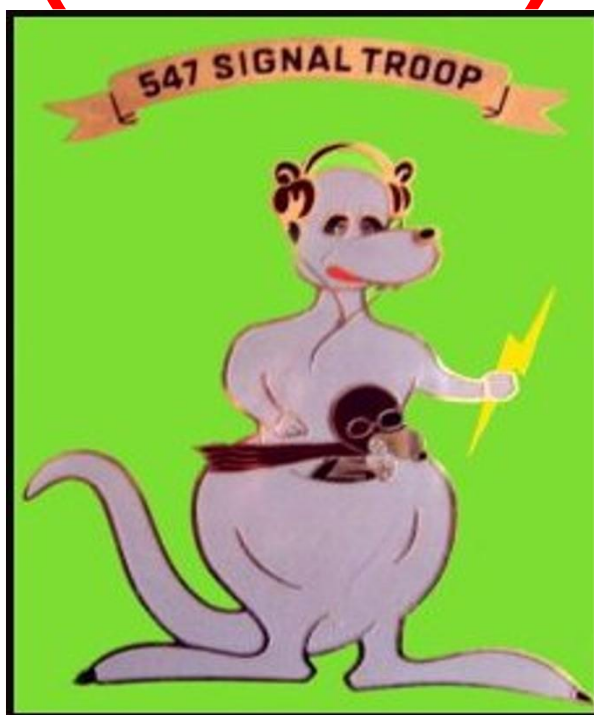




THE STORY OF 547 SIGNAL TROOP IN SOUTH VIETNAM 1966 TO 1972 (Edition #4)



1



By
Robert (Bob) Hartley AM
and
Barry Hampstead

¹ Copy of the Unit Plaque designed by John Zeller



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(Paginated for double-sided printing)



FORWARD

The following two quotes are extracted from the book *The Most Secret War: Army Signals Intelligence in Vietnam*²:

GEN BRUCE PALMER, VICE CHIEF OF STAFF, US ARMY

... field commanders in Vietnam, continue to say that this [signals intelligence] is the backbone of their intelligence effort. They can't live or fight without it.

I want to stress to everyone in this room just how important this effort is...

I can't think of anything more important because they are just blind over there without this effort...

LTG FREDERICK C. WEYLAND, COMMANDING GENERAL, II FIELD FORCE VICTOR

It is always easy for the people to see the performance of an infantry battalion or brigade in fighting and winning the battle.

The performance of a support unit is not so obvious, and yet in your case [303rd RR Battalion that supported the II FFV – (to which 547 Sig Tp was technically/operationally subordinate)]

You have probably contributed to the winning of more battles than any maneuver element in the Country.

This is the 4th edition of The Story of 547 Signal Troop. The first edition was published in January 2014 and the second in March 2016. Both copies are held at the Australian War Memorial's Private Collection as MSS2216. The second copy is available to download as a PDF file. The 3rd Edition was completed in 2018 but not submitted to the AWM. This 4th Edition was completed in May 2022 and contains additional information declassified and released by ASD in 2022.

² *The Most Secret War: Army Signals Intelligence in Vietnam*, James L. Gilbert Military History Office, US Army Intelligence and Security Command, Fort Belvoir, Virginia. 547 Signal Troop was part of the sigint organisation supporting II Field Force (V). (V=Vietnam)



Since publication of the original Story there have been some significant events:

- the Defence Honours and Awards Tribunal has completed its hearings, and its report not recommending any award for the Troop has been published³,
- in August and December 2015, the Australian Signals Directorate released to Bob Hartley the majority of their now declassified⁴ 547 Signal Troop documentation they hold⁵. Unfortunately, the collection is not complete⁶ and there are several large gaps in the history, in particular, monthly reports of all types⁷. In late 2021, ASD commenced releasing the same declassified documents on their Website as part of their 75th Anniversary History Project.
- receipt of additional information from ex-members of the Troop,
- additional records that mention 547 Signal Troop have been recovered from the Australian War Memorial,
- the Australian Defence Force Academy has opened up a web page titled Australia's Vietnam War - Exploring the combat actions of the 1st Australian Task Force⁸,
- in May 2018, the Minister for Veterans Affairs announced the award of the Unit Citation for Gallantry for units deployed in support of Fire Support Bases Coral and Balmoral. Members of the Troop who were deployed to Coral and others who were in-country during the battle are now entitled to wear the citation, and
- in September 2018, the Troop was awarded the Republic of Vietnam Cross of Gallantry with Palm Unit Citation.
- in late 2021 and April 2022, ASD released copies of the declassified documents previously passed to Bob Hartley for general reading on their Web Page⁹.

Using extracts from all of the above, the authors have now completed a comprehensive story and record of 547 Signal Troop in Vietnam that includes all of the available declassified Troop Weekly Summaries with maps and ARDF fix reports. Researchers of the Vietnam War History will find this edition valuable as it provides an insight into the probable locations of VC/NVA Unit Headquarters used as a basis for operations.

³ <https://defence-honours-tribunal.gov.au/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/547-Signal-Troop-Inquiry-Report.pdf>

⁴ This request started several years ago. Approval and declassification took many months and, in many cases, copies had to be passed to the US authorities for clearance.

⁵ Documents that had been previously been sent to ASD from 7 Signal Regiment and the Directorate of Military Intelligence⁵ for storage.

⁶ There are many deficiencies in the Monthly Activities Summaries and Operational Reports.

⁷ The authors are extremely grateful for the efforts of the Records Management Section of the Australian Signals Directorate to locate, declassify, and release documentation. In February 2021 ASD released several of the declassified documents for viewing on their webpage.

⁸ <https://vietnam.unsw.adfa.edu.au/>

⁹ <https://www.asd.gov.au/about/history/declassified>.



It must be stressed that all official documents included in this story have been officially declassified. It must also be noted that in the text 547 Sig Tp and AUM352 refer to same entity.

Many of the Troop Weekly Summaries and Maps are still missing. However, most available have been transcribed and where possible errors etc included for authenticity.

Those with an analytical mind and time may be able to place the many 1ATF operations based on results from ARDF fixes.

During the Defence Honours and Awards Tribunal several congratulatory signals from the various Australian agencies, senior military personnel and US sources were presented to the Tribunal. It is indeed unfortunate that these signals were never displayed within the Regiment for ex-547 Signal Troop and current regimental personnel to see how well the Troop's activities were appreciated. The majority of the signals are included in the Story text.

It must also be mentioned that the authors are purely amateur historians and writers with a deep interest in the Regiment's and 547 Sig Tp History and that the 547 Sig Tp Story has not been edited by any professional. E&OE.

RW Hartley
14 June 2022

Note:

Readers may note that in the Contents and Figure List the page numbers do not match up. Word decided that it would not 'play' within the rules and update correctly.



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PREFACE

During the Defence Honours and Awards Inquiry into Recognition for Service with 547 Signal Troop in South Vietnam from 1966 to 1977 -- *For the Award of a Meritorious Unit Citation*¹⁰ -- held at Canberra on 23 July 2013, it became obvious that no publication existed that outlined the full story of 547 Signal Troop's deployment with the 1st Australian Task Force in South Vietnam.

A History of 547 Signal Troop in South Vietnam, commonly referred to as *The Blue Book*, issued in 1987¹¹, was an attempt to record the social history of the Troop. This proved to be problematical as, due to security constraints, it was not possible to detail the full extent of the Troop's operations. The project of compiling and printing of a book was assigned to a junior officer in 72 Electronic Warfare Squadron, Murray Davies. Fortunately, he was able to collate the writings on 547 Signal Troop by ex-Officers Commanding Peter Murray, Steve Hart, Jack Fenton and Herbie O'Flynn. The *Blue Book* is a good base document of a history of the Troop but contains several anomalies, and does not fully cover the operational successes and deployment from an Operator or Troop perspective. The majority of the information in *The Blue Book* has been included verbatim in this story with some minor editorial changes where necessary. Where there are significant differing interpretations between *The Blue Book* and other writing, all versions have been included.

In 2010, Bob Hartley produced a DVD¹² that gave a brief pictorial history of the Troop, based primarily on the Blue Book. During production of the DVD, it became evident to the authors that there was much more information now available and the full story needed to be told.

Over the past few years there have been many books and publications written on the war in Vietnam by a variety of authors who make reference to how 547 Signal Troop provided support to the operations conducted by the Australian Task Force and American Units. These have been included where appropriate.

It is now over 50 years since 547 Signal Troop first deployed to South Vietnam. The full facts are becoming harder to gather and confirm as, with the passage of time, several members have passed on. While conducting research for this document, the authors have found that over the years the memories of those still with us have dimmed, recollections changed, and stories sometimes embellished. Consequently, it has, at times, been difficult to sort out fact from fiction. We have, therefore, taken the liberty, without being overly judgemental, of using the most plausible rendition. It is indeed unfortunate for the history of the Troop that no formal War Diaries¹³ were kept by the Officers Commanding.

¹⁰ The full report on the Inquiry is contained in Appendix 1.

¹¹ *A History of 547 Signal Troop in South Vietnam* written by J. Fenton, H. O'Flynn, S. Hart, P. Murray, edited by M.J. Davies.

¹² The Story consisted of three DVDs presented in Pro Show Producer.

¹³ On 15 May 1971, HQ 1ATF reissued an instruction detailing which units must maintain a Commanders' Diary. 547 Sig Tp was not included. AWM RCDIG1028284, AWM95. 1/4/22/ HQ 1 ATF Task Force Commanders' Diary. F28.



With a collection of photographs, anecdotes and historical information gathered over years past now at hand, the authors of this publication believe that it is time to issue this updated and more detailed version of *The Blue Book* under the title of *The Story of 547 Signal Troop*.

Our sincere thanks go to all those who have provided information and photographs over the years. It has not been possible to place attribution on all individual photographs as in some cases the original donors' names have not been included. A list of all known donors is acknowledged at the end of the Story.

Special acknowledgement must be given to Brigadier Ernest Chamberlain, CSC, Retired, (Australian Intelligence Corps) for his continuing support in providing the Intelligence background to the military operations, for sharing his vast knowledge of the enemy in Phuoc Tuy Province, and for his untiring efforts in digging out background information on 547 Signal Troop activities.

The information in the Story has been presented in a manner to provide for a reader who does not have a basic knowledge of Signals Intelligence. Terminology and acronyms within the document have therefore been expanded as footnotes. Wherever possible, additional technical information of equipment and events have been included either as footnotes or annexes.

As there is no official history written, or approved, by the relevant authorities, this publication is therefore presented as a 'story' rather than a 'history'. Perhaps in later years it may be used as a base document for an Official History of 547 Signal Troop.

In several American and Australian publications, it is stated that *Airborne Radio Direction Finding was considered the single most important intelligence gatherer during the war*. It is indeed unfortunate that full recognition is not also given to the operators on the 'sets', processing, technical, and administration staff.

This is not new. The following extract from the manuscript *Spook Stuff* by W.J. McCue¹⁴ (a brief history of the Australian Special Wireless Group in World War 2) quotes the following:

Noel Curer-Briggs wrote "Much praise has rightly been lavished on those brilliant men at Bletchley who succeeded in breaking enemy Ciphers in the first place, but in my view not enough credit has been given to the hundreds of men and women all of them privates or junior NCOs, who sat hour after hour snatching from a background of constant static thousands of messages which throughout the war passed from one enemy unit to another. When frequency and call-signs changed and the traffic upon which the cryptanalysts depended dried up, the interceptors saved the day by their skill in recognizing the sending style of enemy operators. Without this skill we would not have been able to reconstruct the enemy wireless networks so quickly and as thoroughly as we did, and without this our task as cryptanalyst would have been immeasurably harder. These men and women deserve all the more praise because they had very little idea of what happened to the traffic they intercepted and none of the cryptography successes we achieved or of the intelligence it produced"

Geoffrey Claridge writes "For me the background is always the set room. It might be a comfortable building, it might be a dug-out, a room cut from desert gravel (or a rain-soaked, mud covered, stinking and hot jungle air - Ed McCue.) At each set a subdued light picks out the left hand of the operator on the tuning dial, his head is bent towards his message pad; his right hand dances across the red-lined

¹⁴ Copies held at the AWM, National Library of Australia and State Library of NSW.



page. Sometimes he stops writing; his left hand turns this way and that. Ah! He has the reply. The air full of subdued cheepings and chirpings. As I walk down the row I can hear who is busy tonight, I think. All Sigint effort stands or falls by that one solitary man. For many hours at a time he waits, searches, listens, writes. What comes from under his hand is mostly gibberish, strings of five-letter groups. No one can check his work now or ever, if for a moment his attention fails, the group is lost, maybe a battle is lost. Only his hunter's instinct keeps him to the task as he tracks down his quarry, down the echoing, whistling corridors of space; only his tracker's ear recognises the old friend, the little tricks of his fist as a signature. One is inclined to forget that without that man the whole super structure of traffic analysis....codebreaking and the Ultra world, that whole structure would have finished; with what consequences, who knows?"

This story attempts to acknowledge all the people who served in 547 Signal Troop, no matter what rank or trade. All personnel contributed to the successes of the Troop and can be justly proud of their service.

During the Defence Force Honours and Awards Tribunal Hearings, several entities presented documentation to support, and in a few cases non-support, of an award for the Troop. One positive outcome was the presentation of previously highly classified documents concerning the Troop being released.

Wherever possible copies of the original documents have been included and where necessary transcribed for better reproduction.

It may appear that more prominence and exposure has been given to the ARDF operations. This is not a bias towards ARDF over the extremely important and successful collection and processing operations. This is as a consequence of the majority of documentation and material available refer only to ARDF operations.

The authors have not been able to recover any copies or examples of raw intercepted traffic, decryptions, translations, or actual copies of reports. However, in many of the monthly reports and summaries there are reports and indications that some traffic must have been decrypted by the Troop.

It is unfortunate that the various Weekly Summary Reports issued by 547 Signal Troop¹⁵ concentrate on the larger VC/NVA units and provide minimum information on the regional Local Force Battalions and supporting intelligence and logistic units. It is only in the later years of deployment that they show ARDF fixes for these units. It is known that these regional units were fixed by ARDF on a daily basis.

Readers may notice some discrepancy in chronological order and continuity at times. This is a consequence of trying to fit in general happenings, specific events, actions, and reports.

Note: Some pages of the Weekly Summaries may only show a small amount of text. This is due to the maps following need a full page.

¹⁵ Held by ASD.



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PART 1

THE BEGINNING





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CHAPTER 1 - BACKGROUND

1.1 Short History

The Vietnam War was a long-lasting conflict in Southeast Asia. It started after World War II and ended in 1975. Before World War II, the French controlled Indochina, today's Laos, Cambodia and Vietnam. After Japan had lost the war and left the country in 1945, the French wanted to take control of Vietnam again. Ho Chi Minh declared Vietnam's independence in September 1945, and fighting with the French and those who supported the French and the French-installed government began. When China became a Communist country in 1949, Communist influence in Vietnam became stronger too. Ho Chi Minh declared Vietnam an independent country. The war with the French ended after the French had lost an important battle at Dien Bien Phu in 1954.

The French were forced out of the country and Vietnam was divided. The Communists controlled the northern part while those who still supported the French controlled South Vietnam. The government in the south was weak and more and more people turned against it. Communist rebels started coming in from the north. They were trained and armed by North Vietnam and called themselves Vietcong.

The Viet Cong in the south were principally Southerners who were directed to move to armed conflict by Hanoi following a 1959 Party Politburo meeting in Hanoi. Those who came from the North into the South in the early years, were also Southerners who had regrouped to the North in 1954-1955.

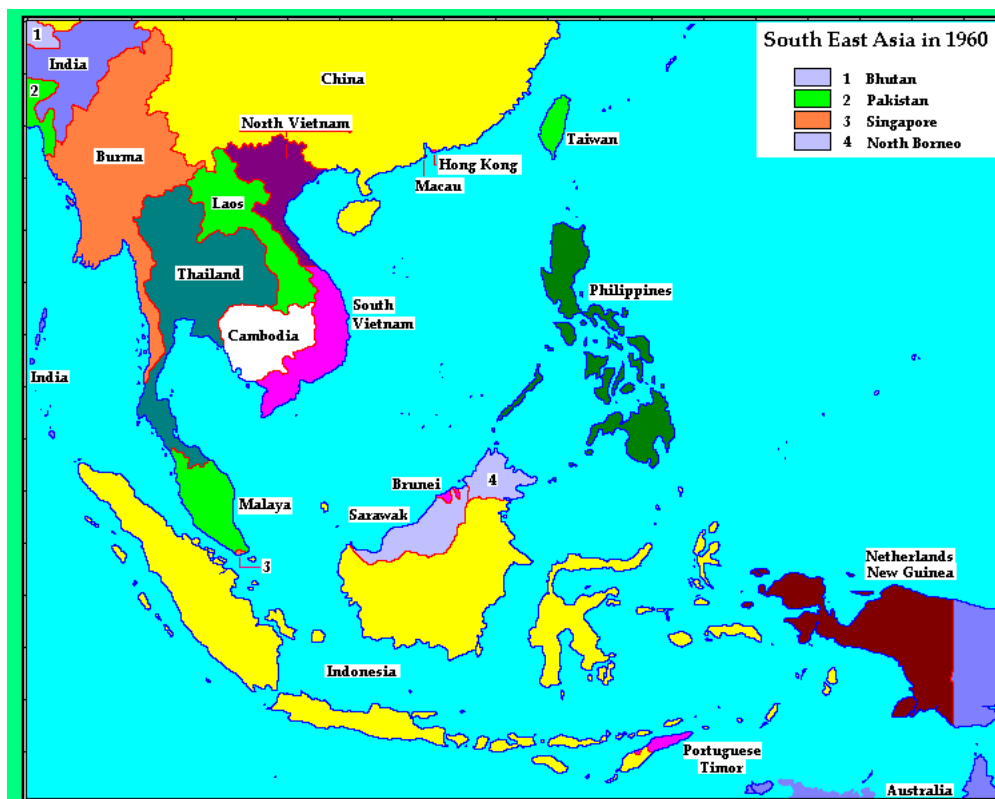


Figure 1: South East Asia



1.2 United States Involvement

During the Cold War America fought Communism in many places around the world. US presidents promised to help countries that were threatened by Communism. They feared that if they let Communists take over the southern part of Vietnam other countries in the region would one by one fall to Communism too. This was called the “Domino Theory”. President John F. Kennedy saw this danger and started sending military advisers to help the South Vietnamese army. After an American warship was attacked off the coast of North Vietnam, Kennedy’s successor, Lyndon B Johnson, responded by sending ground troops to Southeast Asia.

1.3 Australian Involvement

The Vietnam War was the longest major conflict in which Australians had been involved; it lasted ten years, from 1962 to 1972, and involved some 60,000 personnel. A limited initial commitment of just 30 military advisers grew to be an independent Task Force. Each of the three services was involved, but the dominant role was played by the Army.

The chronological order of significant events that occurred leading up to the deployment of the Task Force is as follows:

- **03 August 1962.** The first members of the Australian Army Training Team Vietnam (AATTV) arrived in South Vietnam.
- **08 June 1964.** The Minister for Defence announced that the AATTV would be increased to 83 advisers with expanded role.
- **10 November 1964.** The Prime Minister (Rt. Hon. Sir Robert Menzies) announced introduction of national service to increase the Army’s strength from 22,750 to 37,500. Opposition to the war in Vietnam was not accepted as a reason for exemption.
- **18 December 1964.** The Australian Government, responding to requests from the US President and South Vietnam Prime Minister for 200 additional advisers, offered to send ground troops to South Vietnam.
- **29 April 1965.** The Prime Minister announced the dispatch of an infantry battalion to South Vietnam, with an armoured personnel carrier (APC) troop, a signals troop and a logistic support company.
- **17 August 1965.** The Australian Government approved the increase of Australian forces in South Vietnam to a battalion group, supported by artillery, additional APCs, engineers, army helicopters, light aircraft and more logistic support.
- **06 March 1966.** Prime Minister Holt announced that the Australian commitment in South Vietnam would be increased to a 4350-man task force, and would include conscripts. The 1st Australian Task Force (1ATF) would include two infantry battalions, a Special Air Service squadron, combat and support logistic units and eight RAAF Iroquois helicopters (9 SQN).



The Task Force would be supported by 1 Australian Logistic Support Group (1 ALSG) to be established at Vung Tau. For the first time, national servicemen would be sent to South Vietnam.

The Task force was to be established in Phuoc Tuy Province, north of the Provincial Capital, Baria. The location selected was Nui Dat, just north of the village of Hoa Long on the eastern side of Inter-provincial Route 2.

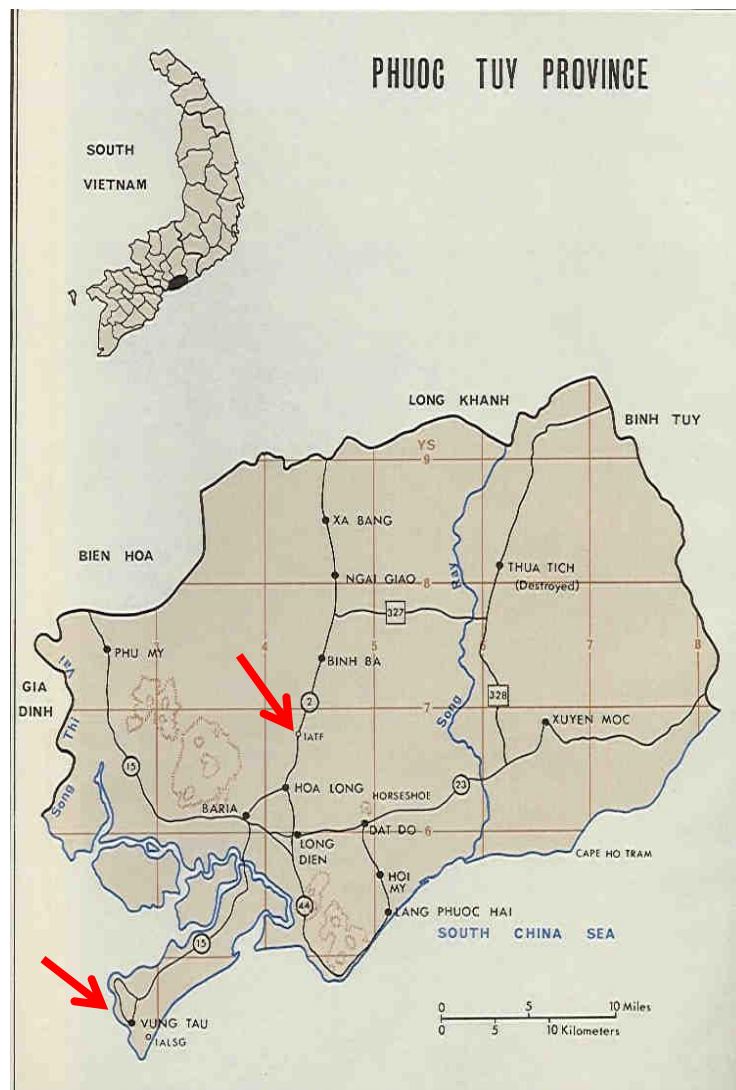


Figure 2: Location of 1ATF and 1 ALSG

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2.1.2 Enemy Main Force Units

The North Vietnamese Army (NVA)¹⁷ and Viet Cong (VC)¹⁸ units that were known to be operating in, or close to, the 1ATF Area of Operations (AO) were:

- 5th VC Division¹⁹
- 274th Main Force VC Regiment (3 x Battalions)²⁰
- 275th Main Force VC Regiment (3 x Battalions)²¹
- 33rd NVA Infantry Regiment²² (3 x Battalions)²³
- D440 Local Force Battalion²⁴
- D445 Local Force Battalion²⁵
- Headquarters Military Region 7
- 84 Rear Services Group
- Three/four District Companies and a number of village guerrilla units
- Various other support units and the Viet Cong Infrastructure

The above formations/units were the main targets for the Troop during the full deployment.

2.1.3 Enemy Districts

The following map shows the Enemy Districts, Base Areas and Units in 1 ATF and surrounding AOs²⁶:

¹⁷ During the French Indochina War (1946–1954), the communist-led forces were termed the Việt Minh. In the context of the Vietnam War (1959–1975), the army was referred to as the **North Vietnamese Army** (NVA). This allowed writers, the U.S. military, and the general public, to distinguish northern communists from the southern communists, or Viet Cong.

¹⁸ The **Viet Cong** or **National Liberation Front**, was a political organization and army in South Vietnam and Cambodia. It had both guerrilla and regular army units, as well as a network of cadres who organized peasants in the territory it controlled.

¹⁹ In several extract also seen as 5th Light Infantry Division (5 LID).

²⁰ In the remainder of the text the VC 274th Main Force Regiment is referred to as 274 Regiment. Extracts remain as quoted. For further details see: *The Viet Cong 275th Regiment: Long Tan and After*, Chamberlain, Ernest, 2021 ISBN 0975035088, 9780975035085

²¹ In the remainder of the text the VC 275th Main Force Regiment is referred to as 275 Regiment. Extracts remain as quoted.

²² 33rd NVA Regt was active in Phuoc Tuy from early 1969 under the VC 5th Division. When 5 VC Div went off to Cambodia in April 1970, 33rd Regt stayed behind and operated in Long Khanh, Binh Tuy and briefly in Binh Thuan. For more insight see *The 33rd Regiment - North Vietnamese Army : their story : (and the Battle of Binh Ba - June 1969)* / Ernest Chamberlain 9780975035054

²³ In the remainder of the text the 33 NVA Regiment is referred to as 33 Regiment. Extracts remain as quoted.

²⁴ 547 Sig Tp knew this Bn as the Chau Duc Bn.

²⁵ For further insight into D445 see: <http://www.scribd.com/doc/62621973/The-Viet-Cong-D445-Battalion-Their-Story> by Ernest Chamberlain

²⁶ Maps courtesy of Brigadier (Retd) Ernest Chamberlain, (Aust Int).

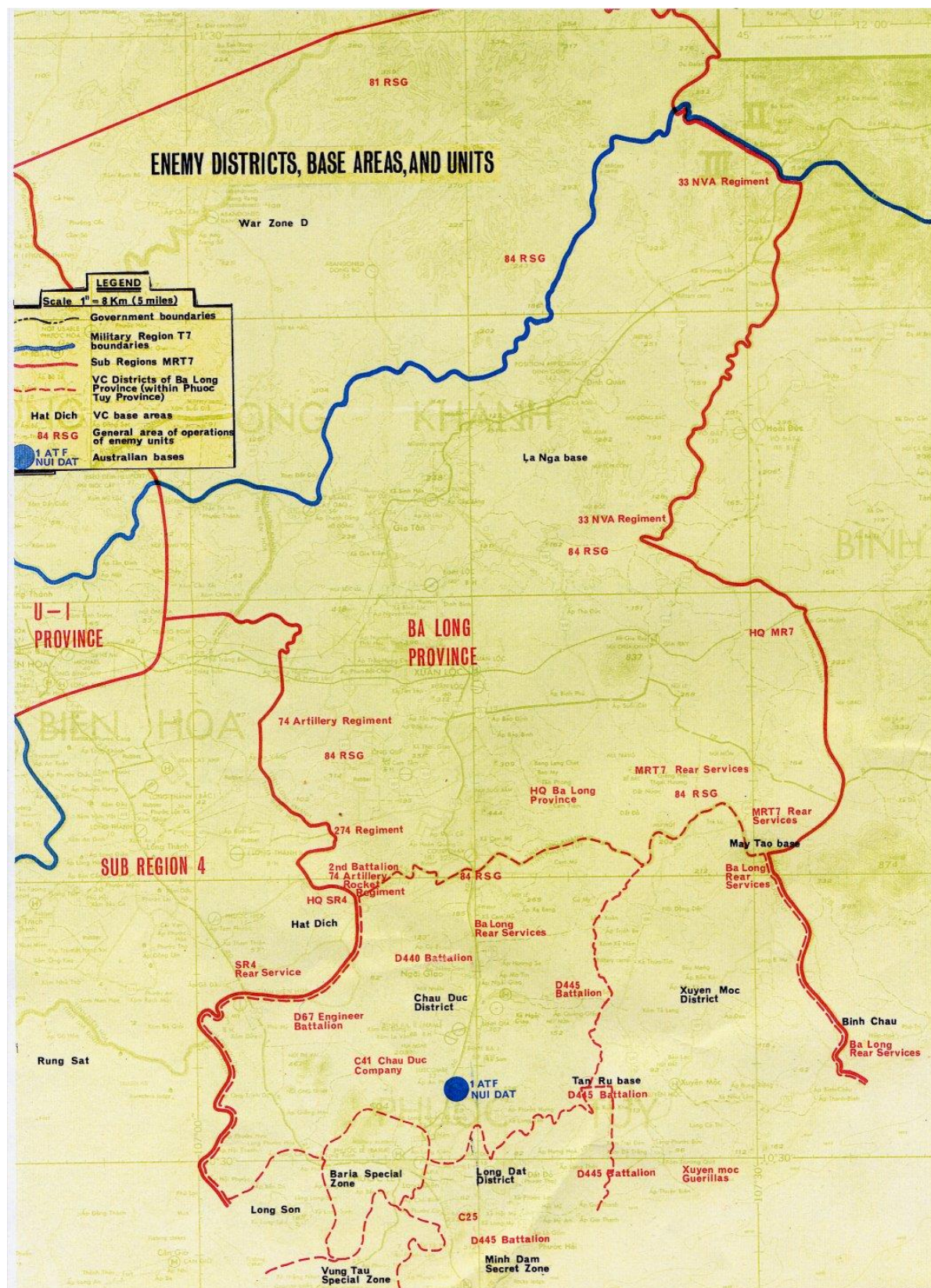


Figure 4: Enemy Districts, Boundaries and Units -1969



2.1.4 5 VC Division

Appendix 2 to Annex A (Enemy Situation) to 6 RAR Op Plan 1 – 11 – 66 of 142000H Nov 66²⁷ show the organisations of 5 VC Div as:

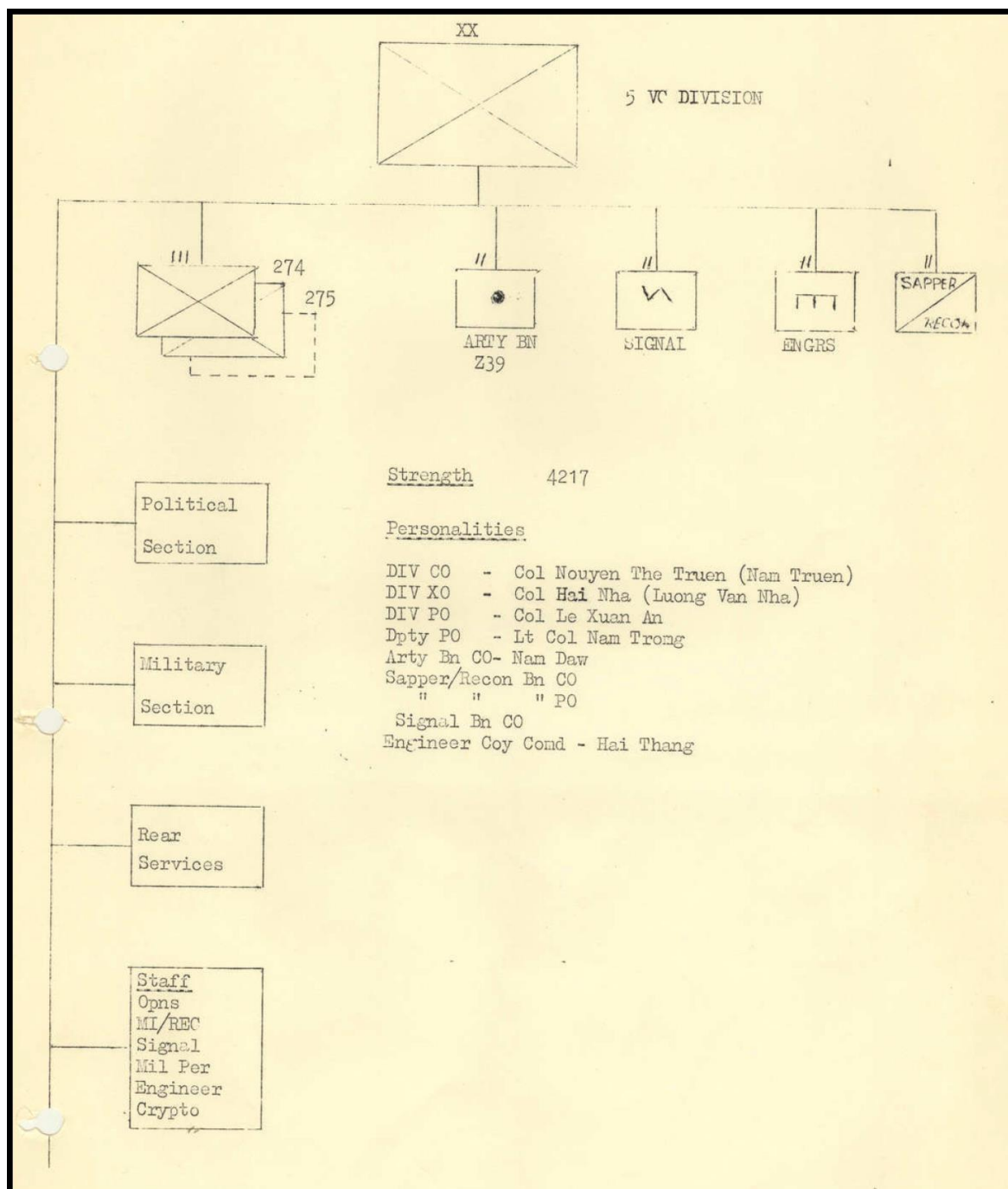


Figure 5: 5 VC Div Organisation

²⁷ AWM95 7/6/8 - 1-30 November 1966, Narrative, Duty Officer's log, Annexes.



2.1.4.1 VC 274 Main Force Regiment

The book *Australian Military Operations In Vietnam*²⁸ states:

The following organisational diagram illustrates the structure and establishment of 274 Regiment. It shows that a VC regiment was a balanced force and the approximate equivalent of an Australian battalion group:

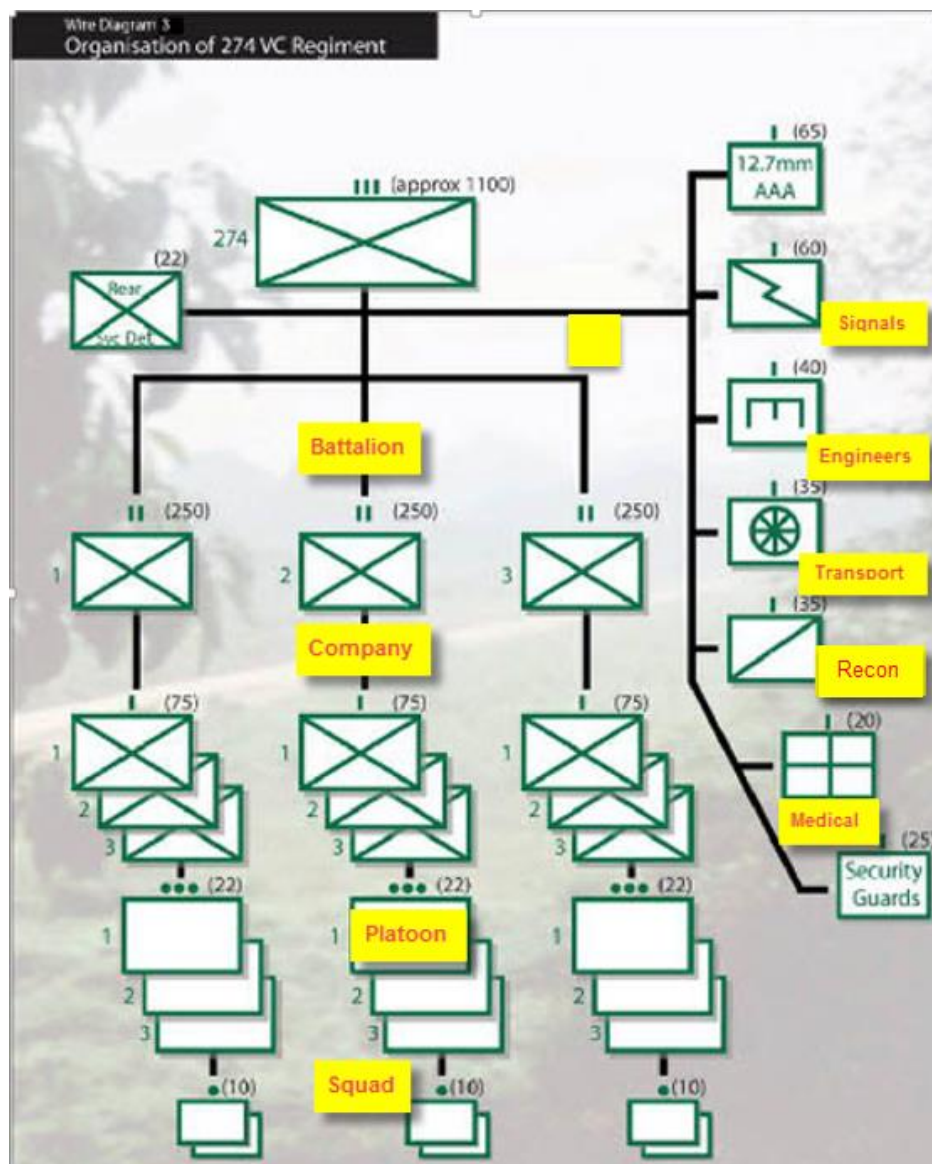


Figure 6: 274 VC Regiment organisation²⁹

²⁸ Palazzo, Albert (2011-11-21). *Australian Military Operations Vietnam (Campaign Series)* (Kindle Locations 730-731). Big Sky Publishing. Kindle Edition.

²⁹ Titles inserted by Bob Hartley.



Appendix 3 to Annex A (Enemy Situation) to 6 RAR Op Plan 1 – 11 – 66 of 142000H Nov 66³⁰ show the organisations of 274 VC Regt as:

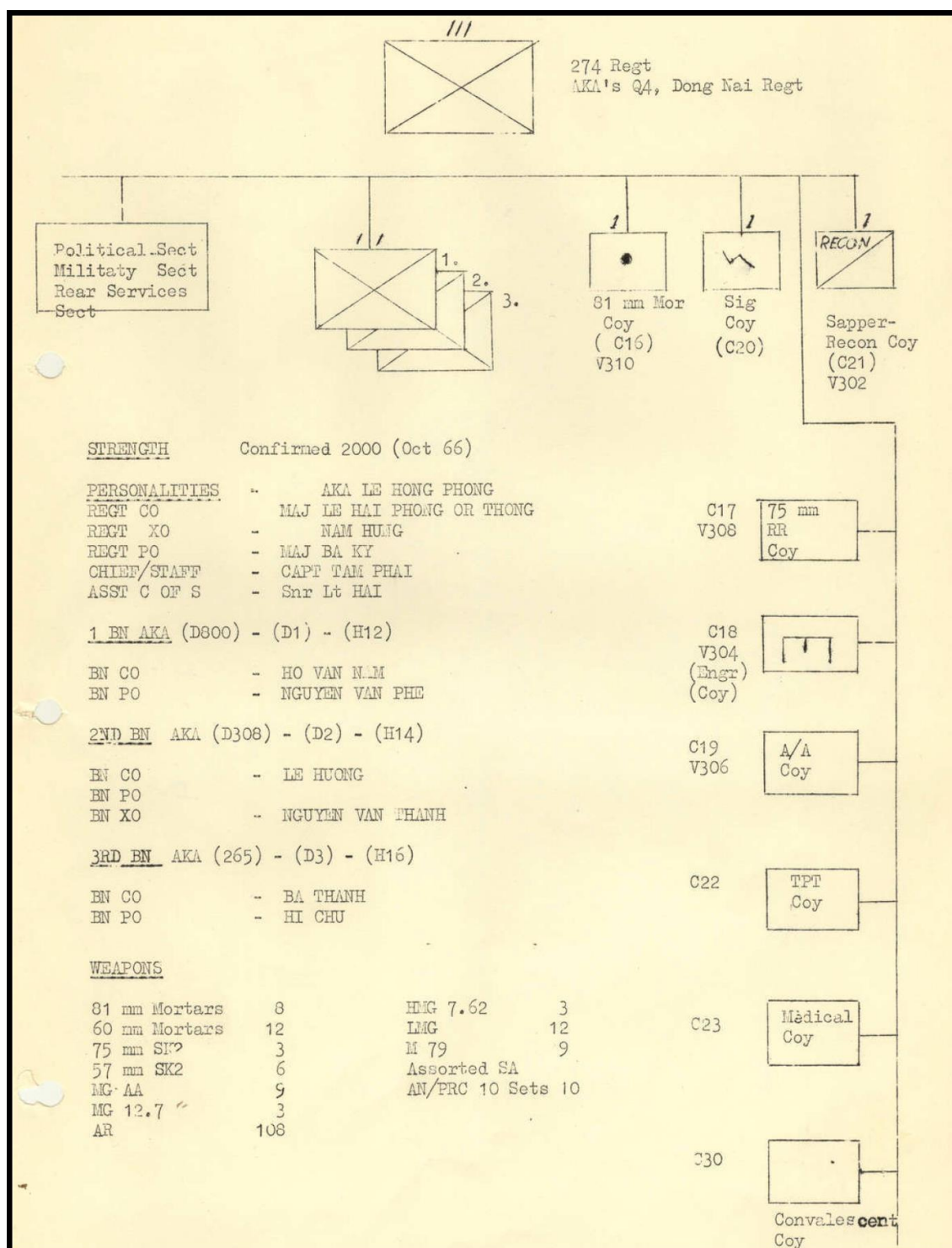


Figure 7: 274 VC Regt Organisation

³⁰ AWM95 7/6/8 - 1-30 November 1966, Narrative, Duty Officer's log, Annexes



2.1.4.2 275 VC Regiment

Appendix 4 to Annex A (Enemy Situation) to 6 RAR Op Plan 1 – 11 – 66 of 142000H Nov 66³¹ show the organisations of 275 VC Regt as:

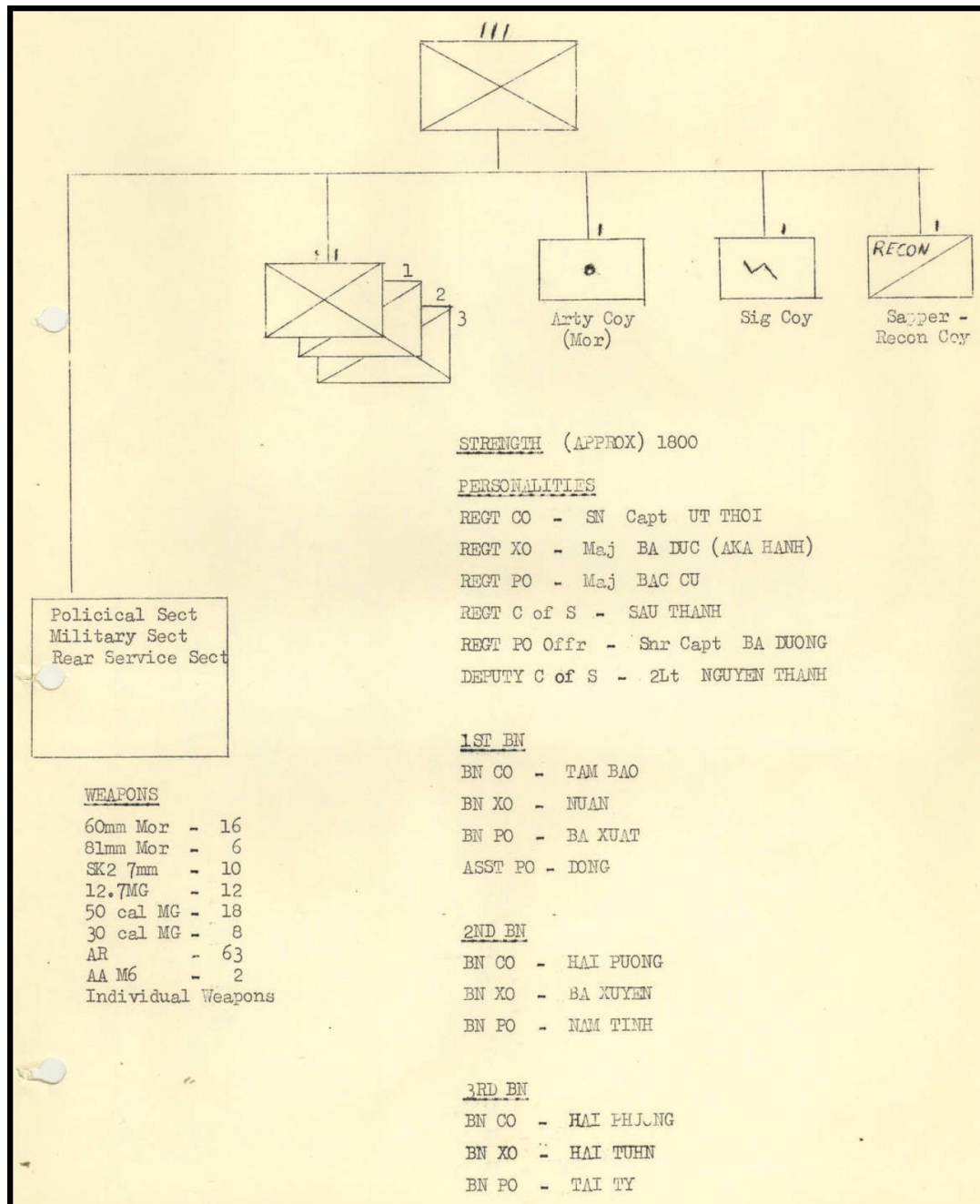


Figure 8: 275 VC Regt organisation

³¹ Ibid.



2.1.4.3 D445 Bn

Appendix 5 to Annex A (Enemy Situation) to 6 RAR Op Plan 1 – 11 – 66 of 142000H Nov 66³² show the organisations of D445 Bn as:

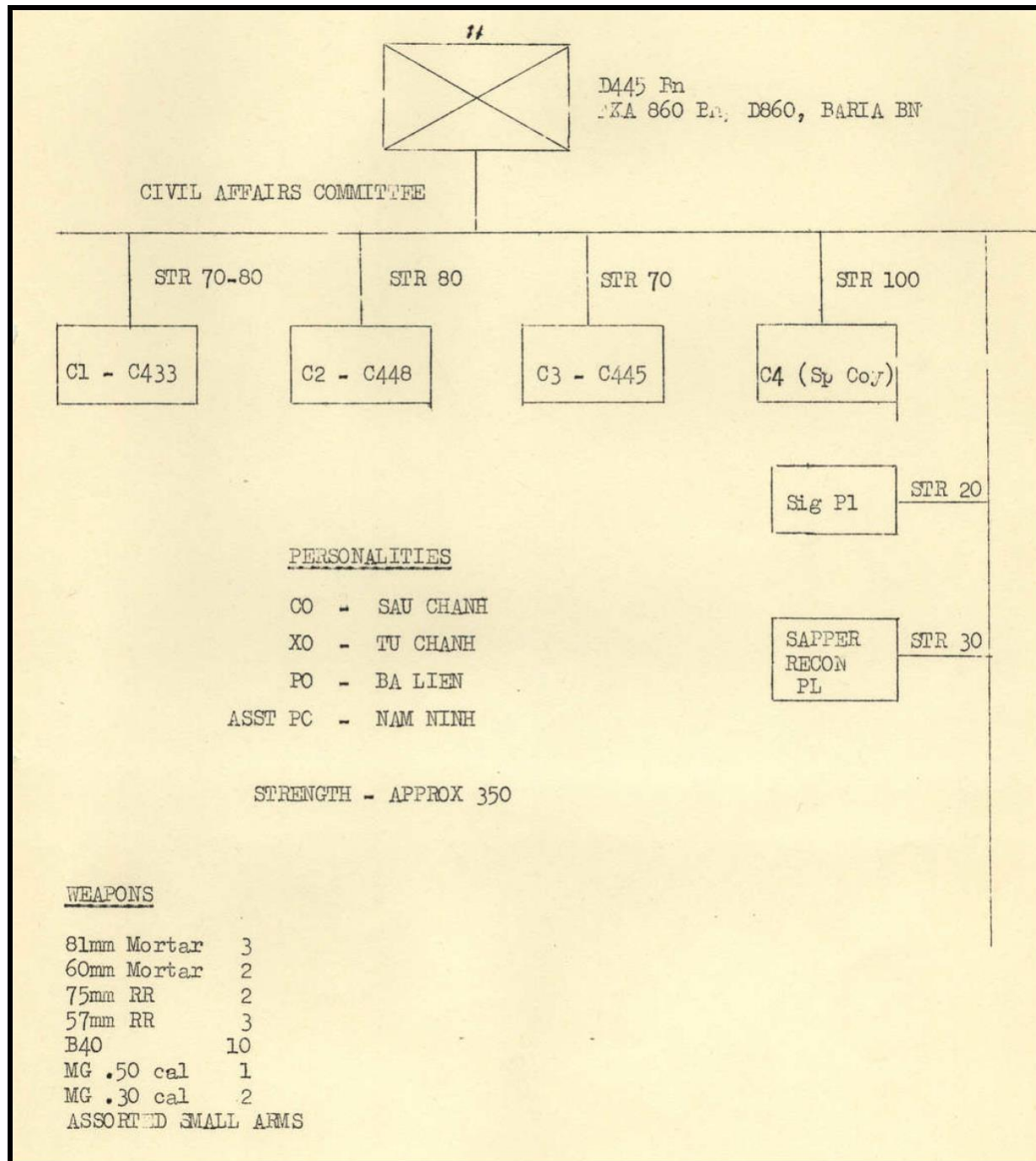


Figure 9: D445 Bn Organisation

³² Ibid.



2.2 VC Infrastructure in Phuoc Tuy

2.2.1 Infrastructure Report

The *Viet Cong Infrastructure Report* in 1971³³ listed the VC Infrastructure³⁴ in Phuoc Tuy as follows:

2.2.1.1 Military Organisation of MR7:

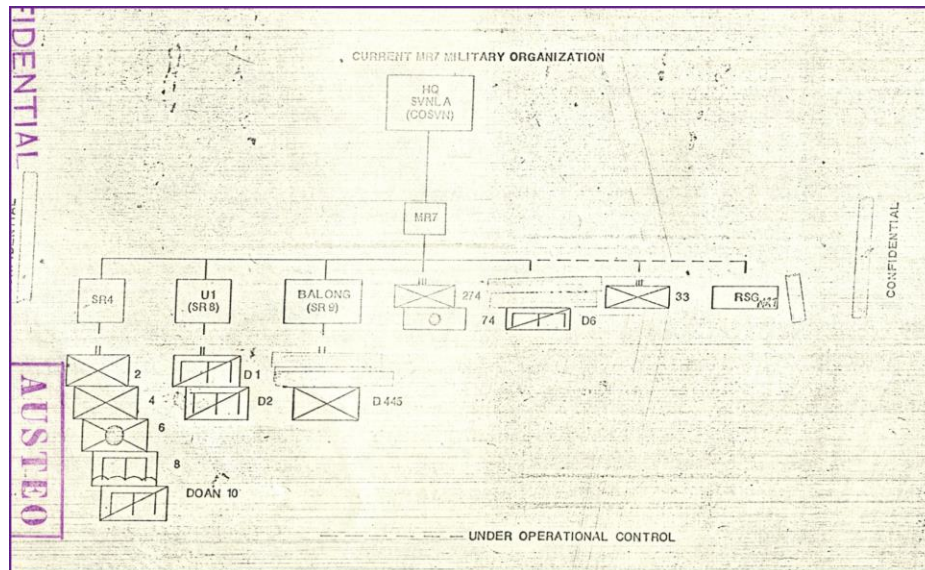


Figure 10: Military Organisation of MR7

2.2.1.2 VC Ba Long Province organisation

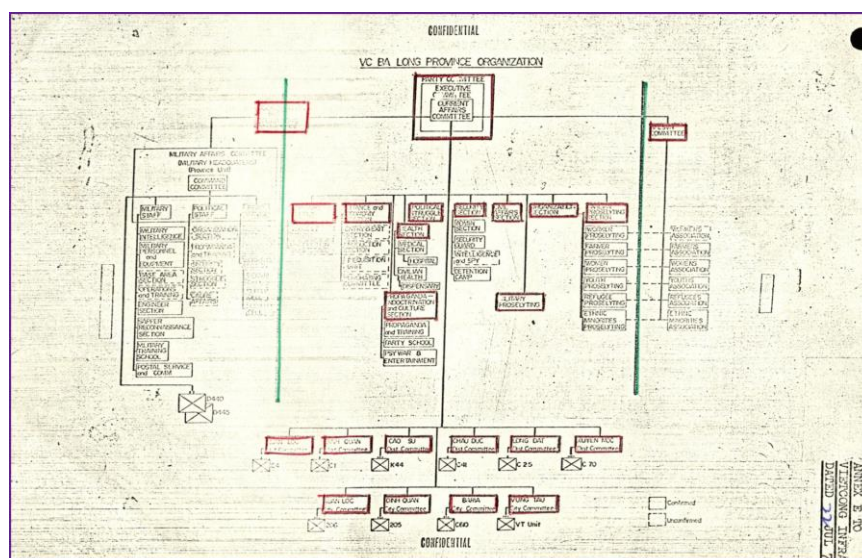


Figure 11: VC Ba Long Province Organisation

³³ AWM2018.8.327 VC Structure Phuoc Tuy.pdf

³⁴ All these identities were found to have communications.



2.2.1.3 Xuan Loc District Committee

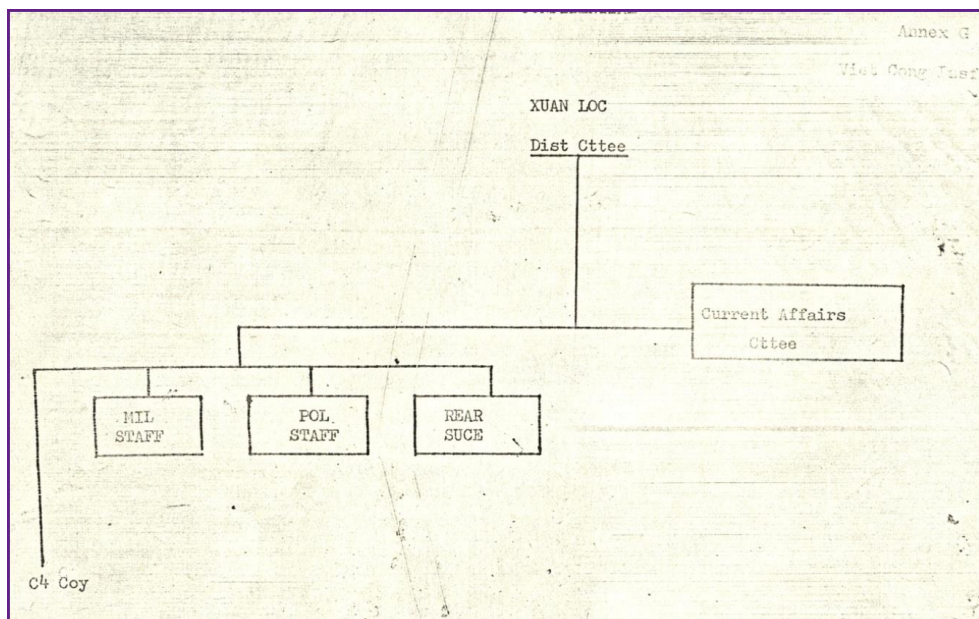


Figure 12: Xuan Loc District Committee

2.2.1.4 Chau Duc District

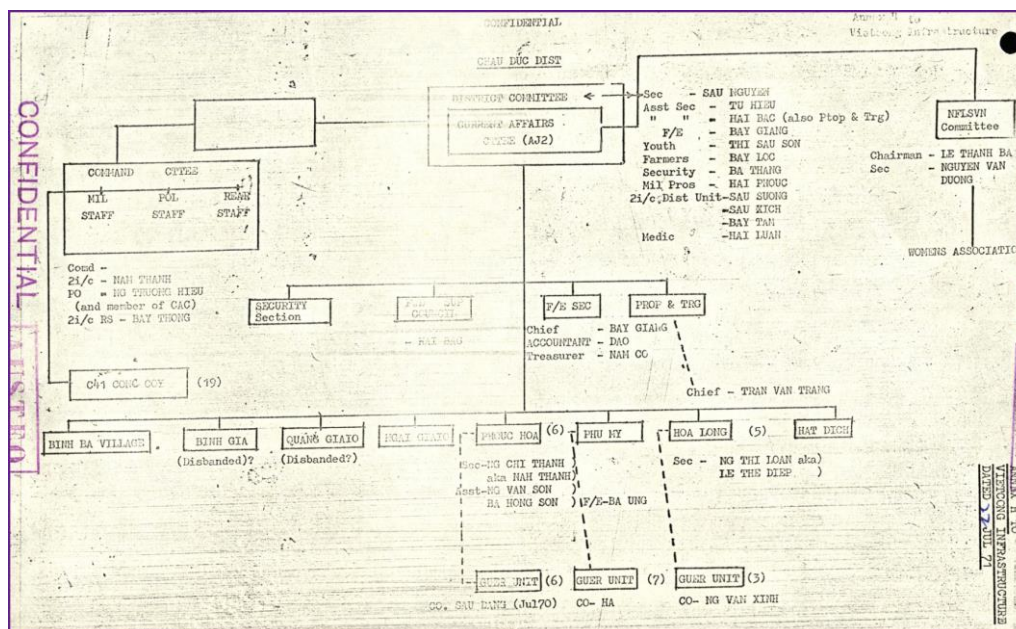


Figure 13: Chau Duc District



2.2.1.5 Long Dat Committee

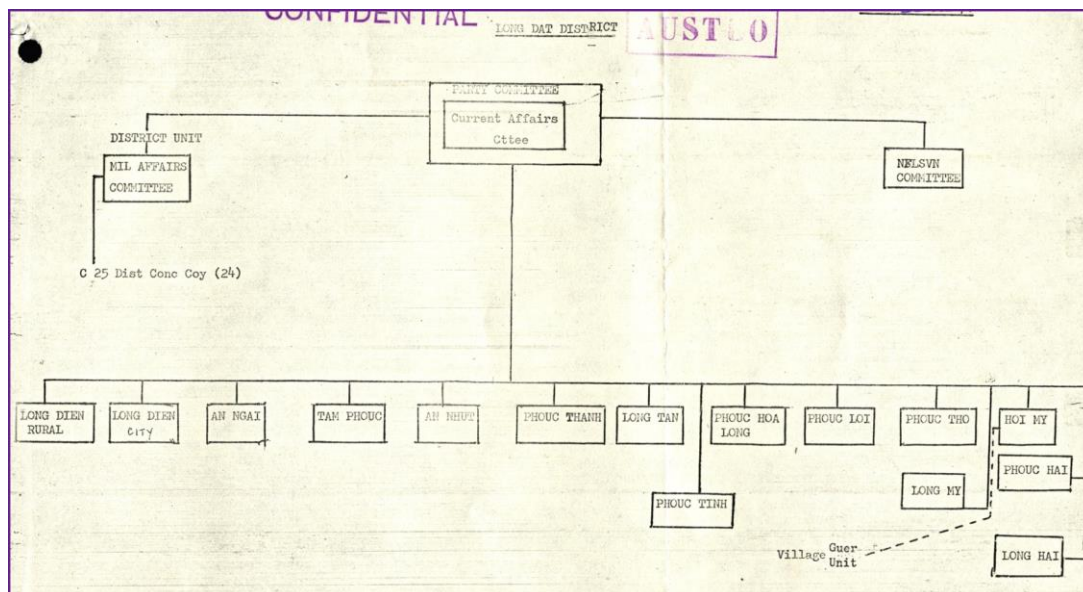


Figure 14: Long Dat Committee



CHAPTER 3 - 547 SIGNAL TROOP - THE BEGINNING

3.1 7 Signal Regiment Establishment

3.1.1 General

In 1966, the establishment of 7 Signal Regiment (7 Sig Regt), located at Cabarlah, Queensland, consisted of four squadrons as shown in the following figure³⁵.

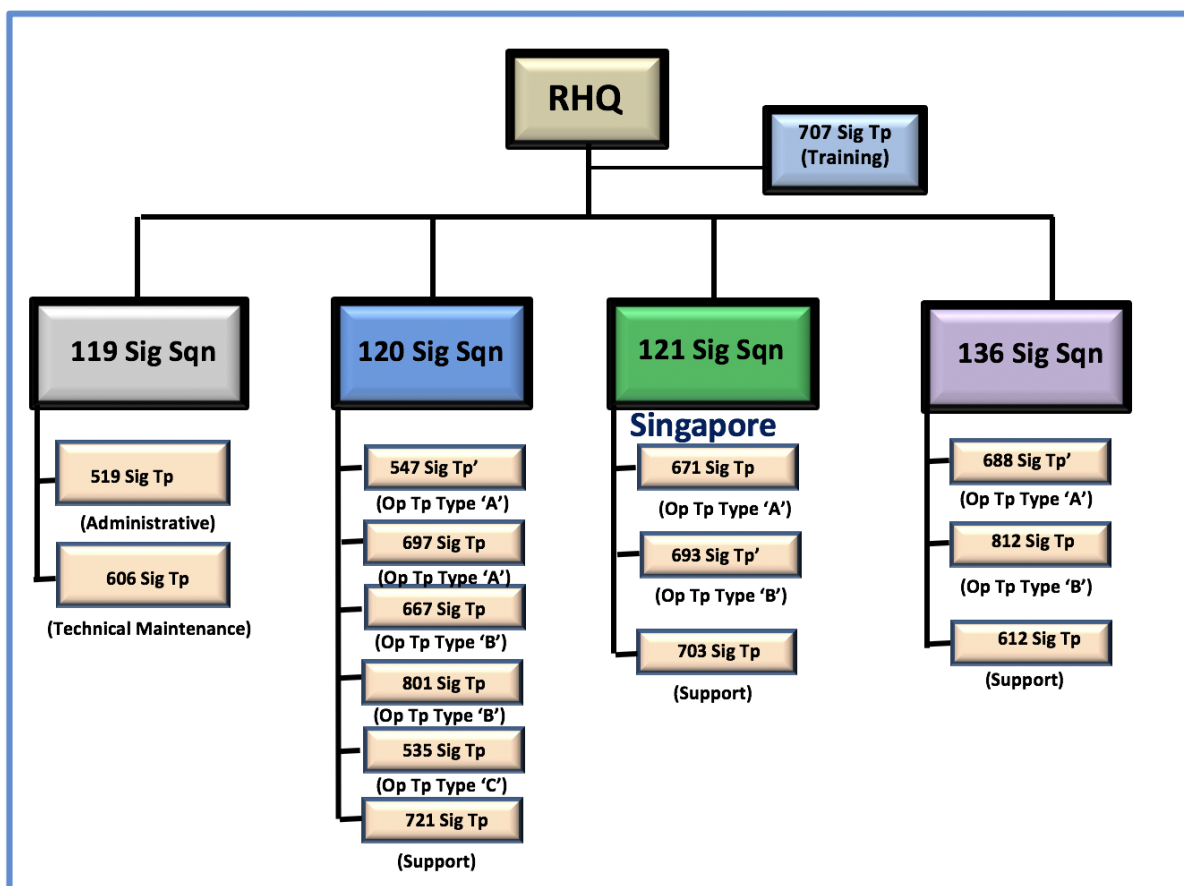


Figure 15: 7 Sig Regt Establishment 1966³⁶

Note:

Few people knew the Troop Designations. Personnel were just posted to the Squadrons.

136 Signal Squadron was a CMF Squadron - not fully manned

³⁵ NAA: A10857, IV/295/TE 7 Signal Regiment.

³⁶ Drawn by Bob Hartley from the above reference.



3.1.2 120 Signal Squadron

547 Signal Troop (547 Sig Tp), a sub unit of 120 Signal Squadron (120 Sig Sqn), was at that time known as the Ready Reaction Troop. The Troop had no office or personnel physically on the ground. All personnel who were posted on paper to the Troop, were deployed in other Squadrons.

Errol Poultney³⁷ recalled³⁸:

I was the Troop Commander of the 'ready' troop at the time that the decision was made to commit Australian forces to Vietnam and was responsible for preparing and dispatching the team and equipment to SVN.

This 'ready troop', which was not initially designated 547, existed as a part of Op Hardihood (?)³⁹ which was a SEATO⁴⁰ contingency plan for the deployment of an Australian force to SE Asia as the need arose. The unit was included in the 1LSF [sic] ORBAT and was to deploy with that organization in the early stages of any overseas deployment.

There were no designated troops to establishment, as these were to be drawn from 7 Sig Regt as required when the balloon went up. The job of Tp Comd was an extra duty to my normal role in 7 Sig Regt at the time. But it did involve maintenance of the ready stores and readiness records and reports as well as attending relevant 1 LSF activities.

There was an Equipment Table [ET] from which a deployment stores holding was packed for ready deployment (7 day notice ?) with all the appropriate marking, paper work etc etc. These stores were held in 1965 at the back end of the old Sergeants Mess adjoining the Officers Mess. They were never used or opened but audited and checked as part of preparedness procedures every six months.

3.1.3 121 Signal Squadron

The Regiment's overseas squadron, 121 Signal Squadron (121 Sig Sqn) was located in Singapore. From mid-1964 to 1966 the Squadron deployed its Tactical Troop, 121/693 Signal Troop (693 Sig Tp) to Borneo to provide direct Signals Intelligence (Sigint)⁴¹ support to the Director of Borneo Operations (DOBOPS) during the Borneo Confrontation⁴².

³⁷ Errol Poultney had many postings within the Regiment: Lt - Troop Commander, Captain - OC 547 Sig Tp, Major - OC 120 Sig Sqn and eventually Lt Col - M18, Canberra.

³⁸ Email to Bob Hartley 14 Sep 2014.

³⁹ Op Hardihood is mentioned in several writings. The context referred to here is not fully identified. Op Hardihood was the deployment of 1 ATF to Vietnam in June 1966.

⁴⁰ The South East Asia Treaty Organisation (SEATO) was an international organisation for collective defense in Southeast Asia created by the Southeast Asia Collective Defence Treaty, or Manila Pact, signed in September 1954 in Manila, Philippines. The formal institution of SEATO was established on 19 February 1955 at a meeting of treaty partners in Bangkok, Thailand. The organization's headquarters were also in Bangkok. Eight members joined the organization. Primarily created to block further communist gains in Southeast Asia, SEATO is generally considered a failure because internal conflict and dispute hindered general use of the SEATO military; however, SEATO-funded cultural and educational programs left long-standing effects in Southeast Asia. SEATO was dissolved on 30 June 1977 when many members lost interest and withdrew.

⁴¹ Sigint (*signals intelligence*) is the monitoring, collection, and analysis of communications intelligence (COMINT) and covers the monitoring of radio and telephone message traffic, the decryption and analysis of coded messages. The related but separate activity known as electronic intelligence (ELINT) mainly covers the detection and analysis of radar, telemetry, and other non-communication signals to discover performance parameters and develop countermeasures.

⁴² A separate manuscript has been written for the Story of 693 Signal Troop and is held in the Australian War Memorial Private Collections MSS2237.



3.2 1st Australian Task Force

3.2.1 1st Australian Task Force Manning

When the deployment of 1ATF to South Vietnam (SVN) was announced in March 1966 and units allocated, no sub-unit or elements from 7 Sig Regt were included.

This oversight was quickly noticed by the Officers in the Director of Military Intelligence, (DMI–MI8), Canberra, responsible for Army Sigint and Electronic Warfare (EW)⁴³, Lieutenant Colonel Ken Whyte and Major Colin Cattnach. They immediately produced appreciations to the senior Army Staff of why and how an Army Sigint presence must be included in the deployment.

3.2.2 Defence Signals Division⁴⁴ Support

On 18 October 2013, ASD provided a narrative to the Defence Honours and Awards Appeals Tribunal (DHAAT) for the *DHAAT's Inquiry into recognition for service with 547 Signals Troop in Vietnam from 1966 to 1971*⁴⁵:

The matter was initially canvassed with the AMF through the Directorate of Military Intelligence (DMI), which was highly supportive. However, as the US was the principal provider of military support to the government of South Vietnam, the matter could not be progressed unilaterally and there were extensive discussions with the US Sigint authorities (most notably the National Security Agency), through DSD's Liaison Officer at Fort Meade, before the necessary arrangements could be finalised. The US authorities were enthusiastic about the proposal to deploy a Sigint unit comparable to their own Direct Support Units (DSU), which supported US contingents of comparable size (i.e. brigade strength) and committed to full support.

