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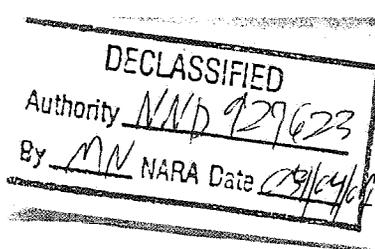
**SUBJECT: Combat Operations After Action Report (RCS: MACJ3-32)
(K-1)**

**Commanding General
 United States Military Assistance Command, Vietnam
 ATTN: MACJ 3-43
 APO 96222**

1. NAME OF OPERATION: TET Offensive After Action Report.
2. DATES OF OPERATION: 310001 January to 182400 February 1968.
3. LOCATION: III Corps Tactical Zone, Republic of South Vietnam.
4. CONTROL OR COMMAND HEADQUARTERS: III Corps and II Field Force, Vietnam.
5. REPORTING OFFICER: LTG Frederick C. Weyand, CG II Field Force Vietnam.
6. TASK ORGANIZATION: Annex B (US/FWMAF Troop List) and Annex C (ARVN Troop List).
7. SUPPORTING FORCES: Annex F (Role of Armor) and Annex G (Artillery).
8. INTELLIGENCE: (Annex A).
9. MISSION: III ARVN Corps and II Field Force Vietnam units conduct offensive operations during 31 Jan-18 Feb 1968 to defeat VC/NVA forces who initiated the TET OFFENSIVE in III Corps Tactical Zone.
10. CONCEPT OF OPERATIONS: This is a report on the 1968 Viet Cong - North Vietnamese Army TET Offensive in III Corps Tactical Zone, and the actions of II Field Force Vietnam and III Corps, RVNAF in defeating that offensive. It includes those general events leading up to TET, the detailed course of the fighting from 31 January through 18 February and a summary of the results of the battle.
11. EXECUTION:
 - a. Events leading up to TET.

➤ By November 1967 the operations of II F FORCEV and III Corps within III CTZ had succeeded in driving the bulk of the VC/NVA main forces away from the more heavily populated areas into the sparsely settled border regions. A captured document showed that the VC in MRIV - the region

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around Saigon - had suffered three times the losses in 1967 as in 1966. The threat in Gia Dinh Province surrounding Saigon was reduced to the point that the 199th Lt Inf Bde was able to phase out Op FAIRFAX, and to move into War Zone D, leaving to the 5th ARVN Ranger Group primary tactical responsibility for the security of the Capital Military District.

The VC were in serious straits in Phouc Tuy and Long Khanh Province where allied pressure had broken down their supply system. The VC in western Hau Nghia Province had been reduced to the point that the 25th US Div was able to shift its brigade forces to operations northwest of Cu Chi; while the 25th ARVN Div continued pacifying Hau Nghia.

The 1st Inf Div had been successful in opening and holding open Highway 13 to Quan Loi, splitting War Zone C from D, as well as facilitating civil and military movement north of Saigon.

The 9th Inf Div had commenced clearing Highway 1 from Saigon to the II-III Corps boundary turning it over progressively to the 18th ARVN Div. The 9th Div was also able to draw down on forces in the northeastern portion of its TAOI while concentrating on expanding Mobile Riverine Force operations in IV CTZ in the Delta.

The Revolutionary Development program was accelerating. Public administration training was underway in all Provinces. Economic activity was improving, partly as a result of the opening of many road LOCs particularly in Hau Nghia and Binh Duong Province.

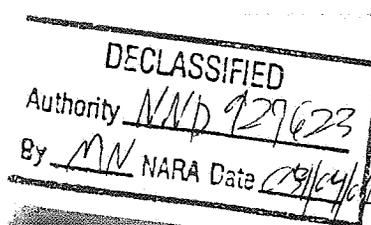
While VC terrorism was on the rise, there was ample evidence that this was occurring because the VC political infrastructure was losing its influence over key sectors of the population.

In November there occurred a series of enemy initiated battles in Phouc Long and Binh Long Provinces. VC/NVA launched strong attacks against Song Be, Loc Ninh, Bu Dop and Bo Duc. During the course of these battles it was found that 21 of the 54 main and local force VC/NVA battalions in III CTZ were concentrated in the northern border regions.

It appeared that the enemy in III CTZ had decided to employ the majority of his main force units along the Cambodian border and, in particular, to strengthen and consolidate his hold over Military Region 10 (Binh Long, Phuoc Dong and Quang Duc Provinces). While intelligence information indicated that the enemy was preparing for a major dry season effort, it appeared that he was probably going to launch the attacks after a TET truce period during which he would massively resupply and reinforce across South Vietnamese borders.

Both to destroy his main force units where they could be found, and to frustrate any large scale TET truce infiltration from Cambodia, II FFV adopted in early December a border strategy and deployment posture depicted on Map 1.

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This map shows III CTZ, the 11 Provinces, the actual VC/NVA order of battle on 10 Dec and the planned TET posture for the 53 II FFORCEV Maneuver Bns. The black circle depicts the allied base area, including Saigon and the Capital Military District, the Long Binh/Bien Hoa complex, and the base camp areas for all 4 US Divisions in III CTZ. 75% of the population of III CTZ lives in this area.

The planned II FFORCEV deployment posture stemmed from a COMUSMACV directed strategy that had three basic features.

First, the undertaking of several offensive operations in the border areas: a divisional sized operation SAN ANGELO-in Phouc Long Province, a 2 Bde operation-YELLOWSTONE-in War Zone C and an Armored Cavalry Regiment operation-FARGO- in Binh Long Province. These three operations would have committed 22 of the 53 maneuver Bns available to CG, II FFV along the northern border.

Secondly, it was planned to achieve a border sealing TET posture in which Battalion Task Forces would block main VC infiltration routes during the TET truce.

Thirdly, by mutual US/RVNAF agreement, there would be a continuing of the shift of responsibility for the security of the area around Saigon and the allied base from US to Vietnamese forces.

It can be seen that, had II FFORCEV fully pursued this strategy the bulk of its forces, 39 Bns, would have been deployed outside the allied base area and up to 150 kilometers from Saigon. At that distance redeployment would have to have been largely by fixed wing aircraft (C-123s and 130s) which must land on secure airfields. Only 14 maneuver battalions would have been available in this base area for quick redeployment and reaction to threats.

The general deployment of the maneuver battalions of ARVN III Corps during this period was not expected to change as radically. On the 10th of Dec there were 22 battalions inside the base area and 25 outside. The 18th ARVN Division was disposed generally eastward along Highway 1, which had been opened for traffic from Saigon to the III Corps boundary since late December. It would continue to provide route security. The 5th ARVN Division was concentrated in Binh Duong Province north of Saigon. The 25th ARVN Division had 15 battalions deployed in western Hau Nghia Province and in Long An Province in position to intercept VC movement from the Parrots Beak area 40 km west of Bao Trai.

Inside the CMD the 5th Ranger Group with 3 battalions provided the area security, backing up the other type RVNAF battalions (3 RF, 2 SVC, 2 MP) which secured Saigon proper.

16 ARVN battalions would remain committed to the security of RD areas.

II FFORCEV did not execute the 10 Dec strategy once evidence began to amass that the VC had changed their own strategy and were going to aim their main force offensive at the populated areas of III CTZ which was largely covered by ARVN.

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Map 2 depicts significant VC/NVA unit moves which were detected during December and January. These moves indicated a definite shift of forces toward the base area in III CTZ.

There were other indicators also.

a. There were several significant battalion sized attacks against district and province capitals such as Bao Trai and Trang Bang in Hau Nghia Province and Tan Uyen in Bien Hoa Province. These attacks broke the pattern of earlier enemy operations and signalled a change in the type objective of VC forces and the size forces he would use in the attacks. Plans for attacks on other capitals were discovered. These included planned attacks on Dau Tieng, Phu Loi, Lai Khe, My Tho, Ben Cat, Cu Chi and Tay Ninh.

b. The VC reorganized the old MR4 area around Saigon (shown by a dotted red line) into five new sub-regions directly under COSVN control (shown by solid red lines). These regions, radiating out from Gia Dinh were obviously designed to facilitate operations around Saigon.

c. VC forces throughout III CTZ were being reequipped with AK47s, 50s, RPG-2s and 7s.

d. NVA fillers were being infused into local force battalions.

e. There were persistent reports of a major offensive being planned.

While these indicators lent weight to the assessment that the VC were going to launch a major offensive, and the objective would be in the populated areas, as yet in early January it was not concluded that the attacks would occur during, and in violation of the TET truce, or that the main objective would be Saigon itself.

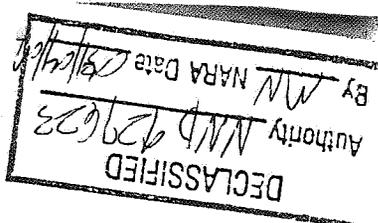
Nevertheless, CG II FFORCEV throughout January gradually shifted the center of gravity of his forces to meet the changed threat.

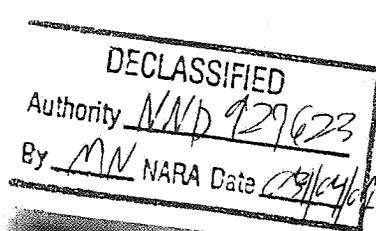
On 10 January COMUSMACV approved abandoning the original TET posture.

Map 3 shows the actual 29 January posture of II FFORCEV units, which amounted to a strategic reversal of the originally planned TET posture. Only 22 battalions remained outside the base area while 27 were inside, within assault helicopter reinforcing distance of any point. Four battalions had been deployed to I CTZ at MACV's direction.

