sniper fire vic XS564649 resulting in 1 US KIA. At 1330 hours a platoon spotted 4 VC and took them under fire and 2 VC fell but were carried off before the platoon could reach the area. The 1/16 Inf (-) remained in the area of the Brigade CP with C Company at XS718704. The 2/28 Inf conducted S&D operations during the day and suffered 1 KIA from a claymore type mine. A Company 2/28 Inf was secretly placed at XS612710 where the company remained until 10 April 1966.

On 9 April 1966 the 1/16 Infantry conducted small S&D operations around the Brigade CP area with negative contact. The 2/28 Inf conducted S&D operations around XS6363, XS6264 and XS6566. At 1900 hours B Company 2/28 Inf received small arms fire vic XS657669. After the fire was returned a patrol reported negative results after searching the area. The 1/26 Inf was flown from PHUOC VINH by C130 to VUNG TAU coming under the operational control of the Brigade. At 0930 hours 1/26 Inf conducted an air assault into LZ PARK (XS716755) with negative contact for the remainder of the day.

On 10 April 1966 the 1/26 Inf conducted S&D operations from their overnight positions going northwest, northeast and east finding a base camp (XS693780), killing 1 VC and possibly wounding another. A Company 1/16 Inf conducted an airmobile assault into LZ LEE (XS761680) after naval, air and artillery preparation. The company had negative contact. 2/28 Inf conducted S&D operations in an area from XS630760 to XS660770 to XS660680 to XS620680 with negative contact.

On 11 April 1966, the Brigade CP and artillery base was moved by air to LZ BILINGS (XS675845) which had been secured by 2/28 Infantry. The 1/26 Inf conducted an airmobile assault into LZ SIDNEY (XS455915) and came under the operational control of the 2d Brigade. The 1/16 Inf conducted an airmobile assault into LZ BUTTE (XS645913) with all landings resulting in negative contact.

X
 On 12 April 1966 the 1/16 Inf, located at XS628912, began S&D operations southwest and then northeast and north to the battalion CP. C Company 1/16 Inf located at XS652890 began S&D operations east and north finding an old base camp (XS703937) and was fired on by 2 VC. In the return fire one VC was believed to have been hit. A Company 1/16 Inf remained in reserve and conducted local operations suffering 1 KIA from VC small arms fire at XS684922. All elements closed into the battalion perimeter by 1730 hours with no further VC contact. The 2/28 Inf continued to secure the Brigade CP and artillery base and remained in reserve to assist the 1/16 Infantry. The 2/28 Inf spent the night vicinity Brigade CP (XS675845).

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On 13 April 1966 the 1/16 Infantry conducted S&W operations south from X5703941 to vicinity X57090 firing on 2 VC setting up a claymore mine vicinity X5701904. The VC fled and the claymore was destroyed. C Company 1/16 Inf secured an area for the engineers who were clearing an extraction zone to be used by the 1/16 Inf on 14 April. 2/28 Inf remained on alert to reinforce the 2d Brigade if necessary and to assist 1/16 Inf if necessary.

On 14 April 1966 the 3d Brigade Task Force terminated Operation ADLATS with all elements returning to L.1 NIS via C123 aircraft and UH1 helicopters. The Brigade closed at 2010 hours thus ending a 16 day operation.

12. RESULTS:

a. Captured Equipment:

1	Binoculars
1	Mauser rifle
21	Crossbows
5	Hatchets
Numerous	Documents

b. Destroyed Equipment:

70 tons	Rice
100 sheets	Tin
2	Claymore mines
300 bolts	Cloth
100 sets	Laundry
5500 gallons	Fuel
500 gallons	Oil
10	Grenades
2	Saigons
3	Small boats
7 gallons	Kerosene
15 sets	Knives
1	Rifle
51	Huts
1	Lav
30	New shirts
Numerous	Mines and booby traps
Numerous	Pots, pans and eating utensils

c. Friendly Losses:

<u>Date</u>	<u>KIA</u>	<u>MIA</u>
30 Mar 66	0	0
31 Mar 66	1	2
1 Apr 66	0	2
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<u>DATE</u>	<u>KIA</u>	<u>MIA</u>
2 Apr 66	1	1
3 Apr 66	0	0
4 Apr 66	0	3
5 Apr 66	0	3
6 Apr 66	0	2
7 Apr 66	0	0
8 Apr 66	0	1
9 Apr 66	0	2
10 Apr 66	0	0
11 Apr 66	0	0
12 Apr 66	0	1
13 Apr 66	0	0
14 Apr 66	0	0
TOTAL	<u>2</u>	<u>17</u>

d. Enemy Losses:

<u>DATE</u>	<u>KIA (BC)</u>	<u>KIA (PCS)</u>	<u>MIA</u>	<u>MIA (EST)</u>	<u>VCC</u>
30 Mar 66	0	0	0	0	0
31 Mar 66	0	0	0	0	0
1 Apr 66	0	0	0	0	0
2 Apr 66	0	0	0	0	0
3 Apr 66	0	0	0	0	0
4 Apr 66	0	0	0	0	0
5 Apr 66	0	0	0	0	0
6 Apr 66	0	0	0	0	0
7 Apr 66	0	0	0	0	0
8 Apr 66	0	2	0	0	0
9 Apr 66	1	0	0	0	2
10 Apr 66	1	0	1	0	0
11 Apr 66	0	0	0	0	0
12 Apr 66	0	0	0	1	0
13 Apr 66	0	6	0	0	0
14 Apr 66	0	0	0	0	0
TOTAL	<u>2</u>	<u>8</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>

19. ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS:

The logistical base for the 3d Brigade Task Force was with the Division base at BLIND Bn SOUTH for most of the operation. The Brigade elements normally resupplied from 0630 - 0800 hours and from 1500 - 1700 hours daily by UH1 and CH47 helicopters. At least one hot meal was provided daily to include acid drinks and comfort items. The Brigade averaged 45 sorties of UH1 helicopters daily with a total tonnage of 30 tons per day. The artillery Class V averaged 259 tons with 70 CH47 sorties. Medical support and evacuation was

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excellent with 173 patients seen during the operation including non-battle and disease patients. No particular supply problems were noted during Operation ABILENE.

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14. SPECIAL EQUIPMENT AND TECHNIQUES:

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a. The 1/16 Infantry experimented with the new illuminating sound for the M79 grenade launcher. It was proven to be very effective in illuminating a squad or platoon at the front.

b. M58 CS cartridges dropped from helicopters were tried but after 2 pods were dropped and failed to activate, their use was terminated.

c. The Brigade used naval gunfire for the first time and it proved to be highly effective in preparing LZ's and supporting units on the ground.

d. The Brigade CP was completely airmobile during Operation ABILENE for the first time since arriving in VIETNAM. It proved to be successful.

15. COMMANDERS ANALYSES:

Some lessons learned during Operation ABILENE were:

a. Each Brigade should have a direct support aviation company (airmobile, light) which is immediately responsive to the Brigade needs.

b. The naval gunfire teams need a better means of communicating with the supporting ships. Several times the naval gunfire support available to the Brigade could not be used because of lack of communications with the ships.

c. Close coordination with GVN sector personnel accounted for 3 VC KIA and 2 VOC.

d. There is a definite need to have replacement clothing, particularly socks, readily available to be issued to the men as needed.

e. The use of stay-behind forces is an excellent idea and should be used more often. Stay-behind forces during Operation ABILENE accounted for 5 VC KIA and 75 tons of rice destroyed.

f. There is a need to conduct training in squad and platoon tactics between each operation and, when feasible, during operations.

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COMMANDER'S COMMENTS

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The Third Brigade accomplished its mission with even greater professionalism than in past operations. The units experienced new include use and application of naval gunfire never before used by the Brigade. The mobility of the Brigade was greatly increased and techniques were perfected during Operation ABILENE. The Brigade had never before been configured so as to be completely airmobile. This method of operation proved to be highly successful.

Although the Brigade encountered no large VC force it proved again that the VC no longer have a safe haven in South Vietnam. The 3d Brigade as part of the finest Division in Vietnam proved it is capable of going anywhere at anytime to give added meaning to the Division motto: **NO MISSION TOO DIFFICULT - NO SACRIFICE TOO GREAT - DUTY FIRST.**

William D Brodebeck

WILLIAM D BRODEBECK
Colonel, Infantry
Commanding

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Commander 2d Air Div

Commanding General 1st Inf Div

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