3.2.3 Initial Allocation

Fortunately, the General Staff accepted the recommendations by DMI and DSD and 547 Sig Tp was initially allocated eight personnel positions in the theatre ceiling. A signal from Army Canberra on 28 April 1966 detailed the following⁴⁶:

CONFIDENTIAL SD12591. HARDHOOD. ORDER OF BATTLE-
ADDITION. 547 SIG TP CMM N COMD CMM ADDED TO ORDAT AS HQ
AFV UNIT CMM AUTHORIZED STR 8 CMM ALL TO MOVE FROM AUST.
Q SERIES TABLE DETAIL TO BE THAT SHOWN IN OUR SIG SD11495 OF
210030Z APR 66

Figure 16: Extract from Army Canberra Signal of 28 April 1966

⁴³ This office has had several titles. Originally it was MI8 and in the 90s Deputy Director Special Intelligence and Electronic Warfare (SI/EW).

⁴⁴ Defence Signals Division. The Australian Signals Intelligence Agency responsible for all Signals Intelligence matters and operations in Australia including the forces. Subsequently renamed Defence Signals Directorate in 1979 and the Australian Signals Directorate in 2013.

⁴⁵ <https://www.asd.gov.au/about/history/declassified>. Narrative on the deployment of 547 Sig Tp to Vietnam 1966 – 1971 (PDF).

⁴⁶ AWM AWM 98 HQ AFV – Establishments – AFV – 547 Sig Tp.



3.2.3.1 Increase to Personnel Confirmatory Signal

On 3 May 1966, the following signal was sent from Army Canberra to all commands detailing the change to Op Hardihood Order of Battle for 547 Sig Tp⁴⁷:

Precedence-Action PRIORITY	Precedence-Info PRIORITY	Date-Time Group 03 0600 Z
From: ARMY CANBERRA		Security Classification CONF
To: MILCOMMAND BRISBANE MILCOMMAND SYDNEY		Originator's Number SD 16475
Info: ARMY MELBOURNE AUSTFORCE VIETNAM MILCOMMAND MELBOURNE MILCOMMAND ADELAIDE MILCOMMAND MORESBY	MILCOMMAND HOBART MILCOMMAND PERTH MILCOMMAND DARWIN CENARMYREC MELBOURNE HQ 1 TP	HQ 1 DIV HQ 1 LSF

Figure 17: HARDIHOOD Confirmation Signal

[Remainder of text poor quality and transcribed]

HARDIHOOD (.) ORDER OF BATTLE AMDT (.) REF AHQ SIGS SD 11495 OF 210030Z APR 66 AND SD 12591 OF 282350Z (.) ONE (.) 547 SIG TP CMM Q SERIES TABLE 43 (.) TP TO BE INCREASED TO 15 ALL RANKS COMM ALL TO MOVE FROM AUST (.) TABLE DETAIL CONTAINED IN SD 11495 OF 210030Z APR 66 CANCELLED AND FOL SUBSTITUTED (.) ALFA (.) PERS TPT AND WPNS AUTH – ESTB IV/295/2 (TE) CMM PERS TOTAL 15 CMM THE FOL APPTS ONLY – DET COMD CAPT – 1 CMM WO2 OP SIGS – 1 COMM SGT OKC – 1 CMM SGT OP SIGS – 1 CMM CPL OP SIGS – 2 CMM SIG OP SIGS – 4 PLUS ATT AUST INT CORPS WO2 INTERPRETER – 1 CMM SSGT INTERPRETER – 1 CMM SGT INTERPRETER – 3 CMM TOTAL 15 CMM ALL TO MOVE FROM AUST (.) INTERPRETER APPTS MAY BE FILLED BY CLERK SPECIAL INT DUTIES OR OP SIGS IF INTERPRETERS NOT AVAIL (.) BRAVO (.) TPT AND WPNS CMM – VIDE REF ESTB AS FOL CMM TRUCKS ¾ TON GS FFR- -2 CMM TLRs CARGO ½ TON – 2 CMM RIFLE AUTOMATIC 7.62 MM – 1 (.) CHARLIE (.) EQPT AUTH – EQPT TABLE TET 4295 ANX Q CMM ENTITLEMENT FOR CLASS 5280 RECEIVERS RADIO R 5223 AS SHOWN IN THAT ANX NOW TO READ QTY 8 CMM NOT QTY 6 (.) CMM CARBINE EQPT OWEN 9 MM QTY 6 (.) DELTA (.) ALL PERS TPT WPNS AND EQPT TO MOVE FROM AUST (.)

ABOVE DETAIL TO BE ACCEPTED AS AUTH PENDING ISSUE OF TABLE (.)
TWO (.) CEILING OF AFV (ARMY COMPONENT) IS INCREASED BY THIS APPROVAL TO 4265

NOTE: Signal traffic appear in UPPER CASE and are therefore extracted as UPPER CASE for this document.

3.2.4 Troop Deployment Considerations

7 Sig Regt was advised of the approval and preparations for the deployment began. During the period 12 to 20 May 1966, Major Cattnach visited SVN to discuss the deployment and roles of the Troop with Australian and US authorities. After attendance at many conferences and visits within SVN and Australia, deployment details were finalised. As indicated in the above signal, the Troop was to have its own personal weapons, vehicles, stores and equipment.

⁴⁷ Ibid.



3.3 Deployment Instruction

On 17 June 1966 (*post departure of the troop*), DMI issued *Comint*⁴⁸ *Support Instruction No 1/66* in relation to 547 Sig Tp⁴⁹.

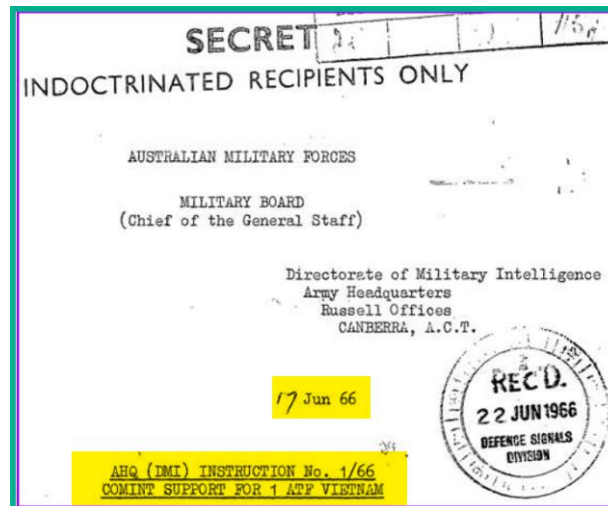


Figure 18: *Comint Support Instruction No 1/66*

The instruction contained the following employment approval:

1. Approval has been given for the employment of the AMF personnel, in conjunction with the US ASA organisation, in Communication Intelligence (Comint) operations in South Vietnam in direct support of 1 ATF.

Figure 19: Extract from AHQ (DMI) Instruction No 1/66 *Comint Support for 1 ATF Vietnam #1*

3.4 Command and Control Tiers

The *Comint Support Instruction* placed three levels of Control on the AMF DSU⁵⁰.

3.4.1 Command and Control

The Troop is to be under Command and Control of the Commander 1ATF.

3.4.2 Operational Control

The Troop is to be under the Operational Control of the US ASA Organisation. This in turn was delegated to 303 RR Bn and 175 RR Coy.

⁴⁸ *Comint* is a sub-division of *Sigint*. *COMINT* - The intelligence derived from foreign communications by other than the intended recipients and covers the monitoring of radio message traffic, the decryption and analysis of coded messages.

⁴⁹ AHQ (DMI) Instruction No 1/66 *Comint Support for 1 ATF Vietnam* dated 17 June 1966. This document was produced by ASD (DSD) at the DHAAT Tribunal. See Part 2 Chapter 2 for further details. Document only found during the appearance of ASD at the DHAAT Inquiry. A copy of the full Instruction is contained at **Annex A**.

⁵⁰ In *Sigint* parlance, a DSU (Direct Support Unit) is a small unit committed in direct support of an entity normally Brigade size.



3.4.3 National Control

For Sigint matter the Troop is under control of DMI (MI8) and DSD.

Control of AMF DSU

4. Command and Control

The AMF DSU will be under the command and control of the Commander 1 ATF.

5. Operational Control

The AMF DSU will be under the operational control of US ASA organisation for operational tasking instructions and technical support.

6. National Control

As all matters effecting Signal intelligence are controlled at the national level in Australia and USA, any changes in role of the AMF DSU must be referred to AHQ (DMI) for discussion between the National Authorities.

3.5 Operational Timings

Timings

13. The AMF DSU will arrive in Vietnam by 14 Jun 66. A period of three weeks training will be required after arrival to ensure the personnel are familiar with US ASA methods of operation. The target date for the AMF DSU operations at 1 ATF is 1 Jul 66.

3.6 US Army Security Agency

As detailed in the Deployment Instruction, to fulfill its role the Troop was to work operationally with units of the US Army Security Agency (ASA).



ASA units operating in Vietnam are described in the National Security Agency (NSA⁵¹) web page⁵² as:

Radio Research Units (RRU) operated in Vietnam under the direction of the U.S. Army Security Agency (ASA) Group. During this time, these operations were classified and operated under the auspices of the 3rd RRU, activated on 23 May 1961. Its ASA nomenclature was the 400th USASA Operations Unit (provisional) until 23 September 1961 when it was redesignated the 82nd USASA Special Operations unit. The 3rd RRU assets included detachments specifically incorporating the RU-6A, RU-1A, and the RU-8D platforms, mission gear, and crews. On 1 November 1964, the unit was redesignated as the 53rd USASA Special Operations Command and on 1 June 1966 was again redesignated as the 509th USASA Group and as the 509th Radio Research Group (RRG).

Note:

ASA Personnel of the 3rd Radio Research Unit lay claim to being the first US military unit to deploy to Vietnam

A private bloggers web page⁵³ described the ASA units as:

Among the least known army units serving in Vietnam were the super-secret forces of the Army Security Agency (ASA) Group, Vietnam.

These included the 8th ASA Field Station in Phu Bai (later Da Nang), the 224th ASA Battalion Aviation) at Tan Son Nhut (later Long Than [sic] North), "the 303rd ASA Battalion at Long Binh, the 313th ASA Battalion at Nha Trang, the 138th Aviation Company (RR) and the 20 ASA aviation, divisional support, operations and security companies scattered throughout the country.

They were unknown because officially they did not exist and were hidden undercover designations to mask their true identities, with Radio Research Unit (RRU) being the most common designator.

⁵¹ The National Security Agency is a national-level intelligence agency of the United States Department of Defense, under the authority of the Director of National Intelligence. Responsible for Signals Intelligence.

⁵² Extract from: http://www.nsa.gov/about/cryptologic_heritage/vigilance_park/origins_of_asa.shtml

⁵³ Extract from: <http://top-secret-man.blogspot.com.au/search/label/Army%20Security%20Agency>



3.7 547 Sig Tp

3.7.1 Role

In several writings Captain Richards, the initial Officer Commanding (OC) of 547 Sig Tp, is quoted as saying *that the major role of the Troop was defined as 'To act as an agency through which US Sigint was to be relayed'*⁵⁴.

Major Cattnach mentioned to Captain Richards during one of their early briefings that he had included more Op Sigs in the Establishment and some additional radio equipment in the stores list and said, "See what you can do Trevor, besides acting as a post box".

The DMI Instruction contained the following Purpose of Operation⁵⁵:

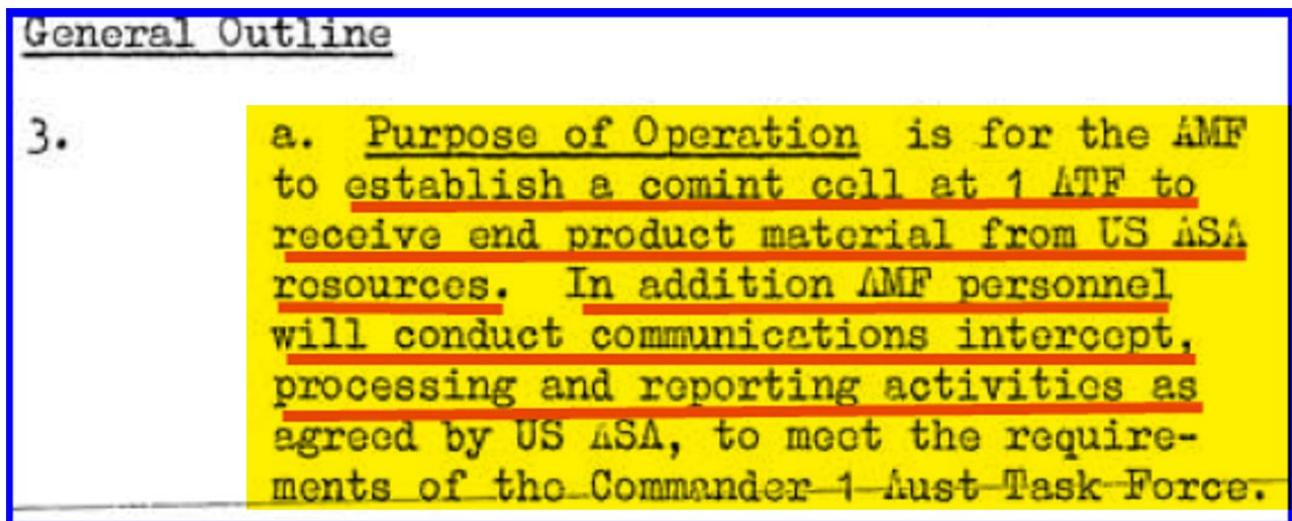


Figure 20: Purpose of Operation

3.7.2 547 Sig Tp Manning and Equipment

Selection of personnel for the first detachment was based on trade skills and experience suitable to fulfil the role. To complement the role, and look to the future, Major Cattnach had the forethought to include mainly Operator Signals (Op Sigs) who had the additional skills of Cipher Operator, as the main source of manpower.

3.7.3 Officer Commanding

Captain Trevor Richards was nominated as the OC as he had recent experience as the Sigint Liaison Officer to the Commander Borneo Operations during the Indonesia-Malaysia Confrontation.

⁵⁴ This statement is slightly at odds with the Purpose of Operation detailed in AHQ (DMI) Instruction No 1/66 which states that the Troop had two distinct roles (see Figure 11) However, as the Instruction was not issued until 17 June 1966, this may account for any variation in the role.

⁵⁵ AHQ (DMI) Instruction No 1/66 Comint Support for 1 ATF Vietnam dated 17 June 1966.



DSD later stated⁵⁶:

Captain Trevor Richards of 7 Signal Regiment was selected as the troop commander, and a senior DSD officer at the time commented that DMI 'could not have made a better choice for the Vietnam task'.

3.7.4 Establishment Positions

Title	Rank	Corps	Trade	Name/Remarks
Officer Commanding	Captain	Royal Australian Signals	Officer	Trevor Richards In later years Majors were posted into this position
Troop Sergeant Major/ Senior Operator	Warrant Officer Class 2	Royal Australian Signals	Operator Signals (Op Sig)	Eric Grace
Senior Analyst	Warrant Officer Class 2	Intelligence Corps	Analyst	Doug Rodgers
Intelligence Analyst	Staff Sergeant	Intelligence Corps	Analyst	Bill Irwin
Senior Operator	Sergeant	Royal Australian Signals	Op Sig	Jim Rayner (Advance Party)
Communications Supervisor	Sergeant	Royal Australian Signals	Operator Keyboard & Cipher (OKC)	Allan Clarkson
Operator Signals	Corporal	Royal Australian Signals	Op Sig	Clarrie Day (Advance Party)
Intelligence Analyst	Corporal	Intelligence Corps	Analyst	Keith Innes Vietnamese language proficient
Operator Signals	Lance Corporal/ Signalman	Royal Australian Signals	Op Sig	Murray Cooper Kevin Lever Ray Pratt Frank Young Andy Aird John Bartlett Bob Brown

Figure 21: Approved Manning⁵⁷

⁵⁶ <https://www.asd.gov.au/about/history/declassified>. Narrative on the deployment of 547 Sig Tp to Vietnam 1966 – 1971 (PDF).

⁵⁷ Table prepared by Bob Hartley from several documents.



Note:

All personnel allocated on the initial deployment had many years experience in Sigint, both in Australia and overseas.



Figure 22: Some of the 'originals'

3.7.5 Equipment

The basic stores list contained:

- In-Service HF and VHF Communication Transceivers.
- Telegraph terminal equipment.
- Cryptographic equipment.
- Generators.
- Communications HF receivers (R5223).
- Tape recorders.



- Aerial /antenna masts.
- Various antennas.
- Weapons.
- Tentage.
- General accommodation stores.

Errol Poultney wrote⁵⁸:

The ET⁵⁹ included two vehicles⁶⁰ so at least some of the deployment would be as part of the initial HMAS Sydney trip to SVN in April 1966.

Getting the ET and Establishment was the easy part. Getting it all together and launching the whole 'shebang' in three weeks was the interesting bit. As the OC Ready Tp that became my task – probably one of the most interesting and challenging tasks of my Army service and I learned a lot in a short time. Particularly about dealing with bureaucratic civilians who kept on insisting everything was impossible in the time frame available.

3.7.6 Radio Direction Finding Equipment

No Radio Direction Finding (RDF)⁶¹ equipment was noted as being on the Stores List. RDF is considered to be an essential part of the operator's inventory.

3.7.7 547 Sig Tp Sigint Station Designation

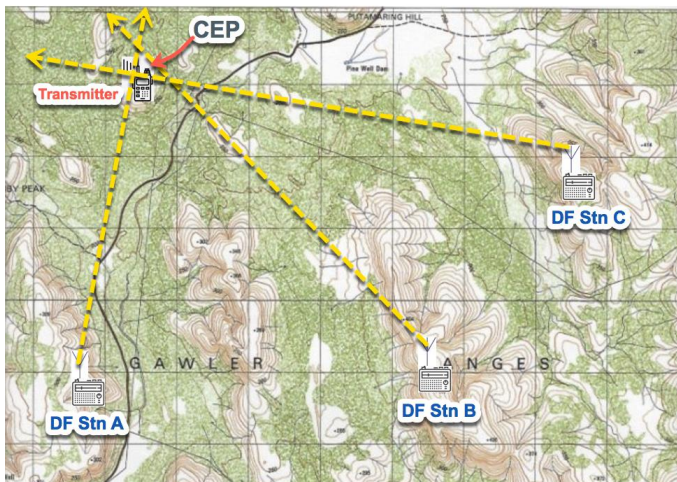
The Troop was allocated the Sigint Station Designator **AUM352**⁶².

⁵⁸ Email from Errol Poultney to Bob Hartley 14 Sep 2014.

⁵⁹ ET = Equipment Table.

⁶⁰ Two Long Base, Fitted for Radio Land Rovers, with trailers.

⁶¹ A radio direction finder (RDF) is a device for finding the direction, or bearing to a radio source. The act of measuring the direction is known as radio direction finding or sometimes simply direction finding (DF). Using two or more measurements from different locations, the location of an unknown transmitter can be determined.



CEP = Circular Error of Probability.

⁶² <http://electrospace.blogspot.com.au/p/sigint.html>: A SIGINT Activity Designator (or SIGAD) is an alphanumeric designator which identifies a facility that is used for collecting Signals Intelligence (SIGINT). These facilities have many different forms, ranging from satellite intercept stations, spy ships and satellites, to sites where internet cables are tapped.



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SIGADs are used for intercept facilities operated by the signals intelligence agencies of the United States, the United Kingdom, Canada, Australia and New Zealand, as these five countries have a close relationship for collecting and sharing signals intelligence under the so-called UKUSA agreement. The first two letters indicate the country and can be UK for the United Kingdom, US for the United States, CA for Canada, AU for Australia and NZ for New Zealand.

Then comes one letter indicating what sort of staff runs the station, which can be M for Army, N for Navy, A for Air Force, J for Joint services (mainly military), F for Joint services (mainly civilian), D for Detachment or C for Civilian staff. AUM = Australian Military.



CHAPTER 4 - PRE-DEPLOYMENT

4.1 Battle Efficiency Tests

Under normal circumstances, all soldiers posted to SVN had to complete a Battle Efficiency (BE) Course⁶³ at the Jungle Training Centre (JTC), Canungra, Queensland. Due to the late notification of deployment, JTC was unable to fit the Troop into its training programme. Consequently, an ad hoc course was conducted at Greenbank. Emphasis was placed on Infantry Minor Tactics (IMT) and weapon handling, instead of the high demands of physical fitness.

Errol Poultney wrote⁶⁴:

Dealing with the personnel preparation was probably the easiest part apart from the BE course originally planned for JTC Canungra. We achieved a compromise there in that we were permitted to run a 7 day BE course at Greenbank which I am sure the members of the original det will remember with relish. It was run by Captain Col Swain who at the time was Adjutant 25 RQR in Toowoomba and lived in at the 7 Sig Regt Officers. Thanks to him we got a tick, but that could have been a show stopper.

Eric Grace⁶⁵ recalled⁶⁶:

Captain Swain from 25 RQR, with the able assistance of Infantry Warrant Officers who'd had recent experience with either the AATT⁶⁷ or in Borneo, ran an excellent course. I was required to undergo instruction in blowing up 'blinds' (unexploded grenades) etc., using Plastic Explosive and detonators just in case it was necessary to destroy sensitive material if we had to bug out of an area once we got to SVN.

4.2 Equipment and Operator Training

At Cabarlah, in between attending the BE Course and leave, the personnel nominated for the first draft spent their time on training and packing stores ready for travel.

Errol Poultney wrote⁶⁸:

The personnel preparation progressed well and the mini-BE course served its purpose, the stores were trickling in but the vehicles remained a problem. They were pretty worn when they started this adventure – it would have been impossible to think that one of them actually returned six years later.

If I recall correctly, they were twice taken down to the Department of Supply Banyo in Brisbane to achieve a level of fitness that would be appropriate to what lay ahead. I think on the second occasion I sent Joe Oxenham⁶⁹ down with the vehicles and told him not to bring them back unless they were ready. They never reached a level of fitness that was required but time was against us.

⁶³ The Battle Efficiency Courses were scheduled for 3 – 6 weeks depending on your Corps and employment area.

⁶⁴ Email to Bob Hartley 14 Sep 2014.

⁶⁵ Eric Grace. Warrant Officer Class Two, the first Warrant Officer Op Sig to be deployed and leader of the Main Body.

⁶⁶ By kind permission of the author. All Recollections that follow are taken from *547 Signal Troop in South Vietnam – The Soldiers' Perspective – Deployment, Early Days and the Lead-up to Long Tan*, by Barry Hampstead, July 2008.

⁶⁷ Australian Army Training Team Vietnam.

⁶⁸ Email from Errol Poultney to Bob Hartley 14 Sep 2014.

⁶⁹ Sergeant Joe Oxenham, 7 Sig Regt Transport Supervisor.



We had to draw all the equipment on the ET pack it and prepare it for loading into the vehicles. In typical Army fashion the new ET bore no relationship to any of the stores held by the Ready Tp in any way shape or form.

4.2.1.1 Operator Training

When time permitted, operators familiarised themselves with the latest Australian communication procedures and where possible, practised the reception of the probable enemy targets.



CHAPTER 5 - INITIAL DEPLOYMENT

5.1 Advance Party

5.1.1 Manning

The advance party consisted of Sergeant Jim Rayner and Corporal Clarrie Day. They were to travel to SVN with the two Land Rovers and all the general stores on board the converted aircraft carrier, HMAS SYDNEY, scheduled to depart from Sydney on 25 May 1966.

5.1.2 Departing Borneo Barracks

On 21 May 1966, the advance party left Borneo Barracks for embarkation at Sydney. Jim Rayner and Clarrie Day drove the two Land Rovers accompanied by three trucks loaded with stores driven by unit drivers.

5.1.3 On the Road

The convoy rendezvoused with elements of 161 (Independent) Reconnaissance Flight (161 Recce Flt), and the line of vehicles commenced their long trip along the New England Highway to Sydney. The two Land Rovers of the Troop suffered frequent breakdowns but fortunately the mechanics of 161 Recce Flt were able to ensure that the convoy arrived in Sydney on time.

Errol Poultney wrote⁷⁰:

The time came and the stores were loaded (oh how they were loaded) ready for Jim and Clarrie to drive them to Sydney joining up with the 161 Recce Flt det south of Toowoomba where the Cunningham Highway joins the New England Highway at some early hour.

The night before they departed Jim and Clarrie stayed in barracks and spent a lot of time doing the rounds saying farewell. Little did they know that going to SVN was a doddle compared with driving the vehicles to Sydney.

The next morning I accompanied them in conveyoy to the RV point and on a couple of occasions I got the signal (loud sounding horn and flashing lights) to stop. Both vehicles were difficult to steer and keep on the road as the front wheels kept on floating off the road and one was already losing oil!! So we went slowly??

When we linked up with 161 Recce Det I apprised Capt Mike Webster the convoy commander of the problems and suggested if he had two people who could sit in the front with Clarrie and Jim it may help. The vehicles were grossly overloaded and I hate to think of the centre of gravity calculations that would prove that they should not be on the road.

So away they went very slowly and after many oil top ups and much stress for Jim and Clarrie they made Sydney but the loads were so big (and the vehicle so weak) they had to be towed onto the flight deck of HMAS Sydney!! Things could only improve?

⁷⁰ Email from Errol Poultney to Bob Hartley 14 Sep 2014.



5.1.4 Boarding HMAS Sydney

For the last part of the journey Jim Rayner had to nurse his vehicle without a handbrake, and it was with some relief that he drove up the Bailey Bridge between the dock and HMAS SYDNEY. His relief changed to terror, however, when a sailor stepped out onto the bridge and demanded to see his pass. Jim figured that compliance with this order would result in a pile-up of the vehicles following him up the bridge. With a hasty rejoinder, *You've got to be joking mate! See me on the flight deck!* he drove past the sailor who was forced to take some quick evasive action.

Jim and Clarrie found that no space had been allocated for the Troop's stores, so the pallet loads from the trucks had to be broken up and thrust into nooks and crannies all over the ship. The Navy claimed that there would be, *No sweat in getting them all together again, your green-over-white-over-green code will stand out.* It did not, however, stand out that well as it bore a similarity to the green-over-grey-over-green code belonging to 161 Recce Flt.

5.1.5 Sydney Departure

On 25 May 1966, HMAS SYDNEY departed on schedule from Sydney for Vung Tau, SVN.

5.1.6 En-route

The days at sea were monotonous, broken only by the comical sight of Jim Rayner parading Clarrie Day on the deck, calling the roll, issuing paludrine tablets⁷¹ and then dismissing him.

On board, the advance party of 547 Sig Tp was fostered by a troop of 145 Signal Squadron (145 Sig Sqn)⁷² which was commanded by Captain Mike Thorne⁷³.



Figure 23: HMAS SYDNEY en route to SVN⁷⁴

⁷¹ Paludrine tablets contain the active ingredient proguanil hydrochloride, which is an antimalarial medicine used to prevent malaria.

⁷² <http://pronto.au104.org/145Sigs/145Sigs.html> In April 1966, 145 Signal Squadron was raised and deployed to South Vietnam and incorporated 709 and 527 Signal Troops. The squadron's role was to provide Force Communications. The unit was replaced by 110 Signal Squadron in early 1967.

⁷³ Captain Mike Thorne later joined 7 Sig Regt. Whilst serving as the OC of 121 Sig Sqn (Singapore). He was killed when a bomb exploded aboard a civil airliner on which he was travelling over Vietnam en route from Bangkok to Hong Kong.

⁷⁴ AWM P01539.020



5.2 Main Body

5.2.1 Departing Cabarlah

The main body (less Keith Innes) departed Cabarlah on 11 June. They travelled by bus to Brisbane and then by train to Sydney, arriving on the 12th. On arrival in Sydney, they went directly to RAAF Williamtown by bus, and departed later that night on a Qantas 707 charter flight for SVN.



Figure 24: Qantas 707 Aircraft used as charter flights to SVN

Eric Grace later wrote⁷⁵:

(Captain) Trevor Richards did not join us until we met at the Railway Station at South Brisbane.

We emplaned from Sydney with a company from 6RAR and I was unlucky enough to be selected by the OC Draft to act as his CSM (Company Sergeant Major) on the Draft which meant checking weapons etc. into the luggage compartment for a company plus.

⁷⁵ By kind permission of the author. All Recollections that follow are taken from *547 Signal Troop in South Vietnam – The Soldiers' Perspective – Deployment, Early Days and the Lead-up to Long Tan*, by Barry Hampstead, July 2008.



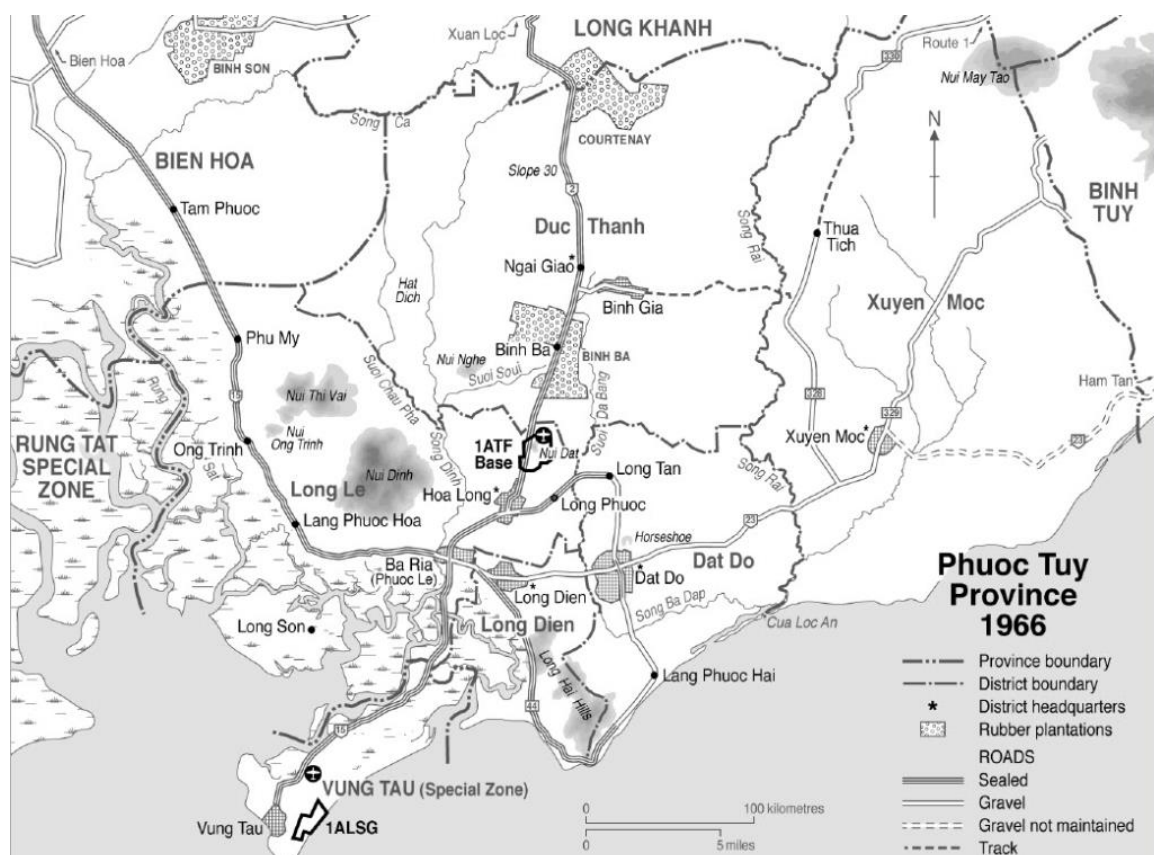
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PART TWO

VIETNAM

1966





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CHAPTER 6 - VIETNAM ARRIVAL

6.1 Advance Party

6.1.1 Vung Tau Arrival

On 8 June 1966, HMAS SYDNEY arrived at Vung Tau and landing craft ferried the advance party of 547 Sig Tp on to the beach. There was some initial confusion in locating all the stores as 161 Recce Flt had been allocated most of the Troop's stores and someone had mistakenly driven off with one of the Troop's Land Rovers. The vehicles and stores were eventually located and the advance party set up camp in the protected area, and awaited the arrival of the rest of the Troop.

Jim Rayner recalled⁷⁶:

I guess chaotic is a good way to describe those first days on the beach at Vung Tau. Because we were such late additions to the Task Force, no proper space had been allocated for our stores and equipment so the pallet loads were broken up with gear shoved in wherever it would fit. Having a similar identification code to 161 Recce (ours was green-over-white-over-green; theirs was green-over-grey-over-green) didn't help and when everything was unloaded we spent days just trying to locate our bits and pieces. One of our Land Rovers was 'purloined' causing further problems and we spent time we could ill afford, looking for the vehicle. Consequently, things that should have been done weren't and I know Eric Grace was not all that pleased with the situation when he arrived at Vung Tau with the main party. Just let me say that he was no less pleased than I was.

6.2 Main Body

6.2.1 Arrival

The main body arrived at Tan Son Nhut Airport, Saigon, on 13 June and ferried in Chinook helicopters to Vung Tau. At Vung Tau, they met up with the advance party. The Troop overnighted with 145 Sig Sqn⁷⁷.

Eric Grace recalled⁷⁸:

When we reached Saigon, Captain Richards was met and informed that he had to attend briefings with the Americans on the role of 547. I was instructed to take the Troop members to Vung Tau, pick up our stores and equipment and be prepared to join the convoy departing for 1ATF the following morning. We travelled to Vung Tau by Chinook helicopter.

On arrival there I was NOT pleased at all: Our stores were still scattered around the beach, and our Land Rovers had NOT been prepared to travel to the Task Force which required the removal of doors and sandbagging the floors of same.

⁷⁶ Recollections from Jim Rayner and other following personnel are taken from "547 Signal Troop in South Vietnam – The Soldiers' Perspective – Deployment, Early Days and the Lead-up to Long Tan" by Barry Hampstead, July 2008."

⁷⁷ 145 Sig Sqn was located at Vung Tau. The squadron's role was to provide Force Communications.

⁷⁸ By kind permission of the author. All Recollections that follow are taken from 547 Signal Troop in South Vietnam – The Soldiers' Perspective – Deployment, Early Days and the Lead-up to Long Tan, by Barry Hampstead, July 2008.



We spent the afternoon gathering stores from the beach in the truck provided by the RAASC⁷⁹ (old Service Corps) and unfortunately, we lost all our field tables (probably acquired by 5 RAR). We also hastily removed the Land Rover doors and sandbagged the floors as required and then spent a cold night on the sand courtesy of 145 Sig Sqn.

Trevor Richards recalled⁸⁰:

[During the pre-embarkation interview] Col Cattanach said at the time that this was the first time that Sigint units had been deployed at the tactical level.

I was told to report to DODSPECREP⁸¹ not HQ AFV⁸² on arrival in SVN as the USA had never worked with another nation below theatre level.

The fact that we were supplying just a codeword post-box for 1 ATF simplified things from their point of view. All they were doing was supplying an exclusive crypto system so I could receive codeword material. They then told me that we were under the Sigint control of G2FFV⁸³ at Bien Hoa (Corps Level).

6.3 Nui Dat

6.3.1 Departure for Nui Dat

On 14 June, the Troop joined the convoys heading to Nui Dat⁸⁴.

⁷⁹ Royal Australian Army Service Corps.

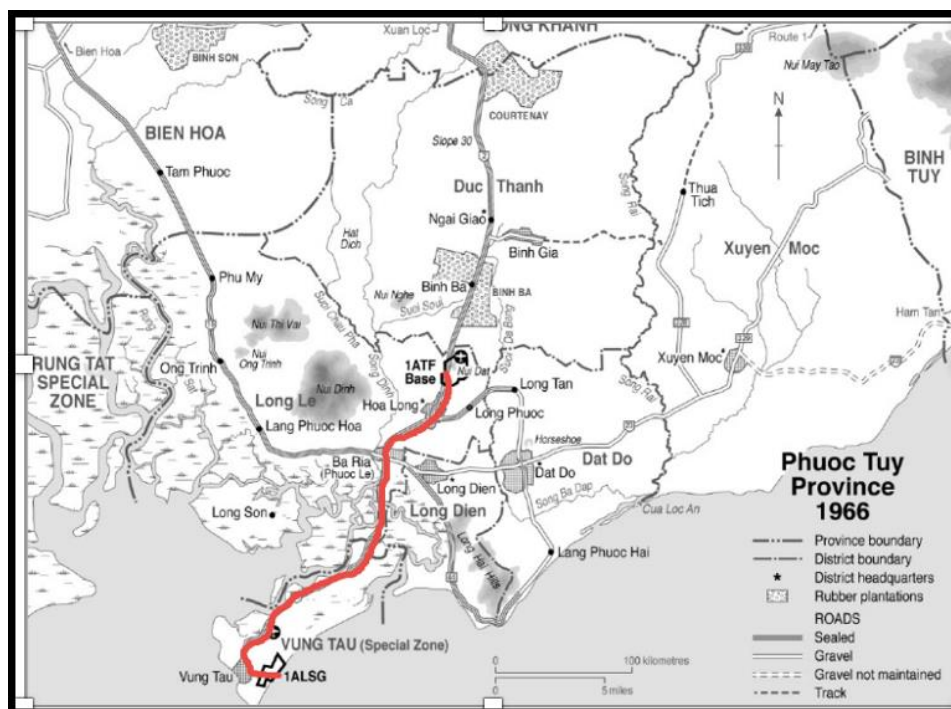
⁸⁰ Email from Trevor Richards to Steve Hart on 23 May 2014 responding to a series of questions.

⁸¹ DODSPECREP. The US Department of Defence Special Representative.

⁸² Headquarters Australian Forces Vietnam.

⁸³ G2=Intelligence, FFV=Field Force Victor.

⁸⁴ <http://vietnam-war.commemoration.gov.au/phuoc-tuy-province/nui-dat.php>. Once Phuoc Tuy had been selected as the provincial site for Australia's task force, a location for its base had to be chosen. There were three possibilities: Ba Ria, Phuoc Tuy's capital; the port of Vung Tau; and an area in the province's central region known as Nui Dat, Vietnamese for 'small hill'. Removed from population centres but close to Viet Cong base areas, Nui Dat was considered ideal for the type of counter-insurgency warfare that Australians waged in Phuoc Tuy. Its location in the centre of the province meant that Nui Dat was in the middle of Viet Cong territory. Therefore, security was of prime importance. The villages nearest Nui Dat – Long Tan and Long Phuoc – were both considered Viet Cong strongholds and the Australian task force's first commander, Brigadier O.D. Jackson, with the agreement of the Province Chief, had the people and livestock of the two villages forcibly resettled. The removal of the local people from the vicinity meant that the chances of the Viet Cong gathering information about the base and the movement of Australian troops were significantly reduced. However, attempts to win the support of Phuoc Tuy's people were compromised by the decision to remove people from their homes without compensation. The base was established by members of the United States 173rd Airborne, the 1st Battalion, Royal Australian Regiment (1RAR) and the newly arrived 5th Battalion, Royal Australian Regiment (5RAR). The first soldiers to occupy it lived in tents and worked to establish defences. Every soldier at Nui Dat had a fighting pit. Elevated bunkers, manned 24 hours a day, were constructed around the base's perimeter which was further defended by wire obstacles and belts of anti-personnel mines. Vegetation was cleared from a 500-metre wide area outside the wire to provide fields of fire and a clear view of approaching Viet Cong. At its peak the base at Nui Dat was home to some 5,000 Australian personnel, but for much of the time most of them were deployed on operations outside the base.

[illegible]

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Kevin Lever⁸⁵ recalled:

Then next morning we travelled in convoy to Nui Dat with Eric Grace in charge because Captain Richards had left us in Saigon to go and have a pow-wow with the Americans. I was a bit worried when I noticed several black-clad, heavily-armed persons in the vicinity of our convoy. Considering what we had been told at Greenbank during our 2 week Infantry Course, I thought I had every right to be worried but they turned out to be Chinese mercenaries who were to be part of our escort on the trip to Nui Dat. One of our Land Rover broke down - apparently a regular occurrence - and we were told that if we couldn't get it going it would have to stay by the side of the road. We managed to arrange a tow. Great start!

The convoy travelled from Vung Tau north along Routes 15 and 2. I managed a grin as we went through the Province Capital, Baria. It was hardly impressive but certainly a step up from the next village, Hoa Long. Again, I wasn't too thrilled to see many of the locals in their black pyjamas and we later heard that Hoa Long contained its fair share of VC (Viet Cong) sympathizers. The word filtered back that we were almost at Nui Dat.

6.3.2 103 Signal Squadron Administration and Area

103 Sig Sqn⁸⁶ was tasked to provide administrative and maintenance support to 547 Sig Tp. This support continued throughout the war engendering a strong bond of friendship between 103/104 Sig Sqn and 547 Sig Tp.

Extract from 'Mounting Instruction'⁸⁷:

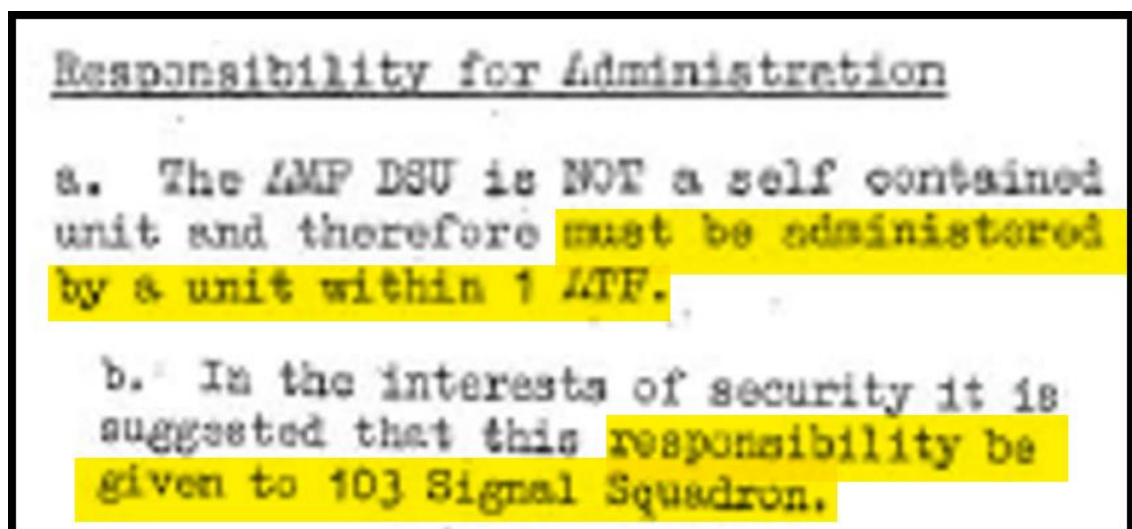


Figure 27: Extract - Administrative Responsibility

6.3.2.1 Troop Location

On arrival at Nui Dat, the OC of 103 Sig Sqn, Major Peter Mudd, allocated the Troop a position opposite the Task Force Headquarters, fairly close to where the communications centre was later to be built.

⁸⁵ Kevin Lever, one of the original Op Sigs. Various Emails to Bob Hartley and Barry Hampstead.

⁸⁶ 103 Sig Sqn was replaced by 104 Sig Sqn in April 1967.

⁸⁷ AHQ (DMI) Instruction No 1/66 Comint Support for 1 ATF Vietnam dated 17 June 1966.



The 103 Sig Sqn War Diaries recorded⁸⁸:

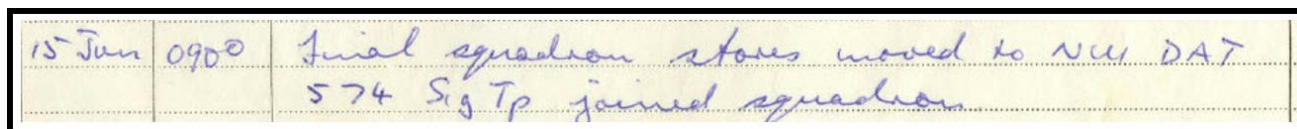


Figure 28: 103 Sig Sqn War Diary Extract

*15 June 0900 Final squadron stores moved to NUI DAT
574 [sic] Sig Tp joined squadron*

Eric Grace recalled⁸⁹:

The trip from Vung Tau to Nui Dat was generally uneventful except that we were stopped at a bridge by the MPs because the other bridge had been blown up. When we arrived at Nui Dat, 5 RAR were still doing clearing patrols.

I reported to the OC 103 Sig Sqn, Major Peter Mudd, who was accompanied by his SSM, Cliff King, and was allocated an area opposite 1ATF HQ.

Having been on a few exercises in my time, I said to him (the OC) that the allocated position was in the middle of a water-course. He said we would have to settle there for the time being and instructed me to locate my stores there and camp the rest of the Troop over the road because weapon pits had been established and all available personnel were required to be behind same. That night the skies opened up; poor old Doug Rodgers had to rescue most of our stores.

6.3.2.2 Accommodation Tents

The Troop erected 11 x 11 tents for accommodation, set up stretchers, and settled in for the night. That night it was extremely dark and poured rain all night.

Several members recalled:

Sometime during the night Murray Cooper⁹⁰ had to go for a small walk, got lost, and was found next morning hugging a rubber tree.

⁸⁸ AWM RCDIG1030014.pdf, AWM95. Australian Army commanders' diaries. [Vietnam]. Signals units. Item number: 6/1/2. Item: 103 Signal Squadron.

⁸⁹ By kind permission of the author. All Recollections that follow are taken from *547 Signal Troop in South Vietnam – The Soldiers' Perspective – Deployment, Early Days and the Lead-up to Long Tan*, by Barry Hampstead, July 2008.

⁹⁰ Operator Signals.

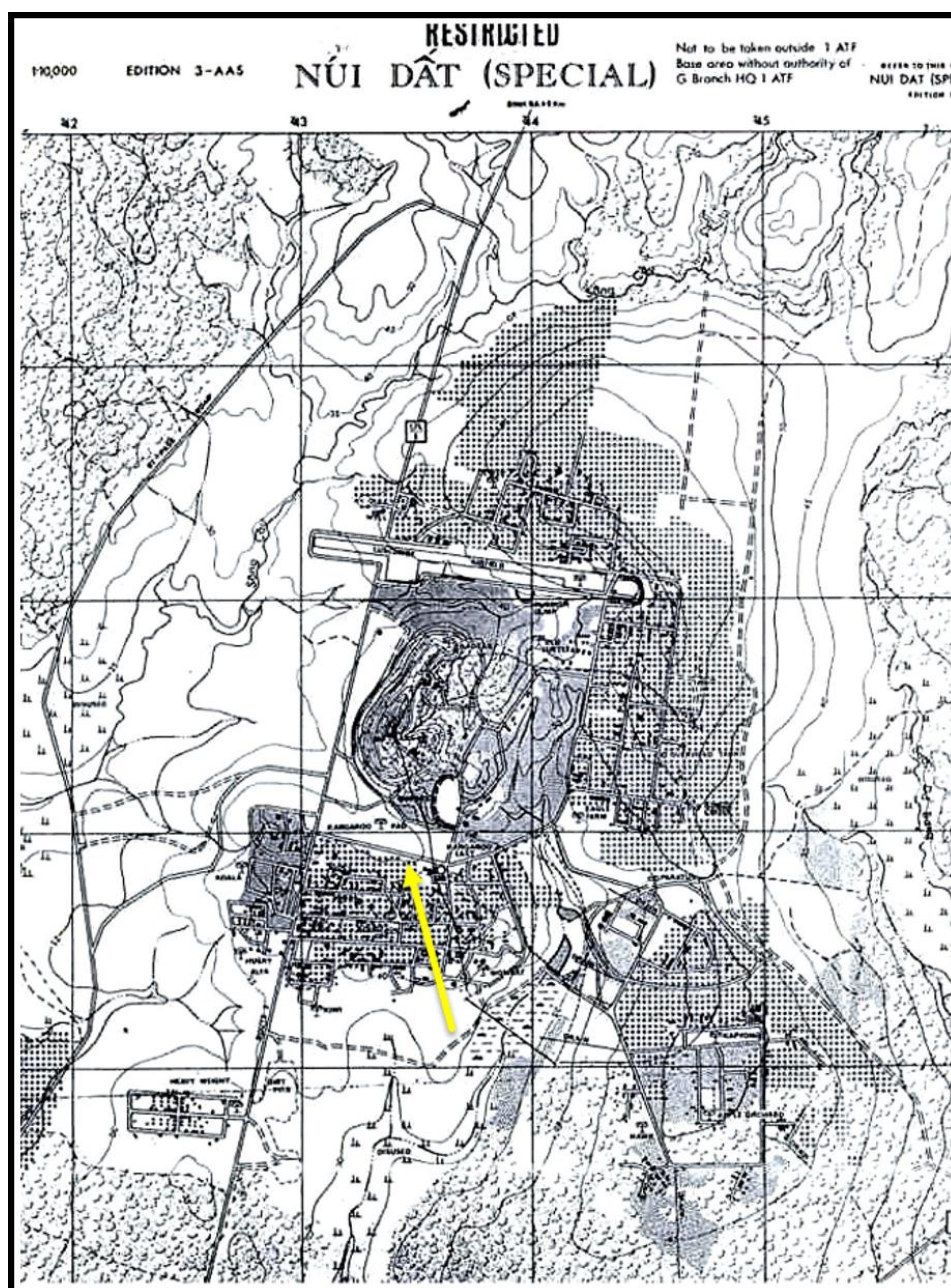


Figure 29: Later map of Nui Dat indicating 547 Sig Tp location



CHAPTER 7 – PREPARATION FOR OPERATIONS

7.1 Initial Setup

7.1.1 Location

On 15 June 1966, Troop members began to build weapon pits for protection and erect a small two-strand barbed wire secure compound around the vehicles and work tents⁹¹ to provide security and limit access from unauthorised personnel⁹².

Eric Grace related⁹³:

The site opposite Task Force HQ proved to be most unsatisfactory. 60-foot high rubber trees were a problem and I've already mentioned the nearby water-course.

The following graphic shows a mud map of the layout of HQ 1 ATF⁹⁴ in July 1966 and the initial location of 547 Sig Tp:

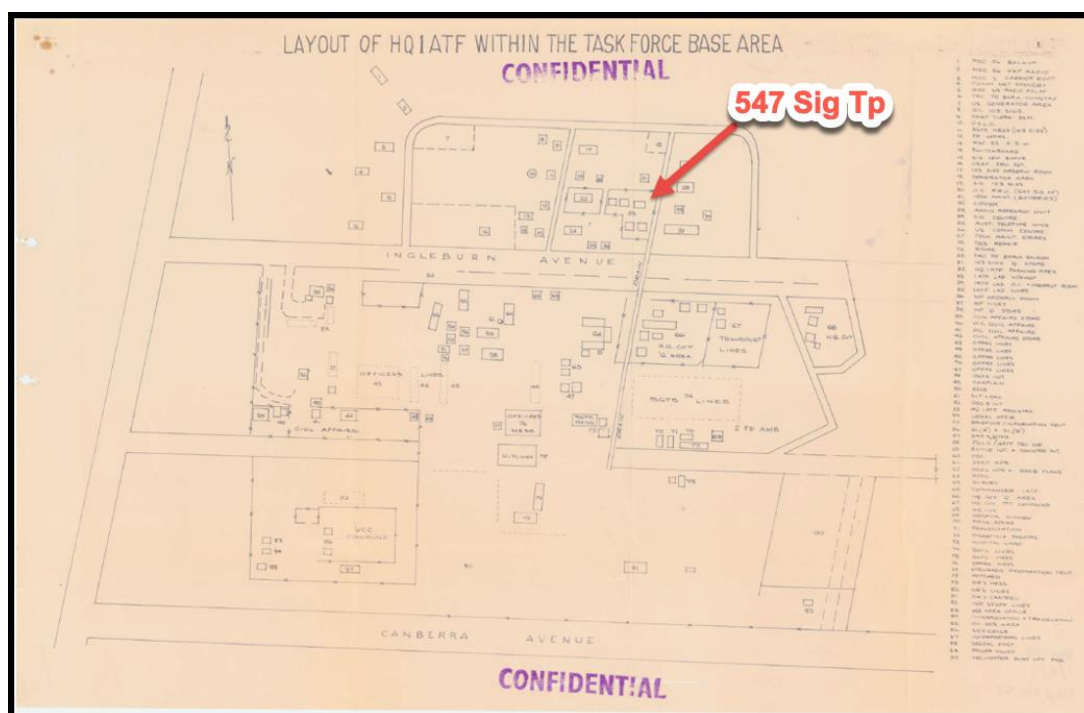


Figure 30: HQ 1ATF Layout and 547 Sig Tp location. Note drain on the right of the Troop compound

⁹¹ The accommodation tents were erected outside the compound.

⁹² All Sigint activities and product are classified at least Secret with special caveat, and only those personnel who hold a Top Secret security clearance with additional briefs are permitted access to the site or material. I

⁹³ By kind permission of the author. All Recollections that follow are taken from *547 Signal Troop in South Vietnam – The Soldiers' Perspective – Deployment, Early Days and the Lead-up to Long Tan*, by Barry Hampstead, July 2008.

⁹⁴ HQ 1ATF War Diaries at <http://static.awm.gov.au/images/collection/bundled/RCDIG1028600.pdf> page 129.

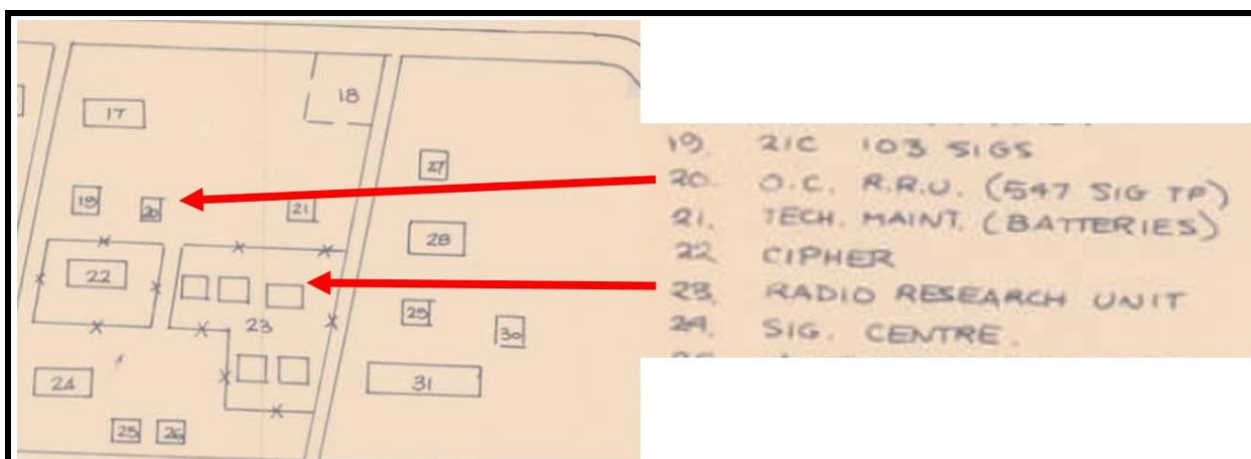


Figure 31: Original compound area (expanded)

7.2 Additional Manpower

7.2.1 Intelligence Corps Personnel

On 2 July, Corporal Keith Innes⁹⁵ arrived for duty in the Processing Cell. A few days later the manpower of the Troop increased by the arrival of Corporal Sam Rogers⁹⁶ from the linguist pool at HQAFV, after crunching his way through the jungles with 5 and 6 RAR.

7.2.2 Operator Assistance

Sergeant Gary Fizzell and Signalman Ray Hyland (ex Op Sigs) were serving with 103 Sig Sqn and at times provided their services to the Troop

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Garry Fizzell later wrote:

My time with 547 was very restricted because of my other commitments as Troop Sgt with Radio Troop. How it came about was that when 547 first arrived they were very short of operators and Jim Rayner asked me if it was possible for myself and Ray Hyland to come and 'fill in' with some of the shift work. The OC of the Troop was also anxious for us to come on over; I spoke to our Sqn Comd., Major Peter Mudd, who then agreed. 547's OC probably also spoke with Major Mudd but I cannot remember that part.

7.3 Telegraph Communications

To meet the "Post Office" role of the Troop, the first element to be established and become operational was the Communication Centre (Comcen). Utilising their own telegraph terminals and cryptographic equipment, the Troop was given access to the in-country discrete Sigint network via

⁹⁵ Intelligence Corps Analyst/Linguist.

⁹⁶ Intelligence Corps Analyst/Linguist/Cryptologist (ex-Operator Signals).

The DVA Nominal Roll of Vietnam Veterans (<http://www.vietnamroll.gov.au/VeteranDetails.aspx?VeteranId=1265448>) lists Sam Rogers as being posted to the Headquarters, Australian Force Vietnam (Army Component) from 19 April 66 to 16 April 1967. Sam was also an ex Op Sig.

⁹⁷ The DVA Nominal Roll of Vietnam Veterans (<http://www.vietnamroll.gov.au/VeteranDetails.aspx?VeteranId=1265448>) A shows Gary serving with 103 Sig Sqn from 26 Apr 66 to 4 May 1967 and Ray serving with 103 Sig Sqn from 22 Apr 66 to 1 May 1967.



communication 'tails' provided by 103 Sig Sqn. When communications were firmly established the Comcen commenced operations on a 24-hour basis. Later a secondary circuit was established.

Captain Richards later reported⁹⁸:

Up until now, [16 September] this station has been treated as a Secret Savin station [99]. Our keylists for the KW7 [100] are only graded secret, but if it is necessary for me to get higher category material, which I don't think is necessary at the moment, I can apply for and get Top Secret Keylists on SSO [101] grounds for our circuit and as such get the SSO at 243 [102] to pass Top Secret Trine material over this link. But as such, this hasn't been necessary which I will cover under the terms of end product.

A US Army Signals Officer working at Vung Tau wrote¹⁰³:

We also had a system between the hill [Vung Tau] and the Australian Task Force at Nui Dat.

We had a large number of telephone and teletype circuits going to various places, some terminating, some just patched through us to and from other places. We had one teletype circuit which was patched through to the Australian area. That circuit was one belonging to the Radio Research Units (RRU). That was the name all Army Security Agency units used in Vietnam, for unknown reasons. Regardless of what name they went by, their circuits always had high priority and were guaranteed to be trouble if they were not kept working properly. That particular circuit was a sixty-words-per-minute (60 wpm), four wire, full duplex circuit from their headquarters at Bien Hoa. As with all their circuits it was fully secured, with all traffic encoded.

⁹⁸ ASD archives. See full transcript at Annex F and now available at <https://www.asd.gov.au/about/history/declassified.Transcript>. Transcript of Trevor Richards Interview (PDF)

⁹⁹ Station only authorised to receive and hold Sigint material up to and including Secret.

¹⁰⁰ KW7 = electronic on-line cipher machine used in the Communications Centre.

¹⁰¹ SSO = Special Security Officer.

¹⁰² Not identified.

¹⁰³ http://www.au104.org/Veteran_Stories/vetstory32.htm.



7.4 Sigint Operation, Liaison and Chain of Command

7.4.1 ASA Organisation

Although never displayed on the ASA hierarchy, 547 Sig Tp would be part of the 509th RR Group¹⁰⁴ and more specifically with 303 RR Bn and 175 RR Co for operational support.

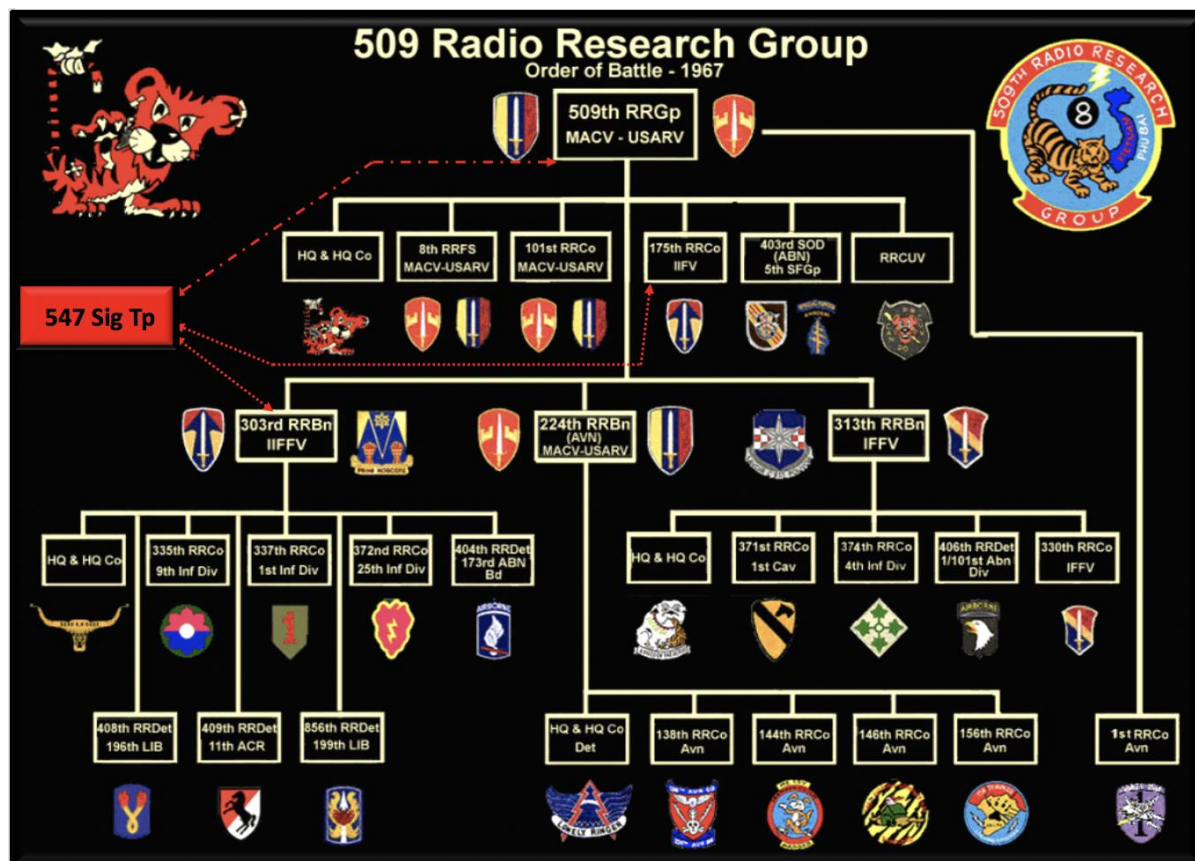


Figure 32: 509th RR Gp Organisation¹⁰⁵

¹⁰⁴ Extract from: <http://www.asalives.org/ASAONLINE/asarrcuv.htm>

¹⁰⁵ 547 Sig Tp inserted by author.



509th US ARMY SECURITY AGENCY GROUP

Organized: 1 June 1966
Cover Designation: 509th Radio Research Group
Supported Command: MACV and USARV
Assigned Command: USASA Pacific
Location: Saigon
Redesignation: US Army Security Group, Vietnam on 15 December 1967
Discontinued: 7 March 1973
Vietnam Campaigns: 3-17
Vietnam Decorations: 3 MUCs and 2 RVN CGP

Figure 33: 509 RR Group History¹⁰⁶

HQ & HQ COMPANY, 303d ARMY SECURITY AGENCY BATTALION

Deployed: 12 April 1966
Cover Designation: 17th Radio Research Unit
Assigned Command: 53d US Army Security Agency Special Operations Command (3d RRU)
Supported Command: FFV-II
Location: Long Binh
Reassigned Command: 509th US Army Security Agency Group on 1 June 1966
Cover Redesignation: 303d Radio Research Battalion on 29 July 1966
Redeployed: 15 June 1971*
Vietnam Campaign Participation Credit: 3-14
Vietnam Honors: 5 MUCs, 1 RVN CGP, and 1 RVN CA
 * Command mission transferred to USASA Field Station, Bien Hoa.

Figure 34: 303 RR Bn History¹⁰⁷

¹⁰⁶ *The Most Secret War: Army Signals Intelligence in Vietnam*, James L. Gilbert Military History Office, US Army Intelligence and Security Command, Fort Belvoir, Virginia. P 122.

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid*, P115.

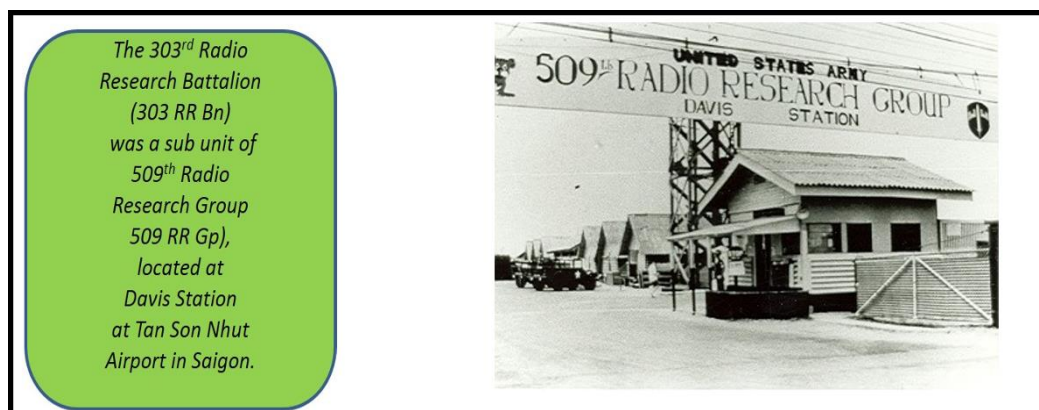


Figure 35: 509th RR Gp Davis Station

Extracts from the book *The Most Secret War: Army Signals Intelligence in Vietnam*¹⁰⁸:

In mid-1965, ASA's command and control in Vietnam was relatively simple. A total of 1,487 personnel were distributed among three units: the 3rd RRU (606), the 7th RRU (54), and the 8th RRU (827). (The 3rd RRU continued to serve as the command element.). But the next 9 months brought the arrival of direct support units and with them new challenges. Given no increase in personnel authorisation or realignment of responsibilities, the commander of the 3rd RRU had to now divide his attention between fulfilling his own operational mission and making sure that DSUs were meeting the needs of their combat commanders in the field. To resolve the command and control issue, ASA discontinued the 3rd RRU on 1 June 1966 and redistributed its mission and resources among four new organisations. Headquarters, 509th Radio Research Group which assumed administrative control of ASA assets in Vietnam; a new Radio Research Communication Unit, Vietnam (RRCUV) that served as ASA's in-country communications center; and the 175th RR Company which took over the 3rd RR's collection and processing missions

By September 1966, the 509th RR Group had settled into a command structure that would remain virtually unaltered for the next 5 years. The group had under its direct control three battalions and a field station: the 303rd and the 313th RR Battalions, which supported the field forces; the 224th Avn Battalion; and the 8th RRU (soon to be redesignated the 8th RR Field Station). In addition, the 509th commanded three smaller elements that performed countrywide missions. The 101st RR Company (formerly the 7th RRU) directed the 509th RR Group's COMSEC effort, and the RRCUV fulfilled ASA's unique communications requirements. The third and final unit, the 403rd RR Special Operations Detachment, would soon arrive in country to provide direct support to the 5th Special Forces Group.

Aside from a small Processing, Analysis, and Reporting Branch, the 509th RR Group acted primarily as an administrative headquarters to provide overall supervision and support to the 20 to 30 ASA units that were further broken down into detachments and teams located at remote sites and fire support bases.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid, P38, 39.



Figure 36: Manual Morse Intercept positions at 328th RR Company¹⁰⁹

7.4.2 Command Interaction

Captain Richards later reported¹¹⁰:

At this time I was only authorised to interact with DODSPECREP Saigon which was the NSA HQ for Vietnam. After a trip to Saigon to see NSA I was put on the distribution list for ARDF¹¹¹ results. Later I came under the technical direction of the 303rd Radio Research Battalion which supported III Corps.

7.4.3 Comcen Liaison

Ian Clarkson, Murray Cooper and Kevin Lever had a short visit to the US Army 303 RR Bn¹¹² at Long Binh¹¹³ to see how their Comcen operated. This was the forerunner to a long and close association between 303 RR Bn and 547 Sig Tp.

7.4.4 Secure VHF Communications

A secure VHF voice link was established to communicate with the US Army and US Air Force (USAF) ARDF¹¹⁴ aircraft that were tasked to operate in, or close to, the Australian AO.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid, P55.

¹¹⁰ ASD archives. See full transcript at Annex F and now available at <https://www.asd.gov.au/about/history/declassified/Transcript>. Transcript of Trevor Richards Interview (PDF)

¹¹¹ Airborne Radio Direction Finding. Full details later in document.

¹¹² The 303rd RR Bn provided Sigint support to II-FFV.

