SUBJECT: Combat After Action Report of the Battle for TAY NINH (U)

TO: See Distribution

1. (U) Name of operation: The Battle for TAY NINH (U).

2. (U) Dates of operation: 17 August to 27 September 1968.

3. (U) Location: Reference
   a. Map, CAMBODIA, 1:50,000, Series L7016; Sheets 6132 II, 6131 I and 6131 II; and VIETNAM, 1:50,000, Series L7014; Sheets 6232 III, 6231 IV, 6231 III, 6232 II, 6231 I and 6231 II (inclosure 1).
   b. Pictomap supplement to standard 1:50,000 scale map, VIETNAM, 1:25,000, Series L8020; Sheets 6231 III N, 6231 IVS and 6232 III N (inclosure 2).
   c. Map, VIETNAM, 1:100,000, Sheets 6331, 6132, 6231 and 6232, Series L607 (inclosure 3).

4. (U) Control and command headquarters:
   a. US 25th Infantry Division (Tropic Lightning).
   b. Headquarters, TAY NINH Province (ARVN).
   c. Headquarters, 25th Infantry Division (ARVN) (August).
   d. Headquarters, Airborne Division (ARVN) (September).

MFR: This is the draft which A G Williamson saw and approved.
5. (U) Reporting Officer: MG Ellis W. Williamson, Commanding General, 25th Infantry Division, APO San Francisco 96225. This Combat After Action Report was compiled by the CO, 18th Military History Detachment (Major Richard A. Baun), APO San Francisco 96225 and the 20th Military History Detachment (Major Charles C. Pritchett and SP5 George R. Skinner), APO San Francisco 96375. Contributions were made by CO, 16th Military History Detachment (Major Paul W. Child, Jr.) 60, 26th Military History Detachment (IIT Raymond F. Bullock) and CO, 27th Military History Detachment (Major Donald A. Lacey), APO San Francisco 96375.


7. (C) Task organization:


   c. Vietnamese (August)

      (1) All provincial and district Regional Forces, Popular Forces (inclosures 7 and 8), Census Grievance cadre, Revolutionary Development cadre, Provincial Reconnaissance units, Self Defense units, Armed Propaganda Teams and one Armored Car platoon (V-100). Artillery which was deployed by platoons in each district town and the provincial city.

      (2) 2d Troop, 10th Cavalry Squadron (organic to 25th ARVN Division – attached to TAY NINH Province).

      (3) 51st Ranger Battalion (19 to 29 August).
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(4) Headquarters, 25th Infantry Division (ARVN) (Command Element).

4. Vietnamese (September)

(1) All provincial Regional Forces, Popular Forces, Census Grievance cadre, Revolutionary Development cadre, Provincial Reconnaissance units, Self Defense units, Armed Propaganda Teams and one Armored Car Platoon (V-100), Artillery deployed by Platoons in each district town and the provincial city. The Regional and Popular Forces units were deployed the same as in August.

(2) Headquarters, Airborne Division; Headquarters, 3d Airborne Brigade; 2d Airborne Battalion; 4th Marine Battalion; 5th Airborne Battalion; Battery A and Battery B, 1st Airborne Artillery Battalion, and Mortar Platoon (81mm), Headquarters Company, Airborne Division.

(3) Headquarters, Task Force B; 2d Marine Battalion; 3d Marine Battalion; 6th Airborne Battalion.

(4) 1st Marine Battalion.

(5) 8th Airborne Battalion.

8. (C) Supporting forces:

a. US Army:

1st Advanced Platoon, 32d Medical Depot
1st Battalion, 27th Artillery (155mm)
2d Battalion, 13th Artillery (105mm) and 2d Battalion, 32d Artillery (175mm/8 inch), 23d Artillery Group

3d Squadron, 17th Cavalry
6th and 7th Transportation Battalions, 48th Transportation Group
11th Combat Aviation Battalion
12th Evacuation Hospital
45th Surgical Hospital
64th Quartermaster Battalion
86th Signal Battalion
145th Combat Aviation Battalion
210th Combat Aviation Battalion
222d Combat Support Aviation Battalion
269th Combat Support Aviation Battalion
277th Supply and Service Battalion
362d Engineer Company (IE)
372d Radio Research Company
554th Engineer Battalion (CBT)
588th Engineer Battalion (CBT)
720th Military Police Battalion

b. US Air Force:

3d Tactical Fighter Wing:

90th Tactical Fighter Squadron (F-100)
510th Tactical Fighter Squadron (F-4)
531st Tactical Fighter Squadron (F-100)
604th Tactical Fighter Squadron (A-37)

12th Tactical Fighter Wing:

391st Tactical Fighter Squadron (F-4)
557th Tactical Fighter Squadron (F-4)
559th Tactical Fighter Squadron (F-4)

31st Tactical Fighter Wing:
136th Tactical Fighter Squadron (F-100) (Air National Guard)
188th Tactical Fighter Squadron (F-100) (Air National Guard)
306th Tactical Fighter Squadron (F-100)
308th Tactical Fighter Squadron (F-100)
309th Tactical Fighter Squadron (F-100)

