DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
Headquarters, 3d Bn 187th Abn Infantry
APO San Francisco, 96383

SUBJECT: Combat After Action Report, Operation APACHE SNOW,
Period 9 May thru 21 May 1969.

TO: Commanding General
101st Airborne Division
ATTN: ACofS, G3
APO San Francisco, 96383

THRU: Commanding Officer
3d Brigade, 101st Airborne Division
ATTN: S3
APO San Francisco, 96383

1. NAME OF OPERATION: APACHE SNOW/Reconnaissance In Force.


3. LOCATION: Vicinity YC320989, Nam Hon District, Thua Thien Province
I CTZ: Republic of Viet Nam, Map Series L7015; Map Sheet 6441 IV;
Scale 1:50,000.

4. Headquarters 3d Battalion, 187th Airborne Infantry, APO San Francisco,
Calif. 96383.

5. REPORTING OFFICER: LTC Weldon F. Honeycutt

6. TASK ORGANIZATION: 3d Battalion, 187th Airborne Infantry

HQ(-) 3/187
Arty LNO
Engineer Squad(-)(B, 326th Eng)
81 Mortar Section

A/3/187
Engineer Section
1 PIO Rep

B/3/187 (Initially 3d BDE RES)

C/3/187
Engineer Section
1 PIO Rep

D/3/187
Engineer Section

A/2/506 OPCON (18-21 May)

7. SUPPORTING FORCES - ANNEX A

8. INTELLIGENCE - ANNEX B
UNCLASSIFIED

9. MISSION: 3d Battalion 3/187, Airborne Infantry combat assaults at H-Hour D-Day (10 May) into LZ 2, coordinate YC314989, vicinity of the Laotian border to destroy NVA/VC forces, interdict enemy LOC, and to locate and destroy his forces within the assigned AO.

10. CONCEPT OF OPERATION: 3d Battalion, 187th Airborne Infantry combat assaults into LZ 2 with D, A, and C Companies in that order. After securing the LZ, D Company RIF's to the SE to secure the high ground vicinity coordinate YC320989. A Company RIF's to the NW and secures the high ground vicinity coordinate YC308994. C Company RIF's to the SW vicinity coordinate YC315985. D Company, initially Brigade Reserve, on order, Combat Assault into LZ 2, RIF SE and link up with Battalion Headquarters. After securing and searching out the border area, 3/187th RIF's to vicinity, Dewar Tia, Hill 937, (YC328981) and searches that ridge complex to the SW vicinity coordinate YC315970; the south vicinity coordinate YC326973; and SE vicinity coordinate YC337976. From this key terrain, conduct RIF's throughout the assigned AO, generally NE to the A-Shau Valley vicinity of A Luci (Y3385901).

1. EXECUTION: ANNEX C (EXECUTION)

2. RESULTS:

a. ENEMY LOSSES

(1) Personnel Losses by Day. (KIA by 3/187th small arms only).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Personnel Losses</th>
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<tr>
<td>10 May</td>
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<td>15 May</td>
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<td>19 May</td>
<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td>20 May</td>
<td>78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21 May</td>
<td>0*</td>
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KIA 357
KFA 102
TOTAL 459

(2) KFA - 102**
(3) PK's - 2
(4) TWC - 12
(5) CSWC - 2
(6) Friendly to enemy killed ratio 1:12
(7) Kill to wpns captured ratio 1:32

*Thirteen bodies found 21 May were credited to action on 15 May; five bodies to action on 13 May.
**Killed by Air Strikes flown in support of 3/187 only.

UNCLASSIFIED
b. US LOSSES

(1) Personnel Losses by day.

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<th>Date</th>
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<th>WIA</th>
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<th>KFBP+</th>
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<td>32</td>
<td>266</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>283</td>
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</table>

*Friendly Fire (AAA)

TOTAL
KIA 329*
WIA EVAC 283
WIA RETURNED to DUTY 35
KIA 36

(2) EQUIPMENT DAMAGED:

- 14 An/PRC 25 Radios
- 1 90mm Recoilless Rifle
- 5 Starlight Scopes

*This figure includes all wounds received regardless of severity. Some personnel were wounded two or more times and are included each time in the total, consequently the total number of actual persons wounded is less than the stated figures.

13. ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS:

a. Supply: The logistical support was provided by a Battalion Forward Support Point located at E3 Berchtesgaden utilizing UH-1D aircraft to shuttle requested items to the field elements, and by the Battalion S-4 in conjunction with the FSSM located at Camp Evans, utilizing OH-47 aircraft. Bulk items of supply such as class I, III, IV, V, and water were flown from Camp Evans to E3 Berchtesgaden by OH-47 to maintain a three-day basic load. Although this three-day basic load was essential to insure that the field ole
were provided with required quantities of the basic classes of supply, it was not always, in fact, present at the forward resupply point.

Due to numerous "Combat Emergency" sorties required by the artillery units in support of the operation, a backlog of sorties for this unit developed and this, combined with dwindling supplies on hand at Fire Base Berchtesgaden, required that this unit declare certain sorties as "Combat Emergency".

Property accountability throughout the operation was difficult, due to the intensive fighting and the number of casualties. In the future to prevent different companies' equipment becoming mixed up, companies will utilize their supply clerks in the field, as coordinators between the companies and Battalion S4 who normally receive backhauled equipment. Each unit will utilize a company roster indicating each individual's type of weapon, its serial number, as well as a separate "line number" for the individual. In addition to greatly speeding up casualty reporting, this line number could be affixed to the individual's weapon and rucksack, which would greatly simplify identifying evacuated equipment.

b. Maintenance: Just prior to operation Apache Snow, all four rifle companies participated in a casualty stand down during which F6S2 contact torps were made available.

c. Treatment, Evacuation and Hospitalization of wounded:

(1) Treatment of casualties was accomplished quickly and skillfully by members of the medical platoon, including replacements who had no previous combat experience. Emphasis on control of hemorrhage, using mechanical means and large amounts of I.V. fluids, in particular serum albumin, kept shock casualties to a minimum.

(2) Evacuation of the wounded from the forward edge of the battle area to the Battalion Headquarters LZ was accomplished by light observation helicopter. An evacuation triad system was set up whereby patients were classified as: critical, moderately serious, and fair condition. The classification was based upon the following criteria: amount of blood loss, state of shock, degree of trauma, type of wound, and time elapsed between initial trauma and primary emergency treatment by medical personnel. From the field, patients were transported by logistical support aircraft, light observation helicopter, and MEDEVAC helicopter to the 18th Surgical Hospital, 22d Surgical Hospital, and C Company, 326 Medical Battalion (FB Blaze). Further evacuation was accomplished by these facilities, upon the individual judgement of the medical officer in regard to each specific case.

d. Transportation: The battalion resupply helicopter was intended to ferry supplies from the forward supply point to our field elements. As this aircraft was the sole means of resupply for our elements engaged in heavy contact, it played an essential role in the overall combat effectiveness of this unit. In several instances, this utility aircraft had to be diverted from its primary function to perform tasks which should have been but were not, completed by other aircraft. For example:

(1) Evacuation of casualties to both FB Berchtesgaden and Camp Evans, and Thu Bai, due to only one of two MEDEVAC aircraft available.
(2) Deployment of badly needed replacements for tactical elements; as many as 34 in one day, due to lack of a aircraft which had been requested but did not arrive.

(3) Resupply of small arms ammunition from Camp Evans directly to field elements, which had become critical due to back log of unflown CH-47 sorties. This necessary, although improper use of the Battalion LOG-bird, resulted in either field elements not receiving requested items or extension of aircraft flying time and in some cases both apply.

e. Communication: There was nothing out of the ordinary regarding communications during this operation.

f. Strengths and other Pertinent S1 problems:

(1) Timely submission of casualty reports was the biggest problem encountered. Because of the distance from the base camp to the area of operation, the only means of communication was with a relay station. When individuals were evacuated it could not be determined to which hospital they went.

(2) To establish a more effective reporting system, a representative was stationed with the CP to record and consolidate pertinent casualty information. Another representative was sen to Phu Bai to check the 85th and 72d and report on members of the command admitted.

14. Special Equipment and Techniques:
a. Employment of Spooky (CH 47 w/mini guns)
   (1) Item: Spooky is primarily used to provide flare and suppressive fire support to friendly perimeters.
   (2) Discussion: The ship uses parachute flares to illuminate the target area. Often, though, the flare is unsatisfactory due to wind, haze or restrictions imposed by the situation.
   (3) Solution: When this occurred, 81mm mortar illumination rounds, timed for near surface ignition, proved to be a quicker and more reliable way to orient Spooky than his own flares.

b. Use of Flak Jackets.
   (1) Item: Flak jackets are used most often to protect soldiers on static posts.
   (2) Discussion: During the battle for Hill 937, many of the US casualties were caused by RPG shrapnel. Many of the wounds, though not serious, were enough to require evacuation. This depleted the fighting strength.
   (3) Solution: When it was determined that the enemy was defending in no area on Hill 937, flak jackets were issued to the attacking troops. By wearing them casualties were reduced considerably. Flak jackets are particularly desirable when in a situation such as this, troops have only a short distance to move to contact and can leave their rucksacks grounded in a relatively secure area.
13. Commander's Analysis.

a. Problem: The only major problem that occurred during this operation was the control of APA.

b. Observation: On three occasions the APA mistakenly placed fire on 3/187 troops, resulting in total casualties of 4 killed and 63 wounded. The principal cause of this was an APA lack of orientation about the ground situation and troops locations. The policy had been for the APA to report directly on an artillery frequency to artillery personnel, bypassing the Battalion Commander. This procedure was used over the repeated objections of the Battalion Commander 3/187.

c. Recommendation: APA should enter the battalion command frequency for a briefing on the ground tactical situation. Only the Battalion Commander, S3 or operations people are completely aware of the troop dispositions and missions. After this they can be released to the artillery TC's control on the artillery radio net.

W. J. Homericutt
LTC, Infantry
Commanding

3 ANNEXES
Annex A Supporting Forces
Annex B Intelligence
Annex C Execution

DISTRIBUTION:
A - Plus
10 - S3 3D BDE
1 - Historian

SUPPORTING FORCES (Direct Support)

2/19 (105 Airborne)
2/19 (105 Berchtesgarden)
2/11 (155 Airborne/Berchtesgarden)

Indirect Support)

2/319 (105 Ta Bat)
2/11 (155 Ta Bat)
1/23 (8" Son)

Artillery Support)

8.1cm 81mm Mortars (YC320989)

PH

4/77 (Evans, Ta Bat)
4/77 (Blaze)

Defensive targets were fired every night by all firing units. These targets were placed on an H&I list kept by the Liaison Officer. The vital data for these targets were fired every 30 minutes during the night, spanning between 1830-1900 hours.

The main problem was the control of AFA. This problem was worked out carefully in the operation. (See paragraph 15, Commanders's Analysis of this report).

The forward observers made good use of recon by fires and used them regularly. Lack of rounds available to the firing batteries restricted use somewhat.

Excellent use was made of the 81mm mortars firing in close support of the Infantry. The mortars fired in defensive targets and Recon-by-fires which proved effective in the successful seizure of Hill 937 and defense the blocking position.
The intelligence estimate of the A-Shau Valley area prior to the operation was essentially correct. (See Appendix 1).

It was felt that due to large number of SLN. People Smiff, VR Sightings and aircraft receiving fire near Dong Ap Bia that a large enemy unit was probably occupying the area around Dong Ap Bia as a way station/supply point. The extensive trail network on and around Dong Ap Bia had indicated that the mountain was located on or near a major infiltration route from Laos into the A-Shau Valley. No unit identification had been made prior to the assault of 3/187 elements on 10 May 1969, although the identification of the enemy presence made Reconnaissance In Force of the area necessary.

1. \textmd{LOCATION}

a. The Dong Ap Bia mountain complex (Y0329777) rises approximately 970 meters from sea level at its highest point. The mountain does not form part of a larger ridge complex, but rather stands alone in the southwestern side of the A-Shau Valley. It is bordered on the west by the Trung Phan River which forms part of the Laotian Border; one the north by the Dong So Ridge line; to the south by the Xe Sap (Rao Lao) River; and overlooks the abandoned A Loui Fort and airstrip location approximately 6000 meters to the east northeast. The valley areas surrounding Dong Ap Bia consist of rolling terrain with the small hills and fingers forming many cross compartments. The vegetation is thick brushwood, and in many places, single canopy jungle. The Dong Ap Bia mountain itself consists of a peak with several ridges and fingers extending in all directions. Two of these ridges form mountains of themselves; Hill 916 (Y0315970) on the southwest, and Hill 937 (Y0327982) on the north. The combination of slope, the thick undergrowth and double to triple canopy jungle make Dong Ap Bia extremely difficult to traverse by friendly troops.

b. Observation by ground elements was poor. Aerial observation was hindered due to canopy thickness, but was able to assist ground units immensely, throughout the operation. Enemy observers used the tree tops as OP's and sniper positions.

c. Avenues of approach into the Dong Ap Bia area were numerous. The valley to the north and south of the mountain were primary lines of communications from the Laotian Border. The northern valley contained many high speed trails through the Pa Da area, which turned southeast and joined the vast trail networks found along the Rao Lao River. From the intersection of the trails east of Dong Ap Bia, this line of communication proceeds across the A-Shau Valley and is believed to terminate in the new BA 114 southwest of Hué City. Many of these trails have branch trail networks leading into the Dong Ap Bia complex, and travel up the many fingers toward the peak itself. These avenues of approach were covered by fire.