¹¹³ Long Binh was located just north-east of the Phuoc Tuy Province.

¹¹⁴ https://www.nsa.gov/about/_files/cryptologic_heritage/publications/misc/traffic_analysis.pdf. P 6-7. **Location and Characteristics of the Transmitter—** Radio direction finding (RDF) attempts to determine the azimuth (line of bearing between the source of the signal and the receiving station) of a propagated radio signal. If the azimuth of some signal can be determined from multiple locations, then perhaps the location of the transmitter can be derived, that is, obtain a “fix” on the transmitter’s location. At times even a single azimuth can be helpful. RDF was particularly useful in locating and following the movements of military units. Further, individual transmitters have unique technical characteristics which, if detected, can be useful to the traffic analyst.



7.5 HQ 1ATF Staff Sigint Experience

7.5.1 Sigint Indoctrinated Staff

There were only four officers on the staff at HQ 1ATF authorised and indoctrinated¹¹⁵ to receive Sigint material.

Trevor Richards recalled¹¹⁶:

Cattanach warned me that none of the Australian Officers in theatre had any experience with Sigint and that I was going to have to be careful!! So although Brig Jackson, Maj Hannigan and Maj John Rowe had been indoctrinated they had no experience with the product. Their reaction was very human in that they wanted nothing to do with something that they did not understand!

¹¹⁵ Sigint briefed and signed relevant undertaking to maintain secrecy and preserve information.

¹¹⁶ Email from Trevor Richards to Steve Hart on 23 May 2014 responding to a series of questions.



CHAPTER 8 - COMMENCEMENT OF OPERATIONS

8.1 Operations Commence

8.1.1 Start Date

The Troop commenced operations on 24 June 1966, seven days earlier than directed.

8.1.2 Role

As stated in the Comint Support Instruction the Troop's purpose was *to establish a comint cell at 1 ATF to receive end product material from US ASA resources*. Fundamentally, the Troop was to act as a 'Post Office'¹¹⁷ and clearance facility for the forwarding of US Sigint reports to the indoctrinated operational staff at HQ 1ATF.

8.1.3 Traffic Analysis

In addition to being a 'Post Office' the role also included conducting basic traffic analysis¹¹⁸ on the received US Sigint product and where necessary adding comments before forwarding to the 1HQ ATF staff.

8.1.4 Display and Storage

The Troop was also required to store the Sigint product and maintain operational maps that were compiled from the reports. It must also be mentioned that at this time there was little, if any, additional information being forwarded from the Australian Sigint Authority, the DSD.

8.1.5 ARDF Reports

Trevor Richards reported¹¹⁹:

I will never forget the first ARDF results that we got -----Topsecret codeword FLASH. I had no idea what was going on. That was how I got to Brig Jackson [Commander 1ATF]. FLASH to me meant the Brigadier only and at once. (I do not know whether Brig Jackson and Comd 2 FFV ever swapped notes on what FLASH meant.) The problem was that most of the ARDF results were unidentified. Slowly we built up our data banks by feeding input in from battle int and NSA data to reduce the number of unidentified.

¹¹⁷ See previous comments that being a "Post Office" was only one of the tasks.

¹¹⁸ https://www.nsa.gov/about/_files/cryptologic_heritage/publications/misc/traffic_analysis.pdf. The word *traffic* to a communicator or cryptologist referred to communications passed between a sender and an intended recipient. Thus, the study of traffic by unintended recipients was called traffic analysis. T/A has been the study of "external" features of target communications. It examined all aspects of communications transmissions excluding code or cipher message content, which was the purview of cryptanalysis (C/A). Traffic analysts studied signals' characteristics, including radio frequency usage, callsigns, (a series of letters and/or numbers assigned to a specific radio station), transmission schedules, locations of transmitters, the routings and volumes of message traffic, informal "chatter" between the targets' radio operators and the unique characteristics exhibited by manual Morse operators. T/A and C/A historically have been the major technical approaches to COMINT, and information derived from traffic analysis and cryptanalysis can be combined to gain knowledge about the senders and receivers. This knowledge was provided to customers in "end-product" reports.

¹¹⁹ Email from Trevor Richards to Steve Hart on 23 May 2014 responding to a series of questions.



8.1.5.1 ARDF Spot Report

A basic ARDF Spot Report contained: *Date, Time of Intercept, Sigint Identity (if unknown – Unid) Fix Location (Map Grid Reference) and Circular Error of Probability e.g.:*

130667 0734Z M1234 YS512834 1500

Note:

A Sigint Identification Number is allocated when a transmitter has been identified as supporting a particular unit.

Circular Error of Probability

A Circular Error of Probability (CEP) is an intuitive measure of a system's precision. In DF terms it is the approximate average distance between a centre point and the intersecting lines of bearing (LOBS).

ARDF results can also be affected by: (in particular the later Australian ARDF Aircraft)

- Pilot's map reading skills
 - Is the aircraft actually directly over the start/finish points of the track?
 - Accuracy of the aircraft compass
 - Accuracy of the aircraft compass correction chart
 - Aircraft yaw
 - Aircraft constant speed
 - Height of aircraft
 - Turbulence
 - Terrain (Signal could be refracting off a nearby hill)
 - ARDF equipment correctly aligned in aircraft
 - Accuracy of the ARDF equipment correction chart
 - Number of LOBs/cuts
 - Plotter's arithmetic
 - Target is the transmitter antenna only
-



Capt Richards Reported¹²⁰:

I had a lot of trouble initially with communications due to the volume of flash messages I was getting in, in that every time an ARDF tip-off anywhere was received over the Corps III area was immediately flashed to every other station. Now I hit this on the head in that I told all other stations that Brigadier Jackson was only interested in grid references or fixes in the PHUOC TUY Province area and immediately 75% of my traffic disappeared.

8.2 Establishment of a Permanent Site

8.2.1 Construction Work Continues

April/May is the beginning of the monsoon season in South Vietnam. The sides of trenches and weapon pits collapsed almost as soon as they could be dug. Drains overflowed and formed new water courses which floated items of stationery and personal equipment away. Restoration and rebuilding was continuous and left in the hands of those off-duty.

8.2.2 Change of Location

After six weeks of operation the Troop was relocated to an area on the eastern edge of 103 Sig Sqn but still remained in the signals area. The Troop members strived to build a permanent home. New perimeter fences and weapon pits had to be constructed.

Eric Grace related¹²¹:

I agitated for a move to a better site near the proposed Helicopter pad so that I could improve our antenna situation and in due course received permission from Major Mudd¹²².

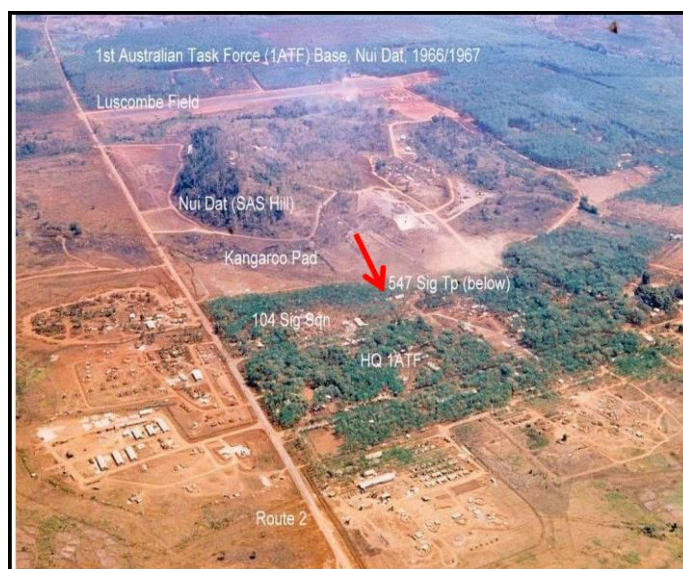


Figure 37: 547 Sig Tp Location

¹²⁰ ASD archives. See full transcript at Annex F and now available at <https://www.asd.gov.au/about/history/declassified/Transcript>. Transcript of Trevor Richards Interview (PDF)

¹²¹ By kind permission of the author. All Recollections that follow are taken from *547 Signal Troop in South Vietnam – The Soldiers' Perspective – Deployment, Early Days and the Lead-up to Long Tan*, by Barry Hampstead, July 2008.

¹²² OC 103 Sig Sqn.





CHAPTER 9 - ENHANCEMENT OF OPERATIONS

9.1 Set Room

9.1.1 Intercept Operations

In addition to the role of being a 'Post Office', the Troop was to '*conduct communications intercept, processing and reporting activities as agreed by US ASA, to meet the requirements of the Commander 1 ATF*'. As the majority of personnel on the deployment were very experienced Op Sigs, they were soon attempting to put their trade into practice and conduct search and intercept of VC and NVA communications networks operating in, and close to, the Australian AO on a time available basis.

9.1.2 Intercept Positions

Initially, an intercept position¹²³ was jury-rigged in a trailer. Later, four intercept positions were established in a tent. It is worth noting that in the initial deployment no technical maintenance staff were included in the personnel list. Operators had to use their very basic technical skills to construct antennas, manufacture equipment racks and maintain equipment.

Eric Grace related¹²⁴:

A trailer-mounted Set Room¹²⁵ does not work terribly well in the mud and slush of the wet season in SVN. Into the bargain, sitting in part of 22 x 11 tentage meant the operators crammed against the sides of the tents which had to be lined with blankets for black-out operations.

The Aerial System. For years we had operated on a basic aerial system of Long Wires and Dipoles. Here we were with 'Masts, Telescopic, 27 feet' under rubber trees some 50 or 60 feet high. We had to get above the rubber trees; that was the rule we learnt in Malaya. We couldn't fire sprigots [sic] up over the trees like we had done in Malaya; the Task Force would have gone on full alert. Murray Cooper volunteered to climb the trees and he did so and I could not speak more highly of Murray in those days.

Masts were a problem; the 27-foot telescopes were useless so we came up with the idea of welding American pickets together with wire for stays. Ray Pratt was well involved in this venture and within a week these mast became the model for a lot of 'sigs' also trying to get above the rubber trees.

¹²³ Normally an intercept position consists of two receivers. Under normal operating conditions the left hand receiver (set) is allocated to the control or senior station and right to the outstation/s or searching.

¹²⁴ By kind permission of the author. All Recollections that follow are taken from *547 Signal Troop in South Vietnam – The Soldiers' Perspective – Deployment, Early Days and the Lead-up to Long Tan*, by Barry Hampstead, July 2008.

¹²⁵ In Sigint Units 'Set Room' defines the area that houses all the intercept equipment.



Capt Richards Reported¹²⁶:

As far as the operators are concerned — you have probably got my previous note by now. What we have done over the past 15 days, is we now have four positions going during the day. Four positions are set up, two of them are used for normal tasking as two eighteen hour positions and the other two positions are used as eight hour positions by using two extra operators. Those are used for general search and development. Once again, the reason for this I will come onto this again in a moment. The two extra operators are one, Lever, from cypher and the other one Day, is the ARDF operator. I found that Rainer [sic - Rayner] can cope with all the administration for the Troop so far as working with 103 Sig Squadron is concerned, operate the ARDF receiver and also keep all the plots up-to-date on the map on which I brief the Brigadier. Communications - I can cope by using two operators only.



Figure 39: Outside the 'Set Room' Tent - Note the intercept position just inside the entrance

9.1.3 Blackout

As operations were on a 24-hour a day basis, the old 11x11 tents emitted a bright glow at night. The only way to overcome this tactical hazard was to hand sew thick woollen blankets around the interior, making the tents unbearably hot on tropical nights.

¹²⁶ ASD archives. See full transcript at Annex F and now available at <https://www.asd.gov.au/about/history/declassified.Transcript>. Transcript of Trevor Richards Interview (PDF)



9.2 Allocation of Resources

9.2.1 Manpower Allocation

The following graphic¹²⁷ depicts how resources were initially allocated:

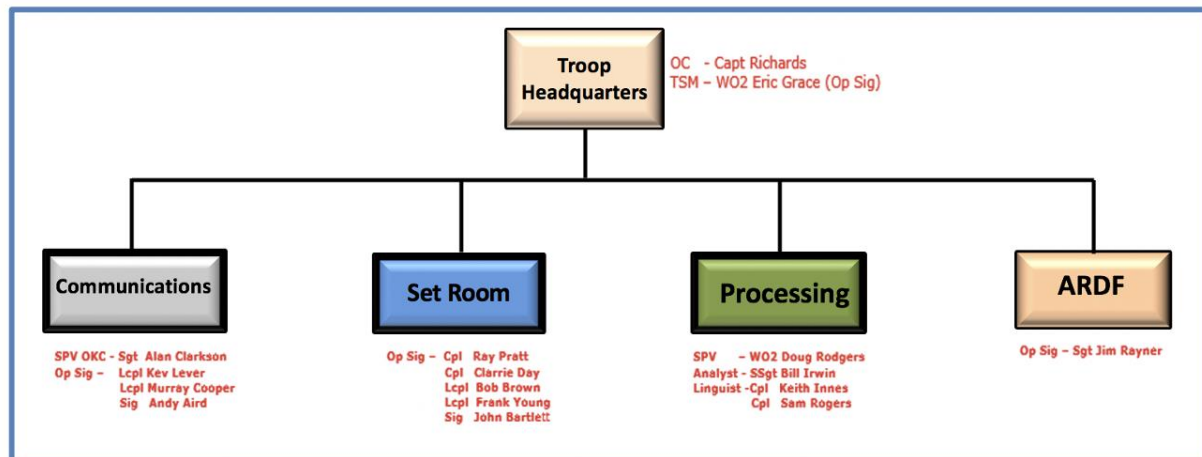


Figure 40: Initial Personnel Allocation

9.2.2 Internal Troop Roles and Tasks

Troop Headquarters. The basic roles of the Troop HQ were:

- Command the Troop
- Liaise with HQ 1 ATF Ops and Int Staff, and brief the Commander when required.
- Liaise with, and brief the appropriate 1 ATF operational and intelligence staff holding the necessary security clearance to receive Sigint material.
- Liaise with units providing administrative support.
- Liaison with US in-theatre Sigint agencies.
- Plan, place and oversee the building of all defensive structures.
- Plan and arrange expansion of working and accommodation facilities.

Communications Section (Comcen). The tasks of the Comcen were:

- Establish communications with US Sigint Units.
- Man communication terminals on a 24-hour basis.
- Maintain communication, telegraph and cryptographic equipment.
- Establish a secure facility for the storage of cryptographic and Sigint material.
- Receive and transmit Sigint product.

Intercept (Set Room) Section. The tasks of the Set Room Section were to:

¹²⁷ Graphic prepared by Bob Hartley from various documents.



- Build an intercept capability.
- When not employed on other general duties, conduct a general search¹²⁸ of the HF spectrum to locate and identify VC and NVA communications networks.
- Where possible provide 24-hour coverage.

Processing (Intelligence) Cell. The roles of the Processing Cell were:

- Maintain the cell on a 24-hour basis.
- Conduct basic traffic analysis¹²⁹ on US Sigint product and any material collected by Troop intercept.
- Conduct basic cryptanalysis¹³⁰ if required.
- Prepare reports.
- Prepare and maintain Sigint maps.
- Conduct translation of Vietnamese to English where necessary.
- Storage of classified material.

ARDF Control. The roles of ARDF Control were:

- Build a communication station.
- Establish communications with US ARDF aircraft.
- Where possible with the aid of other personnel maintain 24-hour coverage.
- Provide tasking lists to US ARDF aircraft.
- Receive reports from the supporting aircraft.
- Where necessary receive and transmit ARDF reports to other US Sigint agencies.

9.3 US RDF Control Centres

9.3.1 ARDF

Extract from *The Most Secret War*¹³¹:

In the past, the scarcity of ARDF resources had been a mitigating factor against committing them to small-scale tactical situations. When MG Joseph A. McChristian became J2, MACV, he further tightened control of ARDF and also acted to end the tug-of-war between the Army and the Air Force as to who should be in the driver's seat when it came to tasking and coordinating ARDF missions. In June 1966, he established a jointly-manned ARDF Coordination Center (ACC) in Saigon.

¹²⁸ General Search implies searching the radio spectrum for all communications activity and recording frequencies, callsigns, communications procedure and where possible the identification of the transmission.

¹²⁹ Traffic Analysis (TA)--Study of communications characteristics external to the text. See Footnote 89.

¹³⁰ Cryptanalysis (CA)--The steps and operations performed in converting encrypted messages into plain text without initial knowledge of the key employed in the encryption.

¹³¹ *The Most Secret War: Army Signals Intelligence in Vietnam*, James L. Gilbert Military History Office, US Army Intelligence and Security Command, Fort Belvoir, Virginia.



Although the Army (3d RRU) and Air Force (6994th Security Squadron) each retained control of its aircraft [¹³²], the new center assumed responsibility for translating requirements from combat commanders into taskings once they were approved by the J2, MACV. Furthermore, the ACC monitored, evaluated, and reported the results of all ARDF missions.

At the working level, there was good rapport and cooperation between ASA and the USAF Security Service. Each made a unique contribution to the common goal of supporting the warfighter. Because the PHILLIS ANN platform did not require manoeuvring to take a bearing and the size of the C-47 permitted a greater number of collection positions on board, the Air Force systems were much more productive than those of the Army. Initially, however, fixes taken by the Army platforms proved to be more accurate. Thus the ARDF Coordination Center tended to assign direct support missions, particularly those of a high priority, to the Army side of the shop and gave the Air Force responsibility for general search.

It was the old question of quality versus quantity. Both were important. While Air Force platforms made rapid progress in the area of accuracy, ASA justified its mission by pointing out that its total cost (aircraft, fuel, maintenance, mission gear, personnel) per fix remained a fraction of that of its sister service.

Extract from *Historical Resume USAF Airborne Radio Direction Finding – Its Development and Use April 1962 – 31 May 1968*¹³³.

ARDF SUPPORT TO TACTICAL OPERATIONS

General Use of ARDF

ARDF results are passed from the aircraft to Direct Support Units (DSU's). These DSU's are located near the combat elements and are in direct contact with the tactical commanders. When the DSU receives the information from the aircraft, it is passed immediately to the tactical commanders. The tactical commanders react to the information differently, depending on the known significance of the target, the immediate tactical situation and the proximity of the targets to friendly military forces.

Some commanders have ordered that a minimum of three rounds of heavy artillery be placed on each location. If the target is of known tactical significance, the commander may order an immediate tactical air strike against the location. It is also common practice to direct a forward air controller (FAC) into the area for reconnaissance purposes.

ARDF support is provided for all major operations. This close tactical support (CTS) is largely incidental since ARDF operations are conducted in daily in most (illegible) When no major operations

¹³² Joe Martin advised by email to Bob Hartley on 18 Feb 2016 “other than suggesting/requesting the geography over which to fly, the 6994th did NOT control the aircraft”.

¹³³ <http://ec47.com/ardf-historical-resume-1968>



USAF EC-47 ARDF Aircraft



are being conducted in (illegible) ARDF flights are referred to as continuity and development (C&D) flights.

In some cases a study of ARDF fixes obtained in a given area has been the basis for conducting an operation. The planned area of operations has often been altered during the operation based on ARDF information.

Tactical commanders rely heavily on ARDF data for planning troop maneuvers and fire support. Also, it is possible, to a large degree, for the commanders to measure the effectiveness of their actions through ARDF.



Figure 41: ARDF Control Centre¹³⁴

9.3.2 Medium, Range DF



Figure 42: Control Centre¹³⁵

¹³⁴ <http://ec47.com/photoGalleries/view/operations>

¹³⁵ Photo Courtesy Dave Breisch.



Dave Breisch wrote¹³⁶

Here is a DF section com center at the Bien Hoa 175th RRC. The DF outstations, where I was at one, get tipped off by the intercept guy...just outside this picture...he passes a mission sheet to the DF com guy who rolls up on the freq, using the radio receivers in the picture...the DF guys now hears the traffic being passed...he then informs all the outstations that report back with line bearings to the DF center. That tip off of freq, and traffic, let us identify if we have the right guy....once we have identified the target, then we roll up the freq, on the DF radio receiver, R-390 in picture, then we read the line bearing the antenna's sense going into the strongest part of the signal, we called Areal null. The green screen a 360 degree circle points to where the signal is coming from. We take down the bearing. Then hourly we transmit over morse back to the Command DF center our bearings. All the outstations report back hourly...using single use crypto pads. And then if the target was important, we could take a radio finger print of the signal.

That is suppose to be unique to the transmitter, for 100% ID. That picture was done on film that had to be processed. The DF comm center then plots the position and informs the intercept section and analysis to put all information together. And then they can bundle it, and send big comm gear stuff...intercepts back up the chain...to hit some NSA computers to see if code could be broken. Big tape drives doing that. All at BienHoa.

¹³⁶ <https://www.facebook.com/groups/1450609408593923> The Shush Patrol – Aust and US Sigs in Vietnam



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CHAPTER 10 – 547 SIG TP MODUS OPERANDI

10.1 Sigint Process

10.1.1 Basic Procedure

Intercept and processing operations conducted by the Troop followed the basic Sigint process:

- **Search.** This is the process of manually searching through the frequency spectrum for enemy transmissions. This is a painstaking process as the numerous unwanted transmissions had to be identified and then dismissed.
- **Intercept.** Intercept involves staying on the one frequency to intercept a transmission.
- **Record.** Record involves recording all the transmission details and traffic either by hand on paper logs or a typewriter. It may also include the use of tape recorders for later playback.
- **Locate.** Locate involves the use of Radio Direction Finding equipment and/or analysis of the addresses on message traffic.
- **Analyse.** Analyse includes Traffic Analysis that covers the study of callsigns¹³⁷, frequency usage¹³⁸, schedules¹³⁹ communications procedure, the external characteristics of a message along with the location information provided by RDF. For the Troop, Analysis included basic Cryptanalysis – the actual breaking and reading of the enemy's encrypted traffic.
- **Report.** Report is the issue of end product reports to the relevant authorities.

¹³⁷ https://www.nsa.gov/about/_files/cryptologic_heritage/publications/misc/traffic_analysis.pdf. P4. **Callsigns** usually a brief series of letters and/or numbers assigned to a specific radio station by a government authority. The radio operator transmitted a callsign to identify the station when making contact with other radio stations. Some callsigns were permanent, while others changed periodically according to a pre-arranged plan to confuse monitoring by unintended listeners. If the unintended listeners (COMINT units) solved the system by which the callsigns were generated and/or assigned, they could then predict the new callsigns used by individual radio stations following the periodic changes.

¹³⁸ https://www.nsa.gov/about/_files/cryptologic_heritage/publications/misc/traffic_analysis.pdf. P4-5. **Frequencies**—Organizations using radio communications were allotted various blocks of the radio frequency spectrum. Within these blocks, organizations selected frequencies which worked best for them. For example, in the high frequency (HF) range (3-30 Mhz). MHz, which provided the bulk of the long-distance communications capability), frequency usage typically was divided between daytime and nighttime ranges, with the higher range used in the daytime for clearer reception. Radio signal propagation at nighttime usually required less power and could be heard well at the lower frequencies because of changes in atmospherics. Military organizations, if given the capability/option, might rotate their use of individual frequencies among the stations of a network in an effort to foil COMINT units' interception and identification of individual stations. Frequency rotations were designed in advance, with stations in a network each being assigned an individual starting frequency, from which they proceeded through periodic rotations in a prearranged manner. To be most effective in countering the COMINT unit's attempt to listen to them, military organizations would simultaneously change callsigns and frequencies.

¹³⁹ https://www.nsa.gov/about/_files/cryptologic_heritage/publications/misc/traffic_analysis.pdf. P5. **Schedules**—Military radio station networks usually operated according to prearranged schedules for making contacts and sending messages. The recovery of these schedules allowed the COMINT unit to allocate its monitoring resources most efficiently, without wasting time listening for an inactive station or network. It maximized the COMINT unit's collection of messages from the network, messages that might be readable and of possible intelligence interest. Additionally, if a station or network changed its callsigns and frequencies, but not its contact schedules, it might be possible to use communications schedules to identify stations and gain insight into the new callsign and frequency allocations, which could lead quickly to full recovery of the network and permit continued exploitation.



10.1.2 Search, Intercept, Record and Locate Procedure

In the initial process the operator searches a frequency band, stops whenever a signal is heard, listens to the signal, notes all characteristics on a radio log - Time, Frequency, Callsign, Communications Procedure, Message Traffic if sent - and if necessary, records the transmission on a tape recorder. The operator then conducts initial traffic analysis or passes the details on to the processing cell.

If the transmission is identified as a target, the operator will continue to intercept/monitor the transmission until the transmission ceases. All information intercepted is copied onto a wireless log and message form.

While the operator is copying the initial transmission, he uses his second receiver to search and try to locate the receiving station (outstation/s). If very lucky, he is able to identify the other station at the same time. Normally the outstation is found on follow-up schedules when the identified transmission is placed on a follow up or tasking program, and other operators assist in the search.

If DF is available, on initial intercept of a required transmission the operator would immediately request DF assistance to provide a location. DF results were the main tool to assist in the identification of the transmission.

When the schedule stops, all of the intercepted material is then passed to the Processing Cell for analysis, decryption if possible, and reporting.

10.1.3 Traffic Analysis and Cryptanalysis

Sam Rogers recalled¹⁴⁰:

Just after I arrived, Doug Rodgers, Billy Irwin and myself went down on a day trip to an ASA unit at Tan Son Nhut for familiarization and making ourselves known to their Sigint personnel. We also went across to 303 RR Bn at Long Binh a couple of days later for the same purpose and to collect as much information as possible. However, without any luck. As I was the cryptanalyst in the section I wanted to obtain the current codes being used by the local 5 VC Div units but they wouldn't give them to me, so I had to do the hard work myself.

10.2 Enemy Transmission Characteristics

10.2.1 Overview

The Troop was given very little information on how the communications systems and procedures of the enemy operated in the Australian AO. The Troop understood that the broad details of the enemy transmission characteristics were:

- The majority of the NVA/VC operated in the low High Frequency (HF) band (2 – 10 megahertz).
- Transmissions were in international Morse Code.

¹⁴⁰ Email to Barry Hampstead 12 Feb 16.



- The control and outstations operated on different frequencies. This was called complex operating.¹⁴¹
- Frequency and callsign changes would occur at least every month.
- Schedule times in the main were fairly constant. Transmission and use of both high and low level code¹⁴² traffic.¹⁴³ No plain text traffic was passed. Formal traffic between Regiment HQ, Battalion HQ and Division HQ was low level. Traffic from Regimental HQ to Higher Formation HQ was normally high level.
- High Communications Security (COMSEC)¹⁴⁴.
- No operator chat¹⁴⁵.
- Frequency instability. The VC/NVA operators would, in most cases, commence their transmissions approximately +/- 500 kilohertz off their previous recovered frequency. (The intercept operator had to search a wide band at the known schedule times to find the stations)¹⁴⁶.
- Higher level units (i.e. Division HQ to formation HQ) would normally have three to four radio schedules per day.
- Regiments and battalions would normally have two radio schedules, one in the AM and one in the PM.

¹⁴¹ Complex working. Complex working is the system of frequency usage wherein the stations of a net, group, or link, communicate with each other on different frequencies.

¹⁴² The generic term 'code' is used in this Story to cover both Codes and Cipher. In cryptology, a code is a method used to transform a message into an obscured form so it cannot be understood. Special information or a key is required to read the original message. The usual method is to use a codebook with a list of common phrases or words matched with a codeword. Encoded messages are sometimes termed codetext, while the original message is usually referred to as plaintext.

Terms like code and cipher are often used to refer to any form of encryption. However, there is an important distinction between codes and ciphers in technical work; it is, essentially, the scope of the transformation involved. Codes operate at the level of meaning; that is, words or phrases are converted into something else. Ciphers work at the level of individual letters, or small groups of letters, or even, in modern ciphers, with individual bits. While a code might transform "change" into "CVGDK" or "cocktail lounge", a cipher transforms elements below the semantic level, i.e., below the level of meaning. The "a" in "attack" might be converted to "Q", the first "t" to "f", the second "t" to "3", and so on. Ciphers are more convenient than codes in some situations, there being no need for a codebook, with its inherently limited number of valid messages, and the possibility of fast automatic operation on computers.

¹⁴³ In this context low level code was normally four figure groups, hand generated from code books and high level codes were normally five figure or five letter groups generated from one time pad or a machine.

¹⁴⁴ Communication Security (COMSEC) – The protection resulting from all measures designed to deny unauthorised persons information of value which might be derived from the possession and study of telecommunications, or to mislead unauthorized persons in their interpretation of the results of such possession and study.

¹⁴⁵ https://www.nsa.gov/about/_files/cryptologic_heritage/publications/misc/traffic_analysis.pdf. P6. **Operator Chatter**—Idle chatter between radio operators generally was unencrypted and in the native language of the country where the stations were located. If, for example, the radio signal was transmitted in international Morse code, three-letter brevity codes (called "Q" and/or "Z" signals) might be used simply to shorten the transmissions in much the same way that cell phone users send text messages today. (For example, "CUL" stands for "see you later.") Chatter collected from careless radio operators often contained useful information that might not otherwise be known to the COMINT unit. Callsign, frequency, or contact schedule information might be disclosed, thus making the intercept operator's job a bit easier. Security lapses in operator chatter could contain plaintext military unit designators and/or their locations—a "gold mine". Some operators had distinctive transmission patterns that could be recognized even after a communications change that resulted in new callsigns, operating frequencies, and contact schedules. Further, often the type of chatter was service unique. For instance, ground forces would sign off one way and air forces another. With slim leads like those, the traffic analyst could begin to recover the new signal procedures, then identify the individual stations, and finally reconstruct the entire network.

¹⁴⁶ For example, in an eight day period in 1970 the transmitter serving Ba Long Province used the following frequencies: 5773, 5585, 5794, 5698, 5661 and 5676 Khz (Extracted from ASD records).



Figure 43: VC Flag - Courtesy Phil Rutherford



Figure 44: VC/NVA Radio Operators #1

Note:

VC/NVA units also operated low powered VHF tactical radios but it was extremely difficult to isolate them from the allied Vietnamese forces as they mainly used captured US equipment, the same language, and communications procedures.

The Troop had very limited success in intercepting low level VC/NVA VHF transmissions.



Figure 45: VC/NVA Radio Operator #2¹⁴⁷

The US Army Security Agency reported post war¹⁴⁸:

The Central Office for South Vietnam distributed codes, call signs, and frequency assignments to the signal staffs at each military region headquarters, where signal representatives from units and province picked up extracts of the information pertaining to their own operations. From those extracts each radio operator copied into a notebook only that information that applied to him. Although much less efficient than the American practice of mimeographing an entire package of communications information, called Signal Operating Instructions, and giving it wide distribution, the enemy methods were far safer. By strictly controlling distribution, signal officers not only limited the amount of signal information vulnerable to capture but also made it impossible for radio operators to enter any nets in which they did not belong, a practice that could cause breakdowns in net discipline and security.

The Viet Cong assigned professional cryptographers to every regiment and every province. Since radio operators were kept physically separated from the cryptographers and were even forbidden to associate with them during off- duty time, radio operators had little opportunity to handle or have knowledge of any unencoded classified information. Besides restricting access to important cryptographic material, the compartmentalization of communicators and cryptographers precluded the inadvertent transmission of classified information in the clear by a careless radio operator. Because of the sensitive nature of cryptographers' work, they were usually handpicked Communist Party members who had received intensive training at a special school in Hanoi.

Even in low- level units without cryptographers, radio operators followed precise operational procedures that made communications more secure. The Communist practice of communicating with each station on a net only at a scheduled time and on a prescribed frequency -- and of varying those

¹⁴⁷ <http://ec47.com/photoGalleries/index>

¹⁴⁸ Extract from: <http://www.asalives.org/ASAONLINE/ebatf95.htm>



times and frequencies periodically -- made it difficult for an enemy to intercept a particular station by continually monitoring a single frequency. The enemy made mandatory the use of universal procedural words, called prosigns, to communicate signal information.

Using these shortcuts meant that transmitters were on the air a shorter time and were thus less exposed to enemy intercept. How diligently the various procedures were followed depended to a great extent on the quality of the supervision rendered by local signal staff officer. Most were quite harsh in enforcing communications discipline. In their reprimands of violators they even equated laxity with disloyalty to the Communist cause.

As the Americans improved their airborne direction-finding techniques, net discipline and operational procedures became as important as cryptography to the Communists. They knew that even if the Americans could not read the text of a station's traffic, they could still home in on the signal emitter of the transmitter. Suspecting that American radio direction finders guided B-52 bombers that were dropping their large bombs with deadly accuracy on the transmitters serving major Communist headquarters, in 1965 commanders began ordering their signal officers to set up transmitters as far away from supporting headquarters as possible. In addition enemy radiomen learned to recognize by sight and sound the types of aircraft used for airborne radio direction finding and to shut off their transmitters when they were in the area.

10.2.2 NVA/VC Signal Order of Battle

While in the process of re-writing this Story, the authors have located two US documents that relate to, and explain, NVA/VC communications operating procedures:

Document 1 is the *TECHNICAL INTELLIGENCE STUDY ST 67-021 NVA/VC SIGNAL ORDER OF BATTLE DATED 18 January 1967*¹⁴⁹:

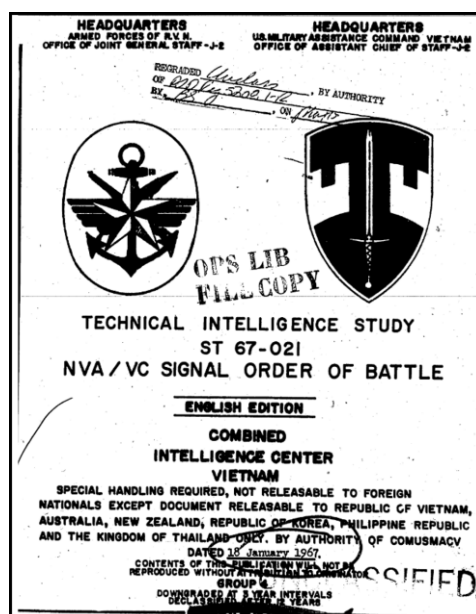


Figure 46: TIS 67-021, NVA/VC Signal Order of Battle – Front Page

¹⁴⁹ [http://www.virtual.vietnam.ttu.edu/cgi-](http://www.virtual.vietnam.ttu.edu/cgi-bin/starfetch.exe?B7dWys9m@cAgJfO.Ay6LyMCIBkvmSVVV1w6VOQ7Uaez2XCO3RN2URs0J2ulEe0ERlwilKay0QA5J0qjKULYhedtu05Ys3zGT5MCEeqtuFHkc8KXWwlng/F015900300773a.pdf)

[bin/starfetch.exe?B7dWys9m@cAgJfO.Ay6LyMCIBkvmSVVV1w6VOQ7Uaez2XCO3RN2URs0J2ulEe0ERlwilKay0QA5J0qjKULYhedtu05Ys3zGT5MCEeqtuFHkc8KXWwlng/F015900300773a.pdf](http://www.virtual.vietnam.ttu.edu/cgi-bin/starfetch.exe?B7dWys9m@cAgJfO.Ay6LyMCIBkvmSVVV1w6VOQ7Uaez2XCO3RN2URs0J2ulEe0ERlwilKay0QA5J0qjKULYhedtu05Ys3zGT5MCEeqtuFHkc8KXWwlng/F015900300773a.pdf).



Some relevant extracts are as follows:

A. Mission and Organization of NVA/VC Signal Units

1. General

a. The NVA/VC signal units are organized on the basis of 1 signal battalion per division and 1 for COSVN, 1 signal company per military region and regiment, 1 signal platoon per province and battalion, 1 signal squadron or cell per separate company, and 1 messenger squad per district. An exception to this organizational doctrine is Military Region 5.

3. Military Region

a. The military region headquarters is supported by a signal section and a signal company. The signal section operate a signal centre. Reports indicate that each region operates a signal school.

(1) Region Signal Centre. The signal section of the military region is an element of the military staff of the military region headquarters. The signal section comprises the following specialized cadre: section chief, assistant section chief, and 1 assistant each for radio, wire, and messenger. The signal section commander is in charge of the subordinate units in the specialized fields. These include the regimental signal sections, province signal platoon, the signal school and the signal company of the military region's signal section.

6. Division.

a. The NVA/VC divisions assigned to SVN are subordinate to either COSVN or a military region headquarter. The divisional signal organization consists of a signal section of 5 or 6 men subordinate to the military staff. Subordinate to the division signal section is a signal battalion consisting of a radio company divided into 2 platoons, a wire company of 2 platoons, and a messenger company of 2 platoons.

7. Regiment.

a. The regiment may be subordinate to the region headquarters or to a regular division and operate as a unit or as separate battalions. The, regiment, like the military region, is supported by a signal section.

8. Battalion.

a. Infantry battalions are assigned to the military regions both as organic units within the regiments and divisions, and as separate units. A signal platoon is organic to each battalion. The lack of standardization in the NVA/VC signal organization is most evident at the battalion level, where a signal platoon is authorized. In actual practice this platoon varies from a 4-man radio cell to a full-size platoon of 50 to 60 men.

B. Signal Tactics and Techniques

1. General. Although the NVA/VC signal equipment does not approach the degree of refinement attained by the US and her allies, it does function and serve their needs. When one notes the variety of their equipment, which has been manufactured in such countries as Communist China, the Soviet Union, and Czechoslovakia and considers the fact that some of it dates back to WW II he can appreciate some of the problems facing the enemy. Despite these shortcomings, the NVA/VC have made very effective use of their communications personnel and equipment. They have developed effective techniques for employing his communication personnel and equipment. Realizing the importance of communications they guard it well. Nothing is discarded which may prove useful for future operations especially those items necessary for the maintenance and repair of his equipment. They salvage and put to excellent use items such as batteries which have been discarded by Free World Forces after they have served their minimum hours of operation. They constantly study methods and capitalize on weaknesses, breaches of security procedures and impatience, especially when under stress of the Allied Forces.



2. Location of the Unit Headquarters and Signal Support element.

a. During combat the unit's signal support generally is located to the rear of the unit headquarters. In a base location the signal support element is located in a secure area selected by the support unit's Chief of Operations Section, who is advised by the Signal Staff Chief.

b. The unit's radio station normally is not located with the unit's headquarters in order to preclude hostile actions against the headquarters upon discovery of the radio station by enemy direction finders. Telephones and messengers are employed between the headquarters and organic signal support units.

d. Runners are used to carry messages between headquarters. Regimental radio operators normally are in stationary positions because communication between regiment and battalion is by telephone and messenger. Voice transmissions are employed as follow-ups.

4. Unit Headquarters and Signal Support Locations During Ambush.

b. During an ambush involving a regiment operating independently of a division headquarters, the division headquarters will not operate a division forward CP. Communications requirements are reduced accordingly.

7. Radio techniques.

Voice radio communications normally are used only under combat conditions. Continuous wave (CW) is used from regiment to division and higher headquarters.

Under normal conditions, radio stations are moved every 5 to 7 days within the designated signal area. Thus, the regiment and division radio stations are the only ones which move, because primary communication between regiment and battalion is by land line.

While moving, the signal element is located in the centre of the moving column. Sometimes, when a regiment is operating both forward and rear headquarters during an engagement the rear headquarters moves into its positions several days to 2 weeks prior to the attack and will maintain normal communications with the division during the movement of the regiment rear and other regiment units. This is done to prevent enemy communications intelligence from finding out that the regiment is moving. Instructions to move are issued from the support unit by runner or telephone. Radio equipment is always placed in camouflage trenches or in heavy foliage areas. Antenna are normally located at least 5 metres from the radio.

Radio transmissions are scheduled 2 to 3 times a day.

10.2.2.1 NVA/VC Signal Organisations – Australian TAOR

The following examples of the signal organisations of some of the units operating within the Australian TAOR were contained as Annexes in the document.

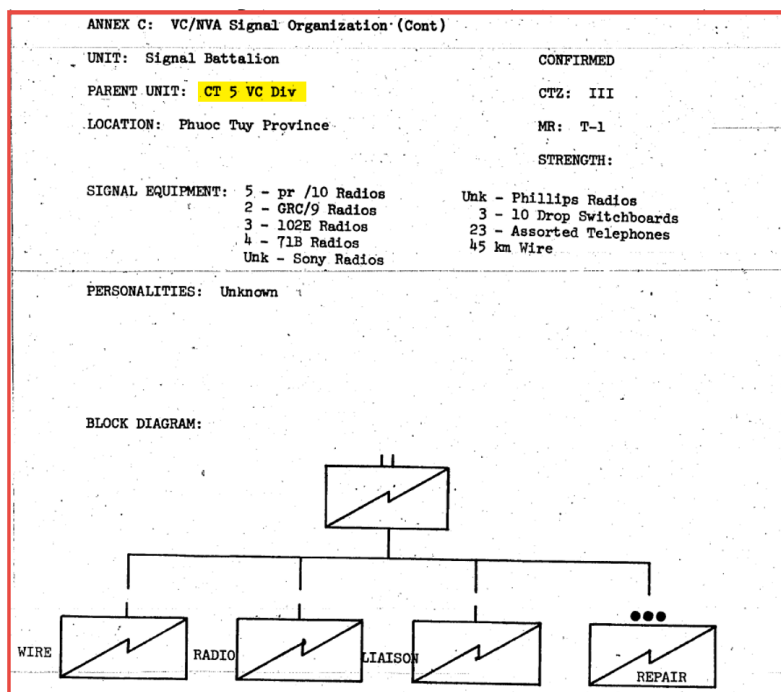


Figure 47: Signal Battalion 5 VC Div Communications

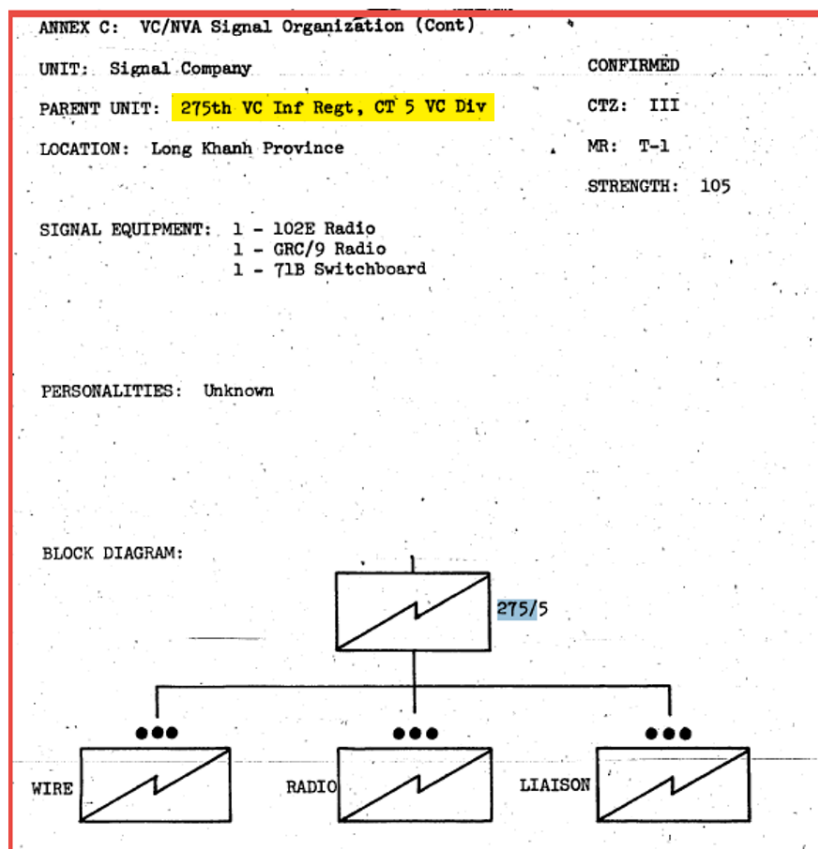


Figure 48: Signal Company 275 Regt

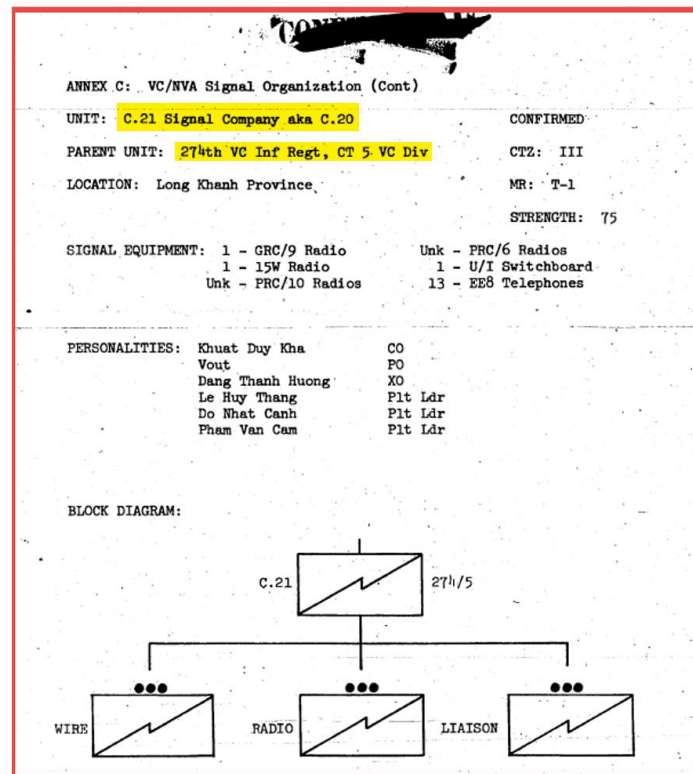


Figure 49: Signal Company 274 Regt

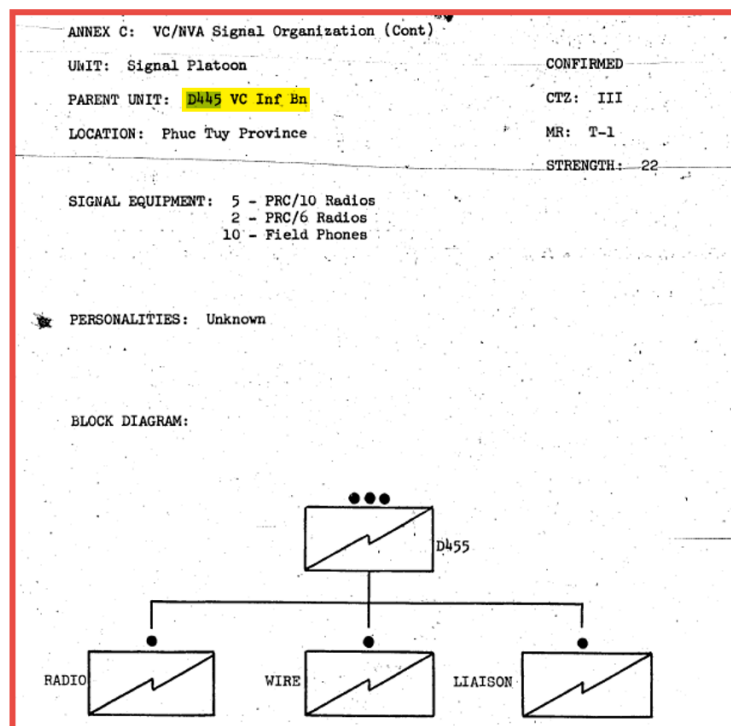


Figure 50: Signal Platoon D445 Bn



Document 2 is an *Interrogation Report of Sergeant Do Van On of the 36th Regiment – captured 14 September 1969*¹⁵⁰. The report contains information pertaining to the communication systems used by the 36th Regiment. Although the 36th Regiment did not operate in the Australian AO it can be assumed that all the operating procedures and characteristic are similar to those used by all enemy units.

DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE INTELLIGENCE INFORMATION		DECLASSIFIED
NOTE: This document contains information affecting the national defense of the United States within the meaning of the espionage laws, Title 18, U.S.C., Sec. 793 and 794. The transmission or the revelation of its contents in any manner to an unauthorized person is prohibited by law. CONFIDENTIAL (Classification and Control Marking)		Authority <i>NND 96 7002</i> By <i>MC</i> NARA Date <i>8/1</i> This report contains unprocessed information. Plans and/or policies should not be evolved or modified solely on the basis of this report.
1. COUNTRY: VS, I CTZ, QUANG NAM Prov	8. REPORT NUMBER: 6 029 0067 70	
2. SUBJECT: (U) Communications Systems of the 36th Regt, 14th Front	9. DATE OF REPORT: 14 Jan 70 <i>024 407</i>	
3. ISC NUMBER: 736.100 585.000 666.000 585.300 742.000 669.000 763.000 771.000 668.000 667.000	10. NO. OF PAGES: 14	
4. DATE OF INFORMATION: 14 Sep 69	11. REFERENCES: DIRM: 1G3g, 10aa, 1H3k; 1J25, 1LL, 1M2aa, 1M3, 1P11a, 1P11b, 1P11c, 1Q	
5. PLACE AND DATE OF ACQ: CMIC, SAIGON, VS 16 Dec 69	12. ORIGINATOR: US Element, CMIC, USMACV	
6. EVALUATION: SOURCE <u>F</u> INFORMATION <u>6</u>	13. PREPARED BY: JOSEPH S. MARTINEAU SP5, USA	
7. SOURCE: PW Interrogation	14. APPROVING AUTHORITY: <i>[Signature]</i> W. H. BEARDSLEY LTC, USA Dir, US Elm, CMIC	
15. SUMMARY: (C) EVALUATION AND FURTHER GUIDANCE IS REQUESTED FROM USIND AGENCIES. This report contains information pertaining to the communication systems used by the 36th Regt, 14th Front to include missions, activities, equipment, and personalities of the various signal organizations within the regiment; commo nets, equipment and accessory specifications, call signs, authentication procedures, frequencies, transmission times, radio team member responsibilities, and radio sites of the 15w and 2w radios; telephone and messenger communications; a comparison of systems; and maintenance and supply. Of interest is limited information concerning the Crypto Sect, Military Staff, 36th Regt, and its activities; VC/NVA monitoring of Allied communications; and Morse code training received by source in NVN.		(Leave Blank)

Figure 51: Interrogation Report - Front Page

An extract of the basic procedures follows:

Transmission Procedures:

1. *Call Signs and authentication.* Monthly frequency and call sign schedules for the 15w^[151] and 2v^[152] radios were sent to the 36th Regt from the 44th Front by runner. The Radio Ass [assistant] of the Sig Sect [section] received these schedules and was responsible for disseminating them to the various radio teams in the regiment. Each 15w radio station was assigned daily primary and secondary call signs, a daytime receiving frequency, and a night time, or alternate, receiving frequency. The schedule included different call signs and frequencies for each day of the month. Call signs always consisted of three letter groups. During transmission, a primary call sign was used to identify the transmitting station and a secondary call sign to identify the receiving station. For example, when station 'A' transmitted to station 'B', the primary call sign of station 'A' and the secondary call sign of station 'B' were used. However, when station 'B' acknowledged the transmission, the primary call sign of station 'B' and the secondary call sign of station 'A' were used.

¹⁵⁰ <http://www.virtual.vietnam.ttu.edu/cgi-bin/starfetch.exe?xOjw4peGa8sGpd11DbD0@.HHW5FiWX.xYgVouvbxsw5my.mtAsVGx7oU4yLomzLdwH9HNxF6adnAF1A.gThWVcn@kDTsD8aeKjDoQgfTFF0/11271007002.pdf>

¹⁵¹ Chicom Radio 102E - see Annex C.

¹⁵² K-63 - see Annex C.



This system of alternating call signs provided an effective means of radio transmission authentication. No other authentication system was used by source's unit.

2. Frequencies and Transmission Times. The 15w radio had three bands; 2500 to 3200 kilocycles, 3200 to 5200 kilocycles, and 5200 to 12000 kilocycles. Transmissions conducted by the 36th Regt were normally included in the range of 4000 to 7000 kilocycles. Both the day (0700 to 1900 hours) and the night time frequencies were changed daily as specified by the 44th Front in the monthly schedule. If interference was detected during a transmission, the alternate frequency was used. If interference was again detected on the alternate frequency, the 44th Front operator transmitted a new frequency to the 36th Regt by code, broke contact and reopened the net on the new frequency. Communication times between the 44th Front and the 36th Regt varied daily, but normally were from 0800 to 1200 hours.

Note:

The authors have not been able to find any record or recollection by ex-members of 547 Sig Tp, of these documents ever being available at the Troop. The information contained in the documents would have made the search, identification and intercept of NVA/VC units much easier.



10.3 NVA/VC Communication Targets

10.3.1 Main Targets for 547 Sig Tp

The main communication targets of interest that were known to be currently operating in 1 ATF AO were:

- HQ Military Region 7¹⁵³
- 5 VC Division
- 274 Regiment¹⁵⁴
- 275 Regiment
- D440 Local Force Battalion¹⁵⁵
- D445 Local Force Battalion¹⁵⁶
- Local Force Companies¹⁵⁷
- 84 Rear Services Group¹⁵⁸
- Lower level intelligence/support units¹⁵⁹.
- Later HQ 33 NVA Infantry Regiment was included.

10.3.2 Case Notations

All links/nets/groups when identified or under development, were assigned a Case Notation¹⁶⁰. The majority of targets intercepted by 547 Sig Tp were initially notated VNGB and later the Sigint authorities changed the VN (Vietnam) to VC and the G (Guerrilla) to M to differentiate between North and South Vietnam forces. e.g., VCMB¹⁶¹. VN was restricted to South Vietnam forces only. Example of full notation and identity. VCMB 05437 = HQ 274 VC Regt to 3 Bns.

¹⁵³ The Cental Office for South Vietnam (COSVN) divided SVN into Military Regions for command and control. MR7 (previously MR1) Ba Long Province HQ and subsequently Baria Sub-Region. 547 Sig Tp was primarily responsible for the area that 1 ATF operated.

¹⁵⁴ The 274 and 275 Regiments, were part of the VC 5th Division and operated principally in the Bien Hoa, Phước Tuy and Long Khánh provinces. The Regiments consisted of a headquarters and three battalions totaling about 1,500 men, recruited from outside the area of their operation supplemented by North Vietnamese Army regulars. Each battalion of the regiments consisted of a HQ, three rifle companies and a heavy weapons company. The regimental HQs had eight supporting companies equipped with 82 mm mortars, 12.7 mm heavy machine guns and 75 mm recoilless rifles and communications, transport, medical and engineer companies.

¹⁵⁵ D440 Bn was, 350 to 400 strong, based in the Phuoc Tuy–Long Khanh border area astride Route 2.

¹⁵⁶ D445 also of 350 to 400 strong, based in the south–east of Phuoc Tuy.

¹⁵⁷ C23, the Xuyen Moc District Company, 30 strong; C25, the Long Dat District Company, 110 strong; and C41, the Chau Duc District Company, 110 strong.

¹⁵⁸ 84 RSG was responsible for providing logistic support to all VC/NVA units in the area.

¹⁵⁹ Vung Tau City Unit, The Vung Tau Guerrilla Unit, military intelligence detachments.

¹⁶⁰ <http://aei.pitt.edu/46893/1/Development.of.Surveillance.Vol.2-5.pdf>: At an early stage, if it is not inherent in the selection of the message or conversation each intercepted signal or channel will be described in standard “case notation”. Case notation first identifies the countries whose communications have been intercepted, usually by two letters. A third letter designates the general class of communications: C for commercial carrier intercepts, D for diplomatic messages, P for police channels, etc. A fourth letter designates the type of communications system (such as S for multi-channel). Numbers then designate particular links or networks. Use of a letter followed by four figures denotes a temporary notation.

https://www.eff.org/files/2014/06/23/guidelines_for_the_classification_of_nsa_sigint_details_1945-1967.pdf. **RASIN – (U) Radio Signal Notation (RASIN)** – A notation assigned permanently and jointly by DIRNSA headquarters to a signal after basic signal characteristics have been verified by NSA/CSS or Second Party signals analysts.

¹⁶¹ For example, VCMB 05407 could equate to Viet Cong, Military, Hand Speed Morse, HQ 5 VC Div to 275 Regiment.



10.4 Progress/Monthly Reports

10.4.1 Overview

Documentation supplied by ASD in December 2015 and now available on the ASD Web Page¹⁶² include several Progress and Monthly Reports. The first Progress Report is dated 29 June 1966. Unfortunately, there are several Progress/Monthly Reports missing¹⁶³.

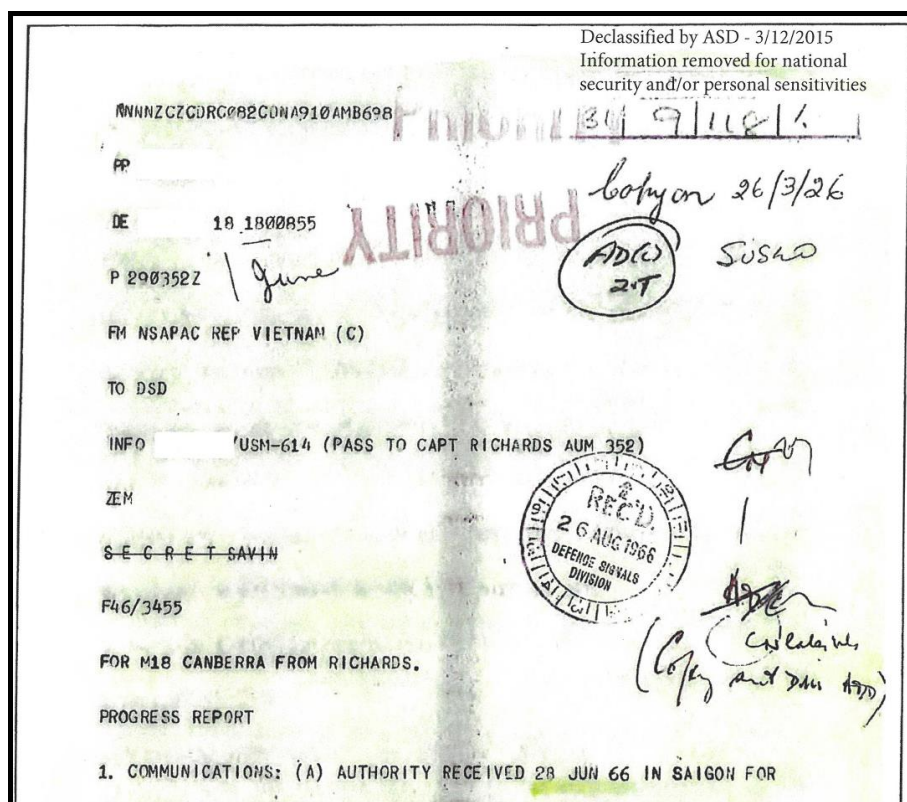


Figure 52: Example of Progress Reports Available

10.4.1.1 Progress Report June 1966

The following are pertinent extracts from the 547 Sig Tp Progress Report dated 29 June 1966¹⁶⁴:

FOR CANBERRA FROM RICHARDS.
PROGRESS REPORT
1. COMMUNICATIONS:

¹⁶² <https://www.asd.gov.au/about/history/declassified>.

¹⁶³ The majority of the following Progress Reports have been transcribed.

¹⁶⁴ Documents received from ASD December 2015. It is worthy to note that the Progress Report was sent from NSAPAC REP VIETNAM to DSD Info USM614 (Pass to Capt Richards AUM 352). The signal has the hand written note 'copy sent to DMI ADD'. It can be assumed that at this time, the circuit from 547 Sig Tp was not operable.



(A) AUTHORITY RECEIVED 28 JUN 66 IN SAIGON FOR ISSUE OF FIVE KW7¹⁶⁵ EQPTS TO ADSU¹⁶⁶ (EXTRA TWO ASKED FOR BY NRV (C)¹⁶⁷ BECAUSE OF FAILURE RATE DUE APPARENTLY TO OVERHEATING. IT WILL TAKE A FEW MORE DAYS FOR ACTUAL RECEIPT OF EQPTS KEY LIST ETC BEFORE DATE CAN BE SET TO OPEN COMMS.

(B) AM BORROWING TWO TMSTG¹⁶⁸ EQPTS FROM USM-614 (17TH [sic] RR BN AT 2FFV)¹⁶⁹ TO ESTB OLC¹⁷⁰ SIMPLEX OVER RADIO RELAY (PROBABLY TWO CHANNELS WILL BE ALLOCATED ON IATF AN/TRC 24¹⁷¹ REAR LINK TO 2FFV FOR ALTERNATE DUPLEX WORKING).

(C) CY OPS¹⁷² DUE TO FINISH FAMILIARISATION LOG AT USM-614 30 JUN 66.

2. MF¹⁷³ INTERCEPT:

(A) **COMMENCED OPERATING 2-3 POSITIONS 24 JUN 66 ON DIRECTED SEARCH** BASED ON TECHNICAL DATA SUPPLIED BY USM-626¹⁷⁴. INFO AND LOGS BEING SENT TO USM-614 BY HELICOPTER FOR IDENT AND STEERAGE PURPOSES ONLY AT MOMENT.

(B) BIG PROBLEM IS ERECTING AERIALS ABOVE RUBBER TREES TO OBTAIN A REASONABLE SIGNAL. PHYSICAL SECURITY PROBLEMS PREVENT ANY CHANGE IN LOCATION YET.

(C) WILL USE AUST DAILY SDS¹⁷⁵ HELICOPTER SERVICE FOR DELIVERING OF RAW TAKE TO USM-614. WHEN COMMS ESTB WILL INITIALLY SEND DAILY TECSUM AND THEN BUILD UP TO SELECTED RAW INFO PLUS REPORT. CONFIRMATION COPIES OF ALL RAW INFO WILL GO BY LOG.

D. AM USING F SIGS 48 AND 49¹⁷⁶ INITIALLY BUT WILL CHANGE TO NS¹⁷⁷ FORMAT AND TYPING AS SIX COPIES OF RAW TAKE WILL BE REQD.

¹⁶⁵ <https://www.cryptomuseum.com/crypto/usa/kw7/index.htm> KW-7 was a highly secure on-line cipher machine, developed by the US National Security Agency (NSA) around 1960, and built by Honeywell in Tampa (Florida, USA). The device was used for low level tactical offline teleprinter traffic.



¹⁶⁶ Possibly expanded to Australian Direct Support Unit.

¹⁶⁷ Expansion unknown.

¹⁶⁸ Ibid.

¹⁶⁹ USM-614 is noted in several documents as being 303rd ASA Bn Bien Hoa.

¹⁷⁰ On Line Cypher.

¹⁷¹ The AN/TRC-24 is a transportable VHF/UHF-FM radio set (Radio Relay) which operates in six frequency bands. Various antennas are used as required for the different frequency bands.

¹⁷² Cypher Operators.

¹⁷³ Medium Frequency.

¹⁷⁴ USM-626 3rd RRU Bien Hoa.

¹⁷⁵ Signal Despatch Service.

¹⁷⁶ FSigs 48 = Wireless Log Form, FSigs 49 = Message Form.

¹⁷⁷ Expansion unknown.



3. ARDF:

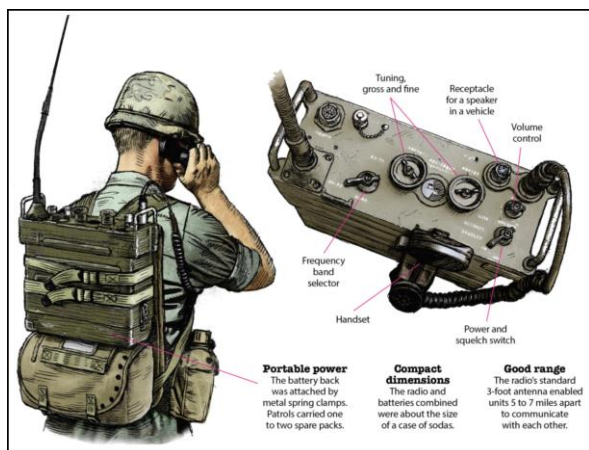
(A) AIRCRAFT EQUIPPED AT MOMENT WITH AN/VRC44¹⁷⁸ WHICH APPARENTLY IS INCOMPATIBLE WITH PRC 25¹⁷⁹. WILL TRY OUR SET BUT IF NO SUCCESS CAN BORROW AN/VRC 12 FROM USM-614.

(B) AIRCRAFT GRADUALLY CHANGING TO AN/VRC 54 WHICH IS COMPATIBLE WITH PRC 25. BY REVNTING¹⁸⁰ SET TO NUI DAT FEATURE (1,000 METERS AWAY) AND USING RC292 GROUND PLANE ANTENNA¹⁸¹ EXPECT TO COVER PHUOC TUY PROVINCE. NRV (C) COMMS

¹⁷⁸ The VRC-12 series includes the VRC-12 and VRC-43 to 49. which consist of various combinations of three basic components, two receiver-transmitter models, the RT-246 and the RT-524, and an auxiliary receiver, the R-442. The RT-246 can select one of ten frequencies preset by the operator. The operator has to select each frequency manually on the RT-524, which has a built-in loudspeaker in the space occupied by push buttons on the RT-246. The RT-524 was developed primarily for use in vehicles where the operator could reach the control panel easily;



¹⁷⁹ The AN/PRC-25 was the most widely used radio set in Vietnam war by the US troops. The radio is a light weight Synthesised VHF man-pack, solid state. 2 Watts power output. The radio provides 920 channels in 2 VHF frequency bands 30-52.95 MHz, and 53-75.95 MHz FM, channel spacing 50 KHz. Requires 12.5-15 Volts DC @800 ma and 3 Volts DC for tube heater voltage. Frequency selection by front panel knobs, frequency display by digital mechanical read-out.



¹⁸⁰ Unknown – possibly 'remoting'.

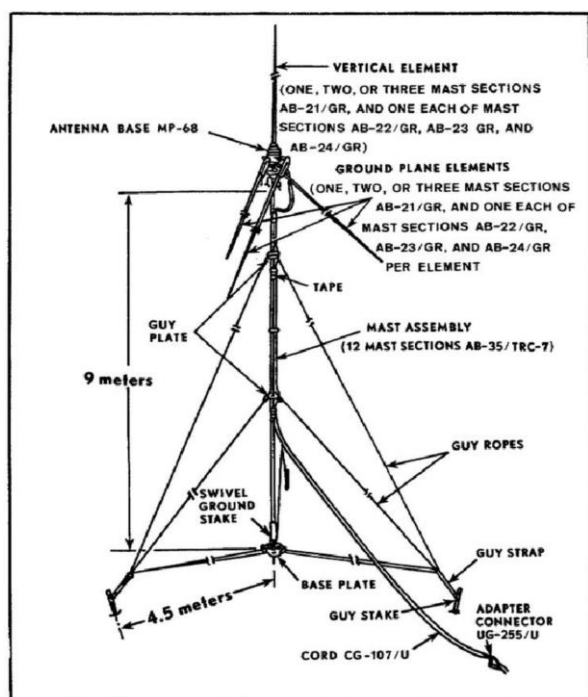
¹⁸¹ RC-292 is a light weight antenna set with a 30 foot mast and an antenna that could be configured for use from 20 to 76 MHz in several bands.



OFFICER WOULD LIKE TO SEE ME EQUIPPED WITH AN/VRC 47 (50 W OUTPUT) VEHICLE MOUNTED AS WELL AS ABOVE TRAVEL WITH TAC HQ OF 1ATF. DUE TO LACK OF MANPOWER TENTATIVE PLAN IS TO SANITIZE ARDF PLOTS RECEIVED AT 1 ATF BASE HQ AND FWD OVER HOT WIRE TO COMD IF REQUIRED. IF 1ATF MOVES OUTSIDE PHUOC TUY (NOT ENVISAGED FOR SOME TIME YET) THEN WILL RETHINK.

4. INTENTION INITIALLY IS TO CO-LOCATE WHOLE DET AT IATF WITH LIASION VISIT BY OC, ANALYSTS, RS¹⁸², TO USM-614 AND NRV (C) WHEN COLLECTING KEY LISTS, COMUS PADS FOR ARDF ETC,

5. NPV (C) HAS ENABLED COMPLETE ACCESS TO ALL AVAILABLE INFO BY BRINGING VARIOUS EXPERTS OVER FROM USM-626 TO HIS OFFICE TO BRIEF US. COOPERATION AND HELP HAS BEEN SUPERB. FURTHER, NRV (C) IS ALLOCATING HIS TOP ANALYST TO AUM 352 FOR TWO WEEKS TO ASSIST US FROM APPROX 14 JULY 1/6.



¹⁸² Radio Supervisor.