32d Tactical Fighter Wing:
147th Tactical Fighter Squadron (F-100) (Air National Guard)
355th Tactical Fighter Squadron (F-100)
416th Tactical Fighter Squadron (F-100)
612th Tactical Fighter Squadron (F-100)

35th Tactical Fighter Wing:
352d Tactical Fighter Squadron (F-100)
614th Tactical Fighter Squadron (F-100)
615th Tactical Fighter Squadron (F-100)
120th Tactical Fighter Squadron (F-100) (Air National Guard)

8th Tactical Fighter Squadron (B-57)
5th Special Operations Squadron (Spooky) (AC-47)
19th Tactical Air Support Squadron (O-1) (FACs)

c. Vietnamese Air Force (VNAF):

23d Tactical Fighter Wing:

514th Tactical Fighter Squadron (A-1)
518th Tactical Fighter Squadron (A-1)
522d Tactical Fighter Squadron (F-5)

d. ARVN: 5 Teams, 30th PSYWAR Battalion

9. (C) Background:

a. TAY NINH Province, located northwest of SAIGON, is bordered on the north, west and south-southwest by CAMBODIA. It shares its southern and eastern borders with HAU NGHIA, BINH DUONG and BINH LONG Provinces, RVN. TAY NINH, the capital city of the province, is located approximately 99 kilometers from SAIGON and approximately 25 kilometers from the CAMBODIAN border. TAY NINH is not considered a delta province, but many delta topographical features are prevalent. In the southwestern half of the province, the countryside is characterized by rice paddy terrain which is heavily flooded during the rainy season. The southeastern quadrant of the province is also flat with a mixture of rice paddies, cultivated rubber plantations and forests. The northern half is characterized by flat, jungle dominated terrain.

b. The two seasons in the province are the monsoon, which lasts from May to December, and the dry, which lasts from January until April. The temperature ranges between 70 and 90 degrees throughout the year.

c. One of the most prominent mountains in RVN, NUI BA DEN (BLACK LADY or VIRGIN Mountain), is located approximately 10 kilometers to the northeast of TAY NINH City. This mountain was a stronghold of the Viet Minh for years and is now controlled by the Viet Cong with the exception
of the summit which was captured in 1964 and became a US communications site. The area to the north of NUI BA DEN is considered generally an unpacified area. This area, known as WAR ZONE "C", is sparsely populated and the suspected location of COSVN Headquarters, the political arm of the Viet Cong. Operations ATTLEBORO, BIRMINGHAM, JUNCTION CITY, YELLOWSTONE and WILDERNESS have been some of the larger operations which have been conducted in TAY NINH Province in 1967 and 1968.

d. TAY NINH Province is the accepted center of the Cao Dai religion which claims approximately 200,000 followers out of the province's total estimated 310,000 population. The great temple or Holy See of the Cao Dai is located in LONG HOA near the provincial capital. This religious sect had a 50,000 man army at one time and was considered one of the leading political forces in the country. Generally, the Cao Dai have been pro-government but attempts in the past have been made by the Viet Cong to enlist their support or at least neutralize their political beliefs. The province chief for the past few years was a Cao Dai, however, he was replaced by a Catholic prior to the attack in September 1968.

e. The province has a land area of over 392,500 hectares and is politically divided into four districts: HIEU THIEN, KHIEM HANH, PHOUC NINH and PHU KHUONG. A III Corps CORDS brief which contains additional background information is attached (inclosure 9).

f. Officials of TAY NINH Province were uncertain of the enemy's intentions and capabilities in March, April and May 1968 as his troop
strength was largely unknown. However, two VC provincial battalions, two VC provincial companies and the local VC district guerrilla organizations were confirmed to be operating within the provincial boundary. Infiltration through the province towards SAIGON had increased to about a battalion a day in preparation for the enemy’s next offensive against the nation’s capital. These infiltrating battalions assisted the local guerrilla and provincial units as they passed through, in exchange for guides, food, supplies, etc.

g. The enemy infiltrated into the province from CAMBODIA west of the FISH HOOK area (XT5890) into a staging area south and east of KATUM (XT3390) near the Saigon River west of the MICHELIN Rubber Plantation (XT5650) and east of SUI DA (XT3357). Among the several infiltration routes from this stronghold or staging area was one through the CAU KHOI Rubber (XT3240) west across the VAM CO DONG River through the RENEGADE WOODS (XT2930) and into the ANGEL’S WING. This is an area in CAMBODIA east of grid line XT2214 to XT2614 which is used by the enemy for staging attacks against SAIGON (see inclosure 10). Considering the enemy’s main stronghold and infiltration route outlined above within the province, it was believed that one of his objectives was to interdict National Route 22 near the CAU KHOI Rubber Plantation (vic XT3135) and isolate TAY NINH City from SAIGON.

h. ARVN forces successfully defended the city in May against a three-battalion VC attack upon the Chieu Hoi Center which is located

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between the Cao Dai Temple (XT241496) and TAY NINH City (XT1950-2050) and upon the Special Forces complex astride Highway 4 (XT204509). Advisor personnel believed this attack was conducted by one of the infiltrating units. The province experienced more enemy initiated incidents in the May Offensive than during the entire TET Offensive-Counter Offensive.

