Chapter 5

THE SON MY OPERATION, 16 - 19 MARCH 1968

The purpose of this chapter is to provide an overview of the preparations for and conduct of the Son My operation conducted by TF Barker during the period 16-19 March 1968.

A. CONCEPT OF THE OPERATION

The Son My operation was conceived and planned by LTC Frank A. Barker, CO of Task Force (TF) Barker, and his immediate staff. Within the Americal Division, it was normal procedure for a battalion or TF commander to plan and conduct operations within his assigned area of operations (AO). It was also the policy for the division commander to approve the scheme of operation prior to its execution. Although MG Koster testified that he did not recall approving the operation, he remembers part of the plan being described to him, and it is likely that he did approve it. It is also probable that BG Lipscomb, commander of the 11th Brigade until 15 March 1968, approved the concept and timing of the operation as the basis for obtaining an extension of the brigade's normal AO from the 2d Army Republic of Vietnam (ARVN) Division (see sketch 5-1). COL Henderson, who became CO of the 11th Brigade on 15 March 1968, was also briefed on the operation and gave it his approval. It is probable, however, that none of these commanders was briefed on the details for executing the plan.

The concept of the operation was that TF Barker, employing all three of its attached rifle companies, would conduct a search and destroy operation in the Son My area beginning on 16 March 1968. Search and destroy operations were at that time officially defined by Military Assistance Command, Vietnam (MACV) directive as those operations conducted for the purpose of seeking out and destroying enemy forces, installations, resources, and base areas. These operations were oriented on enemy forces inside or outside of US units' assigned tactical areas of responsibility. In the case of TF Barker, the objective was the entrapment and elimination of the 48th Viet Cong (VC) Local Force (LF) Battalion and two separate local force companies, and the destruction of their logistical support base and staging area. The 48th had, for several years,
roamed throughout Son Tinh District and, more recently, had used the Son My area as a base for its logistical support activities. During the March 1968 time frame the 48th probably received periodic resupply by enemy sea trawlers operating off the Batangan Peninsula.

At the time of the 16-19 March operation, the 48th was considered as posing a continuing and imminent threat against Quang Ngai City. A MACV intelligence assessment, issued the latter part of February 1968, indicated that the 48th had recently been furnished with additional troops from district forces and a possible North Vietnamese Army (NVA) replacement packet, and intended to combine with other local forces to initiate an offensive against Quang Ngai City. Previous operations by TF Barker elements in the Son My area had clearly established that the 48th possessed heavy weapons, including 12.7mm machineguns, rockets, and mortars. It was believed by the TF headquarters that the 48th had been instrumental in inflicting casualties on TF elements during those previous operations (see chap 4).

Since the Son My area* was not within TF Barker's normal AO, clearance for the temporary extension of the AO was obtained through Son Tinh District and Quang Ngai Province headquarters, and from the 2d ARVN Division which had primary tactical responsibility for the area.

B. ISSUANCE OF ORDERS AND INSTRUCTIONS

The order for the Son My operation was issued orally by LTC Barker at Landing Zone (LZ) Dottie, site of the TF Barker command post, on the afternoon of 15 March 1968. LZ Dottie was located approximately 11 kilometers northwest of the Son My area. No written orders were issued by the 11th Brigade concerning the operation and there has been no substantial evidence developed to indicate that TF Barker issued either an operation overlay or a written fragmentary order to supplement the oral instructions. (One witness [CPT Gamble] testified that he received an information copy of a written operation order subsequent to the 15 March briefing, but it appears from the testimony of CPT (now Mr.) Vazquez, who was the TF Barker fire support coordinator, that CPT Gamble is referring to an

* Village, hamlet, and subhamlet titles used in the reconstruction of events described in this chapter (and depicted on accompanying sketch maps) are based on US Army Topographic maps in existence at the time of the Son My operation. Refer to chapter 3 for titles currently used by Government of Vietnam (GVN) authorities for the various political subdivisions within Son My Village.
artillery firing overlay prepared by Vazquez, rather than an operations overlay from TF Barker. In any event, the overlay was destroyed by Gamble soon after he received it.) Other witnesses who testified as to the possible issuance of operations overlays/orders were not able to recall specifically their content or eventual disposition.

Attending the 15 March briefing were:

LTC Frank A. Barker
MAJ Frederic W. Watke
MAJ Charles C. Calhoun
CPT Eugene M. Kotouc
CPT Stephen J. Gamble
CPT (now Mr.) Dennis R. Vazquez
CPT (now Mr.) William C. Riggs
CPT Earl R. Michles
CPT Ernest L. Medina
*Cpl (now Mr.) Donald R. Milliken
*WO1 (now WO1) Michael O. Magno

COL Henderson had arrived at LZ Dottie at 1330 hours, and prior to issuance of the operation order addressed all or most of the assembled group. He briefly reviewed the concept of the forthcoming operation and then discussed several combat performance areas in which he and BG Lipscomb, previous commander of the 11th Brigade, felt that TF Barker elements had been deficient and, as a result, had failed to accomplish their objectives. He emphasized the necessity and advantages of establishing and maintaining close and aggressive contact with the enemy. Several witnesses testified that he also alluded to the elimination of the 48th LBF Battalion "once and for all."

* Probable Attendees
CPT Medina testified that COL Henderson's briefing also linked together the unit's past failure to aggressively prosecute enemy contacts with the low rate of enemy weapons captured in those operations. According to CPT Medina, COL Henderson referred to their lack of aggressiveness as permitting "men, women, or children, or other VC soldiers in the area" to pick up the weapons and get away. CPT Medina's recollection of this aspect of COL Henderson's briefing is not substantiated by the testimony of other witnesses who were in attendance at the briefing, but MAJ Calhoun, the S3, did testify concerning an earlier operation in the Son My area during which a captured enemy mortar was retrieved by two armed VC women in the midst of a firefight.

C. INTELLIGENCE BRIEFING

Following COL Henderson's remarks and his departure from LZ Dottie at 1415 hours, CPT Kotouc, the TF S2, gave an intelligence briefing to the assembled group. In his briefing, he indicated that the 48th VC LF Battalion was dispersed throughout the Son My area. He testified that both he and LTC Barker felt that the VC headquarters and two companies, totaling over 200 enemy, would be located in the subhamlet of My Lai (4). MAJ Calhoun and MAJ Watke testified, however, that the TF command group deduced that the enemy headquarters was located in "Pinkville" or My Lai (1). Whatever the basis for the intelligence estimate, the testimony of CPT Medina and other members of C Company indicates clearly that they fully expected, based on the intelligence briefing, to encounter an enemy force of between 200-250 in My Lai (4) on the following morning.