10.4.2 COMUS Pads

COMUS One Time Encryption/Decryption Pads were issued by NSA to transmit ARDF results over non-encrypted circuits.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 0	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 0
FREQUENCY G J F H I D A E B C	CALL SIGN UV64K8082-EJ70G5NYTSAB1ZRXHWI90PCMF3
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 0	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 0
A B I J E G H C D F	ABCEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ0123456789
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 0	FM1DTA5ZC4SYB86WDX2E97PRLHK3S1JGOVNU
G F I H J A E D C B	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 0
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 0	ABCEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ0123456789
D I H C G F A E B J	9WL7DUZMTSPCHSEK48NIF1B23G6VXYQJ8DRA
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 0	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 0
C E B F H I J A G D	ABCEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ0123456789
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 0	KLOX54ZSVIABF2CYRQH0118DPGTUNJ9E76W4
A B C D E F G H I J K L M N O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9	64ENCUI2G582DY7XTVRF53QCMLBHWBKAP1J
TRACKING M S G E D X C O G V U 9 A T H Z I 0 B N K J 3 F Z Y R 5 P K 7 1 8 4 6 L	
BRG RPT	
A SUKTP LFXVSGRKNH LZDSITAEXN OHULXANKGEB	QCBUS4PFH-D VJTFIQCSMD TAJOMSEYECWZ A
0123N 0123456789N 0123456789N 0123456789N	1234567890G 10123456789 0123456789N
B OCKRZ FDCJSPMCIUL DMSGONORJE SIZDBWLCAEV	KLWTFPCUYKX JGAFUQYMRP ZARXVTENBYO B
C XNIOU OPESVBJLKT PJMOCANFYUSC MSIOEZCURDG	GCV4ZTDKEXR LWNKFPQVB WRYZMOUDCAG C
0123N 0123456789N 0123456789N 0123456789N	1234567890G 10123456789 0123456789N
D INMRZ OYDSTUWRACQ YUWIDZXGHPA FYHOPTDMUIB	FCLMTSNOCRE SNRACXQVZLE KGBEFNZMPJV D
E PSLMV FXHRTIYAOJC JYTMHVEAQB KESCJZHNEEDN	LXGCZCPFRS! UNCFQIXYVGT WNPKEVQUMBG E
0123N 0123456789N 0123456789N 0123456789N	1234567890G 10123456789 0123456789N
F YTGIU LWSZONDAOH XNCKEUQYIOH FWKESRJIVYQ	VJMTWBALDF HTUADNLMBCZ KFTCVIYBJEP F
G YNEBI UCQKRGPI MJ D JVRITWZLYHK GKEJCFDTPYS	NQX85UEDCAS MILOCZURHNV TFBZVEYHOWX G
0123N 0123456789N 0123456789N 0123456789N	1234567890G 10123456789 0123456789N
H NRLVQ YSKFGAWEQBP FHCLYDGGEXB AINYPWFQUTG	UPJT!!IKCRA OLEXSMBCDZJ TUVCDQNHXM H
I MURXI QHWDEGYRZBC WIGFZUTXMHK AKUBHYHREFI	AOLNYPDS-V QNPSZLDTXVD MAJIVPXNEST I

Figure 53: COMUS ARDF Pad example¹⁸³

10.5 US Reporting and ARDF Support

Capt Richards Reported¹⁸⁴:

The nature and type of Sigint end-product from U.S. sources. Well the predominant one is the series of ARDF fixes that are passed. Now, we get the tip off here. Well first of all, summarise ARDF. Every Monday I put in a request for ARDF, just nominating whether I want close tactical support or Comint development. Under close tactical support, I've got to quote the name of an operation, what area it is in, and then request that the following units be covered within that area. Those requests are coordinated from the 1st Division, 25th Division, 173rd Brigade, by II Force(V) [sic – II Field Force (V)] and consolidated and passed onto MACV. MACV then allocate the aircraft for the week commencing the following Saturday. Now, so far we have been extremely fortunate in that every day we have had an aircraft over our area, and particularly when we had this big contact with the 275th Regiment and they then moved in the 173rd Brigade and a few other people to sort out PHUOC TUY Province. We had anything up to 3 or 4 aircraft over our area on one particular day. So from the point of view of getting a good continuous series of ARDF fixes, we have been extremely fortunate. Now as you have probably seen from the report I've forwarded (and I will cover this a bit later with DF in general) it has been found that ARDF has been found wanting so far as its accuracy is concerned, and hence from the point of view of just using DF fixes as pure intelligence as a tactical aid it has been rather difficult, because, unless I got 2 or 3 fixes on successive days running, in the same area or if I am fortunate enough to get two aircraft in the area on the one day and they both fix the same transmitter at the same time and both put in the one area, well then I can cut down the radius of error which I would

¹⁸³ https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/Category:NSA_one-time_pads

¹⁸⁴ ASD archives. See full transcript at Annex F and now available at <https://www.asd.gov.au/about/history/declassified>. Transcript of Trevor Richards Interview (PDF)



normally put on about 5 to 6 kilometers down to probably a more reasonable figure as quoted by pilots. It has been found that some of their fixes are spot on, but some of them are way out, and this is obviously to do with their training scheme of trying to increase the number of pilots they've got and operators in this particular field. Hence when I am talking to the Brigadier when I get a flash tip-off from an aero plane, the Brigadier says to me "Well is this on spot-on or is it off" and I just don't know therefore you just have to assume it's an area fix of somewhere within a 5 or 6 kilometre area. Hence if we get a collection of transmitters which all appear to be in one area, the Brigadier has then been using this cluster of transmitters and watching which direction the general clutter of transmitters move, whether it's down towards him or away. And using ARDF in this form as a positive dead-sure piece of intelligence, rather than individually trying to assess the value of a particular fix. As such has proved extremely valuable, because at the moment, we have all VC transmitters and so on well away from our TOR ¹⁸⁵ or the area of responsibility; and as such can start to breathe slightly again.

...it has been impossible up to now to pin down to battalion level where each of the battalions and various regiment are at- at least we have been able to give him indicators as to the fact that a Regiment is coming towards us or going away from us. As such the Commander has found this valuable, or so he has stated. These fixes are produced in the time frame to make it valuable.

10.5.1 Special Agent Reports

Capt Richards Reported¹⁸⁶:

*...along this line I had cleared with NSAPAC Rep that the way they handle action-on information up here is quite simple in that all ARDF fixes, on which nearly all American operations are based, are issued out over normal intelligence channels as **SPARS** as a special agent report. This SPAR is given a man's name for example Mike, Jim, John etc. All unidentified fixes are given a code name of Fred, these are passed over the normal intelligence channels to the normal intelligence staff, and, as such, nobody is to tie in the fact that, for example, Rob or Robby is the 274th Regiment. It's just the fact that a military unit called ROB is located at grid reference so and so. This wasn't entirely satisfactory, so I went back to NSAPAC to get this one sorted out on a visit, and they asked me there what my ideas were on action—on, and I just said straight out "well there are two ways out of it; one, due to the fact there is absolutely no collateral whatsoever up here really of any use whatsoever in passing on Sigint, to get your information out in a special case when an operation comes up, all you can do is to just baldly state the fact that the 275th Regiment was last located at such and such a grid reference without quoting any source whatsoever. Secondly if you do happen to be fortunate enough to have any form of collateral whatsoever, then you can up-grade this collateral, as most ARVN reports are graded F6, from F6 say up to a C3 or a B2 report" and this is the way it has been working and has been okayed by NSAPAC REP. This is the reason why in that intelligence summary, the Americans were not particularly perturbed about the actual information in the document, just the fact that the information appeared to be tied down to the fact that the words "VC transmissions" was used in the summary.*

¹⁸⁵ Probably TAOR – Tactical Area of Responsibility.

¹⁸⁶ ASD archives. See full transcript at Annex F and now available at <https://www.asd.gov.au/about/history/declassified/Transcript>. Transcript of Trevor Richards Interview (PDF)



10.5.2 SPARs Received at HQ 1ATF

The 1ATF Commander's Diary [TF Master and Ops/AQ Log] for May 1966¹⁸⁷ indicate that SPARs¹⁸⁸ (Special Agent Reports) were being received at HQ 1ATF from HQ MACVCC¹⁸⁹ on 29 May. This was prior to 547 Sig Tp becoming operational. These reports were most probably based on ARDF Fixes received from USAF aircraft.

HQ 1 AUST TF MASTER OPS/AQ LOG						Sheet No. 19
Period		To				
Ser	Date	From	To	Orig No	Message or Detail	Remark
ial	Time					
109	291030H	MACVCC			SPAR REPORT NUMBER ONE 29 MAY 1966	
110	291620H	S RAR			4 TRUCKS PREVIOUSLY ASKED FOR ARE REQUIRED AS SOON AS POSSIBLE AT S RAR ECHELON	
111	291701H		S RAR		4 TRUCKS DESPATCHED FROM 1 COY RAASC to S RAR	
112	291905H	MACVCC			SPAR REPORT NUMBER THREE 29 MAY 66	
113	291910H	AAFY		6 6491	1 ATF 0667 OF 280730Z, 1 ALSO 61072 OF 290325Z, AIR MOVT. FOL IS DETAILS OF AIR MOVT MON 30 MAY GNN HELI FLT 05. 0800 GNN CAPT HACKENZIE GNN W02 LAING GNN MAJ EVANS GNN MAJ BARLOW ARRIVE VUNG TAU STRIP. TPT REQUIRED. 0800 PICK UP MAJ GREY GNN W0 BARKLEY GNN W0 DAKIN GNN 580T BUCKLE. DROPH002 BARKLEY AT 2 F FORCE V GNN CONTINUE TO TAN SON NHUT. 1530 PICK UP W02 BROOME TAN SON NHUT GNN 1545 PICK UP W02 BARKLEY AT 2 F FORCE V GNN CONTINUE TO VUNG TAU. 1600 PICK UP MAJ EVANS GNN MAJ BURLOW 1630 DROP OFF TAN SON NHUT. TIMES LOCAL	
114	292015H	MACVCC			SPAR REPORT NUMBER FOUR, 29 MAY 66.	
115	292015	MACVCC			SPAR REPORT NUMBER SIX, 29 MAY 66.	

Figure 54: Example of SPAR Reports being received

¹⁸⁷ AWM 95, 1/4/1 HQ 1ATF Narrative Duty Officer's Log Annexes [1-31 May 1966].

¹⁸⁸ The US Army adopted a method of sanitisation to enable the passing of intelligence gained by US Sigint sources to commanders, intelligence and operations Staff not cleared to officially receive Sigint information. The process of sanitisation involved removing all of the externals and internals of signals and reports that gave details or any indication of how and where the intelligence was gathered. This was meant to protect the source of the material and not hamper the flow of intelligence. These sanitised reports were referred to as Special Agent Reports (SPAR).

Later also referred to as 'Usually Reliable Source' (URS).

<http://www.a2zcomputerworks.com/asa/asapgs/hg04.html> 404th Radio Research Detachment (Airborne) 173d Airborne Brigade) *The ARDF source and success also had to be concealed, but unlike SI information, ARDF reports were handled as Department of Defense Secret material and could be passed directly to any officer or noncommissioned officer using a security caveat called a "protected usually reliable source." In military argot, ARDF was "sanitized" to conceal the real source. So the sanitized locations, often plotted to battle maps as a dot or sometimes including a radius of error, were attributed to a usually reliable source or abbreviated URS. Anyone with a whit of imagination quickly learned that "usually reliable source" was a synonym for airborne direction finding. Cluttering this combat intelligence with nonsense did little to hide the source and often confused inexperienced combat staff.*

¹⁸⁹ Later SPARs came from MACVCC and 2FFV. Unfortunately, there are no copies of the SPARs. It is most probable that the full classified versions were passed to 547 Sig Tp on their secure circuit.



CHAPTER 11 – INTERCEPT OPERATIONS

11.1 Initial Intercept

11.1.1 Intercept Activities

Wherever possible and when not employed on operational and administrative tasks, operators assigned to the Set Room conducted intercept activities. The communications systems used by the VC and NVA were vastly different from the types of transmissions that they were familiar with and no training material was available. This meant that there had to be a significant 'on the job' training program. Due to their previous overseas employment and experience, operators quickly adapted to the target intricacies.

11.1.2 Early Results

Eric Grace related¹⁹⁰:

Our Op Sigs rapidly proved their worth and within a fortnight we had completely recovered 5 Div and were providing more accurate info than that received through the Comcen ¹⁹¹.

He also added:

The Recovery of 5 Div wasn't as easy as it sounds, there were literally hundreds of VC transmissions between 4 and 7 Mcs [MHz] and the material we were given was hopeless. Besides the Operator covering the Control Station, you needed at least one other Operator searching for the matching Outstation.

After we had recovered 5 Div, we still had problems distinguishing between the outstations of 274 Regt and 275 Regt and fortunately for us we were able to confirm who was who well prior to Long Tan.

11.1.3 DODO

One early intercept stood out. Soon after commencing operations, 547 Sig Tp operators intercepted a loud (in signal strength) unidentified transmission that was sending low-level code traffic. The signal strength indicated that the station may be close to Nui Dat. Decrypted messages indicated (reporting on Allied vehicle traffic travelling along Route 15) that the station was probably a Military Intelligence Element located in the Nui Dinh Mountains. It eventuated that the station was of particular interest to the US authorities¹⁹². Locating the transmitter became a lengthy process and involved several operations. The operator of the station was given the nickname of DODO by Sigint operators. The full details of the operation are contained at para 13.6.

¹⁹⁰ By kind permission of the author. All Recollections that follow are taken from *547 Signal Troop in South Vietnam – The Soldiers' Perspective – Deployment, Early Days and the Lead-up to Long Tan*, by Barry Hampstead, July 2008.

¹⁹¹ This refers to the reports being issued by the US Authority.

¹⁹² Later identified as (RAD1963 outstation VNGB M7178) or LEECH (RAD 255A) control VNGB M7191.



11.1.4 Intercept Procedures

Detailed at Annex B is a description of how an Op Sig would normally carry out his daily intercept activities.

11.1.5 Radio Arbitrary Designators

During the Vietnam War all transmitters intercepted by Sigint units were identified by Radio Arbitrary Designators (RADs). RADs were primarily used as a tool of identification of transmitters to entities for analyst and operators¹⁹³.

Research indicates that there were two versions of RADs used. The following are examples of the earlier versions of RADs in the Australian TAOR:

RAD 4191A HQ 274 Regiment
RAD 4191C 1 Bn 274 Regiment
RAD 4191D 2 Bn 274 Regiment
RAD 48874 HQ COSVN RSG 84
RAD 303A Mil Int Section 5 LID
RAD 303B MI Sect element 5
RAD 196B Military Intelligence Gathering Station

In 1968, RADs, shortened to RD) were prefixed by a letter followed by four figures. Military transmitters were prefixed by the letter 'M' and political 'P'.¹⁹⁴ It is understood that 'B' was also assigned to military.

The following are examples of RADs¹⁹⁵ that were assigned to transmitters/units in and close to the Australian AO¹⁹⁶:

B4024 Long Dat Dist/Ba Long Prov
B4165 3 Bn 33 Regiment
B4888 2 Bn 33 Regiment
B4223 Long Dat Dist. Also seen as 3 Bn 274 Regiment
B5421 Ba Long Prov Tpt Gp 30
E0809 Chau Duc
E0902 U/I
E0904 U/I
E0905 U/I
E1860 2 Bn 274 Regiment
E1427 C3 MR7
I0019 Elements of MR7

¹⁹³ Several US Army documents refer to RADs with no expansion.

¹⁹⁴ In an email to Bob Hartley on 23 Sept 15, Joe Martin an ex USAF ARDF operator wrote after being questioned on RADs 'I'm quite surprised that you've uncovered links between the RAD and the TUD (True Unit Designator or Designation). I've never seen so much as a mention of either in any US document. The only one I recall is P0003 -- "Papa balls three" -- which, based on the "P", was a high-powered arm of COSVN. I always assumed that P0001 (which I actually never heard of) must've been the net from the Politburo in Hanoi direct to Moscow or Peking, but who the hell knows. I recall the "M" for military, and assume "I" was for intelligence, but beyond that I know not.' The authors are not familiar with the term TUD.

¹⁹⁵ ARDF reports title the RADs simply as 'Identity'

¹⁹⁶ Compiled from various ASD archives of 547 Sig Tp material.



I0093 Elements of MR7
 M0084 HQ 274 Regiment
 M0093 1 Bn 274 Regiment
 M0094 Ba Long Prov
 M1265 HQ MR7
 M0135 HQ 33 Regiment
 M1523 D445
 M4000 HQ 74 Arty
 M4888 2 Bn 33 Regiment
 M5908 Vung Tau Guerrillas/Ba Long Province
 P0201 Elements Ba Long Province
 P0569 MR7
 Q9972 Elements MR7
 W1816 U/I

*The following graphic illustrates the main **networks** recovered.*

It does not show the many intelligence gathering transmitters

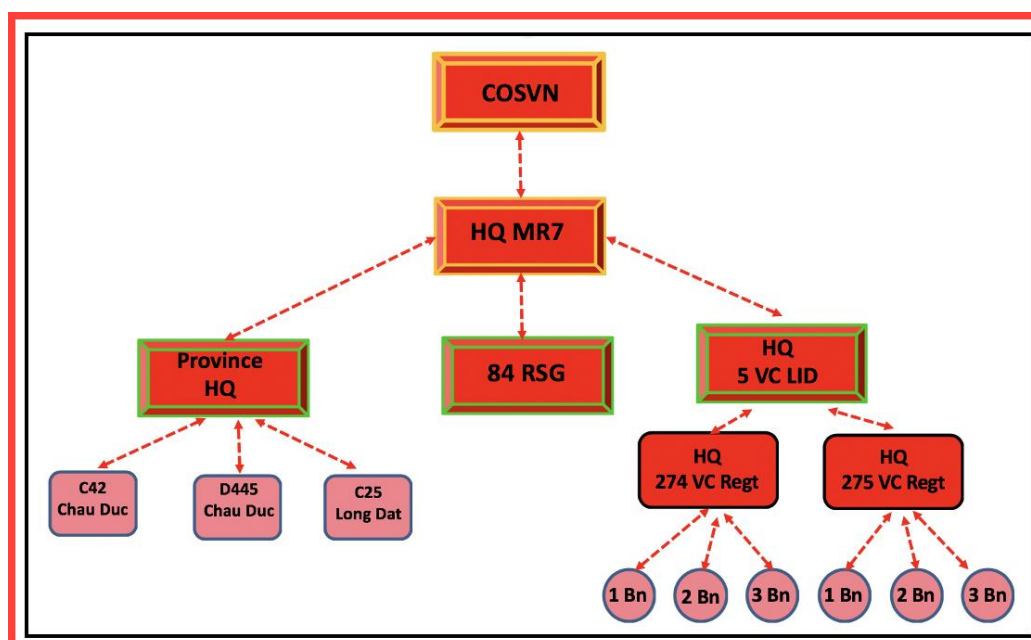


Figure 55: Recovered Networks¹⁹⁷

¹⁹⁷ COSVN = HQ Central Office for South Vietnam, MR7 = NVA/VC Military Region 7, RSG = Rear Services Group (logistics, hospitals).



11.1.6 Recovered Transmitters

All the details of the transmissions recovered by the troop were passed to the various Sigint authorities, 509th RR Gp and 303rd RR Bn. As a consequence of the excellent network recoveries, more emphasis was placed on the intercept and processing capabilities of the Troop.

11.1.7 Timeliness of Results

Operationally the Troop was committed to a role of intermediary between Allied Sigint units and HQ 1ATF. However, the Troop's intercept and analysis indicated that much of the information being received from the US Authorities was out of date.

11.1.8 5 VC Div Signal Battalion

On 2 August 1966, the acting Chief of Staff of the 5th VC Division defected to US Troops¹⁹⁸. His debriefing notes contained information on the Divisional Signal Battalion¹⁹⁹:

Bn HQ Location: Xuan Moc District, Phuoc Tuy Province YS712870.

Composition: two companies (one wireless, one telephone)

Strength: 200 Men

Equipment:

- *Three 15-watt radios,*
- *Five AN/PRC10 radios*
- *40 km of wire,*
- *25 Telephones of US, Czech and Communist China origin,*
- *Three ten-line main switchboards.*

Note: It was noted that the 15-watt instruments constantly changed their location. Fearing air observation, this element never stayed one place longer than 15 days.

11.2 US Counterparts

11.2.1 Training

547 Sig Tp was, in many respects, operationally and technically superior to its allied counterparts. The Troop possessed men with well over twenty years' experience in Sigint and who thrived on remote detachments. Other Allied forces were not so fortunate. For example, the United States Army only gave its operators a few months training and then relied heavily on 'on the job training'.

11.2.2 Interaction with HQ 1ATF

As previously mentioned (para 7.5.1), in 1966, only four people in HQ 1 ATF (Commander, a Major and Captain Intelligence Officers, and one Major Operations officer) were authorised to receive Sigint material²⁰⁰.

¹⁹⁸ Email from Ernie Chamberlain to Bob Hartley 24 February 2022.

¹⁹⁹ It is not known if this information was passed to HQ 1ATF and especially 547 Sig Tp.

²⁰⁰ The US Forces had similar problems: <http://www.a2zcomputerworks.com/asa/asapgs/hg04.html> 404th Radio Research Detachment (Airborne) 173d Airborne Brigade) Because special intelligence, or simply SI, was produced by Radio Research units, security was under the exclusive purview of the ASA. Special passes or access (called SI Clearances) were required to see or listen to SI information or to enter Radio Research facilities. All ASA personnel had SI Clearance. Usually fewer than twenty-five SI Clearances were provided personnel in the supported division (ten in a separate brigade) and those passes were restricted to senior commanders and intelligence staff based on a "need to know." In larger units like divisions and corps, special intelligence was controlled by a Special Security Officer, an SSO, commanding a small SSO detachment. Commanders of Radio Research detachments supporting separate brigades or groups, were the SSO.



The Book *Vietnam: The Australian War*²⁰¹ reported²⁰²:

Throughout Australia's war in Vietnam, a top-secret signals unit—547 Signal Troop—supplied a constant stream of electronic intelligence. In 1966, only four people in the Task Force (outside 547 Signal Troop) officially knew the source—such was the importance of preserving its integrity: Brigadier Jackson, intelligence officers Rowe and Keep, and operations officer Major Dick Hannigan.

No published army doctrine explained electronic warfare in 1966 [²⁰³]; few senior officers—and not one battalion commander—had access to it. Yet Australian signalmen were at the forefront of electronic warfare, thanks to the pioneering work of Lieutenant Colonel Col Cattnach, who elevated SIGINT from a mere US 'postbox' to a highly valued intelligence source.

Much of the Sigint material was received with scepticism as only one of the officers had had previous experience with Sigint. It was only after the Battle of Long Tan that more credence was placed on Sigint.

11.2.3 Troop Results Recognised

With closer liaison established with HQ 1 ATF it became apparent that 547 Sig Tp could perform more than an intermediary role. In fact, some US agencies began to request more of the Troop's results and soon became dependent on the Troop as a source of intelligence.

11.2.4 Strive for Perfection

The success of the Troop's intercept operations was in no small part due to the intercept operators constantly striving for perfection and working extended hours on the 'sets'. One of the greatest tools the Op Sigs had was their ability to recognise the different Morse sending styles of individual target operators and the unique sounds of their individual transmitters. This technique played a major part in the recovery of targets after frequency and callsign changes.

11.3 Intercept Receivers

11.3.1 Receiver Reliability

In the early days of the deployment, reliable intercept equipment became a problem. The HF receivers issued to the Troop before departure from Australia were the Australian-made Reception Set R5223²⁰⁴.

²⁰¹ There are many errors of fact in this book relating to 547 Sig Tp. They will be discussed in footnotes when extracts are listed in the text.

²⁰² Ham, Paul (2010-03-17). *Vietnam: The Australian War* (Kindle Locations 4016-4022). HarperCollins Publishers. Kindle Edition.

²⁰³ The term Electronic Warfare was not used openly until the mid-70s.

²⁰⁴ The R5223 is manufactured in Australia by TCA Telecommunication Company of Australia, a subsidiary of Philips. The Receiver covers 1.5 to 30.5 Mhz in 29 Bands and is suitable for CW, MCW and VOICE reception.





When the receivers were first issued to the Troop for exercises in Australia, they were given a very adverse report but were still issued. During the first five months of operation in Vietnam, many receivers had to be replaced from theatre reserves. As the Troop had no dedicated radio technician and 103 Sig Sqn technicians had very limited knowledge, no experience with the receivers, and no spare parts available, the receivers could not be maintained.

11.3.2 Canberra informed of Faulty Receivers

In-theatre Logistic superiors were informed of the faulty receivers and subsequently a signal was sent to Canberra and 1 ALSG²⁰⁵:

PRECEDENCE — ACTION PRIORITY	PRECEDENCE — INFO DEFERRED	DATE — TIME GROUP 08 1020 Z	MESSAGE INSTRUCTIONS JUL 66
From AUSTFORCE VIETNAM		PREFIX GR	
To ARMY CANBERRA		SECURITY CLASSIFICATION CONF	
Info 101 FD WKSP		ORIGINATOR'S NUMBER OPS 8076	

NEW EQUIP REQUIREMENT (.) ALFA (.) HIGH FAULT RATE EXISTS WITH
RECEPTION SET R5223 (.) FAULTS OCCURRING DETECTOR AND IF STAGES
CMM AERIAL TUNING UNIT CMM BFO CMM BAND SELECTOR AND HHE
FILTERS (.) BRAVO (.) ALMOST IMPOSSIBLE TO DIAGNOSE AND REPAIR
REPAIR FAULTS BECAUSE HANDBOOKS, MAINTENANCE MANUALS, CIRCUIT
DIAGRAMS AND PARTS LISTS ARE NOT AVAIL IN THIS THEATRE (.) IT IS
UNDERSTOOD THEY ARE NOT AVAIL IN AUST (.) CHARLIE (.) PRESENT SIT
IS CLN 3 SAS SQN 3 OF 6 EQPTS UNSERVICEABLE CMM 547 SIG TP 6 OF 8
EQPTS UNSERVICEABLE CMM 103 SIG SQN NIL OF TWO EQPTS UNSERVICE-
ABLE (.) DELTA (.) THIS AFFECTING OP CAPABILITY OF UNITS
PARTICULARLY 547 SIG TP WHICH IS NOW ALMOST INCAPABLE OF
CARRYING OUT ITS ROLE AFTER ONLY 3 WEEKS IN OPS (.) ECHO (.) IN
VIEW ABOVE REQUEST ALTERNATIVE TYPE RECEIVER BE PROVIDED
AS PRI ONE OP REQUIREMENT

Figure 56: HQ AFV Signal re Faulty Receivers #1

²⁰⁵ AWM AWM RCDIG1029039 AWM95 1/3/22 HQ AFV Commanders' Diary 1-31 July 1966.



PRECEDENCE — ACTION PRIORITY	PRECEDENCE — INFO DEFERRED	DATE — TIME GROUP 08 1020 Z	MESSAGE INSTRUCTIONS JUL 66
From AUSTFORCE VIETNAM		PREFIX GR	
To 1 ALSG NAGME		SECURITY CLASSIFICATION RESTD	
Info 1 ATF 547 SIG TP		ORIGINATOR'S NUMBER OPS 8077	
RECEPTION SETS R5223 (.) HIGH FAILURE RATE PREJUDICING OPS OF 547 SIG TP (.) UNDERSTAND 12 EQPTS EXPECTED OF JEPARIT (.) PRI ONE ISSUE OF EIGHT OF THESE TO BE MADE TO 547 SIG TP WHO ARE AUTHORISED TO HOLD THESE IN EXCESS OF ENTITLEMENT UNTIL FURTHER NOTICE			

Figure 57: HQ AFV Signal re Faulty Receivers #1

Frank Young²⁰⁶ later wrote:

Ecky [Eric Grace] ultimately managed to borrow some Collins receivers from the Yanks and that improved the situation - at least as far as the control station went but the R5223s continued to make operating less than pleasurable. Keeping in mind that Ecky had put in such a bad report about the R5223s before leaving Australia, I was always surprised that they were taken in the first place. I believe they were made by an Australian company and I suppose the Army was trying to encourage local manufacturers but they were, without doubt, the crappiest piece of equipment I'd ever used and I often wondered how they had ever been considered for SVN. Maybe I shouldn't have been surprised. There were a lot of equipment failures - right across the board - and the Australian Army learnt some harsh lessons in those early months. The message eventually got through and Major Cattnach was able to arrange for some Collins 390s/391s to be sent from Cabarlah.

11.3.3 New Receivers Sourced

Eventually the Australian Army purchased the Collins 390/391 HF Receivers²⁰⁷ and quickly dispatched them to SVN. The Collins receivers were immediately installed in the Set Room replacing every R5223.

Note:

The Collins R390/391 remained as the main receiver throughout the remainder of the deployment

²⁰⁶ Frank Young: One of the original Op Sigs.

²⁰⁷ The Collins designed R390A/URR (URR = Universal Radio Receiver) was triple superhet receiver suitable for operation in the 0.5 to 30 MHz range suitable for CW, MCW and VOICE reception.



11.3.4 Equipment Description

Detailed in Annex C is a description of all the major equipment used by the Troop and some of the enemy communications equipment captured by 1ATF and US units in the TAOR during the War.

11.4 Current Events in 1ATF

On 1 August, the Chairman of the Chief of Staffs Committee, wrote in a letter to the Minister for the Army [may be Minister for Defence]²⁰⁸:

During the last few days, Situation Reports from the Commander Australian Force Vietnam have indicated that there has been increased Viet Cong activity and a probable build-up in Viet Cong strength in the Phuoc Tuy Province in the area immediately surrounding the Task Force operational base.

2. *It is difficult to estimate at all accurately the extent of the threat which may be building up, but it seems quite clear that there is at least one Viet Cong main force battalion in the general area referred to above, and there could be another one and possibly two Viet Cong regiments which have moved down from the north.*

3. *You will appreciate that the above estimate of the possible enemy threat is based on intelligence which in many cases is not very reliable. However, from the information obtained from our own reconnaissance and patrolling, it would appear to be that there is at least a battalion in the vicinity.*

4. *In view of a possible major threat developing, the Task Force Commander (Brigadier Jackson) decided that he would concentrate his Force in the operational base area and terminate a battalion search and destroy operation which he had been carrying out. This was done on the 29th July, and the Task Force is now concentrated at its operational base, and from there is actively patrolling the areas from which the possible threat could develop. In addition, there has been considerable air reconnaissance from both our own and the United States resources to try and obtain further information about the possible enemy build-up. Some of those aircraft have been fired at from suspected areas. The Task Force is now well deployed to defend itself and its base should a major attack eventuate. It should be noted that a major attack against the Task Force would be very vulnerable to our own air attacks and artillery as well as the small arms fire and other weapons from the Task Force itself. In addition, of course, the US forces have the ability of quickly reinforcing, the Task Force with air mobile reaction forces.*

11.5 Liaison with US Colleagues

11.5.1 Beer as Currency

Close liaison with other allied units was difficult for the first few months as U.S. colleagues seemed distant. Some regarded the troop as enthusiastic amateurs while others stood in awe of the troop's expertise. The convivial can of beer proved to be a great unifier though. The ration of only one can



²⁰⁸ Forwarded to Bob Hartley by Phil Rutherford. Para 3 may be referring to Sigint Reports and part of Para 4 to ARDF Aircraft.



of beer and one of soft drink seemed to present few problems. American troops sold or gave the Troop beer to grease the wheels of progress. Weaker in strength alcoholically, the U.S. beer was nonetheless palatable and the daily garbage run to the dump with dozens of empty cans was undeniable testimony of the generosity of the American friendship.

11.5.2 PRD-1 Fly-away Teams

Barriers between allied units were lowered when combined operations were launched. Lieutenant John Cochrane²⁰⁹ of the US Army 409 RR Det, 11th ACR, brought down his Fly Away AN/PRD-1²¹⁰²¹¹ teams to which 547 Sig Tp operators were attached. The teams received support from the Troop, operated from various DF sites including Nui Dat Hill, Van Kiep, Baria Airfield and Phu My. Results, though not startling, the teams did produce some minor successes. Operators on these teams often found themselves drawing enemy fire²¹².

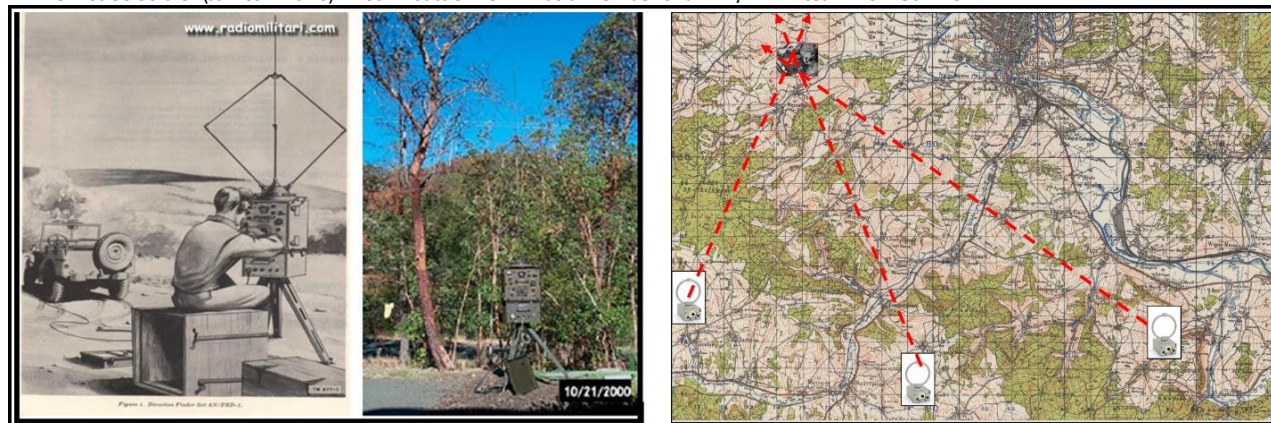
²⁰⁹ Long, Lonnie M.; Gary B. Blackburn (2013-05-14). *Unlikely Warriors: The Army Security Agency's Secret War in Vietnam 1961-1973* (pp. 161-162). iUniverse. Kindle Edition.

On 24 October 1966, six days before he was to join his wife, Elaine, in Hawaii for R&R, John Cochrane was killed by a sniper near Xuan Loc. David McDonald says, "When I was in the 409th, 1st Lt. Cochrane was the operations officer and my OIC. I remember that day very well. The detachment commander, Lt. Cochrane, and an acting sergeant, who was driving, left the Long Binh staging area in search of PRD-1 sites. When out of sight of the staging area, the Captain told the Sergeant to get in back and let him drive. That placed Lt. Cochrane in the passenger seat. Somewhere south of Xuan Loc, in the vicinity of what was to be the 11th ACR compound, a sniper fired two shots. The first went through the oil filter, stopping the engine. The second shot went through the windshield [killing Lt. Cochrane]

²¹⁰ Also see para 17.

²¹¹ The AN/PRD-1 is a mobile and portable HF radio direction finder. The AN/PRD-1 had previously been used in Malaya and Hong Kong by members of 121 Sig Sqn and found to be wanting. It was thought that if you could see the transmitter you would obtain a good line-of-bearing.

²¹² The first US Soldier (James T Davis) killed in battle in SVN was a member of an AN/PRD-1 team from 3d RRU.





409th ARMY SECURITY AGENCY DETACHMENT

Deployed: 18 August 1966

Cover Designation: 409th Radio Research Detachment

Assigned Command: 303d Army Security Agency Battalion

Supported Command: 11th Armored Cavalry Regiment

Location: Xuan Loc (Blackhorse Base Camp)

Relocated: Di An on 5 October 1969

Inactivated: 6 March 1971

Vietnam Campaign Participation Credit: 4-14

Vietnam Honors: 1 VUA, 4 MUCs, 4 RVN CGPs, and 1 RVN CA

Figure 58: 409th History²¹³



Figure 59: 419th PRD-1 Teams²¹⁴

²¹³ Long, Lonnie M.; Gary B. Blackburn (2013-05-14). *Unlikely Warriors: The Army Security Agency's Secret War in Vietnam 1961-1973* (p. 173). IUniverse. Kindle Edition.

²¹⁴ <https://409thrrd.com/photos>



Figure 60: US Army PRD-1 Team (Jeep mounted)

11.5.3 AN/PRD-1 Operations

In early August 1966, Clarrie Day and Kevin Lever attended an AN/PRD-1 familiarisation course²¹⁵ with the US Army at Baria, just south of Nui Dat. It was believed that the loan of an AN/PRD-1 would assist the Troop in the detection of NVA/VC targets.

Capt Richards Reported²¹⁶:

... At the top of the tree we have got J2 MACV who is Brigadier General MacChristian [sic – McChristian], and he virtually has got to the stage of telling ASA that they will form, for example, the team we have down here at the moment, the fly—away team. ASA said "yes sir" and they formed a team and he said "give them to Australia for 45 days", so I have got the team for 45 days.

Kevin Lever recalled²¹⁷:

Clarrie Day and I attended a short PRD-1 'familiarization' with the Yanks at Baria ²¹⁸. We finished up at an ARVN training facility with live firing being a regular part of their training - the problem was that the ARVN recruits didn't seem to mind where they fired and our training area seemed to be part of their firing range. I'd had brief previous experience on the PRD-1s and found that the Yanks didn't know much more than I did - at least we got to know the Yanks.

Both Clarrie and I became operational quickly as we worked as part of the Yank effort to try and 'fix' a special job which was known as 'Dodo'²¹⁹. Clarrie was eventually used by Eric to act as a pilot for the PRD-1 operators on the 'Dodo' job

11.5.4 Noisy Visitors

Apparently, the Fly-away teams enjoyed their time of rest at Nui Dat/ The 103 Sig Sqn Signals Duty Officer's Log for 15/16 Aug 66²²⁰ had the following item:

²¹⁵ 121 Sig Sqn in Singapore had PRD-1s in its inventory and they had been used on exercises in Malays. Unfortunately, none of the 547 Sig Tp members had been in Singapore at the time.

²¹⁶ ASD archives. See full transcript at Annex F and now available at <https://www.asd.gov.au/about/history/declassified.Transcript>. Transcript of Trevor Richards Interview (PDF)

²¹⁷ Various Emails to Bob Hartley and Barry Hampstead.

²¹⁸ Van Kiep ARVN Camp.

²¹⁹ See para 13.6 re Madame DODO.

²²⁰ AWM RCDIG1030017_103 Aug 66, AWM95 6/1/5, 103 Sig Sqn Narrative Duty Officer's Log Annexes 1-31 Aug 1966.

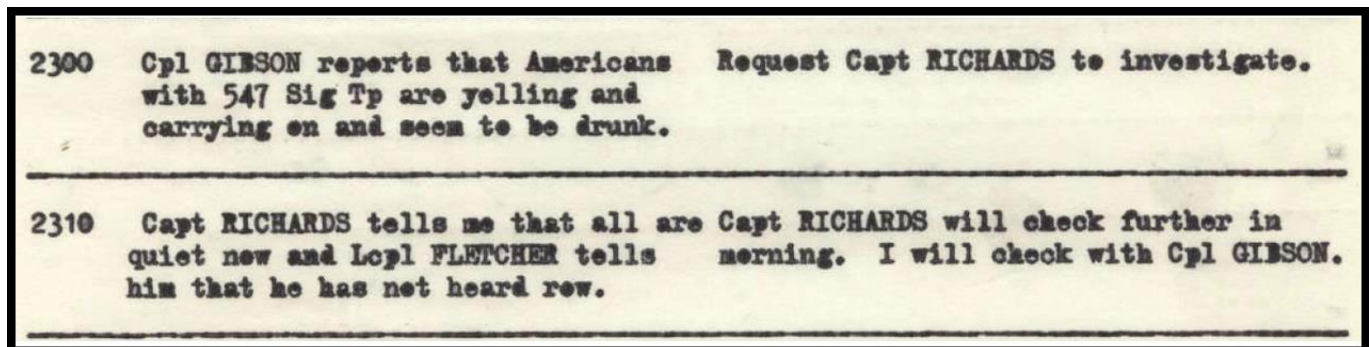


Figure 61: 103 Sig Sqn SDO Log 15/16 Aug 66

2300	Cpl GIBSON reports that Americans with 547 Sig Tp are yelling and carrying on and seem to be drunk.	Request Capt RICHARDS to investigate.
2310	Capt RICHARDS tells me that all are quiet now and Lcpl FLETCHER tells him that he has not heard row.	Capt Richards will check further in morning. I will check with Cpl GIBSON



CHAPTER 12 – THE BATTLE OF LONG TAN

12.1 Overview

Much has been written on the Battle of Long Tan including the actual battle, aftermath, and criticisms of intelligence support prior to the battle. One extract is contained at Annex D.

12.1.1 Operator Recollections

The involvement of 547 Sig Tp prior to the Battle has been mentioned in many publications, mainly from hearsay. Unfortunately, there is no official record. From a Troop's perspective all that can be said is that in the week prior to the battle, HQ 1ATF was forewarned by ARDF reports that the 275 Regiment was moving east to west towards the Nui Dat area²²¹.

Some of the Troop's operators recall the events leading up to the Battle of Long Tan²²²:

Jim Rayner:

As our operations proceeded I was employed as the ARDF controller at 547. I was responsible for tasking the American ARDF²²³ aircraft and sending Spot reports (Spotreps) - 'fixes' on targets fixed in basically the same position on a day-to-day basis and Tacreps (Tactical reports) for any major change. The fixes they provided on the radio station serving the HQ of the 275 Regiment, particularly from the 29th July, certainly grabbed our attention. Unfortunately, the information barely caused a ripple at HQ 1ATF.

Frank Young:

Jim Rayner was working in processing as the ARDF controller and the Yanks were giving him good results particularly on the whereabouts of elements of 275 Regt. In the lead up to the Battle of Long Tan, the radio station serving the HQ of 275 Regiment was fixed on numerous occasions as it moved in steady steps from the area to the east of the Task Force and north of Xuyen Moc. Apparently the information hardly raised an eyebrow up at Task Force HQ. No wonder the analysts were a bit touchy.

Not to put too fine a point on it but the Yank ARDF teams were never given the credit they deserved. We'd have been up the proverbial creek without a paddle if it hadn't been for the efforts of the ARDF pilots, co-pilots and ops. I think it was typical of the Australian Army (at all levels), where any sort of commendation was deserved. Most of what has been said to this point fails to pay tribute to the efforts by the American ARDF personnel. Indeed one article refers to the radio station serving HQ 275 Regt as being 'fixed' by high frequency DF but fails to give the credit to the people who deserved it.

Kev Lever:

²²¹ Ernie Chamberlain has recently published a book *The Viet Cong 275th Regiment (To the Battle of Long Tan and After...)*, Ernest Chamberlain ISBN 0975035088, 9780975035085. The book contains an Annex (G) *The Battle of Long Tan: A Sigint Summary*. The Annex is extremely comprehensive and well worth a read.

²²² Recollections from personnel are taken from "547 Signal Troop in South Vietnam – The Soldiers' Perspective – Deployment, Early Days and the Lead-up to Long Tan" by Barry Hampstead, July 2008", and later emails to Barry and Bob Hartley.

²²³ At this time most of the ARDF fixes were coming from the US Airforce EC-47 ARDF Aircraft. (See Annex E for details of the operation of the US Airforce EC-47 ARDF Aircraft.) In later years HQ1ATF used the term Usually Reliable Source (URS) for sanitized Sigint information to be communicated. See Part 7 Chapter 4.



Though still mainly employed in the Comcen, it was only 2 or 3 nights [actually the night of 15 August] before Long Tan that I found myself on a late evening shift in the set room. **The radio station serving the HQ of 275 Regt began sending a heap of traffic** and it continued through and past the time I was supposed to knock off. There was no relief and there was no one to call to. I don't know where Eric and Doug Rodgers were so I was stuck. I just continued to copy the traffic and even though there were occasional periods of silence I couldn't take the risk of leaving the sets to call someone. I stayed in the set room all night and surprised Eric when he fronted up next morning at 6am. Eric asked me what I was doing there but before I could answer, he reminded me that I was supposed to be on duty at 8am in the Comcen. We had a few heated words and fortunately I didn't have to front for the 8 o'clock shift. **It wasn't too hard to work out that something was in the wind - the amount of late night traffic alerted our blokes but didn't seem to cause too much excitement up at the Task Force HQ.** I wonder what they thought early on the 17th when the base was mortared.

Sam Rogers recalled²²⁴:

Cpl Keith (Barney Rubble) Innes and I shared the same tent when I came across from B Coy, 5 RAR to 547 Sig Tp at the end of Jul' 66. I am not certain as to who heard the first mortar bomb explode in the Task Force position – either Keith or myself, probably both at the same time. When you think about things that happened at night, it is quite interesting to remember that whenever 103 Field Battery fired H&I ²²⁵ missions during the dark hours, you may “stir” as the first salvo was fired but then went immediately back to sleep as it was just a “normal routine” noise. However, if you heard the “rustling” of a rat scurrying about inside the tent or an “odd noise” outside the tent, you immediately awoke; so it was, when Barney and I heard the first round fall and explode in the area.

I then heard the “bonks” or “ponks” as the mortar bombs were being fired out of the tubes from a location some distance away and said to Barney that we are being mortared. During operation HARDIHOOD when I was attached to 5RAR, the mortar platoon on at least two occasions had fired several mortar rounds at “first light” while we were “standing to”, in front of our position where we had harboured for the night before we moved out. So, because of that, I immediately recognised the sound of mortars being fired from a distance.

If I recall, Barney then jumped into our recently dug fighting pit near the tent and I followed soon after even though it felt quite safe in my stretcher which was enclosed on two sides by sandbags. I am uncertain how long we “stood to” but feel certain that WO2 Eckie Grace came down to the OR's lines during the early hours of the morning to check up on all his “young fellas” to make sure we were alright. Throughout the remainder of the night, 103 Field Battery conducted many H&I and counter missions.

Next day was a hive of activity in the set room trying to identify the VC units which were involved in the shelling of the Task Force base, Barney and I also listened in to any VHF voice intercepts and especially so during the Long Tan battle but without success.

Frank Young continued:

We were all aware of the amount of traffic which had been passed on Kev Lever's evening/night shift on the 15th and on the 16th expectations and imaginations ran wild. Then it happened. In the early hours of 17 August - something we all hoped we'd never hear - the sound of (mortar) explosions throughout the Task Force area.²²⁶ We rolled out of bed and into our weapon pits. Bloody hell! I

²²⁴ Email from Sam Rogers to Barry Hampstead 20 Dec 2015.

²²⁵ Harassment and interdiction.

²²⁶ Ernie Chamberlain email to Bob Hartley 13 Dec 2015: The 1 ATF Commander's Diary for August 1966 described the impact on the Task Force base early on 17 August 1966 of “63 VC 82mm mortar bombs and five 70mm howitzer rounds” based on “crater analysis”. ((Source: Headquarters 1 ATF - Commander's Diary, August 1966 – see also 1 ATF, INTSUM No.77, Núi Đất, 17 August 1966)). Subsequently, the 1993 Australian Official History related that the “22-minute shelling began at 0243hrs on 17 August The shelling - from the east of the 1 ATF base, comprised 82mm mortar rounds (from baseplates at YS 459671), 75mm RCL



didn't mind being in Vietnam but this was a bit much. And so we huddled there and did what any self-respecting Op Sig would have done - prayed for the attack to finish and a bit of normalcy to return. Eventually the shelling did stop but it wasn't one of my more pleasant experiences and I wasn't looking for a repeat anytime soon. Ecky said later on that we'd been lucky. Apparently mortars had 'skipped' over us before hitting the SAS²²⁷ and elements of the Artillery. There was 1 killed and some wounded amongst the SAS, Arty and Engr personnel. Reports later indicated that our Artillery had located the launch sites and returned the mortar barrage with interest. I was bloody pleased about that.

In the weeks leading up to Long Tan our ops had continued to produce a steady flow of material for analysis by the processing people and the 17th of August didn't seem to be all that different.

At about 3.40 pm we heard the Task Force Artillery start up. Nothing unusual in that! The Arty fired all the time...but this was different. It didn't stop. Gradually the news filtered through. D Company, 6 RAR was in heavy contact with a large enemy force.

Capt Richards Reported²²⁸:

...As a matter of interest, on this attack with the 275th Regiment, we did produce some useful intelligence through the ARDF fixes in that the Brigadier was warned that the 275th was moving towards our direction, and although we didn't know exactly where he was because the only transmitter we could fix on the whole Regiment was the rear—link working back to Division we then had no idea where the actual Headquarters itself was or the Battalions. Hence when the actual contact came, the Brigadier called me up and said "well who is it" and quite obviously it was the 275th Regiment. So although we couldn't — and it has been impossible up to now to pin down to battalion level where each of the battalions and various Regiment are at — at least we have been able to give him indicators as to the fact that a Regiment is coming towards us or going away from us. As such the Commander has found this valuable, or so he has stated. These fixes are produced in the time frame to make it valuable.

...What is happening up here at the moment is that due to a changeover in intelligence staff the two intelligence staff officers up here Major Rogan [sic – probably Rowe] and Captain Keap [sic – probably Keep] [two lines redacted] so we have had a bit of hiatus up here as regards to continuity on the intelligence side. As a result of this I've been going direct to the Brigadier with information and briefing him direct and converting into military intelligence for him. This seems to have been working fairly well up until now and, as such, has obviated the need of having intelligence staff officers down here actually in our compound; it saves classified material being taken out of the areas except for a map trace which I go up and put on the Brigadiers map board, and everything that goes out of the cell and passed onto the Brigadier is purely verbal. So, as such on general security, we have had no particular problems except for that one bad security breach we had, which was due to Colonel Wall [sic – probably Lt Col Warr CO 5RAR] being briefed very very hastily after we had this big contact up here on the 18th August to start tracing up the 275th Regiment. As such the Brigadier called me in to give him a briefing on the spot and he was away and gone and none of us had any idea as to what he

shells (from YS 473673, YS 469668), and 70mm howitzer rounds. ((Source: McNeill, I., To Long Tan, op.cit., 1993, p.305)). The 70mm rounds were probably fired from an obsolescent Japanese Model 92 howitzer – most likely by an element of the Z-39 Artillery Battalion of Group 89 which had been noted in the Xuyên Mộc area in March 1966. The shelling principally struck artillery positions (103 Battery) - and the RAASC, Engineer, and SAS Squadron areas. 1 ATF suffered 24 wounded – two seriously, with one soldier later dying from his wounds. On 17 August, patrols from B Company of 6RAR found the firing site of Việt Cộng 75mm RCLs (at YS 469668) with 23 discarded 75mm shell cases, "bits of bodies and blood-stained clothing"; and an ox cart destroyed by the 1 ATF artillery counter-battery fire.

²²⁷ SAS: Special Air Service Regiment. The SASR's participation in the Vietnam War began when 3 Squadron deployed as part of the 1st Australian Task Force (1 ATF) in April 1966. The SASR's role in Vietnam was to act as the 'eyes and the ears' of the Australian Task Force through conducting reconnaissance patrols throughout 1 ATF's area of responsibility. The SAS home base was located on Nui Dat Hill.

²²⁸ ASD archives. See full transcript at Annex F and now available at <https://www.asd.gov.au/about/history/declassified/Transcript>. Transcript of Trevor Richards Interview (PDF).



was going to do with this information, even though he had been warned that it was classified etc. etc. So, as such, that is the only problem we've had with action-on.

...Another typical example [of traffic analysis] was a certain military intelligence station. On two occasions now that he turned up he was first of all involved in a big operation with the 274th Regiment, he then turned up a day before our big contact with the 275th Regiment on a ARDF fix; as such he started to prove an indicator that now where he turns up we can expect trouble.

12.1.2 Special Agent Reports

The 1ATF Commander's Diary [Ops Log] for August 1966²²⁹ shows that SPARs were being received at HQ 1ATF from both MACVCC and 2FFV.

FROM 172010H TO 172215H				SHEET NO 714 h			
SERIAL	DATE/TIME	FROM	TO	ORIG NO	MESSAGE OR TEXT	ACTION	COMPLETED
246	172010H	5 RAR			SITREP 20. From 171900H to 172000H. Rn. NTR. Own sit. 721 C Coy searched area GR434733 where Sector had reported fresh diggings. There was no sign of fresh activity in this area since being occupied recently. Adn. NTR.		
247	172030H	2 FFV			SPAR NO 05 FOR 17 AUG 66.	INT	
248	172025H	5 RAR			OF HUI BAR reports movement 50 yards down the hill to the EAST ACTION TAKEN. 1 ANU notified.		
248	172100H	5 RAR			B Coy - no more noise heard.		
249	172100H	6 RAR			SITREP 5. From 171600H to 172000H. Rn. NTR. Own sit. MOOSTARS. A Coy 465695 B Coy 465667 Others no change. Adn. NTR.		
250	172110H	5 RAR			SITREP 21. From 172000H to 172100H. NTR.		
251	172130H	1 ANU			SITREP 5. From 171600H to 172000H. NTR.		
252	172130H	2 FFV			SPAR NO 06 FOR 17 AUG 66.	INT	
253	172130H	MACVCC			SPECIAL AGENT REPORT NUMBER FOUR 17 AUG 66.	INT	
254	172135H	2 FFV			SIGINT - UPR - U 0511.	INT	
255	172205H	5 RAR			SITREP 22. From 172100H to 172200H. NTR.		
256	172215H	MACVCC			SPECIAL AGENT REPORT NUMBER THREE, 17 AUG 66.	INT	
257	172215H	2 FFV			SPAR NO 07 FOR 17 AUG 66.	INT	

Figure 62: Extract from Duty Officers Log 17 August

12.1.3 SPARS Received from 9 August

Some of these may have been duplicates. These reports were most probably ARDF Fixes received from USAF aircraft. Examination of the logs from 9 August²³⁰ show SPARS received:

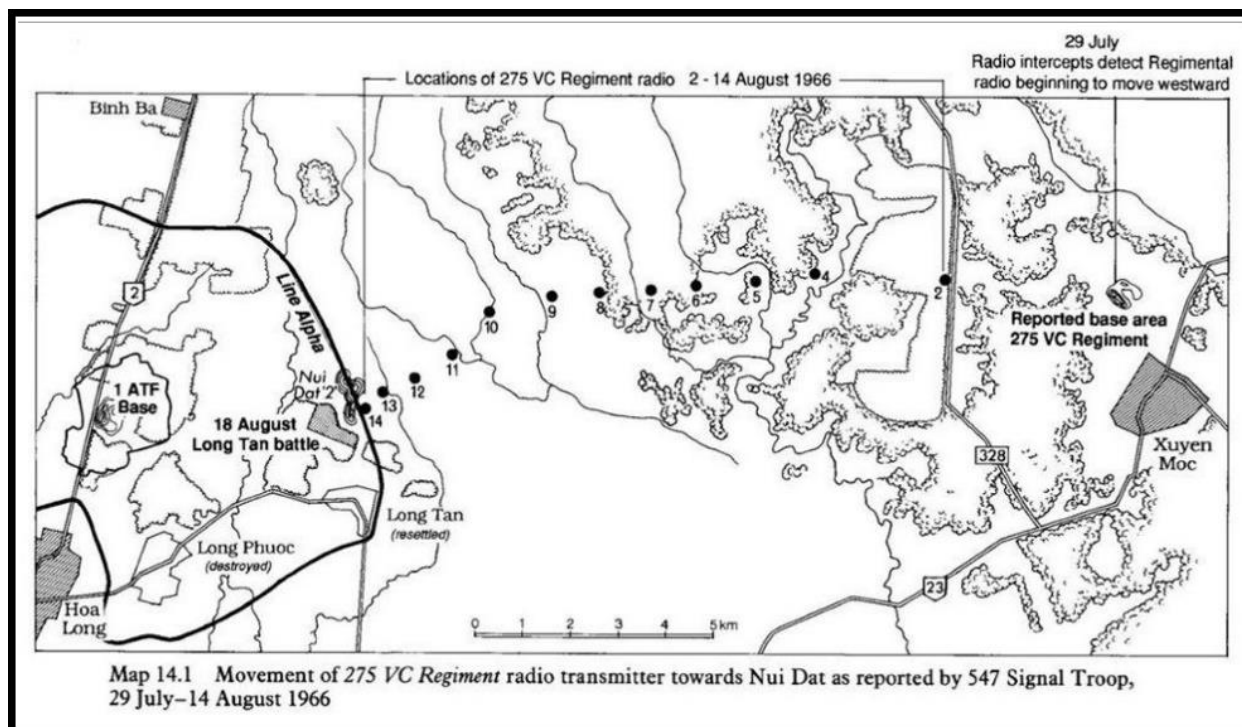
Date	Total	Date	Total
9 August.	9	14 August	4
10 August	8	15 August	nil
11 August	4	16 August	5
12 August	6	17 August	7
13 August	4	18 August	6

12.1.4 Maps of 275 Regiment Movement

Maps similar to the one depicted below have been presented in several publications showing the DF Fixes on 275 Regiment before 18 August – the day of the battle. **The map is a fabrication.**

²²⁹ AWM RCDIG1028611 AWM95 1/4/6 Part 1 HQ 1 ATF Duty Officers Log part 2 1-31 Aug 66.

²³⁰ Unfortunately, some of the logs are difficult to read so some SPARS may have been missed.

Figure 63: Long Tan Map²³¹

The following is an extract from the book *Vietnam: The Australian War*²³²:

*The beaded line on the map in McNeill's book was in fact hand-drawn by the author and not generated by 547 Signal Troop, as the image suggests. When Rowe informed McNeill that 'I had not seen this beaded diagram or anything like it before', McNeill stated that **he had drawn it himself**. 'There was never a copy at the [Task Force],' said Rowe.*

²³¹ This map is an extract from the book: *To Long Tan: Australian Army and the Vietnam War, 1950-66 (Official History of Australia's Involvement in Southeast Asian Conflicts, 1948-75)* Ian McNeill. Allen & Unwin Australia, 1993.

²³² Ham, Paul (2010-03-17). *Vietnam: The Australian War* (Kindle Locations 13791-13794). HarperCollins Publishers. Kindle Edition. Endnotes.



12.1.5 US Air Force ARDF Support

The following declassified document contains information on USAF ARDF operations that were being conducted before and during the period of the Long Tan Battle²³³:

CONTINUED

TOP SECRET

HISTORY
OF THE
6994th SECURITY SQUADRON
1 JULY- 31 DECEMBER 1966
RCS: AU-D5 (AFS-1)

000072
18 OCT 1970

PROJECT CORONA HARVEST
DO NOT DE TRUY
0408627-0408651
0418244-0418257
0408626
No.

USAF SECURITY SERVICE

HQ AF ISR Agency
Security Office
Reviewed by: [Signature]
Date: 30 Apr 67
Classification: UNCLAS

1 JULY 1967

TAN SON NHUT AIR BASE, VIETNAM

COPY 4 of 10 COPIES

TOP SECRET

CONTAINS SPECIAL INTELLIGENCE

USAFSS FORM 86
1 JUN 67
USAFSS - SAN ANTONIO, TEXAS

Figure 64: Document Front Page

Extract:

During July and August, Phyllis Ann²³⁴ provided support for several major offensive operations. One operation most clearly illustrated the effectiveness of utilizing ARDF in both planning and conducting tactical operations. This operation was Operation Toledo²³⁵. Conducted from 1 August through 7

²³³ USAFSS History of the 6994th Security Squadron 1 July – 31 December 1966 RCS: AU-D5 (AFS-1) dated 1 July 1967.

²³⁴ Phyllis Ann was the USAF code name for the deployment of C-47 aircraft fitted out for ARDF operations.

²³⁵ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_allied_military_operations_of_the_Vietnam_War_%28T%E2%80%9310_Aug_%207_Sept_66%29 10 Aug – 7 Sept 66. 173rd Airborne Brigade, 2nd Battalion, 18th Infantry Regiment, BLT 1st Battalion, 26th Marines, 1st Australian Task Force and ARVN 33rd and 35th Ranger Battalions multi-battalion search and destroy operation in the May Tao Secret Zone in Long Khánh, Binh Tuy and Phước Tuy Provinces. The deserted headquarters area for the 5th VC Division was located and destroyed along with vast amounts of supplies.



September 1966, it was originally intended as a search and destroy operation in the eastern portion of Phuoc Tuy Province. However, no contact was made with the enemy in this area. Based exclusively on ARDF results the area of operation was extended west to encompass an area in which COMINT had located a Viet Cong Division. Throughout the remainder of the operation, manoeuvring of Allied Forces was based entirely on ARDF. And although no significant contact was made with fleeing enemy forces the operation was termed extremely successful.

The document also included a table listing the number of fixes prosecuted and passed to supporting DSUs:

<u>PHYLLIS ANN CLOSE TACTICAL SUPPORT</u>					
<u>Operation</u>	<u>Month</u> (Fixes/Passed to DSU)				
	<u>Jul</u>	<u>Aug</u>	<u>Sep</u>	<u>Oct</u>	<u>Nov</u>
Holsworthy	2/1	11/11			
El Paso II	35/28				
Yorktown	7/6				
El Paso III		10/9			
Paul Revere II		1/1	19/10	29/18	
Paul Revere III				52/1	
Paul Revere IV					
John Paul Jones		1/1			
Toledo		33/23	13/13		

Figure 65: Phyllis Ann Fix Table

It is probable that the Toledo Fixes were passed by secure VHF to 547 Sig Tp²³⁶ and signal reports to HQ 1ATF from 2FFV and MACVCC under the guise of Special Agent Reports.

The following is an extract from the 5 RAR Op Order for their involvement in Operation Toledo²³⁷.

Friendly Forces.

(1) Operation TOLEDO is a search and destroy operation being conducted in the EASTERN Sector of Phuoc Tuy Province by 11 Field Force Vietnam in coordination with BLT (Battalion Landing Team) 1/26 USMC.

Figure 66: Operation TOLEDO details

²³⁶ ARDF Control Net.

²³⁷ AWM RCDIG 1030128.pdf AWM 95 7/5/7 Part 1, 5 RAR Ops Log Annexes Part 1, F Annex C- 9.



12.2 Intelligence Failings

12.2.1 Unit's Role

Surprising as it may seem, the unit's role can only be considered minor in the events leading to 18 August 1966, simply because of the reluctance, for whatever reason, of the Commander, Intelligence, and Operations personnel at 1ATF to take notice of the material produced by the Troop. The Troop's intelligence had been treated almost with disdain, and the dispatch of D Company, 6 RAR to the vicinity of Long Tan village had been in response to the mortar attack early on the 17th and not due to the Sigint product received. Somewhere along the line, the system failed.

12.2.2 Passage of Information

Someone, somewhere, failed to tell the people in command about 547's capabilities. Possibly this was because 547 Sig Tp was originally only supposed to be a conduit for the passage of American information, or had the HQ 1ATF staff not been properly briefed about how to use Sigint information? Regardless, it should have been part and parcel of any briefing given before the Task Force was deployed, for even if 547 Sig Tp only ever acted as a conduit, the value of Sigint, from whatever source, should not have been understated. Long Tan could have easily turned into a military and political disaster but fortunately that was not the case. In time, Australian Military authorities came to realize what a valuable tool they had within their grasp.

In his book *Long Tan: The start of a lifelong battle*²³⁸, Harry Smith²³⁹ wrote in mid 2015:

...Incredibly Jackson had already been given crucial information by the top-secret 547 Signals Intelligence Unit at Nui Dat and the Australian Army Training Team Liaison Officer, Commando Captain Mike Wells, based at 10 ARVN Division Sector HQ, Ba Ria. It was, Jackson was told from Morse code radio intercept, more than likely the 5th Division's 275 Regiment and support units were resting in jungle just east of the Long Tan rubber plantation, with another major force, Regiment 274, somewhere to the north. And more ... that D445 battalion was probably near Xa Long Tan to the southeast of the rubber plantation. Local D445 were the very adept band of local soldiers who regularly recruited villagers at the point of a rifle. They were likely the meeters, greeters, guides and feeders for 275 Regiment when it arrived from the far northeast on 14 August – and all this was reported promptly to OD Jackson sitting pretty at Nui Dat. But what did the brigadier respond with? 'Oh, the radio is probably just a 275 Regiment HQ doing a reconnaissance.' Reconnaissance for what Brigadier? So Jackson ignored the critical information available. After being handed this vital classified evidence by Captain Trevor Richards, OC 547 Signal Troop at Nui Dat, OD chose to tell only three fellow officers.²⁴⁰...

Despite all the evidence the 547 Signals Troop OC and the ATF junior intelligence officer could not convince Brigadier Jackson there was an attack pending. Any attack on Nui Dat base was considered a preposterous suggestion by the brigadier. He is on record in the Official History as having said 'The enemy wouldn't dare attack my base.' Even my Commanding Officer Lieutenant Colonel Colin Townsend, is quoted in the Official History as saying, 'I don't think they would have been so stupid.' More famous last words. I won't here begin to include the language so many of my men and observers have used in regard to these two men's extraordinarily inadequate verdicts on the deadly situation. Mike

²³⁸ Smith, Harry (2015-08-02). *Long Tan: The start of a lifelong battle* (Kindle Location 76). Big Sky Publishing. Kindle Edition. *PRELUDE TO BATTLE: 18 AUGUST 1966 – Toni McRae.*

²³⁹ Officer Commanding of D Company, 6th Battalion, Royal Australian Regiment (D Coy, 6RAR) during the Battle of Long Tan on 18 August 1966.

²⁴⁰ Smith, Harry (2015-08-02). *Long Tan: The start of a lifelong battle* (Kindle Locations 198-209). Big Sky Publishing. Kindle Edition. *PRELUDE TO BATTLE: 18 AUGUST 1966 – Toni McRae.*



Wells told me some years ago when we caught up in Canberra that his reports to HQ Australian Task Force's daily conferences were considered 'unreliable', coming from 'just a CMF (Reserve Forces) officer'. So continued the dangerous academic attitude of Royal Military College graduate command officers!²⁴¹ ...

... The information was not passed on to battalions. The penny did not drop about possible enemy Main Force attack. The secret 547 Signals Troop intelligence about 275 Regiment radio, which had been tracked moving in from the east was discarded by Brigadier Jackson as more likely to be just the HQ doing a reconnaissance. So after all the earlier warnings about enemy moving in on our base, I still wonder what the brigadier thought the bloody reconnaissance was for? Unfortunately the junior ATF intelligence officer Captain Keep, who argued the 547 Signals Troop intelligence was indeed significant, had been flown to hospital in Malaya on 15 August and his superior, Major John Rowe, was also hospitalised at Vung Tau on the 16th with hepatitis. Thus, with the two intelligence officers in hospital, the pressure on Jackson about possible enemy attack had dissipated, and he could focus on the concert.²⁴²

12.2.3 Turning Point

Long Tan was, without doubt, the turning point for 547 Sig Tp. The lesson had been learnt and the Troop's information was never ignored again.

Eric Grace related²⁴³:

The Battle of Long Tan put 547 and 7 Signal Regiment on the map. No one ever took much notice of 7 Sigs before Long Tan. Just as a matter of interest, 547 was suddenly flavour of the month. Doug Rodgers and I were required to prepare a briefing for the Task Force Commander each morning (isn't that what Captain Richards had been doing all along?) I always thought it was a case of shutting the gate after the horse had bolted but Long Tan helped 547 make a point. We never looked back after that.

The Book *Warrior Elite*²⁴⁴ reported on 547 Sig Tp:

According to the official SAS history, the unit [SAS] 'had provided little solid evidence that the enemy was massing for an attack on the Task Force'. Recently divulged information reveals that the Signal Troop 547 not only located the major attacking force, the 275 Regiment, but the troop's OC, Captain Trevor Richards, had warned Brigadier Jackson of its approach to within five kilometres of the Task Force base. At the time, however, the Australian signals interception team had yet to establish the reputation that would eventually have the Americans coming to it for its latest intelligence product.

... The fact that they [6 RAR] had been surprised by the massive Viet Cong force cast a shadow over the SAS Squadron's reputation for high-quality reconnaissance and surveillance. Controversy swirled around this aspect of the battle for several years, with some former SAS soldiers claiming the unit had warned HQ that the enemy were about to mount a major attack on the Task Force only to have it ignored by Brigadier Jackson. Others have quoted Major John Murphy specifically refuting the claim that his unit had located the Viet Cong regiment. The official record contains no evidence to back the claims of the dissenters. Instead, it is now clear that the warnings came from 547 Troop, but security classifications have prevented the truth from emerging. Significantly, after the battle, 547 Troop strength was doubled.

²⁴¹ Ibid.

²⁴² Ibid, (Kindle Locations 1695-1701).

²⁴³ By kind permission of the author. All Recollections that follow are taken from *547 Signal Troop in South Vietnam – The Soldiers' Perspective – Deployment, Early Days and the Lead-up to Long Tan*, by Barry Hampstead, July 2008.