1. An enemy recovery from the setbacks of the May attack began in June with harassing activities. In early July, intelligence reports revealed that a major attack upon the city would be initiated. The 5th NVA and the 9th VC Division's bases had been located in the province at XT4460 and XT1876 respectively. This is probably the first time that two division size units were known to be located in the province. By 20 July indications were clear that a large attack would be conducted against the city within a few days. On 24 July, the Acting Commanding General, Brigadier General William T. Gleason dispatched the 2d Battalion, 27th Infantry, to TAY NINH Province to reinforce the 25th Infantry Division's 1st Brigade whose area of operations generally encompassed the province. In addition to this battalion, the brigade exercised operational control over the 1st Battalion, 5th Infantry (M); the 4th Battalion, 23d Infantry (M); the 3d Battalion, 22d Infantry and the 2d Battalion, 34th Armor (-B, C). Direct support artillery for the brigade was furnished by the 7th Battalion, 11th Artillery and general support by elements of the 23d Artillery Group. With these forces, the brigade established a defensive arc of artillery fire support bases around the
city from which infantry units could conduct wide ranging operations to interdict and preempt enemy movement on TAY NINH City. At the same time, the brigade established similar defenses around DAU TIENG, a major division base camp located in BINH DUONG Province 25 kilometers to the east of the city. Province headquarters assembled a battalion size RF reserve composed of the 161st, 267th, 315th and 688th Rifle Companies which operated under the supervision of the sector staff (the Province Chief is also Sector Commander and has a staff of ARVN officers assigned. The staff is comparable to a US infantry battalion) and had the mission of defending TAY NINH City proper. The remainder of the outlying hamlets, villages and towns were protected by the permanently assigned RF/PF forces and other local defense units such as Civilian Irregular Defense Groups, Revolutionary Development cadre and Census Grievance cadre.

j. When the enemy attack failed to materialize in late July and the battle lull that had characterized action in the province since mid-May continued, intelligence data and information were reassessed. The date for the predicted attack was established as early August and later moved forward to mid-August. The need to change the attack dates was believed to be the result of extensive preemptive actions conducted throughout the province to counter the enemy build-up. Among these measures was a steady increase of B-52 bomber strikes against suspected enemy base camps, supply caches and assembly areas. In August, September and October 1968 a total of 253 missions were flown in the province (inclosures 11 and 12). Generally, each mission contained six aircraft with each averaging 30,000
pounds of ordnance. Several US advisors believed that the extensive use of the B-52 strikes forced the enemy to stay above ground at all times and, therefore, be susceptible to artillery fire which was employed in abundance from the various fire support bases.

k. Intelligence reports later confirmed that two enemy battalions were destroyed by these B-52 strikes. One of these battalions, located in the STRAIGHT EDGE WOODS (XT1334), was believed to have had the mission of attacking the city from the south. The other was located in an advance position north of NUI BA DEN. Sector personnel believed that the B-52 strikes probably forced the enemy to delay his attack upon the city because of his heavy losses and the need to regroup and resupply his forces.

1. All allied forces located within the III ARVN Corps Tactical Zone were participating in Operation TOAN THANG or COMPLETE VICTORY which was initiated by OPORD 5-68, Headquarters, II FFORCV and III ARVN Corps, dated 5 April 1968. Based on this order, the 25th Infantry Division (US) prepared and issued OPORD 1-68 to all organic units (inclosure 13). Message AVFBC-OP #050470, Commanding General, II FFORCV, subject: Operation TOAN THANG (U), dated 31 May 1968, redesignated the campaign as Operation TOAN THANG II effective 312400 May 1968 (inclosure 14). These forces had been involved in a similar operation entitled RESOLVED TO WIN which began subsequent to the 1968 TET Offensive and terminated just prior to the initiation of COMPLETE VICTORY.
m. Essentially, there were no ARVN units based or operating in the province at the beginning of August with the exception of artillery platoons (two tubes) deployed in the province and district towns. The local forces, RF/PF, etc., were committed primarily to the defense of fixed installations, hamlets, bridges, etc., and were available for only limited daytime operations.

n. TAY NINH Province is generally located within the tactical areas of interest of the 25th Infantry Division (ARVN) and the US 25th Infantry Division (inclosure 15). Elements of the 1st Infantry Division (US) and the 5th Special Forces Group also operated within the area. Camps operated by the Special Forces were located at BEN SOI (XT092476), KATUM (XT330898), THIEN NHON (XT087816), TRANG SUP (XT170555) and TAY NINH (XT204509).

o. Many consider the entire heavily populated complex to be TAY NINH City; however, this is a misconception as TAY NINH City proper is generally the portion of the complex located in grid squares XT1950, XT1951 and XT2050 (inclosure 16).