Only one brigade of the 101st Abn Div was deployed into the SAN ANGELO operation rather than the entire division. One brigade was diverted into AO MANCHESTER in War Zone D releasing the 199th Lt Inf Bde for security operations in AO UNIONTOWN around the Bien Hoa/Long Binh complex. One brigade of the 101st Abn Div undertook operations in AO NORMANDY in the FILHOL area north of Cu Chi just before its redeployment to I CTZ.

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One brigade of the 25th Inf Div was pulled out of AO YELLOWSTONE in War Zone C and operated closer to Dau Tieng, while one brigade shifted from north of Highway 1 to western Hau Nghia Province.

Op FARGO was terminated and only 1 Sqdn remained at Loc Ninh while the Regt (-), together with elements of the 101st Abn Div and 1st Div conducted a series of three leap-frogging operations north to south called ATTALA, ARAB, and ASPEN targeted against the suspected locations of the 165, 88 and 101 NVA Regts.

The 1st Australian Task Force (1 ATF) commenced its first operation outside Phouc Tuy Province when two of its three battalions conducted operation COBURG in AO COLUMBUS against the suspected locations of the 274, 275 VC Regts and the 5th VC Division.

During this same period of time there were no major shifts in ARVN forces. However III Corps shifted three battalions just before TET. The 3/9 Inf Bn was moved from Song Be to Phu Van, vicinity of 5th ARVN Div headquarters; the 1/52 Inf Bn was moved from its deployment on Highway 1 to Gia Ray; and the 52d Ranger Bn was moved to the vicinity of Xuan Loc from Ham Tan.

Men absent from their units for the TET truce had lowered ARVN strength on 29 January to about 50% of their authorized 41,952 strength. Although the TET truce was cancelled at 0945 on 30 January, the inadequate Vietnamese communication system precluded the effective notification of the bulk of these soldiers. Accordingly the strength of the 46 ARVN battalions was still at about 50% when the VC attacks were launched on 31 January.

The RF/PF in III CTZ were at approximately 70% present for duty strength on the 30th of January, largely because the individuals in the units live close to their outposts.

b. VC Strategy and Plan.

According to various sources and VC documents captured in the weeks before their offensive, the main VC/NVA strategy was based on the fact that "the war will reach a culminating point" in 1967-68 with the objective of:

- (1) Forcing US forces to withdraw from Vietnam.
- (2) Forcing the GVN to accept a coalition government which the NLF/SVN could dominate.

The objectives of forcing US withdrawal and gain coalition were to be reached by a general counter-offensive featuring large scale, powerful continuous attacks utilizing reserve forces supported by newer and larger weapons. This counter-offensive was to coincide with a general uprising of the people of SVN who would assist the VC in destroying the GVN. The attacks were to be directed at political and military targets, such as:

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- (1) Provincial and district capitals.
- (2) The government in Saigon.
- (3) Other GVN agencies such as RD cadres and the National Police.
- (4) Widespread attacks by fire designed to demonstrate the failure of GVN to protect people and to offer an opportunity to propogandize and proselyte the people.
- (5) Finally, the destruction and/or demoralization of the RVNAF.

Tactical targets of military significance were to be airfields, rear service bases such as Long Binh Post, lines of communication to include docks and shipping facilities, and cities; targets whose existence are essential to the conduct of the war as well as the government and targets which, by their nature, are difficult to secure and defend.

The operational plan for the VC in III CTZ appears to have included efforts to:

- (1) Move to areas along the Cambodian border where training and resupply could be accomplished in established base camps closer to sources of supply and the safe border of Cambodia.
- (2) Attempt to draw US forces from central and southern III CTZ toward the Cambodian border where they would be fixed for TET.
- (3) Concurrently, to infiltrate replacements and new equipment to the main and local force units which would conduct the main attacks.
- (4) Launch simultaneous attacks against the selected objectives with main and local force units which would conduct the main attacks.
- (5) Launch simultaneous attacks against the selected objectives with main and local force Bns while the Regts blocked Allied reaction with the exception of the 5 VC Div, which had the mission of attacking the Bien Hoa/Long Binh Complex.

The VC were counting heavily on the fact that ARVN units would be at reduced strength during TET.

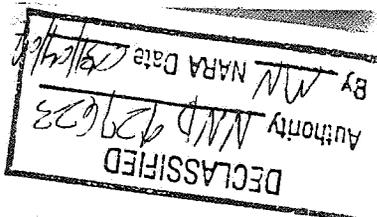
The VC operational plan was apparently as indicated on map 4.

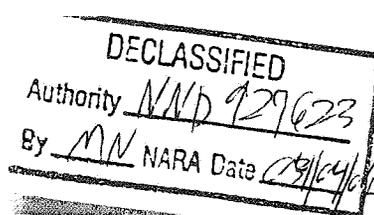
(1) 274th and 275th VC Regts supported by combined Artillery Group, U-1 Local Force Bn, and other local force elements had the mission to seize and hold the Bien Hoa/Long Binh complex. Key targets were Bien Hoa AB; HQ, II FFV; HQ, III Corps; the PW camp, and destruction of the ammo storage area.

(a) 271st Regt: Attack selected targets in the Hoc Mon area; block allied reaction by interdicting Route 1; be ready to reinforce and exploit success in the northern Saigon area.

(b) 272d Regt: Block reaction of the US 25th Inf Div from the Cu Chi-Dau Tieng area; be ready to reinforce to the northwest of Saigon.

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- (c) 273d Regt: District and RVN installations in Thu Duc HQ, block reinforcements from Bien Hoa; blow the Newport bridge at Binh Loi.
- (d) 165th NVA Regt: Contain 1st Inf Div in vic Lai Khe; interdict Highway 13.
- (e) 141st NVA Regt: Interdiction of Hwy 13 vic An Loc.
- (f) 101st NVA Regt: Secure the area north of Saigon in vicinity of Go Vap.
- (2) Dong Nai Regt: Given Bn missions, 1 Bn to seize and hold Tan Uyen, other elements participated in attack on Phu Loi - Phu Cuong, supported by Phu Loi 1 Bn. 3d Bn, attack Tan An.
- (3) 88th NVA Regt: Block Hwy 13 vic An Loc.
- (4) In the Saigon - Cholon - Tan Son Nhut area the attacks were conducted by the 1st, 3d, 4th, 5th and 6th Local Force Bns, the 2d Independent Bn, 267, 269, and 506 Local Force Battalions and the C-10 Sapper Bn. Their missions were: To seize and hold TSN AB and possibly the adjacent Vice-Presidential Palace, to seize and hold the Presidential Palace, to seize the US and Phillipine Embassy's, to seize and hold or destroy selected objectives such as National Police Stations, power points, and other GVN installations. The primary purpose was to disrupt the GVN and the City of Saigon as much as possible, to cause the GVN and US government to "lose face", and to force the GVN to the conference table with the NFL and/or NVN where they could negotiate from a position of strength. These units were to have been reinforced within 48 hours, according to prisoners.
- (5) In Sub-Region E-1, 7th LF Bn: Seize and hold Cu Chi.
- (6) Sub Region E-2, 506th LF Bn: Seize and hold Duc Hoa to include HQ 25th ARVN Div.
- (7) Sub-Region E-3, local forces: Harass GVN installations by fire, assist in the passage of forces attacking Saigon, conduct harassing attacks by fire and provide security for C&C element conducting attack on Saigon.
- (8) Sub-Region E-4, local force: Harass GVN installations by fire.
- (9) Ba Bien Province, D445 LF Bn: Seize and hold Ba Ria.
- (10) D440 LF Bn: Seize and hold Xuan Loc, 18th ARVN Div HQ
- (11) My Tho Province, 261, 263 MF Bns, 514th LF Bn: Seize and hold My Tho; 516 LF Bn: Seize and hold Ben Tre.
- (12) Sub-Region E-5, Phu Loi I Bn: In conjunction with the Dong Nai Regt: Seize and hold Phu Loi - Phu Cuong.
- (13) All these actions were supported by local force units who probably had the mission of assisting the main attacks by providing guides and security forces, as well as conducting harassing attacks on either pre-planned targets or targets of opportunity.

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(14) In War Zone C and MR 10, local forces supported by COSVN security units, rear service units, and artillery units were to pin down allied forces by conducting harassing attacks by fire against Allied Installations and FSPB's.

The techniques of VC/NVA infiltration of both supplies and forces bears mentioning. The buildup of weapons and ammunition caches in and around Saigon began as early as November. Caches were established for the purpose of:

- (1) Resupplying attacking local force units.
- (2) Arming recently recruited personnel.
- (3) Arming civilians who would rally to the VC cause during the expected "uprising".
- (4) Arm VC prisoners released from Chi Hoa Prison.

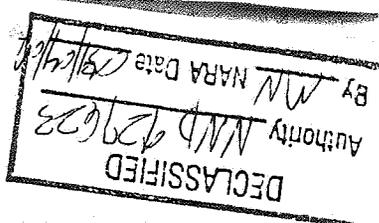
Heavier weapons and ammunitions were generally infiltrated from Cambodia via the "Parrots Beak" (Ba Thu) area by sampan. Replacements and rockets came through the "saddle" area of Phouc Long Province, down routes east of Song Be, and through War Zone D. Another major route for supplies was the "Fishhook" area on the Tay Ninh - Binh Long Province boundary in War Zone C.