²⁴⁴ Macklin, Robert (2015-08-25). *Warrior Elite: Australia's special forces – from Z Force and the SAS to the wars of the future* (Kindle Locations 1860-1879). Hachette Australia. Kindle Edition.



12.2.4 History Not Repeated

In hindsight it is indeed unfortunate that the many books now available that describe how Sigint was used in World War 2 were not available before the Vietnam conflict. They may have given the staff more insight into the world of Sigint and how to use Sigint product. A passage from the Book *MacArthur's Secret Bureau*²⁴⁵ highlights how Sigint was a major part of operational planning:

Within [General] MacArthur's Headquarters, the signals intelligence that was produced by Central Bureau and received by [General] Willoughby was combined with information from other sources (other signals intelligence, unit reports, aerial reconnaissance, captured documents and prisoner interrogations, for example) and used in three key ways: to prepare estimates of enemy strengths; to produce intelligence appreciations; and to prepare intelligence estimates in support of specific operations.

²⁴⁵ MACARTHUR 'S SECRET BUREAU, *The Story of the Central Bureau General MacArthur's Signals Intelligence Organisation*, Author Jean Bou, Australian Military History Publications, ISBN: 978-0-9872387-1-9, pages 45.



CHAPTER 13 – OPERATIONS CONTINUE

13.1 VHF Voice Intercept

13.1.1 Use of VHF

Soon after arriving in the theatre, the Troop had received reports of the NVA/VC using VHF²⁴⁶ equipment for communications.

Capt Richards Reported²⁴⁷:

...Quite often, or not quite often, but once or twice we have uncovered cases with PRC9, 10 sets²⁴⁸ and 25 sets²⁴⁹. We know they are being used. My progress at the moment on VHF is that I have had the two linguists over staggered hours over the 24 hour period mixing it up on the top of NUI DAT with an RC292 antenna²⁵⁰. If anybody comes up on the air at all or breathes across the ether, I have got a darn good chance of picking them up within about a fifteen kilometer radius, but so far there has been absolutely nothing on the air. I think, and this is only just my opinion, is that virtually the only time the VC use VHF is when they actually carry out an operation. As such, our best chance of VHF intercept is the next time we get a contact, like we did with the 275th Regiment, instead of being on the ground or putting men out with the Battalion, the best way to do it is to actually use a VHF platform. Tomorrow I am taking down the equipment, which will be a 744 receiver²⁵¹ plus a tape-recorder, to fit into a Cessna which should be quite a simple operation simply because the power supply can be taken off through the cigarette lighter on the dash board, and it is simple to plug into the VHF aerals on the Cessna, To tie this in with the homing device available on the Cessna, it is possible to pick up a message, tape it, and also to get a homing fix in on the station to get a rough idea where it is on the

²⁴⁶ Very high frequency (VHF). Frequency range from 30 MHz to 300 MHz, normally short range line of sight.

²⁴⁷ ASD archives. See full transcript at Annex F and now available at <https://www.asd.gov.au/about/history/declassified/Transcript>. Transcript of Trevor Richards Interview (PDF).

²⁴⁸ <http://armyradio.com/PRC-9-Receiver-Transmitter.html>. Radio set AN/PRC-9, frequency range 27.0 to 38.9 MHz, Super-Heterodyne FM Receiver / Transmitter. Man-Pack or Vehicular fixed station operation. 1 Watt transmitter Output. Uses 16 miniature wire ended tubes. Power requirements 1.5V, 6V, 67.5V, 135V powered by BA-279 battery. The AN/PRC-9 is part of a family of radios AN/PRC-8, AN/PRC-9, and AN/PRC-10 which were used as a squad radio by US Army in Korea and Vietnam Wars and by many NATO countries. Made in USA in 1950's and 60's, each radio had a different frequency range.

AN/PRC-8 - 20.0 to 27.9 MHz

AN/PRC-9 - 27.0 to 38.9 MHz

AN/PRC-10 - 38.0 to 54.9 MHz



²⁴⁹ See para 10.4.

²⁵⁰ See para 10.4.

²⁵¹ http://www.radiomuseum.org/r/military_oa_1451pr_r744a.html. All mode (AM, FM, CW) military VHF surveillance receiver covering 20-100 MHz.





ground. Once again I think the only chance we are going to have of picking up any VHF at all is when the actual VC put in operation on some area. Hence I am making this installation as easy as I possibly can, so that at a moments notice we can ring up VUNG TAU, the aircraft can meet us at an aircraft strip available at BARIA, and within half an hour of an operation starting we should have the linguist up in the air with his equipment searching for VHF voice. Ultimately the Light Aircraft Squadron is moving front VUNG TAU up to the Task Force, in that a strip is to be built up here - it is partly built at the moment and when this is done, it will become a much faster reaction when VHF can be used. But throughout the country there has been very very little success at all against VHF and if we can just get one VHF intercept, put it on tape, it will be quite feathers in the caps of the Australians so far as the Americans Sigint effort is concerned.

"Can I carry out VHF search both on the land in the air at the same time?" Once again, I don't think this will ever be required, simply because we found that with the Battalions going on a search-and-destroy operation the VC keep well out of their way. The only time that the VC will take on a target is when they outnumber the target by anything up to between 4 and 6 to 1, which is what happened when we had this big brush with the 275th Regiment. They thought they were just taking on a company which they were, they had at least three Battalions there, and hence it was a reasonable target and they took them on straight away. But where our battalions actually go searching for trouble, up until now it has been proven that the VC keep well out of their way. As they go through an area they find evidence that the VC have left the area within the last 24 hours and the enemy just refuses to fight under these grounds. In other words it is just not going to pay to put out a VHF intercept operator with a Battalion actually on the ground. On top of this if he is out on foot or in a vehicle, it is extremely difficult to get up a good aerial simply because, the country these people go through, you cannot take vehicles; the operator must take it on his flat feet hence all he can have is just a short whip aerial. The range of this country would be extremely limited on picking up anything with a PRC9 or 10 and virtually you would only pick it up if we had a contact, and, as I have pointed out, that is not very likely. So I think the final answer will be VHF search on an aerial platform, particularly at the time of a VC contact.



13.2 Operation Darlinghurst

13.2.1 Overview

Operation DARLINGHURST²⁵² was conducted during the period 25 to 31 Aug 66 by 5 RAR as part of Operation Toledo and the follow up actions after the 6 RAR Battle at Long Tan.

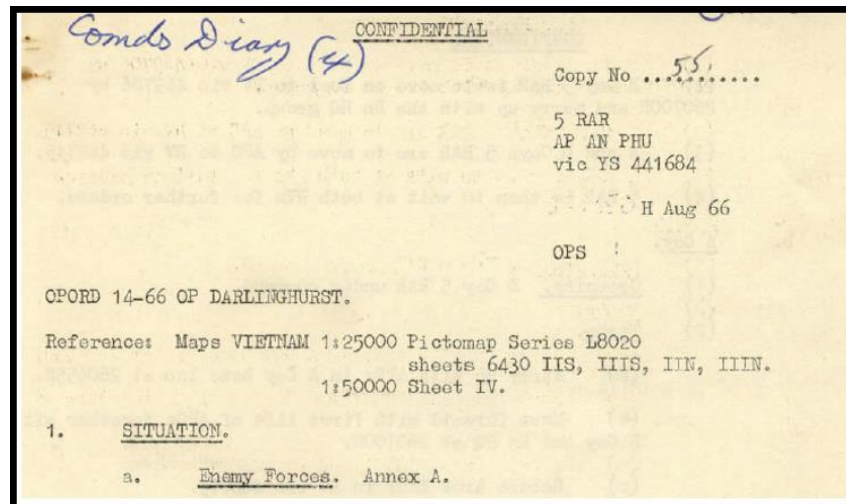


Figure 67: Operation DARLINGHURST Operation Order²⁵³

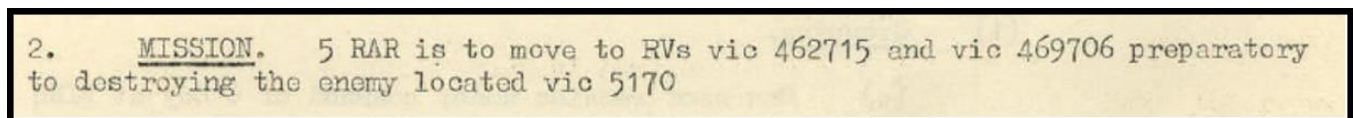


Figure 68: Operation DARLINGHURST Mission²⁵⁴

13.2.2 Annex A Operation Order

Annex A (Enemy) to the Operation Order contained the following²⁵⁵:

²⁵² Inserted due to the mention of probable Sigint operations in the Enemy Annex.

²⁵³ AWM RCDIG 1030128.pdf AWM 95 7/5/7 Part 1, 5 RAR Ops Log Annexes Part 1, F Annex C-10.

²⁵⁴ Ibid.

²⁵⁵ Was this a security breach???



CONFIDENTIAL

Copy No 55
5 RAR
AP AN PHU
SOUTH VIETNAM

22250 H Aug 66

Annex A (Enemy) to OPORD 14-66 (OP DARLINGHURST)

ENEMY SITUATION AS AT 251800H

1. LOCATIONS

a. HQ 5 VC Div	646821 (25 Aug)
b. HQ 274 Regt	552828 (25 Aug)
c. HQ 275 Regt	515708 (25 Aug)
2. ACTIVITIES. 275 Regt is attempting to withdraw to the EAST. This regiment is in poor condition due to the presence of large numbers of wounded members. The regiment moved away to the North East after the battle with 6 RAR, but has swung its path Westwards presumably to avoid 173 Abn Bde. The location of the regimental base camp was discovered by patrols on 25 Aug. This base will probably move but its rate of movement will be relatively slow unless the wounded are abandoned.
3. 274 Regt has moved out of the HAT DICH area during the past 36 hours. Two of its three battalions are moving now. One of these two has a mortar company (8 x 82mm mortars) (10 x 60mm mortars) and an air defence company (15 x 30 cal MG) (5 x 50 cal MG) under command. The third battalion which was not moving when located was carrying two litres of rice per man. This indicates that the VC are out for a medium length operation. The urgency of their movement was revealed in radio transmissions to their battalions today. It appears that 274 Regt is attempting to come to the rescue of 275 Regt. On 24 Aug a VC company was encountered by 173 Abn Bde at 555775. This could have been the vanguard of 275 Regt.
4. There could be an additional four infantry and two support battalions within 10km of 275 Regt. HQ 5 Div appears to be stationary at the moment.

Figure 69: Operation DARLINGHURST Operation Order - Annex A²⁵⁶

²⁵⁶ AWM RCDIG 1030128.pdf AWM 95 7/5/7 Part 1, 5 RAR Ops Log Annexes Part 1, F Annex C-10.



13.2.2.1 Intelligence Review No 1257:

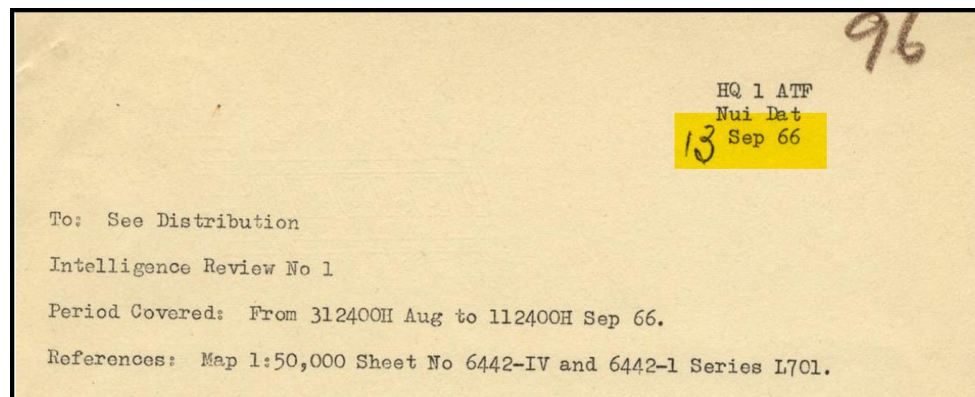


Figure 70: HQ 1 ATF Intelligence Review dated 13 Sept 66

- d. RED HAZE and SPAR
- (1) SPAR has indicated a primary area of interest bounded by YS5875 - YS5889 - YS6675 - YS6689. A secondary triangular area bounded by YS5574 - YS5974 - YS5769 was also revealed.
- (2) Significant RED HAZE omissions came from an area approximately 2-3,000 metres SW of the secondary SPAR reported above.
- (3) Both RED HAZE and SPAR reports could mean a VC camp and this deduction is supported by recent track activity 3,000 metres SE of the 126 feature (YS5271).

Figure 71: SPAR Reports²⁵⁸

²⁵⁷ AWM RCDIG 1027822.pdf AWM 95 1/4/12 Part2 1, HQ 1ATF Narrative Annexes Part 2.

²⁵⁸ It is not known whether this information came from both US and 547 Sigint sources.



13.2.2.2 Intelligence Review No 2²⁵⁹

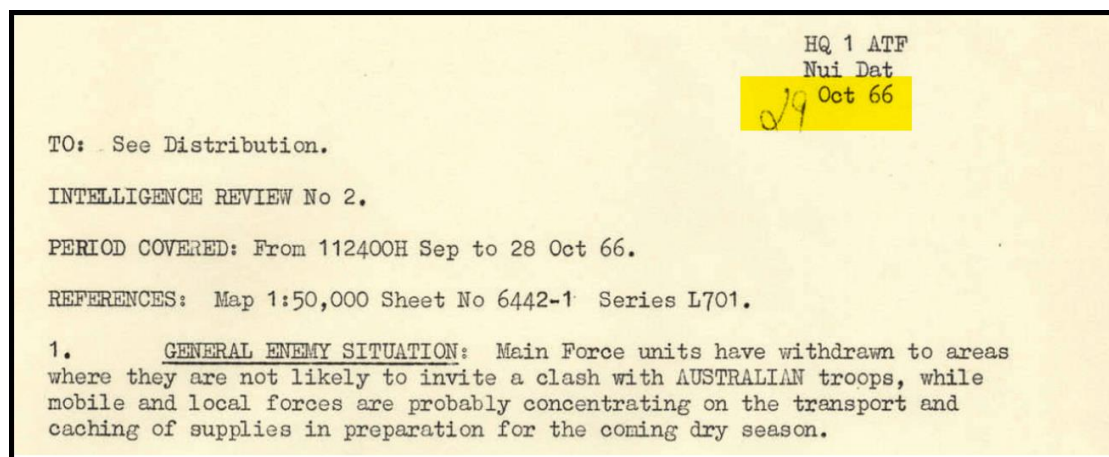


Figure 72: HQ 1 ATF Intelligence Review dated 29 Oct 66

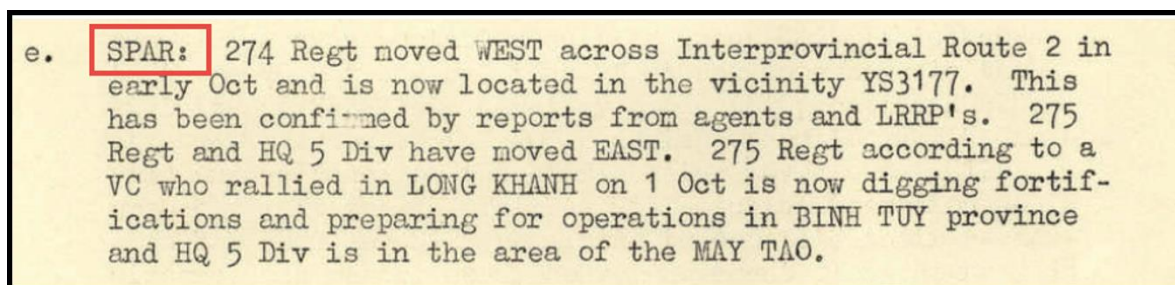


Figure 73: HQ 1 ATF Intelligence Review dated 13 Sept 66²⁶⁰

13.3 Troop Operations Continue

13.3.1 A Near Miss

In August/September, Jim Rayner, Kevin Lever and Murray Cooper were part of a team that included a US Army AN/PRD-1 operator, reconnoitring sites suitable for PRD-1 operations.

During the recce, the team paused to speak with a local school teacher. After resuming their journey, they noticed a burning smell coming from their webbing in the back of the vehicle. Kevin Lever ejected the webbing from the vehicle and, moments later the grenades attached to the webbing, exploded. A subsequent investigation revealed that a lighted cigarette had been thrust into one of the basic pouches during the halt.

²⁵⁹ AWM RCDIG 1027822.pdf AWM 95 1/4/14, Part2 1, HQ 1ATF Narrative Annexes Part 2.

²⁶⁰ It is not known whether this information came from both US and 547 Sigint sources. .



13.3.2 547 Sig Tp Added to 1 ATF Distribution List

Operation VAUCLUSE was conducted during the period 8 – 24 September. The following extract²⁶¹ shows the main page and the first indication that 547 Sig Tp was part of the 1ATF Distribution List.

CONFIDENTIAL

Copy No. 9.....

HQ 1 ATF
NUI DAT (YS 435667)
061200H Sep 66
OPS 226

Annex Z (Distribution) to Frag Order 3-3-66 (Op VAUCLUSE)

RECIPIENT	DISTRIBUTION	COPY NO
5 RAR		1 - 2
6 RAR		3 - 4
3 SAS Sqn		5
1 APC Sqn		6
1 Fd Regt RAA		7
1 Fd Sqn RAE		8
103 Sig Sqn		9
<u>547 Sig Tp</u>		10
1 ARU (Log Co)		11
161 (Indep) Recon Flt		12

Figure 74: Op VAUCLUSE Frag Order – Distribution List

13.4 Report on Troop Progress

13.4.1 MI8 Request

On 30 August, MI8 sent a signal to 547 Sig Tp info DSD regarding a possible visit and points that most probably will be raised during the visit²⁶².

R 300045Z

FM ARMY CANBERRA

TO AUM352

INFO DSD

SECRET SAVING U A R D

REPORT ON TPS PROGRESS.

ONE.

POSSIBLE DURING OCT 66 A VISIT MAY BE MADE YOUR AREA BY AD(D) DSD (BOTTRILL) AND MI8 OR G2 MI8. IMPORTANT PRIOR ANY SUCH VISIT HAVE YOUR VIEWS ON FACTORS EFFECTING YOUR WORK SO NECESSARY CONSIDERATIONS MAY BE MADE BY DSD/MI8.

TWO.

SECURITY OF MATERIAL. WHAT IS PRESENT SITUATION WITHIN 1 ATF WITH RESPECT TO STORAGE OF HIGHER CAT MATERIAL IF SUCH WAS FOUND NECESSARY FOR PASSAGE TO YOU.

THREE.

²⁶¹ <http://static.awm.gov.au/images/collection/bundled/RCDIG1030018.pdf>.

²⁶² ASD Archives.



END PRODUCT.

ALFA. ADVISE NATURE AND TYPE OF SIGINT END PRODUCT BEING RECEIVED FROM US SOURCES. ONE. WHAT VALUE IS IT TO COMD. TWO. IS IT PRODUCED IN THE TIME FRAME TO MAKE IT USEFUL.

BRAVO. WHAT IS TP ABLE TO PRODUCE FROM OWN RESOURCES EG IS IT NEW OR ONLY CONFORMATION OF US MATERIAL.

CHARLIE. WHAT EXTENT IS INT STAFF ABLE TO USE OUR MATERIAL. DO THEY MAINTAIN A CONTINUITY PATTERN ON SIGINT MATERIAL IN YOUR CELL. WHAT SORT OF REQUESTS ARE YOU GIVEN BY THEM FOR SIGINT MATERIAL. TO WHAT EXTENT IS SIGINT ACCEPTED ON FACE VALUE OR DO YOU HAVE TO SELL IT, HAS SIGINT PROVEN FALSE.

FOUR. DF.

BASED ON YOUR PREVIOUS REPORT ON ARDF TO WHAT EXTENT WOULD COMD NOW RELY ON INFO PROVIDED BY ARDF.

ALFA, IF CONTINUED TO BE PRODUCED BY PRESENT US SYSTEM.

BRAVO. IF YOU WERE GIVEN ARDF RESOURCES UNDER YOUR WON CONTROL.

CHARLIE. DO YOU CONSIDER PROVISION OF GROUND BASED DF NET IS DESIRABLE OR ESSENTIAL FOR TASK FORCE PURPOSES.

FIVE

TECHNICAL FACILITIES.

ALFA.

ARE YOU AWARE THAT ACCORDING TO THE CAPTURED LT COL COFSTAFF 5 VC DIV THAT HE REPORTED THE USE OF AN/PRC 9 FOR COMMS WITHIN 5 DIV AND TO HIGHER AUTHORITY. HAVE YOU HAD ANY SUCCESS ON YOU AIRBORNE VHF INTERCEPT. HAVE YOU SUFFICIENT RESOURCES TO CARRY OUT REQUIRED VHF SEARCH BOTH ON GROUND AND AIR.

BRAVO.

WHAT PROGRESS HAS BEEN MADE OF MOVING YOUR INSTALLATION INTO HUTTED ACCN. SIX.

MANNING.

INTERESTED TO KNOW HOW PERSONNEL ARE EMPLOYED AND WHAT YOU CONSIDER YOUR GREATEST WEAKNESS.

SEVEN. YOUR REPORT SHOULD INCLUDE ANSWERS TO ABOVE QUESTIONS AND ANY ADDITIONAL POINTS YOU MAY HAVE. ANY RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ADDITIONAL MANPOWER COULD NOT BE MET UNLESS IT PROVEN THAT IT WOULD RESULT IN ADDITIONAL ESSENTIAL INFORMATION BEING PROVIDED FRO 1ATF.

13.4.2 Trevor Richard's Response

On 13 September, in response to the signal, Trevor Richards prepared²⁶³ and sent a voice recording to MI8²⁶⁴ by safe hand. A full transcript of the recording is included at Annex F. Some extracts from the transcript have been included below and others earlier within the Story to amplify significant events. [There may be some duplication – footnotes inserted by authors]

²⁶³ ASD archives. See full transcript at Annex F and now available at <https://www.asd.gov.au/about/history/declassified.Transcript>. Transcript of Trevor Richards Interview (PDF).

²⁶⁴ ASD Archives. It is believed that the tape recording was transcribed at MI8, Canberra, and the transcript then forwarded to DSD. The full transcript is included as it gives a detailed insight into the operations of the Troop in the first four months and possible improvements. The authors have included amplifying notes where appropriate. Now

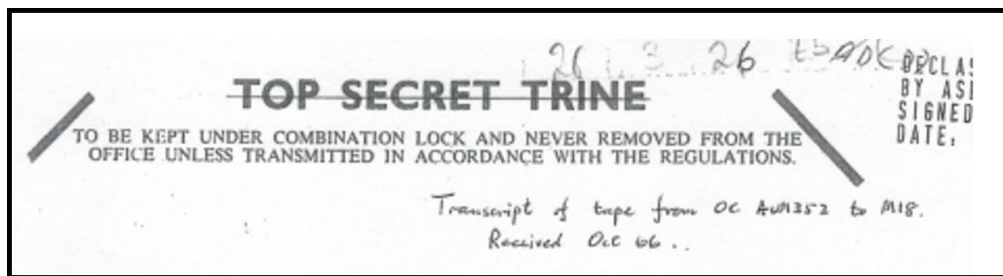


Figure 75: Transcript First Page

Dear Sir,

Reference your signal 300045Z August 66. Taking your paragraph numbers and referring to then I will start off and say that para 1, I would myself definitely welcome a visit by both DSD and M18 at this stage as everything has got to a very interesting stage up here on the American side of the house as to exactly how everybody is going to be employed, and if you hadn't come in and suggested a visit I would have come back and suggested that somebody should come up and have a pretty close look as to what is going to happen up here.

First of all to answer your first questions. Paragraph two on security of material. What is happening up here at the moment is that due to a changeover in intelligence staff the two intelligence staff officers up here Major Rogan [sic – probably Rowe] and Captain Keap [sic – probably Keep] [two lines redacted] so we have had a bit of hiatus up here as regards to continuity on the intelligence side. As a result of this I've been going direct to the Brigadier with information and briefing him direct and converting into military intelligence for him. This seems to have been working fairly well up until now and, as such, has obviated the need of having intelligence staff officers down here actually in our compound; it saves classified material being taken out of the areas except for a map trace which I go up and put on the Brigadiers map board, and everything that goes out of the cell and passed onto the Brigadier is purely verbal.

Now, to get back to the question of storage of higher category material. Up until now, this station has been treated as a Secret Savin station ²⁶⁵. Our keylists for the KW7 are only graded secret, but if it is necessary for me to get higher category material, which I don't think is necessary at the moment, I can apply for and get Top Secret Keylists on SSO ²⁶⁶ grounds for our circuit and as such get the SSO at 243 ²⁶⁷ to pass Top Secret Trine material over this link. But as such, this hasn't been necessary which I will cover under the terms of end product.

Now your next question on paragraph 3B is what we can produce from our own sources. We can now produce everything that is possible to produce on PHUOC TUY Province at the moment. As such, we will get a message which is readable, and Corporal Rogers is extremely valuable in this regard, we then pass off the original text plus our translation underneath Ops. Immediate ²⁶⁸ back to USM 626 who then publish it as formal serialised end-product. As a result of what we have been able to achieve over the last three months, the two positions at USM 626 that the Americans have allocated at PHUOC TUY Province have now been cut back to one, and they are still keeping the one on there simply because I asked them to do so until we get some more experience in what's going on up here, to see if they can rely completely on our complete take. The other problem, too, was that at the time we were having trouble with the radio sets, power fluctuations, and I thought it was worth the while to have the extra back-up if they could afford to do it, and which they are doing.

²⁶⁵ Station only authorised to receive and hold Sigint material up to and including Secret.

²⁶⁶ SSO = Special Security Officer.

²⁶⁷ Not identified.

²⁶⁸ Operational Immediate Signal Precedence.



The next question paragraph 3C is to what extent is the Intelligence Staff able to use our material. With the new personalities I've got up here, they prefer just to cope with what's on the 'open' side, and, due to the fact that the new G2 INT up here Major Povor [sic – most probably Major Piper] who has just arrived over from II Force (V) I think we will gradually see a change in this, in that he will act as a coordinator between what I produce, what is produced on the open side, interrogation reports and so on, actually start trying to collate intelligence which hasn't been done up till now, and tie the whole lot up into one bundle to form a composite picture. As such, the direct contact with the Brigadier might probably decrease as time goes by, and the staff will then start to function in the way it should. As such I hope they will ultimately come down here and open up a cell in the compound and take away a lot of what I have been forced to do up until now, simply because it has been so time consuming. But to try and extract the last ounce of intelligence as to what is going on; a lot of straight TA we have found very useful. For example over certain links to say certain numbers of messages have been passed, or the fact that a station has not been [active] for 15 or 20 days, this could mean that he has either got a power failure, or he is moving, and as such over a period of time we are now starting to get various indicators on nets and to what it could possibly mean, with a fair degree of accuracy. Another typical example was a certain military intelligence station. On two occasions now that he turned up he was first of all involved in a big operation with the 274th Regiment, he turned up a day before our big contact with the 275th Regiment on a ARDF fix; as such he started to prove an indicator that now where he turns up we can expect trouble. Those are just a whole series of possibilities, probabilities, and so on, and we are watching them extremely carefully as to how we frame ourselves when briefing the Brigadier on this, but so far we haven't over- stepped the mark or just using (you might say) just straight TA material in the form of end-product. And as such this is one reason why I have gone to great lengths to make sure that it has been me myself who has done the actual briefing rather than have intelligence officers coming down here, when trying to extract the last amount of information, getting stuck into our TA section, or trying to get stuck into our TA section, and questioning Irwin and Rogers, and generally trying to, ultimately what they would do, is to start trying to tell us how to do our job. So there is a fine dividing line between this, which I am well aware of, and I hope we are keeping on the right side of it at the moment, but this is probably one of the things which you can assess when you come up here. That I think explains the rest of your questions. "Do they main continuation pattern of Sigint material in my cell", the answer is no; "what sort of requests were you given by them for Sigint material?" well none at all, simply in that the fact that we are covering everything in PHUOC TUY Province that is identified and which has a notation. And as such we give him every last ounce of information that was possible to get. The Brigadier speaks to me direct and says "I'm putting in an operation or planning an operation here in a months time, I am interested in so and so. What can you do to help?" I can then give him a rough idea of what we can possibly produce with what we know at the moment, and secondly, all we may do is just alter our priorities here. But we found that there is really no need to do this even as, simply because we are able to cover everything that is up on the air "To what extent is Sigint accepted on face value or do you have to sell it?" Initially, for about the first month or so after we got into operations, it was a question of proving ourselves to the Brigadier as to what we can produce, and as such now from what I have said previously, you can see that General Jackson will take everything at all that we can produce. "Has any Sigint proven false?" The answer is yes. You have now seen this report, I hope, on the Operation on taking that particular radio station (and this ties in on the previous comments on ARDF as to how accurate it is) was the fact that we actually proved that ARDF was out by 6 to 8 kilometers on a particular station on 3 successive fixes, when compared with the results produced by the PRD-1 confirmed on the ground by SAS and then reflected in traffic the next day.²⁶⁹

The answer to your next question on paragraph 4. "Based on your previous report on ARDF to what extent would the commander now rely on information provided by ARDF?" He does rely on this information so long as I can give him the worst possible radius of area associated with ARDF. So, as say, we have proved this out by 6 to 8 kilometers; hence when I just get one fix on a station that hasn't been heard for some time, I tell him about this but I say "it is ARDF, hence, Sir, I would

²⁶⁹ See Signal and details at para 13.5 re Madame DODO.



leave it in a 5 kilometer area for the time being, in case we get or until we get another fix tomorrow. If we get another fix the next day and it is still in the same area, we then start cutting down the margin of error, for generally the Commander just uses as background material because the VC are now well outside our TAOR, and generally he just wants to make sure in what general area the Province are in and the fact that they are not, or do not appear to be, planning to create trouble for him through a current operation which may last for the next two to three weeks. Hence ARDF has been found to be quite good from this point of view, and as such the Brigadier has found it pretty well invaluable. The main thing about ARDF which I will emphasise is that at the moment until the system is perfected, ARDF is not and I repeat not a tactical aid, in that the claimed radius of error has been found to be wanting in many occasions, although in two or three occasions it has been proved quite accurate. Now, for example, after the contact with the 275th Regiment, they were located by ARDF from about 22nd August to about four days later. An SAS patrol was put in to confirm it on the ground they found a group of ten people approximately 100 paces from the centre of the fix. They couldn't actually work out whether this group of eight to ten people had a radio station with them, but this is the normal size of a radio detachment whether it is a command transmitter or is an intelligence transmitter. As such it was a rather large coincidence if they weren't the particular people in question. So I still feel that ARDF is quite accurate in some circumstances, but in others, it can be quite wrong, and as such it is difficult to know when you get this fix whether it is right or on the Knocker or whether it is out by a certain error greater than what they claim.

Now your next question on 4C is "Do I consider provision of ground based DF net desirable or essential for Task Force purposes?" I say neither, for the following reasons. First of all, the PRD-1 is extremely limited in its employment in PHUOC TUY Province, at the moment to three sites. There is one at BARIA, one at the Task Force area, and one about 6 Kms north of BARIA at BINH BA²⁷⁰. Each of these stations form a base line running north and south, approximately 7 kilometers between each equipment. As such you can get a fix in a triangle going out from the base line to an apex of approximately ten kms. Now anything within that area, you can get quite good fixes on. But to get fixes on anything else in the Province, they have to be redeployed to form a new base line. The number of sites which are technically suitable on to which to put the PRD-1 are extremely limited.

Secondly. You have to put out a protective force to protect them, and the Brigadier says that the minimum force he would put out or allow me to put out with a PRD-1 would be a company and he is not prepared to let a company go just to protect one PRD-1 site. Thirdly, the PRD-1s would have to be flown into their sites, which means the use of helicopters, and would require one helicopter for each team. So all told, it is not a very economical proposition from the point of view of resources in order to deploy these things. The next one is the fact that you have to have one well qualified CW operator with each PRD-1. You also need a second man to operate the tip-off. Due to lack of sensitivity with the PRD-1 and selectivity, it is essential that you have steerage to pick up the required target in this kind of band that we have got at the moment. Now over here, we have been the only people who have had any success at all with the PRD-1s; They have been on issue to all other DSUs or Radio Research Companies in the Corps III area, but none of them have been able to produce results and there was a tremendous discussion yesterday, across at the 17th at this DSU commanders conference, that I went to on the PRD-1. Everyone of them was shooting the PRD-1 down in flames, simply because they were not employing it correctly and were trying to work it over ranges greater than it was suitable to employ them - in other words outside its capabilities.

Your paragraph 6 on manning. "The way personnel are presently employed?" What I have done and found is that one TA man can cope with what we are producing at the moment. This is Irwin. As such I then use Rodgers as virtually a troop commander in that he supervises all the work in TA and sort of generally ties together all the work of the troop, and organises work parties and everything like that. I handle everything outside the Troop; in other words dealing with the staff on requiring defence stores or timber, working as SSO or as Australian Intelligence Officer briefing the Brigadier, working in with the 17th RR Battalion etc. etc. As far as the operators are concerned — you have probably got

²⁷⁰ 5RAR was providing security at Binh Ba during this period.



my previous note by now. What we have done over the past 15 days, is we now have four positions going during the day. Four positions are set up, two of them are used for normal tasking as two eighteen hour positions and the other two positions are used as eight hour positions by using two extra operators. Those are used for general search and development.

13.4.3 RAAF Flt Lt Indoctrination Status and ARDF

On 7 October, MI8 requested Capt Richards of Fl Lt Status and ARDF fitment to Cessna²⁷¹:

C O N F I D E N T I A L COMINT CHANNELS '

FROM MI8;

FLT LT [Redacted] IS CLEARED TS AND INDOCTRINATED CAT THREE WOULD LIKE YOU TO CLARIFY POSITION AND ROLE INTENDED FOR [Redacted]. IS THIS FOR AIR PURPOSES ONLY OR IS [Redacted] GOING TO OPERATE AS MEMBER OF 1 ATF I NT STAFF AND ASSIST YOU. 2. YOU WILL BE GLAD TO HEAR THAT MAJ CATTANAGH WILL BRING WITH HIM EXPERIMENTAL ARDF EQPT FOR USE IN LIGHT AC WHICH HAS BEEN TRIED SUCCESSFULLY [Redacted] WE HAVE EQPT ON LOAN FOR CONTINUATION OF OPERATIONAL TRIALS IN VIETNAM. ORDERS ARE BEING ISSUED BY DMO AND P L/AW AHQ FOR MINOR MODIFICATION (SMALL HOLE IN FLOOR) OF TWO CESSNA AC OF 161 FLT SO THAT EQPT CAN BE USED. PLEASE OIL THE WAY FOR AVAILABILITY OF AC SO THAT THERE IS NO DELAY IN THIS RESPECT WHEN CATTANAGH ARRIVES.

13.4.4 RAAF Flt Lt Attached to HQ 1 ATF Status

On 11 October, Capt Richards, advised MI8 of RAAF Flt Lt being attached to GQ 1ATF Staff²⁷²:

OPS013

S E C R E T S A V I N

FOR MI8. YOUR 270600Z. REF YOUR PARAS

1. FLT LT [redacted] IS TO OPERATE AS MEMBER OF 1ATF I NT STAFF AND ASSIST THIS TP. MEMBER WAS ORIGINALLY POSTED TO PERFORM AIR INT BUT THERE IS NEGATIVE REQUIREMENT FOR THIS NOW.

2. AM OILING WAY FOR AC AVAILABILITY. ANTICIPATE NO PROBLEMS

13.4.5 Forthcoming Visit and Buildings

On 13 October, Capt Richards advised MI8 and DSD on additional info for visit of Maj Cattanach and Bob Botterill²⁷³:

INT 037

FOR M18. ADDITIONAL INFO FOR VISIT CATTANACH/BOTTERILL

1. A. HAVE APPROVAL TO ERECT TWO TROPICAL HUTS MEASURING 50FT BY 20FT AND 40FT BY 20FT. THE BIGGER BUILDING HAS

²⁷¹ DSD Declassified, 547 Sig Tp in Vietnam (tranche2).

²⁷² DSD Declassified, 547 Sig Tp in Vietnam (tranche2).

²⁷³ DSD Declassified, 547 Sig Tp in Vietnam (tranche2).



BEEN ERECTED AND THE CONCRETE BASES FOR BOTH BUILDINGS WILL BE POURED DURING THE NEXT WEEK. THE SMALLER BUILDING SHOULD BE ERECTED BY MID NOV 66.

B. HEAT SHOULD BE NO PROBLEM AS FANS SHOULD COPE WITHOUT USING AIR CONDITIONING.

C. SET ROOM WILL HAVE AREA OF 25FT X 20FT WHICH CAN TAKE UP TO EIGHT POSITIONS.

D. TA WILL HAVE AREA OF 25 FT BY 29FT

E. IN OTHER BLDG WILL BE OC OFFICE, INTELL, COMMS SECTION AND Q STORE

2. ASA HAS CONVERTED ALL CIRCUITS TO FULL DUPLEX TO OBTAIN BETTER RESTORATION PRIORITIES AND REQUIRE US TO DO THE SAME.
IN ADDITION TRAFFIC VOLUME IS SUCH THAT FULL DUPLEX IS REQUIRED
EXTRA EQMNT REQUIRED WILL BE

- A. TWO AN/GGC3 TELEPRINTERS
- B. TWO TAA4ATG PAGE PRINTERS
- C. TWO TH5/TG

3. AERIALS.
[Redacted]

4. POWER.
[Redacted]

5. NO MATTER WHETHER TP IS INCREASED IN SIZE OR NOT WILL REQUIRE HELP ON INSTL.
[Redacted]
THE ONLY PART OF INSTL LIKELY TO CAUSE PROBLEMS IS THE COMMO CENTRE PLUS CONTROL PANNELS FOR [Redacted]

6. WILL TAKE NO OP DEMAND ETC ACTION ON ABOVE UNTIL AFTER VISIT

7. ON ARDF5 SUGGEST PILOTS REQUIRE INDOCTRINATION.

PSE ADVISE YES OR NO.

13.4.6 Congratulations to 547 Sig Tp

On 19 October, DSD advised DMI of congratulatory message on AUM352²⁷⁴:

SECRET SAVIN
WE HAVE SIGHTED SIGNAL FROM [redacted]

WHICH INCLUDES FOLLOWING SENTENCE
+AUM352 HAS DONE AN OUTSTANDING JOB OF PROVIDING THE COMINT
COMMUNITY WITH EXCELLENT INTERCEPT COVERAGE AND TRANSLATIONS
OF VC ACTIVITY IN THIS ((I.E. PHUOC TUY)) AREA+.

²⁷⁴ DSD Declassified, 547 Sig Tp in Vietnam (tranche2).



13.4.7 Congratulations to 547 Sig Tp Again

On 20 October 1866, MI8 sent the following signal to 547 Sig Tp and DSD regarding Sigint briefed officer at HQ AFV and congratulations²⁷⁵ ²⁷⁶:

S E C R E T G U A R D C O M I N T C H A N N E L S

*FOR [Redacted] FROM [Redacted] MAJ.[Redacted] WHO IS TO RELIEVE MAJ [Redacted]
AT HQ AFV IS CLEARED TOP SECRET AND INDOCTRINATED CAT 3.
PLEASE ADVISE ALL CONCERNED.*

*TWO. AM VERY PLEASED TO HEAR FROM DSD UNOFFICIALLY THAT US
SIGINT AUTHORITIES CONSIDER AUM 352 TO HAVE MADE AN OUTSTANDING
CONTRIBUTION TOWARDS COMINT ON PHUOC TUY.BEST WISHES AND KEEP
UP THE GOOD WORK*

²⁷⁵ DSD Declassified, 547 Sig Tp in Vietnam (tranche2).

²⁷⁶ Congratulations possibly info received in Signal to DMI on 19 Oct.



13.5 274 VC Regiment Communications Equipment

13.5.1 Recovered VC Notebook

On 19 October 1966, a notebook belonging to the 2ic of the 274 VC Regiment was recovered in the Nui Thi Vai Mountains²⁷⁷. In the notebook was a communications appreciation data dated 24 September 1966.²⁷⁸

The following equipment table is derived from the information contained in the document:

Unit	Equipment
Regimental Signal Unit	2 x 15 watt Radios ²⁷⁹ (one in bad condition) 4 man pack radios (1 x PRC-25 ²⁸⁰ , 3 x PRC-10 ²⁸¹ – one in bad condition) 6 x Telephones (3 in bad condition) 8.5 km wireline (2 km in bad condition)
1 st Battalion	4 x PRC-10 (2 in bad condition) 4 x telephones (2 in bad condition) Wireline 4.8 km (2 km in bad condition)
2 nd Battalion	5 x PRC-10 (1 x PRC 9) (1 in bad condition) 5 x Telephones (3 in bad condition) Wireline 4.8 km (2 km in bad condition)
3 rd Battalion	5 x Main pack radios (1 in bad condition) 5 x Telephones (1 in bad condition) Wireline 4.8 km (3 km in bad condition)

²⁷⁷ It is not known if the Troop ever received a copy of this document.

²⁷⁸ Email to Bob Hartley from Ernie Chamberlain 1 May 2017.

²⁷⁹ Probably Chicom 15 watt HF AM Transceiver. Frequency Coverage 2 – 12 MHz.

²⁸⁰ US Army AN/PRC-25 30 – 76 MHz. See previous mention.

²⁸¹ The AN/PRC-10 came into the US Army inventory in March, 1951. It is a 16 tube FM radio which was used as a squad radio. It is part of a family of radios AN/PRC-8, AN/PRC-9 (27 – 38.9 MHz), and AN/PRC-10 (38 – 54.8 MHz). See previous mention



13.6 Madame DODO

13.6.1 Preview

As briefly mention at para 11.1.3, soon after operations commenced the Troop was intercepting communications from an agent in the Nui Dinh Mountains, and General Westmoreland (Commander Vietnam Forces) ordered the agent to be 'taken out'. The Troop, with US Support, was tasked with locating the transmitter.

Several air strikes were placed on the suspected location with no result. As a consequence, the SAS were given the task but they were also unsuccessful.

13.6.2 Operator Recollections

Eric Grace recalled²⁸²:

Our Troop was intercepting an agent in the Nui Dinh Mountains almost from the word go and General Westmoreland ordered the agent to be taken out. Sammy Rogers was so interested in this job that he even assisted us as an operator.

When we were tasked with getting 'fixes' on 'Dodo', Clarrie got the pilot's guernsey because the (Yank) PRD-1 receivers weren't the best - basically they lacked sensitivity - and I thought Clarrie was the best man to act as pilot i.e. to help steer the Americans onto the right station, particularly as their operators weren't as experienced as ours.

The Americans had come down from 11th ACR to assist us with a DF job on a VC station which had been given the code name 'Dodo'. 'Dodo' was operating from somewhere in the Dinh Hills to the west of the Task Force and carried out regular skeds reporting on vehicle movement up and down Highway 15.^[283] We had no PRD-1s of our own so the Yanks arrived with their equipment carried in their 3 APCs. As I said, I wasn't all that happy about losing Clarrie to help the Yanks but General Westmoreland considered the location of 'Dodo' a priority. After several fixes were obtained, 6 RAR was given the job of 'taking Dodo out'.

Gary Fizzell²⁸⁴:

I was operating at times when we were intercepting 'Madame Dodo' (we added the 'Madame' after the agent was captured up on the hills). I had personally logged her and took traffic from her. I remember Sammy Rogers' eagerness for us to copy as much four short figure traffic as possible. I found it exciting because for all my time at Cabarlah & Singapore I never had the opportunity to log something as important as this and to actually 'see' a result.

I believe her transmitter is down at the School Museum, Watsonia. She was fairly easy to copy; slow morse and QSA 5 [Signal strength] but her transmitter was unstable and we had to chase her up and down the band.

²⁸² By kind permission of the author. All Recollections that follow are taken from *547 Signal Troop in South Vietnam – The Soldiers' Perspective – Deployment, Early Days and the Lead-up to Long Tan*, by Barry Hampstead, July 2008.

²⁸³ The reports of vehicle movement would not have been current due to only two or three radio schedules per day. In addition, the 'agents' would not have been able to see highway 15 from the location of the cave and would have had to rely on observation from forward outposts.

²⁸⁴ Ex OP Sig posted to 103 Sig Sqn but assisted 547 in his spare time.



Kevin Lever²⁸⁵:

The Yanks put an air strike onto the Dinh hills but it didn't make much difference to 'Dodo'. 'Dodo' came up on time for the next sked - it made me wonder how far underground she was. 'Dodo' only ever sent Morse at about 5 words per minute. I think our blokes missed her when the station was eventually put off the air.

13.6.3 Signal to DSD

On 2 August, the following signal was to MI8 and DSD from 547 Sig Tp²⁸⁶:

[First page missing]

3. ARDF. A LOT OF PROBLEMS CAUSING POOR SERVICE. 90 PERCENT OF AVLVL [sic²⁸⁷] FIXES ARE UI²⁸⁸ AND [redacted] PROVED SEVERAL FIXES OUT BY APPROX. SIX KILOMETERS [sic]. EXAMPLE ONE ATF ORDERED BY GENERAL WESTMORELAND TO CAPTURE VC RADIO STATION IN OUR AREA (SUBSTATION ON PRIORITY ONE ALFA.)

AFTER MY OBJECTIONS OVERRULED, OBTAINED TWO PRD DASH ONE TEAMS FROM 17 RR [sic] BATTALION TO A. EVALUATE EQUIPMENT FOR THEM AS NIL RESULTS SO FAR.

B HELP IN FIXING TARGET. ON FIXES SUPPLIED BY PRD DASH ONE, SAS PATROLS WERE PUT INTO CONFIRM LOCATION.

AN ACCIDENTAL CONTACT 100 METRES FROM FIX (CONSISTENT TWICE DAILY OVER TEN DAYS) WAS REPORTED IN TRAFFIC NEXT DAY. MESSAGE REVEALED PRD DASH ONE FIX WAS RIGHT ON TARGET. THREE ARDF FIXES OVER SAME PERIOD HAD TARGET SIX KILOMETERS [sic] AWAY TWICE AND IN FIVE RAR AREA ONE (ABOUT 10 KILOMETERS AWAY). COULD NOT FIX ANY OTHER NOTATION WITH PRD DASH ONE DUE TO LACK OF SECURE AREAS FOR A GOOD BASE LINE. RADIO NOT CAPTURED YET AS SAS FOUND IT LOCATED WITH AT LEAST A BATTALION. RESULTS GAINED ANPRD – ONE OF USE IN SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES BUT EXTREMELY LIMITED DUE TO REQUIREMENT FOR LARGE NUMBER OF SITES.

- A. SECURITY FORCE, HELICOPTERS ETC.
- B. ARDF AND PRD DASH ONE TEAMS ARE NOT TASKED BY U.S.
[line redacted]
- C. AM WORKING ON BOTH ALFA AND BRAVO.

WILL KEEP INFO

FEEL FINAL ANSWER IS ARDF ONCE SYSTEM IRONED OUT

13.6.4 SAS Support and Training

On 29 August, 547 Sig Tp sent the following message regarding Short Range Direction Finding (SRDF) equipment²⁸⁹:

P 190400Z [sic – possibly 290400Z]
FM AUM-352
TO USM614
INFO MRV(C)
USM626
USM704
DSD
ARMYCANBERRA (MI8)

²⁸⁵ Various Emails to Bob Hartley and Barry Hampstead.

²⁸⁶ ASD Archives.

²⁸⁷ May be an abbreviation for available, or corruption for ARDF.

²⁸⁸ Unidentified.

²⁸⁹ ASD Archives.



OPS001

SRDF. REQUEST FOR US [sic – possibly USE] OF NEW EQPT

1. RESULTS OF FLY AWAY SRDF TEAMS OVER PERIOD 17 – 29 AUG 66 HAVE PINNED **DODO (RAD1963 OUTSTATION VNGB M7178) OR LEECH (RAD 255A) CONTROL VNGB M7191** IN YS3666 AND YS3766. THESE FIXES WITH PRD-1 ARE STILL NOT ACCURATE ENOUGH IN THIS PARTICULAR TERRAIN AS SAS PATROLS HAVE BEEN SEARCHING AREA FOR PAST THREE DAYS WITH NO TRACE OF ENEMY TO DATE. A LARGER OPERATION MUST REVEAL ITS PRESENCE GIVING TARGET SUFFICIENT WARNING TO ESCAPE.

2. TO CARRY OUT GEN WESTMORELAND MISSION TO CAPTURE THIS RADIO STATION SUGGEST FOLLOWING:

A. UNDERSTAND USM626 **HAS TWO TELEFUNKEN SRDF SETS**²⁹⁰ ON USER TRIALS AND THAT SET IS ACCURATE UP TO ONE MILE WHEN MOUNTED ON A MAN.

B. REQUEST SET BE MADE AVAIL TO AUM-352 FOR TWO WEEKS SO THAT SAS RADIO OPERATOR CAN BE TRAINED ON TASK AND SENT OUT ON PATROL TO HOME IN ON TARGET.

C. IF SUCCESSFUL THIS TECHNIQUE COULD THEN BE APPLIED AS STANDARD PROCEDURE ONCE ARDF OR SRDF HAS LOCATED GENERAL AREA OF SEARCH. THE INFO SAS BRINGS BACK CAN THEN BE USED TO PLAN OPERATIONS THUS ELIMINATING ALL PROBLEMS OF ACTION ON SIGINT.

3. FOR DSD AND MI8 CANBERRA

A. REQUEST PERMISSION TO GIVE LIMITED SIGINT BRIEFING TO FOL RADIO OPS OF 3 SAS SQN ON AN AS REQUIRED BASIS.

B. MORSE SPEED OF ABOVE IS ABOUT FIFTEEN WPM BUT AM PREPARED TO TRAIN BEST OPERATOR TO RECOGNISE TARGET BY TONE OF TRANSMITTER ETC IF HE CANNOT COPE WITH MORSE SPEED. ALL TRG TO BE CONDUCTED OUTSIDE OUR AREA AND OP TO MEMORIZE CALLSIGNS, FREQS ETC TO LIMIT HIS VALUE TO ENEMY IN UNLIKELY EVENT OF CAPTURE. (SAS RECORD TO DATE IS PRACTICAL EVIDENCE OF THIS IE NIL KIA, NIL WIA, NIL CAPTURED). FEEL ABOVE SOLUTION IS ONLY PRACTICAL MEANS OF INCREASING CHOICES OF FINDING ENEMY ON THE GROUND AND HENCE BEING ABLE TO PROVIDE ACCURATE INTELLIGENCE TO COMD FOR PLANNING OPERATIONS AND ELIMINATING WASTED EFFORT.

The following signals were sent between DSD and MI8,²⁹¹ responding to the above signal from 547 Sig Tp:

FM DSD

TO: MI8

REF. 547 SIG TP SIGNAL 190400.

2. CONFIRMING TELECON CATTANACH/COLLINS, 30 AUG. DSD VIEW IS THAT IF PROPOSAL IS ACCEPTED BY COMPETENT U.S. AUTHORITIES THEN WE WOULD HAVE NO (R) NO OBJECTIONS.

3. IF ACCEPTED WE WOULD RECOMMEND:

(A) THAT THE NUMBER OF SAS PERSONNEL BE BRIEFED BE KEPT TO MINIMUM.

(B) THAT THE BRIEFING IS DONE BY SOMEONE NOT CONNECTED WITH 547 SIG TP AND IS AS NON-REVEALING AS POSSIBLE.

(C). THAT THERE SHOULD BE NO (R) NO CONNECTION WITH 547 ROLE AND THE OPERATION ITSELF.

4. HAD IN MIND SOMEONE FROM G2 SAYING +WE HAVE BEEN INFORMED THAT DODO USES A TX ON 5678 KC/S WITH CALLSIGN XYZ. WE HAVE A PIECE OF EQUIPMENT WHICH, IF USED CORRECTLY, WILL ENABLE YOU TO PIN POINT (OR HOME ON) THE TRANSMITTER. ONE OF THE SIGNALS PEOPLE

²⁹⁰ Telefunken PE-484 body-wearable miniature direction finder that could be used as a manpack DF system on patrols. (See Annex C).



²⁹¹ ASD Archives.



WILL INSTRUCT YOU IN ITS USE+. THE INSTRUCTOR WOULD CONFINE HIMSELF TO DEMONSTRATING THE EQUIPMENT AND ENSURING THAT THE SAS MAN COULD WORK IT.

MI8 responded to 547 Sig Tp.

FROM: ARMY CANBERRA

TO: 547 SIG TP

FROM MI8

YOUR OPS 001 OF 190400Z

ONE. WE HAVE CONSULTED WITH DSD ON YOUR PROPOSAL. WE FEEL THAT THE FEASIBILITY OF YOUR PLAN IS BASICALLY ONE FOR THE U.S. AUTHORITIES TO DECIDE BECAUSE OF THE RISK OF THIS ACTIVITY COMPROMISING THE TRUE ROLE OF 547 SIG TROOP AND THAT OF U.S. UNITS. HOWEVER WE BELIEVE THAT THIS RISK IF MINIMISED BY PRECAUTIONS SHOULD BE ACCEPTED IN VIEW OF OPERATIONAL ADVANTAGES THAT MAY ACCRUE.

TWO. FOLLOWING ARE THE PRECAUTIONS WE CONSIDER SHOULD BE TAKEN.

ALPHA. OPERATION SHOULD BE CONFINED IN KNOWLEDGE TO AS FEW PEOPLE AS POSSIBLE.

BRAVO. OPERATION SHOULD BE SEEN AS AN ADDITIONAL CAPABILITY, STRICTLY TACTICAL, FOR SAS PATROLS TO LOCATE ENEMY.

CHARLIE. NO CONNECTION IS TO BE SEEN BETWEEN THIS SAS CAPABILITY AND 547 SIG TP.

DELTA. OC SAS MAY BE BRIEFED ON TRUE STORY AS HE IS INDOCTRINATED BUT HE SHOULD BE GIVEN NECESSARY INFORMATION BY INT STAFF OF 1 ATF. YOU IN TURN WILL BRIEF INT STAFF STRESSING NEED TO PROTECT SOURCE OF TARGET INFO.

FOXTROT. [No Para Echo in Signal] PERSONNEL SHOULD BE TRAINED ON INSTIGATION OF OC SAS.

MINIMUM NUMBER OF SAS SIGS TO BE TRAINED ALL OF WHOM SHOULD BE CLEARED AT LEAST SECRET [redacted] TRAINING MAY BE GIVEN BY YOU OSTENSIBLY IN RESPONSE TO REQUEST BY OC SAS BUT MUST BE CONFINED TO TECHNICAL OPERATION OF EQPT.

GOLF. SUGGEST PERSONNEL BE TRAINED IN AREA REMOTE FROM SAS AREA AND THEY BE WARNED BY OC SAS ON NEED FOR SECURITY ON BASIS THAT SURPRISE WILL BE LOST ON ENEMY IF COMPROMISE OCCURS ON POSSESSION OF NEW SAS CAPABILITY.

HOTEL. NO REPEAT NO ORDERS OR INSTR SHOULD BE IN WRITING.

THREE. AM PLEASED YOU MADE THIS PROPOSAL.

Trevor Richards recalled²⁹²:

I discovered at Nui Dat that OC SAS Sqn was a Major Spud Murphy and that he was indoc²⁹³ before SVN on other SAS business

Because Maj John Rowe had no Sigint background, and was determined to have nothing to do with it as he told me in no uncertain words, I worked with Spud Murphy by giving him a map square to look in --- i.e. a 1,000 yd zone which covered any ARDF and PRD-1 Fixes. He thought it was bloody marvellous int for his purposes. Not targeting info which is how the USA tried to use ARDF fixes.

We had two PRD-1s and sighted one on Nui Dat hill and the other in the ARVN compound half way to Vung Tau.

So yes, I briefed Spud Murphy on DODO. His troopers used to saddle up with all their gear whenever I appeared.

But no one at 1 ATF HQ knew I was briefing Spud Murphy on the side.

²⁹² Email to Bob Hartley 10 Sept 2015.

²⁹³ Formally briefed on Sigint.



Capt Richards Reported²⁹⁴:

...reference the request I sent back to Australia on using the SAS for getting fixes on units up to the last mile. What finally had turned out was the fact that the opinion from the Americans was the complete opposite to the signal you sent up here, and the fact that they do have a number of Special Forces personnel specially indoctrinated and trained for this sort of work, so I ended up getting two Special Forces Sergeants down here, who had been trained in the use of the Telefunken and the URR10²⁹⁵ and I sent them out on one patrol with the SAS; by having them sleep with the SAS, briefing them at a separate part as suggested in your signal and getting them to memorise the targets. But unfortunately by the time I got them out here, the targets I could possibly use them against (or the Brigadier, I am sorry, could use them against) had gone well outside our TAOR, and hence apart from the one operation we did it has been impossible to use them, so I am sending them back tomorrow. Tomorrow being the 14th September. Now I think though that this aid of using the short range DF is going to be extremely valuable, and once again this is one point I forgot to mention earlier on, the SAS have proven invaluable in producing open collateral for our material so far as action-on Sigint is concerned, in that having Major Murphy indoctrinated we get a series of ARDF fixes or SRDF fix, SAS patrol is put out to confirm this on the ground and they will bring back all necessary collateral. When I say collateral it need not necessarily be the actual contact with forces but can be use of trails, water points, bunkers that have been used in the last 24 hours and things of this nature. This information has then become open and the Brigadier uses it as positive intelligence for the planning of operations. As such anything that we have given SAS to check out has proven positive and Major Murphy, as OC of the SAS Squadron, is very happy with this and he is all for closer collaboration between what we produce and then what he can do on the ground. So this looks like a further use of the SAS and a very practical way of using their abilities to the ultimate.

...Now after this first report, that you have received, was in, and based on this General McChristian, J2 MACV, formed an air mobile or flyaway team. This is the team I have had with me now for the last four weeks²⁹⁶ They consist of an officer, a sergeant and twelve men and three men to each team. Consists of four teams all told. They have a VRC47²⁹⁷ for communications between teams, with a KY-8²⁹⁸ voice cyphony equipment on which to have voice encryption. As such we sited the fourth team right alongside our

²⁹⁴ ASD archives. See full transcript at Annex F and now available at <https://www.asd.gov.au/about/history/declassified/Transcript>. Transcript of Trevor Richards Interview (PDF).

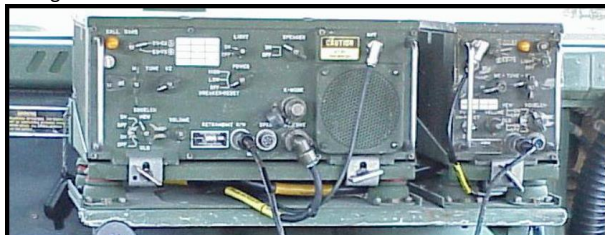
²⁹⁵ Not identified.

²⁹⁶ See report of noise by 103 Sig Sqn.

²⁹⁷ http://www.radiomuseum.org/r/military_anvrc_47.html

AN/VRC-47 Mobile radio: Military transceiver covering 30-52,95 MHz (Band A) / 53-75,95 MHz (Band B), 920 channels with 50 kHz channel spacing, FM (F3), output power 1 - 3 (low power) or 35 W (high power), standard and subaudio tone (150 Hz) operated squelch.

The AN/VRC-47 system consists of RT-524A/VRC transceiver, R-442 auxiliary receiver (to monitor a second channel while operating on another frequency), the Mounting MT-1029 for RT-524 and the Mounting MT-1898 for the auxiliary receiver. Standard vehicle antenna is the AT-912 whip antenna with the antenna tuning unit MX-2799.



²⁹⁸ <http://www.cryptomuseum.com/crypto/usa/ky8/index.htm> KY-8 was a voice encryption unit that was developed by the US in the early 1960s as part of the NESTOR family of devices. Of this family, the KY-8 was the base station and vehicular unit.



set room, and when our operator here on the set actually picks up the target we then immediately flashed out the actual signal itself to the three PRD-1 teams. The three PRD-1 teams were strictly tasked; they were all given a tasking list, they knew what times they had to come up, what call signs to go for each, and then with the tip—off we were able to produce results, even though the standard of their operating was absolutely shocking, and as such most of them were DF operators, not even CW operators. I will cover this one later on. As such, if ever I do want PRD-1 teams I can apply for this air mobile or air flyaway team to come down to my area again. I am sending them back in the next couple of days simply because all VC targets have moved outside the range of the PRD-1, there is nothing left here for them to do, and although they have been allocated to me for a total of 45 days, which is still another two to three weeks, I have no further use for them so they are going back. Hence there is no requirement at all for me to have my own PRD-1 team; organic to my unit in any way, shape or form.

13.6.5 Operation BATHURST

13.6.5.1 Overview

On 24 October, during Operation Bathurst in the Nui Dinh Hills, B Company, 6 RAR, came across a large VC camp. A firefight took place. After the enemy decamped, an alert soldier of 5 Platoon noticed a radio aerial strung between trees. They followed the wire into a cave where they found the radio, and discovered a female VC clinging to the ceiling of the cave. The 23-year-old woman was later identified as To Thi Nau, the head of the Military Proselytising Committee at Hoa Long.





13.6.5.2 Operation Order

6RAR Operation Order²⁹⁹:

Copy No 64

6 RAR
NUI DAT
1 Oct 66

OPORD 2-10-66 (Op BATHURST)

Reference : Maps : VIETNAM 1:50,000 Sheet 6442 I, 6442 II, 6442 III, 6442 IV.
1:25,000 Sheet 6430 IIs, 6430 IIIs.

1. SITUATION

a. **Enemy Forces :** No change from OP PLAN (Op CASULA).

b. **Friendly Forces :**

- (1) Details and conditions of ARVN Units, RF and PF, in areas relevant to this operation are held by the IO.
- (2) 1 Fd Regt RAA will move batteries as required in support of TF operations.
- (3) General Support Battery (101 Fd Bty RAA) will be prepared to provide one ~~DD~~ (Airborne) and one Air Op as well as one OP Party (for attachment to 1 APC Sqn) in support of Road Runner Operations.
- (4) 1 APC Sqn will conduct Road Runner WEST to PHU MY YS 2574 on 11 and 22 October with 6 RAR.
- (5) 1 APC Sqn will conduct daylight patrol in open country and ~~rubber~~ plantation areas in the vicinity of LONG PHUOC YS 4564.
- (6) 1 Fd Sqn RAE will place one detachment under command 6 RAR for Road Runner WEST to PHU MY YS 2574 on 11 and 22 October.

c. Attachment and Detachment : No change.

2. **MISSION :** 6 RAR is to conduct operations as part of 1 ATF mission to confirm domination of the TAOB and the main routes to it.

3. EXECUTION

a. Concept of Operations : Four type of activity will be conducted during this three week period as follows :

- (1) Intensive patrols up to company strength to dominate TAOB and to destroy enemy penetration, to include reconnaissance, clearing, ambushing and following up trails. Particular stress will be laid on night ambush operations.

Figure 76: 6RAR Operation Order Extract

13.6.5.3 HQ 6RAR Duty Officer's Diary

The sequence of evince leading up to and the capture of DODO was reported in HQ 6RAR Duty Officer's Logs³⁰⁰ as:

20	1245	B Coy	6 RAR	Contact. Wait Out. Target Called for. GR 331649.
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Figure 77: Initial Contact

²⁹⁹ AWM95 7/6/7 RCDIG1027950 6RAR Narrative Duty Officer's Log Annexes 1- 31 Oct 1966.

³⁰⁰ Ibid.

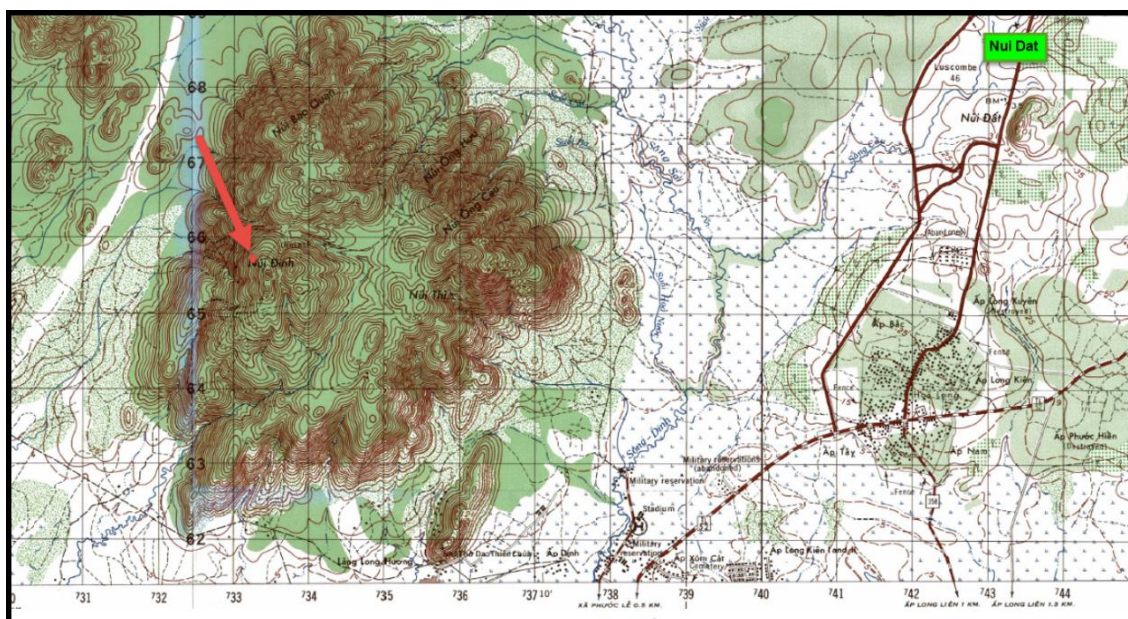


Figure 78: Location of cave

33	1310	B Coy	6 RAR	Contact report. 2 VC seen in hut, YS 331657, VC fled south. Being engaged. Am engaging probable withdrawal routes. Am moving a call sign forward in sweep. More details to follow. No casualties either side.
34	1318	B Coy	6 RAR	Have found large VC camp am assaulting now.
35	1346	B Coy	6 RAR	Found VC camp GR 332657 appears to be 15-20 men camp abandoned when my call sign ran into sentries. Much equipment and some documents, some rice and an aerial for radio set. We are now searching the camp thoroughly. Will destroy it and follow up in direction that enemy withdrew. It appears that enemy has access to Aust equipment and a number of pack was are Aust. Clothing Green, Black and Grey also wivilians clothes. There is no Radio in loc will check bearing of the airdrops.

Figure 79: Contact Report

47	1457	B Coy	6 RAR	We have found a receiver/transmitter for morse set and earphones as well.	DE XXX
48	1500	B Coy	6 RAR	E Woman in hole with radio, also Chinese grenades, claymore mines documents and a radio set.	

Figure 80: Radio Found

52	1510	B Coy	6 RAR	Viet woman talked she says 8 people, 6 men 2 women. Didnt say which way they went. There are others from camp who visit HOA LONG and return at 1300 hrs or 1400 hrs every day. Have not returned yet I will ambush.
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Figure 81: Enemy Personnel

53	1523	6 RAR	B Coy	Send description of gear found.
54	1523	B Coy	6 RAR	An American set US Signal Corps on freq 1.4.1 megs. Number is RTT /GEO9. We have finished destruction of village, still searching tunnels, moving other call sign to lay ambush on track. Will move to top of hill and call you in.

Figure 82: Radio Description³⁰¹

³⁰¹ RT-77/GRC-9 Backpack or Vehicular Transceiver: The AN/GRC-9 Radio Station is a low-power radio transmitter and receiver that was used in either ground or vehicle configurations. Made in USA. Frequency band 2 - 12 MHz Output 1 - 15 Watts.



638	250701H	5 RAR	SITREP 7. 0600H to 0700H. NTR.
	250805H	6 RAR	SITREP 2. 0400H to 0800H. En. 1 VCC and documents and equipment evacuated to Task Force. Own sit. A Coy patrol has departed.