During the intelligence briefing and/or LTC Barker's operational briefing (see below), the civilian population within the Son My area was categorized as "active sympathizers with the VC." Several witnesses testified that it was stated by both Barker and Kotouc that most of the civilian inhabitants would be out of the Son My hamlets and on their way to local markets by 0700 hours on the morning of 16 March 1968 (this was a Saturday morning, normally a marketing day for the Vietnamese). Some reference was also apparently made, or had been made, to previous leaflet drops and helicopter-borne loudspeaker broadcasts which had allegedly warned the civilian inhabitants of Son My to evacuate the area and move to GVN-controlled areas in order to avoid potential injury from forthcoming allied operations. The context in which the leaflet drop/loudspeaker information was briefed to TF Barker personnel on 15 March, and, in fact, whether it was actually briefed on 15 March (as opposed to an earlier or later date) is not certain from the testimony developed. Examination of pertinent records of TF Barker, the 11th Brigade, and the Americal Division,
however, reveals no evidence of any leaflet drop or aerial broadcast directed at the inhabitants of My Lai (4) during the period 1 through 20 March 1968, and those drops and broadcasts which were conducted in the vicinity of the Son My area during this time did not advise the inhabitants to evacuate the area. In any case, the probable presence of civilians within the operational area on the morning of 16 March 1968 was taken into account by LTC Barker in the development of his operational plan, particularly as it pertained to the employment of artillery preparatory fires.

D. OPERATIONAL ORDERS AND INSTRUCTIONS

Following the intelligence briefing by CPT Kotouc, an operations briefing and implementing instructions were given by MAJ Calhoun, TF S3, and LTC Barker. MAJ Calhoun testified to the effect that he does not recall specifically what information was presented by him and what information/instructions were given by LTC Barker, but that Barker had personally selected the location for the landing zones and the artillery preparation which were to be used on the following day. MAJ Calhoun also testified that the instructions presented at the 15 March briefing pertained only to plans for the first day of the operation, 16 March.

LTC Barker's death in action on 13 June 1968 and the absence of any written instructions or operational overlays provided during the operations briefing, have made it necessary to reconstruct the planned scheme of maneuver and operational instructions almost exclusively from testimony of witnesses present at the briefing and/or who habitually worked in the TF Headquarters. While the instructions described herein and the planned scheme of maneuver depicted on sketch map 5-2 are presented as a cohesive entity, the preponderance of the pertinent testimony indicates that the orders and instructions were issued to various individuals in a somewhat piecemeal fashion throughout the afternoon of 15 March, and that during MAJ Calhoun's briefing on the planned scheme of maneuver, the details were depicted only on the tactical operations center (TOC) map, which was presumably erased or discarded subsequent to the Son My operation. (As part of a Combat After-Action Report which he submitted on 28 March 1968, LTC Barker inclosed a sketch depicting the maneuver of his attached and supporting units [see exhibit R-2]. The sketch generally corroborates the testimonial reconstruction of his overall scheme of maneuver, but it is inconsistent in its depiction of the movement of C Company, with that discussed during the 15 March 1968 briefing and with the actual maneuver of C Company which occurred during the combat assault.)

LTC Barker's plan called for the operation to commence at 0725 hours on 16 March with a 3- to 5-minute artillery
preparation to precede the initial airmobile combat assault by Company C into a LZ west of the subhamlet of My Lai (4) (see sketch 5-2). Planned insertion time for the first lift of Company C was 0730 hours, to be followed by a second lift as soon as possible. Insertion of the first lift, following the artillery preparation, was to be supported by suppressive fire from helicopter gunships during the touchdown and unloading of the assault troops. Following completion of the combat assault, Company C was to move generally east through My Lai (4). (The preoperational briefing apparently did not include instructions pertaining to C Company actions which occurred in the subhamlet of Binh Tay and other subhamlets east of My Lai (4) on 16 March. Those actions resulted from supplementary orders issued during the course of the operation (see chap 6).) After completing the sweep of My Lai (4), C Company was to move northeast to link up with Company B in a nighttime defensive position approximately 1-1/2 to 2 kilometers to the northeast of My Lai (4). The nighttime position was apparently designated as an objective area primarily to provide a basis for coordinating the movements of Company C and Company B.

Following insertion of Company C, a second combat assault was to be conducted by Company B into an LZ south of My Lai (1), unless they were required to reinforce Company C in the assault on My Lai (4). A second artillery preparation was also planned on the LZ south of My Lai (1) to precede insertion of B Company elements. Thereafter, B Company was to move north through My Lai (1), then west to link up with C Company.

Company A, the third attached rifle company, was assigned the mission of moving the night of 15-16 March from field positions located east of LZ Dottie into blocking positions on the northern bank of the Song Diem Diem, almost due north of the Son My area. Company A was to maintain these blocking positions throughout 16 March in order to trap enemy forces attempting to escape from the Son My area to the north.

The 174th Aviation Company was to provide five troop-carrying helicopters, LTC Barker's command and control helicopter, and accompanying gunships required to support and control the combat assaults by C Company and B Company. Four additional troop lift helicopters were to be provided by the 71st Aviation Company.

An aero-scout team from B Company, 123d Aviation Battalion, which provided direct support for TF Barker, was to screen the area to the south of the My Lai (4) and My Lai (1) complex. (The aero-scout team consisted of one OH-23 observation helicopter and two accompanying UH-1B armed helicopter gunships.)

TF Barker had also arranged to have US Navy "Swift Boats"
patrol the coastal waters east of the Son My area off the Batangan Cape.

A fourth rifle company, A/4-3 Inf, was also placed under the operational control of TF Barker during the period 14-18 March 1968. It played no active role in the Son My operation per se, but was employed to provide local security for LZ Dotti and LZ Uptight during the course of the operation. It was returned to control of its parent battalion at 1700 hours on 18 March.

From the evidence available, it appears that unit movements followed subsequent to 16 March were not specifically planned or discussed during the 15 March briefing. The scheme of maneuver for 17, 18, and 19 March was apparently contingent on the events of 16 March and was executed in response to supplementary oral orders issued by LTC Barker following the combat assaults on 16 March.

After the operational briefing, LTC Barker took several of his subordinates on an aerial reconnaissance of the target area.

E. ISSUES CONCERNING LTC BARKER'S BRIEFING

In view of subsequent events at Son My, the key issues which emerge concerning the 15 March briefing involve the orders and instructions issued by LTC Barker and his staff (and subsequently by his subordinates) concerning (a) the planned artillery and gunship preparatory fires, (b) the burning or destruction of houses and other structures, (c) the killing of livestock and destruction of other foodstuffs, and (d) the handling of noncombatants encountered during this operation.

The artillery preparation was to be fired by D/6-11 Arty (consisting of four 105mm howitzers) which was located at LZ Uptight. There is conflicting testimony as to whether LTC Barker planned to have the artillery preparation fired on the LZ for C Company, on the hamlet of My Lai (4), or on parts of each. CPT Vazquez, artillery liaison officer to the TF, testified that LTC Barker wanted the preparation placed on the LZ but had also specified that he wanted the tree and bunker line along the western edge of the hamlet "covered" to knock out enemy weapon positions which he expected to be set up there. CPT Gamble, CO of D/6-11 Arty, testified from memory that the general location of the planned preparation was to the west of My Lai (4) but stated that any confirmatory records which would have contained the precise map coordinates of the planned preparatory fires were destroyed (in accordance with his unit SOP after retention in the unit's files for a period of 6 months. CPT Gamble's immediate superior, LTC (now COL) Luper, stated that he discussed the planned preparatory fires with LTC Barker.
on 15 March 1968 and that LTC Barker wanted the fires placed on My Lai (4). MAJ Calhoun and CPT Kotouc both testified to the effect that LTC Barker considered the probability of noncombatants' being present in My Lai (4) at the time of the artillery preparation, and decided to fire the preparation anyway as a means of minimizing friendly casualties from the entrenched enemy which he also expected to be present at My Lai (4) on the morning of 16 March. The preponderance of the testimony thus indicates that LTC Barker's plan called for the artillery preparation to be fired onto the LZ for Company C and into the western and southwestern portions of My Lai (4) without prior warning to the inhabitants (see sketch 5-3). Testimony provided by aviation witnesses also indicates that LTC Barker's plan called for helicopter gunship suppressive fires to be placed on and around the LZ to protect the troop-carrying helicopters in the interval from the time the artillery preparation ceased until the troops were inserted on the ground.