2. \textmd{ENEMY ACTIVITY}

a. The enemy was indeed surprised as the 3-187 elements combat assaulted between Dong Ap Bia mountain and the Laotian Border in a successful effort to prevent escape of enemy units into Laos. There was an almost complete lack of hostile ground fire as the escape routes were blocked by assaulting elements. As the 3-187 Airborne Infantry moved up the mountain, they found that...
the enemy employed defense in depth principle well indeed. The lower
defenses were made up of the first line of defense. As friendly elements
moved forward the enemy fell back to increasingly stronger, better prepared
positions. The enemy was well entrenched and had bunkers as large as
8' X 20', 6-8' deep. Sectors were constructed in "A" frame configuration,
and were capable of withstanding almost any type of supporting fire. All
bunkers and fighting positions were mutually supporting and were covered
by fire from 2 or more bunkers or fighting positions. During the attack
of 14 February, it was found that the enemy was employing large chicon clay-
more type mines in front of and behind their bunker systems. The claymores
were controlled from a central spider hole or bunker. If friendly units
overran the forward bunkers, the rearmost claymores were installed to fire
into friendly troops as they searched and cleared the bunker complexes.

b. It was found that the enemy units were well trained and equipped, with
new uniforms, weapons, and gas masks. They were especially well disciplined
and obviously trained in techniques of fire and fire control, as they would
consistently wait, camouflaged and undetected, until friendly troops were
in close proximity before firing. When engaged, the enemy had planned sectors
of fire and obtained good area coverage. Marksmanship was far above average
for VU/NVA forces. Supers in trees were employed effectively, but consistently
enjoyed a short lift span, as the trees offered little protection and friendly
troops observed and engaged them usually after the first shots were fired.

c. It was found that although CS was used against the enemy forces,
that the effect was limited due to the presence of new NVA protective masks.
CS did have some effect however, as several VNA attempted to flee their
bunkers under CS attack. C/3-187 reported on 20 May that the enemy was
employing an inferior form of CS against their position. Several chicon
CS grenades were found later, confirming the limited US capabilities of NVA
forces.

d. Although enemy forces will not under normal circumstances, remain in a
fixed location under heavy friendly attack, the NVA elected to establish a
very determined defense. One reason for this was probably due to the importance
which the enemy attached to the facilities on Dong Ap Dic, and the lines of
communications adjacent to it. It appears also that the air assaults of
friendly forces cut off his escape routes across the Loaion border leaving
no alternative but to stand and fight.

e. The NVA forces in the A-Shau Valley have radio monitor capabilities as
evidenced on the Battalion Command net at 0948 hours, on 17 May. At this time
radio calls for "BlackJack" were received from an unknown station. The calls
were in English with a heavy vietnamese accent.

3. UNIT IDENTIFICATION:

Captured documents have identified the 7th and 8th Battalions, 29th Regiment
Headquarters and possibly the D-2 Aa Battalion as comprising the majority
of uprowing forces at Dong Ap Dic. Documents have also indicated that the
29th Regiment replaced the 9th NVA Regiment on or about 5 May 1969. It is
possible that a part of the 9th Regiment also took part in the battle. The
9th Battalion, 29th Regiment has not been identified and is believed to be
located at DK 611, in Laos.
1. Unit insignia:

Uniforms in the enemy bodies were of three basic colors: olive-drab black, and blue-grey. On several of the bodies, unit insignia was found, it was made by hand, and in several colors. The symbol 1-2 and 1-2/6 was in blue; the symbol T-2 in red; and symbol T-2/3 with T-2 in red and 1-6 in white. The symbols T-2/4, T-2/3 and T-1/4 were also found. These insignia are believed to represent the following:

- 1-2/2 6th Co 29th Bn 8th Div, 29th Rgt.
- 1-2/2 6th Co 8th Div, 29th Rgt.
- 1-2/2 7th Co 2nd Div, 29th Rgt.
- 1-2/2 6th Co 7th Div, 29th Rgt.
- 1-2/2 6th Co 6th Div, 29th Rgt.

A P.W. stated that his insignia was T-2/6, and was a member of the 6th Co, 8th Div 29th Rgt., establishing the T-2 as the symbol of the 8th Div. T-4 is possibly an ASA for 7th Div, 29th Rgt. The P.W. further stated that no special insignia was attached to the various thread colors, that personnel of his unit utilized the color readily available to him.

P.W. interrogation of NVA private Pham Van Hai, of the 5th platoon, 3rd company 6th Co 8th Rgt (29th Rgt.), stated that his regiment had replaced the 467th Regiment at Dong Hoa by 15 days ago (5 May 1969). He further stated that the 7th and 8th Battalions and 29th Regimental Headquarters were located (substantiated by document readouts) and that his unit consisted of the 5th, 6th, and 7th Companies. He stated that the 8th company strength was 130 men upon arrival, and had suffered approximately 30 casualties by 20 May. The prisoner's statements agree with 191st Airborne Division holdings of enemy numbers and subordination. Upon completion of Operation Apache Snow, the 29th NVA Regiment is held with the following strengths:

<table>
<thead>
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<th>UNIT</th>
<th>ESTIMATED STRENGTH</th>
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<td>29th Rgt Hq</td>
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<tr>
<td>7th Bn</td>
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<td>6th Bn</td>
<td>140</td>
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<tr>
<td>5th Bn</td>
<td>450</td>
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See appendix I to ANNEX A (Intelligence) for estimated strength of the 29th Regiment prior to Operation Apache Snow.

2. As a result of Operation APACHE SNOW, the presence of the 29th NVA Regiment in the A-Shau Valley was confirmed. Their location had been unknown to US/ARVN sources since the fall of 1968. Captured documents indicate that the Regiment had received, rested, and remained in North Vietnam prior to its return to the Republic of Vietnam in April 1969. Document readouts indicated that the 29th NVA Regiment was to stay in the A-Shau prior to conducting offensive operations in the more populated lowlands of Thua Thien Province. Moments of the Regiment in contact with friendly forces during this operation suffered a 70 to 80 percent loss in strength. Only the 9th Bn, location unknown remains combat effective. Due to the defeat of the 29th NVA Regiment at the hands of the 131st Battalion, 187th Airborne Infantry, this former well trained, disciplined and equipped unit has been rendered combat ineffective, and will not be capable of undertaking any significant offensive in the near future. The 29th Regiment has decided to have withdrawn to Da Nang to regroup, thus further to accomplish its mission of combat operations in the lowlands near Phu City.

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1 ENCLOSED Extracts from OPORD 3-69, ANNEX "A" Intelligence Operations APACHE SNOW.
1. (C) General. The northern A Shau Valley is a primary enemy LOC used for movement of material and infiltration of troops to enemy units throughout I Corps. Also, the enemy has maintained logistic installations in the northern A Shau which distribute much needed supplies to units operating in Quang Tri and Thua Thien Province. The importance of the northern A Shau as a vital LOC has increased because friendly operations are presently interdicting other key enemy LOC's in northern I Corps. Operation Maine Crag is blocking enemy movement on Rte 956, and Operation Massachusetts Striker is disrupting enemy activity on Route 548 and high speed trails in the southern A Shau - Roi Nai area and on Route 614 and main trails east of BA 607. Recently acquired intelligence indicates a pattern of movement from the northern A Shau (YD 3012) to BA 114. Additionally, the sighting of several large hut and bunker complexes vic YD 3007 and airstrikes in the same area resulting in numerous secondary explosions indicates that the enemy has established a large supply depot in this area. It is very likely that the flow of supplies from this depot and other logistic installations in the northern A Shau Valley to BA 114 will increase in the near future.

2. (C) Disposition of Enemy Forces in the Northern A Shau Area (See Appendix 10)

a. 6th Regt. The 806th Bn, 6th Regt is presently operating near the Song 0 Lo and My Chanh Rivers. The 800th and 802d Bns are presently unlocated. Following the Tet Offensive of 1968, the 6th Regt retreated to the northern A Shau - BA 611 area. It is very possible that the 800th Bn and/or 802d Bn, 6th Regt is presently located in this area.

b. 9th Regt. The 816th Bn, 9th Regt is presently operating in the southern A Shau - Roi Nai area vic YC 4997. The 815th and 818th Bns, 9th Regt are presently unlocated. The 9th Regt normally operates in the northern A Shau - BA 611 area, and in August 63, the 816th and 818th Bns were operating near Pa Du (2), YC 352974. It is very possible that elements of the 9th Regt are presently operating in that area.

c. 559th Trans Grp. Elements of this unit are currently operating in BA 611 and throughout the northern A Shau Valley.

d. Unidentified Enemy Forces in BA 611. The Hq of TTHMR is believed to be located in BA 611 in Laos. It is very possible that a regiment is serving as a security element for this large Hq. In response to a friendly operation in the northern A Shau Valley, it is possible that this regiment would be committed to defend the supply depots.

e. 675th arty Regt. The 675th Regt was contacted during Operation Dewey Canyon. It is considered very possible that elements of this unit are still operating in BA 611.

3. (C) Enemy Tactics and Equipment

a. In Operation Dewey Canyon, the 9th Marine Regt discovered several
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FACT NAME: PEARL (FUTURE SITUATION) 24 APR 69

Two guns and sizable quantities of 122mm ammunition via Rte 322 1-502
No. 1 recently discovered 50 rds of 122mm ammunition in the area east of
a 607. Thus, it is very possible that friendly forces in the northern A
Shau Valley will encounter 122mm artillery fire from 1607 m rds.

1. In Operation Conduct Puck, which was conducted from 4-20 Aug 68
in the northern A Shau Valley, the 16th and 33th Bn conducted delays
attacks and avoided major contact. However, the 9th Marine Regt encountered
large armed enemy attacks during Operation Deuce Canyon when they entered
major cache areas. The 3-17 Coy met heavy resistance while initially
pressing via YD 3507, and the 3-187 initially met stiff resistance
when entering their present AO. Thus, since other major LOC's are being
locked, it is possible that the enemy will defend his supply installations
throughout the northern A Shau Valley.

a. In Operation Deuce Canyon, the 9th Marine Regt found several large
caches which were extensively booby trapped. Additionally, the large
 caches found by 3-502 Abn Inf coy of Bu 607 were booby trapped with 4
bungie corded charges. The 3-187 has also found their caches were booby
trapped. Thus, it is very possible that caches in the northern A Shau
 Valley are booby trapped.

(2) Potentially Lucrative Target Areas in the northern A Shau Valley

a. Area vic YC 3507. Recent VR, airstrikes, and contacts have indicated
that this area is a major supply area.

b. Lao Lio River area. The trails along this river serve as a key
infiltration route into Thu Thien Province. Infiltration Station #4 is
at vic YC 3594. An "X" on a captured map was loc near Pa Bu #1 via
YD 322574. Additionally, SLAR and URS indicated enemy presence and move-
ment in this area in March and early April.

c. Dong So Mtsn or "Beak" area. During Operation Delaware, 19 Apr
- 3 May 69 1st ACP discovered large caches in this area. A photo mission
down on 7 Apr 69 revealed 5 camouflaged trucks via YD 361011 and numerous
31 drums via YD 364009. It is very possible that a truck park is located in
this area.

d. Ap Bia Mtns area, vic YC 3198. Recent URS and SLAR indicate enemy
rescence and a pattern of west-east movement in this area. It is very
possible that the enemy is moving supplies eastward from Pa 611 to caches
in this area.
1. (c) The A Shau Valley floor consists of flat open terrain which varies in width from approximately 300 meters near grid coordinate YD363032 to 2 to 6 kilometers near YS240950. Vegetation includes grass, 2 to 6 feet tall, and scattered brush. Numerous bomb craters and streams existing throughout the valley's floor restrict wheeled vehicles but tracked vehicles can move throughout the valley floor with relative ease. Route 548, which traverses the entire valley, is usable by tracked vehicles but wheeled vehicular movement is interdicted by bombing. Movement off of 548 is possible in the valley, as evidenced by numerous enemy wheeled vehicles and wheeled vehicle tracks observed on aerial photography, including many examples of wheeled tracks in stream beds. Foot movement is good on the valley floor. Helicopter landing zones are available in any portion of the valley floor. However, since these zones can be observed for long distances and since cover from direct fire weapons is lacking, combat assaults would be extremely hazardous and difficult to protect without a heavier and normal number of gunships.

2. (c) The northeastern side and the southwestern side of the A Shau Valley differ greatly in vegetation, trafficability, and overall shape of the terrain.

a. The northeastern side including a narrow transitional area between the valley floor and the mountain ranges.

(1) The Transitional Area: Bordering the northern A Shau on the west side at a depth of one to two kilometers, this area, although it appears from the air to be covered with low, even vegetation, is actually covered with a matted grass and brush vegetation which would greatly restrict foot movement and which would support only tracked vehicular traffic. Landing zones in this area are infrequent and are limited to stream beds and scattered slash and burn areas. Few trails have been recorded through this area between Rte 547A and the northern end of the valley, however, one road exists from Rte 548 at coordinate YD304093 into the extreme western end of the Co Ping ridge. Part of this road was cut by a bulldozer and beyond the point where it enters the tree line, small segments appear through breaks in the canopy as far north as grids ID3011 and YD3112. In November of 1968 the area entered by this road was reported as a probable storage area or transhipment area from which trails lead into BA 114. From photography it appears that error could deploy into as far north as the YD 3112 grid.