Figure 87: Evacuation of VCC and Equipment

Figure 88: 5 Platoon, 6 RAR outside the cave complex³⁰³

Soldiers of 5 Platoon, B Company, 6th Battalion, The Royal Australian Regiment (6RAR), with To Thi Nau (partially obscured) a captured female Viet Cong (VC) soldier who was found hiding in the roof of a cave, used as an enemy camp, with a powerful United States Army radio transceiver. 547 Signal Troop, attached to 1st Australian Task Force (1ATF) headquarters, had been picking up powerful VC radio transmissions from the Nui Dinh mountains and Captain (Capt) Trevor Richards, the 547 Signal Troop commander, alerted 3 Squadron, Special Air Service (3SAS), who searched the general area without success. General Westmoreland learnt of the radio independently and personally instructed the 1ATF to "take it out". Capt Richards was instructed to pinpoint the location of the radio transmitter, that had now been given the code name, Dodo. Using two Second World War "black boxes" the location was narrowed down to about 200 square metres. 3SAS dispatched four additional patrols, again without success. On 24 October 1966, B Company, 6RAR, was patrolling the Nui Dinh hills, during Operation Bathurst, and came across a large VC camp. The VC sentries were engaged and after an exchange of fire the fifteen to twenty VC in the camp fled. B Company captured a substantial amount of equipment and documents in the camp that had given the VC a panoramic view of the province, including the Task Force area at Nui Dat. An alert soldier of 5 Platoon saw a radio aerial strung between two trees and Lance Corporal Kerry Rooney and Private M Birchwood, both of 5 Platoon, followed the wire into a cave that lead them eventually to the radio where they also discovered a female VC clinging to the ceiling of the cave. The 23 year old woman was later identified as To Thi Nau, the head of the Military Proselytising Committee at Hoa Long. As To Thi Nau was captured too late in the day to be evacuated she was held overnight and taken the next morning to 1st Australian Task Force base at Nui Dat where she was interrogated by Australian soldiers of the 1st Division Intelligence Unit before being sent to the American II Field Force Headquarters at Long Binh. The interrogation later became the subject of an inquiry after allegations of brutality and water torture.

³⁰³ From The Australian War Memorial Collection ID Number: P02809.012.



To Thi Nau, (aka Minh Hoang), a 23-year-old Viet Cong woman captured with a radio in the Nui Dinh Hills west of Nui Dat on 24 October 1966

[AWM P01404.011]AWM P01404.011



Figure 89: Madame DODO (AKA To Thi Nau)

13.6.5.5 HQ 1 ATF SITREP 24 Oct 66

On 25 October 1966, the Commander HQ 1 ATF Situation Report (SITREP) for the period 240001H to 242400H Oct 66³⁰⁴ stated:

(vi) 6 RAR continued Operation BATHURST with minor contact. D/6 RAR remained as security force for Fire Support Base YS257684. During period 240700H and 240900H D/6 RAR conducted road block in vicinity of Fire Support Base. At 240905H D/6 RAR detained three females and one male, all without ID cards. Detainers were evacuated to Task Force Area for interrogation. At 241245H B/6 RAR contacted 2 VC in hut at YS331657. VC fled SOUTH on contact. At 241300H B/6 RAR discovered VC camp for 15 to 20 men at YS332657. Some equipment, documents and rice were discovered in camp. Camp appeared to have been evacuated within the last 10 minutes. Also discovered in area was wireless antenna. VC clothing discovered was green, black and grey. At 241530H B/6 RAR reported capturing one female VC in tunnel at YS332657.

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Figure 90: HQ 1ATF Sitrep 24 Oct Extract #1

13.6.6 HQ 1 ATF SITREP 25 Oct 66

On 25 October 1966, the Commander HQ 1 ATF Situation Report (SITREP) for the period 240001H to 242400H Oct 66 stated³⁰⁵:

³⁰⁴ <http://static.awm.gov.au/images/collection/bundled/RCDIG1027939.pdf>

³⁰⁵ Ibid.

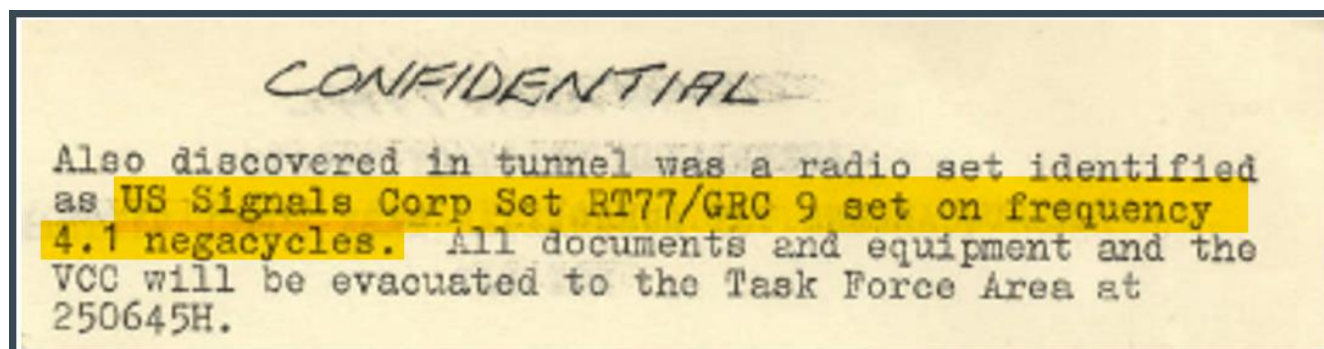


Figure 91: HQ 1ATF Sitrep 24 Oct Extract #2

13.6.6.1 HQ 1 ATF Intelligence Review 29 Oct 66

On 29 October 1966, the HQ 1ATF Intelligence Review No 2³⁰⁶ that covered the period 112400H Sep to 28 Oct 66, under the heading *CONTACTS WITH THE ENEMY* reported:

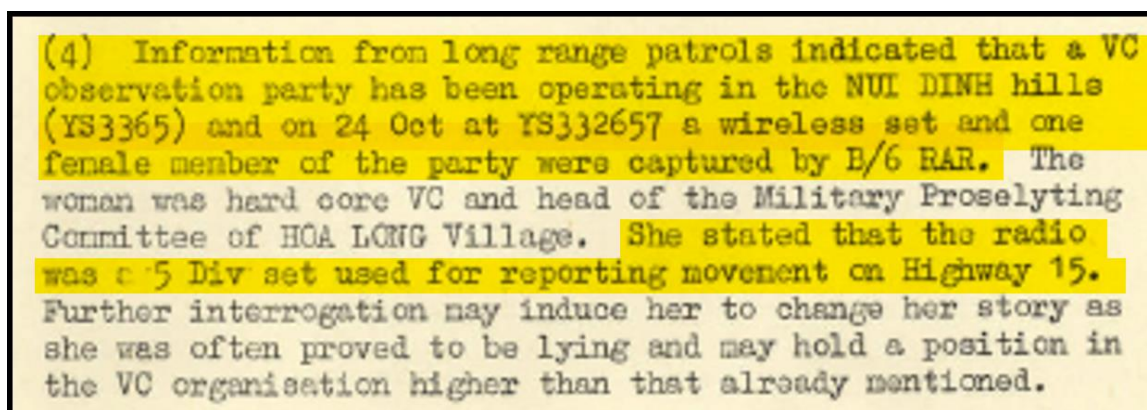


Figure 92: Extract HQ 1ATF Intelligence Review 11 Sep to 28 Oct 66

Eric Grace also commented³⁰⁷:

Although the station known as 'Dodo' was not put off the air until late October 1966, the job receives a fair bit of coverage in these writings because it was such an important part of 547's initial operations. 6 RAR had several cracks at removing 'Dodo' and finally achieved success when they captured a young Vietnamese woman by the name of To Thi Nau on the 24 October 1966. The woman was taken to 1ATF and was interrogated the next day. In what was to eventually become known as 'the water torture affair', she was alleged (by an Australian journalist) to have had water poured down her throat by her interrogators. Doug Rodgers and I had been ordered to report to the vicinity of where the questioning was taking place but we had no need to enter the tent being used and all I was interested in was the equipment she had been using. Doug was required to speak with Captain Mike Heenan³⁰⁸. I wasn't party to their conversation. Later, I saw the woman when she left the tent. She looked alright to me.

³⁰⁶ Ibid.

³⁰⁷ By kind permission of the author. All Recollections that follow are taken from *547 Signal Troop in South Vietnam – The Soldiers' Perspective – Deployment, Early Days and the Lead-up to Long Tan*, by Barry Hampstead, July 2008.

³⁰⁸ OC of Detachment 1 Div Int Unit (SVN)]. Mike Heenan had previously served as the Intelligence Officer at 7 Sig Regt.



It is believed that the Americans named the station as 'Dodo'³⁰⁹.

13.6.7 Further Writing on DODO

In the book *To Long Tan: the Australian Army and the Vietnam War 1950–1966*³¹⁰, Ian McNeill wrote a complete section on DODO:

In late July 547 Signal Troop began picking up powerful Viet Cong radio transmissions from the Nui Dinh hills. With the aid of a radio direction finding aircraft Richards's men began taking fixes on the location of the station. Occasionally it moved, but appeared to remain within a two kilometer square. Richards alerted Major John Murphy, commanding 3 SAS Squadron. Murphy sent patrols to spy out the general area to see what was there, but without success. Later General Westmoreland was informed of the radio from his own intelligence sources and seemed to attach particular importance to it. In October he sent word personally to the task force to 'take it out'. The station had been given the codename 'Dodo'. Richards was instructed to endeavor to pinpoint the station so that patrols could capture it. He objected. The radio was part of a widespread Viet Cong reporting network, he argued; better it be left in place and exploited rather than destroyed. Dodo would only be replaced and the business would start over again. Overruled, he decided to obtain a more accurate fix using ground triangulation procedures rather than rely on the US electronic aircraft. For this he obtained two Second World War vintage electronic 'black boxes'³¹¹, one of which he located at the ARVN compound in Ba Ria, and one at the Nui Dat base. With these he was able to narrow the location of the radio down to approximately 200 metres. At the same time it appeared to have stopped moving.

Altogether Murphy dispatched four patrols to locate Dodo. Although they appeared to have come close, none succeeded in finding the radio. Then on 24 October B Company of 6RAR was patrolling the western heights of the mountain as part of the program to maintain a presence in the Nui Dinh hills during Operation Bathurst. Moving up a ridge shortly before midday the lead platoon, alerted by the smell from an outdoor latrine, came across sentries to a large enemy camp. After an exchange of fire the fifteen to twenty occupants of the camp fled. Much equipment was found including rice, documents, clothing and a number of Australian army packs. From the camp one had a panoramic view of the province, including most Of Route 15 and the Nui Dat base. Then an alert soldier of 5 Platoon, led by Second Lieutenant John O'Halloran, spotted a radio aerial strung between the trees. A lead wire trailed to the ground. Lance Corporal Kerry Rooney and Private M. Birchell of 5 Platoon followed the wire which took them to a cave ...

³⁰⁹ Where the name DODO actually came from has not been confirmed. Trevor Richards believes it came from the Americans.

³¹⁰ Ian McNeill, *To Long Tan: the Australian Army and the Vietnam War 1950–1966*, The Official History of Australia's Involvement in Southeast Asian Conflicts 1948–1975, vol. 2 (Sydney: Allen & Unwin in association with the Australian War Memorial, 1993, page 395.

³¹¹ The 'black boxes' would be the AN/PRD-1 Manpack DF.



13.7 Another Captured Radio

13.7.1 5RAR

In addition to the DODO and radio capture, on 21 October at 1645 hrs, 1 Pl, A Coy, 5RAR also captured a radio transmitter in a cave/tunnel complex. The 5RAR Operations Log reported³¹²:

A/Tk Pl	Con	1705	We have come across a cave, has bedding and rice, the other has xxxx rifle it is booby trapped, also blood trail. The second cave is full with wires leading all round. Request assistance of A/Pnr Pl.	Ps
---------	-----	------	--	----

Figure 93: Cave Located #1

A/Pnr	Con	1503	At loc of cave wires still there, cave looks as though it has been rearranged and what we thought was wgn now a piece of rubber. Have secured area and wish to throw grenade before entering.	
-------	-----	------	---	--

Figure 94: Cave Located #2

5 RAR LOG 21 Oct 66 (DATE)				
FROM	TO	TIME	TEXT	
A Coy	Con	1525	Sitrep fm area of tunnel 1 Pl recovered a radio set, a powerful transmitting set, a radio diagram pam, batteries, set of earphones, CW key, a power plant to operate it, aerial looks like a dipole. The tunnel extends a long way underground, the first measures 30 ft, have found radio log book are operational instr book.	P

Figure 95: Radio Located

The HQ 1ATF Operations Log Reported³¹³:

445	211645H	5RAR	SITREP 15. 1500H to 1645H. Enr: 1 Pl A Coy recovered a powerful radio transmitter, a radio diagram, pair of batteries, ear phones, CW key, aerial, a power plant to operate the set, a radio log book, an operational instruction book. These were found in tunnel located this morning (YS288715). Tunnel extended long way underground. The first cavern measures 30 ft. There are a further 4 caverns. 3 pl A Coy has found 2 a/tk mines and some medical equipment. Contact as reported. Own Sit: All companies continue search.
-----	---------	------	--

Figure 96: Radio, Diagrams and Equipment Captured

³¹² AWM95 7/5/9 Commanders' Diary 5RAR Narrative, Operations Log, Annexes, 1 – 31 Oct 1966

³¹³ AWM95 1//4/15 RCDIG1027950 HQ 1ATF Duty Officers Log F79.

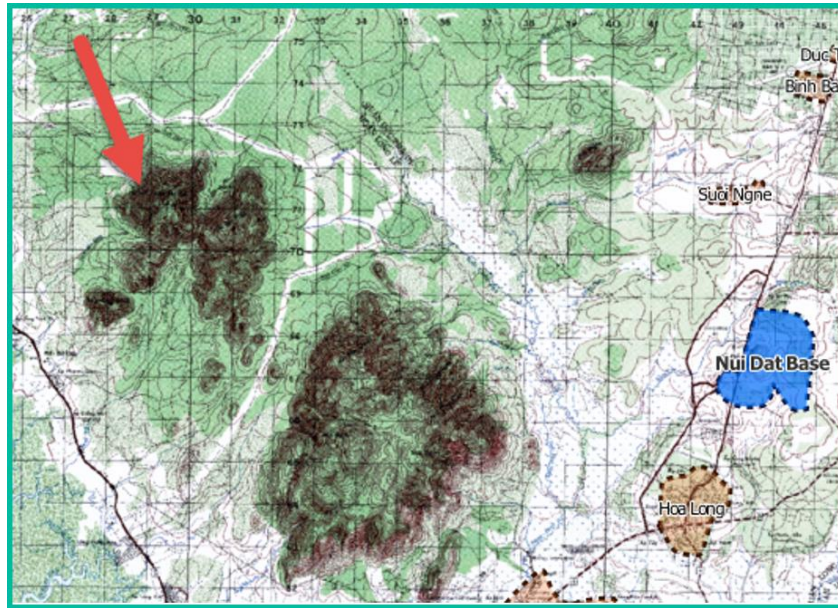


Figure 97: Location of Cave/Tunnels

13.7.2 Captured Radio Details

5RAR also reported further details of the captured Radio³¹⁴:

³¹⁴ https://armyradio.com/Chinese_Radios.html. Chicom 71. Manpack AM radio which weighed 45 lb. It covered 1.9 to 7.2 MHz and was 6 1/2" x 12" x 15". Power was provided by a D71 dry battery.





Annex G 1

MESSAGE FORM

PRECEDENCE ACTION	DATE TIME GROUP	SECURITY CLASSIFICATION
ROUTINE	27 Z	RESTRICTED
<u>FROM</u> 5 RAR		ORIGINATOR'S NUMBER
<u>TO</u> LISTS B & D + FCC		A 841

The radio set which was captured by 1 Pl during Op QUEBETAN is a CHICOM transceiver model 71B. This is a new piece of Chinese equipment. A number of these transceivers have been captured by US Forces in the Northern regions. This set is amplitude modulated with a frequency range from 1.9 to 7.3 megacycles. It may be used for cipher CMM voice or morse operation. Usually the latter role is preferred by the VC. It is battery powered and requires a large number of 1.5V flashlight cells for power supply. It produces a three watt output and has a normal working range on ground wave radiation of 30 km. On sky wave propagation it will operate over hundreds of miles. It is normally used as a sub station on a regimental net ie. for a battalion or for smaller units on separate operations CMM as was the case in our discovery .

DRAFTERS NAME	OFFICE	TEL NO	RELEASING OFFICER'S SIGNATURE & RANK
O'NEILL	IO	-	<i>R J O'Neill</i> Capt

Figure 98: Captured Radio Details



13.8 Troop Operations Continue

13.8.1 Hours of Duty

13.8.1.1 HQ Personnel

There were no laid down duty hours for the Troop HQ personnel. A normal working day would be at least 12 hours doing normal operational, command, liaison and administrative tasks and on call for the rest of the time. The Troop Sergeant Major/Senior Supervisor would also work in the Set Room as often as possible.

13.8.1.2 Comcen Personnel

The Comcen operated a 3x8 hour shift system with one operator on duty at all times. When traffic levels increased, staff absences occurred, or a secondary circuit opened, additional operators were recruited from the Set Room Section. This required Comcen operators to work many double shifts. The 3x8 hour shift system continued throughout the deployment. The Comcen manning consisted of a Sergeant Supervisor working a normal 10 hour day duty, and three shifts of one operator working eight hour shifts. The Sergeant was also on permanent call out and filled in for operator absences. When not working in the Comcen the operators were also required to carry out administrative duties in the compound and to mount gun piquets.

13.8.1.3 Set Room

Set room personnel also operated a 3x8 hour shift system. In the initial stages there were two operators allocated per shift. When the off shift operators were not employed on administrative tasks they would also add their resources on the sets. It was usual during the 0700 – 2200 hours period to have at least three intercept positions fully manned. When manpower increased and the operating hours of the enemy became more apparent the 3x8 hour shift basis was refined.

13.8.2 Frequency/Callsign Change

When there was a VC/NVA frequency/callsign change, virtually all operators rushed to the Set Room to assist. It became a personal challenge between the operators to see who was the first to find the new frequencies. It was a matter of personal pride to be the first.

13.8.3 Administrative Tasks

When the Operators were not employed in the Set Room and Comcen on their normal shift roster, they also had to perform administrative tasks and man gun piquets.



13.9 Operations Overview

Capt Richards Reported³¹⁵:

...What we have done over the past 15 days, is we now have four positions going during the day. Four positions are set up, two of them are used for normal tasking as two eighteen hour positions and the other two positions are used as eight hour positions by using two extra operators. Those are used for general search and development. Once again, the reason for this I will come onto this again in a moment. The two extra operators are one, Lever, from cypher and the other one Day, is the ARDF operator. I found that Rainer [sic - Rayner] can cope with all the administration for the Troop so far as working with 103 Sig Squadron is concerned, operate the ARDF receiver and also keep all the plots up-to-date on the map on which I brief the Brigadier. Communications - I can cope by using two operators only. I had a lot of trouble initially with communications due to the volume of flash messages I was getting in, in that every time an ARDF tip-off anywhere was received over the Corps III area was immediately flashed to every other station. Now I hit this on the head in that I told all other stations that Brigadier Jackson was only interested in grid references or fixes in the PHUOC TUY Province area and immediately 75% of my traffic disappeared and we are now on a basis whereby the two of them can cope quite adequately by keeping communications open between eight o'clock in the morning when the cards or the plugs are changed for setting up a cypher, up until approximately 11 o'clock at night which is the time the last day ARDF fixes come in. We close down for an hour at lunch time and it is possible to shut down for anything up to two to three hours round about tea time so those two can cope with it quite well to give them a day off from time to time normally on the basis of once a month, I use either Lever or Aird to fill in for them, to keep continuity in the communications. On the TA side it is run by Irwin. On the off-duty hours on the VHF side I have been using both Rodgers and Ennis [sic - Innes] in the TA section; for two reasons one to do all translations. Corporal Rodgers is an extremely good crypt-linguist and his work has been invaluable so far as cracking at messages is concerned. Once he actually has a matrix, and the basic ground work for all our crypt work has been done by the Americans but Rodgers has been able to improve on it. Using this information Innes has also been trained to translate messages as they come in they also give Staff Sergeant Irwin a hand on a lot of the routine work in TA. For such, a team of three can cope quite adequately as well as keeping up with, as we have been lately, a fourteen hour VHF position up on the top of NUI DAT. On ARDF side, I have remoted an RC292 antenna to the top of NUI DAT, approximately three quarters of a mile away, it is working and efficiently well with a PRC25 set. From the top of that hill, I have got a range and can make reliable contact over a range of 50 miles. On the operator side, Warrant Officer Grates [sic - Grace] copes with this quite well, with his five operator force, his standard two positions plus the extra two for development. My biggest weakness I think at the moment, is I need a general purpose storeman-cum-administrative man-cum-clerk to help out with preparing stuff for the Brigadier, and generally just a general purpose man all told. I don't like using Rodgers in the role he is now employed in, in that he really does not have that much technical work to do. As such a man with his abilities, he should be employed full time on TA duties

... there is absolutely no steerage. As I have said we have had or to go back, as at the 31st August we have suddenly started losing notations; we have now only got about 2 or 3 effective notations on the whole of the province and some of our productive notations in the past have now just disappeared off the band. So we created two general search positions and we started virtually directed search based on the following things — unidentified callsigns and freqs which had been fixed by ARDF in the general area of PHUOC TUY Province, we are putting these on cover; secondly, going across the band in directed search, any notations that we picked up that sounded close we got the PRD-1 on to it; if they could get a null on it or fix we took this as a general indicator, although there was a danger in this because quite often we get skywave transmissions from hundreds of miles away and, when bounced off mountains and so on in our area, appears as a groundwave

³¹⁵ ASD archives. See full transcript at Annex F and now available at <https://www.asd.gov.au/about/history/declassified/Transcript>. Transcript of Trevor Richards Interview (PDF).



transmission on which you get a null. But even taking this into account it was a worthwhile procedure. So out of the last 15 days we have produced somewhere in the vicinity 3 to 4 hundred VNGB dev items. Of those a total of 5 have been identified. So as a rough assessment, I would say that we have less than half the known VC transmissions in our area. Hence with a drop in cover and the fact that I have got the necessary slack to cover more stuff, my aim was to start trying to develop some of this staff [sic – stuff] that is around. I was talking to the OC of the 175th Company (this is the USM626 which is the company in SAIGON which has about 26 positions and the bulk of the TA staff, analytical staff, crypt staff, and. the reporting authority on translations in, as far as I am concerned anyway.) I was speaking to him and I asked him about the reason we hadn't any idents at all and it turns out that they have no section in their TA set up which is capable of doing developmental work. This is just matching up callsigns, freqs, generally handling GS or developmental work. They spend all their time allocating all their resources to a blanket cover on every known notation. If a notation is not productive in that (a) you can't crack cypher and (b) you just want continuation of it say to get a series of ARDF fixes, and also the fact that you know that its [I group garbled] don't change I suggested to him why don't you put it on rotational cover and cover it say once a fortnight or once a month just to make sure he is still there so that you have still got standard information for ARDF then drop him from cover and allocate an extra position for GS or developmental work seeing as there is so much on the air that we just haven't identified. This to them was a completely new thought — to them as everything comes up, they cover it and if they can't cover everything they just produce more operators and by hook or by crook they just blanket cover the whole darn lot. They don't appear to have any system of allocating definite priorities and trying to put three or four positions together and getting the maximum out of each position; and hence the reason why we have been getting no steerage is that they are just not capable of doing this.

In the next couple of months the **11th Cavalry Regiment**³¹⁶ is moving into a position just south of XUAN LOC which is about 15 to 20 kilometres north of our location. They have a completely track unit in APC their DS unit (DSU) is also mounted in APCs. The regiment consists of three squadrons, so they have three APCs, one allocated to each squadron, each one set up with one double position morse, and when a squadron goes out on operations the APC goes out with them and as they are trundling along the road, so the HF position and the APC picks up stuff off the air and so on. Now this is completely wrong, and Colonel Masters agrees with this and said that they are just going to have to pull this stuff out and centralise it, at least at regimental level.

³¹⁶ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/11th_Armored_Cavalry_Regiment. 11 Armored Cavalry Regiment (Blackhorse Regiment). On 7 September 1966, at Vung Tau, South Vietnam, the Regiment made an amphibious landing under the command of William W. Cobb, along with 3,762 troopers. Base camp was established on November 1966 and the Regiment began reconnaissance in force operations directed at suspected Viet Cong concentrations in the provinces around Saigon. Later the Regiment moved north and established Blackhorse Base Camp—the new home of the 11 ACR Vietnam. Blackhorse Base Camp was located approximately 6 kilometres (3.7 mi) south of the village of Xuan Loc on Route 2 and approximately 2 kilometres (1.2 mi) southeast of the village of Long Goia. Saigon is approximately 35 kilometres (22 mi) to the west along Rt. 1.



13.10 Compound Construction

13.10.1 Use of Personnel

All construction within the compound had to be undertaken by Troop members as only personnel with the necessary security clearances and associated briefings were allowed into the area. Material and building plans for construction were supplied by 1ATF resources. Operators became extremely proficient in the art of filling sandbags, digging out bunkers, mixing and laying concrete, carpentry and construction. To cover all safety aspects after laying of electric cables an electrician had to be provided by outside sources but he was under constant and close escort.

Capt Richards Reported³¹⁷:

The big problem here of course is to get things done; everything is on a self-help basis, we will have to build our accommodation ourselves. At the moment this is still not in site simply because the small king strand, or tullock as it is called which is a 3Ø by 2Ø hut, is still not available in the country. When they become available I am top on the priority to get these things built. But when this will be I do not know.

Eric Grace recalled³¹⁸:

Shortly after our American friends departed from 1ATF [DODO operation], Capt Richards provided us with the plans for a tropical hut. The plans were supplied by Task Force Engineers. They would provide us with a concrete mixer and the necessary material; however, we would have to carry out the construction.

The concrete mixer was very heavy and we only had our old Land Rover to shift it; that was quite difficult in the mud and slush. We did a clutch and Frank Young got the job of replacing it under RAEME supervision.

Operational commitments had to be met but everyone mucked in. The hardest part was nailing all the supports together and ensuring the building was blacked out for use at night.

We must have done a reasonable job. The huts were used throughout the rest of 547's time at Nui Dat.

13.10.2 Buildings

Originally the Troop was only allocated one building. Annex E to 1 ATF R17-1-1 dated 7 July 66, Distribution of Major Buildings lists³¹⁹:

³¹⁷ ASD archives. See full transcript at Annex F and now available at <https://www.asd.gov.au/about/history/declassified/Transcript>. Transcript of Trevor Richards Interview (PDF).

³¹⁸ By kind permission of the author. All Recollections that follow are taken from *547 Signal Troop in South Vietnam – The Soldiers' Perspective – Deployment, Early Days and the Lead-up to Long Tan*, by Barry Hampstead, July 2008.

³¹⁹ AWM RCDIG1028600 AWM95 Commanders' Diary 1/4/5 HQ 1ATF Annexes [1-31 Jul 1966].



19	103 Sig Sqn	1	OR Mess
20	(incl 547	1	OP, Sig Cen, Cypher Room, Teletype
21	Sig Tp)		
22		1	547 Sig Tp Ops Room
23	TOTAL 103 Sig Sqn	2	Sgts Mess or PX/Amenities

Figure 99: Extract from Distribution of Major Buildings List

13.10.3 Operations Building

As planned, the first building to be completed was the Operations building:

This Operations building comprised:

- Set Room
- Processing/Int
- ARDF Control

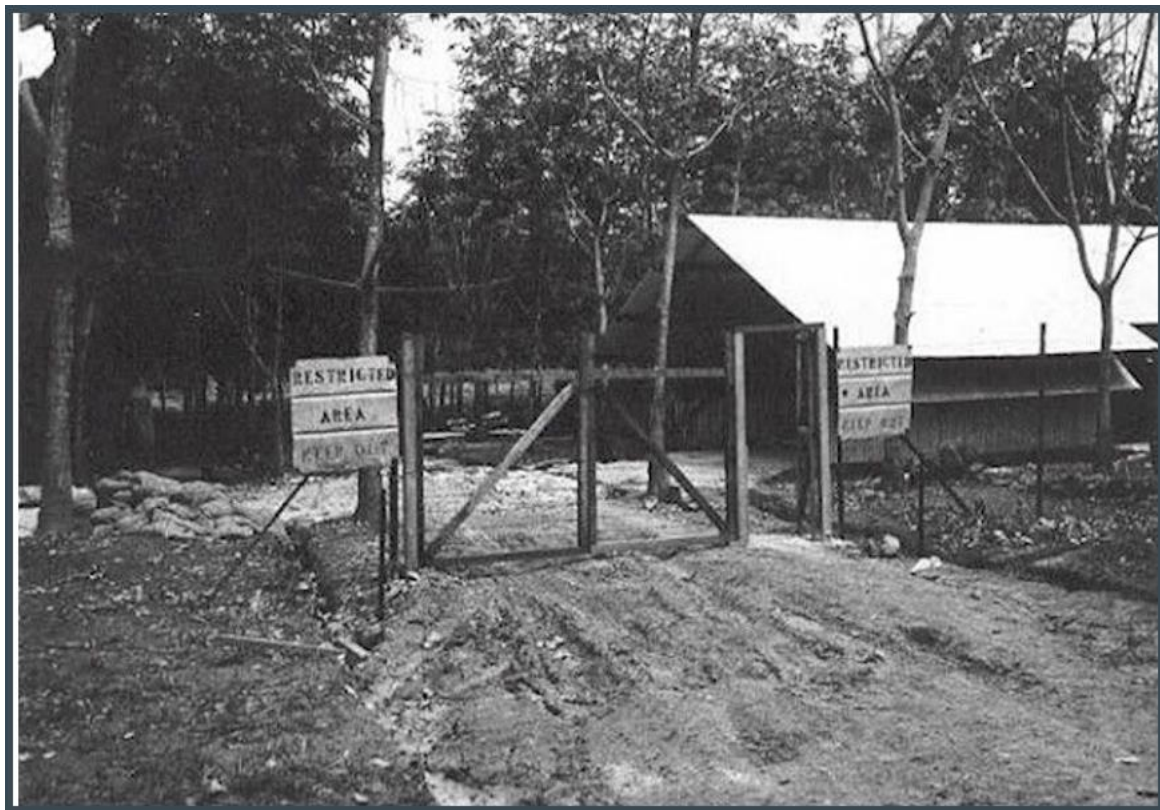


Figure 100: Completed Operations Building

13.10.3.1 Blackout

The interior of the building was fitted out with a variety of blackout materials to stop any light being seen from outside.



13.10.3.2 Equipment Racks and Aerials

While erection of the buildings was taking place, Troop members were also building equipment racks for the Comcen and Set Room, completing wiring, and erecting aerials. The aerials were originally nothing more than star-pickets which had been welded together to a height of 32 to 35 feet. Sergeant Gary Fizzell of 103 Sig Sqn often came down to give assistance with the aerials during his spare time.



Figure 101: Intercept Position³²⁰

13.10.4 Troop HQ

The Troop Headquarters building was to comprise:

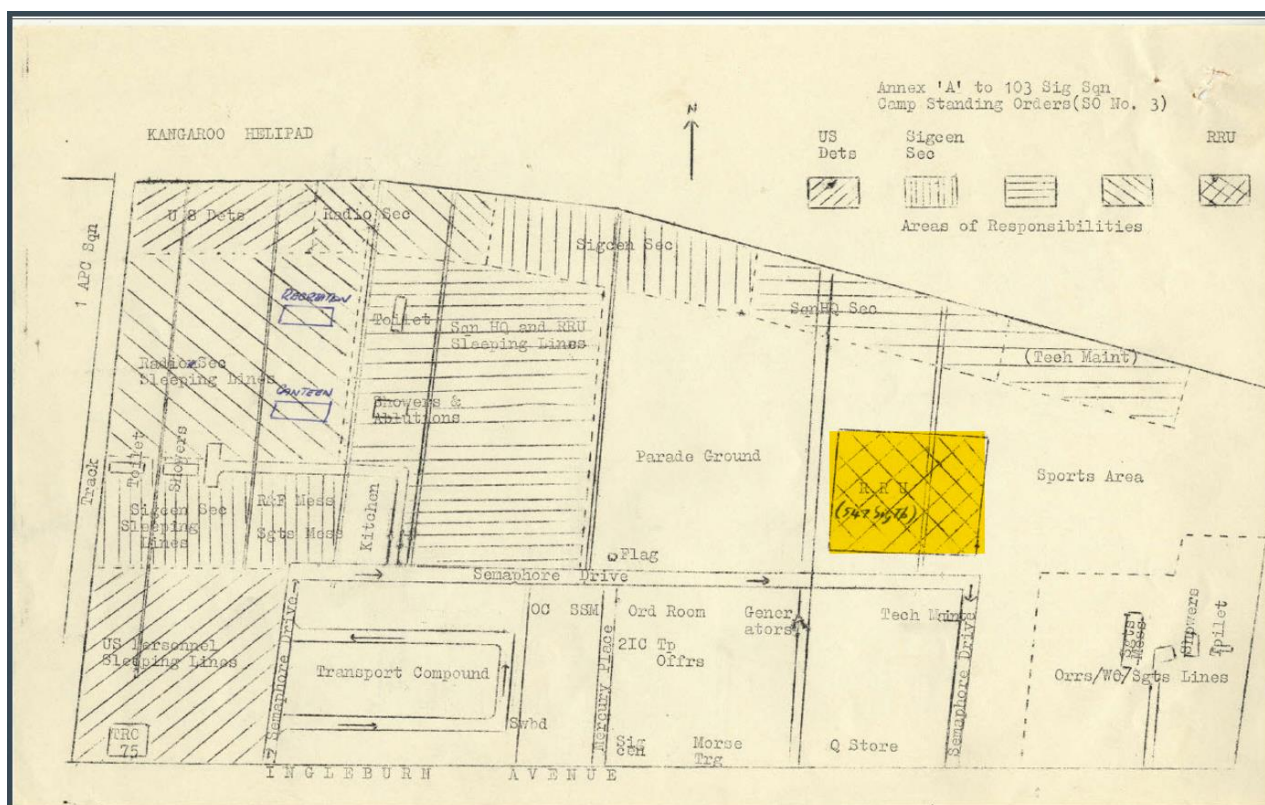
- Comcen
- OC Office
- Stores

³²⁰ A later improved Intercept position.



13.10.5 103 Sqn Area and Defence Responsibilities

The following sketch is an extract from 103 Sig Sqn Standing Orders³²¹ and shows the Sqn area and Troop/Section areas of responsibility at October 1966:



13.11 Visitors and Troop Expansion

13.11.1 DMI, DSD and WRE

On 23 October, Major Colin Cattnach, Mr Bob Botterill and Mr Ron Hall (DSD) flew in to inspect the Troop's operations and to warn the unit of its impending expansion. At the same time scientists³²² from Weapons Research Establishment (WRE) arrived to conduct trials with the first Australian ARDF system. (See para 14.1)

13.11.2 Increased Task Cover

Capt Richards Reported before visit³²³:

³²¹ AWM95 Commanders' Diary Signals Units 6/1/7 103 Sig Sqn Duty Officer's Log Annexes 1[– 31 Oct 1966].

³²² No record of names – Ross Treharne was possibly one.

³²³ ASD archives. See full transcript at Annex F and now available at <https://www.asd.gov.au/about/history/declassified.Transcript>. Transcript of Trevor Richards Interview (PDF).



...what I would like to do is still to continue everything in our area of interest, but also develop the extra developmental banks — and I think the best compromise would be to keep two positions going on the cover as we know it. The extra two positions should be used for developmental work and preferably this should be brought up to four because, ultimately, with the increase in notations that we are going to get through development we are going to need extra positions to cope with the normal fixed cover; hence we will ultimately end up with say four or five positions covering the extra stuff that we have picked up, which then leaves you with your last position as a supervisor's position or as a general search position. I think with six positions we could then cope quite adequately with everything that is on the air in PHUOC TUY Province.

Eric Grace related³²⁴:

I remembered the look of horror on Trevor Richard's face when I said I wanted 10 positions in the new set-room and needed all the 391's I could get. I said we needed spare positions when we were looking for jobs and it was no use NOT having enough positions to do so. Col Cattnach didn't raise an eyelid, he said I'll arrange for all available 391's to be forwarded ASAP and asked me what else I needed, I replied more isolators for the Aerial System.

When I received all the 391's from Cabarlah: - I spoke to Captain Trevor about having them upgraded by US Techs trained by Collins and we got some US Techs down from Long Binh to overhaul the 391's and they worked Perfectly. In fact better than they were at Cabarlah even the dials moved smoothly.

13.11.3 Compound and Tp HQ

The following photograph shows the compound, entrance, the Troop HQ building, and accommodation tents still in the rear. The operations Building is to the right.



Figure 102: Troop HQ - OC Office, Comcen and Stores

13.11.3.1 Comcen Air-conditioning

It was fortunate that an air conditioner was obtained through the Engineers. This enabled the sensitive cryptographic equipment to perform at its optimum.

³²⁴ Email from Eric Grace to Barry Hampstead



Note:

*A few months later, the stores area was fitted out for
Technical Maintenance and the stores relocated to a tent.*

13.11.3.2 Earth Mat

Whilst the scientists were in the area it was discovered that true earth was some 58 feet below the ground and that was why Slim Bartlett kept feeling electricity in the dials of the radio sets. To gain a better earth connection, Ray Pratt and Eric Grace hammered extendable earth pegs into the ground at the side of the new Operations Building.

The Book *Vietnam: The Australian War* reported³²⁵:

The first sixteen men of 547 Signal Troop, led by Captain Trevor Richards, were rushed up to Vietnam in June 1966, grabbed some equipment from the Americans and 'started cooking with gas' in a nondescript, fan-cooled corrugated iron shack at Nui Dat. It had two long benches with ten operator positions, each equipped with two Collins R391 high-frequency receivers and a tape recorder³²⁶.

³²⁵ Ham, Paul (2010-03-17). *Vietnam: The Australian War* (Kindle Locations 4023-4025). HarperCollins Publishers. Kindle Edition.

³²⁶ The use of the clichéd 'cooking with gas' is hardly the case as most of the Australian-manufactured R5223 radio receivers that the troop was obliged to take with them to SVN had faulty local oscillators (kilohertz tuning). The Troop's best efforts floundered until Eric Grace was able to borrow some Collins R391 radio receivers from the Americans. There were only four operator positions located in a tent. The building was not available until later.



13.12 Visit and Manpower Expansion

13.12.1 Additional Op Sigs, OKR, Clerk and Technician

Due to the excellent results achieved by the Troop (including the improving recognition by HQ 1 ATF Staff of the value of Sigint), Major Cattnach informed the Troop that there would be an increase in manpower. Lieutenant Bill Hughes had been named to replace Captain Richards, Warrant Officer Graham Stewart would be transferred from 552 Sig Tp to replace Eric Grace, eight additional Op Sigs would be added to the establishment, additional operators for the Comcen, a clerk, and more importantly a senior radio technician. All of the personnel nominated for the expansion were to attend a Battle Efficiency Course at Canungra in late November or December.

13.12.2 Visit Outcome

On 30 Oct, the following signal was sent by Maj Cattnach from GCO HK³²⁷ in relation to the visit to AUM-350³²⁸:

*S E C R E T SAVIN SECTION ONE OF TWO
DMI FOR MI8
INTERIM REPORT BY G2 MI8/AD(D) ON SIGINT SUPPORT IN SVN*

1. **INCREASE IN STRENGTH.**

(A) THE FOLLOWING RECOMMENDATIONS ARE MADE BASED ON PRESENT 1ATF REQUIREMENTS³²⁹:

<u>CATEGORY</u>	<u>PRESENT</u>	<u>PROPOSED</u>	<u>INCREASE</u>
OC	1	1	-
2IC (OFFR)	-	1	1
SOO	1	1	-
OPERATORS SET ROOM TASKING	5	12	7
ARDF CONTROL	2	1	MINUS 1-
ARDF OPERATING	-	2	2
COMMS (INCL OP- OKC)	3	4	1
PROCESSING	3 (PLUS 1 ATT)	5	2
TECH SUPPORT	-	2	2
CLERK/STOREMAN	-	1	1
TOTAL	15	30	15

(B) COMMENTS ON PROPOSED VARIATIONS.

2IC. CONSIDER THAT SECOND OFFICER SHOULD ALWAYS BE AVAILABLE AT 1ATF FOR DETAILED CONTROL .S DETACHMENT IN VIEW OF EXTENSIVE MOVEMENT OF OC ON LIAISON AND BRIEFING DUTIES. THIS EVEN MORE IMPORTANT WHEN DETACHMENTS ADMIN/CAMP DUTIES ARE CARRIED OUT BY OTHER UNITS.

*OPERATOR SIGNALS. ESSENTIAL **THAT DET SHOULD HAVE CAPABILITY OF***

³²⁷ British Communications Office Hong Kong.

³²⁸ DSD Declassified, 547 Sig Tp in Vietnam (tranche2).

³²⁹ Placed into table by author.



MANNING FOUR EIGHTEEN HOUR POSITIONS AND/OR ANY PERMUTATION UPTO EIGHT POSITIONS. THESE ARE REQUIRED TO PERMIT DETACHMENT:

ONE. TO COVER KNOWN LINKS OF DIRECT INTEREST TO 1ATF.

TWO. TO PROVIDE SEARCH, DEVELOPMENT AND RECOVER OF NEW AND U/I LINKS IN PHUOC TUY AND ADJACENT AREAS.

ESSENTIAL ALSO THAT ALLOWANCE MADE FOR R AND R SEMICOLON ALSO, WITH ANY INCREASE IN STRENGTH FEEL WE MUST MAKE CONTRIBUTION TO GUARDS/CAMP DUTIES ETC. WHICH HAS BEEN MAJOR PART OF DIFFICULTY WITH [redacted]

ARDF (CONTROL/PLOTTING).

ORIGINAL CONCEPT CALLED FOR TWO ARDF (ONE COMMS ONE PLOT). NEW CONCEPT WILL **INCORPORATE ARDF AIR TO GROUND CONTROL AS PART AND PARCEL OF SET ROOM WITH PLOTTING PART OF TA PROCESSING ARDF (A/C OPERATING).** ENVISAGE TEAM OF TWO OPERATORS WILL BE NEEDED FOR THIS.

COMMS. ADVICE NOW BEEN RECEIVED AUM 352 TO BE CONVERTED TO CRITCOM CIRCUIT NEXT TEN DAYS. ESSENTIAL THIS CIRCUIT NOW BECOME FULL DUPLEX AND OPERATE 24 HOURS/DAY. ESSENTIAL THAT TWO OF PROPOSED FOUR SHOULD BE FULLY QUALIFIED OKC TO ENSURE CRYPTO SECURITY.

PROCESSING. THIS SECTION TO CONSIST OF : ONE SPO SEMICOLON TWO CRYPT LINGUISTS TO EXPLOIT READABLE TRAFFIC PLUS _A LINGUIST FOR VOICE SEARCH. [redacted] OF SIGINT INTEREST/RELIEF

CRYPT LINGUISTS SEMICOLON

ONE TRAFFIC ANALYST. THIS REPLACES OLD ESTB OF ONE SPO/TP SGT, ONE T/A DUTIES ONE LINGUIST PLUS ONE CRYPT ANALYST (ATTCHED). TECH SUPPORT. DUE LACK OF KNOWLEDGE OUR EQPTS BY OTHER TECHS IN THEATRE AND WITH INCREASED NUMBER PROPOSED SETS ESSENTIAL TO HAVE TWO TECHS ON DET STRENGTH. ALSO [redacted] CANNOT COPE WITH ADDITIONAL LOAD.

CLERK/STOREMAN. CURRENTLY SPO IS HAVING TO DEVOTE MAJOR PORTION OF TIME TO ADM. DUTIES AND PROCESSING HAS SUFFERED ACCORDINGLY.

(C) THE ABOVE INCREASES SATISFY PRIORITIES 1-3 AS LAID DOWN BY DMI, THESE ARE CLOSELY INTER-RELATED AND IT IS NOT POSSIBLE TO DISTINGUISH BETWEEN THEM. WITH REGARD TO PRIORITY 4 (ADDITIONAL

COVER NOT DIRECTLY RELATED 1ATF REQUIREMENTS) CONSIDER INCREASE NOT RPT NOT JUSTIFIED AT THIS STAGE. AS INDICATED IN PARA 1 (B) (UNDER QUOTE OPERATOR SIGNALS UNQUOTE) **VIEW IS THAT DETACHMENT'S ROLE SHOULD BE TO COVER ALL KNOWN LINKS OF DIRECT INTEREST TO CMD 1ATF TOGETHER WITH NECESSARY SEARCH AND DEV ON NEW AND U/I LINKS IN PHUOC TUY AND ADJACENT AREAS. THIS DIRECTLY RELATED TO DETACHMENTS PRIMARY FUNCTION OF SUPPORTING CMD 1ATF** SEMICOLON IT WILL BE A BIG TASK IN ITSELF AND THE CONTRIBUTION TO SEARCH AND DEV. WILL BE WELCOMED BY THE U.S. . DO NOT RPT NOT FEEL THAT ADDITIONAL EFFORT ON MORE GENERAL SEARCH AND DEV WOULD BE WARRANTED. (D) THE INCREASES HAVE BEEN DISCUSSED WITH AND ARE STRONGLY SUPPORTED BY CMD AFV. (BOTTERILL ALSO HAD OPPORTUNITY IN HK TO MENTION INFORMALLY AND VERY BRIEFLY TO SEC DEFENCE WHOSE REACTION NOT UNFAVOURABLE).

2. ARDF. **BRITISH EOPT FOUND TO BE IN NEED CONSIDERABLE REPAIR DUE WAY IN WHICH REMOVED FROM AIRCRAFT.** BECAUSE OF NATURE OF FIT TO AUSTER (I.E. INTO CONTROL PANEL) MAJOR MODIFICATIONS NEEDED TO FIT INTO AMF LIGHT A/C. **HOPE TO HAVE A RACK FITTED IN LIEU OF FRONT PASSENGER SEAT AND MODIFICATIONS TO ALLOW TRAILING AERIAL COMPLETED BY MONDAY 31 OCT AND PILOT AND OPERATOR TRAINED IN NEW**



PROCEDURE BY WEDNESDAY. AIMING FOR FIRST FLIGHT TRIALS BY THURS 3 NOV. HAVE STRESSED TO ALL CONCERNED **THAT ARDF MUST BE CONSIDERED AS A FIELD TRIAL ONLY** AT THIS STAGE AND NOT RACED INTO OPERATIONAL USE. U.S. AUTHORITIES (IN PARTICULAR, [redacted]) VERY INTERESTED AND HAVE ASKED TO BE KEPT FULLY INFORMED OF PROGRESS

CCN LA LC CONCEPT - PARCEL OF SET
LC ONE T/A DUTIES WA ANALYSTS - (ATTACHED).

Mr Botterill Comments on Visit

On (possibly 14/15) November, GCO HK sent a signal to DSD and MI8 regarding the visit to AUM352³³⁰:

FROM BOTTERILL,

FOLLOWING IS FURTHER MISCELLANY OF POINTS ARISING FROM SVN VISIT (NOT POSSIBLE DISCUSS DRAFT WITH CATTANACH BUT THINK HIS VIEWS BROADLY REPRESENTED).

2. CMD 1ATF CONFIRMED VALUE OF SIGINT TO HIM AND STATED **IT WAS HIS ONLY RELIABLE INDICATOR.**

3. HAPPY WITH SECURITY OF AUM 352 SITE FOR RETENTION [Redacted] BUT IT IS NOT RPT NOT SUITABLE FOR RETENTION OF [Redacted] WOULD THIS DEGREE OF SECURITY SEEM PRACTICABLE TO ACHIEVE EITHER NOW OR IN FORESEEABLE FUTURE SEMICOLON WILL REGARD TO PERMANENCE OF SITE, CMD 1ATF CONFIRMED INTENTION TO RETAIN PRESENT BASE AREA EVEN IF FORCE INCREASED (BY SAY ONE BATTALION) AND SCOPE/AREA OF OPERATIONS THEREBY EXTENDED. SINCE IT IS OUR VIEW THAT **MAIN ELEMENT OF AUM 352 WOULD REMAIN PERMANENTLY IN BASE AREA** AM CONFIDENT WE CAN ASSURE [Redacted] THAT SITE IS IN EFFECT A FIXED ONE. (IN CONNECTION STRENGTH OF AUM 352, HOWEVER, NOTE THAT WIDER SCOPE OF [Redacted] OPERATIONS COULD BRING REQUIREMENTS FOR **MORE COVER AND FOR COMMS PERSONNEL AND CHANNELS FOR COMMUNICATION BETWEEN THE BASE AREA AND POSSIBLE MOBILE HQ** SEMICOLON AS STATED IN GCO(HK) 300400. RECOMMENDED STRENGTH OF UNIT IS BASED ON PRESENT 1ATF REQUIREMENTS)

4. DETAILS OF CONTENTS OF [Redacted] QUOTE TECH SUPPORT PACKAGE UNQUOTE UNFORTUNATELY NOT AVAILABLE FOR DISCUSSION WITH AUM 352 BUT SHOULD CERTAINLY BE OF GREAT VALUE. MAIN WORRY AT UNIT IS LACK OF BOTH TA AND CA FEEDBACK (IN THE SENSE WE UNDERSTAND IT). AFTER BRIEFING GIVEN US BY ASA REPS AT NR(V) AM NOT SURE WE COULD EVER EXPECT TO GET THIS SEMICOLON THE BRIEFING AMPLY CONFIRMED INFO WE ALREADY HAD ON PRESSURE EXERTED JUST TO KEEP UP WITH CURRENT MATERIAL SEMICOLON FOR EXAMPLE:

(A) **MANY TA STAFF TIED DOWN IN PREPAR I NG** [corrupt] SEMICOLON

(B) **VIRTUALLY NO SEARCH AND DEV** SEMICOLON (IN FACT NO MENTION MADE OF THE ONE POSITION EACH AT [redacted] REFERRED TO IN RECENT AUSLO SIGNAL) SEMICOLON [redacted]

(C) **ABOUT 15,000 REQUESTS RECEIVED MONTHLY FOR MRDF SEMICOLON ALL KNOWN MILITARY STATIONS ARE CHECKED WEEKLY AND POLITICAL STATIONS MONTHLY** SEMICOLON LITTLE TIME LEFT FOR SUPPORT TO SEARCH/DEV. LIAISON AS SUGGESTED IN GCO(HK) 300430 COULD HELP TO SOME EXTENT AS COULD **EXPERIENCED AUST. CIVILIAN/ANALYST AT** [redacted] HAD SOME

³³⁰ DSD Declassified, 547 Sig Tp in Vietnam (tranche2).



QUALMS ON LATTER POINT LEST HE BE SUBMERGED IN SYSTEM SEMICOLON NR(V) CONSIDERED THIS COULD INDEED HAPPEN TO SERVICEMAN BUT THAT CIVILIAN COULD RETAIN ADEQUATE INDEPENDENCE.

5. BOTH A BIT CONCERNED ABOUT PROCEDURE FOR BRIEFING CMD 1ATF ON INFERENCES (PRIMARILY BASED ON TA). AT PRESENT THIS DONE VERBALLY BUT BOTH FELT SOME MORE FORMAL RECORD SHOULD BE MADE. SUGGESTED THAT OC SHOULD AT LEAST KEEP NOTE OF SUBSTANCE OF BRIEFINGS AND I AGREED DISCUSS FURTHER WITH AD(C) ON RETURN.

6. ONE SMALL CHANGE IN TECH REPORTING PROCEDURE. UP TO NOW AUM 352 HAS PRODUCED DAILY TECSUMS³³¹ WHICH HAD TO BE CONVERTED BY [redacted] TO [redacted]. ASKED AUM 352 IF POSSIBLE PREPARE IN [redacted] SEMICOLON NO GREAT DIFFICULTY SEEN AND CHANGE WOULD BE WELCOMED BY [redacted]

7. IN REPLY TO QUESTION I TOLD O.C. AUM 352 THAT DSD WOULD LIKE TO SEE COPIES OF ALL HIS POST-OPERATION REPORTS TO HELP KEEP US IN PICTURE.

[large redaction]

10. IN ABSENCE OF VOICE MATERIAL, IMPRESSION GIVEN BY NR(V) WAS THAT THE ARVN THIRD PARTY CONTRIBUTION WAS OF LITTLE VALUE.

11. CMD 1ATF ASSURED US (EMPHATICALLY) THAT BUCKETS OF VC VHF VOICE ACTIVITY HEARD AND EXPLOITED TACTICALLY IN 1RAR OPERATION IN JUNE LAST YEAR. OC AUM 352 WILL BE TRYING TO LAY THIS HARE BUT IN MEANTIME CMD 1ATF IS PLANNING TO LISTEN ON GROUND IN FORTHCOMING OPERATION. AUM 352 HOPE TO TRY SOME AIRBORNE VHF INTERCEPT ST SAME TIME.

13.12.3 Letter to Deputy Chief of the General Staff

On 15 November, DMI wrote to the Deputy Chief of the General Staff (DCGS) about a review of 547 Sig Tp activities³³².

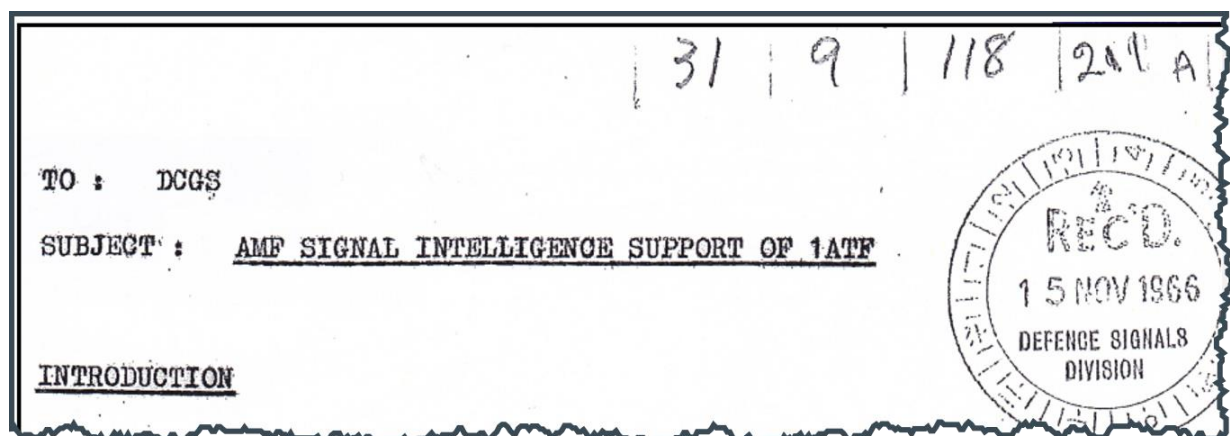


Figure 103: DCGS Letter Front Page

³³¹ Technical Summary.

³³² DSD Declassified, 547 Sig Tp in Vietnam (tranche2).



INTRODUCTION

1. You recall that approval was given in October 1966 for Major C.J Cattanach to accompany Mr Botterill, Assistant Director Defence Signals Division on a visit to SOUTH VIETNAM. The main purpose of this visit was to:
 - a. Review the composition and functions of the AMF Direct Support Unit (DSÜ) with 1 ATF,
 - b. Consider ways and means of increasing the effectiveness of the DSU; and
 - c. Improve cooperation with the U.S. Sigint effort.
2. In addition to the above, arrangements were made with the British Ministry of Defence (Army) for Major CATTANACH to take a trial Airborne Direction Finding equipment (ARDF) which was being tested in FARELF, to SVN for further field trials in an AMF Cessna aircraft.

CONSIDERATIONS

3. The primary aim of the DSU when established in June 1966, was to provide a means by which Comd 1ATF could receive results of the U.S. Signal Intelligence effort. In addition, an intercept and processing capability was inbuilt in order that the DSU could provide a direct service to the Comd 1ATF on VC units and formations within the 1ATF TAOR.
4. This small independent capability has been so successful that both the Commanders AFV and 1ATF have stressed that this unit is providing the most, and in many cases the only reliable intelligence and that any means that can be found to increase this capability would be greatly appreciated and fully supported.
5. Discussions with the U.S. Sigint Authorities confirmed the value of this AMF DSU to the overall Sigint effort and they have agreed to provide an additional feedback of technical information to the AMF DSU in order to increase the effectiveness of the AMF effort. They also fully supported any increase in manpower that could be provided in order to further exploit various VC networks in military region 7 which as yet, are not firmly identified.
6. In relation to the day to day cooperation between U.S. authorities and the AMF DSU, many technical problems would be overcome if close personal contact were possible. Due to U.S. security regulations, it is currently not possible to achieve this contact and further representations should be made in order to make this possible. In addition, a definite advantage can be foreseen if a Defence Signals/civilian expert was to be attached to the appropriate U.S. authorities in VIETNAM in order that the overall interests of the Australian Sigint authorities and the AMF unit in particular could be fostered
7. Detailed investigation of the problem involved showed that the main source of intelligence now being produced by Sigint in SVN is by:
 - a. Intercepting and reading some low grade cipher traffic from low level VC communication networks and
 - b. Construction of enemy OOB information and locations by covering a large number of enemy networks



8. The AMF DSU at present has the capacity to cover the known units and formations in the immediate area of influence of 1ATF, but has no capability to cover other currently unidentified VC networks known to be in the AMF area of interest. These networks could be of great importance and it may be possible through them, to find additional exploitable material which could lead to further intelligence concerning the disposition and future intentions of the enemy. Even if this was not possible, it would provide further information on the OOB of VC forces within the area of interest of 1ATF

9. Although the U.S. authorities have aircraft engaged on ARDF and it is expected that this number will increase during 1967 it is unlikely under the present system centralised priority control that the AMF DSU could rely on receiving US ARDF support to enable it to maintain continuity of location of VC HQ as and when required.

[Redacted]

It is considered highly desirable therefore that the AMF DSU have an ARDF capability under its own control as soon as possible. This is strongly supported by Comd AFV and Comd 1 ATF.

10. The British ARDF system could not be fully installed in a Cessna aircraft during the visit to SVN due to approval to modify the aircraft not having been received from the RAAF authority in Australia. In addition the aircraft were due for a major service. A temporary Installation was made however and both operators and pilots were instructed on the techniques involved. A full assessment of the effectiveness of this British system will not be possible until after a further 20-30 hours of test flying have been completed commencing when the installation has been fully fitted and major services completed in December 1966. It is possible that the British system might only be partially successful. For this reason it is intended to proceed with the Australian system being developed at WRE. Whatever system might be accepted it will be necessary for the DSU to have priority call on the use of a light piper wing aircraft on a daily basis.

ADDITIONAL MANPOWER REQUIRED

11. In addition to the increased manpower required for intercept including exploitation of unidentified VC networks and for an independent ARDF capability further manpower is required.

- a. For the additional processing effort that will be necessary as a result of increased intercept.
- b. To reduce the long hours of work of all personnel at present with the DSU (this averages about 90 hours per week) to ensure maintenance of optimum efficiency.
- c. To provide a small administrative and technical effort which at present is being undertaken by [Redacted] to the detriment of that unit's efficiency.
- d. To enable as a result of the requests the conversion of the present Sigint communication channel to 24 hour operation.

The minimum proposed increase is 15 personnel made up as follows:

<u>Category</u>	<u>Present</u>	<u>Proposed</u>	<u>Remarks</u>
Command	1	1	
Processing	3	5	To incl 1 Int Offr who will in addition act as IC
Operating – Intercept	8	14	Will permit manning of 4 x 18 hour posns as



			<i>opposed to present 2s posns,</i>
ARDF Control	1	1	-
ARDF Operating	p	2	<i>To permit operation in AMF Cessna A/C.</i>
Sigint Comms	2	4	<i>To allow 24 hour operation.</i>
Technical	-	2	<i>To permit own receiver and cipher maintenance</i>
Admin	-	1	<i>To act as Clerk/Storeman</i>
	15	30	

12. The above manpower can be provided within current establishment of 7 Sig Regt and no difficulties are foreseen in maintaining the increased members overseas. It is considered that these additional members should be provided As soon as possible.

RECOMMENDATION

13. It is recommended that you:

- (a) Note that **effort will be made to attach a DSD civilian expert to the appropriate U.S. SigInt authority in Vietnam** and the case for closer personal contact between AMF DSU and the U.S. Sigint authorities will be pressed further.
- (b) **Approve an increase of 15 personnel in the strength of the AMF DSU for 1 ATF to be effective forthwith.**
- (c) **Agree in principle that the AMF DSU have an independent ARDF system** the equipment for which will be decided after an assessment has been made of the merits of British and Australian prototype equipment now under trial and development.

13.12.4 November Visit

In November, Warrant Officer Graham Stewart³³³ of 552 Sig Tp³³⁴ visited the Troop.

13.13 December

13.13.1 Staff Increases and Administration

On [8 December] DSD sent a signal to [redacted] concerning staff increases at AUM350 and other administrative aspects³³⁵:

SECRET SAVIN

RECENT DEVELOPMENTS AFFECTING SIZE, FUNCTIONS ETC OF AUM 352.

- 2. **IT HAS NOW BEEN DECIDED THAT AUM-352 SHOULD BE INCREASED TO**

³³³ The DVA Nominal Roll of Vietnam Veterans (<http://www.vietnamroll.gov.au/VeteranDetails.aspx?VeteranId=1265448>) shows WO2 Grahame Stewart as serving with 552 Sig Tp 18/11/66 – 20/4/67 and 547 Sig Tp 21/4/67 to 31/10/67. Prior to taking up his last posting in Australia Graham had spent most of his career with 7 Sig Regt.

³³⁴ 552 Sig Tp was part of 145 Sig Sqn at Vung Tau and was classed as a Light Sigcen Troop.

³³⁵ DSD Declassified, 547 Sig Tp in Vietnam (tranche2).



DOUBLE ITS PRESENT SIZE (FROM 15 TO 30 MEN); THIS INCREASE IS STILL SUBJECT TO MINISTERIAL APPROVAL BUT THIS IS EXPECTED VERY SOON. ADDITIONAL MANPOWER WILL BE SUPPLIED FROM [Redacted]

3. OBJECTS OF BUILD-UP ARE:

(A) TO INCREASE CAPABILITY TO TOTAL OF FOUR 18-HOUR POSITIONS, THUS ENABLING UNIT COVER ALL KNOWN ENEMY COMMS IN 1 ATF AREA OF INTEREST (PHUOC TUY PROVINCE) AND ALSO UNDERTAKE SEARCH/DEV AGAINST HITHERTO UNDISCOVERED TARGETS IN AND ADJACENT TO THAT AREA.

(B) TO ENABLE UNIT CONTROL ITS OWN ARDF CAPABILITY (WHICH FOR TIME BEING WILL TAKE FORM OF LIGHT AIRCRAFT EQUIPPED WITH [Redacted]

(C) TO EASE ADMINISTRATIVE AND PROCESSING BURDEN BY PROVIDING ADEQUATE PERSONNEL FOR THESE FUNCTIONS.

4. TWO PROBLEMS IN PARTICULAR WERE NOTED DURING RECENT VISIT TO SAIGON OF [Redacted]

(A) PRESENT [Redacted] EMBARGO ON VISITS BY AUM 352 PERSONNEL [Redacted] IS INEVITABLY INHIBITING MOST EFFECTIVE USE OF UNIT'S RESOURCES AS CONTRIBUTION TO TOTAL VIETNAM SIGINT EFFORT.

(B) DESIRABILITY OF HAVING [Redacted] A DSD LIAISON OFFICER WHO WOULD SPEND PART OF HIS TIME ACTING AS LINK BETWEEN AUM 352 AND [Redacted] AND REMAINDER AS WORKING MEMBER OF [Redacted] ANALYSIS/PROCESSING SECTION.

5. POINTS IN MY PARA 4 HAVE BEEN TAKEN UP

13.13.2 Christmas

5 December 1966, was the first Christmas for the Troop in-country.



Figure 104: Christmas 1966. Bill Irwin, Trevor Richards and Jim Rayner³³⁶

³³⁶ 7 Sig Regt archives.



13.13.3 Operations

13.13.3.1 DSD VC Working Aid

On 11 December 1966, DSD released DSD Working Aid No 5/67, *Analysis of Type of Reporting by Radio Stations of VC 5th Light Infantry Division Passing Readable Traffic*³³⁷. The opening pages are included below and tri monthly reports are shown where appropriate.

SECRET SAVIN		DSD <i>PAR</i> 31/9/118 178
TO BE KEPT UNDER COMBINATION LOCK AND NEVER REMOVED FROM THE OFFICE UNLESS TRANSMITTED IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE REGULATIONS.		
ISSUED : CN5/ 11 Dec 67 COPY NO.: <u>24</u>		
<u>DSD VC WORKING AID NO. 5/67</u>		
<u>ANALYSIS OF TYPE OF REPORTING BY RADIO</u> <u>STATIONS OF VC 5TH LIGHT INFANTRY</u> <u>DIVISION PASSING READABLE TRAFFIC</u>		
		
	<u>CONTENTS</u>	<u>PARAGRAPH</u>
I	INTRODUCTION	1
II	GENERAL	2 - 7
III	CONCLUSIONS	8 - 9
ANNEX A : LINK BY LINK DESCRIPTION OF TYPES OF REPORTING		

³³⁷ DSD Declassified, 547 Sig Tp in Vietnam (tranche2).



ANALYSIS OF TYPE OF REPORTING BY RADIO STATIONS
OF VC 5TH LIGHT INFANTRY DIVISION
PASSING READABLE TRAFFIC

INTRODUCTION

The aim of this research project was to analyse the type of reporting by radio stations of the VC 5th LID passing readable traffic.

GENERAL

2. A total of 573 readable messages intercepted between October 1966 and August 1967 were examined. These messages were passed on 15 links, two of which were 30-called Military Affairs or Command links and a third was a link on the Watch Net. The remaining 12 links served unidentified tactical Military Intelligence elements of the VC 5th LID.

3. The majority of messages contained the type of reporting to be expected from field-unit observation posts. These dealt with reports on "enemy" road convoys, aircraft activity, coastal shipping, reports of troop deployments and movements, and post-action reports on contacts with the "enemy". Some of the reports on convoys and shipping were very detailed, listing vehicle loads and ships' cargoes. Some of their information apparently came from the local "District Committee" or "Agent Network", within which some of the MIE's had contacts. An obvious concern over the use of chemicals by the Allies was reflected in some messages.

One such message reported that the "energy" was "spraying poisonous chemicals". The remainder of the traffic dealt with routine administrative matters, such as personnel movements, resupply and other "house-keeping" affairs.

4. It is felt that some of the MIE's may be not more than just observation posts or standing patrols, the tasks of which are to occupy suitably concealed positions and report upon enemy activity without risking exposure.

5. The average strength of these MIE's appears to be at least eight to ten men. One of the MIE's was reduced to four men, but reported that because of this, it could not carry out its assigned tasks. The personnel comprising an MIE do not always remain in one group, but are sent out on reconnaissance in smaller groups or even individually.

6. Examination of traffic passed on the link between 303A and 303B in the period October 1966 to December 1966 tends to disprove the identification of 303B as a TMIE. Messages mention, inter-alia, ammunition delivery and training (both political and military). The



context of the messages implies that the station was being initially deployed. It could be commented, that it seems unlikely that a small TMIE would require delivery of ammunition, but would rather carry its own limited requirements on the man. Furthermore, it is thought that training would hardly be carried out once the MIE was deployed. Between 28th October 1966 and 1st May 1967, their link was inactive. When it was re-activated, all names and cover designators used in the earlier period were replaced by new ones. Reporting was of the normal MIE style concerning enemy activity. The link has been inactive since 19th May 1967, when 303 B was ordered to "completely withdraw".

7. A link by link description of the types of reporting by radio stations passing readable traffic is appended to this report as Annex A.

III. CONCLUSIONS

8. The types of reporting by subscribers studied in this report tends to confirm their roles, with the possible exception of 303B.

9. Evidence against the identification of 303B as a TMIE is very scant and may be the result of different shades of meaning being imposed by translation from Vietnamese.

13.13.3.2 Annex A of the Report included the period 19 Oct – 31 Dec 66:

LINK	PERIOD	TOTAL MSGS.	SUBJECT OF REPORTS/COMMENTS
303A-303B MIS HQ 54D- U/I MIE [i]	19 Oct-31 Dec 66	14	Admin msgs dealing with rice and med sups, sig arrangements, ammo delivery, political and other training and recce. Reference made to a "new base". One msg to 303 B was addressed to an "Arty Gp". Comments: The exchange of tlc of this nature indicates the probable initial deployment of the entity served by station 303 B.