While there is some conflict in the testimony as to whether LTC Barker ordered the destruction of houses, dwellings, livestock, and other foodstuffs in the Son My area, the preponderance of the evidence indicates that such destruction was implied, if not specifically directed, by his orders of 15 March. (CPT Medina testified that during the aerial reconnaissance of the target area, subsequent to the briefing at LZ Dottie, he received explicit instructions from LTC Barker to destroy My Lai (4). These instructions were apparently not overheard by other participants in the aerial reconnaissance, but would have been consistent with the planned objective of neutralizing or destroying the 48th VC Battalion's logistical support base in the Son My area.) Whether LTC Barker attempted to make any distinctions, during the briefing or in his subsequent instructions, between dwellings, livestock, and foodstuffs of noncombatants versus those belonging to the VC is highly doubtful since he and his staff apparently acted upon the intelligence assessment that virtually the entire Son My area was controlled and inhabited by VC and VC sympathizers. Further, CPT Kotouc testified that at some time on the 15th he was informed by LTC Barker that the village was to be destroyed, including homes, livestock, and foodstuffs.

The preponderance of the evidence also indicates that at the TF level no specific plans or arrangements were made for the handling of any noncombatants found in the Son My area. Further, the testimony of persons who were present at the 15 March briefing indicates strongly that LTC Barker did not issue any instructions pertaining to the problem of collecting and processing noncombatants who might be encountered during the planned operation. Several witnesses have testified to a vague recollection of the unit standing operating procedure (SOP) to be followed in evacuating noncombatants from operational areas, but there is no indication that such an SOP was
referred to by LTC Barker or any of his staff during the 15 March briefing. (While the evidence also indicates that TF Barker had no written SOP, it would be normal for a battalion or task force to operate on the basis of unwritten but generally understood "standing operating procedures.")

There is no substantial evidence that LTC Barker directly ordered the deliberate killing of noncombatants. However, when considered in the light of the information concerning (a) the alleged leaflet drops and loudspeaker broadcasts, (b) the generally accepted intelligence picture of Son My as being comprised almost exclusively of "VC and VC sympathizers," (c) the assumption that most of the civilians would be "gone to market" at the time of the artillery preparation and combat assault, (d) LTC Barker's decision to fire the artillery preparation on at least a portion of My Lai (4), (e) the commonly known results of previous operations by TF Barker in the Son My area, and (f) the overall concept of the operation, it seems reasonable to conclude that LTC Barker's minimal or nonexistent instructions concerning the handling of noncombatants created the potential for grave misunderstandings as to his intentions and for interpretation of his orders as authority to fire, without restriction, on all persons found in the target area.

Following the briefing, LTC Barker took all of his company commanders, CPT Vazquez, and possibly CPT Kotouc on an aerial reconnaissance of the Son My area. The reconnaissance was apparently intended to provide the company commanders and the artillery liaison officer with a final visual familiarization of the target area, to include their own landing zones and assigned objectives, and to provide CPT Gamble and CPT Michles with transportation back to LZ Uptight. As noted earlier, CPT Medina testified that during the reconnaissance LTC Barker specifically instructed him to destroy My Lai (4). There is no evidence to suggest, however, that LTC Barker embellished his original orders and instructions during the reconnaissance or at any subsequent time prior to the actual beginning of the operation.

F. SUBSEQUENT BRIEFINGS BY COMPANY COMMANDERS

Following LTC Barker's briefing and the aerial reconnaissance, his company commanders returned to their unit areas and issued their own implementing orders. (Since the evidence developed in this Inquiry shows no positive indications of war crimes perpetrated by members of A Company during the ensuing operation, only the briefings given by the B and C Company commanders are described herein).

CPT Michles, the B Company commander, followed his normal procedure of issuing his orders to the platoon leaders, his
artillery forward observer (FO), and selected members of his command group. Key personnel who attended his briefing were:

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<th>Name</th>
<th>Title</th>
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<tr>
<td>LLT (now CPT) Kenneth W. Boatman</td>
<td>Artillery FO</td>
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<td>LLT (now CPT) Thomas K. Willingham</td>
<td>Platoon Leader, 1st Platoon</td>
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<td>LLT Roy B. Cochran</td>
<td>Platoon Leader, 2d Platoon</td>
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<tr>
<td>SSG (now Mr.) Franklin McCloud</td>
<td>Acting Platoon Leader, 3d Platoon</td>
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<td>SSG Edward O. Vann</td>
<td>Acting Platoon Leader, Weapons Platoon</td>
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<td>SGT (now Mr.) Barry P. Marshall</td>
<td>Squad Leader, CP Security Squad</td>
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<tr>
<td>SP4 (now Mr.) Lawrence Congleton</td>
<td>Radio/Telephone Operator (RTO)</td>
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(CPT Michles was killed in a helicopter crash with LTC Barker on 13 June 1968. The details of the orders which he issued on 15 March 1968 have been developed from the testimony of some of the individuals listed above.)

LLT Boatman testified that CPT Michles began his briefing by quoting LTC Barker as having said, "everything down there was VC or VC sympathizers." LLT Boatman also said Michles told them, "we've had a lot of trouble there, not just a little," and they were to "go down and clean the place out."

LLT Willingham stated that he received instructions from CPT Michles to "burn all villages." LLT Boatman also testified that similar instructions were issued by CPT Michles. The command group and platoon leaders all understood that the operation was to be a search and destroy operation. In particular, LLT Willingham said this was the first operation during which the company had to destroy the hamlets of the "Pinkville" area. SP4 Congleton left the briefing with the impression that the area was to be completely destroyed.

The testimony from individual members of the rifle and weapons platoon has provided conflicting information concerning the issuance of orders for the operation. The majority recalled that the briefings were conducted by their squad leaders, although the second platoon may have been briefed by LLT Cochran. The testimony indicates that these briefings provided more details on the essentials of getting to the objective area than a thorough orientation on the methods of accomplishing the
Generally, the substance of the briefings was considered routine and standard procedures were to be used. They did not receive any special instructions on destruction of villages and livestock or on the handling of VC suspects and noncombatants. Because of their experience from two previous operations in the area, they expected to encounter numerous mines and boobytraps. Although the term "search and destroy" was used to describe the mission by most witnesses, they were not told, nor did they expect to get orders on destruction procedures until they were in the objective area.