(2) The Mountainous Area: Rising abruptly out of the narrow fingers and uneven contours of the transitional area the canopy covered steep slopes (20% to 50%) of the mountainous region form an unbroken barrier to movement, observation, and helicopter operations. Elevation increases by over 3,000 feet from the valley floor to the ridge lines which reach their peak some five to six kilometers from the valley. Although these ridge lines are greater in elevation than those bordering the
A Shau they have supported Fire Base construction in the past and should afford the same basic problems in the future as were encountered during the recent construction of FSB's WHIP and MUR. The drainage problems encountered at FSB WHIP will confront construction units again in the northern A Shau. There is no known granite outcropping which would seriously hinder bulldozers from preparing the Fire Base platform. Not so much the vegetation but the severe slopes will impede foot movement from the mountains toward the valley floor. Landing Zones of course will be restricted to old FSB locations and to those points previously cut by friendly units.

b. The southwestern side of the valley differs from the northern side in several ways: firstly the mountains are isolated and do not form a solid barrier to movement; secondly, of the few mountains, one, the Co A Mong, located strategically at the extreme northern tip of the valley, has supported a friendly FSB and another, the Dong So ridge, has been penetrated by at least one enemy vehicle (wheeled) which was destroyed and/or abandoned prior to September of 1968; thirdly the southern side of the valley is characterized by numerous ICC's - Route 922 and the 922 bypass around the northwestern slope of Co A Mong mountain, the Xe Sap River and the Rao Lao River, and many well-worn trails from Laos into the valley; and lastly, broad rolling areas between the two rivers which are void of heavy canopy would afford relatively easy foot movement. (see area 2 on diagram).

The traversability of the entire area west of the valley and north of the Rao Lao can be considered good for foot movement but unsuitable for optimal deployment of vehicles. Although the rivers and streams are, for the most part, negotiable, the avenues for vehicular movement are restricted by slope and vegetation. (Also not enough information about soil content is available to determine suitability, but one can assume that wet weather would restrict movement since the area is the drain filed for the waters of the A Sap Valley).

The Rao Lao River, from 10m to 40m wide, is not an insurmountable barrier to foot movement, especially during dry months. Due to its rocky bottom and the fact that it is not fed by any major cascading mountain streams, the Rao Lao flows slowly through its low banks. The depth varies from numerous shallow rapids to wide deep pools where it washes through layers of sand and silt. The appearance of numerous trails which weave back and forth across the river also indicate an easy traversability. The Xe Sap River differs from the Rao Lao with an increased number of sandbars and rapids making it less easily traversed.

Landing Zones are available south of the A Shau along rivers and streams, especially the Xo Sap River. Large assault landing would be possible in the northern end of the valley on and around Rte 922 between Laos and Co A Mong mountain.
A key point in understanding the terrain of the western side of the Shau Valley is that the few existing mountains are isolated. The enemy used these vantage points not only to store their material but also concealed locations from which to harass friendly observation planes and thus protect their own movement over high speed routes from BA 611 and rough extensive trail networks from BA 611 and further down the Laotian border. Two of the mountains seem to be especially suitable for friendly use. First the Cg A Nong mountain has supported a FSB in the past and permits good observation toward BA 611 and toward the A Shau Valley. Due to extensive bombing the southwestern slope has been cleared of vegetation and Route 922 running along the chalky slope is completely interdicted by and slides. Observation to the north is hindered by trees. Streams in the A Nong area will not hinder ground operations in any way. Second the Ne S ridge, centrally located on the western side of the northern A Shau can be easily entered on foot from its northern and southern tips. Friendly sites, were they located on these two ridge lines could probably check enemy movement while supporting US ground operations. Also occupation of one ridges would greatly lessen the amount of enemy fire upon heliborne operations.
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215th Bn
239th Bn
23d Bn

1st 25th Art - Arty Bn | UNK | Unlocated
4 Co (unk designation)

Rich Tram 42 | UNK | Unlocated

10th Inf Bn
1st Co
2nd Co
3rd Co
4th Co
641st Indep Inf Co
642d Indep Inf Co
643rd Indep Inf Co

3d Art Bn

C-10 Co
C-11 Co
C-12 Co

2 5/1 Art Bns
(3-4 Co's probable)

4th Commo Bn

55th Trans Bn
H-5 Co
H-6 Co
H-7 Co
H-8 Co

52d Trans Bn (Poss)
9th Inf Security Bn (Poss)
1st Inf Security Bn (Poss)
U/C Signal Co
ANNEX G (Execution) to After Action Report, Apache Snow (3/187 Operations).

1. The initial phase of the operation was executed as planned i.e. the 3/187 secured LZ 2 and the terrain immediately adjacent to it.

2. The intention after that was to secure Dong Ap Bia and the major ridges running off it to the southwest, south, and southeast.

3. The enemy, however, was discovered in force on Dong Ap Bia and the 3/187 fought him there throughout the period of participation in Apache Snow.

4. The appendices to this annex describe, in chronological order, the detailed day to day operations of the 3/187, from staging on 9 May through extraction from the AO on 21 May.

APPENDICES:

1. 9-10 May
2. 11 May
3. 12 May
4. 13 May
5. 14 May
6. 15 May
7. 16 May
8. 17 May
9. 18 May
10. 19 May
11. 20 May
12. 21 May
Operation APACHE SNOW began for the 3/187 with staging in the vicinity of Fire Base Blazo on 9 May (D-1) 1969.

Pathfinders were supposed to arrive before dark on the 9th to coordinate the D-Day lift but they did not. The Battalion S3 met with the company commanders and a search was made of the PZ in an attempt to locate aircraft guide markers according to what had been described to the S3 by the aviation representative the night before. Finding only a partially marked PZ, the plan was formulated to position troops from east to west in two rows each with 15 groups of 5 men each. The lift was scheduled to use 30 aircraft.

At 0700 hours, on 10 May, the 3-187 troops were formed according to plan for an expected 0720 hours, pick up. Pathfinders arrived sometime around 0700 hours. Their information about the pattern on the PZ and number of ships to be used was confused and contradictory and they never did coordinate or control the lift to any effective degree. Consequently the composition of the ground units' lifts was not exactly as planned.

The C&C ship reported on the battalion frequency at 0700 hours and by 0705 hours, the Battalion Commander was airborne and ready to start the lift. The PZ time for D Company, the first unit lifted, was at 0750 hours. Their LZ time was 0801 hours, and the D Company Commander reported that LZ 2 was cold. Elements of A and C Companies were lifted at 0801 hours, and were closed into LZ 2 at 0820 hours. The Battalion Headquarters (minus the CO and Arty LNO who were airborne in the C&C ship), the mortars and additional elements of C and A Companies departed the PZ at 0845 hours, and were on LZ 2 at 0856 hours.

The insertion had caught the enemy by surprise. D Company, after securing the LZ according to plan moved its 1st Platoon up the ridge to the southeast. This immediate push up the ridge was to prove an important achievement. It was from this position, the key terrain to the immediate northwest of Dong Ap Bia (Hill 937), that the Battalion Headquarters controlled and supported operations throughout the period 10 to 21 May. Occupation of this terrain also resulted in an effective blocking position, as it stood on the major ridgeline and trail complex between Dong Ap Bia and the Laotian border.

The lack of proper Pathfinder PZ coordination caused a broken sequence of troops arriving in LZ 2. Consequently, there was some confusion and disorganization in effecting the Battalion Commander's plan for securing and expanding the perimeter of the LZ and commencing initial RIF's. When the Battalion Headquarters arrived, the S3 gathered the available leaders and directed actions essentially as the Commander had intended, i.e., A Company organize on the northwest part of the perimeter and commence a RIF to the high ground to the northwest; C Company secure the southern portion and commence a RIF to the southwest. C Company was assigned the mission of LZ security until all elements were in. D Company as mentioned, already had the eastern side and had moved out to the southeast.
At 0930 hours A Company reported reaching the high ground approximately five hundred meters to the northwest (YC313994) and finding and searching out trails in that area. During this period the headquarters and mortars, following D Company, began their move toward the southeast. C Company, waiting the arrival of the remainder of its forces, secured LZ 2 and commenced a platoon RIF toward the southwest.

At 1044 hours the Battalion Commander with the Artillery LNO, landed at LZ 2.

At 1045 hours a LOH on VR reported a complex of bunkers and huts several hundred meters to the east of the LZ.

By noon D Company had secured the ridgeline blocking position to the southeast (YC320988) and the Battalion Headquarters and Mortars were within the D Company perimeter. Preparation of an LZ and mortar positions had begun.

Throughout the middle of the day Pink Teams, LOH VR’s, ARA and FAC’s reported numerous trails, huts, bunkers, tunnels and small groups of enemy east and west of the 3/187 location.

By 1600 hours B Company, which had been the Brigade reserve, closed into LZ 2, completing the 3/187 into the AO. B Company moved southeast to the Headquarters location and received instructions to continue moving southeast toward Dong Ap Bia, set up an NDP, and to move at first light on the 11th to RIF toward Hill 937.

At 1646 hours and 1638 hours B Company reported receiving sniper fire and then small arms and RPG fire. They responded with small arms fire, 90mm RR and were supported by mortars, artillery, gunships and airstrikes. The US suffered three WIA, while killing four of the enemy. MEDEVAC (2 ambulatory and 1 litter) was completed by 1835 hours. Gunship and airstrike support continued until dark. The night defensive positions for 10 May were:

A Co(-) at YC308994
B Co(-) at YC321987
B Co 2d plat at YC306995
B Co 4th plat at YC321986
J Co(-) at YC315985
D Co Mortars and En Hqs at YC320989
J Co 1st plat at YC314983

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The night of 10/11 day was quiet and the morning's activity started at 0600 hours with a fire ball (perimeter fires into potential enemy locations).

At 0625 hours, Company's reconnaissance by fire prompted enemy return fire from vicinity coordinate YC31798. Company returned fire with organic weapons.

Assault 25, light fire team (LFT), was on station at 0653 hours and reported two enemy soldiers running on a trail about four hundred meters east of B Company's location. He reported an observation post in a tree, also, and bunkers fortified with rocks, in the same general area. The area was taken under fire by Assault 25 and he fired on and missed by automatic weapons.

Bomber 23, LCH, reported that a LCH reconnoiter for him took enemy fire from the vicinity of coordinate YC33997. At 0745 hours he engaged the area by fire.

B Company departed their NDP at 0745 hours.

A and B Companies sort reports that their units had commenced moving.

Plans for the day were:

A Company RIF vicinity of NDP; then double back to vicinity of LZ 2 (YC31/935).
B Company RIF from NDP to vicinity of YC32998 for the northern tip of Hill 937.
C Company RIF south and east from their NDP.
D Company remain in blocking position with Battalion Headquarters and Mortars; conduct limited RIF's to the north and east.

The FAC reported in at 0844 hours, with the first of six airstrikes of the day.

At 0935 hours, B Company reported finding two RPG rounds, one light machine gun, and numerous blood trails to the east of the previous day's contact. Between 0900-1000 hours, B Company found 4 enemy KIA's in the vicinity of coordinate YC32498. The KIA's were wearing green uniforms with khakis underneath. One of the dead had a picture in his wallet that appeared to be of him in an officer's uniform. Also found on his person was an additional picture, North Vietnamese money, eight razor blades, and a US type accessory pack with tobacco.

By 0910 hours B Company had found two additional enemy KIA's, one SK3 rifle, one MAC, a Chiccom grenade, one AK47 rifle, one RPG launcher with six rounds, some medical equipment, a lighter, bandages, items of clothing, and numerous blood trails.

C Company gave his position, at 0913 hours, as YC315985.

At 0946 hours, A Company had moved to YC304994. He reported that he was keeping the company (-) at that location and sending out platoon RIF's.

At 1008 hours, FAC, reported finding a large but with bunkers around it at coordinate YC328978.
At 1045 hours B Company reported more silica trails and numerous small knolls in direction of advance.

At 1100 hours, A Company reported the following locations: 3d Platoon at YC320993; 1st Platoon at YC300993.

At 1106 hours, B Company reported that he had found one large sack of rice containing approximately 15 pounds of rice balls; a carrying case containing three AK-47's and magazines; a bag containing three satchel charges already primed; another small bag containing something similar to C4; a bag of first aid supplies and equipment; two more Chicom grenades and blood trails leading to the east up the hill.

New locations at 1158 hours were: A Company and 3d Platoon at YC304994; 1st Platoon at YC300993; 2d Platoon at YC320990. B Company at YC323984; C Company (-) at YC323983; C Company 3d Platoon at YC313981.

At 1159 hours, A Company reported that they had discovered a well-used trail four meters wide running NW-SE.

At 1215 hours, the 1st Platoon of D Company returned to the company location. The platoon had reconnoitered to the NE for several hundred meters but had made no contact with the enemy.

At 1310 hours, B Company reported finding several communication wires running down from the hill into the stream bed along his route of advance. He also reported a small knoll to his east covered with sniper holes.

A IOH on WR at 1315 hours, reported that he had sighted at least two telephone poles with wires and insulators on them at coordinate YC351939. He added that there were trails running parallel to the communications system. These wires and trails evidently ran from the east, up over Hill 937, to the west. The IOH also reported that he had received fires from bunkers at YC324981.

Throughout the day A, C and B Companies continued to find trails, fresh tracks, communication wires and cables, spider holes, miscellaneous pieces of clothing and equipment, blood trails, and huts and bunkers. The pilots too, continued reporting numerous indications of enemy presence around and on Hill 937.

By 1550 hours, B Company moving east, had started up the ridge leading to Hill 937. While following fresh tracks, they were fired on by a lone sniper. The sniper's intention, evidently, was to draw the unit up the ridge where the enemy waited in bunkers.

At 1624 hours, B Company was in contact at YC327983, and at 1630 hours, the Company Commander reported that he had suffered three US KIA's. He also had two US WIA's and possibly two more from attempting to retrieve the first two. His troops had confirmed six one-y KIA's. The Battalion Commander instructed him to increase his volume of fire and push past the wounded, rather than attempt to immediately retrieve them under direct enemy fire. Mortars, artillery, gunships, and airstrikes were used in support of B Company. A MEDEVAC was requested at 1643 hours, and at 1842, all wounded were out.