10. (C) Intelligence:

a. The enemy concentrated upon two objectives within the III Corps Tactical Zone after conducting his unsuccessful offensives against SAIGON in May and June. These objectives were:

"Liberate" the country section by section.

Inflict heavy casualties upon friendly forces especially the 25th Division (US) and necessitate the redeployment of free world forces away from SAIGON, then attack the capital city.
b. Participating enemy units:

(1) 5th NVA Division:
   275th Regiment
   33d Regiment
   88th Regiment
(2) 9th VC Division
   271st Regiment
   272d Regiment
   273d Regiment
(3) 101st Regiment
(4) 174th Regiment
(5) D14 Local Force Battalion
(6) D16 Local Force Battalion

c. For detailed information on the activities of the above enemy units see inclosures 17, 18 and 19.

d. Weather: The months of August and September were in the middle of the southwest monsoon season. The weather was characterized by hot humid days with heavy rain showers in the late afternoon and early evening hours. There were about 12 hours of daylight during this period. The sun rose at 0641 hours and set at 1903 hours in early August. By late September, daylight hours were reduced as sunrise was at 0642 hours and sunset was at 1844 hours.

e. Terrain: The northern half of the province is characterized by dense, heavily vegetated forest/jungle. The western portion of the southern
half is open, flat, agricultural land with patches of forest; and the southeast has open land, forests and four large rubber plantations. The rubber plantations, as well as the central portion, have a network of relatively good dirt roads. Trafficability for foot, vehicle and tracks, was good on the roads to extremely poor in the rice paddies.

11. (C) Mission: Allied forces operating in III CTZ had the mission of conducting a combined offensive over an extended period of time to locate and destroy all enemy units operating in the area.

12. (C) Concept of operation and execution:

Colonel Freemont B. Hodson's basic plan for the defense of TAY NINH City was to deploy his forces beyond the city in blocking positions astride the likely enemy avenues of approach. From infantry-artillery fire support bases, the 25th Infantry Division's 1st Brigade commander mounted extensive daylight reconnaissance in force and helicopter borne combat assault operations designed to detect and destroy the enemy in his assembly areas and approach marches. These daylight operations were supplemented by numerous platoon size ambush patrols laying in wait at night for the enemy along principle roads, trails and waterways.

This concept of operations was executed with the establishment of Fire Support Base BUELL along route 4 three kilometers northwest of TAY NINH (XT213532) and Fire Support Base RAWLINS (inclosure 20) installed six kilometers east of the city (XT301502). The permanent 25th Infantry Division's base camp (brigade sized) seven kilometers west of the city
(center of mass XT165517) was the location of the brigade headquarters and maneuver elements deployed in outposts to the northwest and west of the city.

Twenty-five kilometers to the east of TAY NINH, another permanent brigade sized division base camp, Camp RAINIER, at DAU TIENG (XT495475) served as a base of operations for brigade forces operating in that general area.

Extensive cross-attachment between the infantry and mechanized infantry battalions was employed. Areas of operations around the city were assigned as follows: 3d Battalion, 22d Infantry, LTC Alexander H. Hunt, Commanding, operated from Fire Support Base BUELL with a general area of operation north of TAY NINH; 4th Battalion (M), 23d Infantry, LTC Clifford C. Neilson, Commanding, maneuvered from Fire Support Base RAWLINS throughout an area of operations to the east of the city; 2d Battalion, 27th Infantry, LTC John F. Kenney, Jr., Commanding, worked out of the TAY NINH Base Camp, outposting and maneuvering to the west of the base camp and city; with Headquarters and A Company, 2d Battalion, 34th Armor, commanded by LTC Theodore E. O'Connor located at the TAY NINH Base Camp for a reserve. It received additional attached units as the situation dictated.

Direct artillery support for these maneuver elements was provided by the 7th Battalion, 11th Artillery, LTC Forest E. Pierce, Commanding, whose batteries were deployed at Fire Support Base BUELL, Fire Support Base RAWLINS, TAY NINH Base Camp and DAU TIENG Base Camp. Eight inch/
175mm artillery support was provided by the 1st Battalion, 27th Artillery and the 2d Battalion, 32d Artillery deployed at the base camps and Fire Support Base ST. BARBARA at BAU CO (XT275685), 17 kilometers north of TAY NINH City (inclosure 21). General support artillery was organic to the 23d Group, II Field Force Artillery.

The 1st Battalion, 5th Infantry (M), LTC Andrew H. Anderson, Commanding, operated from the DAU TIENG Base Camp covering a wide arc which encompassed the MICHELIN Rubber Plantation to the east and the BEN CUI Rubber Plantation to the west.

Within the city of TAY NINH, the 161st, 267th, 315th and 688th Regional Force Rifle Companies and the 2d Troop, 10th Cavalry Squadron, 25th ARVN Division were organized into a provisional battalion under the control of the Province Chief. In the outlying hamlets, villages and towns, permanently assigned Regional Force Companies and Popular Forces deployed in squads and platoons, assumed a static defense posture to engage any enemy who might penetrate the heavily populated urban area.