There were exceptions to the above interpretation. Three men, two from the first platoon, believe they were to shoot anyone found in the objective area. One of these men recalled either CPT Michles or his platoon leader saying, "This is what you have been waiting for--'search and destroy'." Undoubtedly there is some substance to these exceptions. The testimony does not suggest that there was a special effort to prepare the company emotionally for a revenge-type mission. CPT Michles did not stress this operation (in the same manner as CPT Medina by assembling his men and discussing it with them on 15 March. While at the pickup zone on the morning of the 16th, however, he did remind the men to be extra cautious.

CPT Medina assembled most of the officers and men of C Company to issue his orders and instructions for the planned operation. (C Company witnesses testified that CPT Medina's briefing was held following a memorial service for a former member of the company who had been killed in action a few days previously. The testimony of these witnesses is inconclusive as to whether the service was held on 15 March immediately prior to the briefing, or whether it was held prior to the 15th.)

Key personnel who attended CPT Medina's briefing were:

CPT Eugene M. Kotouc
2LT (now Mr.) Roger L. Alaux, Jr.
2LT (now 1LT) William L. Calley
2LT Stephen K. Brooks
2LT (now Mr.) Jeffery U. LaCross
SFC Isaiah Cowan

TF S2
Artillery FO
Platoon Leader, 1st Plt
Platoon Leader, 2d Plt
Platoon Leader, 3d Plt
Platoon SGT, 1st Plt
SSG David Mitchell 1st Squad Leader, 1st Plt
SSG L. G. Bacon 2d Squad Leader, 1st Plt
SFC (now lSG) Jay A. Buchanon Platoon SGT, 2d Plt
SGT Kenneth L. Hodges 1st Squad Leader, 2d Plt
CPL (now SGT) Kenneth Schiel 2d Squad Leader, 2d Plt
SGT Lawrence C. LaCroix 3d Squad Leader, 2d Plt
SSG (now SFC) Manuel R. Lopez Platoon SGT, 3d Plt
SGT (now Mr.) John H. Smail 1st Squad Leader, 3d Plt
SP4 (now Mr.) Joe Grimes, Jr. 3d Squad Leader, 3d Plt
SFC Leo M. Maroney Platoon SGT, Mortar Plt

(One witness from C Company testified that there were one or more field grade officers also in attendance at Medina's briefing. This is not substantiated by other available evidence.)

CPT Medina testified that at the time of his briefing he felt sure that the company would make heavy contact with the enemy the next morning and would probably suffer heavy casualties. He stated that he was deeply concerned about it and that he "tried to convey this same message to the people in Charlie Company" during the course of his briefing. Using a stick or some such device he sketched out the planned scheme of maneuver on the ground as he briefed his men. All of his orders and instructions were issued orally, as is the usual case with a company-size unit.

During his briefing, CPT Medina reiterated the purported intelligence concerning the 48th VC Battalion's location in My Lai (4). He told his men that they would probably be outnumbered approximately 2 to 1 and that he expected the LZ to be "hot," or under enemy fire, when the first lift touched down. He informed his men of the artillery preparation and then described his planned scheme of maneuver (see sketch 5-4). The 1st Platoon, which was to be inserted onto the LZ first, was assigned the right (or southern) sector of the hamlet with the mission of "sweeping the enemy out to the open area on the east side of the village." The 2d Platoon was assigned the left (or northern) sector of the hamlet and had the same mission as the 1st Platoon. The 3d Platoon was to be used initially as the company reserve, with the mission of providing security for the LZ and then to search and clear the hamlet in greater detail after the 1st and 2d Platoons had completed their sweeps. A

5-12
mortal squad from the Weapons Platoon was to accompany the 3d Platoon into the LZ and provide mortar fire support to the company, if needed. If not required, the squad was to move with and assist the 3d Platoon. CPT Medina also issued general instructions concerning cleaning of weapons, and discussed ammunition loads to be carried the next day. He reminded his men of the need to be thorough and careful in searching and destroying the numerous tunnels and bunkers which he expected to encounter at My Lai (4). At the same time, allegedly because of COL Henderson's earlier remarks, CPT Medina reemphasized the necessity for aggressively closing with the enemy in order to prevent retrieval of enemy weapons from dead VC by "other men, women, children, or other VC soldiers in the area."

With respect to the key issues involved in his issuance of orders and instructions, the evidence is conclusive that CPT Medina ordered the men of his company to burn and destroy My Lai (4), and to kill all livestock and destroy other foodstuffs found in the area. The evidence is less explicit but equally convincing that CPT Medina's orders and instructions concerning the inhabitants of My Lai (4) left little or no doubt in the minds of a significant number of men in his company that all persons remaining in the My Lai (4) area at the time of combat assault were enemy, and that C Company's mission was to destroy the enemy. According to his own testimony, this was based on his having been told (during the TF briefing) that "there would be no civilian population in the village. Any men, any women and children would be gone to market at 0700 hours." CPT Medina's acceptance of this estimate is further evinced by his own testimony that during his remarks to his men "any reference made as to what we might find in My Lai (4) was that of the 48th VC Battalion." He explained that he was trying to prepare his men "mentally and physically to meet a VC Main Force Battalion...trying to build their morale up, giving them psychological bread to go in and do battle with the 48th VC Battalion." Many witnesses have testified that CPT Medina also made reference to casualties which the company had recently taken from enemy mines, boobytraps, and sniper fire, and that he alluded to the forthcoming operation as an opportunity for "revenge" or to "get even" with the enemy. In a very real sense, then, it appears that the operation took on the added aspect of a grudge match between C Company and an enemy force in My Lai (4).

There is no substantial evidence to indicate that CPT Medina discussed procedures to be followed in case any civilian inhabitants of My Lai (4) elected to stay home from the market on the morning of 16 March 1968.

Later in the evening, CPT Medina held another meeting with his platoon leaders and their platoon sergeants. Testimony
concerning the substance of this meeting is conflicting, but it appears that nothing was said which altered in any way his earlier instructions concerning the next day's operation.

The testimony of key personnel is also inconclusive with regard to the conduct or content of subsequent platoon-level briefings by 2LT's Calley, Brooks, or LaCross. LT LaCross testified to the effect that any instructions issued by him related only to organizing and equipping his men for the operation. Briefings of a similar nature apparently were given by LT's Calley and Brooks.