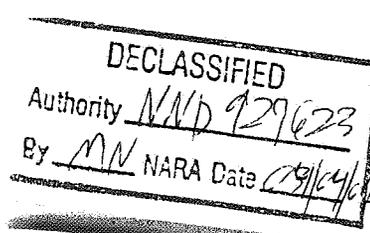
It is known that the VC made a study of commercial traffic into Saigon and based upon this knowledge weapons, ammunition and demolitions were smuggled into the city by vehicles representative of the prevailing traffic. For example along Highway 1, vegetable and produce carrying trucks were used and trucks normally carrying rubber and firewood used on Highway 13. Hollowed logs, coconuts and pineapples were techniques employed, to transport small arms and ammunition.

The movement of enemy troops into Saigon was non-infiltration in the accepted sense of the word, such as movement from NVN to SVN down the Ho Chi Minh trail. The Bns that participated in the attack on Saigon proper (exclusive of Tan Son Nhut Air Base) were the 1st through 6th Bns, inclusive of old MRIV, all of which normally had operated in or on the periphery of the CMD. The VC in these Bns were familiar with Saigon and did not require any extensive network to assist their movement into the city. They were able to move about as ordinary citizens. For example the C10 Sapper Bn is a Saigon unit and several PWs from this unit revealed that they were taxi or lambretta drivers and were intimately familiar with the city. The weapons for these units other than those carried were infiltrated under various covers and disguises. There are no documented cases of any mass movements, such as bringing weapons in by ship.

When it is considered that the VC infiltrated Saigon, a city of 2,500,000, and suburbs of an additional 800,000, with 4,000 troops, the infiltration is placed in its proper perspective. Four thousand people moving in a city that size during the TET season, while nearly 20,000 ARVN soldiers were on TET leave would be extremely difficult to detect.

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The other battalions and regiments that took part in the offensive made normal tactical marches over established routes, through established base camps, and known base areas. These units were held in assembly areas at 9 to 12 hours marching distance from their targets. At the proper time they moved out to attempt to reach their targets for the coordinated assault. Several things served to cause a faulty execution of their plan. Guides and units got separated or lost, columns got intermixed forcing the commanders to either attempt unscrambling on the move or waste valuable time by halting and unscrambling. Another example was the failure of two VC companies to rendezvous in the rubber plantation adjacent to the Bien Hoa POW camp because they became confused when they arrived and found no rubber trees. Some plows had cleared the area of vegetation one month earlier and the units overshot their mark and did not contribute to the unsuccessful attack on the camp. Some march tables were poorly calculated, so that a few units were in the wrong place at the wrong time and in the wrong formation. Other units attacked from a march column without deploying, while in still other cases units waited for following elements which never arrived.

c. Actions during 29 Jan - 5 Feb:

In the 48 hours preceding the main VC attacks in III CTZ events moved swiftly. Intelligence indicators of an imminent attack multiplied and both ARVN and US forces made precautionary adjustments.

CG, II FFORCEV sent out a Flash message to all OPCON units at 291615 Jan stating that the VC could be expected to violate the TET truce and for all units to be prepared for that contingency.

On the night of 29-30 Jan heavy attacks occurred in I CTZ, causing GVN to cancel the TET truce at 300945 Jan. III Corps and II FFORCEV immediately resumed offensive operations. The only significant contact on the 30th, however, was the sighting at 1100 hours by a 25th ARVN Div FAC of a convoy of 25 ox carts and 200 VC south of Tay Ninh at XT29Q300. Tac Air and a light fire team killed 40 VC and destroyed 8 ox carts.

18th ARVN Div redeployed two battalions to Xuan Loc as a ready reaction force - the 52d Ranger Battalion from Ham Tan, Phouc Tuy Province, and the 1/52 Inf Bn from its Highway 1 security mission in Binh Tuy Province.

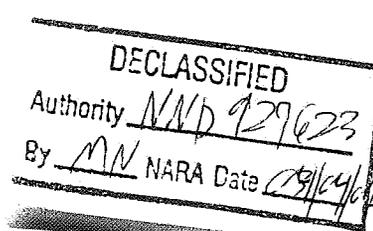
The 5th ARVN Div redeployed the 3/9 Inf Bn from Song Be to the vicinity of 5th ARVN Div headquarters in Binh Duong Province.

CG, III Corps also directed the CO, CMD to request OPCON of the 1st Abn Bn from JGS on 30 Jan which was done. The 1st Abn Bn was deployed in Saigon as CMD reserve with one company dispatched to the National Broadcasting Station and one to the Chi Hoa Prison.

Tan Son Nhut Sensitive Area conducted a rehearsal of its US-ARVN base counterattack plan, and on 30 Jan went on red alert at 1745 hours along with Bien Hoa Airbase.

At 2125 hours the 86th RF battalion captured a prisoner in the CMD who

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quickly admitted that Tan Son Nhut and the broadcasting station were to be attacked that night, that tanks would be used, and that the VC were dressed like ARVN soldiers. Based on this information, the CMD alerted all units at 2200 hours and red alert status was in effect.

At Long Binh the perimeter bunkers were manned, and gunships were placed on strip alert.

d. The Battle of Long Binh.

As early as 0035 hours on 31 Jan the first indications of a ground attack were realized as Co E, 4/12 Inf, 199th Lt Inf Bde detected and engaged a VC force north of the Dong Nai River (XT039222) moving south toward Bien Hoa Airbase. They engaged the VC, were supported by artillery and air and eventually killed 47 VC. At about 0100 a long range patrol of the 199th Bde also detected approximately 90 VC who doubletimed past their position just north of Ho Nai Village near Long Binh.

These contacts caused the gunships on strip alert to be ordered aloft. When the widespread 122mm rocket and mortar attacks came at 0300 these aircraft were able to quickly engage several of the launching sites, disrupting their fire.

Map 5 shows the full scope of the VC initiated actions in the base area of III CTZ on 31 January. Each red dot represents an attack by fire and each red arrow a separate ground attack.

Map 6 shows the allied response on the 31st in the areas of the most significant engagements which are outlined by black lines. Only the unit symbols are shown for the principal forces involved in these attacks.

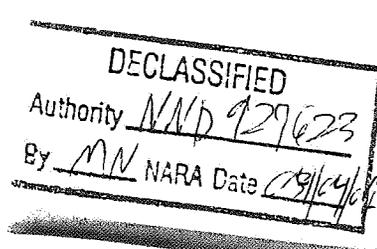
In the Long Binh area, a heavy rocket and mortar barrage directed at the 199th Bde Hq and II FFORCEV Hq started the attack. Light fire teams prewarned and aloft and artillery responded immediately to the rocket fire coming from the east and north of the Dong Nai River. Several of the eastern firing points were put out of action before they had fired all the rounds on site.

At 0330 CG II FFORCEV ordered the 2/47 Mech Bn, 9th Inf Div north from its position on Route 15 vicinity Bearcat, to the Long Binh area.

At 0430 two battalions of the 275th Regiment launched a ground attack through Ho Nai village south across Highway 1 against the northern perimeter of Long Binh. At the same time U-1 Local Force Battalion harassed the eastern perimeter covering efforts by Sapper units to penetrate the main ammunition dump. One company of the 275 Regt attempted to seize the ARVN PW compound, located between Bien Hoa and Long Binh, which contained approximately 2000 PW's at the time of the attack.

While fire was returned from the bunker line and from armored personnel carriers other units of the 199th Bde immediately engaged the VC throughout the area. By a series of platoon and company moves, both on foot and mechanized, they converged on the 275 Regt which was

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under heavy fire, particularly from gunships of one Air Cav Troop 3/17 Air Cav Sqdn. Enemy forces were unable to make headway into the bamboo area south of the PLANTATION Compound and attacked the 12th Aviation Group runway without success. Several teams penetrated the ammo dump and set time charges, many of which were removed by EOD teams before 4 of 100 pads of ammo detonated at 0800. The 1st Platoon, Company B, 2 Battalion 47 Infantry (Mechanized) with MP gun jeeps were protecting II FFORCEV Hq. This force started a sweep through Widows Village, located across the road and north of the Hq, where it ran into strong resistance and lost one APC.

By 0600 it became apparent that the 199th Bde, reinforced by units of the 9th Div and supported by the fires of one troop of the 3/17 Air Cav, had encircled the bogged down assault elements of the 275th Regt and were killing them at a sustained rate.

At 0800, Company B 4/39 Inf made a combat assault into the grass helicopter pad in a field opposite II FFV Hq. The LZ was hot, the unit quickly cleared the area and moved through the Widows Village along with a mechanized company and the recon platoon from the 2nd Battalion 47th Infantry.

A company sized force from the 199th Bde, together with ARVN MPs, repulsed the attack on the PW compound although it fought alone until late afternoon.

From this point on the battle at LONG BINH consisted of the systematic destruction of the defeated VC Regt by air, artillery, ground sweeps, ambush and LRP activities.

e. The Battle of Bien Hoa.

Simultaneous with the 0300 attack on the eastern portion of LONG BINH, BIEN HOA Airbase received about 25 rockets followed closely by a mortar supported ground attack. Two Bns of the 274th VC Regt attacked from the east, while the 238th VC Local Force Co reinforced, attacked III Corps Headquarters.

The VC attacking the airbase were initially engaged by the east bunker line manned by an RF Platoon, and the MP Base reaction force. The VC breached the perimeter wire but did not get onto the airstrip. The 57th RF Bn, dispatched by the Dong Nai Sensitive Area Command, reinforced the defenders of the Air Base at 0420 and the VC were driven out of their penetration.

At 0820 the 2/506 Abn Bn was deployed by helicopter from its operational area in AO MANCHESTER to the 101st Abn Div HQ at BIEN HOA Air Base and commenced an attack south out through the east gate.