Figure 105: Readable Traffic #1



303A-303C MIS HQ 5 LID U/I MIE	19 Oct-31 Dec 66	28	Reports on spotter aircraft and subsequent arty fire tasks. Airstrikes and recce by f-105's mentioned. Other msgs concerned "enemy" convoys along Highway 1 and troop activities. On 1 Dec 66, 303C was warned "Pay attention to [1U] and C123's which are releasing chemicals. If they are released, report immediately in accord with the SOI of the watch facility". (T1352) Comment: This concern about the use of "chemicals" by the "enemy" is reflected in later messages also.
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Figure 106: Readable Traffic #2

303A-303D MIS HQ 5 LID U/I MIE	19 Oct-31 Dec 66	32	This link was used predominantly to report on coastal shipping. It also reported on convoys and air activity in the VUNG TAU/HAM TAN area. The outstation was ordered to "get in touch with the district^[i] to confirm what the boats were carrying". (T1332). In a similar msg it was warned to "take precautions against chemicals. If chemicals are released, take action" (T1356). On 22 Nov 66, 303D sent a msg complaining that the "element is not capable of carrying out the mission with 4 people up here. Suggest send additional people for guard duty" (T1347). Comment: [i] Probably the District Committee.
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Figure 107: Readable Traffic #3



LINK	PERIOD	TOTAL MSGs.	SUBJECT OF REPORTS/COMMENTS
303A-303D MIS HQ 5 LID U/I MIE	19 Oct-31 Dec 66	32	This link was used predominantly to report on coastal shipping. It also reported on convoys and air activity in the VUNG TAU/HAM TAN area. The outstation was ordered to "get in touch with the district[i] to confirm what the boats were carrying". (T1332). In a similar msg it was warned to "take precautions against chemicals. If chemicals are released, take action" (T1356). On 22 Nov 66, 303D sent a msg complaining that the "element is not capable of carrying out the mission with 4 people up here. Suggest send additional people for guard duty" (T1347). Comment: [i] Probably the District Committee.

Figure 108: Readable Traffic #4





CHAPTER 14 – AIRBORNE RADIO DIRECTION FINDING

14.1 Project High Divine

When 547 Signal Troop deployed to South Vietnam it had to rely on US sources for ARDF support. It was quickly realised that integral ARDF support was an essential requirement for the Troop³³⁸.

Capt Richards had reported earlier³³⁹:

Now coming on to our own ARDF resources, the main reason behind a request for this is the fact that under the centralised tasking system that the Americans use at the moment, I've got absolutely no access at all to the pilots or to the operators. And the way that the operate is that initially, from what I can gather, they were given a little bit of tasking, but it wasn't strictly controlled; working through the 17th RR Battalion or 33rd Radio Research Battalion as they are now starting to call themselves again, at LONG BINH, USM 614, they now task the aircraft strictly everyday. And as such the system is now starting to improve in that the number of unidentified fixes is now starting to cut down quite considerably, and are starting to produce a lot more fixes. The big problem is, though, is that in the aircraft, once the operator picks up the signal he then pipes it down to the pilot. The pilot gets the signal in his earphones, he then goes ahead and takes the fix without any further help whatsoever from the operator. Now I am positive this is (although I have got no proof of this and I haven't been up in ARDF aircraft), due to the cluttering of the band up here, we have proved time and time again that there is quite often a powerful, more powerful, transmitter sitting on top of the one you want to fix; this has proved a problem with trying to get fixes with the PRD-1 and as such it could be extremely difficult for the operator to give the pilot a very clear signal. And I think from time to time the pilot may fall into the error of fixing the wrong signal. Once again I have no proof of this, this is just my own private opinion. What I would like to do, if given the chance of having my own ARDF resources, is the fact that I know Army Design Establishment has been working (not Army Design Establishment, WRE) have been working on an airborne DF system, would be to get this up here for a year's trial period, if it is at a users trial stage, to see if we can produce a system which is more accurate than the American one. I do not wish to say at all that it is time to give the American system away because I think ultimately it will be perfected, but if at least we could get our own up here we could compare two, and the Americans may get some benefit out of seeing what results we can get with our system, and we can see if we can contribute towards theirs in any way. If it was under my control, it would have to be placed at VUNG TAU where you have got the resources to repair aircraft. Now there are two ways of doing this - one, is to attach it to the RAAF if it is a big piece of equipment and must go into an aircraft say the size of the Caribou or something like that. As such, I dare say, operators have to be supplied I could use one of my operators from here, could train a RAAF pilot and over perhaps a period of two months user trials it should be possible to evaluate by the end of six to eight weeks, with by that time a well-trained pilot and operator, as to just how good an Australian system could be. The other alternative, if it fits into a light aircraft, is to fit it into the current range of equipment that the 161 Independent Recce Flight has, which are Cessnas. This is a much smaller aircraft and as such the aircraft would have to be specially fitted etc. etc. but Major Doyle who runs the Recce Flight, and whom I indoctrinated the day before yesterday, is all for anybody at all that can contribute to him keeping fixed wing aircraft. This is now getting into the light aircraft politics, but apparently is a great move to go all for helicopters and get rid of all fixed wing aircraft. He is very anti against this, and as such by helping me out with either a VHF platform for voice or for airborne DF, he is all for this. One

³³⁸ See Annex I for the full Story on Australian ARDF.

³³⁹ ASD archives. See full transcript at Annex F and now available at <https://www.asd.gov.au/about/history/declassified/Transcript>. Transcript of Trevor Richards Interview (PDF).



final thing, 161 Recce Flight have put back a request to Australia, which has been approved by Task Force is to have their Cessnas withdrawn because of maintenance problems, and to be issued with the American Bird-Dog which is called the L17, which is a smaller aircraft and may or may not be suitable for an Airborne DF system. The Americans use the Beaver, which is a much bigger aircraft, simply in order to get all their equipment into it.

14.1.1 WRE Research

It is believed that Major Cattnach had already placed a research task on WRE in South Australia to develop an ARDF system capable of being installed in the Cessna 180B, being flown by 161 Recce Flt³⁴⁰. The project was allocated the cover name *HIGH DIVINE*.



Figure 109: Australian Army Cessna 180B

14.1.2 ARDF Trials

The first ARDF trials were carried out in-country during the period 23 October to 5 November with Jim Rayner and Clarrie Day being the operators sitting in the rear of the aircraft.

14.1.3 Trials Completed

The trials were not completely successful, but a rudimentary system was available³⁴¹. More development was required back at WRE. Trials continued in country in December³⁴².

14.1.4 161 Independent Reconnaissance Flight

Extracts from 161 (Independent) Reconnaissance Flight Commander's Diary 27 October and 1- 3 November 1966³⁴³:

³⁴⁰ After writing the first copy of the 547 Story, it has now been confirmed that WRE was conducting trials. It has not been identified when the initial tasking was placed on WRE. However, the R Treharne produced Technical Memorandum CPD(T) 169 dated April 19695, contained the following paragraph: *The first development trials were carried out in South Australia in February 1965 and successful operational trials were made in August 1967. Although intended for experimental demonstration only the Australian equipment was so successful that it has been pressed into operational service ever since.*

³⁴¹ The authors have not been able to locate any further information or documents that give details of any ARDF operations or results obtained from this system. 161 Recce Flt War Diaries do not show any further details of flight or sorties assigned to 547 Sig Tp. This may be due to the security restrictions.

³⁴² See Trials Report in Chapter 15.2.6

³⁴³ AWM 95, 8/1/13, 8/1/14, Digitised Collection 161 Recce Commander's Diary 1-30 November 1966.



27	"	213017 2Lt R W ASKEW flying SIOUX A1-400 was required to fly two miles off the coast to (Dmr) dispose of faulty ammunition. Maj C GATTENCACHE AHQ 6007 and Capt R RICHARDS (154 Sig Tp) visited the unit to discuss communications.
----	---	---

Figure 110: Diary Extract 27 Oct 66

VUNG TAU	1 Nov 66	FW & RW Operations in support of HQ 1 ATF
	2 "	" " " " " " " "
	3 "	" " " " " " " "
	4 "	" " " " " " " " 36330 Sgt J W RAYNOR (547 Sig Tp) attached for radio equipment trials, returned to unit.

Figure 111: Diary Extract 1 – 4 Nov 66

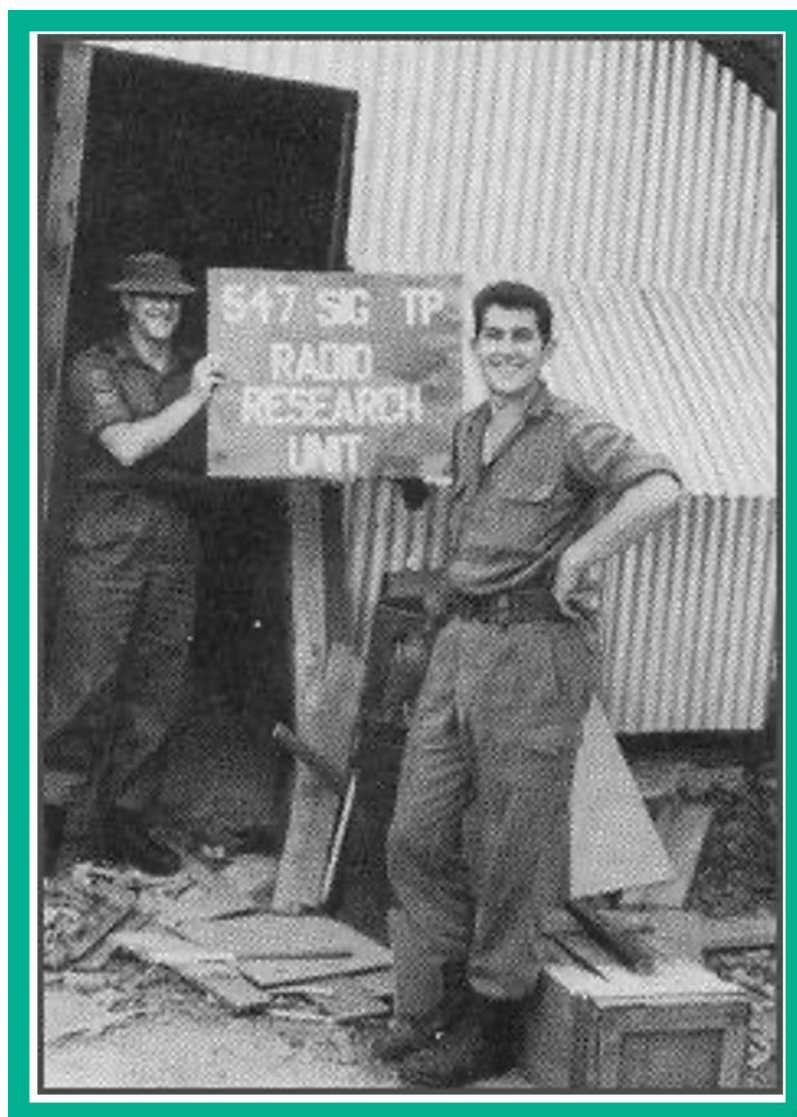


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PART 3

1967





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CHAPTER 15 – JANUARY 1967

15.1 Overview

15.1.1 Consolidation

1967 saw the consolidation of building projects, refining operational procedures, new ARDF equipment, additional manpower and the originals finishing their tour of duty.

15.1.2 Troop Cover Name

As a consequence of the Troop being located inside a compound within the secure 1ATF area, much interest was shown and inquiries were continually made as to what activities were being conducted behind the wire. To ensure that security was not compromised the Troop title was changed locally as 547 Sig Tp Radio Research Unit. The Radio Research term was the title used by all the US Army Sigint Units. The use of this title became a double edged sword. Other communicators within the Task Force concluded wrongly that 547 Sig Tp was conducting COMSEC operations against them. One of the main aspects of COMSEC was listening to your own communication networks and reporting any possible security breach and/or misuse of communications procedure. The end result was that Troop members were completely distrusted by other signal unit and communication personnel to the extent that at dining and canteen facilities they normally had to sit by themselves and endure unpleasant remarks thrown at them. In one way this was helpful for security but very lonely for Troop personnel. This attitude prevailed for the full deployment of the Troop. In mid-1967 the term Radio Research was removed.

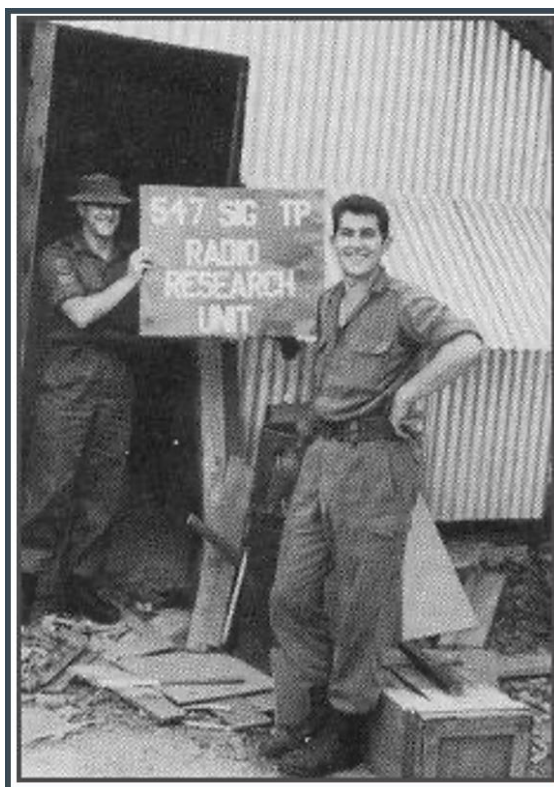


Figure 112: Bill Irwin and Sam Rodgers with the RRU Sign



It is worth noting that 552 Signal Troop at Vung Tau and later a section within 104 Sig Sqn were the entities conducting COMSEC on 1ATF communications.

Note

The US Army had many units in various locations conducting COMSEC on their communications. They were also titled Radio Research.

15.2 Antenna Field

As a consequence of the successful intercept operations additional antennas had to be erected. A vacant position to the east of the Troop compound was selected, and during breaks of intercept and when not on other duties, operators were involved in the erection of additional masts and antennas. As this activity was outside the compound additional assistance was, at times, provided by 103 Sig Sqn. Maintenance and the addition of other antennas was a constant for operators and technical staff for the duration of the deployment.

15.2.1 New Antenna Masts

With the installation of a secondary communications circuit in December, thoughts turned to upgrading the existing antenna system. Captain Richards set out on a search to allied units and returned jubilantly with the news that he had acquired four concrete poles, each of 45 feet length. With the hard work of acquisition over, all that remained was for Jim Rayner to travel to Saigon and get them back to Nui Dat.

The poles were loaded on a semi-trailer and delivered to Nui Dat. The rest of the tackle (guy ropes, strainers, guy pegs) remained under Jim's watchful eye. He made many trips to Tan Son Nhut Airbase to hitch rides for the numerous cases on any aircraft flying to Nui Dat. It took some time to get all the tackle delivered.

Kevin Lever recalled³⁴⁴:

Engineers bored big deep holes, but the time I came home they were still not up. In fact we used the holes to fire our Owen guns, and the Krait snakes seem to like the holes as well.

Erection proceeded with off-duty members labouring over the masts until they towered over the old masts. A rigger was borrowed to install the bi-conical arrays but unbelievably he was afraid of heights! So the task fell to Jim Rayner. By mid-March the new aerials were erected and giving excellent results.

³⁴⁴ Various Emails to Bob Hartley and Barry Hampstead.



The following photograph taken in 1969, shows one of the masts outside the compound.

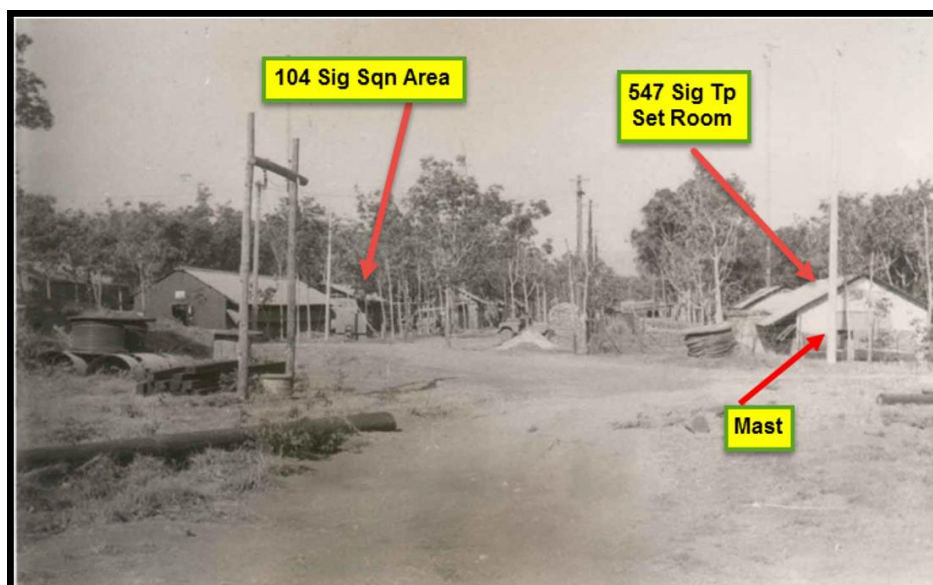


Figure 113: 45 foot concrete mast³⁴⁵

15.2.2 Compound Layout

In late 1966 the Troop started occupying the new buildings. The following graphic depicts the layout of the Troop compound in late 1966 early 1977.

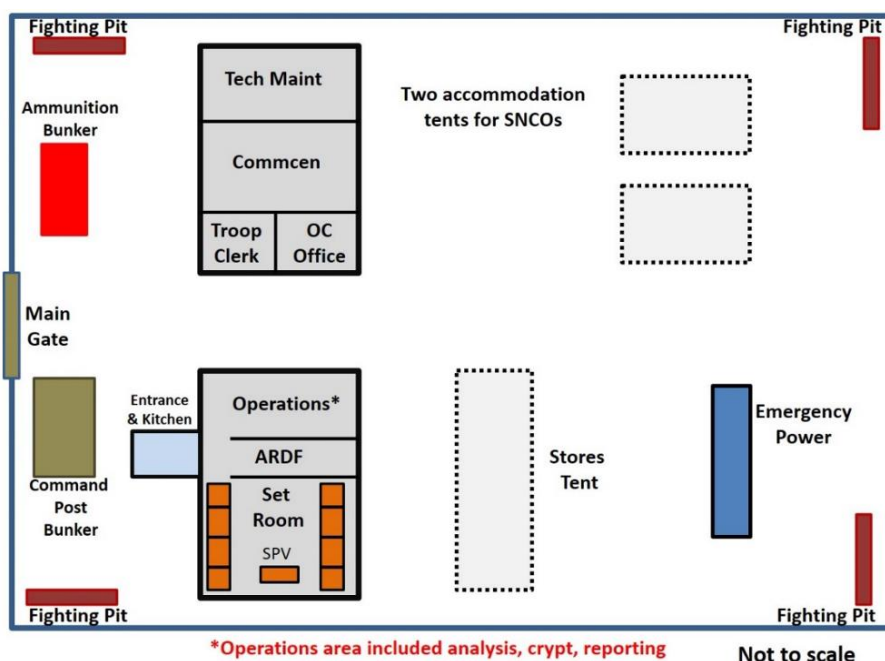


Figure 114: Compound layout late 1966/early 1967³⁴⁶

³⁴⁵ Photo courtesy of Bob Hartley. Photograph taken from the 104 Sig Sqn Sergeants Mess 1969.

³⁴⁶ Drawn by Bob Hartley from unit records.



15.2.2.1 Accommodation Tents

Most of the junior ranks accommodation tents were located outside the compound, between the barbed wire fence and Kangaroo Helicopter Pad. The two tents in the compound were primarily occupied by senior processing staff.



Figure 115: Other Ranks accommodation tent lines³⁴⁷

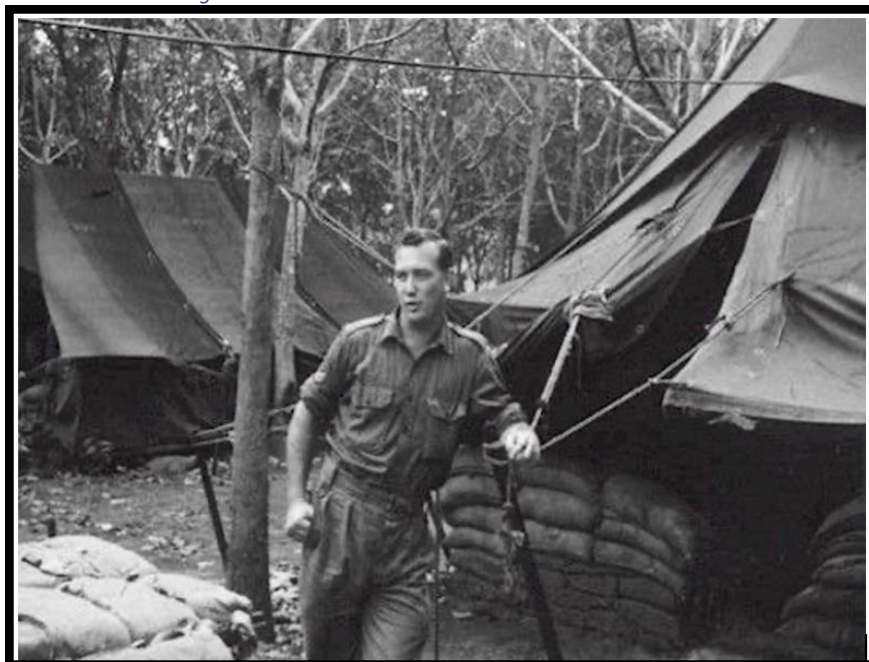


Figure 116: Frank Young outside his tent³⁴⁸

³⁴⁷ 7 Sig Regt Archives.

³⁴⁸ Ibid.



Figure 117: Gun weapon pit between tent lines and Kangaroo Pad³⁴⁹



Figure 118: Gun Bunker³⁵⁰

³⁴⁹ Photo courtesy of John Harding.

³⁵⁰ 7 Sig Regt Archives.



15.2.3 US Visitors

Allied visitors to the Troop were surprised by its capability. Counter invitations followed and social exchanges started with the US units. Helicopters were the main means of transportation - in fact rumour had it that Bob Brown had invented a heli-taxi service, *The Playboy Choppers*.

15.2.4 First Departure

On 23 January, Allan Clarkson, the Comcen Supervisor, departed for Australia. He was the first of the originals to complete his tour of duty. Andy Aird supervised the running of the Comcen until a replacement arrived.

15.2.5 ARDF

Early in 1967 the Troop workload increased with the introduction of the aerial experiments. Operators, who seldom ascended more than twenty feet up a mast, now found themselves hurled around the sky in a Cessna. Despite all efforts the equipment under test failed. However, a bigger and better prototype was already being constructed at WRE.

15.2.6 ARDF Trial Report

On 13 January DMI sent a signal to DSD, Mod Army (DI24 (A) and WRE IS Group detailing an interim report on ARDF Trials being conducted in SVN³⁵¹.

S E C R E T SAVIN

FROM M18. HEREWITH INTERIM REPORT ON ARDF TRIALS NOW BEING CONDUCTED IN SVN

ONE. TESTS COMMENCED 19 DEC 66 AGAINST KNOWN TARGET TRANSMITTER TILL 1 JAN 67. DUE TO EQPT FAILURES PROCEDURE ERRORS GAINING TEAM WORK EXPERIENCE CMM FOLLOWING TENTATIVE CONCLUSIONS WERE DRAWN.

ALFA. NINETY PERCENT ALL FIXES BETWEEN EIGHT HUNDRED AND TWO THOUSAND METRES. REMAINING FIXES WITHIN FIVE KILOMETRES (WHICH IS ACCEPTABLE TOLERANCE TO INT STAFF).

BRAVO. ACCURACY UNAFFECTED BY HEIGHT OF AEROPLANE.

CHARLIE. ACCURACY AND SENSITIVITY OF EQPT HIGHLY DEPENDENT ON LENGTH OF AERIAL. A MUCH BETTER SIGNAL AND RUSTRAK GRAPH OBTAINED WITH INCREASE IN AERIAL LENGTH EG BEST RESULTS OBTAINED USING FULL LENGTH OF WIRE OF ONE HUNDRED AND FIFTY FEET OR APPROX THREE QUARTERS WAVELENGTH COMPARED TO THEORETICAL QUARTER WAVELENGTH OF FORTH FIVE FEET APPROX.

DELTA. DISTANCE OUT FROM TARGETS EFFECTS RESULTS DRASTICALLY AND UNPREDICTABLY. THIS WOULD BE DUE TO AERIAL PATTERN OF TARGET.

TWO. COMMENCED OPERATIONAL FLYING 2 JAN 67. DUE TO UNCOOPERATIVE BEHAVIOUR OF VC TARGETS HAVE ONLY OBTAINED ONE BEARING. TARGETS ARE HIGHLY INTERMITTENT AND HAVE LASTED FOR ONLY 2 TO 3 MINUTES SO FAR. DUE TO LACK OF CHECK POINTS IN CERTAIN AREAS CMM WILL REQUIRE APPROX TEN TO FIFTEEN MINUTES FOR 3 BEARING FIX.

³⁵¹ DSD Declassified, 547 Sig Tp in Vietnam (tranche2).



THREE. GROUND TO AIR TIP OFF ESSENTIAL. SIMPLE TOP OFF CODE BY VOICE OVER AIR CONTROL NET BEING DEVELOPED. AIRCRAFT VHF FM MUST REMAIN ON THIS NET FOR ARTY SHOTS WHICH OFTEN MESS UP PRE PLANNED FLIGHTS (RANGE OF 175 MM GUNS IS 34 KILOMETRES) BUT H AND I TASKS ARE CANCELLED DURING OUR FLIGHTS. ULTIMATE IN LUXURY TIP OFF WOULD BE VOICE CIPHERY TO TRANSMIT INSTRUCTIONS AND ACTUAL SIGNAL BUT THIS NOT ESSENTIAL WITH EXPERIENCED OPERATORS WHO KNOW TARGETS.

FOUR. POINTS STILL TO BE RESOLVED.

ALFA. EFFECT OF FREQUENCY AND POWER FLUCTUATIONS OF VC TXS ON ACCURACY.

BRAVO. EFFECT OF AERIAL PATTERNS OF VC TXS GIVING FALSE MAXIMUMS.

FIVE. TO ASSIST IN FURTHER ANALYSIS

SIX. CONFIDENTLY EXPECT SYSTEM TO BE WORKABLE WITHIN ITS PARAMETERS TO GIVE CONSISTENT FIXES WITHIN TWO KILOMETERS



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CHAPTER 16 – FEBRUARY 1967

16.1 Personnel

16.1.1 Arrivals

In February the first group of reinforcements arrived.

3 February:

Sergeant Eddie Jones
Corporal Clem Foster
Signalman Dave Wardell

4 February:

Signalman Flinders Dennis
Signalman Neville Derry
Signalman Hugh Dixon
Signalman Ray Hannett

6 February:

Captain Bill Hughes
Corporal Chick Hanks (OKC)
Lance Corporal Peter Ashton (OKC)
Lance Corporal Lance Townsend (Clerk)
Signalman Rod Harper
Signalman Bob Maher

16.1.2 Establishment Increase

On 6 February 1967, the formal Increase to *Establishment for 547 Signal Troop (Op Tp – Type 'A') Less Detachment* ESTB IV/295/2 (TE) was issued increasing the establishment to 30 personnel. A copy of the establishment is shown at Annex G.

16.1.3 Bill Hughes' Promotion

Bill Hughes was promoted to Captain and became the Troop's 2nd In Command (2IC) until he replaced Trevor Richards.

16.1.4 Technician

The arrival of Sergeant Eddie Jones was indeed welcome. Being the Troop's first technician he was greeted with a mountain of work.

16.1.5 Op Sigs and Experience

The reinforcements included several Op Sigs who were making their first tour of duty overseas. The 'old-timers' like Clem Foster and Bob Maher provided the necessary continuity.



16.1.6 Comcen

Chick Hanks and Peter Ashton arrived to work in the Comcen and to release some of the Op Sigs back to the Set Room.

16.1.7 Clerk

Lance Townsend was a welcome arrival as the Troop's first clerk. He was soon able to test out his administrative knowledge handling the batch of newcomers.



Figure 119: Lance Townsend

16.2 Administration

16.2.1 Additional Vehicle

On 20 February 1967, HQ AFV authorised the increase of one Truck Utility $\frac{3}{4}$ tonne Fitted for Radio plus trailer for the Troop³⁵².

16.3 Operations

16.3.1 Op Sig Training

As previously mentioned, the communications systems used by the VC and NVA were vastly different from the types of transmissions that the Op Sigs were used to and there was only limited training material available in Australia for the newer Op Sigs to train on before departure. Due to the Troop's operational requirements, there was no time to run in-house training courses so the

³⁵² AWM 98 R310/2/54.



operators had to learn on 'on the job'. It was only a few weeks before they were capable of copying all tasks on cover.

16.3.2 Set Room Watches

With the additional manpower and the operating hours of the targets virtually static, the 3x8 hour shift basis was refined. The majority of the VC/NVA targets did not communicate between the hours of 2300-0600, therefore not all intercept positions had to be manned during this time. Between the hours of midnight to dawn normally only one operator was required for duty. The shift system and roster was modified to enable most operators being on duty between dawn and midnight. When operators were not on normal intercept duties, sleeping, supplementing the on duty shift due to increased enemy radio activity, carrying out administrative tasks, or manning gun piquets, they were fortunate to have time off.

16.4 NVA/VC Imitative Communications Deception

16.4.1 HQ 1ATF ICD Advice

In mid-February, the HQ 1ATF Troops Information Sheet *No 30, Period 6 – 12 Feb 67*³⁵³, contained the following information regarding enemy Imitative Communication Deception (ICD)³⁵⁴:

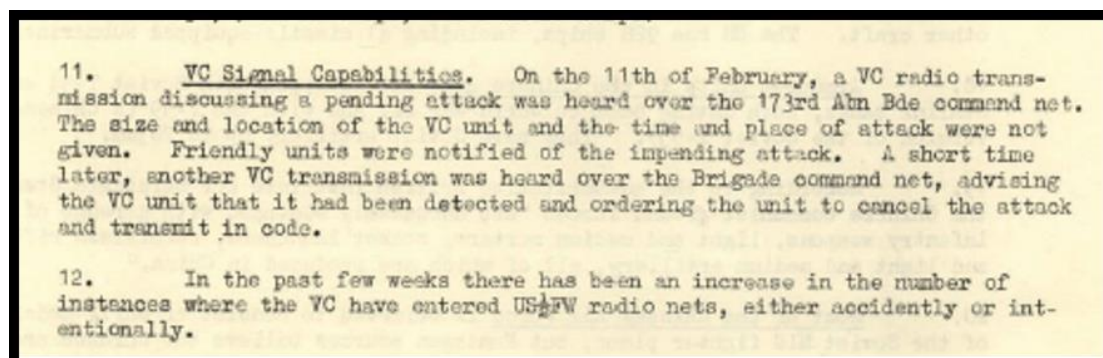


Figure 120: Extract from HQ 1ATF TIS No 30

16.4.2 547 Sig Tp Response

As a consequence, the OC of 547 Sig Tp, Trevor Richards, issued the following signal³⁵⁵:

³⁵³ <http://static.awm.gov.au/images/collection/bundled/RCDIG1028413.pdf>

³⁵⁴ ICD involves the introduction of false or misleading but plausible communications into target systems that mimics or imitates the targeted communications.

³⁵⁵ AWM95 Commanders' Diary HQ 1 ATF Narrative Annexes [1 – 29 Feb 1967] RCDIG 1028413. Note the use of Radio Research Unit.



MESSAGE FORM		
(Feb 67)		
Precedence Action	Precedence Info	Date/Time Group
ROUTINE	ROUTINE	28 0100 Z
From 1 ATF		
To	Security Classification	
List B (Less serial 5) plus 57 GL Seat	CONFIDENTIAL	
RAAF VUNG TAU, HQ AFV, HQ NZ FORCE V	Originator's Number	
Info 11 FFORCE V	6223	
SUBJECT: JAMMING/ICD DIRECTED AGAINST FREE WORLD FORCES.		
ONE. THE AUSTRALIAN RADIO RESEARCH UNIT 547 SIG TP HAS BEEN DIRECTED TO COMPILE INFORMATION PERTAINING TO JAMMING/IMITATIVE COMMUNICATIONS DECEPTION (ICD) ATTEMPTS DIRECTED AGAINST FREE WORLD FORCES IN RVN.		
TWO. ALL SUSPECTED INSTANCES OF JAMMING OR ICD ARE TO BE REPORTED BY IMMEDIATE SIGNAL OR TELEPHONE TO 547 SIG TP OR EBONY 40 USING THE FOLLOWING FORMAT:		
ALFA. ZULU START TIME.		
BRAVO. ZULU FINISH TIME (TO BE FORWARDED LATER IF NECESSARY).		
CHARLIE. FREQUENCY.		
DELTA. CALLSIGNS OF ICD.		
ECHO. DESCRIPTION OF ICD OR JAMMING.		
FOXTROT. AUTHENTICATION USED TO DETERMINE ICD		
Drafter's Name Office Tel No RICHARDS 547 Sig Tp 22 <i>Sam A. Richards</i> Releasing Officer's Signature & Rank		

Figure 121: Signal drafted by OC 547 Sig Tp

Figure 122: NVA Intercept Operators³⁵⁶

³⁵⁶ <http://www.armchairgeneral.com/forums/showthread.php?t=65809&page=4>



CHAPTER 17 – MARCH 1967

17.1 Personnel

17.1.1 Additional Manpower

On 11 March, Capt Richards sent a signal to MI8, DSD and 7 Sig Regt concerning additional manpower³⁵⁷:

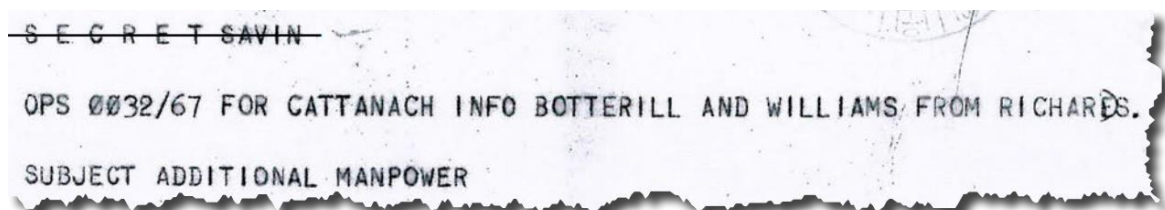


Figure 123: Manpower

SUBJECT ADDITIONAL MANPOWER

1. INTRODUCTION.

DURING VISIT CATTANACH BOTTERILL OCTOBER 66 AN ESTIMATION RPT ESTIMATION OF MANNING FOR 18 HOUR POSITIONS PLUS EQUIPMENT FOR EIGHT DOUBLE POSITIONS MORSE WAS MADE. THIS WAS CONSIDERED THE MINIMUM INTERCEPT EFFORT REQUIRED TO SATISFY INTELLIGENCE REQUIREMENT OF COMMANDER ONE ATF.

2. DUE TO DEVELOPMENT AND FURTHER KNOWLEDGE OF INTERCEPT PROBLEM THE MINIMUM INTERCEPT EFFORT REQUIRED NOW TO SATISFY COMMANDER ONE ATF ONLY IS

- A. 4 BY 18 HOUR POSITIONS 0001 TO 0800Z.
- B. 3 BY 16 HOUR POSITIONS 0001 TO 1600Z.
- C. 1 BY 24 HOUR POSITION 0001 TO 0001Z.

3. A. TOTAL INTERCEPT HOURS PER WEEK REQUIRED IS 728.

- B. 16 OPERATORS ARE REQUIRED AT 45 HOURS PER WEEK WHICH IS MAXIMUM FIGURE FOR THIS OPERATION BASED ON 9 MONTHS EXPERIENCE FOR CONTINUOUS INTERCEPT.
- C. ONE OPERATOR REQUIRED FOR DUTIES. [Redacted] AS AGREED CATTANACH/ [Redacted]
- D. ONE OPERATOR REQUIRED FOR R AND R PLUS R AND C AT TWELVE DAYS TOTAL PER MAN AS ALREADY AGREED. ALSO TO COVER SICKNESS.
- E. CONSIDER SERGEANT AND TWO CORPORALS ARDF OPERATORS SUFFICIENT.
- F. STAFF SERGEANT OPERATOR WILL BE USED TO RUN A SEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT SECTION OF ROUGHLY 28 HOUR POSITIONS.
- G. PART OF ONE OPERATOR REQUIRED TO ACHIEVE ROTATION IN SIGCENTRE, CAN ABSORB THIS.

³⁵⁷ DSD Declassified, 547 Sig Tp in Vietnam (tranche2).



- H. OVERALL INCREASE REQUIRED IN PRESENT ESTABLISHMENT IS FIVE OPERATOR SIGNALS.
- I. HAVE MAINTAINED COVER REQUIRED FOR PAST TWO MONTHS TO PROVE INCREASE IN MANNING IS REQUIRED BUT THIS WILL HAVE TO CEASE WHEN AUST ARDF ARRIVES.
- J. REFERENCE MY OPS0012 DATED 201055 ON PRE VIETNAM OPERATOR TRAINING. SUGGEST SINGAPORE CAN BEST COPE WITH NEW OPERATORS AND TRAINING. NO MATTER WHAT THE COST ELSEWHERE THE FIVE EXTRA M OPERATORS MUST BE SINGAPORE TRAINED OR BE POSTED HERE DIRECT FROM SINGAPORE AND REPLACED IN SINGAPORE BY ROOKIE OPERATORS FROM AUSTRALIA. CANNOT COPE WITH MORE THAN FIVE ROOKIE OPERATORS ALREADY HERE WITHOUT ADDITIONAL OPERATORS.

4. EQUIPMENT. WILL REQUIRE TWO EXTRA MANUAL MORSE POSITIONS. TOTAL TEN. REASONS.

- A. SIX POSITIONS FULLY TASKED.
- B. TWO POSITIONS ON PERMANENT SEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT.
- C. EITHER SUPERVISOR WILL REQUIRE A POSITION PERIODICALLY.
- D. ARDF OPERATOR REQUIRE TARGET FAMILIARISATION.
- E. MAXIMUM ACTIVITY DURING DAYLIGHT HOURS.
- F. A RESERVE OF TWO POSITIONS WILL BE HANDY IN EMERGENCIES
- G. POSITIONS EASELY INSTALLED BY CUTTING FIVE FEET OFF TRAFFIC ANALYSIS SHOP.
- H. THENCE REQUIRED TWO MORE OPERATOR PANELS AND RADIO SET R391 RADIOS. HAVE ALL BITS AND PEICES FOR INSTALLATION.

5. PRESENT ESTABLISHMENT FOR TRAFFIC ANALYSIS AND VOICE INTERCEPT CAN COPE.

6. REQUIRE BATTERY ELECTRIC PORTABLE TAPE RECORDER FOR MAN PORTABLE OR AIRCRAFT USE AS ANPNH4

- A. TOO BULKY AND HEAVY,
- B. NO MORE BATTERIES AVAILABLE.
- C. HAS HIGH MAINTENANCE RATE.

7. DSD 100116Z REFERS.

8. REQUEST INCREASE TO ESTABLISHMENT OF FIVE OPERATOR SIGNALS TO GIVE TOTAL OF TWO OFFICERS AND THIRTY THREE OTHER RANKS PLUS TWO EXTRA POSITIONS.

EQUIPMENT. INCREASE TO ARRIVE WITH AUST ARDF AND OR BY ONE MAY 67. BRIG GRAHAM PREPARED PERSONALLY TO STRONGLY RECOMMEND THIS INCREASE IF CONSIDERED NECESSARY

17.1.2 Additional Manpower Response

On 15 March, MI8 responded to Cpt Richard's signal of 11 March³⁵⁸:

FROM MI8. YOUR OPS 0032/67. ADDITIONAL MANPOWER.

1. POSITION NOW BEING INVESTIGATED BY DSD/MI8

³⁵⁸ DSD Declassified, 547 Sig Tp in Vietnam (tranche2).



2. NOT WITH STANDING ANY FINDINGS MADE BY DSD/MI8 BELIEVE VERY LITTLE CHANCE THAT ANY INCREASE WOULD BE AGREED IF SUBMISSION MADE BY AUST AUTHORITY. ANY REQUEST FOR INCREASED MANPOWER MUST BE MADE BY COMD IATF AND SHOULD BE MADE KNOWN DURING CURRENT VISIT BY CGS

3. PROVISION ALREADY EXISTS FOR ONE ADDITIONAL OP SIG AS FIRST REINFORCEMENT TO BE HELD IN THEATRE GIVING 547 SIG TP A STRENGTH OF 31 WHICH WOULD INCLUDE 3 SNCO , 5 CPL AND 11 SIG OP SIGS.

4. VERY DIFFICULT TO ASSESS FROM RECORDS HELD HERE HOW YOU INTEND TASKING EACH OF THE EIGHT SUGGESTED POSITIONS AND INDEED IF SUCH AN INCREASE WOULD IN FACT PROVIDE ANY INCREASED INTELLIGENCE COMPONENT FOR COMD IATF. REQUEST YOU PROVIDE INFORMATION ON ABOVE TO ASSIST OUR INVESTIGATION.

5. DUE MANY REASONS DIRECT REPLACEMENTS FROM SINGAPORE NOT POSSIBLE IN ALL CASES NOR WILL IT BE CONSIDERED THE NORMAL METHOD. ESSENTIAL THAT [redacted] HOLDS MAXIMUM TRAINING AIDS FROM YOU IN ORDER BEST PRE TRAINING POSSIBLE. EVERY EFFORT WILL BE MADE TO PROVIDE SINGAPORE TRAINED OPERATORS BUT THIS WILL NOT ALWAYS BE POSSIBLE DUE AMF HEAVY OVERSEAS COMMITMENTS WHICH ARE ALL PRIORITY TASKS

6. NEW ARDF SYSTEM WILL INCLUDE LIGHTWEIGHT TAPE RECORDER

7. ANY ADDITIONAL EQUIPMENT WILL BE DECIDED AFTER

INVESTIGATION INTO MANPOWER INCREASE

17.1.3 Medical Evacuation

Jim Rayner had been ill for some time and his failure to respond to medication made his evacuation back to Australia necessary. Jim was medically evacuated (Medivac) back to Australia on 27 March.

17.1.4 HQ Australian Force Vietnam Strength Return

The strength of 547 Sig Tp was listed in the March issue of the HQ Australian Force Vietnam (AFV) Monthly Report as Temporary Duty in Country and having a staff of 17³⁵⁹:

UNIT	ESTABLISHMENT (UNIT AUTH STR)				POSTED STRENGTH *(PGS IN COUNTRY)				ATTACHED *(TDY IN COUNTRY)				TOTAL TOTAL				REMARKS
	OFFR	WO	TOTAL	OR WO OFFR	OFFR	WO	TOTAL	OR WO OFFR	OFFR	WO	TOTAL	OR WO OFFR	OFFR	WO	TOTAL	OR WO OFFR	
T/DUTY IN COUNTRY ARMY																	
AF "VERNON STURDEE"					4	3	7	37	44				4	3	7	37	44
547 SIG TP					1	1	2	15	17				1	1	2	15	17
DET 52 SUP PL					1		1	9	10				1		1	9	10
TOTAL					6	4	10	61	71				6	4	10	61	71

Figure 124: HQ AFV Monthly Strength Return Extract

³⁵⁹ <http://www.awm.gov.au/collection/AWM98/R723/1/13/1/2/>



17.1.5 Visitors

17.1.5.1 11 ACR Team

In March, one of the 11 ACR teams called into the Troop for a liaison visit and to stock up on supplies. The team was warmly welcomed by the Troop. The team came from the 409th ASA Detachment that was in direct support of 11 ACR.



Figure 125: 11 ACR visitors #1



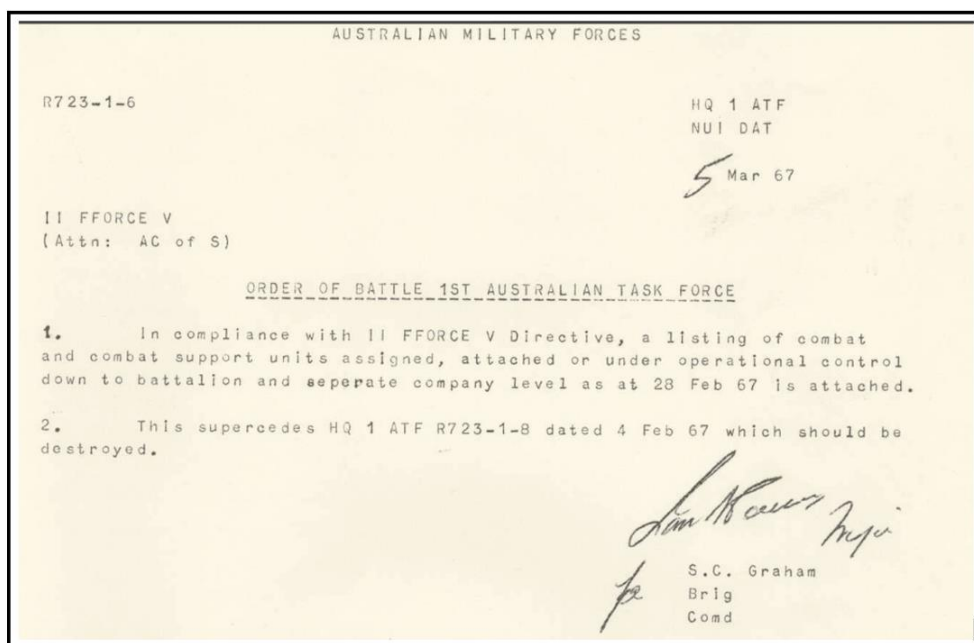
Figure 126: 11 ACR visitors #2



17.2 Administration

17.2.1 1ATF Order of Battle

On 5 March, HQ 1 ATF issued the Order of Battle³⁶⁰. 547 Sig Tp was listed as one of the units:



CONFIDENTIAL					
1 ATF ORDER OF BATTLE					
Mar 67					
PROV	STATION	COORD	CTL HQ	OP STATUS	
547 Sig Tp	PHUOC TUY	BARIA	YS436666	HQ 1 ATF	OP

Figure 128: HQ 1ATF Order of Battle #2

This is the first time that 547 Sig Tp has been noted in the Monthly Return

³⁶⁰ AWM95, 1/4/34. HQ 1ATF Annexes [1-31 Mar 1967].



17.3 Operations

17.3.1 US ARDF Support

The declassified *US Air Force Project CHECO Report dated 20 Sept 1968*³⁶¹, noted that the US Army was assisting Australia with its experimentation with the ARDF Aircraft³⁶².

Finally, the Army is assisting an Australian experiment in RVN with a makeshift ARDF system in a Cessna 182. There is a plan to test the Australian equipment in an Army aircraft.^{20/}

Figure 129: Extract from Project CHECO Report³⁶³

17.3.2 US Army ARDF Support

17.3.2.1 Aircraft in Support of 547 Sig Tp

When the US authorities became aware of the exceptional results achieved by the Troop, a US Army ARDF aircraft³⁶⁴ was assigned in direct support. See Annex H for details on the US Army ARDF aircraft and operation.

17.3.2.2 Sponsor Unit

The aircraft and crew was supplied from the US Army 146th Aviation Company (Radio Research) (146 Avn Coy) that was based at Tan Son Nhut Airport³⁶⁵, Saigon.



Figure 130: US Army ARDF Aircraft at Luscombe Field

³⁶¹ <http://www.dtic.mil/dtic/tr/fulltext/u2/a485058.pdf>. Declassified in August 2006.

³⁶² Aircraft was a Cessna 180.

³⁶³ Project CHECO 20 Sep 68, page 43.

³⁶⁴ Beechcraft Seminole designated RU-8D.

³⁶⁵ The 146th Army Security Agency Company (Aviation) (Forward) was first activated at Long Ihan, Vietnam, 1 June 1966, and flew the RU-6 and RU-8 Special Electronic Mission Aircraft in support of US Forces in Vietnam. When deactivated in Vietnam on 17 February 1973, the 146th had been awarded 3 US Meritorious Unit Citations and 2 Vietnamese Crosses of Gallantry with palm for service through 15 campaigns. In 1969 146 Avn Co re-located to Long Thanh just to the north of Phuoc Tuy Province.



The following is an extract from the Armchair General Web Page:³⁶⁶

[Jim "Sakk" Frankenfield] After Joe [Weir] & I got settled in after about 2 months, we were told that they needed volunteers to fly "Direct Support" for the Aussies. . . . Joe went first with Capt. Jack Daniels and really got the respect from the Aussies, that we needed. He flew with them for about 1-2 months, then I went down . . . The Aussies were really a great bunch! Not only can they party, but they are exceptional fighters and their Intel group was really sharp. Joe & I both had some very memorable times while flying & working with the Aussies . . . at Luscombe Field at Nui Dat--the 1st Australian Task Force.

The following is an extract from the 146 Avn Coy Web Page³⁶⁷:

[Jim "Sakk" Frankenfield] Joe Weir & I flew direct support for them [547 Sig Tp] for about 3-4 months and lived with them during that time. The airstrip was always a challenge to land & take-off--it was about 1000 feet "too short" for our planes. We had to land "uphill" so we could stop faster--which was all right if we didn't misjudge the approach, as there was a wall of trees at the top. For take-offs, we had a mine field at the other end! The Aussies seem to come out of everywhere when we had to take-off, I think they didn't want to miss the excitement.

17.3.3 Special Agent Reports

In March, HQ 1ATF was continuing to receive SARs from HQ II FFV ³⁶⁸:

FROM 010001H TO 011300H MAR 67				HQ 1 ATF OPS LOG			SHEET 1	
SERIAL	DATE/TIME	FROM	TO	ORIG NO	MESSAGE OR TEXT		ACTION	COMPLETED
134	031845H	IIFV			SPECIAL AGENT REPORTS Nos 05, 06.			INT.

Figure 131: HQ 1ATF Ops Log Extract

17.3.4 British ARDF Trials

On 2 March, DSD sent a signal to an unspecified address for Gorman³⁶⁹ concerning British ARDF³⁷⁰:

S E C R E T COMINT CHANNELS

FOR GORMAN

ARDF (PARA (C) OF YOUR 020726 NOTAL) COPY OF RICHARDS
SIGNAL SENT BY ARMY, CANBERRA TO MOD ARMY (D124A) INFO 121
SIG SQN (DTGJ 270545/FEB) TOGETHER WITH FOLLOWING COMMENT
QTE AMFB STILL INTENDS TO CONDUCT FIELD TRIALS

. [redacted] NEW SYSTEM IF SUCCESSFUL SHOULD OVERCOME MAJOR
PROBLEM OF LENGTH OF TRANSMISSION AND RA 217 SHOULD BE MORE
SUITABLE RECEIVER UNQTE.

2. YOU ARE WELCOME TO DISCUSS QUITE FREELY WITH FEAF/FAELF
RESULTS OF AUM352 TRIALS DISAPPOINTING BUT NOT ENTIRELY

³⁶⁶ <http://www.armchairgeneral.com/forums/showthread.php?t=65809&page=20>

³⁶⁷ <http://members.verizon.net/~vze2cmt8/146th.html>

³⁶⁸ AWM95, 1/4/33/ HQ 1 ATF Narrative Duty Officer's Log (1-31 Mar 1967).

³⁶⁹ DSD Officer.

³⁷⁰ DSD Declassified, 547 Sig Tp in Vietnam (tranche2).



UNEXPECTED IN VIEW OF TIME REQUIRED FOR FIXES. WE SUPPORT
AMF VIEW (PARA 1 ABOVE) THAT WE SHOULD PROCEED WITH FIELD
TRIALS

3. WE ARE ASKING AUSLO(W) FOR SOME MORE INFO

17.3.5 Tasking Allocation

On 17 March, AUM352 sent a signal to MI8 and DSD³⁷¹ in reference to MI8 signal of 152300Z³⁷².n

S E C R E T SAVIN
FOR MI8. YOUR 152300Z.

1. REFERENCE RECEIVED TOO LATE TO BRIEF CGS

2. ALL FOLLOWING DATA IS PURELY TO PROVIDE INTELLIGENCE FOR COMD 1 ATF

3. TASKING PRIORITY LIST AS FOLLOWS

- | | |
|---------------|-------------------------------|
| 1. VCMB 00618 | 10. VCXBJ0076 |
| 2. VCMB 00617 | 11. VCMB 05411 |
| 3. VCMB 00620 | 12. VCXB J0075 |
| 4. VCMB 05407 | 13. VCXB J0012 |
| 5. VCMB 00032 | [also shown as 13] VCXB J0072 |
| 6. VCMB N4510 | 14. VCXB J0073 |
| 7. VCMB 00608 | 15. VCMB 05408 |
| 8. [MISSING] | 16. VCMB 00813 |
| 9. VCXB J0074 | 17. VCMB 0 5409 |

SUPPLEMENTARY LIST

- A. VCMB 05401
- B. VCOB 05401
- C. VCOB 0 5402
- D. VCMB 00605
- E. VCMB 00607

4. POSITION ALLOCATIONS³⁷³

TIME (Z)	POSN1	POSN2	POSN3	POSN4	POSN5	POSN6	POSN7	POSN8
2300	00617							
2330	05407							
0001	05409	J0074						
			00813					
0030	05409	063		00620				
0100	00608	J0076		N4509	05408			
0130	05407		00618		J0075	J0073		
0200		N4510		05411				
0230	00617		00618					
0300	055??	J0076	[corrupt]	N4509	05407	00813		
0330	05407	J0072	[corrupt]			J0073		
0400	LUNCH	LUNCH	LUNCH			LUNCH	LUNCH	
0430	05407	05409	00617	LUNCH	LUNCH	J0073		

³⁷¹ DSD Declassified, 547 Sig Tp in Vietnam (tranche2).

³⁷² Not Located.

³⁷³ Author made signal contents into table.



TIME (Z)	POSN1	POSN2	POSN3	POSN4	POSN5	POSN6	POSN7	POSN8
	(0420)							
0500		J0076		00620		J0075(?)		
0530		J0074		N4509				
				(0540)				
0600						00813		
0630	05407							
0700		N4510		05407	05411			
				(0720)	(0720)			
0730	05409	055	00618		05408	J0073		
	(0750)							
0800	058	J0072	00618	00620	XXXXX	XXXXX	XXXXX	
			(0820)					
0830			00610	N4509				
0900	TEA	TEA	05407	J0075				
0930	05407	J0074	00813	TEA				
1000	05407	N4510	00617	05409				
				(0945)				
1030				XXXXX				
1100		J0073	00813					
1130	630							
1200		N4510						
1230								
1300	05407		J0073					
1330	00617	05408						
1400			N4509					
1430	05407	05409	00032					
1500	05407							
1530		J0074	00813					
1600	05407							
1830	05407							

1830/2400 COVER POSSIBLE SKEDS ON VCMBI05405 PLUS VC SEARCH

5. DEVELOPMENT GROUPS NOT YET NOTATED WHICH HAVE BEEN LOCATED IN PHUOC TUY PROVINCE. THIS DOES NOT INCLUDE DEVELOPMENT ITEMS WHICH ARE UNLOCATED YET.

TIME (Z)					
2300					
2330					
0001	035	048			
0030	056	063			
0100	048				
0130	062				
0200	058				
0230	063				
0300					
0330	0055				
0400	056	048	059		
0430	060				
0500	031	051	061	058	
0530	051	056			
0600					LLX DE FYH 6560 (- ARDF)
0630					
0700	064				
0730	055				
0800	058				



TIME (Z)					
0830	062				
0900					
0930					
1000	058				
1030					
1100					
1130	063				

6. COMMENTS ON TASKING

TASKS ARE ALLOCATED TO POSITION AS PER POSITION ALLOCATION. IN BETWEEN THESE TASKS ALL OPERATORS ARE REQUIRED TO DO SEARCH AND ALSO COVER DEV GROUPS ALLOCATED TO THEM.

IN ADITI ON TO THIS IT IS NECESSARY TO HAVE TWO FULL-TIME SEARCH AND DEV POSITIONS BETWEEN THE HOURS OF 0001-0800Z TO RECOVER TASKS LOSTS THROUGH CALLSIGN CHANGES, RECORD NEW ACTIVITY IN AREA ETC. TO DO THIS JOB EFFICIENTLY IT IS NECESSARY TO HAVE REGULAR OPERATORS FOR CONTINUITY.

7. MANNING FOR TASKED POSITIONS.

13 OPERATORS ARE RQUIRED TO WORK A BASIC SHIFT ROSTER OF 49 HOURS PER WEEK OVER THE 6 TASK POSITIONS AS FOLLOWS: -

11.24 HR POSITION = H1X17 HOUR POSITION = 1X16 HOUR POSITION = 1X10 HOUR PSITION AND TWO [garbled] 8 HOUR POSITIONS.

(BESIDES 49 HOURS ON THE SETS PER WEEK THERE ARE OTHER TROOP TASKS TO PERFORM. STRAIN HAS ALREADY SHOWN ON SOME OF THE OLDER OPERATORS WHO HAVE WORKED WELL ABOVE THIS FIGURE SINCE ARRIVING HERE AND AT LEAST 3 HAVE HAD MINOR BREAKDOWNS IN HEALTH WHICH COULD BE ATTRIBUTABLE TO LONG HOURS AND THE CLIMATE ETC)

8. SEARCH POSITIONS.

REQUIRE AT LEAST 3 FULL-TIME DEVELOPMENT OPERATORS SO THAT NO CONTINUITY IS LOST. THESE OPERATORS ARE REQUIRED TO MAN THE TWO DEV POSITIONS BETWEEN 0001 AND 0 [garbled] Z PLUS COVER ANY OTHER ADDITIONAL TASKS THAT MAY BE ALLOCATED. WITH TASKS SUCH AS THESE WITH CHANGING CALLSIGNS FREQS AND SKEDS THESE SEARCH POYITIONS ARE INVALUABLE. SINCE STARTING THESE POSITIONS THIS STATION HAS RECOVERED PRIORITY TASKS LOST THROUGH CALLSIGN CHANGES ETC NOTATIONS LOCATED IN OUR AREA (SEE PARA 5 ABOVE)

9. OP SIGS REQUIREMENT.

(A) CPL AND SIG TOTAL 21

13 OPERATORS FOR SHIFTWORK.

3 OPERATORS FOR DEVELOPMENT POSITIONS

1 OPERATR FOR [redacted] AREA DUTIES

1OPERATOR FOR RELIEF OF PERSONNEL FOR R&C R&R .

2 OPERATORS FOR ARDF AIRCRAFT

1 OPERATOR FOR ARDF TIP OFF RADIO (ALSO USED IN T/A)

[garbled] SNCOS. TOTAL 3.

1XW02 AND IXSSGT SUPERVISORS

IX ARDF CONTROLLER

(C) INCREASE OF FIVE CPL/SIG OP SIGS REQUIRED



10. ALL UNITS IN TYS AREA HAVE BEEN ALLOCATED AN INCREASE OF 10 PERCENT IM STRENGTH T COVER R&R , R&C , AND SICKNESS ETC. IF IT IS RULING APPLIED TO THIS UNIT REQUIRE 3 EXTRA MEN

TO ONE . SAY 2 OP SIGS AND 1 OKC

11. AFTER CONSIDERATION OF ABOVE PSE ADVISE

- (A) YOUR CONCURRENCE OR OTHERWISE
(B) WHETHER SUBMISSION TO BE MADE BY COMD 1 ATF

17.3.6 547 Sig Tp Progress Report for 1-31 Mar 67

The 547 Sig Tp Progress Report for 1-31 Mar 67³⁷⁴ stated: (Pertinent extracts only)

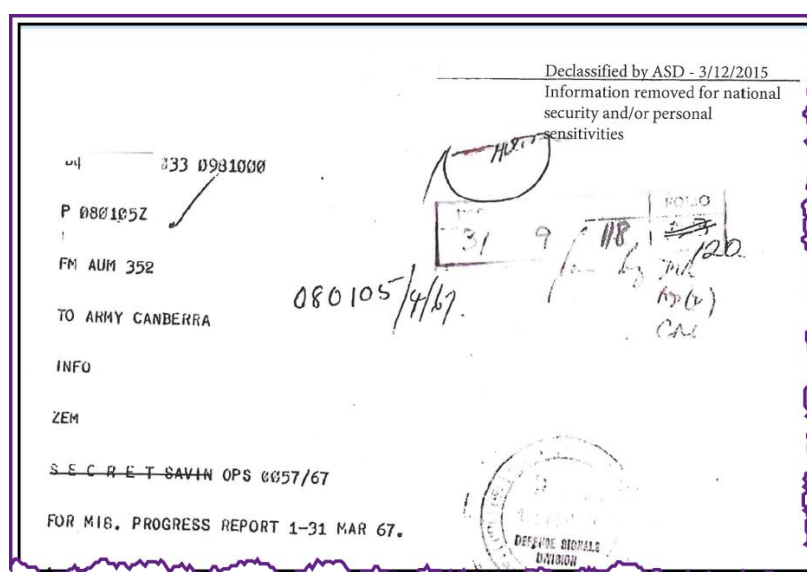


Figure 132: AUM-352 Signal³⁷⁵

1. SET ROOM
- A. MAINTAINING:
 - 1 X 24 HR DPM³⁷⁶
 - 3 X 16 HR DPM
 - 5 X 8 HR DPM³⁷⁷
- B. TRAINING. PROGRESSING WELL. EXPECT ALL OPS CAPABLE OF DOING SET TASKING BY 15 MAY 67. PLUS TWO OPERATORS CAPABLE OF SEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT. WITH TWO WEEK HANDOVER WITH REPLACEMENTS EXPECT THAT HUGHES WILL BE IN GOOD SHAPE BY 1 JUNE 67.
- C. AM TRYING TO COMPLETE GRACE/STEWART HANDOVER ASP AND GET GRACE HOME BY 20 APR 67 WITH EXTRA TAPES FOR LAST MINUTE HELP IN TRAINING REPLACEMENTS.

³⁷⁴ Documents received from ASD December 2015. and now available at <https://www.asd.gov.au/about/history/declassified>.

³⁷⁵ Note M18 the only addressee. M18 must have forwarded the signal to DSD.

³⁷⁶ DPM = Double Position Morse i.e. one intercept position with two receivers.

³⁷⁷ These figures would equate to 9 intercept positions manned 0800 – 1600, 4 positions manned 1600 – 2400 and 1 position 2400 – 0800 (times approximate).



- D. SET ROOM HAS NO PROBLEMS ON EQUIPMENT OF AERIALS. ALL R391 RXS HERE AND ONLY TWO REQUIRE MAINTENANCE AT THIS TIME.
2. TA.
- A. NO MAJOR PROBLEMS
- B. NOW TASKING AMERICAN ARDF DIRECT ON OUR AREA OF INTEREST BY AIRCRAFT LANDING AND BEING BRIEFED AND BY SENDING ELECTRICAL BRIEFING. TIP OFF BEING USED BUT THIS IS BEING CHECKED AND IMPROVED ON BY US AUTHORITIES ON COMSEC GROUNDS. ONLY ONE TYPE OF AIRCRAFT CAN LAND HERE OF THREE TYPES EMPLOYED DUE TO SMALL SIZE OF STRIP. BRIG GRAHAM HAS APPROVED EXTENSION OF STRIP AS PRIORITY ONE PROJECT ON ABOVE GROUNDS. ABOVE PROGRESS DOES NOT ALTER NEED FOR USER TRIALS AND TESTS OF LATEST AUST EQPT IN THIS THEATRE
3. COMMS.
- A. NEW COMCEN 9 PERCENT COMPLETE. TO BE COMPLETED 30 APR 67.
- B. CIRCUIT TO 303RR BN HAS IMPROVED CONSIDERABLY OVER PAST MONTH DUE TO FOLLOWING PROBLEMS BEING RESOLVED BY COMMS OIC 509 RR GP. (I) NO ORDER BETWEEN RELAY POINTS ON CIRCUIT. (II) CIRCUIT HAD NEVER BEEN ENGINEERED. (III) ONLY CIRCUIT THAT DID NOT GO THROUGH PATCH PANEL AT [WORDS CORRUPTED PROBABLY VUNG TAU] RELAY
- C. IT IS ANTICIPATED THAT NEW TRS AT 303 RR BN WILL BE COMPLETED BY 1 JUL 67. HENCE IT HAS DEFINITELY BEEN DECIDED BY ALL CONCERNED TO LEAVE CIRCUIT AS IT IS OUR OLD TACTICAL CIRCUIT HAS BE REACTIVATED AND IS ON PERMANENT STANDBY WITH DAILY TESS IN CASE OF EMERGENCIES.
- D. COURIER FOR HARD COPY CODEWORD MATERIAL.
DIRNSA³⁷⁸ HAS REFUSED TO APPROVE OR COMMENT ON AUST SDS HELICOPTER AS AUTHORIZED COURIER AS IT IS PURELY AN AUSTRALIAN MATTER AND THEY ARE PREPARED TO ACCEPT A DSD RULING. UNTIL USM 704 [³⁷⁹] OR USM 614 CAN PROVIDE COURIERS TO THIS STATION APPROX 1 JUL 67 AM SENDING COURIER TO SAIGON ONCE PER WEEK AS INTERIM SOLUTION. PREFER ALL REFERENCE TO AUST SDS HELICOPTER AS COURIER BE DELETED EXCEPT FOR DAILY CARRIAGE OF RAW TRAFFIC AND LOGS
4. ADMINISTRATION
- A. POSTING ORDERS. PSE ADVISE WHETHER ACTION HAS BEEN TAKEN ON POSTING ORDERS FOR FOLLOWING INT CORPS PERSONNEL.
32222 WO2 D RODGERS
15562 SGT D W ROGERS
34360 SGT WE IRWIN
53727 SGT K INNES
ASSUME ALL MEMBERS GOING TO DSD QUERY.
- B. MEDICAL
[REDACTED]
- C. VISITS
(I) MAJ GEN M C CHRISTIAN J2 MACV 29 MAR 67
(II) COL APPLINGTON NRV(C) 15 - 16 MAR 67
(III) REPS FROM NRV(C), 509TH RR GP, ARDF AVN BN
- D. STORES AND EQPT
EQPT CONTNUING TO ARRIVE IN STEADY STREAM
- E DISCIPLINE. NIL

³⁷⁸ Director National Security Agency.

³⁷⁹ 509th ASA Gp Saigon.



DSD VC Working Aid

On 11 December, DSD released DSD Working Aid No 5/67, *Analysis of Type of Reporting by Radio Stations of VC 5th Light Infantry Division Passing Readable Traffic*³⁸⁰. The Report included the period 1 Jan -31 Mar 67³⁸¹:

LINK	PERIOD	TOTAL MSGS.	SUBJECT OF REPORTS/COMMENTS
303A-303C MIS HQ 5 LID U/I MIE	1 Jan-31 Mar 67	2	303C was ordered to report on aircraft working from REN LA [not located].

Figure 133: Readable Traffic #1

LINK	PERIOD	TOTAL MSGS.	SUBJECT OF REPORTS/COMMENTS
303A-303D MIS HQ 5 LID U/I MIE	1 Jan-31 Mar 67	78	Continued to report mainly on shipping. Reference to Allied sweep ops on 22 Jan 67. On 25 Jan 67 "3 Dakotas were spraying poisonous chemicals along the coast from HEP HOA [YS 8873] to the HO LINH mountains [YS 8873]". (T235). 303D also reported on aircraft activity around HAMTAN [YS 9884], and on the construction of some buildings by the Americans.

Figure 134: Readable Traffic #2

LINK	PERIOD	TOTAL MSGS.	SUBJECT OF REPORTS/COMMENTS
303A-303E MIS HQ 5 LID U/I MIE	1 Jan-31 Mar 67	47	Reporting on activity along Highway 1 and Provincial Route 333. A message disclosed that the strength of this MIE at about 14 Jan 67 was 8 men. As four of these had "gone back", "there is nobody to cover the enemy situation at VO DAT [YT 7433], TAN LINH [YT 9326] and the ONG DON intersection [YT 6303]". (T0126). Reports also disclosed problems in carrying rice, a sweep up by U.S., Aust., and ARVN troops in the DUC THANH area [YS 4682] on 26 Mar 67. The team was told to report in detail on standard operating procedures of convoys, e.g., spacing of vehicles, escorts, flank protection.

Figure 135: Readable Traffic #3

³⁸⁰ DSD Declassified, 547 Sig Tp in Vietnam (tranche2).

³⁸¹ Section of Report modified by author to show all headings and information.



LINK	PERIOD	TOTAL MSGS.	SUBJECT OF REPORTS/COMMENTS
136A-136C MAS HQ 5 LID MAS 275 Regt	1 Jan-31 Mar 67	1	Message dealt with an unsuccessful radio sked.
136A-136D MAS HQ 5 LID - MAS 274 Regt	1 Jan-31 Mar 67	6	Detailed reports of convoys in the XUAN LOC area [YT 4009] and a msg detailing targets and the plans to attack them.