The preponderance of the testimony from most C Company personnel is consistent in their description of the men's reaction to CPT Medina's briefing as described in the following representative examples:

"When we left the briefing we felt we were going to have a lot of resistance and we knew we were supposed to kill everyone in the village."
-William Calvin Lloyd, 1st Plt, C/1-20 Inf

"...the attitude of all the men, the majority, I would say was a revengeful attitude, they all felt a little bad because (we) lost a number of buddies prior to My Lai (4)."
-SGT Gregory T. Olson, 1st Plt, C/1-20 Inf

"That evening, as we cleaned our weapons and got our gear ready, we talked about the operation. People were talking about killing everything that moved. Everyone knew what we were going to do."
-Robert Wayne Pendleton, 3d Plt, C/1-20 Inf

"I would describe the mood (of C Company) as a feeling that they were going to wreak some vengeance on someone—things hadn't been very good to us up until that time."
-SGT Michael A. Bernhardt, 2d Plt, C/1-20 Inf

"Although CPT Medina didn't say to kill everyone in the village, I heard guys talking and were of the opinion that everyone in the village was to be killed. At this time we had had a lot of casualties from a minefield and everybody was pretty well shook up."
-James Robert Bergthold, 1st Plt, C/1-20 Inf

"...we were all 'psyched' up because we wanted revenge for some of our fallen comrades that had been killed prior to this operation in the general area of 'Pinkville'."
-Allen Joseph Boyce, 1st Plt, C/1-20 Inf
"We expected strong VC resistance. We were really expecting trouble. We were all psyched up."
-Dennis Irving Conti, 1st Plt, C/1-20 Inf

"...it seemed like it was a chance to get revenge or something like that for the lives we had lost."
-Tommy L. Moss, 2d Plt, 1C/1-20 Inf

The succeeding portions of this chapter provide a summary of the chronology and sequence of events which occurred throughout the Son My operation. Chapter 6 contains a more detailed account of C Company actions in and around the subhamlet of My Lai (4) on 16 March and in the hamlet of My Khe on 17 March. Chapter 7 contains a similar account of B Company actions in the hamlets of Co Luy and My Lai during the period 16-19 March.

G. SUMMARY OF OPERATIONS ON 16 MARCH

During the night of 15-16 March, the 2d Platoon of A Company moved from the company's night defensive position in the vicinity of Hill 108 (see sketch 5-5) to a blocking position along the river due south of the hill mass. At approximately 0530 hours on the morning of the 16th, the remainder of the company began its movement by foot toward designated blocking positions along the Song Diem Diem, north of the Son My area. As the company moved to the east, its lead elements received fire from an estimated squad-size enemy force located in the vicinity of Phu My (1), and one man from Company A was slightly wounded. The return fire was returned, the enemy dispersed, and the 1st and 3d Platoons continued moving toward their respective blocking positions located to the east and south of Phu My (1). At 0725 hours all elements of A Company were reported to be in position.

By 0708 hours, five troop-carrying helicopters and two accompanying gunships from the 174th Aviation Company, and four troop-carrying helicopters from the 71st Aviation Company arrived at LZ Dottie. They were loaded with the 1st Platoon (consisting of approximately 28 men), with a 6-8 man command group from the company headquarters (including CPT Medina), and with 18-24 members of the 2d Platoon. The first load lifted off from LZ Dottie at approximately 0715 hours.

The initial marking round for the artillery preparation fired from LZ Uptight at approximately 0722 hours and detonated about 1,000 meters to the north of My Lai (4). CPT Vazquez, artillery liaison officer, stated that he observed the smoke marking round from his vantage point in LTC Barker's command control helicopter, and relayed firing adjustment instructions to the fire direction center at LZ Uptight. He has testified that the firing adjustment instructions were coupled with his
order for the entire battery to "fire for effect" immediately following the 1,000-meter shift. CPT Vazquez subsequently testified that this order was given to conserve time and "get on with the operation."

The full artillery preparation began at approximately 0724 hours and impacted both on the LZ for C Company and in the southwestern portion of My Lai (4). There is conflicting testimony as to the number and type of rounds that were fired in the preparation. Several witnesses testified that the preparation probably consisted of as few as 30 rounds and contained no white phosphorous shells. The preponderance of the evidence, however, indicates that from 60 to 120 mixed rounds of point detonating high explosive ammunition along with some white phosphorous ammunition, were fired in the preparation.

Shortly before insertion of C Company's first lift, the aero-scout team from B Company, 123d Aviation Battalion arrived in the Son My area and established their aerial screen generally parallel to and south of Route 521. Several members of the aero-scout team observed the artillery preparation going into the north of their location.

The lead ship of the troop-carrying helicopters, inbound toward the LZ at about 0727 hours, contacted LTC Barker by radio and was advised by him that there were "no restrictions on door gunners" in the placing of helicopter suppressive fires on the area. Following completion of the artillery preparation at about 0729 hours, gunship suppressive fires, consisting of rockets and machinegun fire, were placed on the LZ and probably on portions of My Lai (4).

The lead elements of C Company touched down at 0730 hours, approximately 100-150 meters west of My Lai (4). The LZ was officially recorded as "cold" or free of enemy fire. C Company personnel hit the ground running and immediately took up positions from which to secure the LZ for subsequent lifts. The troop lift helicopters returned to LZ Dottie for pick up of the second lift while the two accompanying "Shark" gunships remained orbiting over the My Lai (4) area.

The second lift of C Company departed from LZ Dottie at 0736 hours. It consisted of the remaining personnel from the 2d Platoon, the entire 3d Platoon (approximately 30 men), seven to nine men from the company mortar platoon, two men from the 52d Military Intelligence detachment, and two personnel from the 11th Brigade Public Information Office (PIO).

The second and final lift of C Company was inserted at 0747 hours. As the helicopters were departing the LZ, the lead ship
reported having received fire from one of the hamlets in the vicinity of My Lai (4) but apparently sustained no hits on the aircraft nor any casualties among the troop passengers.

COL Henderson's command group, on the morning of 16 March, consisted of COL Henderson, MAJ McKnight (11th Brigade S3), LTC Luper (CO 6-11th Artillery), LTC MacLachlan (Air Force Liaison Officer to the 11th Brigade), CSM Walsh (11th Brigade Sergeant Major), and SGT Adcock (COL Henderson's radio operator). COL Henderson and MAJ McKnight have testified that the command and control helicopter had reported late to the brigade headquarters that morning, and the command group consequently did not arrive over the operational area until approximately 0750 hours. However, LTC MacLachlan and SGT Adcock testified that the command group arrived over the area in time to observe the artillery preparation and first insertion by C Company (approximately 0725 hours). LTC Luper also testified that the preparation was visible from a distance as they arrived in the area and that they observed the landing of C Company's first elements. CSM Walsh remembered few of the details concerning the combat assault.

Upon arriving in the vicinity of My Lai (4), both COL Henderson and MAJ McKnight recall observing helicopter gunships orbiting to the northeast of the LZ and dropping red smoke markers on the ground. COL Henderson orbited above that point and observed two bodies dressed in uniforms with web gear and two weapons. He and MAJ McKnight testified that at about this same time, they also observed a large number of personnel (approximately 300) moving out of the operational area in "an orderly manner" along Route 521 to the southwest. At approximately 0800 hours, MAJ McKnight contacted LTC Barker by radio to advise him of the mass departure. Barker acknowledged the transmission and informed McKnight that he would send the aero­

scout team over the area to "check out" the people along the road. Shortly afterwards, MAJ McKnight contacted the aero­

scout team himself and informed them that COL Henderson's command and control ship was orbiting over the column of de­

parting personnel and had observed three individuals dressed in black. The scout team subsequently notified MAJ McKnight that two of the three individuals had been stopped and were available to be picked up. At approximately 0810 hours, the two suspects were picked up by COL Henderson's command and control helicopter. COL Henderson then observed B Company's combat assault.