A Troop, 3/5 Cav from the 9th Div had been ordered to reinforce III Corps Headquarters, departed from Blackhorse Base Camp, fought right through the middle of the 275 Regt astride Highway 1 and plowed into the flank of the 274th Regt attacking BIEN HOA Air Base, inflicting and suffering heavy losses. It linked up with the 2/506 Bn and assisted in securing III Corps Hq. Airstrikes, gunships and artillery saturated the VC approach routes east of the airbase. Despite the heavy ground attack

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air operations were not halted at BIEN HOA except between 0300 and 1300 on 31 Jan.

By late afternoon, 31 Jan, the immediate ground threat to Bien Hoa and the III Corps Headquarters had been eliminated. Several hundred VC were killed in this action. It was to take three more days, and the concerted efforts of the 199th Bde, elements of the 101st Abn Div, 11th Armored Cav Regiment, and the 9th Inf Div to drive out or destroy the remnants of the five VC battalions in the Bien Hoa/Long Binh area. The major ground attack from the 5th VC Division, however, was eliminated on the first day of the offensive.

f. The Battle of Tan Son Nhut.

The attack of Tan Son Nhut commenced at 0321 hours when heavy fire was received on the base from all around the perimeter. The main attack by a 3 battalion force was launched from the west at Gate #51 while secondary attacks were aimed at eastern Gate #10 and northern Gate #58.

The VC force apparently attacked in a column of battalions, prepared to pour through a breach in the perimeter bunker line. The heavy weapons companies of each of the battalions were set up in the Vinatexco Textile Mill, a structure west of Gate #10. Anti-aircraft weapons were placed on the roof, and apparently a cache of weapons was assembled there to supply those recruits in the force that were not armed.

The initial assault defeated several bunkers guarding Gate 51 and the leading battalion penetrated the defenses and got approximately 200 meters inside the wire in the direction of the main runway.

Forces from the 377th Security Police Squadron and a 2 platoon USARV Task Force (TF35) and mixed ARVN elements executed their counter-attack plan in time to block the penetrating force.

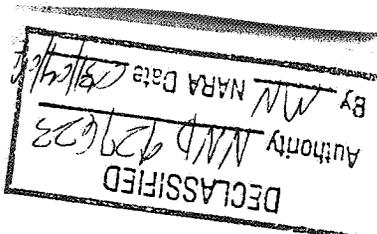
At approximately 0430 2 companies from the 8th ARVN Abn Bn counter-attacked the penetration, sustaining heavy casualties.

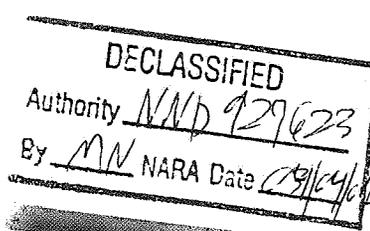
The Tan Son Nhut Sensitive Area Commander and his advisor requested assistance from US combat forces. The 3d Sqdn, 4th Cavalry, 25th Inf Div was committed. The Sqdn was deployed on Route 1 from the Hoc Mon Bridge, 8 miles from TSN, to Go Dau Ha. Troop C, at the Hoc Mon Bridge responded first. It was guided cross country past potential blocking positions by the Sqdn Commander who dropped flares from his C&C helicopter. This technique permitted the troop to arrive before light, at 0600, avoiding VC planned ambushes.

Troop C attacked the VC force from the northwest drawing heavy fire from the Textile Mill. It succeeded in cutting off the trailing VC battalions from their source of weapons in the mill. It then became heavily engaged with the VC forces in the vicinity of Gate 51, losing over a third of its strength while destroying the capability of the VC force to continue the attack. This was the decisive force, and action, which defeated the main VC assault on TSN.

VNAF and USAF airstrikes were put on the Textile Mill in the morning hours and partly neutralized its fire.

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At 1219 a mixed US and ARVN force of 25 men from TSN, under the command of a US Army Sergeant (MSG Beaugardus) launched a counter-attack against the depleted VC force inside the base and overran them, closing the gate and ending this threat. During this action the Vietnamese Commander, Deputy Commander, and US Deputy Senior Advisor were wounded.

At 1300 the remainder of the 3/4 Cav Sqdn arrived at Gate 51 after having completed the neutralization of the Textile Mill, and engaging the disorganized VC forces. The threat was eliminated from the west when the 3/4 Cav arrived.

Over 500 VC dead were counted within the base and west of Gate 51.

On the north perimeter of TSN the 2d Svc Bn (ARVN) blocked the strong VC/NVA attack which had already swept through Go Vap.

Two VN Marine Bns from the Delta were combat assaulted into the JGS headquarters area during the morning and one, the 4th VNMC Bn counterattacked Go Vap from inside TSN.

In Go Vap the VC overran the Co Loa Artillery Camp capturing 12 105mm howitzers. The defenders had removed the breech blocks however, so the weapons could not be used. These artillery pieces were later recaptured intact. By 1000 hours the Armored Command Headquarters was also penetrated. The VC were accompanied by NVA tank crews, expecting to capture, and use tanks from the headquarters, but all had been removed two months previously. The counterattack by the 4th VNMC Bn retook the Co Loa area by nightfall, having killed over 100 VC and sustaining losses of 7 KIA and 52 WIA.

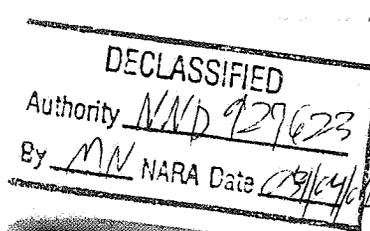
g. The Race Track.

The Phu Tho Race Track was the locus of another series of battles. The VC seized and tried to hold the race track for several reasons:

- (1) It was a good rallying point for VC unfamiliar with Saigon.
- (2) It was the center of a good road net.
- (3) It had a large covered area, suitable for a hospital.
- (4) Its control denied the US forces a large LZ inside the city.
- (5) It was within 82mm mortar range of TSN.

A strong VC force converged and assembled at the track after overrunning the police station there. A US MP platoon engaged them but was pinned down. One Company 3/7 Inf, reinforced with a platoon of D/17 Cav, drove in from Binh Chanh by truck and counterattacked, linking up with the MP force. This force cleared the race track so that by 1300 the 3/7 Inf Bn was able to combat assault onto the track.

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The 33d Ranger Bn from Nha Be District joined the 3/7 Inf and the combined force commenced to clear the area. By nightfall an area 3 to 4 blocks in radius was cleared. The 6 VC Local Force Bn, which had the mission of seizing the nearby Chi Hoa Prison, was the principal enemy unit engaged. In the course of the heavy fighting in the vicinity, the VC Bn was virtually destroyed. It never reached its objective - the Chi Hoa Prison.

The fighting around the race track ebbed and flowed for several days because VC troops continued to rally there. Eventually personnel from every VC unit in the attacks on Saigon were identified at the race track.

h. US Embassy.

The US Embassy was a particular target singled out for the VC. Elements from the C10 Sapper Bn - a unit whose members lived in Saigon itself - breached the wall with satchel charges and attacked the main building with RPG and AW fire. The Marine guards defended from inside the building and were reinforced by both MPs and a small Marine reaction force. One platoon from Co C, 1/502 Abn Bn was dispatched from Bien Hoa by helicopter and successfully landed on the roof pad at 0810 after having been driven off by fire at 0500. The grounds were secured by 0900, 19 VC having been killed on the Embassy grounds.

i. Other Attacks in Saigon.

JGS headquarters was attacked from the north at 0930. The VC succeeded in entering peripheral buildings but were unable to reach any vital installations. They were opposed by the 8th Abn Bn. As soon as ARVN reinforcements arrived the VC holed up in the buildings they had seized and ARVN undertook the slow task of rooting them out.

The Presidential Palace received RPG and AW fire from an unfinished hotel across the street from the palace grounds. ARVN troops, US MPs and National Police, supported by two ARVN tanks cordoned off the area. They kept the building under a state of siege for two days until all the VC were either killed or captured.

Attacks were made against police stations, particularly in the 6th and 7th Precincts. Hotels and other embassies were attacked by fire.

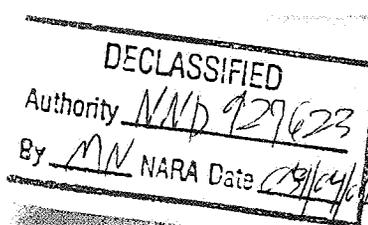
The studio portion of the National Broadcasting Station was seized. The 1st ARVN Abn Bn drove the VC out.

BOQ's and BEQ's throughout Saigon received attacks by fire. Police and combat unit forces were dispatched to the relief of US personnel in these quarters.

j. Hoc Mon.

The attacks outside Saigon proper in the CMD were launched against Hoc Mon and Binh Chanh district headquarters. The attack on Binh Chanh

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subsector headquarters was repelled. The central police station was overrun, two bridges destroyed, the District Headquarter surrounded and the Quang Trang Training Center penetrated in Hoc Mon District. Several VC companies occupied downtown Hoc Mon. 1st Bn, 27th Inf was combat assaulted west of the district capital in the afternoon of the 31st, but was not able to clear the town by dark.

k. Reinforcement of CMD.

Throughout the day of the 31st ARVN and US forces reinforced the CMD. Chart A shows the rate of reinforcement through the 5th of February.

The VC failed to prevent reinforcement either overland or by air. By midnight of the 31st US and ARVN had brought more maneuver battalions into the CMD than the VC had in their initial assault.

In order to control combat units in the CMD, CG II FFORCEV dispatched his Deputy Commander to Saigon with a small staff to take operational control of all US units. This operational headquarters, TASK FORCE WARE, was colocated at CMD headquarters and was operational by 1100 31 Jan. It remained operational until 18 Feb.