(2)
At 1900 hours, during an ARA strike, one of the ships turned and fired in the wrong direction. The rockets impacted in the center of the Battalion Headquarters location. One US was killed and thirty-five wounded. Fifteen of the MIA required MEDEVAC. Included in the wounded were the Battalion Quartermaster and 83 (both lightly); the Artillery LNO and S4 officer (both seriously); and the Operations Sergeant and the Mortar Sergeant (both seriously). Various ships were used to evacuate and by 1907 hours, the casual ties were cleared from the 3/187 location.

Though this disruption, the headquarters continued to function. Mortars continued their mission in support of B Company and the Battalion Commander returned to direct airstrikes, and give instructions to the companies.

At 1942 hours, D Company's 3d Platoon, which had been on a PIF to the north, returned to the blocking position, reporting negative sightings.

As requested earlier, reported on station at 1937 hours and operated until 2349 hours.

W's for the 3/187 on the night of 11/12 May were: A Co(-) at YC312593 with 2 ambushes at YC313992 and YC310594; B Company at YC325981; C Co(-) at YC316981 with 1st Platoon ambush at YC316981; D Company. Battalion Headquarters and Mortars at YC320989.
The night was quiet. At 0640 hours, Bilk 37, reported on station and put in the air strikes for A Company. There were light air strikes against the enemy throughout the day, the last one going in at 1734 hours. These strikes were a mix of high drag bombs, napalm, and 500 and 1000 pound bombs with fuze delay. The accuracy of the strikes was outstanding.

At 0659 hours, Company A began moving toward the Battalion Headquarters location. They arrived at 0805 hours.

Company reported at 0820 hours that his rear element spotted some movement.

The Battalion Commander called Brigade at 0852 hours, and requested a team of engineers to assist in blowing an LZ for B Company. This request for an LZ at that location (vic. coord. YG323983) proved to be a wise one. The lower LZ, as it came to be called, was the key intermediate staging, evacuation, and supply point throughout the operation.

At 0913 hours, B Company received enemy small arms and RPG fire from the vicinity of coordinate YG325981. Results were 1 US WIA; the return fire killed an enemy soldier.

The Division Artillery Commander arrived on the upper LZ at 0940 hours. He had come to discuss the ARA mishap and a policy for control of ARA. It was agreed by him that the ARA ships would come up on the battalion command frequency to receive a briefing on the ground tactical situation before going to work for a company artillery FO. Prior to the accident on the 11th, they had been reporting directly to the Artillery FO. This procedure was used against the repeated objection of the Battalion Commander 3/187.

At 0950 hours, Banshee 27, a LOQ ship carrying the engineers, reported in on the battalion frequency and was turned over to B Company's control. At 1024 hours, while inserting the engineers, the ship crashed after its tail struck a tree. There were six casualties resulting from the crash; three engineers and three crew members. One of each required immediate MEDEVAC. B Company and the remaining engineers, however, continued with the preparation of the LZ. Throughout the day gunships, ARA, airstrikes, artillery, and mortars pounded the area east of the B Company location.

At 1141 hours, D Company replaced by A Company in the blocking position, departed the Battalion Headquarters location and commenced a RIF down the finger leading northeast from the upper LZ.

At 1219 hours, the MEDEVAC requested by B Company for the crash victims reported on station, but the LZ was not considered ready and the Battalion Commander told the ship to return and wait for his call.

At 1226 hours, the Battalion S3 reported to the Brigade S3 that the crashed ship was burning and therefore there would be no need for a rigger team.

B Company reported at 1224 hours, that he was receiving incoming mortar rounds from the vicinity of coordinate YG325976. No casualties resulted. The suspected enemy location was fired on by gunships, artillery, and counter mortar fire.
At 1648 hours, B Company had an acceptable LZ and had extended the security of it sufficiently to bring in a MEDEVAC. He had a total of nine casualties to be evacuated; three were litter and six ambulatory. The MEDEVAC went in twice, without incident, and the evacuation was complete by 1700 hours.

At 1654 hours, Thunder 44 (LCH) went into the lower LZ and took out three US KIA's sustained in a previous action.

B Company reported that he had at least three confirmed enemy KIA's.

During the afternoon, B and C Companies called in reports of sporadic enemy movement, RPG, small arms and mortar fire. There were no US casualties resulting from these fires, however an additional NVA soldier was reported KIA. In response to any report of enemy movement or fires, friendly fires of several types were put into the suspected locations.

At 1657 hours, one of the gunships sighted three huts and many bunkers and firing positions at coordinate YC325977. He was instructed to engage these.

At 1745 hours, C Company, moving east, reported their location as YC325977. This was just two hundred meters south of B Company. The 2d Platoon of A Company, which had been sent to B Company's location with a resupply, arrived there at 1848 hours.

D Company had no enemy contact on the 12th and at 1724 hours, he reported his position as coordinate YC325989.

At 1829 hours, C Company, having engaged several enemy sightings SW of the upper LZ that afternoon, stated that he was pulling back from the contact area and digging in for the night. A moment later he reported that an estimated eleven RPG and mortar rounds fell into his old position to the west and that he was calling artillery on the suspected enemy location.

During the remaining hours of light, artillery and mortar defensive fires were adjusted in around the perimeter.

At 2000 hours, on 12 May the 3-187 was disposed as follows: A Company, Battalion Headquarters occupied the blocking position at coordinate YC325980; C Company at YC325978 with the 1st Platoon ambush at YC323979; D Company at YC323988 with a platoon ambush at YC323987.

The night was quiet with no enemy contact.
The first person to report on the Battalion Frequency on the morning of 13 May was Assault 11 (LTP). He stayed on station from 0645 hours until 0735 hours during which time they situated to the west and south of the blocking position and engaged several hut and bunker complexes.

The FAC was next, at 0656 hours, with the first of ten airstrikes to be placed in support of the Battalion until 1900 hours that night. At 0716 hours, C Company, moving east for half an hour already and reconnoitering fire as they moved, reported that their lead element was receiving small arms fire. They requested permission to hold and strike the suspected enemy location with mortars and artillery. The request was granted.

B Company was next, at 0725, with a report that he was receiving AK-47 fire from his west. Fighter/Controllers were overhead at the time and an immediate strike was called on the enemy location.

At 07.32, B Company reported that he had three of his troops slightly wounded.

Minutes later, C Company reported that he had five US WIs.

At 0850, B Company requested a MEDEVAC for two of his wounded and also informed the Battalion Commander that he had US KIA.

The preponderance of enemy fires, which consisted of RPG, mortar and small arms, was coming from the vicinity of YC37928. For the next several hours, the Battalion Commander directed airstrikes, ARA, artillery and mortars into the area.

At 0920, C Company, pushing slowly eastward, reported enemy fires and movement from several directions in close to his position. He reported that the enemy were expertly camouflaged and that C Company was using maximum reconnaissance by fire as they moved.

D Company, who had moved out at first light, reported movement, but no enemy contacts, as he was reconnoitering in the vicinity of YC325990.

At 0956, B Company's elements, following fresh tracks to the east, ran into a nest of snipers and reported two more US WIs and one KIA.

The US response to these contacts was immediate and violent. Hardly a report of enemy contact occurred during this operation that there was not some type of air support overhead. An average of eight to ten airstrikes per day put Air Force Fighters overhead nearly fifty percent of the time. Continually on the outskirts of the immediate contact area, gunship scout teams provided the area engaged enemy movement and bunker complexes and were immediately available for close in support of the infantry.

For example, during this morning of contact for B and C Companies, there were at least four assault gunship teams, each at different times, in the area supporting them. Each team averaged about an hour on station. Also by noon
ive airstrikes had been delivered in their support. During the rare moments that air support was not overhead, artillery and mortar fires were directed into these enemy locations. Final casualty figures would show the enemy had suffered for each casualty he inflicted on the 3/187.

At 1045, C Company reported that due to continuing enemy contact, he now suffered a total of two KIAs and eight WIs. A MEDEVAC was requested and the seriously wounded were taken out. THUNDER 44 (1OH) who has been shuttling personnel to and from Companies B and C Companies, evacuated eight of the less seriously wounded who were KIA to the upper LZ. B Company, at this time, had sustained a total of five wounded and one KIA for the day.

D Companies sent in locations at 1058 hours; B was at Y0325981 and C at Y0325979. The enemy was fighting a determined delaying action, but the 3/187 units continued their deliberate move toward the hill.

At dawn D Company had reconnoitered to the northeast and then turned southeast toward Hill 937. At 1227 hours, the 3d and 2d platoons moved through a streambed at Y0327958 and began the move up the hill toward Hill 937. The 1st platoon had been covering the stream crossing by the time they moved out, mortars and RPG's wounded seven, two seriously. The Company Commander ordered the 1st platoon to move the wounded down into the streambed, prepare a PZ and secure the area. He took the Company(-) southeast up the ridge to search for the suspected enemy position. By 1330, MEDEVAC 927 reported in, but the PZ was not ready and he departed to refuel. Meanwhile the Company(-) pushed further on up the ridge and the 1st platoon continued improving the PZ. ADA supported D Company as it moved up the hill.

At 1345 MEDEVAC 927 returned and, since the D Company PZ was still not ready, it was turned over to B Company who has been in continuing contact all day long and had now sustained more than ten WIs.

At 1450 hours, D Company(-) had reconnoitered approximately three hundred yards southeast up the ridge and were in the vicinity of Y0325987.

At 1510, unknown to Battalion Headquarters, MEDEVAC 927, returned once more and D Company Commander directed him to the PZ. A few minutes later the Company Commander reported to the Battalion Commander that the MEDEVAC had been hit by RPG and has crashed. The 1st Platoon Sergeant, later describing what had happened, said that the ship had been hovering for a minute or so and dropped the basket when it took a direct hit from the RPG. He observed that the fire, only one RPG round, came from a ridge to the north. The ship came straight down on the 1st Platoon Command Group. Five men were killed (three crewmen and two from D Company) and three were injured (one non-member very seriously and two men from D Company) as a direct result of this crash.

The Battalion Commander ordered D Company to start moving the wounded back to the upper LZ. He also ordered A Company to send a platoon down to assist D.
hours, the company commander confirmed the situation and the enemy fire was generally unorganized. He ordered the platoon to advance and attack a position that was a total loss. The report of enemy contact was relayed to the company commander. The intention was to get the NVA out first and return the following day for the dead.

At 0100 hours, the 2d Platoon, A Company, had linked up with B Company. At 0515 hours, however, B Company commander called to say their company was under heavy pressure and that they closed their movement. He requested support from the night and moving to the upper hill by early the next morning. The battalion commander approved this; instructed them to make their movements as infiltable as possible; and ordered A Company Platoon to return to the blocking position.

From the afternoon of the 13th, B and C Companies had continued maneuvering toward Hill 937 attempting to gain a favorable position for a major attack on the 14th. It was not an easy task. Both units maintained contact throughout the afternoon. B Company's contact with the enemy ceased at 1730 hours. C Company received mortar and small arms fire late in the afternoon, though contact broke contact at 1941 hours. C Company continued observe movement of enemy at 2000 hours.

As a result of the day's actions the Battalion had suffered thirty-three men WIA and four KIA. It was not until the next day, when the battalion penetrated the enemy bunker complex, that they were to confirm the damage inflicted on the enemy. Undoubtedly it was even greater than reported, since the enemy had all night to retrieve his dead and wounded.

At 2000 hours, A Company's 3d platoon returned to the blocking position.

At 2040 hours, D Company sighted moving lights several hundred meters to his north. Artillery was called in on the area and the lights disappeared, Spooky cane on station at this time and worked until 2314 hours.

The 3/187 NDP's for the night of 13/14 May were: A Company, Battalion Headquarters and Mortars at YC320969; B Company at YC329983; C Company at YC335961; and D Company at YC323989.

The Battalion now fully realized that the NVA were present in considerable strength in the vicinity of Hill 937 and the blocking position occupied by the Battalion Headquarters.

The alert posture for the Headquarters, Mortars and A Company was 100% until 2400 hours; 50% until 0300 hours; and 100% again until 0500 hours. Instructions were passed for an alert STAND-TO at 0500 hours. At that hour every man and officer on the blocking position was to be in a fighting position; mortar crews on their weapons; and every radio on the channel into the net. These alert percentages and STAND-TO criteria were maintained throughout the operation. STAND-TO was held daily at 0500 hours and 1900 hours. Controlled rest periods during the day sustained the alertness of the troops.

There was no action during the day of 13/14 May.
At 0630 hours, on 14 May the 2d platoon of A Company returned to D Company's NDP to carry the wounded back to the upper LZ.

The AF PAC, now a familiar voice and part of the daily scene reported on station at 0646 hours, and began the first of thirteen airstrikes spaced throughout the day.

The 14th of May should be considered the first concentrated attempt by the 3d Battalion, 187th to seize Hill 937. The plan was for D Company to attack from the north, after they had evacuated their wounded and recovered the dead from the crashed helicopter. B Company would attack from the west and C Company also from the west but on a finger 150 meters south of B Company. All companies would be supported by an artillery prop.

At 0756 hours, as C Company began his deliberate move toward Hill 937. He reported movement to his west and south. Reacting to all such reports, the Battalion Commander continually instructed his company commanders to move somebody toward the suspected enemy location, to watch the friendly flanks, to use maximum reconnaissance by fire, to employ the 90mm and to keep moving and stay spread out. The Battalion Commander kept airstrike, gunships, artillery and mortars striking the enemy. All fires were brought in as closely as possible without causing friendly casualties. Units identified their positions with smoke and the Battalion Commander insisted that nothing rounds be fired by artillery and mortars on first rounds and after each substantial change in data.

At 0810 hours, B Company, moving east to the north of C Company, reported receiving one RPG and light AK-47 fire and at 0832 hours, he reported receiving additional RPG and small arms as well as mortar fire.