After completion of the C Company combat assault, the troop lift helicopters had flown to LZ Uptight where they loaded the first lift of B Company. A second artillery preparation,
which was to support the B Company landing, began at 0808 hours and was completed at approximately 0812 hours. Shortly afterwards, the first lift of B Company was inserted onto the LZ, located approximately 500 meters south of My Lai (1). The LZ was reported as being "cold." By 0830 hours, the remaining elements of B Company had been lifted from Uptight into the same LZ.

Following B Company's combat assault, COL Henderson apparently returned to the area north of My Lai (4) where he had previously observed the two bodies with weapons.

On the ground, C Company had earlier formed up with the 1st and 2d Platoons generally on line and had begun its movements to the east toward My Lai (4) (see sketch 5-6). Lead elements of the company entered its western edge at approximately 0750 hours. CPT Medina and the command group initially remained behind on the LZ as elements of the company entered the hamlet.

At approximately 0830 hours, during the course of the company's movement through the hamlet, the 2d Platoon moved out into the open area to the north of My Lai (4) to retrieve the two enemy weapons observed by COL Henderson. The location of the weapons was marked by "Shark" gunships which had returned from supporting the B Company combat assault. After retrieving the weapons, the platoon was directed by CPT Medina to move to the subhamlet of Binh Tay located 400 meters north of My Lai (4) proper.

Following his observation of the C Company elements, COL Henderson returned to LZ Dottie, arriving there at approximately 0845 hours. He released the two VC suspects to a Military Intelligence prisoner interrogation team and spoke to MG Koster who arrived later. COL Henderson denied having spoken to LTC Barker during this time or having visited the TOC where the details of the operation were being monitored, recorded, and reported to his headquarters at Duc Pho. LTC MacLachlan and MAJ Calhoun testified, however, that they observed COL Henderson talking with LTC Barker, inside the TOC, during this period of time.

MG Koster arrived at LZ Dottie at 0935 hours. He apparently spoke to COL Henderson for approximately 15-30 minutes and then departed. According to his testimony, he had spent the earlier part of the morning in the northern part of the Americal Division's zone, and is uncertain as to whether he flew over the Son My area prior to his arrival at LZ Dottie. COL Henderson testified that he was under the impression, at the time he spoke to MG Koster, that Koster had flown over the area.
LTC Barker spent most of the morning in his command and control helicopter over the operational area, controlling and coordinating the combat assaults. Evidence indicates that he returned to LZ Dottie on at least three occasions during the morning. He returned the first time at approximately 0835 hours for refueling. The evidence available indicates that he remained on the ground until approximately 0855 hours and that he took advantage of the time not only to refuel his helicopter but also to bring the personnel in his TOC up to date on the results of the operation.

Back in the Son My area, the 2d Platoon of C Company reached the subhamlet of Binh Tay at approximately 0845 hours, and remained in and around that area for approximately one hour. Following completion of its action, the platoon returned to My Lai (4) to rejoin the rest of the company which had set up a perimeter along the eastern edge of the hamlet.

To the east, B Company had encountered no reported resistance to its movement north toward My Lai (1), but suffered one man killed (the 2d Platoon leader) and four wounded from a boobytrap detonated on the southwestern edge of the hamlet (see sketch 5-7).

At approximately 0850 hours, the aero-scout team screening to the southwest of B Company reported capturing two 60mm mortar tubes along with 60mm and 82mm mortar ammunition. This report was later amended to reflect only the 60mm mortar ammunition.

As B Company progressed toward My Lai (1), another enemy boobytrap was detonated, wounding three men. LTC Barker had returned from LZ Dottie to the My Lai (1) area and used his command and control helicopter to evacuate the three wounded men from B Company at approximately 0945 hours.

Because of the heavy concentration of mines and boobytraps in and around My Lai (1), the 3d Platoon of B Company was diverted to the northwest to search out the hamlet of My Lai (6) while the 2d Platoon and the command group remained in the area west of My Lai (1).

Following his pickup of the B Company wounded, LTC Barker had the helicopter drop him off for a second time at LZ Dottie at approximately 0950 hours, while the wounded men were taken by his helicopter to the medical facility at Chu Lai.

After leaving LZ Dottie at approximately 1000 hours, COL Henderson returned to the operational area until about
hours, when he departed for a courtesy call on the 2d ARVN Division Commander at Quang Ngai City, and a subsequent lunch break at his headquarters in Duc Pho. MG Koster apparently also departed LZ Dottie at approximately 1000 hours.

Although lead elements of the 1st Platoon of C Company had reached the eastern edge of My Lai (4) by about 0900 hours, the company continued to operate in that area until about 1330 hours before moving on to the northeast to link up with B Company.

By the time the company was ready to begin its movement to the northeast for the link-up, a total of 90 VC had been reported killed along with 3 weapons captured, and 23 VC suspects detained in the vicinity of My Lai (4). One soldier from C Company had been wounded in the foot apparently as a result of the accidental discharge of a weapon while inside My Lai (4).

B Company's 1st Platoon, which was operating along the coast to the east of My Lai (1), reported killing several groups of enemy and capturing assorted enemy equipment at the same general location beginning at 0955 hours (see sketch 5-7). The platoon reported a total of 30 enemy KIA accumulated by 1025 hours and by 1420 hours had reported killing a total of 38 enemy and capturing assorted gear. By that time, the remainder of the company had completed its sweep through My Lai (6) and the area west of My Lai (1) and had reached the night defensive position west of the hamlet. The 1st Platoon subsequently moved north from the site of the reported enemy dead and established a platoon defensive position along the coastline near My Lai (3) (see sketch 5-8).

COL Henderson testified that he returned to the operational area early in the afternoon, following his meeting at Quang Ngai City and a subsequent stopoff at the brigade headquarters at Duc Pho. During the afternoon, he stopped off at LZ Dottie on at least two occasions, during which time he discussed the operation with LTC Barker. He also testified that he overflew the Son My area, observing the operation, at least twice during the afternoon. He returned to Duc Pho in the late afternoon.

By approximately 1530 hours, C Company had completed its movement from My Lai (4) to the night defensive position and shortly thereafter linked up with B Company (see sketch 5-9). (According to the TF Journal, the 1st Platoon of C Company subsequently moved to a night defensive position located about 800 meters to the southwest of the main defensive site.) C Company brought 10 suspects to the night
defensive position where they were subsequently interrogated by Vietnamese National Police elements. The National Police had been flown into the position by helicopter and were accompanied by CPT Kotouc, TF S2. CPT Kotouc also delivered instructions from LTC Barker concerning the continuation of the operation on 17 and 18 March.

During the day, A Company had suffered two booby-trap casualties within the 3d Platoon blocking position, but had failed to detect any enemy fleeing north toward their positions.

The aero-scout team from B Company, 123d Aviation Battalion had continued to support the operation in Son My and the peripheral area throughout most of the afternoon of the 16th.

Operating to the east of B Company, the Navy "Swift Boats" sighted and boarded several sampans containing Vietnamese males and children. At approximately 1700 hours, these detainees were turned over to B Company elements.