Outside the CMD besides widespread attacks by fire there were four major ground attacks. These attacks were initiated against Ben Cat, Duc Hoa, My Tho, and Ben Tre. Map 7 shows all major attacks in III CTZ through 19 Feb.

l. Ben Cat.

The Phu Loi Local Force (LF) Bn, C10 LF Co and an element of the C10 Sapper Bn attacked the 8th ARVN Regt Hqs and Ben Cat District Hq at 0355 from the east. By 0429 the VC were inside the ARVN perimeter having captured the 155mm howitzer position. The town of Ben Cat was also occupied. The 1st Squadron 4th Cavalry and Co C 1/18 Inf counterattacked with the 2/8 ARVN Inf by 0530, supported by 1st Div Arty, 5 LFTs, and Spooky. The armored cavalry relieved the district headquarters just before it was about to fall.

The attack was halted and contact broken by the VC at 0600. The enemy left 47 dead, 4 PWs and 20 weapons behind. Friendly losses were 13 ARVN KIA, 21 WIA and 3 US Advisors were WIA.

m. Duc Hoa.

Elements of the VC 506th LF Bn attacked the 25th ARVN Div Hq, and the MACV compound in Duc Hoa at 0625. At 0640 they entered the market place.

First a FAC from Tan An and a LFT from Cu Chi arrived at 0640. At 0720 the 4/49 Bn, 2/10th Cav, and the Div Recon Co - all ARVN - arrived and counterattacked. The VC withdrew to the southwest by 0900.

n. My Tho.

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At 0415 My Tho was attacked by strong VC forces while the 32d Ranger Bn north of the city was attacked at 0500. A VC Bn entered the city and fighting continued throughout the day. B Co, 3/47 Bn was dispatched east from Dong Tam and cleared the western portion of the city to the main north-south canal by dark.

The 3d Bde, 9th Div together with Navy TF 117 made a riverine assault on the southern edge of My Tho on the morning of 1 Feb. The 3/47 and 3/60 Bns attacked north astride the reservoir in My Tho, linking up with B Co on the west. By 1800 the VC were driven northwest out of town. ARVN units continued the pursuit up route 6A.

The Mobile Riverine Force was put under the operational control of the Senior Advisor, IV Corps on 1 Feb.

o. Ben Tre.

Ben Tre was attacked at 0415. The VC surrounded the US Advisory Compound south of the city and entered the city by 0630. They remained in control through the night. On 1 Feb the 3/39 Bn, reinforced by B Co, 2/60 Bn combat assaulted at 1835 south of the city and relieved the MACV compound that night.

A composite Bn reinforced the 3/39 Bn on 2 Feb. The city was not completely cleared until 3 Feb.

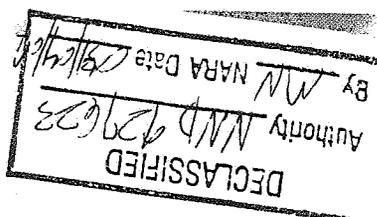
Ground attacks were launched on 1 Feb in three new locations, while continuing in the CMD. These were against Phu Cuong, Cu Chi and Ba Ria.

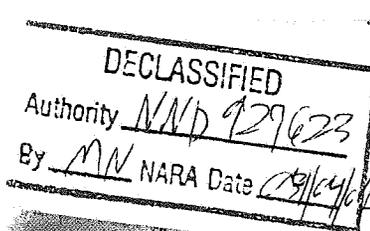
p. Phu Cuong.

At 0430 the 1st and 2d Bns of Dong Nai Regiment reinforced by the Phu Loi I Bn attacked Province Headquarters and the Engineer School at Phu Cuong. The enemy quickly penetrated the Engineer School compound and seized control of the northern portion. They occupied sections of the city but were unable to capture the province headquarters. An ARVN reaction force consisting of the 3/9 and 2/8 Inf, 1/1 and 3/1 Cav Sqdns, and 5th Div Recon Co counterattacked. By 1100 they had regained control of the school. By 1830 Phu Cuong was cleared. This action resulted in 98 VC KIA.

The fighting at Phu Cuong spread eastward when elements of the 1/4 Cav and 1/28 Inf, 1st Infantry Division conducted sweeps north of Phu Loi. The night before a 1st Inf Div LRP north of Phu Loi had spotted VC moving southward and called artillery on them. The VC withdrew into the village of An My which included one, possibly two, battalions of the 273d VC Regt. The VC had been attempting to slip past Phu Loi enroute to Thu Duc. The 1st Div cordoned the village, evacuated and screened civilians and then attacked. This action continued through 4 Feb as the Div systematically destroyed the trapped VC force, some plowing much of the village in the end. In these actions 343 VC were killed, and among the weapons captured were 3 81mm mortars with 4 baseplates.

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At 0110 hours the 7th LF Bn, reinforced, launched a ground and mortar attack on the town and subsector headquarters. VC penetrated the MACV compound and opened the jail. About 50% of the compound was burned. Local RF and PF units, supported by ARVN and US artillery, defended.

At 0320 the 25th Inf Div base camp just to the north received a heavy attack by fire. 10 rounds of 122mm rocket and 200 rounds of 82mm mortar fell, resulting in 1 KIA and 28 WIA.

The VC in Cu Chi began to break contact at 0500. At 0530, D Co 3/22 Inf with one platoon of 4/23 Mech was engaged by VC blocking forces while moving south out of the base camp to relieve the town.

At 0730 the 2/49th ARVN Inf moving to the north toward Cu Chi engaged VC blocking forces. It was reinforced by the 3/49th Inf and 1/10 Cav.

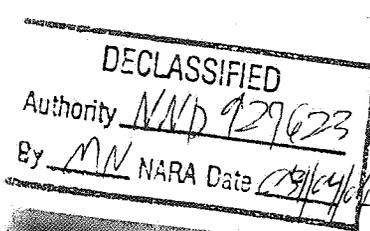
Both US and ARVN units reached the center of town by 1030. The VC forces withdrew from the area at 1145 but contact continued by ARVN until 1830. There were 40 VC KIA in Cu Chi and 25 others outside, 11 of which were killed by artillery. Heavy civil damage was done to the center of Cu Chi.

r. Ba Ria.

On the morning of 1 Feb in Phouc Tuy Province, south of the 1st Australian Task Force Nui Dat Base Camp, the VC D445 Local Force Bn, reinforced by the C610 Ba Ria town company launched multiple attacks. At 0455 two VC companies attacked the RF Ammunition and Logistics compound in the northeast sector of Ba Ria. Heavy contact continued, the RF supported by artillery. The RF kept the VC out of the compound until later relieved. At 0500 about 140 VC attacked JUSPAO, PRU Hq, MSS Adv Hq the MP station and VIS headquarters. One platoon occupied the provincial hospital, Catholic church and town theater. All these facilities, were in the center of Ba Ria astride Highways 15 and 23. At the same time two companies assaulted the bridge at YS375609. The local RF outpost, supported by mortars and artillery, prevented the VC from destroying the bridge.

At 0700 the C1 Co of the D445 Bn assaulted and captured the airstrip adjacent to the Van Kiep National Training Center on the east of Ba Ria. At 0830 Co A, 3d Battalion, Royal Australian Regiment with 9 armored personnel carriers counterattacked down Highway 2 from Nui Dat. It was this small armored-infantry force which broke the VC grip on all the key centers in and around Ba Ria, while two ARVN units completed the clearing of the town itself of VC. The Australian force swept to the center of town and cleared the VC from the church, JUSPAO, hospital, VIS, PRU Hq and theater. It then proceeded to the administration and logistical Co compound to resupply the RF force there. Later it relieved the district headquarters and the Van Kiep Training Center, where elements of the 11 Abn Bn were in contact.

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Several ARVN units were now converging on the area. Between 0945 and 1230 the 3/52 Inf was combat assaulted from Xuan Loc to LZs west of Ba Ria. This bn commenced clearing operations eastward. The 52d Ranger Bn was airlanded at the Van Kiep Field at 1300 and worked westward into town. At nightfall the 52d Rangers and 3/52 Inf were securing portions of the town. At 0900 the 4/48 Inf Bn, and RD support battalion at Dat Do moved westward to Long Dien by truck, secured the Chieu Hoi village at YS402601 and searched to north and east of Ba Ria. At dark this battalion returned to secure its RD area at Dat Do.

The locus of VC effort shifted to Long Dien on subsequent days. It was not until 4 Feb when the VC were substantially eliminated from the Ba Ria-Long Dien populated area.

s. Action at Xuan Loc.

From the early morning hours of 1 February, numerous reports of enemy activity indicated that an attack on Xuan Loc was imminent. Reports of VC movement and actual sightings caused many local people to leave their rural homes and flock to Xuan Loc. At 011515 Feb all ARVNAF and FWMAF units were placed on red alert status.

At 1550 the first attacks were made on Xuan Loc from the southeast and southwest of the city. Enemy units later identified as the D440th Battalion, 84th Rear Service Group and a Xuan Loc Local Force Sapper Unit took part in these attacks. After the initial attacks, elements of the 3d Squadron, 5th Cavalry, 9th US Infantry Division moved to reinforce Xuan Loc closing at 1630.

The VC attacks were directed at the Province Hq, 18th ARVN Div Hq, headquarters and base camps of the 43d ARVN Regiment and against the 54th US Artillery Group and the 2/35th Arty Bn compounds.

Mutual support between compounds, particularly by mortar and artillery fire, was highly effective in stopping the VC assaults. Howitzers of C Btry, 1/83 Arty Bn (8") fired in close support of the ARVN 52d Ranger Bn compound to halt several attacks. Direct fire by howitzers was used on numerous occasions.