At 0843 hours, C Company reported that he was moving into a bunker complex on the military crest of the ridge and that he was running into small arms, RPGs, hand grenades, and claymores employed by enemy troops from the top of the ridge.

At 0902 hours, B Company reported that two of his platoons were in contact.

At 0903 hours, C Company reported that his 3d Platoon had almost reached the top of the hill but was meeting extremely heavy resistance.

At 0931 hours, B Company reported that he had his lead platoon on top of the ridge and that they were receiving extremely heavy fire. At this time C Company reported movement and enemy fires from around his position, and he reported that he would have to pull back. The Battalion Commander approved and, in order not to expose B Company's southern flank, he ordered them to pull back also. B Company meanwhile reported discovering another bunker complex guarded by strands of claymores, booby traps and command detonated mines. In addition he reported many enemy bodies in the area of contact.

At 1200 hours the Battalion Commander reported to the Brigade S3 that he estimated there were at least two companies to a battalion of enemy on Hill 937.

At 1210 hours, B Company Commander reported that the top of the ridge was covered with blood, pieces of bodies, and enemy dead, but that he would have to wait to give an accurate figure on enemy KIA's.
During the night, B and C Companies evacuated wounded, rescued stragglers, and prepared for the next day. Special companies with the enemy were located in the vicinity of the lower LZ from which the companies worked.

Clearer pictures of casualties and reports of enemy activity were sent to the Battalion Commander during the afternoon. B Company reported his strength at 85 and C Company at 70. They had started the operation with 95 and 105 respectively. The CO ordered them to establish NDP's in the vicinity of the lower LZ and informed them that A Company would relieve C Company on the 15th. He also sent a platoon of B Company to C Company's location to assist with the wounded.

At 1345 hours, the 3d Brigade Commander, Iron Haven, visited the 3/327. He stayed for about thirty minutes, talked with some of the troops and then departed.

During this day of fierce fighting by B and C Companies, D Company had been reconnoitering the area surrounding the downed helicopter.

The 2d Platoon of A Company, arrived at 0714, secured the previous day's wounded, and carried them back to the upper LZ.

Company's 1st Platoon was sent back to the crash site to obtain the five bodies left there overnight. The 2d Platoon reconnoitered the ridge just north of the crash site. The 3d Platoon covered the trails in the vicinity of the NDP.

The 1st Platoon had moved to the crash site, secured the bodies, and was enroute to the upper LZ by 1400 hours. There had been no sign of the enemy, but, on their return, an RPG attack wounded four. None was serious, however, and the platoon continued with its evacuation mission.

At 1610 hours, D Company Commander informed the Battalion Commander that the 1st Platoon would not reach the upper LZ by dark and that he had given them instructions to press on until 1830 hours at which time they were to drop the bodies and return to the company NDP.

In addition to the 1st Platoon's wounded, the 3d Platoon had sustained six MIA from RPG's.

At 1910 hours the 1/506 sent in NDP's which placed them approximately 2 K's to the southwest of the 3/327. On the evening of the 14th of May the 3/327 was disposed as follows: A Company, Battalion Headquarters and Mortars at YC320989; B Company (-) at YC324982 with 2d Platoon ambush at YC324981 and the 2d and 3d Platoon ambush at YC323982; C Company at YC324982; D Company (-) at YC323980 with two ambushes at YC323989 and YC323988. The intention for 15 May was to attack Hill 937 again before the enemy could bring in reinforcements. A Company was to relieve C Company on B's southern flank, but was to attack more from the south than C Company had. Since B Company nearly reached the top of the hill on the 14th, they were to attack again essentially in the same way due to the limited avenues of approach to Hill 937. C Company, was to occupy the blocking position on which the Battalion Headquarters was located. D Company, operating to the northeast, was to continue attacking in that area. The 1/506 was to move toward Hill 937 from the southeast and block enemy routes of escape and enemy reinforcing attempts through that area.
The 15th of May was the second attempt at Hill 937.

Hill 937, the AF FAC, reported on station at 0635 hours, with the first of two air strikes to be placed on the hill.

In the morning, C and A Companies completed their exchange of positions i.e. 1 Company assuming the blocking position on the hill with the Battalion Headquarters, mortars and A Company in the attack position south of B Company. At approximately 1200 hours, the companies began the move toward Hill 937. The first contact reported was from B Company at 1316 hours. Enemy claymores and command detonated mines caused several US casualties. At this same time A Company, though not in contact, reported that the enemy was moving elements between him and B Company. The Battalion Commander coordinated the fires of the two companies and gunships into the draw between men and instructed them to keep abreast of one another as they moved toward Hill 937. The enemy was employing claymores, RPG's, MG's and mortars, in addition to small arms and snipers. B Company reported that the enemy was well dug in and camouflaged and that the US troops received the greatest volume of fire when they were up and attempting to move, indicating the excellent training of the enemy. Both elements, however, continued to make steady progress up the hill, using maximum reconnaissance by fire, employing the 40mm cannister round, and creeping mortars and artillery to their front and flanks.

At 1400 hours, both companies were about 150 meters from the top of the hill and each had sustained no more than a dozen wounded. At 1400 hours, however, the ARA once again shot up a friendly unit. This time it was B Company's command group and resulted in 2 US KIA's and 14 WIA's. Included in the fourteen wounded were the Company Commander, the FO, RTO's and 1st Sergeant.

At 1359 hours, the Battalion Headquarters area received the first of four PG rounds spaced about twenty minutes between each. Eight persons from the headquarters and five from C Company were wounded. Included were the Battalion Commander and the S3; neither was evacuated at the time.

At 1416 hours, the B Company wounded were being carried back to the lower Z and another captain (planned to replace the S2) had taken command of Company.

At 1500 hours A Company reported he was about 75 meters from the hill top of 937. B Company was out of radio contact due to the unfortunate strike on its command group. At 1512 hours, A Company reported movement around him.

At 1517 hours, the Battalion Commander briefed Brigade on the situation. He explained to Brigade that he doubted B Company could reach the top with its command group knocked out. The new B Company Commander had just taken over and had requested that he be allowed to pull back and sort out what he had. The Battalion Commander felt that A Company might make it without B, but did not want to put a single, below strength company on the hill alone. He recommended that the two companies pull back to their NDPGs of the previous night and let the Air Force continue to bomb the hill. This was approved by Division.
At 0230 hours, as A Company was drawing back for the air strikes, they reported that the enemy was counter-attacking down the ridge to their south in an attempt to flank them. The Battalion Commander ordered A Company to put fire into the area in an attempt to protect his rear. Artillery and mortar fires were saturated in close to the company. At 0331 hours, A Company reported that its rear element was in contact and at 0337 hours informed that he had one KIA and 6 or 7 WIA's. At 0603 hours, A and B Company linked up at the Tower.

At 1700 hours, A Company reported total casualties for the day at 1 KIA and 13 WIA's; B Company had 2 KIA's and 19 WIA's all but five of B Company's KIA's were caused by the ARVN ship. The magnitude of this misstep could not be appreciated at the time. On this day, sustaining moderate casualties, the 3-137th had nearly attained the top of the hill only to have the momentum of the coordinated attack interrupted by the ARVN strike on B Company's eastern section. Three days later the 3-137th was to suffer its 20 worst of casualties in its third attempt to take the objective. Even though the hill was pounded day and night on the 16th and 17th by air, artillery and mortar, one can only assume from the ferocity of the fighting on the 15th, as compared to that on the 15th, that the enemy must have reinforced considerably.

At 1800 hours Spooky was requested for 2000 hours, and throughout the night he was employed on Hill 937 and west of the headquarters location toward the action sector.

By 1944 hours all the casualties had been evacuated. At 2126 hours, B Company reported his strength as 65. A Company still had approximately 100 men.

The evening defensive positions for 15 May were: A and B Companies to position at the lever 17 at YO320936, C Company, Battalion Headquarters, and mortars positioned the blocking position at YO320939 with 1st Platoon A Company embarking at YO318930. D Company at YO321938 was just northeast of the block position with a platoon size ambush 100 meters to the north of the NVA.

Several fireballs were planned at odd times through the night.

At 0230 hours, Brigade called to confirm plans for a coordinated two battalion attack using gas (63) to be conducted on the 16th. The concept was that two companies of 3/137 would move toward Dong Ap 5A1 to a position from which they could exert pressure on the enemy and support by fire from the west while the 1/506 made its assault from the southwest. The scheme never had a chance for the 16th, because the 1/506 was too far from the hill.

At 0900 hours, G Company detected movement on the perimeter and employed grenades against the suspected enemy location. At 0930 hours, G Company again reported movement. The Battalion Commander cautioned the company to refrain from using small arms or 80's until absolutely necessary. He instructed the unit to be sure that they did have movement and to continue to use hand grenades in order to deny the enemy knowledge of the exact time of the unit's exposure.

The evening defensive positions for 16 May were: A and B Companies to position at the lever 17 at YO320936, C Company, Battalion Headquarters, and mortars positioned the blocking position at YO320939 with 1st Platoon A Company embarking at YO318930. D Company at YO321938 was just northeast of the block position with a platoon size ambush 100 meters to the north of the NVA.
The movement at this time was in a large draw off the western edge of the perimeter. At 2300 hours, three to four enemy grenades, or comparable explosive devices, were hurled at the perimeter. The US troops responded with more hand grenades. At 2400 hours troops were ordered to continue the 100% alert. Eight minutes later heavy movement was reported and at 0050 hours several more small satchel charges or grenades were thrown toward the perimeter. All landed just short and there were no US casualties. The S3 called Brigade and requested to keep Spooky on station throughout the night. At 0130 hours the perimeter received sporadic small arms fire. The Battalion Commander instructed the line to put some M-79 fire in the suspected locations which were south and west of the perimeter. He then asked Brigade to increase the volume of his H&I fires and to fire his defensive targets. He also emphasized the need for Spooky or ARA.

At 0315 hours, Shadow (0119) with a searchlight fire guide capability and similar to Spooky reported on station. The artillery and mortars were adjusted and Shadow went to work. At 0240 hours, Hawk 19, a light fire team of Cobras, checked in and went to work in conjunction with Shadow.

Shadow, who by now was oriented and placing accurate and close fires to the north and west, merely kept his light on and Hawk 19 went in under him to shoot in the target area.

While the two were working C Company reported more enemy satchels, MG fire was placed into the draw to the west, after a soldier reported seeing two of the enemy.

About 0400 hours, Shadow left station (Hawk 19 had already departed) and the artillery and mortars resumed until 0525 hours, when Spooky reported in and went to work.

As late as 0510 hours, C Company continued to report movement. Evidently, if the enemy had planned an attempt at the perimeter, he decided against it once confronted by the alert response of the troops to his movement and the continuous mix of air and indirect fire support. 1st light check revealed 1 enemy KIA.
On 0700 hours, Condor 6, (Lt), reported an enemy posi
sion west of the Headquarters location to the border. He reported two fires that
appeared to be the result of secondary explosions resulting from sporadic shing
the night.

On the morning of the 16th, B and D Companies exchanged positions and leisure
B Company returned to the upper LZ blocking position and secured the eastern
half of the perimeter. C Company, after a complete resupply, moved down to
the lower LZ.

At 0830 hours, the Battalion was informed of the locations for the 1/30th.
That unit reported two companies in light contact. Very little forward
progress had been made from his NDP's and, consequently, the coordinated
attack was postponed until the 17th.

While the two companies selected to make the next attack, D and A Companies,
were making preparations, the Battalion Commander continued to direct
airstrikes and artillery on the objective.

Engineer support continued to assist the Battalion in enlarging the upper LZ,
blowing a 360 degree clearance for the mortars and generally improving the
defenses of the blocking position.

At 1430 hours, the 24th Corps Commander visited the Rakkasans and stayed
for about an hour.

There were no significant contacts on the 16th. At dark the unit locations
were: A Company at YC21955 with 4 LP's; B Company at YC320939 with 2
ambushes; C Company at YC320939 with 1 platoon ambush; D Company at YC324986
with 1 platoon ambush.

Twelve skypots were cleared in the vicinity of the Battalion mainly to the
west along the border.
The night passed quietly with no enemy contact. Lights were observed on Hill 937 and artillery and mortars were adjusted on them.

At 0250 hours, the Battalion Headquarters received locations for the 1/506: A Company and Battalion Headquarters at YC328969; B Company at YC319872; and C Company at YC327965.

The 1/506 had gained about 300 meters from the previous day's position, but they were still too far away to be considered in any immediate plan for a coordinated attack with the 3/187th.

At 0910 hours, Bilk 35, the AF FAC, reported on station with fighters carrying 1000 pound fuze delay bombs. With him in the aircraft was a 3/187th officer who had been up the hill. It was hoped that he could point out to the FAC the precise locations on the hill that the enemy was concentrating his defenses.

At 1038 hours, the Battalion Commander's callsign (BlackJack) was transmitted and repeated on the battalion net. The voice was obviously that of a Vietnamese. It was assumed to be the enemy and Brigade was notified.

At 1024 hours, Brigade conducted an artillery CS test fire on Hill 937.

At 1055 hours, as the third airstrike of the day began, A Company Commander reported that he saw an enemy body tossed into the air. From the Battalion Headquarters location, one could observe also what appeared to be bodies suspended from trees.

At 1220 hours, locations for the 1/506 showed that their two lead companies had only progressed a hundred meters since their 0850 hours report.

Throughout the day newsmen arrived on the scene.

At 1300 hours, the Battalion S3 asked for a report on the progress of the 1/506. Brigade informed him that they were in essentially the same locations and that their A Company was running into stiff resistance from enemy in bunkers. Once again the coordinated attack was postponed, pending forward progress by the 1/506.