Despite the wide ranging operations of the 1st Brigade maneuver elements to seek out the enemy, contact was rare as the battlefield lull which had characterized operations in TAY NINH Province since mid-May continued through July and the first two weeks of August.

However, LTC Albert N. Stubbleline, the 25th Infantry Division G-2, continued to predict a major attack on TAY NINH City. Major General Ellis W. Williamson who assumed command of the division on 3 August directed a continuation of the operations around the city.

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A. Wolfe, assumed command of the 1st Brigade on 5 August and continued to pursue the general strategy and tactics established by Colonel Hodson.

To avoid pattern operations, Fire Support Base BULLL was closed and relocated. On 10 August, Fire Support Base BUELL II was established four kilometers north of the old fire base (XT227568).

The lull was broken abruptly on the night of 17 August (inclosure 22). At approximately 2110 hours a platoon ambush patrol from D Company, 2d Battalion, 27th Infantry in position along route 13 approximately six kilometers from the city (XT294520) detected a column of 300 enemy troops moving towards the city. The platoon leader called artillery fire upon the column and engaged the rear elements of the force with his own organic weapons. After approximately 120 rounds of artillery fire fell on the enemy and a brief fire fight was waged between the column and the ambushing patrol, the enemy formation broke and withdrew to the northeast. This enemy force was later identified as the 3d Battalion, 275th VC/NVA Regiment.

Although this contact provided the relatively minor results of five enemy killed (as opposed to 12 US wounded), its significance is measured more in the fact that it alerted the 1st Brigade and local Vietnamese forces to heavy enemy troop movements around TAY NINH City.

Meanwhile within the city, a plot was uncovered in which the enemy attempted to steal armored personnel carriers from the 2d Troop, 10th Cavalry Squadron (ARVN). Two soldiers, assigned to the troop, were VC
agents who had the mission of driving the armored personnel carriers to a school within the city where they would link up with sappers. This force would then use the vehicles to attack the USMACV Compound and other key local government installations.

The plan went awry, however, when one of the pair was ordered to DAU TIENG with a small element from the troop. The second agent then attempted to enlist the assistance of a third soldier for the plot. This soldier informed the troop commander of the incident, and the VC agent was promptly taken into custody.

As the evening passed, approximately 20 small scale attacks upon government outposts throughout the province were reported (inclosures 23, 24, 25, 80 and 81).

At 0115 hours, 18 August, the enemy effort in and around TAY NINH City began as the TAY NINH Base Camp and 1st Brigade Headquarters was struck by five rounds of 82mm mortar fire and 19 rounds of 107mm rocket fire. As the artillery units at the camp began to fire the first of 508 rounds of counter mortar fire to be expended during the night, the brigade Tactical Operations Center received a radio call at 0123 hours that Fire Support Base BUELL II was under heavy 82mm mortar attack (inclosures 26 and 27).

When the last of approximately 100 mortar rounds fell on BUELL, the perimeter of the fire base was assaulted by two enemy battalions which charged the position in human wave attacks. From within the base, the approximately 500 men of Headquarters and D Companies, 3d Battalion, 22d
Infantry; C Company, 4th Battalion (M), 23d Infantry; 1st Platoon, A Company, 2d Battalion, 34th Armor; B Battery, 7th Battalion, 11th Artillery; and A Battery, 3d Battalion, 13th Artillery responded to the enemy attack with a withering blanket of small arms, automatic weapon, mortar and artillery "killer junior" fire. (inclosures 28 and 82).

To augment his organic fires, LTC Hunt called in supporting fires from helicopter gunships based at TAY NINH and artillery from nearby mutually supporting fire support bases (RAWLINS and ST. BARBARA). Before the attack was finally repulsed, Air Force fighter-bombers came on station above Fire Support Base BUell II to smash at the enemy with napalm and 500 and 750 pound bombs.

Coordinating his fire support so that the air strikes were concentrated on the southern half of his perimeter and the artillery fires in the north, LTC Hunt was successful in deterring the enemy in his desperate efforts to reach the perimeter wire. At approximately 0430, the enemy heavily outgunned and badly mauled broke contact and withdrew to the northeast.

Moving forward from their bunker line positions to sweep around the fire support base and pursue the fleeing enemy, Hunt's infantrymen recovered 105 enemy bodies and captured 13 wounded prisoners of war. Littered around the battlefield were 15 AK-47 rifles, 12 RPG rocket launchers, four machine guns, one M-16 rifle, 10 pounds of enemy documents, 4000 rounds of small arms ammunition, 117 RPG rounds, 263 hand grenades, 21
recoilless rifle rounds, 25 bangalore torpedoes and nine 82mm mortar rounds. Hunt's losses in the battle were one killed, 26 wounded and one self-propelled 155mm howitzer and two tanks damaged, but still operational (inclosures 29 and 83).

Readout of the captured documents and interrogation of the prisoners of war later identified the attacking force as the 3d Battalion, 273d VC/NVA Regiment and elements of the 178th VC/NVA Regiment.