After having visited the 11th Brigade headquarters at Duc Pho (from 1510 to 1535 hours), MG Koster returned to LZ Dottie at 1645 hours, bringing with him LTG Edgar C. Doleman (Ret.) who was visiting the Americal Division in conjunction with a special study of communications systems in Southeast Asia (COMSEA). MG Koster and LTG Doleman (Ret.) were briefed on the operation by LTC Barker, and departed LZ Dottie at 1715 hours.

By the evening of 16 March 1968, TF Barker had reported a total of 128 VC killed, 3 weapons captured, assorted mines, boobytraps and equipment captured and destroyed, and friendly casualties of 2 killed and 11 wounded from the first day's action in the Son My operation. With the possible exception of one man, slightly wounded, from A Company, none of the TF Barker casualties was inflicted by direct enemy fire.

H. SUMMARY OF OPERATIONS ON 17 MARCH

At 0400 hours on the morning of the 17th, persons assumed to be VC were detected crossing the bridge south of the blocking position occupied by A Company's 1st Platoon. They were engaged by the platoon and withdrew immediately. Following this encounter, A Company remained in its designated blocking positions throughout most of the remainder of the day.
Early that morning, both C Company and B Company began moving toward the south from their night defensive position. B Company skirted the southern edge of My Lai (1) and moved to the bridge located to the southeast of the hamlet (see sketch 5-10). The company began crossing the Song My Khe at that point at about 0800 hours. At 0810 hours the company had one man wounded from a booby trap detonated near the eastern end of the bridge and shortly thereafter reported receiving sniper fire from the vicinity of My Khe (4). The company continued moving to the south along the coastline. At 1320 hours, B Company's 2d Platoon reported killing one VC approximately 400 meters north of Co Lay (1). Subsequently, the company passed through Co Lay (2) and Co Lay (3) before returning to the north again later in the day.

C Company also moved to the south, generally parallel to B Company, and passed through the subhamlets of My Khe (3), My Khe (1), and My Khe (2) (see sketch 5-10). En route, one man was wounded by an enemy mine or booby trap detonated in the vicinity of Hill 85 at 0930 hours. He was evacuated by helicopter at 1000 hours.

During the course of its movement to the south, C Company discovered several mines and booby traps in and around the hamlets, and at 1410 hours reported engaging and killing two VC to the southwest of My Khe (1). At 1530 hours, while moving into My Khe (2), C Company reported apprehending three VC suspects consisting of two men and one woman.

After reaching the Song Tra Khuc, C Company turned back to the north toward a night defensive position located to the east of My Khe (1) and on the western side of the Song Kinh Giang (see sketch 5-11). While en route to this location, elements of the company were reported to have found one VC hiding in a tunnel approximately 1,000 meters north of My Khe (2). The individual was killed by the throwing of a grenade into the tunnel. C Company reached their selected night location at approximately 1800 hours.

After reaching the Song Tra Khuc, B Company also turned back to the north and moved along the coast until it reached its defensive position, located approximately halfway between Co Lay (1) and My Khe (4) (see sketch 5-11). B Company was closed into that location by 1900 hours, and reported no further action during the remainder of the 17th.

Late in the afternoon, A Company (minus the 2d Platoon) had moved from its northern blocking positions to night ambush sites located in the vicinity of Giem Dien (1), on the southern side of the Song Diem Diem (see sketch 5-12). In the meantime,
the 2d Platoon had moved from its position along the Song Diem Diem, to establish a night ambush position approximately 1 to 1-1/2 kilometers to the northwest. At 2115 hours, the company commander reported that the company (-) had received six to seven rounds of enemy 60mm mortar fire. Friendly casualties from the fire were two killed and five wounded. The casualties were subsequently determined to have been caused by hand grenades apparently hurled into the company's positions by enemy sappers. The wounded were evacuated by 2245 hours and A Company reported no further action on the 17th.

I. SUMMARY OF OPERATIONS ON 18 MARCH

By 0800 hours on the morning of 18 March, both B and C Companies had moved out from their previous night positions. C Company initially moved west back through My Khe (1) and then swung north toward the pickup zone in the vicinity of My Lai (3). B Company continued to move along the coast in the direction of the fish ponds north of My Lai (2) (see sketch 5-13).

As C Company passed to the west of My Lai (1), it suffered two more casualties from an enemy booby trap. One platoon was left behind to secure a pickup zone for the medical evacuation helicopter and the remainder of the company continued its movement to the north.

At approximately 1300 hours, the company received word that COL Henderson was en route to its location to talk with the company commander, CPT Medina. A landing site was secured approximately 900 meters to the northwest of My Lai (1) and COL Henderson and members of his command group landed shortly thereafter. They remained on the ground 10-30 minutes, then departed, and the company continued its movement to the helicopter extraction site near My Lai (3).

After reaching the My Lai (3) area, C Company secured its own pickup zone. The extraction began at 1420 hours and was completed, with all elements back at LZ Dottie, by 1630 hours. The extraction was carried out through the use of two or three UH-1 "Slick" helicopters. The first load of C Company men to be extracted was met at LZ Dottie by COL Henderson.

Earlier that morning, A Company (-) had begun moving northwest from the Giem Dien area. The company crossed the Song Ham Giang at a fording site and by 2045 hours that night had reached a night defensive position in the vicinity of Hills 108 and 109 (see sketch 5-14). The company reported no further action that night.

5-23
By 1900 hours, B Company had reached the fish ponds in the vicinity of Ky Xuyen (1), and collected the inhabitants to facilitate a search of the area (see sketch 5-15). Subsequently, the inhabitants of Ky Xuyen (2) and An Ky were also rounded up and moved into Ky Xuyen (1) so that the two subhamlets would be clear for searches to be conducted by B Company on the following day. The 1st Platoon then established an ambush location approximately 200 meters to the north of Ky Xuyen (1). No further activity was reported by B Company on 18 March.

J. SUMMARY OF OPERATIONS ON 19 MARCH

At 0130 hours on 19 March, CPT Michles reported that B Company was receiving incoming mortar rounds. Approximately 15-16 mortar rounds and enemy small arms fire were received in the initial volley, resulting in one soldier killed and five wounded. CPT Michles requested a medical evacuation helicopter and a light fire team (two gunships) to assist him. By 0245 hours the wounded had been evacuated and the gunships were on station. They remained on station until 0300 hours and then returned to Duc Pho. At 0440 hours, CPT Michles reported receiving an additional two rounds of enemy mortar fire with no resultant friendly casualties.

After first light, the 1st Platoon searched the area to the northeast of its night defensive position in an attempt to locate the enemy mortar position and found the mortar firing position but no enemy mortar.

At 1050 hours, LTC Barker began extraction of B Company from the Son My area, using his command and control helicopter for troop lift. The 1st Platoon was extracted first and was taken to LZ Uptight. The remainder of the company was extracted to LZ Dottie and had closed at that location by 1345 hours.

B Company's return to LZ Dottie on 19 March 1968 concluded TF Barker operations in the Son My area.

K. SUBSEQUENT OPERATIONS BY TF BARKER (See sketch 5-16)

There is no evidence to indicate that any TF Barker elements entered the Son My area again following the 16-19 March operation.