Meanwhile the 3/187 stored extra ammunition, to include concussion and CS grenades, at the lower LZ. Additional flak jackets were distributed to the companies destined to make the attack on the 18th. Defenses at the blocking position were improved and RIF's were sent out to the west, northwest and northeast.

During the afternoon, A and D Company Commanders, with a platoon each, reconnoitered forward to the hill in order to determine a position from which they could best support the impending attack by the 1/506. It was agreed by both commanders that they would simply have to move up the hill until contact was made before they could exert any appreciable pressure on the enemy's defenses.
Both platoons returned before dark and at 1730 hours D Company Commander reported hearing a burst of AK47 fire that was apparently shot up in the air. He presumed that it was an enemy CP alert signal.

At 1950 hours, the Battalion Headquarters received three or four enemy rocket. They landed about three hundred meters southwest of the perimeter, however, and there were no casualties.

At 2030 hours, the Brigade S2 informed the Battalion S2 that the enemy surrounding Hill 937 were from the 99th NVA Regiment.

The NDP's for the 3/187 were essentially the same as they had been on the 1/506. Ambush and IP locations, of course, were varied some.

At 0130 hours, NDF's were received for the 1/506 which showed them to be where they were at 1300 hours.

With this knowledge, the Battalion S3, after conferring with the Battalion Commander, called Brigade and made a strong recommendation that on the following day the 3/187 not attempt to go in alone again should the 1/506 not show more progress. It was agreed that the mission for the two 3/187 companies was to support, by fire, as the 1/506 attacked from the southwest. The Battalion S3 explained that when the order was given to move, A and D Companies would move forward to make contact and continue to move forward until they were exerting pressure on the enemy's defenses. They would attempt to not become decisively engaged until the 1/506 was in position and ready to go for the hill.

At 0130 hours, Spooky 12 arrived and he was directed against Hill 937 and the ridge running west from the blocking position to the border.
Another Spooky came on station at 0453 hours, and worked until 0538 hours. The night was uneventful, however.

At 0500 hours, Bilk 14 an AF FAC, reported on station.

At 0737 hours, Assault 27, a helicopter scout team, reported fresh tracks and that it appeared to be a recently dug grave two kilometers to the northwest of the blocking position in the area that Spooky had been firing the past few nights.

A Company reported at 0815 hours, that they had departed their NDP and were moving to their attack position.

Brigade informed the Battalion Commander of the sequence of events for the attack:
1st - prior to 0830 hours, airstrikes in support of each battalion.
2nd - 0830 to 0930 hours, artillery register on the hill.
3rd - 0930 to 0945 hours, artillery CS prep.
4th - 0945 to 0955 hours, regular artillery prep.
5th - 0955 hours, troops move out.

The schedule was a flexible one and was immediately slipped. The airstrikes were put in for the 3/197th, finishing at 0954 hours. The artillery registration began at 0915 hours, and lasted about 20 minutes. The first rounds of CS were on the ground at 0940 hours. The CS round accuracy was poor, however, and most of them landed in the vicinity of A Company located in an attack position three to four hundred meters southwest of the registration area. This was not the catastrophe one might think. The gas prep was sparse and would probably have had little effect on the enemy even if it had been on target. The day was bright and clear and there was a gentle breeze of 4 to 6 knots from the southwest, so the gas didn't linger.

At 0955 hours, Brigade informed that the CS prep would be continued dispensing the gas from aircraft.

At 0957 hours, A Company reported receiving RPG's and small arms fire from the southwest.

Shortly after 1000 hours, the ADC, Haykeye, made the decision to curtail the use of gas and start the artillery prep; it began at 1010 hours. The artillery prep lasted for fifteen minutes with the last rounds on the ground at 1025 hours. By this time D and H Companies had moved to within 200 meters of the hilltop. D Company had reported light contact and A Company had been receiving fire on his right flank from the northern side of the ridge to his southwest. This was the ridge that B Company 1/506 was supposed to be attacking over but all units of the 1/506 were too far away to be of any assistance. The Battalion Commander, airborne in a LOH, instructed a Company to move to the northern edge of the ridge that he was on, in order to get cover from the fires to his southwest. The enemy was also down in the draw to a Company's north and A Company was instructed to use maximum range by fire to the left since a RFA was...

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At 1056 hours, D Company reported that he was 150 to 200 meters from the top, and was maintaining a heavy volume of fire on the enemy in support of the 1/506 but the volume of enemy fire was increasing.

At 1059 hours, the following locations for 1/506 were received: A and C, with the Headquarters, were at YC328966, one hundred meters back from their last forward most platoon; B Company 1/506 was at YC320973, a gain of a hundred meters but still a kilometer from A Company 3/187th. Included with this report of their locations was the message that they were receiving small arms and RPG's but were making good progress.

At 1103 hours, D Company reported seeing NVA "all around him" and that he was "shooting them up". A Company reported at 1104 hours, that his lead element had yet to make hard contact. At 1105 hours, D Company Commander personally confirmed two NVA dead. At 1128 hours, however, D Company reported receiving a heavy volume of small arms and automatic weapons fire, RPG's and claymores and that he was taking heavy casualties. Most of the fire was coming from the trees on the northern edge of the bombed out area on the hilltop and from bunkers to his front.

At 1137 hours, A Company reported being about 75 meters from the top and firing in support of 1/506.

The following report came from the 1/506 at 1141 hours: B-1/506 had moved only 100 meters and is receiving fire from all sides - mortars, small arms and RPG; A Company 1/506 is also in contact.

At 1142 hours, D Company Commander reported that he was hit bad and was turning over command to his 2d Platoon Leader. Eventually, all of D Company's officers were wounded.

At 1150 hours, both companies were receiving a heavy barrage of 60 and 82-m mortar fires. The Battalion Commander called for artillery on the suspected sites, which were on the eastern side of Hill 937, and also requested an airstrike on that area.

By 1151 hours, A Company reported incoming small arms and RPG and reported that his 1st platoon leader had been hit.

At 1158 hours, Silk 35 the AF FAC, who had put so many strikes on to Dong Ap Bia, reported in and announced that he would have some fighters overhead in about 15 minutes.

At 1130 hours, C Company departed the Lower LZ to carry ammunition up to D Company and also to carry back casualties to the lower LZ. C Company also had a be prepared mission to pass through D Company and take up the attack on order.

At 1201 hours, A Company reported having 5 to 6 seriously wounded.

At 1202 hours, C Company was receiving automatic weapons fire and reported that he had a platoon leader hit. At 1206 hours, C Company reported two...
he was pinned down and receiving RPG and mortar fire. The Battalion Commander, above in a LCH, ordered him to spread his men out, get moving and get the ammunition up to D Company.

The majority of the fire on Company C was coming from the southern edge of a ridge running northwest off the hill. The Battalion Commander adjusted the mortars into the area and called for more artillery into the same place.

At 1213 hours, Assault 26 a (LFT) put a strike into the area from which Company was receiving most of its fire; about three hundred meters from his position on an azimuth of 300 degrees.

At 1214 hours Bilk 34, FAC, was overhead with fighters.

D Company reported again at 1218 hours, that he was receiving a heavy volume of fire. The Battalion Commander told him to hold fast; not try to move forward; and that C Company was on the way up to reinforce him, to resupply arms, and assist with his casualties. By this time, B Company, too, had a platoon carrying ammunition to the lower LZ. It was also to assist with the security of that area and help with the evacuation of the wounded.

At 1229 hours, while the platoon was en route, the ARA unknown to be in the area again shooed up the friendlies. One man was killed and four men wounded from B Company platoon. At this point, the Battalion Commander ordered the ARA out of his area.

Meanwhile, C Company enroute to D Company's location, reported a continuous volume of mortars, RPG's and small arms coming at his left flank from the north. He was still pushing toward D Company, but the forward progress was difficult.

At 1231 hours, A Company reported that he had eight WIA's and was holding in place. He had already dispatched an ammo resupply party to the lower LZ.

At 1239 hours, the Battalion Commander, who had landed to allow his LCH to refuel, was airborne again. He immediately started adjusting the mortars in closer to his companies had the artillery moved to make it more effective, and demanded that C Company spread out, put out a greater volume of fire and move faster up to D Company's location.

At 1241 hours, Bilk 35 put an airstrike into the front of A Company's position. The approach was a difficult one for the jets because of the disposition of friendlies, but the pilots did a magnificent job. This time, with the FAC and Battalion Commander in the air working together, they managed to put the strike precisely where it was needed.

For the next half hour the companies held in position and the enemy was hit with a concentrated mix of napalm strikes, gunships, mortars and artillery, as well as a maximum volume of US small arms, MG, M-79 LAW, and 90mm. At 1301 hours C Co reported that he had one of his reinforcing units linked up with D Company and that another was right behind with ammunition. The Battalion Commander ordered him to move up personally and take what remained of D Company under his command. He "resored" and added that his First Sergeant had just been hit.
At 1336 hours, the Battalion Commander returned to the Headquarters location. Incidentally, at the blocking position there was a clearing on the southeast side of the hill from which the entire 3/187 effort could be observed. Though not the same as being in a LOH, it was a good ground observation and control position.

At 1350 hours A Company, who by now had effected his ammunition resupply, reported that he was still receiving RPG's, mortars and small arms. At 1357 hours, the Brigade S3 informed the Battalion Commander that 1/2/506 would arrive later in the afternoon to reinforce the 3/187.

The Battalion S3 kept a continual check on the progress of the 1/506, hoping for some progress in that direction to take the pressure off the units of the 3/187. Throughout the day, however, the 1/506 forward progress was slow. Evidently 3/2/506 had made a heavy contact and had moved off the ridge to the south-east of A/2/37 and had gone east to join the main body of the 1/506. This action was unknown to the 3/187.

With casualties beginning to mount, assistance from the 1/506 not forthcoming, and, adding to the difficulty, a torrent of rain falling, the Battalion Commander recommended to Brigade that he once more pull back the 3/187 to avoid taking unacceptable casualties. His recommendation was approved by the Brigade Commander and at 1432 hours on the 18th the three companies reported that they were pulling back. A Company was to hold initially and support by fire to the front of B and C Companies while they withdrew. All Companies, however, continued to have contact with the enemy as they were pulling back. The enemy were in trees along the ridge to the north and northeast of A and C Companies and in the draw between these two and A Company. Airstrikes, artillery and mortars, in addition to the fires of the ground troops, got the companies back down the hill.

At 1437 hours, the Battalion Commander briefed the ADC, Hawkeye on the situation. It was agreed that the enemy must be reinforcing considerably from across the border. As the enemy KIA's were wearing clean new uniforms and steel helmets and gas masks.

At 1456 hours, the Battalion reported from Brigade all possible air support for the night i.e. Spooky, gunships, ARA.

It was felt that the enemy, having previously attacked the 3/187th's blocking position, might try attacking there again in order to divert attention from Dong Ap Bia. Even during daylight the troops manning this position, who were not taking rest breaks, were kept alert, OP's were manned and squad RIF's were sent out three to four hundred meters in all directions. Sporadic contacts by the headquarters and blocking unit was experienced. Included in the request at 1456 hours, for air support, was a request for increased MEDEVAC's. A heavy rain was falling, visibility was less than 20 meters, and the northern A Shau was socked in. US WIA's were lying on the LZ and a reported 15 to 20 more were on the way. Sixty three were eventually evacuated.

At 1526 hours, the Battalion Commander, 2/506, arrived at 3/187 Headquarters in order to discuss the arrival of his A Company in about one hour.
+ 1637 hours, the first H-21K reported the area. Through breaks in the
cloud cover, use of 100 ships, the LCIs, and an escort carrier to use the Division Commander's
destroyer, all the wounded were evacuated before dark.

+ 1655 hours, Thunder 44 LCI reported that he had evacuated all the serious
KIA's from A, C, and D Companies and was starting to evacuate the WIA's.

At this point the LCI shuttle, between the upper and lower LZ's was
appropriate. The LCI's and its pilots were of invaluable assistance to the
/167th during the operation. Thunder 44 (and others) became a salve to
the whole effort. In the dark, in the rain, through indirect fire, the LCI's
and LZ's receiving fire, they performed in a most courageous
manner. The lower LZ was located about 400 meters to the southeast of the
/167th. It was the key intermediate area between the rear LZ's and the
objective. "Boy's could bring supplies, key personnel" and are only as far as the
rear LZ. The A-1's could land only on the upper LZ. Consequently, it
was to the LCI to shuttle wounded and immediately needed items between the
rear LZ's. On many occasions, when time and the situation demanded, the LCI
overdrew right down into the area where the companies were attacking, in order
to deliver critically needed items.

The first ships with the troops of A/2/506 arrived on the upper LZ at 1630 hours,
and were spotted by 1723 hours. Between lifts of the A/2/506, the Division
Commander, Lucky Eagle, stopped in to visit with the Bakkas and stayed for
about 30 minutes. It was a timely visit and gave the officers and men of the
/167th a great boost.

+ 1645 hours, the Battalion Commander was informed that some US KIA's and
possibly WIA's had been left on Hill 937 when D and C Companies pulled back.
He Battalion Commander ordered D Company Commander to go back up and get
men, after both units had rendered an accurate accounting.

+ 1745 hours, A Company reported that his men had reported killing at least
5 of the enemy, but that he had not cannibaled all of his troops yet.

+ 1800, F/14, had fighters with 1000 pound bombs, at 1731 hours, and
continued pounding Hill 937.

+ 1800 hours, the following casualty figures were reported to the Battalion
commander: C Company WIA 27; KIA 1; D Company WIA 23; KIA 10; MIA 12;
A Company WIA 10, KIA 6.

The corrected battalion totals were: WIA (hostile) 60, (friendly) 4, total
WIA 64; KIA (hostile) 13; (friendly) 1, total KIA 14.