As the enemy mounted his assault on Fire Support Base BUELL II the PHOUC NINH District Headquarters (XT129504) located 10 kilometers west of TAY NINH was struck by a mortar and small arms attack at 0140 hours. One kilometer to the south of the city, the BEN KEO RF/PF Training Center (XT235476) received a 70 round mortar attack at 0150 hours.

The scattered attacks by fire, however, soon were replaced by widely executed ground assaults. At 0230 hours an estimated company of enemy troops were reported to have forced their way to the central portion of LONG HOA (XT248470) where they were heavily engaged by a PF platoon. At the same time, the TAY NINH Province Headquarters on the western outskirts of the city (XT198506) was hit by a concentrated mortar barrage of 15 rounds.

The enemy made a serious attempt to disrupt electronic communications into and out of TAY NINH City at 0234 hours when an estimated company assaulted the perimeter of the communications relay site on the summit of NUI BA DEN Mountain (XT261581) to the northeast of TAY NINH. Striking
with small arms, automatic weapons and rockets against the facility's bunker line manned by A Company, 3d Battalion, 22d Infantry, the enemy was able to breach the line in one location and was successful in blowing up one generator before he was pushed back out of the site.

All other sectors of the bunker line held fast throughout the night and at approximately 0615 hours, the enemy withdrew down the mountain leaving behind 15 dead, five AK-47 rifles, three rocket launchers, three pistols, 12 hand grenades, 100 satchel charges and 20 RPG rocket rounds. Eight defenders of the mountaintop were killed in the fighting, but the enemy was unable to accomplish his objective of disrupting the flow of vital radio communications for TAY NINH City and the surrounding area. A photographic study of NUI BA DEN is attached (inclosure 30).

Meanwhile, in the city itself a strong enemy force assaulted the THUONG HOA RF Outpost which guarded the approach to the southeastern edge of the city complex (XT268452). This ground attack commenced at 0245 hours and by 0300 hours the RF company manning the position had been overrun and scattered. As the early morning wore on, a PF outpost located five kilometers north of the city (XT217552) reported itself to be under a heavy ground attack. The PHU KHUONG District Headquarters (XT234476) also reported that it was receiving a ground attack from an estimated company size enemy force.

Other stand off and harassing attacks were continuing upon outlying outposts in the province. Extracts from the daily journals maintained by
the Tactical Operations Center, III Corps (ARVN), reveal the times and locations of these attacks in both August and September (inclosure 31).

Analysis of information gathered relative to the attacks in the TAY NINH vicinity during the night of 17-18 August indicated that in addition to the above mentioned enemy units in action to the north and northeast of the city, the 271st VC/NVA conducted attacks to the west of TAY NINH making a feint against the TAY NINH Base Camp and assaulting the CU CHI string of hamlets (vic XT1945-XT1950). Elements of the 275th VC/NVA Regiment and the D-14 Local Force Battalion moved from the CAU KHOI Rubber Plantation (XT3244) southeast of TAY NINH to attack the LONG HOA area and penetrate the southeastern section of the city.

In the meantime, the 272d VC/NVA Regiment remained in an area northwest of the city and was not committed during the night. Both the eastern and southern fingers of LONG HOA had been occupied by 0730 hours on 18 August and attempts were being made by the enemy to infiltrate weapons to agents inside the Cao Dai Holy See.

The populace evacuated the occupied area and took refuge in the Holy See as by noon there was an estimated 7000 refugees in this area. The PHU KHUONG district chief deployed all available forces and the enemy's drive was actually halted in the LONG HOA area by these local defense units consisting of Revolutionary Development (RD) cadre, RF/PP, etc. On the western flank of the action, the 1st Brigade's Combined (US and ARVN) Reconnaissance and Intelligence Platoon (CRIP) made a stand near

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the medical dispensary as the line of resistance formed in the vicinity of XT234467, XT244466 to XT248476. Advisor personnel believed that the enemy intended to hold his position for the remainder of the day then attack PHU KHuong District Headquarters on the following day. This was confirmed later by two Hoi Chanhs who also revealed that three regiments were to attack, occupy and hold the city for a three day period.

Action in the LONG HOA area was contained by the local forces and was considered a Vietnamese operation up to this point; however, a plan to eject the enemy was developed by the province chief, his US advisor, LTC Vernon L. Bond, Jr., and the 1st Brigade commander. The plan was to maneuver a US element to block in the vicinity of the outpost which had been overrun in TRUONG HOA (XT268452) and maneuver another blocking force down Highway 22 to occupy positions on the southwestern edge of the city complex (XT240447). Once these blocking forces were positioned, Vietnamese troops, utilizing only organic weapons, were to attack from the center and clear the LONG HOA area.