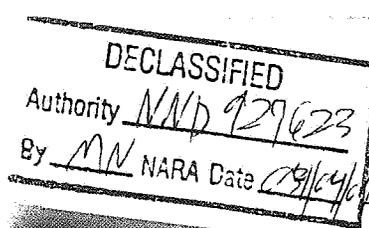
After their first assaults were repulsed, the VC reinitiated attacks on 2 Feb at 0130, 0300, and 0700 hours. The 3/5 ARVN Cav Sqdn, and troop C, 3/5 US Cav Sqdn conducted a sweep around the periphery of Xuan Loc breaking up VC units while the 43d ARVN Regt, RF/PF and National Police cleared the city.

At 2245 the 2d of February the VC attacked again, were repulsed, and by 0700 the next day the city was cleared for the last time.

Although there were several harassing attacks and reported attempts by the VC to launch other attacks the VC did not seriously threaten Xuan Loc again.

Map 8 shows the principal actions on 1 Feb in the key areas of the CMD, Long Binh and Bien Hoa.

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In the Long Binh/Bien Hoa area the 199th Bde swept areas adjacent to Ho Nai Village (YT095126) and to the north and east. There were scattered contacts all day with small groups of VC from the 275 Regiment who had no general withdrawal plan. Over 100 VC bodies were located in the area. One heavy contact occurred between 2115 and 2400 as a US company and enemy group clashed.

Near III Corps Headquarters, VC were still holed up in the built-up area across from the airbase. The 3/11 Cav Sqdn with the 2/506 Abn Bn conducted a joint sweep through the village of Ap Thanh (YT015125) against a block established by the 58th RF Bn. Heavy fighting occurred in the built up area until it was cleared at 1830. There were 4 US KIA, 5 WIA and 67 VC KIA, 9 PWs and 53 weapons captured. This action cleared the last pocket of VC from the area between Bien Hoa and Long Binh.

In other parts of the Long Binh complex, the 1/11 Cav Sqdn swept the bamboo area between II Field Force Headquarters and the Ammo Dump as a follow-up to airstrikes. The area was then denuded by Rome Plows removing the concealment offered near friendly installations.

Within the CMD the VC continued to maintain control of downtown Hoc Mon on the 1st, culminating in an unsuccessful attack on the district headquarters at 1815. Just north of the town, along the Saigon River, the 3/17 Air Cav Sqdn engaged and killed 73 VC.

The VC attacked a series of military installations at Go Vap early in the morning, overrunning a PF outpost. As depicted on Map 8, DCG, II FFV had coordinated two areas of operation within the CMD, and formed a Task Force in each area. TF Thebaud with 2 Inf Bns and a Cav Sqdn operated in the Tan Son Nhut area while TF Gibler, with 1 Inf Bn reinforced by a mech company operated in the Race Track area.

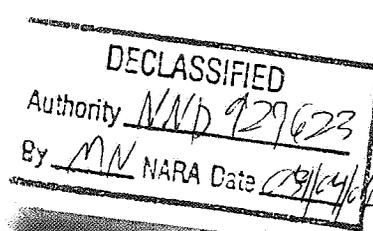
At 011100 Feb TF Thebaud made a coordinated attack with the 1st VNMC Task Force north through Go Vap. The Marines had the heaviest going and fighting continued until 1900 when the VC were ejected from Camp Red Ball (a US transportation corps installation) and the ARVN Armored Command Compound. This combined US-VN attack broke the back of the VC north west of Go Vap. Nine NVA were captured and identified as members of the 101st NVA Regiment which had conducted the early morning attacks.

In the vicinity of Saigon the 2/27 Inf Bn made a sweep to the west of Tan Son Nhut and in the rubble of the Textile Mill found 162 VC bodies and 101 weapons from the previous days action.

At the Race Track Cos A and B of the 5/60 Mech Bn joined the 3/7 Inf Bn (TF Gibler) and a four company sweep was initiated. At 1500 one mech co engaged a VC force 3 blocks from the Race Track. The VC fired RPGs from rooftops. The second mech company reinforced, attacked the VC and swept the area after killing 120.

The An Quang Pagoda in Cholon became the focus of heavy fighting when an ARVN unit discovered that a VC headquarters was established there. National Police and VNMC Marines encircled the Pagoda by 1305. Air-

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strikes were called in on the buildings and finally seized by 1705.

In spite of the heavy fighting all through Saigon on 1 February, and the spread of attacks by fire to MACV headquarters, police stations and more GVN installations, it was apparent that the VC neither controlled nor had put out of action any critical installation. The government was still intact and there was no signs of a popular uprising. The 48 hour period before relief was scheduled for the local force units was running out and no relief was in sight. The VC were on the defensive everywhere in Saigon.

Several outposts were attacked in Binh Chanh District and the pattern of attempted LOC interdiction southwest of Saigon began which was to last well into the month of March. Three RF/PF outposts, a base camp of TF Gibler, and the Binh Dien Bridge on Highway 4 were attacked. Highway 4 was cratered both north and south of Binh Chanh.

In Cholon the COFAT compound received a small arms attack; snipers surrounded the technical school adjacent to the Free World Military Assistance Forces Headquarters; and the 593d Signal Company came under mortar attack.

t. Actions 2-5 February.

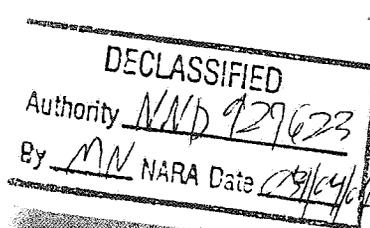
The Period 2-5 February was transitional between a predominance of VC initiated attacks and the regaining of the initiative by US FWMF and ARVN forces. Map 9 shows events during this period.

In Saigon the VC concentrated their flagging offensive effort in Cholon. They attacked the Nguyen Can Tho and Pham Van Chi Police Stations in the 6th Precinct southwest of Saigon.

The elements of the 273d VC Regiment which had not been trapped in An My launched an anticipated attack in the morning of 2 Feb on Thu Duc District Headquarters and the National Police Station. Having been warned that the VC planned to destroy the large power plant and water treatment works in Thu Duc, a Cavalry reinforced Infantry company of the 1/18 Inf Bn were already in place when the attacks came, and the Bn (-) was in Thu Duc proper. The VC attacks were repulsed.

The VC Regt attacked again in greater strength on the night of 3 Feb, and tried to carry out its mission of destroying the large Newport Bridge linking Saigon and Bien Hoa. One force attacked the Newport Bridge at 0100, the District Headquarters at 0410, and the 2d VNMC Bn compound at 0650. District forces, reinforced by a company from the 1/18 Bn and 3 RF platoons, repulsed the attacks killing over 80 VC. Civil damage was heavy, however, and 38 civilians were killed and 75 houses destroyed. In the attack on the Newport Bridge the VC overran bunkers and the eastern end of the bridge. A relief force of the 1/5 ARVN Cav and elements of the 720th US MP Bn retook the bridge by 0250. Eleven VC were found dead on the bridge but the bridge itself was not damaged. On the night of 2 February the VC attacked a bridge by RPG in Hoc Mon District defended by 25th Inf Div units. At 031500 Feb enemy forces overran a PF unit guarding the

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Can Dua bridge and were successful in destroying it.

In Tan Binh District VC conducted mortar and rocket attacks against 3d VNMC Bn outposts at Vinh Loc and US MATS team locations.

While Nha Be district was relatively quiet, a precautionary deployment of the 2/327th Abn Bn was made to the POL storage facility in Nha Be. The Bn was flown by fixed wing air from Song Be to Tan Son Nhut on 2 Feb then moved by helicopter to Nha Be. Together with the 3/11 Cav Sqdn, which had come to Bien Hoa from Loc Ninh, the 2/327th Abn Bn was the only other US maneuver bn which had to be brought into the allied base area from border regions of III CTZ for deployment in the TET offensive.

There were many sightings of VC units and groups moving during daylight around Saigon attempting to consolidate. By this time the 271 and 272 VC Regiments began to move into Hoc Mon District after their plan to relieve Local Force units in Saigon had been threatened. Harassment by gunships, artillery, and sweeps by US or ARVN units initiated by such sightings prevented the massing of any major enemy force. Twenty VC sampans were spotted at night on the Saigon River in Go Vap and were sunk with numerous secondary explosions. The density of VC in a relatively small area caused them to suffer very heavy casualties, and also caused a breakdown in their battlefield police habits. Abandoned crew served weapons and equipment to include radios, as well as the capture of wounded PWs, were indications of how hard hit were VC units northwest of Saigon.

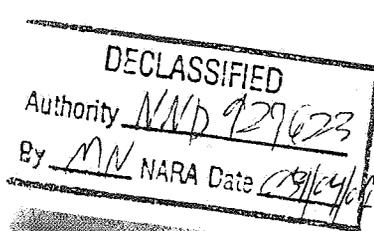
By 5 Feb in the Capital Military District the Commanding Officer of the CMD and the DCG, II FFV had divided their tasks. RVNAF units took over sole responsibility for clearing Saigon of VC, while US units began to operate against VC attempting to base in the outer districts. Map 9 shows the respective AOs on 5 Feb. This map also shows the first step in returning responsibility of outlying CMD areas to the US Divisions from the special CMD Task Force. The 25th Div reassumed control of its forces and the Hoc Mon area from DCG, II FFV on 5 Feb. By this time the locus of the battle began to fall astride the CMD - Hau Nghia boundary, rather than remain inside the CMD.

The increasing concentration of VC in Cholon, where the ARVN Ranger Gp operated, was matched by sharp fighting in Binh Chanh, particularly along the Ben Luc Canal. One combat assault by 3/7 Inf Bn resulted in seven helicopters damaged by fire in the engagement where the VC were deployed along the canal.