+ 1900 hours, the Battalion LZ sent the enemy casualty figures, 472 killed
by A/167th troops, to the Brigade CP. A Company 27 KIA, I Company 28 KIA,
C Company 27 KIA, 6 U.S. 27 KIA, 1 British 43 LCI.

At 1930 hours, the Battalion Headquarters position received approximately 50
enemy rounds (suspected 100) from the southwest at a distance of 400 to 600
meters. Rations were immediately rest on the area and the response was rapid.
The artillery was promptly used to the LZs to the rear, to the LZs to the rear.

At 1932 hours, 2 heavy land mines were found and reported. Notification of

fires rained on the target for approximately ten minutes, receiving no further fire, the enemy position was presumed to be neutralized. All enemy rounds had fallen short, and there were no US casualties.

Spooky came on station at 2003 hours, but was diverted minutes later to go to work for the 1/506 as they were reported to be in contact with the enemy.

OPTs for the 3/187th on 16 May were: A Company at YC323983, with ambush at YC321983; C Company and B Company at YC323984; D Company and A/2/506 were on the perimeter at the blocking position, YC320989.

B Company occupied the northern half of the perimeter with a platoon sized ambush to the north (YC320991), and A/2/506 occupied the southern portion with a platoon sized ambush to the west (YC318988).

In 2100 hours, the Battalion Commander reminded Brigade that Spooky was no longer working for the 3/187th and requested that the 1/506 keep him on their side of the fire coordination line (FCL) so that the 3/187th could continue with its fire support program. FCL's using the 97.8 and the 32.8 grid lines had been established.

At 1235, the Brigade discussed the multi-battalion operations for the 19th and 20th with the Battalion Commander. Essentially these plans were to commit additional battalions into the Dong Ap Bid campaign. Around noon on the 19th, the 2/501 would be combat assaulted into an LZ approximately 1500 meters northeast of Hill 937 and the 2/3 ARVN would be combat assaulted into an LZ approximately 2000 meters southeast of the hill. All four battalions would be in position by dark on the 19th and early on the 20th they would attack the hill.

At 2332 hours, the Battalion Commander informed the companies of this plan and requested they confirm their strength figures. The following were reported: A Company 83; B Company 78; C Company 76; D Company 57; and A Company 2/506 58.
At 1900 hours, the 3/187th was on station and worked the hill and border region. While working just east of the border, about 1500 meters to the west of the 3/187th, we reported several fairly big secondary explosions. This was the same area in which Spooky reported secondaries on a previous night.

Squads went in on suspected infiltration routes throughout the night.

The troops on the LZ perimeter continued with the 100/30/100% alert schedule and fired their fireballs. The night was quiet.

At 0415 hours, Speedy II, FAC, reported that he had a set of fighters inbound with "Smoke and Nape". ETA 0630 hrs.

At 0617 hours, 4 Company Command cautioned that someone had been popping purple smoke continuously since the FAC was on station. A check was made through Bravo with all units in the area. No body was proven by marking anything with purple smoke. All friendly in the immediate area had marked with white, but none was using purple.

At 0712 hours, Speedy II announced another set of fighters on station.

Assault 24, LFT, who had been working since 0704 hours, reported sighting more purple smoke on the ridge line 300 meters southwest of A Company.

Speedy finished his airstrike at 0738 hours, and left the 3/187th area to put in a strike for 1-506.

On 19 May, there was a total of seven airstrikes put on the eastern slopes and on top of Hill 937, in support of the 3/187th. Also, Assault (LFT) roamed the area all day drawing the enemy's fire and engaging him.

Early in the morning, C and A (3/187th) Company Commanders were brought up to the Battalion Headquarters where they met the Company Commander, A/2/506. All were briefed on the plans for the remainder of the day and the attack on the 20th. Each was given an aerial VR of the objective.

D Company was brought to the upper LZ and A/2/506 replaced it at the lower LZ.

The Battalion Commander intended that, during the day, the three companies prepare completely for the attack and be in their attack positions and dug in by nightfall. On the 20th, A/2/506 was to attack up the northern face of the hill into the trees from which D and C Companies had received the majority of their fires on the 18th. C Company, in the middle, was to attack on generally the same line of advance that they had used in reinforcing D Company on the 18th. A Company which had sustained only light casualties on the 18th, was to take the southern flank but attempt to keep its forces protected from the anticipated enemy fire from the southwest.

Orders were to move deliberately; bypass nothing; and take out all resistance to the flanks.
The rest of the morning was used to stockpile ammunition at the lower LZ; check every man going into the attack for a flak jacket; and generally equip and prepare for the impending assault on Hill 937.

At 0925 hours, the Brigade S3 informed the Battalion Commander that the 3/501 had a helicopter crash (not as a result of enemy action) on it's PZ and to hold off moving 3/187th elements. Actually, the 3/187th units had more than enough time to meet whatever plan that evolved. The distances to the three units' attack positions were not more than an hour for C and A Company and only slightly longer for A/2-506.

It was already apparent that even with the whole day at their disposal some of the other battalions might not be at their assigned LD's by dark.

For the troops of the 3/187th and attached A/2-506, the 19th was a time to get set just as they wanted for the attack.

The Rakusan mortar men, however, guided by the Battalion Commander, who was sometimes at their ground position and sometimes in a LOH, spent the whole day firing into suspected enemy locations and obtaining data for specific points on the hill that would be fired as the companies moved forward the following day. From their two tubes they fired more than three hundred rounds of 81mm on the 18th and again on the 20th; plus another 70-80 WP each day.

At 1050 hours, D Company reported seeing one NVA body fly through the air due to an air strike on hill 937. Another body could be seen hanging from a tree. By this time the formerly triple-canopied top of Dong Ap Bia was bald and with each airstrike and each arty prep the canopy peeled back more exposing the shells of bunkers destroyed by the pounding.

At 1155 hours the Brigade S3 informed the Battalion Commander that the artillery prep for the 2/3 ARVN LZ would begin at 1230 hours and continue for 15 minutes. He confirmed the LZ location as YC341976. The 2/3 ARVN would assault with 550 troops. Upon the completion of their assault, the 2/501, with 500 troops, would be inserted at YC333991.

At 1238 hours, A Company 2/506, while maneuvering into their attack position, reported engaging a sniper in a tree in the vicinity of YC322985.

At 1306 hours, the Battalion Commander instructed B Company to RIF about 1000 meters to the west and at 1345 hours, two patrols departed.

From 1416 hours until 1521 hours, the Battalion Commander was airborne in a LOH, flying low over Hill 937 to get a good look at enemy positions and to assess the effects of the US fires on them.

At 1421 hours, the Brigade reported that the 2/3 ARVN would complete their G4 into the LZ at YC341976 in approximately ten minutes. Their LZ was cold. As a visual recognition symbol, the ARVN troops would be wearing red and yellow arm bands.

The Battalion Commander, 3/187 while directing artillery and mortars from the LOH, called at 1432 hours to inform the Battalion S3 to tell Brigade that artillery fires in support of the 1/506 were falling on the 3/187th.
APPENDIX 10 Con't

Though these two battalions, and on the 20th, two more battalions, converged on the same general area, there was no major problem or incident with fires as listed by this FCL.

At 1447 hours, the Brigade S3 announced that th 2/3 ARVN LZ completion time was 1450 hours, and that the 2/501 would begin their CA shortly.

The 2/501 made their assault later in the afternoon onto a cold LZ and commenced their RIF to the south toward Dong Ap Bia.

The 1/506 had reported to Brigade at 1600 hours, that its B Company was at YC327973 and that its A Company in that vicinity also had made no contact with the enemy that day.

At 1611 hours, 1/2-506 confirmed that they had killed the sniper fired on earlier.

Skyspots were cleared at 1715 hours; with the 3/187th requesting priority for three on the border to the west. ARC lights and skyspots were planned for numerous locations on this night as they had been for other nights during the operation.

At 1750 hours, A Company reported hearing an enemy mortar several hundred meters from their location (YC324984) on an azimuth of 210 degrees. The area was immediately pounded by counter mortar fire and even quickly by artillery. The enemy rounds did not fall on any of the 3/187th locations.

At 1915 hours, B Company reported spotting several NVA carrying a mortar at YC314993 or about 300 meters to the NW of the upper LZ. The enemy force was taken under fire by MG's, mortars, and artillery and was not seen or heard from again.

At 2046 hours, the 3/187th received NDP's for the 1/506: A Company at YC327974; B Company at YC324964; C Company at YC327986 also Battalion Headquarters. Their forward progress had been about 100 meters from the previous NDP's.

Earlier, Brigade had sent coordinates to dictate forward progress for lines of departure (LD) that the four battalions would make by dark on the 19th. These were: 3/187th from the NW YC326989. This was well behind the forward progress of the attached A2/506's forward progress. The other attacking companies, of course, were already poised at the bottom of the hill.

2/501 from the NE YC331989 they had inserted about a kilometer NE of this in the mid to late afternoon and did not quite make their LD by dark. Their NDP was in the vicinity of YC339975.

The 2/3 ARVN were to reach YC339975 and did so easily.

The 1/506 were to reach YC328979 and they were there at night fall on the 19th.

On the night of 19 May, elements of the 3/187th were disposed as follows:
A Company at YC324984 with the 1st Platoon ambush at YC323984 and 21 Platoon ambush at YC323993, they employed 2 LF's.
C Company located in a combined position with A Company, had its 3d Platoon
attaching at Y0325983. C Company put out one LP in addition.

D Company still at the lower LZ, employed one LP. D Company's mission for
the 20th was to provide security for the lower LZ and provide ammunition and
casualty carrying parties in support of the attacking companies.

D Company manned the blocking position.

1/2/506 was at Y0326987 with 3 LP's.

Generally this is the way the four battalion were displaced on the night of
19-20 May:

The 2/501, to the NE still had a mile of rough uphill terrain to climb
before they reached the hill top; they were not to make it on the 20th, until
several hours after the Rakkasans.

The ARVN troops, a kilometer or better to the SE, had an easier approach and
with light resistance would reach the eastern side of the hilltop about 2
hours and a half after H-Hour.

The 1/506, to the SW, in the general vicinity of the past few days, were to
continue at about the same rate on the 20th. Their casualties on the 20th; how-
ever would be their heaviest of the operation.

The 3/187th units, in a position up tight to the enemy's main defenses,
had Dong Ap D'ia's western face coming at them in the night. Tomorrow they
would sit on top of Hill 937 approximately two hour after H-Hour.
At 0001 hours, on the 20th of May, the same entry that had been entered for the past nine days was made once more: Journal opened, 3/187 continues operations in assigned AO vicinity of the A Shau Valley.

The first daylight activity was Stand-To, it began at 0530 hours, and relaxed at 0600 hours. Defensive fires were included in this Stand-To.

Speedy 11, PltC, reported on station at 0633 hours, with his usual wares: smoke and nap.

Enemy fire from small arms cracked over the Battalion CP area at 0634 hours, as if to tell the 3/187 that the enemy was still there. The perimeter returned fire to the suspected locations west of the upper LZ. Brigade was asked to send a pink team out to take a look. A pink team already on the way, arrived at 0640 hours, and was asked to scout west of the upper LZ.

Instructions were passed to the perimeter to periodically shoot up trees and other possible sniper locations for the next ten to fifteen minutes. Meanwhile, the Bn CO had put in the airstrike. An explosion, followed immediately by the cry for "medic", interrupted morning shaving at 0705. One of B Company's LPI's was hit by the shrapnel of an RPG fired from a crew to the northwest of the upper LZ. The area was shot up and a squad RIF sent out to investigate, reported negative contact. A MEDEVAC was brought in and the evacuation was completed by 0735 hours.

Another airstrike had since begun against Hill 937, and Assault 28, LFT, was working to the west.

At 0745 hours, A Company 2/506, reported that his troops had killed one enemy soldier. The enemy KIA had walked directly up to their perimeter carrying a grenade with the pin pulled and they fired him up with small arms. He didn't appear to be on dope. He had no insignia. In his possession were a tobacco pouch, song books, and a paper with what appeared to be coordinates on it.

Two ships inbound at 0810 hours, with newsmen. At 0813 hours, Speedy 11 reported on station with the 3d of 7 airstrikes for the 3/187 on D-Day. At 0904 hours the Brigade S3 informed the Battalion Headquarters that the artillery prep would begin in two minutes.

At 0917 hours, the Brigade S3 informed the Bn CO to instruct the 3/187 units to hold in place once contact with the enemy was made and to wait for the coordinated move of the 1/506 and the 2/501 before continuing the assault on Hill 937. The Brigade Commander would give the order to move out.

At 0942 hours, the Brigade S3 informed the Bn CO that there was mortar fire falling too close to the 2/3 ARVN. The CO informed Brigade that they were not the 3/187 mortars as they were not firing.

At 0950 hours, the 2/3 ARVN, reported mortar fire falling to their front and rear. At 0958 hours, with two minutes of artillery prep remaining, the Bn CO passed last minute reminders to his troops. He was particularly anxious for A/2/506 to get fires into the wooded area to C Company's front. The artillery seemed to increase in intensity as H-Hour approached. The fires which included 105, 155, and 81mm, were steady and intense. This prep was the best artillery effort witnessed by the 3/187 during the entire operation. The troops by now were standing in the door.
All wore flak jackets and had more than two basic loads of ammunition. Concussion and CS grenades were also carried. They did not realize at the time, but only one man, a soldier from A/2/506 would not return that day. Not a man balked and at 1000 hours, when the word came from Brigade that the artillery prep was over, they assaulted the hill.

At 1003 hours, the Battalion Commander requested that Brigade have the 2/3 ARVN mark their lead element with purple smoke and the lead element, 2/501, mark with yellow. He requested that they use those colors exclusively and that they keep out continuous smoke.