In accordance with this plan, A and B Companies, 4th Battalion, 23rd Infantry (M), moved into a blocking position in the vicinity of a bridge site (XT270458) on the southeastern edge of the city and a task force consisting of A Company, 2d Battalion, 34th Armor and C Company and the Scout Platoon, 4th Battalion, 23d Infantry (M) occupied the blocking positions on the southwestern edge of the city complex (XT240447). The southeastern blocking positions were later reinforced by D Company, 2d Battalion, 27th Infantry.
The attack to clear the area began at approximately 0900 hours and the RF/PF swept approximately two blocks past the market area (XT236472); but could not advance further due to firm resistance. The action became a stalemate and at approximately 1830 hours the RF/PF returned to the province compound to provide local security after being relieved in place by a 25th Infantry Division unit, B Troop, 3d Squadron, 4th Cavalry reinforced by the 1st Brigade's Combined Reconnaissance and Intelligence Platoon. This unit established positions during the night of 18-19 August at the point where the RF/PF action began on the previous morning (XT237467).

At 1845 hours, B Troop came into contact with the enemy at XT242473, and in the firefight that took place one cavalryman was killed and five wounded. The CRIP platoon made contact at 2015 hours at XT234467. Meanwhile, in the blocking position on the southeast, A and B Companies, 4th Battalion, 23d Infantry (M), had made contact with an estimated enemy company near the bridge site at XT270458 and by 1715 hours, were heavily engaged with the enemy at XT263463. In this later fight which was supported by helicopter gunships, four infantrymen were wounded and one armored personnel carrier was destroyed.

The PHU KHUONG District Headquarters (XT234476) received over 100 rounds of indirect fire beginning at 2100, and apparently the enemy withdrew from the city under cover of this attack.

As the situation developed during the day in and around TAY NINH City, the 1st Battalion, 5th Infantry (M) sweeping out of the DAU TIENG Base
Camp into the BEN CUI Rubber Plantation intercepted elements of the 33d VC/NVA Regiment as they assembled to move south through the concealment of the plantation. At 0720 hours, B Company of the battalion established contact at XT438467 to begin an engagement that continued until 1630 hours (inclosure 32). Reinforced by the battalion's C Company and Scout Platoon along with the 3d Brigade CRIP and supported by artillery, helicopter gunships and Air Force fighter-bombers strikes, this force blocked the enemy regiment's movement and forced it to withdraw to the north. A search of the battlefield following the action discovered 92 enemy bodies, one field radio, three .50 caliber machine guns, six AK-47 rifles, one RPG rocket launcher, 500 rounds of small arms ammunition and three RPG rounds. The mechanized battalion then established blocking positions within the BEN CUI Rubber to engage any further efforts by the enemy to move southward (inclosures 33 and 84).

The 51st Ranger Battalion, located in BIEN HOA, was alerted during the evening hours of 18 August for deployment in TAY NINH City the next day. The battalion began an airlift at 190615 August and closed into the provincial city at 0830 hours. Immediately after arriving, coordination was effected by the rangers with province officials, the 25th Infantry Division (ARVN), and US 25th Infantry Division's 1st Brigade. The rangers were given the mission to clear the northeast finger of LONG HOA and the provincial forces were ordered to clear the southeast finger. Both forces had elements of B Troop, 3d Squadron, 4th Cavalry supporting
this operation. The sweep towards the blocking positions still in location in the southeastern and southwestern edges of the city began at 0900 hours and by 1400 hours all forces had advanced outside the city without establishing contact as the enemy had withdrawn during the night. The rangers operated under control of Headquarters, 25th Infantry Division (ARVN) until 21 August when the battalion was placed under OPCON to the 1st Brigade, 25th Infantry Division (US). Operations continued with this US unit until 29 August, when the battalion returned to BIEN HOA. The rangers did not encounter heavy resistance during the entire period as it appeared the enemy's main objective was to destroy US units. The ranger's action was described by the battalion's senior advisor, CPT William W. Sherrell (inclosure 34).

Approximately four blocks of homes near the LONG HOA market area were burned by the withdrawing enemy during the night of 13 August. Damage caused by friendly forces was minimal as artillery and air strikes were not employed because the officials did not desire to create additional destruction. The enemy was located in foxholes and bunkers with connecting tunnels and in all probability tactical air and artillery would have been only marginally effective against these positions unless a position happened to receive a direct hit.

The enemy's feint against TAY NINH Base Camp and the CU CHI string of hamlets on 17-18 August was not serious as the local RF/PF along with one US mechanized unit contained the attack. Air strikes were considered but were not employed in this area as targets could not be defined.
RF/PF contacts with the enemy in the immediate vicinity of TAY NINH City after 18-19 August were light and scattered although intelligence agents continued to report the enemy would attempt to immediately return and occupy the city. This tactic is used frequently by the VC to preclude friendly forces from pursuing, regardless of how badly the attackers have been mauled. The situation within the city slowly returned to normal as all intelligence reports and estimates began to indicate that the enemy’s next offensive would be against SAIGON.