During this same 3 day period outside of the CMD there were several other significant contacts.

At Bien Hoa on 3 Feb, the 2/11 Cav Sqdn swept north of the airbase and became heavily engaged in Tan Phu Village. Fighting continued into the night and a company of the 3/506 Abn Bn reinforced. This action resulted in 34 KIA and was the last heavy contact in the Bien Hoa/Long Binh area.

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On 4 Feb at 0115 hours elements of the Dong Nai Regt attacked Tan Uyen. The VC overran the ARVN dependent housing area and occupied a brick factory. At 0330 the VC destroyed the power plant by high explosive. At 0540 the 3/48 ARVN Inf arrived by a route which avoided a VC ambush designed to intercept it. The VC broke contact by 0800. At 0810 one company 2/18 Inf Bn arrived and swept south of Tan Uyen. At 0830 a troop 1/4 Cav Sqdn arrived and pursued the VC to the north.

Phu Hoa Dong Subsector Headquarters, defended only by a PF unit, successfully repulsed a strong attack at 0400 hours on 4 Feb. 16 VC were killed, 8 weapons captured while only 1 PF was killed.

In Long Khanh Province Dinh Quan was attacked on 2 Feb by a VC company which occupied all of the village except the District Headquarters and the artillery position. The 18th ARVN Div relieved the town with the 3/48 Regiment. By 5 Feb all hamlets in the vicinity were secure and Route 20 was opened from the La Nga River to the II Corps boundary.

Attacks by fire continued throughout III CTZ. The heaviest attacks after the 31st of January occurred against the 25th Inf Div base camp at Cu Chi and the 1st Inf Div camp at Lai Khe. Lai Khe received 42 separate attacks by fire between 31 January and 3 Feb, including 141 rounds of 122 mm rocket fire. The rocket fire, however, failed to be a substitute for artillery for the VC. Assaulting units had been led to believe that the rockets preceding an assault would batter down barbed wire and prepare the way for successful assault. There are no recorded instances in which this occurred. There was a conspicuous absence of promised 120mm mortar fire and 107mm rockets during the attacks. The backbone of the VC attacks remained the 82mm mortar, RPGs, and AK-47s.

It was not until approximately 3 Feb that road and bridge interdictions began to assume serious proportions, and by that time the original purpose had failed - to prevent US or RVNAF reinforcement during the critical 48 hour period following the 31 January attacks. QL1 from Saigon to Cu Chi was interdicted more by the heavy fighting which took place along its length than by specific road blocks. QL4 into the Delta began to be a major target of the VC however.

Chart B shows the comparative battle losses from 31 January through 5 February.

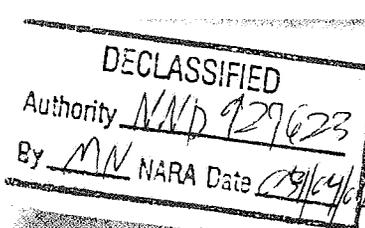
u. Actions 6-19 February.

After 5 Feb the battle around Saigon changed in character. While separate attacks against outlying province and district capitals continued, they were occurring in diminishing frequency and intensity.

Map 10 depicts the main events of this period.

Within Saigon RVNAF units undertook the task of clearing VC out of the city. Clearing the Cholon area fell to the 5th Ranger Group, which

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found that it lacked the forces to do the job while also securing the Phu Tho Race Track. DCG, II FFV was asked by ARVN if he would redeploy a US unit to the Race Track to free their forces for the city fighting ahead. The 3/7 Inf Bn was redeployed for this purpose on 9 Feb taking over an area of operations outlined by the blue broken lines. On 12 Feb this unit, acting on intelligence from ARVN, found the main VC command post in a pagoda 2 km west of the Race Track. Surrounding it they destroyed the VC defending force and captured the headquarters. Taking 3 PW and killing 49 VC including Gen Tran Do, COSVN political chief who was in command of all VC forces attacking Saigon.

Outside Saigon a number of VC units exfiltrated as shown by broken red lines. But the VC high command, in spite of the failure of their attacks and the losses suffered by its assaulting forces, insisted on continuing offensive action.

Units of the 9th VC Div began to invest the area between Hoc Mon - Cu Chi - Phu Hoa, while elements of the 7th VC Div moved into the Nhi Binh area of the Saigon River. The VC brought in 122mm rockets and attempted to establish a dispersed stronghold north and northwest of Saigon from which they could launch rockets against Tan Son Nhut.

US and ARVN units commenced systematically searching this area. The results were a large number of sharp engagements with relatively small numbers of VC killed in each encounter.

To the east of the Long Binh/Bien Hoa complex the remnants of the VC 274 and 275 Regiments withdrew toward War Zone D. It was during this period, roughly 4-8 February, that the two battalions from the 1st Australian Task Force began to exact their toll from the VC.

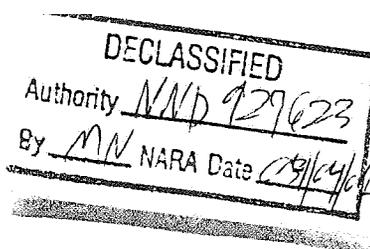
Up until 31 January the 1 ATF had been operating offensively to the northeast in AO COLUMBUS. Once the attacks on Long Binh demonstrated that the bulk of the VC were between Long Binh and AO COLUMBUS, the ATF did a tactical about face, and deployed a series of company and platoon sized day and night ambushes between the Dong Nai River and Highway 1.

As depicted on Chart C, the Australians steadily killed small groups of VC withdrawing to the east. The dates of the passage of the bulk of the VC force can be seen in the large number of contacts and kills between 4 and 7 February.

Elsewhere in III CTZ there were a number of significant actions.

On 6 Feb a VC local force battalion attempted to launch a major attack against Tay Ninh City. The Province Chief had received advance warning of this attack, to include the exact direction of the approach. He deployed his reconnaissance platoon in an ambush several km west of the city. The VC walked into the ambush, and then were struck heavily by gunships which came to the aid of the ambush force. The VC fled westward after heavy losses, leaving behind banners which they had intended to parade in the streets of Tay Ninh. They had failed to even reach the city.

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On 10 February the K-3 Bn, Dong Nai Regiment attacked Tan An from the west of 0255 hours. In order to reinforce the attack, hastily recruited fillers from 17 different infiltration groups were committed with the battalion. Many of these fillers had virtually no training. The main attack was repulsed by RF/PF forces and National Police who killed 103 VC and captured 22 while losing 3 RF, 8 NP and 1 ARVN KIA. The 3d Brigade headquarters area of the 9th US Inf Div defended its own compound in Tan An killing 19 VC. Indiscriminant mortaring by the VC caused 25 civilians KIA and 125 WIA in the city.

Captured documents show that COSVN ordered a second wave of attacks to be launched which were to be stronger than the first attacks on 31 Jan. These attacks occurred on the night of 17-18 February. The "wave" was feeble by comparison with the earlier TET assaults. Their scope is shown on Map 11. There were 10 ground attacks and 57 attacks by fire. The VC lost 446 killed at an allied cost of 28 US and 82 ARVN KIA.

The heaviest fighting of the second wave occurred in Song Be where two infiltration group battalions - the 211 and 212 - seized the western half of Song Be City. They were driven out by 2 companies of 31st ARVN Rangers and elements of the 101st US Abn Div after extensive damage was done to civilian houses. Over 100 VC bodies were found in the rubble.

As action subsided from the second wave on 18 February, it was clear that the enemy lacked the strength to mount serious new attacks against the key areas in III CTZ. The essential defensive battle of TET was over.

Chart D shows the total battle losses from 29 January through 19 February. 12,614 NVA/VC were killed at a cost of 944 US/FWF/RVNAF KIA, a ratio of 13.36 to 1.

An analysis of the reported body count revealed that the very large number of VC/NVA reported killed was the result of many small contacts rather than a few large ones (in which the margin for error in reporting is proportionately greater). A detailed machine record analysis of contacts resulting in 8,021 of the reported killed revealed that they were killed in 849 separate successful contacts. That is an average of less than 10 per contact. Only 2264 of the 8024 were reported killed in the 13 engagements claiming over 100 VC dead, while 1880 were reported killed in 686 contacts claiming less than 10 VC KIA. The Australian kills on Chart C demonstrate this characteristic in detail: 202 killed in 60 contacts averaging 3.3.

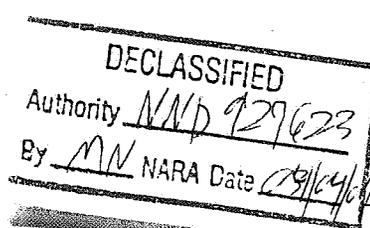
The results of this analysis tend to substantiate the belief of this command that VC/NVA forces lost nearly 20% of its 29 January strength killed in 20 days.

v. Results of offensive on US/FWF/GVN.

From 29 Jan through 19 February: US forces lost 453 killed and 3,625 wounded. ARVN (III Corps) lost 471 killed and 1290 wounded. Australian, New Zealand and Thailand forces lost 20 killed and 83 wounded.

No US/FWF/ARVN maneuver units from company size were destroyed or rendered combat ineffective during the offensive.

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The 58,000 RF/PF personnel manned over 650 outposts in III CTZ during the period. 63 of these outposts, or less than 10% were seriously damaged or destroyed. 22 were overrun and 5 abandoned without contact. 221 RF/PF were killed, 481 wounded and 68 were missing. One RF company was rendered combat ineffective by hostile action.