Following the operation, the rifle companies of the TF were employed in operations which were apparently routine and of no present significance, until they left the
TF to rejoin their present battalions. Until they left the TF, the companies were employed in the areas and time periods described below. During this period they were apparently broken down into platoon and squad-size elements and conducted semi-independent operations within their assigned areas.

Following its arrival in an area northeast of LZ Uptight on 19 March, A Company continued to conduct operations along the eastern coast of Binh Son District until 24 March. These operations were apparently designed to assist in protecting the rice harvest which was then in progress. No significant enemy contacts were reported during this period. The company returned by helicopter to LZ Dottie on 24 March, remained there through the 25th, and then moved to provide local security for LZ Thunder located to the south near Duc Pho. Following its movement to LZ Thunder, A Company did not participate in any further operations by TF Barker.

On 19 March, B Company was airlifted from the Son My area to LZ Dottie, and remained at that location through 23 March, to provide local security forces for both LZ Dottie and LZ Uptight. On 24 March, the company moved by foot to the vicinity of hill mass 108-109, approximately 3 to 5 kilometers to the southwest of LZ Uptight, and continued operations in that area through 1 April. Only scattered contacts occurred during this period, with a total of five VC reported as killed by the time B Company returned to LZ Dottie and LZ Uptight on the afternoon of 2 April. B Company remained at LZ Dottie until the TF was disbanded on 8 April.

After being relieved of the local security mission by B Company, C Company moved overland on 20 March to an area approximately 5 kilometers east of LZ Dottie. Operations were conducted from that location to a distance of about 5 kilometers to the northwest during the period 20-25 March with no reported enemy contact. On 26 March, the company was airlifted back to LZ Dottie where it assumed the security mission from A Company until 2 April. On 3 April the company conducted a one-day operation approximately 6 kilometers north-northeast of LZ Dottie, and returned to Dottie by nightfall of that same day. On 4 April, the company moved by foot to an area approximately 6 kilometers north-northwest of LZ Dottie and conducted operations in that area until 8 April. On 8 April, C Company was extracted by helicopter and was moved to rejoin its parent battalion (1st Battalion, 20th Infantry) which was then engaged in Operation Norfolk Victory (I) southwest of Quang Ngai City.

TF Barker was officially disestablished at 1200 hours, 8 April 1968.
TF BARKER EXTENSION
OF MUSCATINE A O
SON MY OPERATION
16-19 MARCH 1968

KILOMETERS

SKETCH 5-1
PLANNED SCHEME OF MANEUVER FOR SON MY OPERATION
16 MARCH 1968

LZ DOTTIE (APPROX 11 KM)

LZ UPTIGHT (APPROX 5 KM)

A

3-1

BLOCKING POSITION

OBU

MY LAI (4)

LZ-1 C/1-20

LZ-2 B/4-3

MY LAI (I)
PINKVILLE

MY LAI (2)

MY KHE (4)

CO LAY(1)

CO LAY(2)
GENERAL LOCATION OF
PLANNED ARTILLERY
PREPARATION FOR C/1-20
16 MARCH 1968
0 METERS 250

Binh Tay

MY KAI (4)
(THUAN YEN)

LZ 1

SKETCH 5-3
GENERAL SCHEME OF MANEUVER PLANNED FOR C/1-20 16 MARCH 1968
A COMPANY MOVEMENTS
15-16 MARCH 1968

0530 HRS
A

ENEMY FIRE RECEIVED
(0640 HRS)

1A/3-I
(0725 HRS)

3A/3-I
(0725 HRS)

2A/3-I
(0725 HRS)

A COMPANY MOVEMENTS
15-16 MARCH 1968

SKETCH 5-5
APPROX 1000 HRS
2d PLT RETURNS TO MY LAI (4)

APPROX 0845 HRS
ENEMY WEAPONS RETRIEVED (APPROX 0840 HRS)

APPROX 0750 HRS

APPROX 0900 HRS

C COMPANY MOVEMENTS
16 MARCH 1968 (AM)
VICINITY OF MY LAI

0 METERS 250
500
3d PLT

2d BOOBY TRAP
DETONATED-0930
3 US WIA

1st BOOBY TRAP
DETONATED-0845
1 US KIA
4 US WIA

LZ B/4-3

AERO SCOUT
TEAM CAPTURES
60MM MORTAR
AMMO

38 ENEMY REPORTED
KILLED BY 1st PLT
0955-1420 HRS

INITIAL B COMPANY
MOVEMENTS
16 MARCH 1968

My Lai (6)

My Lai (1)
"PINKVILLE"

My Khe (4)
(MY HOI)
B COMPANY MOVEMENTS
16 MARCH 1968 (PM)
VICINITY OF MY LAI (1) AND (2)

1A/3-1

NIGHT DEFENSIVE POSITION FOR CO B (-) AND CO C (-) 1420 HRS

MY LAI (2)

NIGHT DEFENSIVE POSITION FOR 1st PLATOON

KY XUYEN (1)

38 ENEMY REPORTED KILLED BY 1420 HRS

MY KHE (4)
DEPART MY LAI (4) APPROX 1330 HRS

LINK UP WITH B CO - APPROX 500 METERS NW

1ST PLT NIGHT DEFENSIVE POSITION

C COMPANY MOVEMENTS

16 MARCH 1968 VICINITY OF MY LAI (5) AND (6)
MOVEMENTS (PM) AND NIGHT DEFENSIVE POSITIONS OF B AND C COMPANIES
17 MARCH 1968

C/1-20 NIGHT DEFENSIVE POSITION - 1800 HRS

1 VC REPORTED KILLED

B/4-3 NIGHT DEFENSIVE POSITION (1900 HRS)

3d PLT NIGHT DEFENSIVE POSITION (1900 HRS)
A COMPANY MOVEMENTS AND LOCATIONS
17 MARCH 1968

REPORTED LOCATION OF VC MORTAR/SAPPER ATTACK ON A/3-1 (-) (2115 HRS)
B AND C COMPANY MOVEMENTS AND LOCATIONS ON 18 MARCH 1968

- LZ SECURED FOR COL HENDERSON'S VISIT - APPROX 1300 HRS
- PICKUP SITE (PZ) FOR C/1-20
- * BOOBY TRAP DETONATED - 1233 HRS 2 US WIA
- SKETCH 5-13
A COMPANY MOVEMENTS AND LOCATIONS
18 MARCH 1968

A/3-1 (2045 HRS)
2A/3-1
A/3-1(-)
1B/4-3
NIGHT AMBUSH SITE - 18 MARCH

AREA SEARCHED ON MORNING OF 19 MARCH

B COMPANY MOVEMENT AND LOCATIONS FOR 18 MARCH (PM) AND 19 MARCH (A M)

SKETCH 5-15
GENERAL AREA OF OPERATIONS FOR C/I-20
4-8 APRIL 1968

GENERAL AREA OF OPERATIONS FOR A/3-1
19-23 MARCH 1968

GENERAL AREA OF OPERATIONS FOR C/I-20
20-25 MARCH 1968

AREAS OF OPERATION FOR TF BARKER ELEMENTS FOLLOWING THE SON MY OPERATION