In the meantime, however, the US 25th Infantry Division’s 1st Brigade which continued its screening operations around TAY NINH fought numerous significant battles against enemy forces attempting to maneuver into positions around the city. On 19 August, A Troop, 3d Squadron, 4th Cavalry was moved from CU CHI to reinforce the 1st Brigade. As the troop moved north along route 26, it encountered a large enemy force, later identified as elements of the 275th VC/NVA Regiment which was positioned in the CAU KHOI Rubber Plantation (XT311485) approximately eight kilometers east of TAY NINH. The contact which began at 0937 hours continued until 1745 hours. The cavalry troop was reinforced by A Company, 1st Battalion, 5th Infantry (M) which moved into the contact area from Fire Support Base RAWLINS. The ground troops were supported throughout the day by artillery, helicopter gunships and Air Force fighter-bomber strikes. When the firing ceased, the two company size units swept the contact area and accounted for 34 enemy bodies, one RPG rocket launcher, three AK-47 rifles and three machine guns. US losses were four killed and 17 wounded.
While this contact was taking place, B and C Companies with the Reconnaissance platoon, 1st Battalion, 5th Infantry (M) with the aid of supporting artillery, helicopter gunships and air strikes were engaging the 33d VC/NVA Regiment along route 239, the main supply route between TAY NINH and DAU TIENG (inclosure 32). The contact was established at 1225 hours at a point approximately eight kilometers west of DAU TIENG (XT425457). Fierce fighting continued until 2100 hours and resulted in an enemy body count of 76 and the capture of three AK-47 rifles and one RPG rocket launcher. Ten infantrymen were killed and 62 wounded by the heavy enemy fire. Two tanks and five APCs were also knocked out of action by the enemy (inclosures 35 and 85).

In the early morning hours of 20 August, the 3d Battalion, 273d VC/NVA Regiment moved to attack the TAY NINH Base Camp from the northwest. At 0105 hours however, the enemy column was engaged by an outpost approximately two kilometers (XT146543) northwest of the base camp (inclosure 36). This outpost was manned by 36 personnel of the 3d platoon, A Company, 2d Battalion, 27th Infantry who called artillery, helicopter gunships and Air Force air strikes for support. The massive fire support that ringed the platoon's perimeter throughout the fight was the key factor in turning back repeated attempts by the enemy to overrun the platoon's position. At dawn the enemy withdrew leaving behind 155 dead, three wounded prisoners of war, two AK-47 rifles, three RPG rocket launchers, five machine guns and one field radio. Losses sustained by the platoon were five killed and six wounded (inclosures 37 and 86).
This early morning action was followed closely by another significant contact when at 0945 hours B Company, 4th Battalion, 23d Infantry (M) sweeping route 26 as it passes through the CAU KHOI Rubber Plantation (XT325470) approximately eight kilometers east of TAY NINH City made contact with an estimated company size enemy unit. A Troop, 3d Squadron, 4th Cavalry moved to the contact area to reinforce the mechanized company. In addition, the contact was supported by artillery which fired 466 rounds into the contact area, helicopter gunships and 14 Air Force fighter-bomber sorties. The battle raged around a bridge site on the road until 1850 hours when the enemy broke contact and withdrew. A search of the area after the firing ceased revealed 28 bodies, four AK-47 rifles and one machine gun abandoned by the enemy. The two US ground units sustained four killed and seven wounded.

The enemy’s continued presence in the vicinity surrounding the DAU TIENG Base Camp on 20 August was underscored at 1728 hours when the camp was rocked by a 47 round barrage of 82mm mortar rounds which resulted in wounding two personnel.

While the immediate vicinity of TAY NINH City remained relatively quiet on 21 August, the BEN CUI Rubber Plantation and DAU TIENG Base Camp erupted in heavy fighting. C Company and the Scout Platoon of the 1st Battalion, 5th Infantry (M) swept out of the DAU TIENG Base Camp into the southern BEN CUI and at 1130 hours came into contact with two battalions of the 33d VC/NVA Regiment at XT460440 (inclosures 38 and 32).
the fierce battle that followed 182 enemy soldiers were killed (by body count) as 1094 artillery rounds, helicopter gunships and 14 Air Force fighter-bomber sorties were committed to support the heavily outnumbered mechanized units. Eighteen infantrymen died in the fighting and 23 were wounded before contact was broken and the enemy withdrew.

As the heavy battle waged a short distance away, the DAU TIENG Base Camp was struck by four 122mm rockets at 1345 hours killing one man and wounding another.

In the meantime, A Company, 4th Battalion, 23d Infantry (M) and A Troop, 3d Squadron, 4th Cavalry came into contact with an unknown size enemy force at 1502 hours during a sweep through the CAU KHOI Rubber Plantation approximately 10 kilometers east of TAY NINH (XT355440). Helicopter gunships and Air Force air strikes were called in to support the contact which resulted in three troopers being killed and five wounded. A search of the contact area after the firing ceased failed to reveal any enemy losses during the fire fight.

With the continuing enemy threat to TAY NINH City and the heavy enemy activity in the BEN CUI Rubber Plantation to the east of the city, the 2d Brigade (commanded by Colonel Raymond O. Miller until 31 August, succeeded by Colonel Eugene M. Lynch) of the 25th Infantry Division moved to DAU TIENG (inclosure 39). This relieved the division's 1st Brigade of this area of operations and permitted concentration of 1st Brigade effort in the immediate TAY NINH area.