The 3/187 units had met only light resistance by 1015 hours, and continued pressing up the hill behind their mortar fires. Still, the Bn CO, overhead in a LOH, cautioned them to get spread out, stay alert, recon by fire, and by-pass nothing on their immediate flanks.

By 1020 hours, the 3/187 was 125 meters from the military crest of the hill. The 2/3 ARVN to their southeast, were also making fast gains toward the top.

At 1027 hours, the Bn CO reported that all 3/187 units were abreast, approximately 150 meters from the military crest of the hill, and still climbing.

By 1031 hours, A/2/506 reached the first bunkers on the northwestern face of the hill. They reported no resistance. Still they were instructed to approach the structures carefully and destroy them before moving beyond them.

The initial lull was deceptive and at 1035 hours, the battle of wits began once more. C Company reporting receiving ARVN. The Bn CO urged him to counter with his 90mm and to press quickly for the military crest which was less than 50 meters from him. The enemy was still on the hill in force, however, and at 1037 hours, C Company reported receiving heavy automatic weapons fire. The Bn CO instructed him to put suppressive fires into the automatic weapons position and hold in place until A/2/506 moved farther up to hit the enemy flank.

A/3/187 was into the action with a report, at 1042 hours, of incoming enemy fire. Again the fires were from the ridge to his rear (50) and from the draw on his left flank. At 1045 hours, C Company reported that one of his platoon leaders was hit. A minute later C Company noted that they were receiving heavy grenade. This position just below the military crest was quite precipitous and the enemy, without exposing himself, simply rolled hand grenade down on the attacking troops.

At 1043 hours, C Company reported a MG firing at his right flank. This fire was coming from one of several bunkers that were still intact even after the comitted 30 day pounding by air and artillery. Many of course had been destroyed. Of the fire, however, there had been multiple, concentrated area of rubble. Assaulting bunkers cleverly positioned and dug deep into the side of the hill. Only a direct hit would destroy one. This particular MG sat at the N between the two ridges upon which C and A Companies were advancing.

At 1045 hours the Brigade CO informed the Bn CO that the 2/3 ARVN was still maneuvering and suggested that the Bn CO coordinate the movement of the ARVN Battalion with the 3/187 to avoid the possibility of one friendly unit inflicting casualties on another. At 1048 hours, A/2/506 reported...
four of his soldiers were WIA. C Company informed Bn CO at 1102 hours that he was still receiving RPG's. The Bn CO cautioned the Company Commander to continue to keep fires going out, but to keep them low because of the AKM locations just on the other side of the hill. At 1107 the Bn CO informed A/2/506 that his direction of advance was off. He was instructed to turn 45 degrees to his left and move forward. His direction had been too southerly and his fires had been browning C Company. At 1109 the Bn CO put a smoke marker down to guide A/2/506 to the precise terrain that he wanted taken. He did the same for C Company a moment later.

Since 4/3/187 first had contact thirty minutes earlier, the action had become heavier. At 1116, he reported enemy on his right flank and stiff resistance on his left, but that he was making headway toward the large berm and bunker complex on the western military crest of the hill. A moment later the Bn CO, adjusting mortars from the LOH, was bringing 2 rounds of 81mm tube per minute directly onto this target area. He told 4/3/187 to watch his flanks, because the "geeks" are up and running around up here and streaming off the western side of the hill into the draw.

At this time, he enjoined the Bn CO 1/506 to move quickly to catch the enemy trailing into the draw several hundred meters to the front of the 1/506. At 1126 A Company CO reported that he had just been hit in the head and was passing on command to his 2d Platoon Leader. All the 3/187 units were on the military crest of the hill by 1127 hours. Ammunition began to run low at this point and A and C Companies started carrying parties back to obtain more. D Company which was securing the lower LZ, already had dispatched some parties forward. For immediate insurance, the Bn CO ordered a mix of M-60 M-16, and M-79 shuttled up to Company's location ASAP. At 1134 C Company shouted to Black Jack that the enemy had masks on and was employing gas! The Bn CO ordered "Put on your masks and don't stop moving forward." Actually, there never was any appreciable amount of gas used by the enemy. What he did use was probably 0/S grenades dropped by US WIA's on the 18th. At 1142 hours, Thunder 007 the LOH went right into C Company's location and kicked out the ammo resupply.

The first company to actually reach the top of Hill 937 was C/3/187. He accomplished this at 1144, one hour and forty-four minutes after starting. He complained of a lot of sniper fire, though, and the Bn CO told both A Companies to get moving and relieve C Company's flanks. The Bn CO returned to the GP to refuel at 1145 hours.

At 1152 hours A/2/506 was receiving heavy fire from below C Company's location. C Company, who by now had progressed further onto the top of the hill, diverted one of his rear elements to move north and down into the draw between him and A/2/506 to neutralize resistance there. The Bn CO was airborne again at 1200 hours. C Company reported numerous snipers on the hill top and the Bn CO told him to be sure that he shot every thing up and be certain to clear every bunker he passed, even if it appeared unoccupied. The LOH had already started the casualty evacuation shuttle to the upper LZ. The Bn CO now was escorting groups of WIA on the hill and advised units of the enemy locations in relation to them. Mortars, keeping up a maximum sustained rate of fire, were adjusted on these locations. The Bn CO advised the 2/3 AKM and 4/2/506 to link up on the northeast. The 2/501 was still a considerable distance down the face of Long or Big in that direction. At 1207 C Company estimated that he had ten US WIA's. At 1208 the Bn CO reported to Brigade that a good number of the enemy to the front of A Company were just standing there and looked armed. He requested pink team to look them out. At 1213 the Bn CO

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observed white puffs of smoke, possibly from an indirect fire weapon, behind the 3/506 location. Assault 23, 1 L/4, was told to check the area. By 1145, link up between 3/2/506 C Company and elements of the 3/3 ABN had been made, and was 26 reported that he might have spotted mortars to the east of the hill. The L/4 CO told him to clear the location with the 3/3 and L/4 LMG. At 1200, D Company was still receiving fire from the ridge to the south of 4 Company. At 1232, Brigade informed the 3/3 that the 3/3 would want to visit one of the 3/3 mortars. The L/4 CO was aware of the area and could name in. Both the Division Commander and the G-3 informed 3/3 to visit the locations of the 3/3. At 1230 1 Company had linked up with 0 Company on the hill and was working to their front and the L/4 CO continued to chase the action with the mortars. At 1232 hours the L/4 CO reiterated to Brigade that he could see the enemy retreating toward the 1/506. The location of the retreating elements was marked and struck in a measurable time by 3/3, aircraft, mortars, artillery, and a mortar within ten counts per 

The southern end of the blocking position, overlooked the drive leading east from Dona to Bi to the Combat Border. Mortar fires, airstrikes, artillery and a mortar were clearly observable and conventionally adjusted on the enemy. At 1138, an advisor with the 2/3 ABN reported that several advisors had been killed and that some of the crews were retreating from the hill. At 1230, 2/506 requested a DEWAC and was instructed to give his position on the map to the observer. About this time, also, C Company reported 1/25 from 150 meters away. The majority of the reports from the rear were actually small caliber (60mm) enemy mortar fires. Enemy mortar fires of varying caliber were definitely fired from the east, northeast, and north of the upper 2/4 at different times during the day. At 1334, 2/506 reported receiving 60mm mortar fires from the north of his location on Hill 437. It appeared that the enemy was driving them from the hill, had positioned mortars in several locations. Pink teams and ABN were usually dispatched to deal with these suspected locations. At 1350 hours the Battalion Commander requested that Brigade contact the 1/506 and 2/506 to run their positions and come upon the 3/506 frequency to discuss final push of the unit on the hill. At 1405 hours, the Brigade Commander informed the Battalion Commander that our mission now was to search the objective thoroughly, and destroy remaining enemy activity. At 1410 hours 2/506 reported that his casualties were 1 KIA and 8 WIA. A L/4, Assault 23, moved in at 1420 hours and was instructed by the Battalion Commander to work over the east of the retreating enemy in the area to the east and southeast of Hill 437. At 1430, the Battalion Commander requested to Brigade that the mortar operations call for 2/3 ABN to press over the crest of the hill into the unit and further support their mortars.
achieved the hill, they exploit their success by pushing down into the area to the west. This could keep the area to the west and southwest free for the present and enable US airstrikes and artillery to pound into the line of the retreating troops. Airstrikes into this area must have taken their toll because for days after this vigorous mortar sites were found in the vicinity of the large western draw. Speedy 1-1/2 was on station with lighters at 1451 hours and was told to keep his advance on the enemy retreating west. At 1539 hours, the 1/1 Advisor reported receiving mortar on and south of 250 degrees from his location. The Battalion 53 requested current loc of the 1/10 on the advancing through the suspected vicinity of the mortar. At 1516 hours, the Adv. Advisor reported to the 3/137 that he was still pushing toward the objective and that the NVA for his UP would be to the east of Hill 687. Rick 24 PhC requested clearance to put an airstrike into vicinity coordinates YC320972. The Battalion 53 gave coordinated clearance for the 3/137 but suggested that he check with 1/526 for any of their troops possibly in that area. At 1552 hours, while the Division Commander was visiting, enemy mortars were fired from the west at the upper LZ. The suspected area was fired up with mortars, MGs and artillery. There were no friendly casualties. During the remaining hours of daylight the unit on the hilltop continued setting up operations. The progress was slow because of the continuing sniper fire. At 1651 hours, C Company had found two of the enemy WIAed in a bunker. One died shortly there after C Company Commander called to explain that the captive wouldn't come out of the hole. The Battalion S3 instructed him to throw tear gas or smoke grenades into the hole. The Battalion Commander came on the radio at that point to warn the Company Commander that he didn't want a single US soldier even scratched in an encounter such as this one. He ordered that if they couldn't get the NVA out of the hole to tell him we would throw a frag grenade in with him. Minutes later at 1655 hours, the enemy soldier was out of his hole stripped and on his way to the lower LZ. This captive evacuated later in the afternoon told the grizzly tale of how more than 30% of his company of a hundred and twenty men had been wiped out since the fighting began on 10 May. He was from the 5th platoon, K8 Bn, 29th NVA Regiment. The Brigade S3 landed at 1707 hours to confer with the Battalion Commander and to pass on the new missions and general movement planned for the 3/137 for 21 May to the Battalion S3.

On the 21 of May, the 3/137 was to be withdrawn from the area and sent in for a Stand-Down and subsequent missions in the coastal plains.

As late as 1816 hours, C Company reported having a man wounded by sniper fire.

At 1930 hours, D Company arrived at the upper LZ and took position on the southern half of the perimeter.

NDF's went in at 1936 hours were: A Company 3/137 at X5328982 with 2 LP's; B Company 2/137 at X5328982 with 1 LP; B Company 2/137 at X5328998 with 5 LPs and an animal; C Company 3/137 at X5328982; D Company 2/137 at X5328982 with 2 LP's and an animal at X5319988.
At 0050 hours, B Company's 2d Platoon LP detected movement and two grenades. There were no other actions on the perimeter except for firefights, and the night passed quietly.
On the 21st at 0032 hours, Brigade informed the Battalion S3 that the desired order of extraction of 3/187 units was: B, C, Battalion Headquarters, D and A. The quiet was broken at 0615 hours, when enemy 60mm mortars were fired at the headquarters location. Approximately 13 rounds were fired from south of the perimeter but caused no casualties. Counter mortar fire answered swiftly and MG's raked the suspected location. An additional fireball was executed at 0630 hours. At 0656 hours, the C&C ship, to be used in controlling the extraction, reported in on the battalion command frequency. B Company was prepared for pickup but, because of adverse weather at 0730 hours, the Battalion Commander elected to postpone the extraction for an hour.

At 0910 hours, the Division Commander arrived at the upper LZ. Five minutes after his arrival, enemy mortar rounds, impacted just outside the northern section of the perimeter. The target was engaged by mortars and HMG and there were no friendly casualties.

At 0924 hours, Brigade was informed that the extraction would begin at 0930 hours.

The PZ times for B Company was 0936 hours. It was clean for B Company at 1014 hours.

A FAC requested clearance to put an airstrike into the vicinity of coordinate X0314981. This area was the main draw off Hill 937; it extended to the border and was the shortest escape route for the enemy. Clearance was granted.

PZ time for C Company was 1017 hours. The PZ for C Company and A Company was located on the top of Hill 937. A Company, 2/506, which was extracted after the completion of the 3/187, provided security for the pickup.

By 1030 hours, B Company had completed its move to the intermediate LZ at FB Blaze and was on its way to a new mission at Phong Dien.

The PZ complete time for C Company clearing Hill 937 was 1031 hours, and by 1105 hours, they too had been cleared through FB Blaze and were on their way to a new mission at Ccılı Beach. Next the headquarters came out and it was back at Camp Evans by 1136 hours. Everything was going smoothly with the D Company extraction when at 1300 hours, with 21 men remaining on the upper LZ, they received four incoming RPG rounds. Fortunately only two men were wounded and not seriously. The Battalion S3 who was controlling the extraction, gave instruction to the platoon leader on the ground and called for air support from Brigade. While the D Company Platoon sought to neutralize the enemy presence and guarantee the security of the PZ, the lift shifs were diverted to A Company. A Company was extracted from Hill 937 without incident and by 1505 hours, was on the way to Eagle Beach for a stand-down.

Approximately 1400 hours, the Battalion Command 3/187 arrived in a LCH over B Company's troops, that were left on the blocking position PZ. He directed armed helicopter fires and airstrikes on possible enemy locations close to the PZ. After an hour of these fires, he deemed the PZ secure and the troops were successfully extracted by 1515 hours.

Thus ended the action of the 3/187 at Dong Ap Bia Hill 937.