There were a few cases of RF/PF outposts being defeated by treacherous action from within. In the worst case 37 RF/PF and 2 US were murdered in the La Cua outpost in Hau Nghia Province by VC who had penetrated the organization.

National Police Forces were a target of the VC. Within the Saigon/Gia Dinh complex 87 police were killed and 326 wounded out of 16,839 assigned, about half of whom were on leave at the outbreak of hostilities. Outside of this complex an additional 45 police were killed and 139 wounded of 11,500 assigned. Province police headquarters in Hau Nghia, Binh Duong and Phouc Tuy Provinces received substantial damage. In Saigon the VC heavily damaged police stations in the 5th, 6th and 7th precincts.

The RD effort was clearly not one of the immediate targets of the VC. However, the offensive set back the pacification programs in III CTZ. Many Revolutionary Development Cadre were withdrawn from their assigned hamlets to help with the security of their respective district or provincial capitals or to perform other missions to help the many refugees. Before TET cadre were in 92 hamlets. By 1 March they were back in 83, although 24 teams were still in hamlets due to be completed in 1967. The VC penetrated about 50% of the hamlets pacified during the 1967 campaign. But 90% of the hamlets entered had an RD group or 5 man stay behind element in it. With the exception of Binh Duong Province, the VC caused little or no physical damage to the hamlets, confining most of their activities to propaganda and efforts to force the population to provide them with logistical support. Out of 5518 RD cadre 24 were killed and 7 captured during February.

Of the 46 operational DIOCC in III CTZ only one was totally destroyed and two damaged.

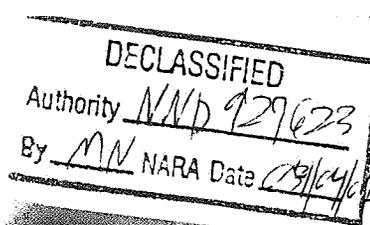
The Chieu Hoi program received a distinct set back. The returnee rate dropped to an all time low of only 107 for February, and remained low.

There were no sector or subsector headquarters overrun, although many were surrounded and besieged for periods of time.

While LOC eventually became a target of the VC, initially they did little damage to roads, bridges or culverts. Only 1 bridge was dropped on 30 Jan, 3 on 2 Feb. By 19 February 9 bridges had been destroyed and 5 damaged.

The offensive created well over 100,000 refugees, 67,000 in Gia Dinh. 11,000 houses were 50-100% destroyed. The heaviest civil damage was in Thu Duc, Hoc Mon, Go Vap, Duc Hue, Long Dien, Song Be and Ba Ria. At least \$20 million damage was done to industrial and commercial enterprises

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with another \$8-10 million damage to structures housing these enterprises. Food stocks dropped and prices soared during the peak of the Tet attacks, but by the end of the month there were no critical shortages and prices had returned to normal.

Of the eleven provinces in III CTZ, Hau Nghia, Phouc Long and Binh Long were the most adversely affected.

w. Results of offensive on VC/NVA.

VC/NVA forces lost 12,614 killed, 864 personnel and 3089 weapons captured in the offensive.

The impact of these losses were both qualitative as well as quantitative. Chart E shows the degradation in combat effectiveness of those 54 enemy maneuver battalions which were in III CTZ on 29 January. This chart does not take into account the factor of undetected replacements received during the period, but it has been determined that the replacements received during the offensive were far short of the losses suffered.

A large number of crew served weapons were captured, including 82mm mortars and anti-aircraft machine guns. These were taken as often as not on sweeps of the battlefield conducted the day after an action. This is unusual, for rigorous police of the battlefield is a characteristic of VC and NVA units. It indicates how severely the units were hit. Over 60 pistols were captured. These are habitually carried only by leaders.

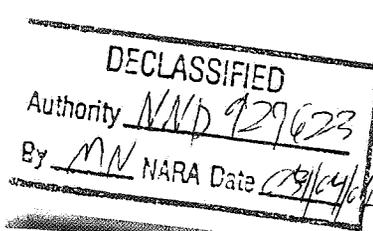
Because the enemy chose to commit local force units initially, these elements in suffering heavy losses degraded their capability to support NVA main force units in preparing the battlefield, furnishing guides; carrying out ancillary combat tasks, and policing the battlefield. As a result many NVA main force units had to try to fulfill the role of the local forces. Lacking detailed knowledge of the terrain and population several such units were destroyed, and scattered, or made ineffective by allied action.

Several reports indicate that as early as 16 January political cadre were being ordered to join military units as fillers in order to bring those units up to strength for a maximum effort. In addition preparations were made in such detail as to have provisional governments standing by to assume the leadership of the expected popular uprising. As a result a few thousand of the 47,014 enemy casualties reported in South Viet Nam are assumed to have been infrastructure members. The number of cadre actually killed in III Corps is unknown. At no prior time during the insurgency has there been indications of such a loss of political cadre. Though some of these were already compromised and can now be replaced with personnel having better "covers", their replacement by either infiltration or recruitment should pose the same difficulties which led to the understrength posture of the combat units originally.

These losses have left the infrastructure particularly vulnerable at the district and city level, where failure to replace lost cadre may result in the temporary breakdown of control in selected urban areas.

x. Conclusion:

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The VC/NVA TET offensive aimed at no less an objective than winning the war with one stroke aimed at the heart of political and administrative power in South Vietnam-Saigon. Militarily it was a complete failure for the VC. Its political impact is both harder to judge and beyond the scope of this report. But it must be concluded that whatever political gains were made were bought at an enormous cost to both VC and NVA in terms of trained men and organized units. It was a price which neither North Vietnam nor the NFLA can afford for long. The amount of damage done to US and ARVN forces was slight by comparison, and out of the battle ARVN emerged with an unprecedented rise in self-confidence. The civil cost was considerable, but not catastrophic, nor permanent. NFL claims to represent the people were shown to be patently false as the popular uprising - a central assumption in NVA planning - failed to materialize in spite of the sudden display of NVA/VC strength throughout III CTZ. The continued weakening of "war of liberation" techniques has been shown as North Vietnam increasingly has had to replace VC losses by outside infiltrators and not by NFLA recruitment. This in turn has been reflected in the lesser guerrilla skills of NVA units when operating near populated areas, making their detection and defeat easier, and forcing them to rely more on outside support and better weapons to survive and operate. The impact of the TET offensive on the course of the war has yet to be determined but it is clear that it has brought the war closer to resolution either by military or political action.

y. Lessons Learned.

VC/NVA forces are willing to sacrifice military units, suffer heavy casualties, and risk military defeats to create an international image of strength. Calculations of threat based solely on enemy military capabilities and national military strategy may be seriously misleading.

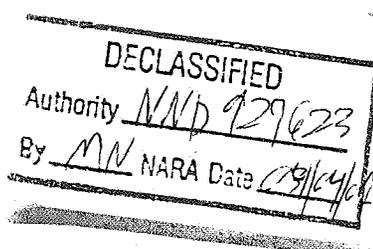
Maximum use of spoiling attacks against intermediate enemy base areas will reduce the momentum of the main attack and prevent most of the enemy forces from reaching populated areas. The enemy's intermediate bases are normally located along infiltration routes. Infiltration and exfiltration routes tend to coincide. Therefore, the employment of this tactic, in conjunction with all available fire support, inflicts maximum enemy losses and avoids the heavier military casualties, physical destruction and civilian casualties normally associated with fighting in urban areas.

The enemy moved sizeable groups of personnel and significant materiel support into Saigon and other critical areas before the offensive began. Friendly forces were not warned of these actions by the local population which was either indifferent to the enemy's presence, supported him passively, or was afraid of enemy reprisal in the event his presence was disclosed. Allied forces had no information base in the local population.

The VC and NVA are capable of infiltrating all the supplies they require to sustain their operations. Surveillance, control, and interdiction of waterways in III CTZ are inadequate to stop this flow.

Damage to property and both civilian and military casualties in urban areas can be reduced by the use of riot control agent CS. While not the sole means of achieving these goals, CS was employed effectively to drive enemy personnel from buildings and fortified positions. This increased the enemy's vulnerability to allied firepower and lessened the requirement to engage in sustained combat in urban areas. Prior planning for the rapid employment of CS facilitates the conduct of fighting in urban areas.

The experience gained during the conduct of combined operations with RVNAF



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prior to the TET Offensive was of great value during the TET offensive. US/FWMAF/RVNAF units gained a better appreciation of the strengths, weaknesses, capabilities and operating procedures of other allied nations. This reduced the reaction time required to counter enemy threats and enhanced coordination and cooperation at all echelons. It also developed a high degree of mutual confidence and understanding among the allied nations which facilitated the application of overwhelming firepower and mobility against the enemy. Regular combined operations with participation by forces from all allied nations will enhance combat readiness for and facilitate conduct of operations during periods of crisis such as the initial days of the TET offensive.

Air Cavalry units were employed effectively in screening and economy of force roles in intermediate enemy base areas and along suspected infiltration and exfiltration routes. When the requirement exists for conducting operations in areas where other combat forces cannot be made available, air cavalry units are well suited for this purpose.

The enemy turned a decisive military defeat into a psychological gain. Despite heavy losses, he mounted an offensive of sizable proportions and demonstrated his capability to conduct coordinated attacks by fire and maneuver over widely dispersed locations. Politically he gained world-wide attention and may have enhanced his position at the current peace negotiations.


 FRED C. WEYAND
 Lieutenant General, USA
 Commanding

ANNEXES:

- A - Intelligence.
- B - US/FWMAF Troop List.
- C - ARVN Troop List.
- D - Command Precautions.
- E - Significant Actions.
- F - Role of Armor.
- G - Artillery.
- H - MACCORDS.
- I - III Corps Advisory Group.