Figure 136: Readable Traffic #4

LINK	PERIOD	TOTAL MSGS.	SUBJECT OF REPORTS/COMMENTS
199A-1990 HQ 5 LID - U/I Element on Watch Net	1 Jan-31 Mar 67	1	A msg from NAM TAN^[i] to HIEU^[2] at HQ 5 LID stating; "as of 1 Mar... it seems the final phase will be completed by 5 Mar. On or about 7 Mar we will return to HQ ..." Comments: [i] Collateral holds as Chief of Staff, HQ 5 LID. [ii] Previously assoc with MIS 5 LID.
309A-309B MIS 275 Regt Sub MIE	1 Jan-31 Mar 67	5	Situation reports on the "enemy" in the area of AI BI [YS 4382], DUC THANH [YS 4680] and SOUI RAM [YS 4498]. Administrative traffic.

Figure 137: Readable Traffic #5



CHAPTER 18 – APRIL 1967

18.1 Personnel

18.1.1 Arrivals and Departures

There were four arrivals and three departures in April.

Arrivals

6 April

Sergeant Bob Field

19 April

Sergeant John Bull

21 April:

Warrant Officer Graham Stewart

Sergeant Robert (RC) Howell

Departures

16 April:

Sergeant Sam Rogers

Corporal Kevin Lever

23 April:

Captain Trevor Richards

18.1.2 Sergeant Assignments

John Bull was to be employed in the Processing³⁸² area and Bob (RC) Howell was assigned to the Set Room as the overall supervisor. Bob Field took over the Comcen Supervisor position.

18.1.3 Troop Sergeant Major Handover

Graham Stewart returned to the fold and commenced a handover with Eric Grace.

18.1.4 Handover of Command

On 23 May, Captain Bill Hughes assumed command of the Troop

18.1.5 103.1094 Sig Sqn Handover

During the month, 103 Sig Sqn commenced handover to 104 Sig Sqn³⁸³. 104 Sig Sqn continued providing all the administrative support to the Troop.

18.1.6 HQ AFV Monthly Strength Return

The strength of 547 Sig Tp was listed in the April issue of HQ AFV Monthly Report³⁸⁴ as Temporary Duty in country with an increased strength of 24:

³⁸² In the 60s and 70s most of the Op Sig WOs and SNCOs had been crossed trained as analysts and cryptographers.

³⁸³ 104 Sig Sqn remained in-country for the duration.

³⁸⁴ <http://www.awm.gov.au/collection/AWM98/R723/1/13/1/2/>



UNIT	ESTABLISHMENT					POSTED STRENGTH					ATTACHED					TOTAL				
	(UNIT AUTH STR)					*(PCS IN COUNTRY)					*(TDY IN COUNTRY)					TOTAL				
	OFFR	WO	TOTAL WO OFFR	OR *(EM)	TOTAL	OFFR	WO	TOTAL WO OFFR	OR *(EM)	TOTAL	OFFR	WO	TOTAL WO OFFR	OR *(EM)	TOTAL	OFFR	WO	TOTAL WO OFFR	OR *(EM)	TOTAL
T/DUTY IN COUNTRY																				
ARMY																				
AF "VERNON 3700JEB"											4	3	7	46	53	4	3	7	46	53
DET 86 TPT PL											1		1	29	30	1		1	29	30
547 SIG TF											1	3	4	20	24	1	3	4	20	24
DET 52 SUI PL											1		1	9	10	1		1	9	10
TOTAL											7	6	13	104	117	7	6	13	104	117

Figure 138: HQ AFV Monthly Strength Return for April Extract

The posted strength of the Troop may vary slightly each month due to arrival/departure dates and the date that the statistics are taken.



18.2 Operations

18.2.1 Target Locations

In March/April the Troop sent a map of the main enemy positions to DMI³⁸⁵:

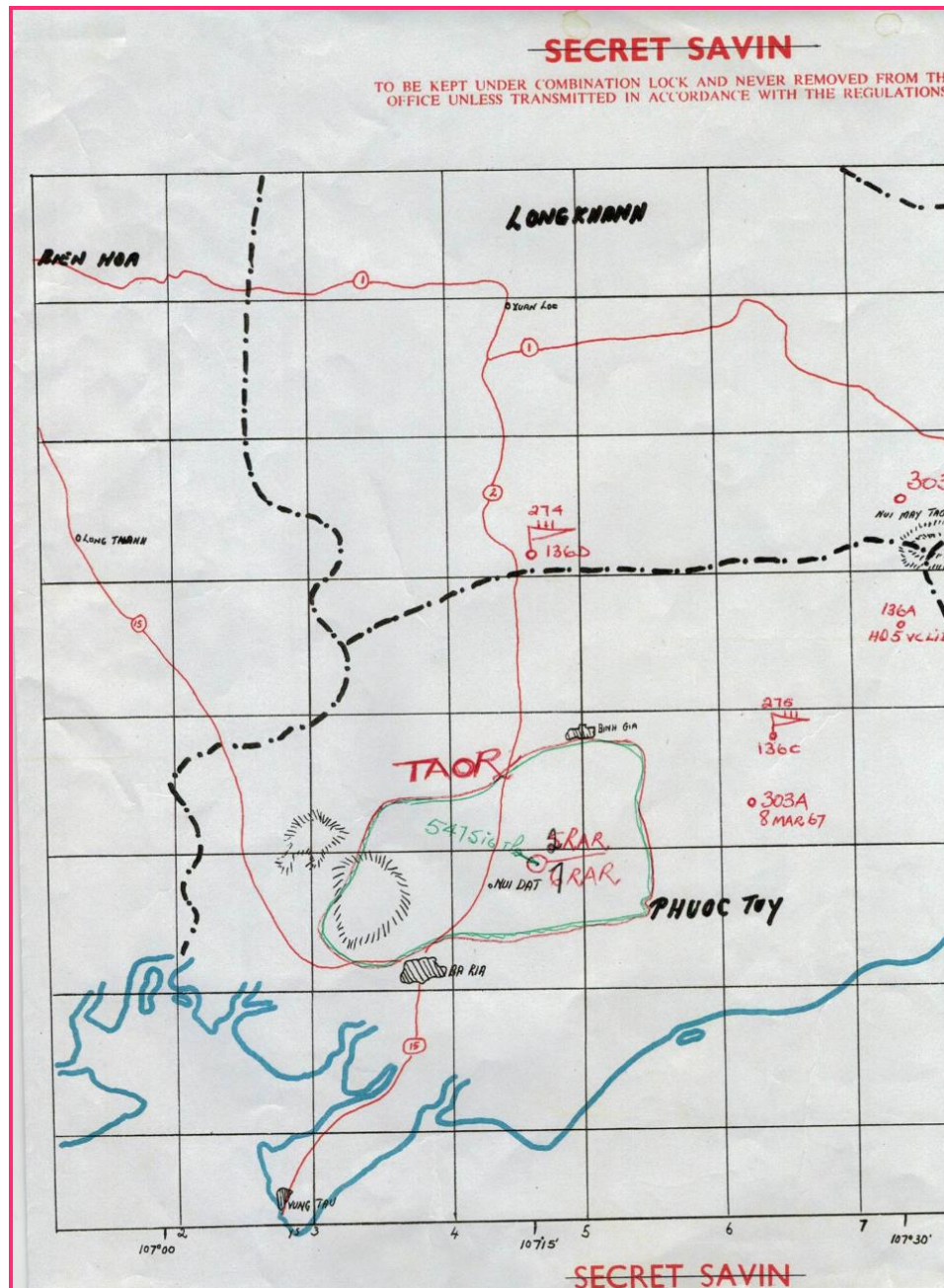


Figure 139: Target Locations March/April 1967

³⁸⁵ Located in ASD archives. The reason the map was produced is not known but most probably drawn by Doug Rodgers and/or Bill Irwin. Locations and identities most probably derived from intercepts and ARDF



18.2.2 Intelligence Review of Enemy Locations

The location of VC units appears to be close to those listed in the Intelligence Review No 6 dated 10 Mar 67³⁸⁶.

VC STRENGTHS AND LOCATIONS		
UNIT	STRENGTH	LOCATION
HQ 5 Div	100	YS7179
274 Regt		
Bn		YS3480
Bn		YS5488
Bn		YS3492
275 Regt	1200	YS6582
D445 Bn	300	YS5774
C21	100	YS3578
C23	60	unlocated
C25	100	YS4855
Group 84:	900	
C125	170	HAT DICH
C300	73	unlocated
C200		XUYEN MOC
C134		RSSZ
C100		XUYEN MOC

Figure 140: VC Strengths and Locations

³⁸⁶ AWM95, 1/4/34. HQ 1ATF Annexes [1-31 Mar 1967].



18.2.3 G2 (Int) Comments on Intelligence at HQ 1ATF

On 28 April, Jim Furner the GS (Int) at HQ 1ATF wrote to 'David' at DSD ³⁸⁷ regarding Intelligence at HQ 1ATF and contact with 547 Sig Tp:

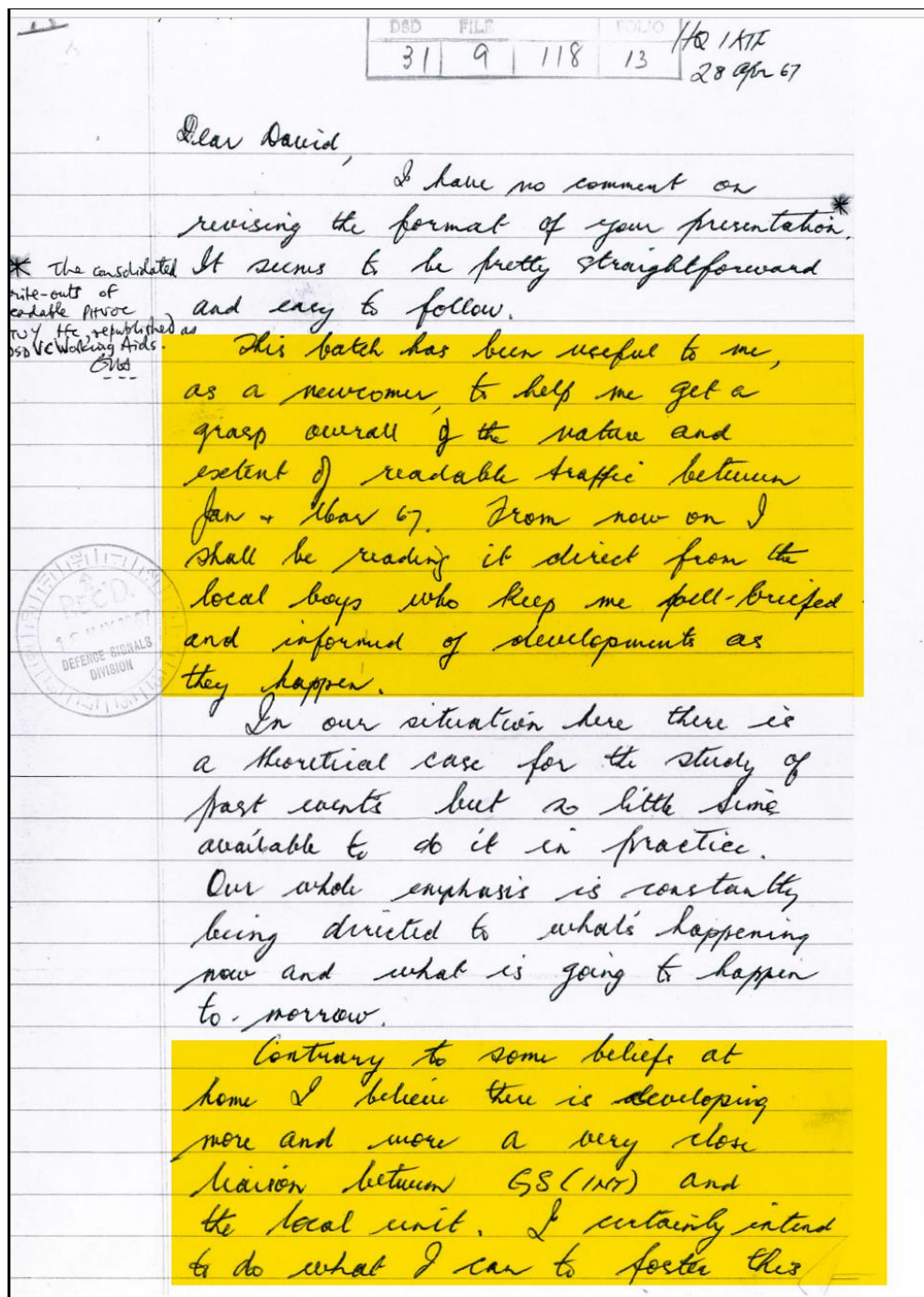


Figure 141: Furner Letter Page 1

³⁸⁷ DSD Declassified, 547 Sig Tp in Vietnam (tranche2).



2.

13A

mutual support and co-operation.
There have been so many "wheelbarrow-
dealers" around here in the
intelligence business in the past
that I'm afraid the straightforward
& tedious business of searching
amongst the straw has often
been neglected. People tend to
seek more spectacular harvests.

Will you please give my
kindest regards to Gerry Gorman,
Mac Moroney, Don Rae and
Boss Williams if they are not
too busy to be disturbed.
Also Rex Turner.

All the best,

Sincerely,

Jim Furner

(JIM FURNER)

GS (INT)

AUST. TASK FORCE, VN.

Figure 142: Furner Letter Page 2



CHAPTER 19 – MAY 1967

19.1 Personnel

19.1.1 Arrivals and Departures

There was a large turnover of personnel in May:

Arrivals

4 May

Sergeant Barry Hampstead
Corporal Mike Conaghan
Signalman John Zeller
Corporal Roger Harrison
Corporal Robert Lamont

11 May

Lieutenant Richard Brockett

12 May

Corporal James Thomas

19 May

Corporal Peter Bradley
Corporal John Bramston

25 May

Signalman Daniel Clarke

26 May

Signalman Geoff Hall

Departures

1 May

Signalman Ray Hyland (103 Sig Sqn)

13 May

Warrant Officer Eric Grace

20 May

Corporal Murray Cooper
Staff Sergeant Bill Irwin

22 May

Warrant Officer Doug Rodgers

23 May

Corporal Clarrie Day

24 May

Corporal Andy Aird
Corporal Frank Young



Although not officially part of 547 Sig Tp, Ray Hyland played a major part in the early operations in the Set Room and is remembered as being a vital part of the Troop.

19.1.2 Intelligence Officer

Richard (Dave) Brockett arrived to become the Troop's first Intelligence Officer (IO) and to serve as Troop 2IC.

19.1.3 Processing Section

Barry Hampstead replaced Bill Irwin in Processing. Peter Bradley and John Bramston, both Int Corps, were employed in the Processing Section.

19.1.4 Set Room

Roger Harrison, Jock Lamont, Blue Thomas, John Zeller, Danny Clarke and Geoff Hall were a welcome addition to the Set Room.

19.1.5 Troop Sergeant Major

Graham Stewart replaced Eric Grace as the Troop Sergeant Major (TSM).

19.1.6 HQ AFV Monthly Strength Return

The strength of 547 Sig Tp was listed in the May issue of HQ AFV Monthly Report³⁸⁸ as Det³⁸⁹ 547 Sig Tp under 1 ATF units with an increased Establishment Strength of 30 and a Posted Strength of 29:

UNIT	ESTABLISHMENT				POSTED STRENGTH				ATTACHED				TOTAL			
	(UNIT AUTH STR)				*(PCS IN COUNTRY)				*(TDY IN COUNTRY)				TOTAL			
	OFFR	WO	TOTAL WO OFFR	OR *(EM)	TOTAL	OFFR	WO	TOTAL WO OFFR	OR *(EM)	TOTAL	OFFR	WO	TOTAL WO OFFR	OR *(EM)	TOTAL	TOTAL
2 RAR	40 (2)	10	50 (2)	828 (78)	878 (80)	38	11	49	821 (80)	870					38	11
7 RAR	40 (2)	10	50 (2)	828 (78)	878 (80)	38	11	49	789 (80)	838					38	11
1 SAS SQN	6	2	8	101 (9)	109 (9)	6	2	8	100 (9)	108					6	2
1 DIV INT UNIT	1	2	3	12 (1)	15 (1)	1	1	2	11 (1)	13					1	1
DET 547 SIG TP	2	2	4	26	30	2	1	3	26	29					2	1

Figure 143L HQ AFV Monthly Strength Return for May 1967 Extract

19.2 Administration

19.2.1 Messing Facilities

As previously mentioned, the Troop was administered by 103/104 Sig Sqn. This included kitchen and messing facilities. The following pictures show the 104 Sig Sqn kitchen:

³⁸⁸ <http://www.awm.gov.au/collection/AWM98/R723/1/13/1/2/>

³⁸⁹ In several documents 547 Sig Tp is shown as both Det and just 547 Sig Tp for the full deployment.



Figure 144: 103/104 Sig Sqn Kitchen³⁹⁰

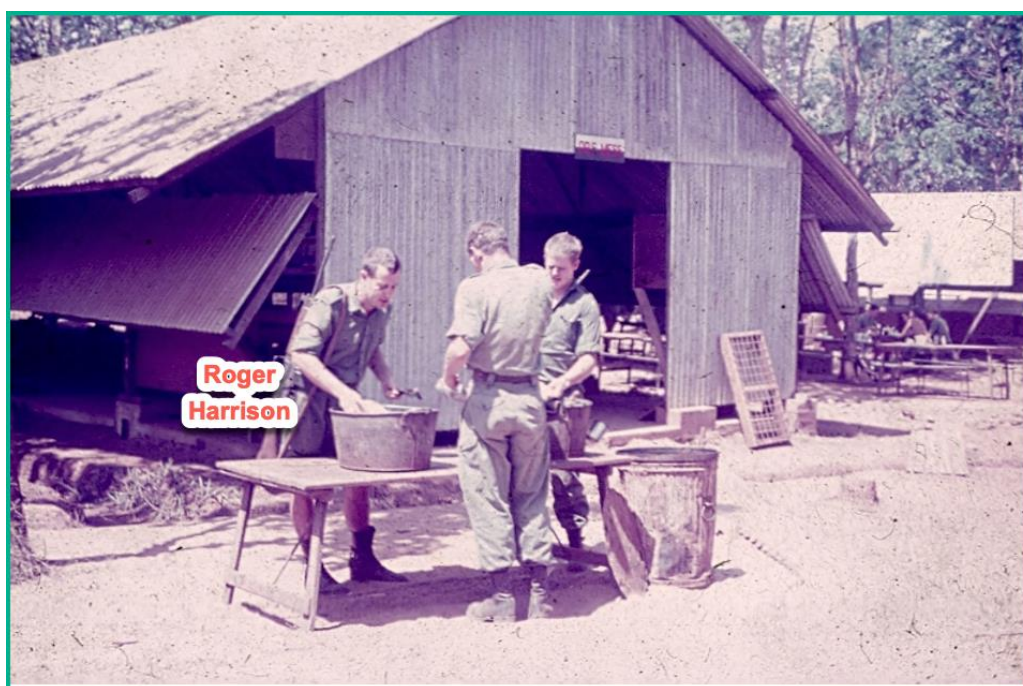


Figure 145: After meal washing up facilities

³⁹⁰ 7 Sig Regt Archives.



19.2.2 Living Accommodation

Tentage, protection and drainage of the junior ranks accommodation area continued to evolve.

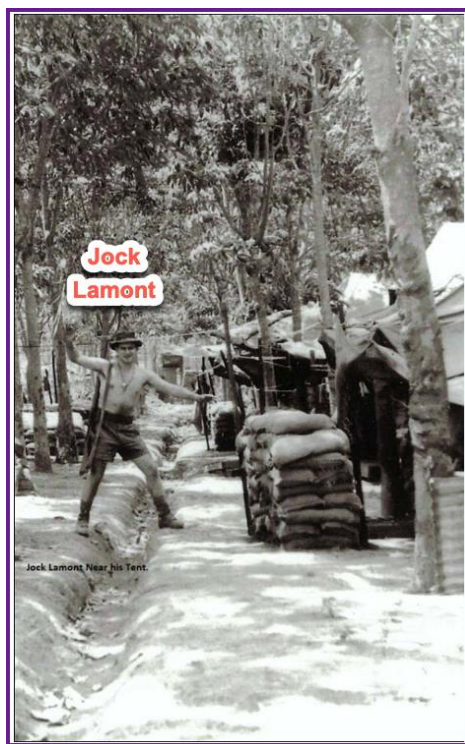


Figure 146: A happy soldier outside his tent³⁹¹

19.2.3 103 Sig Sqn Departure

On 4 May, the last members of 103 Sig Sqn departed SVN. The following extract from the 103 Sig Sqn Commanders Diary³⁹² shows the final departure details:

This form is to be enclosed with the annexes in AF - C 2119 (Adapted).			COMMANDERS DIARY NARRATIVE		AF - C 2118 (Adapted) Revised Jan, 1965
MONTH AND YEAR <u>MAY 1967</u>			REFERENCE MAP <u>VIETNAM 1:50,000 Sheet 6442 I to IV</u>	UNIT/FORMATION <u>103 SIG SQN</u>	COMMANDING OFFICER <u>MAT (D MUD)</u>
Place and grid reference	Date	Time	Event or information		Annex letter and enclosure number
<u>NUU DAT</u> <u>YS 4367.</u>	<u>1 MAY</u>		<u>NTR</u>		
	<u>2 MAY</u>		<u>NTR</u>		
	<u>3 MAY</u>		<u>Final members of 104 Sig Sqn arrived in SOUTH VIETNAM</u>		
	<u>4 MAY</u>		<u>13 members of 103 Sig Sqn left SOUTH VIETNAM</u>		

Figure 147: 103 Sig Sqn Departure

³⁹¹ Photo courtesy of Jock Lamont.

³⁹² <http://static.awm.gov.au/images/collection/bundled/RCDIG1030013.pdf>



19.3 Operations

19.3.1 Congratulations from Director, NSA

On 4 May, the following letter was passed from the Director DSD to DMI³⁹³:

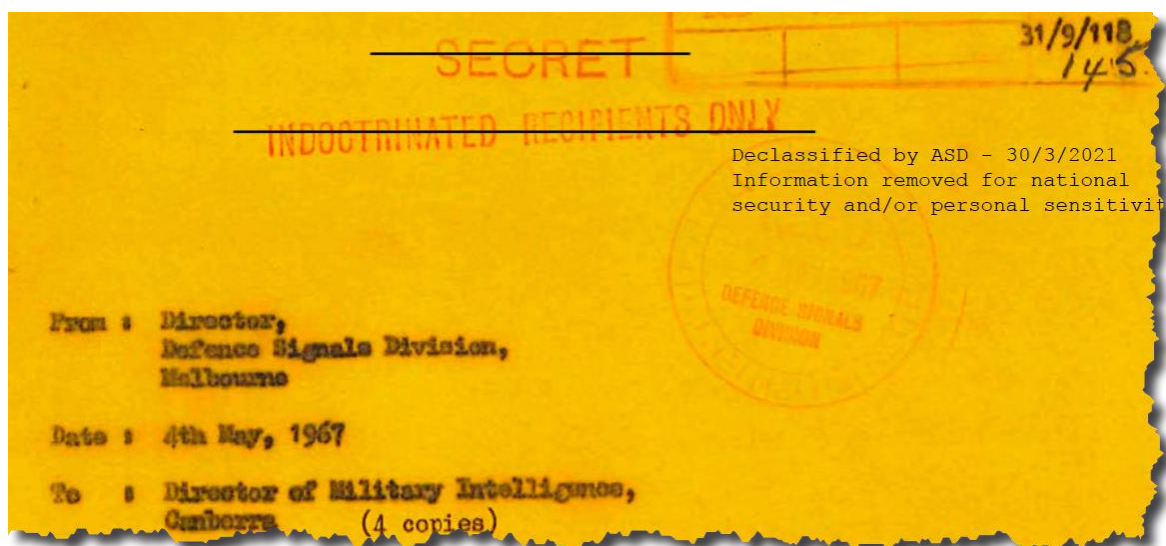


Figure 148: Letter to DMI³⁹⁴

The following personal messages have been exchanged between General Carter (Director, National Security Agency, Washington) and Mr Thompson (Director DSD):

From General Carter

1. On the occasion of the completion of the original ADSU's complement's tour in Vietnam, I wish to congratulate, Captain Trevor J. Richards and members of 547 Signals Unit, 1 ATF, for their outstanding performance of a difficult task in a complex environment.
2. Captain Richards and the men of the 657 SU have earned the highest respect of the U.S. Intelligence community in South Vietnam for their truly professional approach, exceptional expertise, and outstanding performance of a difficult task. The unit was a major contributor of SIGINT information on enemy activities in southeastern Vietnam, and its role in support of cooperative SIGINT effort was a major factor in the successful fulfilment of command SIGINT required in that area.
3. Colonel Aplington has informed me a large part of the credit for the unit's success is directly attributed to Captain Richards' exceptional performance as a commander and liaison officer and is his consistently helpful and cooperative attitude. I would be grateful if you would extend my heartiest personal commendation and appreciation to Captain Richards and the men of the 547 SU.

From Mr Thompson

³⁹³ DSD Declassified, 547 Sig Tp in Vietnam (tranche2).

³⁹⁴ Transcribed as too poor to insert fully.



1. *Thank you for our message concerning the ADSU in Vietnam which will give well-earned encouragement to Captain Richards and the members of 547 Signals Troop. We in DSD have also been most impressed by the performance of the original unit and are confident that incoming members will maintain the high standards achieved.*
2. *I would like to acknowledge also that we we have been greatly assisted throughout by the cooperation and support so readily extended by [redacted] in the theatre*
2. *DSD very strongly endorses the remarks may be General Carter and by Colonel Aplington.*
3. *The above signals were shown to Captain Richards on his visit to DSD today. Additional copies of this letter are forwarded in case you wish to forward a copy to 7 Signals Regiment and 547 Signals Troop.*

ADC.

19.3.2 Visit to US Stations

19.3.2.1 Saigon and Long Binh

Bill Irwin organized a trip for him and Barry Hampstead to visit 509th RR Gp at Davis Station Saigon, and 303rd RR Bn at Long Binh.

Barry Hampstead:

We travelled up by Caribou (I wasn't sick), had a couple of hours at the station which was located at Tan Son Nhut Airfield and then bludged a lift with a Yank driver up to the HQ of the American 303rd Radio Research Battalion at Long Binh. Long Binh was located 'just across the road' from Bien Hoa Airbase and during the night, the VC mortared Bien Hoa. Not having been briefed on what to do in such cases, Bill and I just stayed in bed. John Bull would have been proud of our savoir-faire as he had pulled a similar stunt in Kuching back in 1965 when, during a stand-to, he'd sat in front of a radio position and tried to look busy. Actually I was a little embarrassed when I got up next morning and went for a shower because the Yanks were still in their weapon pits on 'Stand to'. They weren't too concerned about Bill and me though. After all, we were only 'bloody Aussies'.

The purpose of our visit to Long Binh, apart from Bill making his farewells, was for me to attend a short course on the procedures to be used for the destruction of classified waste. I got talking to some of the young American operators and was surprised to hear that in some cases they had only trained as Sigint ops for about six months before their Vietnam posting. They generally found the job quite difficult and were impressed by the standard of Australian operators with whom they had come in contact. The course only lasted for about half an hour and then it was back to the Sergeants Mess to fill in time before we went back to Nui Dat.

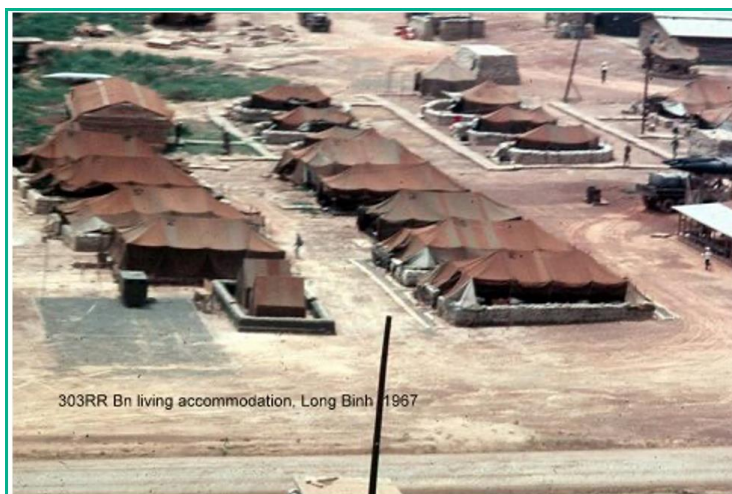


Figure 149: 303 RR Bn Long Binh. The working area is to the right our of shot

19.3.3 DSD VC Working Aid – Readable Traffic

Annex A to the Report³⁹⁵ included the period 1 April -31 May 67³⁹⁶:

LINK	PERIOD	TOTAL MSGS.	SUBJECT OF REPORTS/COMMENTS
303A-303B MIS HQ 54D- U/I MIE [i]	1 Apr-31 May 67	9	Reports on "enemy" activity incl on 1 May 67, "70 M113's^[ii] which transported two puppet companies ... (to XUYEN MOC)". Comments: [i] This link was inactive from 28 Oct 66 to 1 May 67. When it was reactivated, all names and cover designators used in the earlier period were replaced by different cover. The link has not been active since 19 May 67 when 303 B was ordered to "completely withdraw". [ii] 70 M113's could move approx. 1½ battalions.

Figure 150: Readable Traffic #1

³⁹⁵ DSD Declassified, 547 Sig Tp in Vietnam (tranche2).

³⁹⁶ Section of Report modified by author to show all headings and information.



LINK	PERIOD	TOTAL MSGS.	SUBJECT OF REPORTS/COMMENTS
303A-303C MIS HQ 5 LID U/I MIE	1 Apr-31 May 67	27	On 15 May 67, the team was ordered to "closely observe the road between BINHGIA [YS4077] and XUAN SON [YS5677]" (T875). During this period it reported mainly on road movement and artillery action.

Figure 151: Readable Traffic #2

LINK	PERIOD	TOTAL MSGS.	SUBJECT OF REPORTS/COMMENTS
303A-303D MIS HQ 5 LID U/I MIE	1 Apr-31 May 67	68	Continued to report on sea and air activity. On 19 May 67 it was ordered to move the "whole cell back to the road". (T920).

Figure 152: Readable Traffic #3

LINK	PERIOD	TOTAL MSGS.	SUBJECT OF REPORTS/COMMENTS
303A-303E MIS HQ 5 LID U/I MIE	1 Apr-31 May 67	68	Continued reporting on convoys, movement of personnel, clashes and reports of construction by U.S. troops. On 15 May 67 there was a report that "one of our cadre at MAY TAU Mountain [YS 7491] went over to the CHIEU HOI" (T876).

Figure 153: Readable Traffic #4

LINK	PERIOD	TOTAL MSGS.	SUBJECT OF REPORTS/COMMENTS
309A-309B MIS 275 Regt Sub MIE	1 Apr-31 May 67	2	Dealing with movement of cadre.

Figure 154: Readable Traffic #5



LINK	PERIOD	TOTAL MSGs.	SUBJECT OF REPORTS/COMMENTS
4178A-4178B Poss HQ 275 Regt - Poss U/I subordin- ate 275 Regt	1 Apr-31 May 67	2	A msg for 4178A on 15 May 67 stated that "command of the company had been handed over to you". The other stated that "all is well" (at 4178B)

Figure 155: Readable Traffic #6

19.3.4 Congratulative Message

The following message dated May 1967, was included in the DHAAT Report³⁹⁷:

Lieutenant-General Marshal Carter

Director of the United States National Security Agency (DIRNSA)

May 1967

Following the withdrawal of Captain Richards, the Troop was lauded by Director of the United States National Security Agency for their 'professional approach, exceptional expertise and outstanding performance of a difficult task' in a complex and adverse environment. DIRNSA judged Richards to have demonstrated 'exceptional performance as a commander and a liaison officer', a judgement with which DSD whole-heartedly agreed.

It was noted that Captain Richards and 547 had earned the highest respect of the US intelligence authorities in South Vietnam.

³⁹⁷<https://defence-honours-tribunal.gov.au/wp-content/uploads/2015/06/Report-of-the-Inquiry-into-547-Signal-Troop.pdf>



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CHAPTER 20 – JUNE 1967

20.1 Personnel

20.1.1 Arrivals and Departures

There was only one arrival in June, the last for the financial year and the last group of the originals returned to Australia.

Arrivals

3 June

Corporal Garth Brown

Departures

3 June

Corporal John Bartlett

7 June

Corporal Steve Innes

8 June

Corporal Bob Brown

Lance Corporal Ray Pratt

20.1.2 Technician Welcomed

The arrival of Garth Brown doubled the strength of the Maintenance Section to two.

20.1.3 Mention in Despatches – Ray Pratt

On 22 February 1968, Ray Pratt was gazetted as being awarded a Mention in Despatches (MID) for his outstanding contribution to 547 Sig Tp.



Figure 156: MID Clasp



20.1.4 Mention in Despatches Recommendation – Trevor Richards

The following MID recommendation for Captain Trevor Richards was found in the Australian War Memorial (AWM) Files³⁹⁸:

RECOMMENDATION FOR HONOURS OR AWARDS		AF - W 3121 (Adapted) Reprinted Jun, 1966
Army Number..... 47025	Recommendation in respect of —	(For AHQ use only) AHQ File No
Rank..... Captain (Substantive)	* (i) New Year	
(Temporary) (Honorary)	* (ii) Birthday	
Christian Names (in full).....	* (iii) Immediate Award	CAG No
..... Trevor John Martin	* (iv) Periodical (Operational)	
Surname..... RICHARDS (Block Letters)	* (v) Periodical (Non-operational)	LG No
Decorations..... N11	* Strike out where not applicable.	
Corps..... Royal Australian Signals	Recommended by	Honour or Award
Unit and Posting..... 547th Signal Troop -	Brigadier	
Officer Commanding	Commander	H.I.D.
Date of Birth..... 1st October, 1937	1st Australian Task Force	
Date of Enlistment..... 9th December, 1959		

Figure 157: Recommendation for Honours and Awards - Trevor Richards

The citation reads:

Place: Nui Dat, South Vietnam Date: 3rd June, 1967

Captain Trevor Richards was commissioned in 1959. Since this time he has served with the Royal Australian Signals Corps, with the exception of two years during which he attended the Royal Melbourne Technical College.

In 1966 this officer was posted to 1st Australian Task Force in duties of a highly classified nature.

During his tour of duty in Vietnam, Captain Richards showed a very marked degree of technical skill which, coupled with his dedication to duty and high qualities of leadership, produced outstanding results. His team became recognised as one of the leaders in its field, producing results out of all proportion to its size and contributing time after time to disruption of planned enemy operations.

Captain Richards did not spare himself to produce these results and his service with the 1st Australian Task Force has been in the highest traditions of the Royal Australian Signals Corps and the Australian Army.

³⁹⁸ AWM 103 R445/1/1/ Part 1 Recommendations for honours and awards 1964-69, F47/57. [There is no record of this recommendation ever being approved or reason for no-approval – it is possible that the total of awards allowed for the year may have been passed – Long Tan appeared to take precedence].



20.1.5 Last of the Originals

On 8 June, the last of the Troop originals departed SVN. Not enough plaudits can be placed on the original group. They started with a bare piece of ground and on it they raised and built a home for the Troop for the next six years. The operational procedures they established remained for the duration and set a benchmark for all to follow.

20.1.6 HQ AFV Monthly Strength Return

The strength of 547 Sig Tp was listed in the June issue of the HQ AFV Monthly Report³⁹⁹ as Det 547 Sig Tp with an Establishment Strength of 29 and one OR as supplement⁴⁰⁰. The Posted Strength was 29:

UNIT	ESTD STR			SUPPLEMENT			ESTD & SUPPLEMENT			POSTED STR			ATTACHED			TOTAL		
	OFFR	OR's	TOTAL	OFFR	OR's	TOTAL	OFFR	OR's	TOTAL	OFFR	OR's	TOTAL	OFFR	OR's	TOTAL	OFFR	OR's	TOTAL
HQ AFV	39	29	68				17	17		13	13					13	13	
Det 547 Sig Tp	1	28	29	1	1		1	29	30	2	27	29				2	27	29
2 PAR	36	760	796	2	78	80	38	838	876	38	841	879				38	841	879

Figure 158: HQ AFV Monthly Strength Return for June 1967

20.1.7 Troop Manning

The following graphic shows the organisation of the Troop in mid-June.

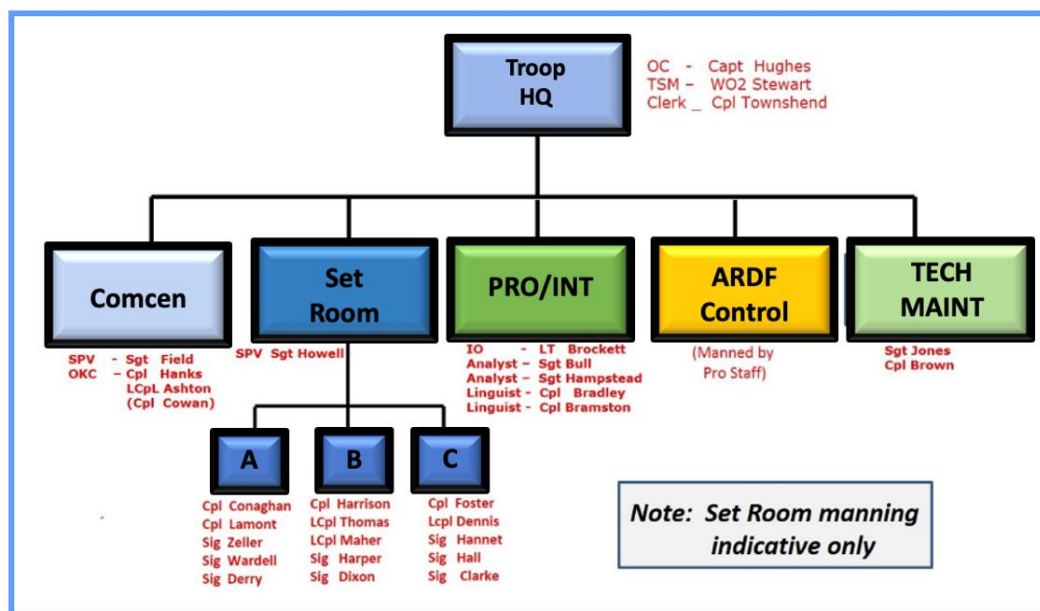


Figure 159: Troop Manning 30 June 1967⁴⁰¹

³⁹⁹ <http://www.awm.gov.au/collection/AWM98/R723/1/13/1/3/>

⁴⁰⁰ The authors have not been able to find what the Supplement is.

⁴⁰¹ Drawn by Bob Hartley from unit records. E&OE.



20.1.8 Set Room Shift System

As can be viewed in the Troop Manning graphic, the Set Room consisted of three watches. The shift system was based on a six-day cycle:

2 x Day watches (0800-1600)
 2 x Evening watches (1600–2300)
 2 x Administration days

Normally, one operator from the day watch was assigned to work the 'dog watch' (2300 – 0800). The watch on administration would be used on administrative tasks around the Troop area and supply additional operators to the set room. When the administration days fell on a Saturday or Sunday, the watch would normally have rest days and more than likely travel to the Vung Tau Rest and Recuperation (R&C) Centre.

20.1.9 ARDF Faults

On 19 June, AUM352 sent a signal to MI8⁴⁰² regarding ARDF equipment faults

[. First part redacted]

ECTED THAT WHOLE KIT SHOULD BE. RETURNED TO WRE FOR REJENAT [garbled]

2. HOWEVER, MAINT STAFF AND PROFESSIONAL PRIDE WON OUT AND EQPT IS NOW BACK TO OPERATING STANDARDS. NOTWITHSTANDING EQPT IS GETTING OLD, AND FAULT FINDING BECOMING MORE DIFFICULT. IN ORDER TO INSURE AGAINST THIS SITUATION REOCCURRING WOULD SUGGEST WRE SUPPORT IN CONVERTING THE +A+ MODEL (WHICH IS NEVER USED) TO A SECOND +B+ MODEL. THIS WOULD GUARANTEE CONTINUING SERVICE TO COMD, AT LEAST UNTIL ARRIVAL OF ENGINEERED MODELS.

3. WE HAVE CAREFULLY STUDIED THE DIFFERENT CIRCKITRY AND FIND THAT IF WRE COULD PRODUCE THE FOLLOWING, WE COULD DO THE CONVERSION HERE. WHERE CIRCKITRY NUMBERS ARE MENTIONED, THESE REFER TO TECHNICAL NOTE CVD (T) 145.

A. AERIAL HOUSING.

(1) COPPER BOX (MOUNTED IN FIBRE GLASS AERIAL HOUSING) CONTAINING

(A) DIODE SWITCHES AND AERIAL TUNING CIRCUIT (FIG 28)

(B) SWITCH WAVEFORM GENERATOR (FIG 29)

(2) MODEL +B+ LEAD AND PLUG

B. CONTROL BOX. COMPLETE NEW CONTROL BOX (MODEL +B+) WITH NEW

⁴⁰² DSD Declassified, 547 Sig Tp in Vietnam (tranche2).



TYPE AERIAL POD INPUT SOCKET.

C. PROVIDE FOLLOWING PARTS FOR A NEW POWER SUPPLY.

(1) DIN PLUG FOR AKAI TAPE RECORDER TOWER SUPPLY.

(2) QTY 3 ONE MICROFARAD 160 VOLT DC WORKING CONDENSERS.
WE CAN EFFECT THE OTHER MINOR CHANGES TO PROVIDE THE SECOND
POWER SUPPLY.

4. I WOULD APPRECIATE MI8/WRE DISCUSSING FEASABILITY OF THIS
PROPOSAL AND ADVISING RESULT AND INTENTIONS. IN ADDITION, THE
FOLLOWING ITEMS FOR RUSTRAK ARE URGENTLY REQUIRED TO REPLACE
BROKEN PARTS.

A. STYLUS FOR THE GALVANOMETER

B. SWINGING FRONT GATE.

5. OTHER ARDF PROBELMS.

A. WE HAVE QTY 2 RACAL R217 UNSVC EQPT HERE REQUIRING
CO Mplete LINE-UP. REQUEST APPROVAL TO BAKLOAD ITEMS TO (SIG REGT
AND BE REPLACED BY 2 FROM THE REGT).

B. FOR Mi8. ARE YOU IN A POSITION TO ANSWER MY SIGS 181 OF 310235Z
MAY 69 RE PAYMENT OF FLYING PAY. WE HAVE NOT RECEIVED ANY ADVICE
AS TO METHOD OF PAYMENT AND NONE OF OUR OVS ⁴⁰³HAVE RECEIVED IT,

6. AIRBORNE COLLECTION.

AM CURRENTLY IN PROCESS OF INSTALLING A HF POSITION IN SECOND
CESSNA FOR PURPOSE OF AIRBORNE COLLECTION, WE HAVE CAPTURED
SOI'S OF 33 REGT, GIVING DETAILS OF A [redacted], BUT THIS IS
UNWORKABLE FROM THIS STATION.

HOWEVER, WE HAVE NOTICED IN THE PAST THAT ARDF AIRCRAFT CAN HEAR
A TASK NOT READABLE ON THE GROUND, WOULD SUGGEST YOU GIVE SOME
THOUGHT TO POSSIBILITY OF AIRBORNE COLLECTION CONCURRENT WITH
ARDF OVS. SINCE ARDF OVR CANNOT SPARE TIME TO TAKE COPY, A
SECOND OVR COULD EFFECT COLLECTION. THIS COMPLETELY IMPRACTICAL
AT MOMENT AS CESSNA OF COURSE, BUT OFFERS ITSELF AS A DISTINCT
POSSIBILITY IN PORTERS. WOULD APPRECIATE YOUR VIEWS

⁴⁰³ Possibly OPS.



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CHAPTER 21 – JULY 1967

21.1 Personnel

21.1.1 Arrivals and Departures

There were no arrivals or departures in July.

21.1.2 Wayne Cowan

In June/July, 104 Sig Sqn lent Corporal Wayne Cowan⁴⁰⁴ (OKC) to the Troop to assist in the Comcen for a few months. Like Ray Hyland, although never officially posted to 547 Sig Tp, he was considered to be part of the Troop.

Wayne later wrote⁴⁰⁵:

After I had been in Nui Dat for about two months, I was given, on loan, to another signals unit there, 547 Signal Troop. This meant more hours, as this unit only had four operators to man the communications centre 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. We also had to cover periods when someone was sick or on rest and recreation leave, as well as do gun pit duty every third or fourth night, and various work parties improving the defences and carrying out maintenance in the camp area, so this meant something like a 10 or 11 hour day on the average. This is not really as bad as it seems though, as there was nothing else to do, and at least working kept us occupied.

21.1.3 Establishment Increase

21.1.3.1 Troop Request

On 18 July 1967, the Troop requested an establishment increase.

21.1.3.2 HQ 1ATF Recommended

HQ 1ATF supported the request and sent a letter to HQ AFV and Canberra. Extracts from the HQ 1 ATF Letter to support the increase are as follows⁴⁰⁶:

Proposal

It is proposed that the fifteen (15) Operator Signals (ECN 623) be increased to twenty (20). To retain the normal ration of NCOs/Sigs one corporal and four signalmen operators are required.

Justification

Since February 1967 the operating requirements in the Area of Responsibility for this unit have risen considerably, and unless operators are available to maintain cover on these additional commitments then valuable intelligence could be lost to 1 ATF.

Due to the increased effort required to maintain this unit's present support to 1 ATF, the Operator Signals personnel in this troop are employed in the Set Room for a minimum of 63 hours per week,

⁴⁰⁴ The AWM List shows Wayne serving with 104 Sig Sqn from 26/4/1967 to 21/3/1968. On departure from SVN, Wayne was posted to 7 Sig Regt.

⁴⁰⁵ Email to Barry Hampstead.

⁴⁰⁶ AWM: AWM 98 HQ AFV – Establishments – AFV – 547 Sig Tp.



with one rest day every 16 days if operating activity permits. This situation cannot continue without having an adverse effect upon the personnel concerned and any decrease in operating hours could reduce essential support at present given to the intelligence staff at HQ 1 ATF.

It is expected that additional commitments in a field of activity akin to present operating requirements will be given to this troop in the near future. Without an increase in operating personnel present support will be reduced in order to accept this new activity.

The increase in operators would also cover R&R, R&C and sickness.

An 'A' Type Troop consisting of 24 Operator Signals is the normal requirement to support a Task Force in the field. With the increase of 5 operators making a total of 20 Operator Signals Personnel, 547 Sig Tp will be able to function efficiently providing there is no further increase in responsibility in our area or additional direct support is given to other major units in SOUTH VIETNAM .

Conclusion

547 Sig Tp is an integral part of the 1 ATF intelligence gathering facility and at present is operating continuously under arduous conditions. It is essential that this unit be adequately staffed otherwise the high standard of operation presently being produced could be adversely affected and the value of this important source restricted.

S Graham, Brig, Comd

21.1.4 HQ AFV Monthly Strength Return

The HQ AFV strength Report for July remained the same as June⁴⁰⁷:

UNIT	ESTB. STR			SUPPLEMENT			ESTB & SUPPLEMENT			POSTED STR			ATTACHED			TOTAL		
	OFFR	OR	TOTAL	OFFR	OR	TOTAL	OFFR	OR	TOTAL	OFFR	OR	TOTAL	OFFR	OR	TOTAL	OFFR	OR	TOTAL
Det 547 Sig Tp	2	28	30	1	1		2	29	31	2	27	29				2	27	29

Figure 160: HQ AFV Strength Return for July

21.2 Administration

21.2.1 Unit Weapons

21.2.1.1 Authorised Weapon Holdings

On 17 July 1967, HQ 1 ATF issued R100/1/1 *Unit Weapons – Holdings and Entitlements*⁴⁰⁸. 547 Sig Tp is shown as:

⁴⁰⁷ <http://www.awm.gov.au/collection/AWM98/R723/1/13/1/3/>

⁴⁰⁸ AWM95, 1/4/50, RCDIG1028601



Annex L to HQ 1 ATF
R1000/1/1 dated 17 Jul 67

UNIT: 547 Sig Tp

UNIT WEAPONS - HOLDINGS AND ENTITLEMENTS

SERIAL	WEAPON TYPE	ENT	ITI	TOTAL	HOLD	REMARKS
1	SHOTGUN 12 GAUGE	N11	N11	N11	N11	
2	MACHINE CARBINE	8	N11	8	11	3 to be returned
3	RIFLE L1A1	18	N11	18	13	
4	RIFLE L2A 1	2	N11	2	2	
5	PISTOL 9MM	4	N11	4	4	
6	PISTOL SIG 1½ IN	N11	N11	N11	N11	
7	MG M60	N11	N11	N11	N11	
8	MG 30 CAL	N11	N11	N11	N11	
9	MG 50 CAL	N11	N11	N11	N11	
10	M79 40MM	N11	N11	N11	N11	
11	ROL CARL GUSTAFF	N11	N11	N11	N11	
12	RIFLE 106MM	N11	N11	N11	N11	
13	FLAME THROWER	N11	N11	N11	N11	
14	MORTAR 81MM	N11	N11	N11	N11	
15	MORTAR 4.2 IN	N11	N11	N11	N11	
16	L5 105MM	N11	N11	N11	N11	
17	M2A2 105MM	N11	N11	N11	N11	
18	LAUNCHER GRENADE	N11	N11	N11	N11	
<u>NOTES:</u>						

Figure 161: 547 Sig Tp Weapons Holding



21.2.1.2 Change of Weapons

Initially the eight machine carbines were the Owen Sub Machine Gun. These were replaced by the Australian Manufactured F1 Sub Machine Gun circa 1967. In 1967 the F1s were replaced by the Armalite M16⁴⁰⁹.

21.2.2 Equipment Variations

21.2.2.1 Tape Recorders

In July, the Troop also submitted several Requests for a Variation to Establishment (RVE) for equipment. One of the main items was a change of tape recorders from the Philips EL3549 to the A N/PNH-4 Recorder Reproducer.⁴¹⁰

⁴⁰⁹ Weapons:



⁴¹⁰ AWM 98 R985/2/73. Recorders:



21.3 104 Sig Sqn Layout and Areas of Responsibility

In July, the defensive areas of responsibility within the 104 Sig Sqn area changed slightly. The following sketch is an extract from the 104 Sig Sqn Standing Orders⁴¹¹:

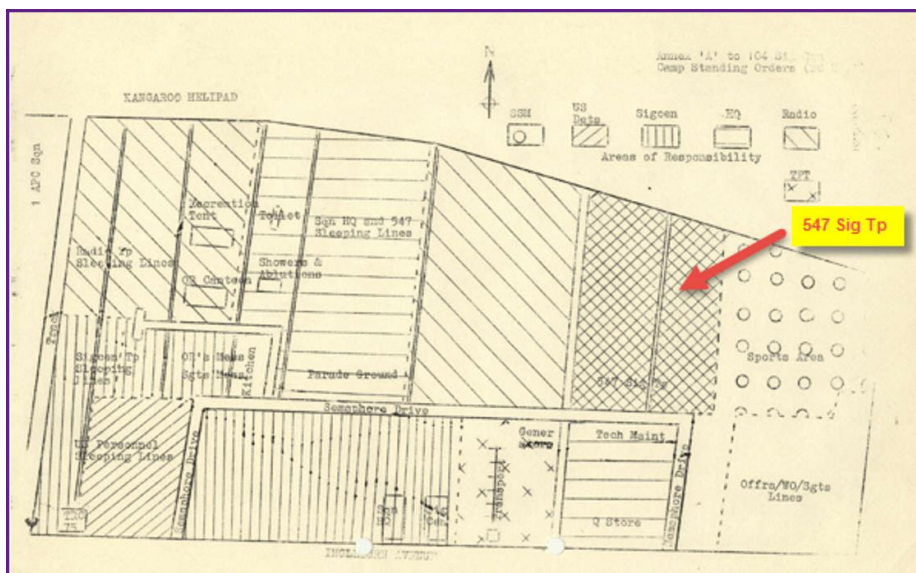


Figure 162: 104 Sig Sqn Areas of Responsibility

21.4 Operations

21.4.1 175 Radio Research Company

In July, the 175th RR Company was established at Bien Hoa to support II Field Force Victor (II FFV)⁴¹² and was the superior reporting authority for external 547 Sig Tp product⁴¹³.



Philips EL3549



Recorder, Reproducer Set AN/PNH-4

⁴¹¹ <http://static.awm.gov.au/images/collection/bundled/RCDIG1029853.pdf>

⁴¹² II Field Force, Vietnam (II FFV) became the largest army combat command in Vietnam. Prior to arriving in Vietnam from Fort Hood, Texas, the II FFV had been activated in January 1966 as a redesignation of the XXII Corps. II FFV had the mission of exercising operational control over U.S. and allied forces in the III Corps Tactical Zone, as well as rendering assistance as directed to the South Vietnamese forces there. It became the nucleus of the Third Regional Assistance Command (TRAC) on 30 April 1971.

⁴¹³ Extract from: <http://www.asalives.org/ASAONLINE/asarrcuv.htm>

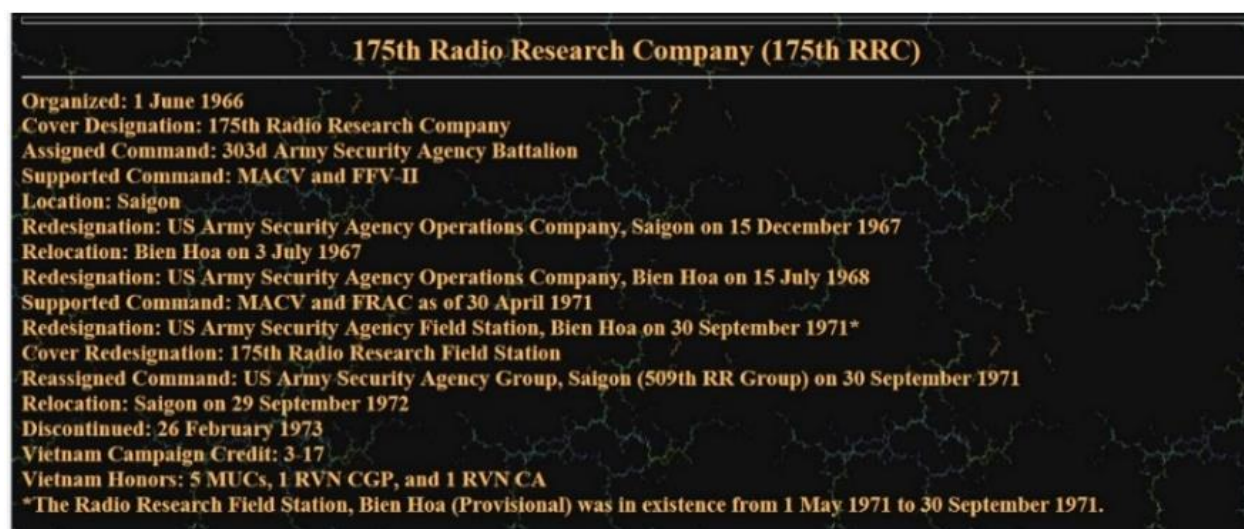


Figure 163: 175th RRC History

21.4.2 Operation PADDINGTON

The largest search and destroy operation mounted by the Australians to that point, 'Operation PADDINGTON' (9–15 July), was carried out in cooperation with American and South Vietnamese units based in Bien Hoa province, and targeted the Viet Cong 5th Division. Mounted on a large scale under American command and involving nearly 15,000 troops, Paddington failed to result in significant contact, in spite of the employment of well coordinated search techniques and blocking forces. A large number of Viet Cong camps, bunkers and storage areas were, however, uncovered and destroyed, resulting in significant disruption to the communist logistic system. Under the overall command of Major General George G. O'Connor, commander US 9th Infantry Division, allied forces for 'Operation Paddington' included the US 1st Brigade, 9th Infantry Division, the 2nd Battalion, US 47th Infantry Regiment (Mechanised), the US 11th Armored Cavalry Regiment, Task Force B Marine Corps (RVN) and the 1st Australian Task Force, as well as various supporting arms including two artillery batteries and more than a thousand armoured vehicles and helicopters. Viet Cong casualties included 92 killed, including 31 by 1 ATF for the loss of one Australian killed and another wounded. Nonetheless, the results were disappointing for the Australians, and the Viet Cong continued to elude them⁴¹⁴.

⁴¹⁴ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Battle_of_Suoi_Chau_Pha



21.4.3 USAF Fix Reports

The USAF ARDF After-Action Feedback on USAF Fixes Report⁴¹⁵ dated 4 July 1967 stated that artillery had been fired onto ARDF Fixes as follows:

DATE	LOCATION	# OF ROUNDS	CALIBER
9 JUN	YS 603932	2	175
	YS 621853	10	175
12 JUN	YS 600850	3	175
	YS 632874	4	175
	YS 596839	4	175
13 JUN	YS 600911	4	155
	YS 662861	4	175
	YS 611978	4	175
	YS 649901	4	175
	YS 700919	4	175
	YT 520029	12	155
	YS 621962	4	175
	YT 536023	12	155
	YS 613950	2	175
	YS 648958	3	175
15 JUN	YS 649855	4	175
	YS 609888	4	175
	YS 629831	4	175
	YS 620919	5	175
	YS 638935	2	175
	YS 598967	2	175
	YS 514913	2	175
16 JUN	YS 643846	8	175
	YS 621844	3	175
21 JUN	YS 598843	3	175
	YS 630903	6	175
2 JUN	YS 572812	3	175
	YS 636679	4	175
	YS 589870	4	175

Figure 164: USAF Fixes

21.4.4 303rd Bn Appreciation of Support Rendered

On 13 July 1967, the CO of 303RD RR Bn sent the following signal to CO [sic] 547th Sig Tp.: Information copies were sent to CO 509th Gp and CO 175th RR Co⁴¹⁶.

SUBJECT: APPRECIATION OF SUPPORT RENDERED

1. I CONSIDER THE TECHNICAL CONTRIBUTION PROVIDED BY YOUR UNIT, IN SUPPORT OF OPERATION PADDINGTON, OF THE HIGHEST CALIBER. [sic]
2. THE DATA PROVIDED TO [redacted] AND DIRNSA ON THE 5TH VC DIV SIGNIFICANTLY CONTRIBUTED TO THE SUPPORTED COMMANDS HAVING ALL AVAILABLE COMINT PRIOR TO AND DURING THE AFOREMENTIONED OPERATION.
3. THE COOPERATION EXTENDED, AND THE TECHNICAL PROFICIENCY EXHIBITED BY THE PERSONNEL OF YOUR COMMAND MAKE OUR PROFESSIONAL RELATIONSHIP BOTH A PRIVILEGE AND A PLEASURE.

⁴¹⁵ <http://ec47.com/storage/UserFileFolder/1F.pdf>

⁴¹⁶ ASD archives.



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CHAPTER 22 – AUGUST 1967

22.1 Personnel

22.1.1 Arrivals and Departures

There were two arrivals in August.

Arrivals

13 August

Signalman John Dean

23 August

Sergeant Ted Blacker

22.1.2 Employment Areas

Ted Blacker went into the ARDF Section and John Dean into the Set Room.

Note:

Ted Blacker had been selected by Major Cattnach to be the main operator and NCO in-charge of the new ARDF operations in the Troop. Prior to departure from Australia, Ted had undergone some very brief training with the new ARDF model at WRE



Figure 165: Ted Blacker with the ARDF Aircraft at the rear⁴¹⁷

⁴¹⁷ Photo Courtesy of Paul Talbert.



22.2 161 Recce Flt

The OC of 161 Recce Flt, Senior RAEME Maintenance Officer and fixed wing pilots were given a limited security briefing on the role of 547 Sig Tp and in particular the role and operation of the ARDF aircraft.

The Book *Possums and Bird Dogs*⁴¹⁸ reported:

The Cessnas were seldom allocated for direct support work because the aircraft needed an airfield rather than the rough landing zones that sufficed for Sioux operations. They had their own special functions and operations. Major Laurie Doyle recalled that the fixed wing element worked almost exclusively for the intelligence staff at the task force headquarters. 'We got our reconnaissance tasking every day, and it was pretty standardised. We did some new things, too, like providing a platform for airborne electronic intelligence missions.'

Signals intelligence operations

Planning for the Australian task force recognised the need for a specialist unit to provide signals intelligence (Sigint) in the same way that the Radio Research Unit at Bien Hoa fed intelligence to the 173rd Airborne Brigade. 547 Signals Troop arrived at Nui Dat on 15 June 1966. Its operations were highly classified and the source of the intelligence it provided was strictly 'need-to-know'. It took some time for 547 Troop to establish its bona fides. When it warned of the approach of a main force enemy headquarters in the days before Long Tan, its information was questioned because of the lack of corroborating intelligence from other sources. After that historic engagement, 547's contribution gained respect and became a vital factor in the planning of battalion operations.

22.2.1 Pilots

he fixed wing pilots at the time were Major Lawrence Doyle (handing over to) Major George Constable (OC), Captain John Wright, Lieutenant Kevin Peacock and 2nd Lieutenant David McFerran.

22.2.2 DSD Liaison Officer

On 4 August, Clive Luckman arrived in Vietnam as the DSD Liaison Officer (DSDLO) and was based at Bien Hoa with the 509th RR Gp and 175th RR Coy. He regularly visited the Troop in his US Army field dress. He also visited many other Sigint units and unassumingly made his points to those who counted. An expert in many fields, he showed talents befitting a diplomat as he eased open barriers hitherto closed to operational liaison. He became known as *that funny little U.S. Colonel with the Australian accent*.

During the TET offensive in January 1968, the unit [Bien Hoa] was subject to a heavy attack by the Viet Cong using mortars, machine guns, grenades and small arms fire. The attack continued for more than three days with several suicidal attempts to overrun the unit. Clive was the only non-combatant in the unit and though fearful of the outcome never lost the sense of humour which endeared him to his US Army comrades⁴¹⁹.

22.2.3 Visitors

On 23 August, Major Colin Cattnach (G2 MI8) visited the Troop again. This time he was accompanied by Zeb Jeffrey and Ray Malcolm, scientists from WRE.

⁴¹⁸ Nolan, Peter (2012-03-15). *Possums and Bird Dogs: Australian Army Aviation's 161 Reconnaissance Flight in South Vietnam* (Kindle Locations 1585-1608). Allen and Unwin. Kindle Edition.

⁴¹⁹ Extract from the Blue Book.



22.2.4 HQ AFV Monthly Strength Return

The HQ AFV Strength Report for August showed an increase in the Posted Strength to 30⁴²⁰:

UNIT	EQL STR			SUPPLEMENT			2. ESTB & SUPPLEMENT			POSTED STRENGTH			ATTACHED			TOTAL		
	OFFR	OR	TOTAL	OFFR	OR	TOTAL	OFFR	OR	TOTAL	OFFR	OR	TOTAL	OFFR	OR	TOTAL	OFFR	OR	TOTAL
DET 547 SIG TP	2	28	30	1	1		2	29	31	2	28	30				2	28	30

Figure 166: HQ AFV Strength Return for August 1967

22.3 Operations.

22.3.1 ARDF

22.3.1.1 ARDF Equipment

The visitors from Canberra and WRE, arrived with a new version of the ARDF equipment for installation and testing⁴²¹.

22.3.1.2 Fitting into Aircraft

The new equipment (still claimed to be experimental) was fitted into the Cessna aircraft and, with the assistance of 161 Recce Flt and the 146 Avn Co⁴²². After installation, detailed testing was conducted.

22.3.1.3 Results and Crew

The equipment immediately showed more promise and provided better results than the earlier model. Mike Conaghan joined Ted Blacker as part of the ARDF team. Full details of the Australian ARDF System throughout its development are shown at Annex I.

22.3.2 DSD VC Working Aid – Readable Traffic

Annex A to the Report⁴²³ included the period 1 Jun -31 Aug 67⁴²⁴:

LINK	PERIOD	TOTAL MSGS.	SUBJECT OF REPORTS/COMMENTS
303A-303C MIS HQ 5 LID U/I MIE	1 Jun-31 Aug 67	34	Continued to report on road convoys, air movement and "enemy" activities. It watched and reported on coastal shipping.

Figure 167: Readable Traffic #1

⁴²⁰ <http://www.awm.gov.au/collection/AWM98/R723/1/13/1/3/>

⁴²¹ See Annex I for details.

⁴²² 146 Avn Co operated a variety of ARDF aircraft out of Tan Son Nhut Airfield, Saigon.

⁴²³ DSD Declassified, 547 Sig Tp in Vietnam (tranche2).

⁴²⁴ Section of Report modified by author to show all headings and information.



LINK	PERIOD	TOTAL MSGS.	SUBJECT OF REPORTS/COMMENTS
303A-303D MIS HQ 5 LID U/I MIE	1 Jun-31 Aug 67	32	Road convoys along Highway 2 troop movements and air activity were reported on. Also reports of clashes. On 28 Jun 67, 303D reported that his "station is continually being cut off at the bridge here". Comment: Possible reference to land line comms.

Figure 168: Readable Traffic #2

LINK	PERIOD	TOTAL MSGS.	SUBJECT OF REPORTS/COMMENTS
303A-303C MIS HQ 5 LID U/I MIE	1 Jun-31 Aug 67	24	Reported on enemy activity, road convoys and air movements.

Figure 169: Readable Traffic #3

LINK	PERIOD	TOTAL MSGS.	SUBJECT OF REPORTS/COMMENTS
309A-309B MIS 275 Regt Sub MIE	1 Jun-31 Aug 67	3	Reports disclosed illness [malaria] and lack of rice at 309B.

Figure 170: Readable Traffic #4

LINK	PERIOD	TOTAL MSGS.	SUBJECT OF REPORTS/COMMENTS
4191A-4191B HQ 274 Regt HQ 3 Bn 274 Regt.	1 Jun-31 Aug 67	1	Request for ammo and weapons.
4191A-4191D HQ 274 Regt HQ 2 Bn 274 Regt.	1 Jun-31 Aug 67	7	Sitreps and reports on clashes with the "enemy". Several reflections of Allied sweep ops.
137A-137U/I MIS 274 Regt U/I Sub MIE	1 Jun-31 Aug 67	7	Reporting on clashes and allied ops including on 15 Jul 67 a landing by 2 bns and an arty unit at CAM MY [YS 4766]. A msg on 2 Jul 67 from 137A stated that "the observation station is to withdraw" ... "when withdrawing ... fill in all trenches and destroy all traces (of your presence)". (T1048).

Figure 171: Readable Traffic #5



CHAPTER 23 – SEPTEMBER 1967

23.1 Personnel

23.1.1 Arrivals and Departures

There were no arrivals or departures in September.

23.1.2 Establishment Increase

23.1.2.1 Establishment Increase Approval Expected

On 12 September DMI advised AUM350 and DSD that the proposed strength increase should be approved soon⁴²⁵:

S E C R E T COM INT CHANNELS

IT IS LIKELY THAT THE PROPOSED STRENGTH INCREASE OF 5 OPERATORS SIGNALS WILL BE APPROVED SHORTLY CMM THE INCREASE TO BE MET WITHIN THE PRESENT ARMY VIETNAM CEILING. HAVE RECOMMENDED THAT THE INCREASE CONSIST OF THREE CORPORALS AND TWO SIGMEN IN ORDER TO ANTICIPATE THE EFFECT OF THE OVERALL RANK STRUCTURE INCREASE FOR 7 SIG REGT, ANTICIPATING ACTION NOW REQUIRED TO PREPARE ADDITIONAL PERSONNEL FOR MOV,

23.1.2.2 Establishment Increase Approved

On 13 September, a signal was received from Army Canberra⁴²⁶ advising that approval had been given for an establishment increase:

SECRET SD62212 AMDT TO ESTB IV/44/1 (TW) 547 SIG TP. REF AFV LETTER R310/2/58 DATED 4 AUG 67 (TO AHQ ONLY).

ONE. APPROVAL IS GIVEN FOR THE ESTB TO BE AMENDED BY ADDING THREE CORPORAL AND TWO OPERATOR SIGNALS (ECN263) AS A THEATRE INCREMENT.

TWO. NO COMPENSATING REDUCTIONS ARE REQUIRED.

THREE. ESTB AMDT WILL FOLLOW

23.1.2.3 161 Recce Flt Fixed Wing Pilots

In September, Captain Bernie Forrest and 2nd Lieutenant Thomas Guivarra joined 161 Recce Flt as replacement fixed wing pilots.

23.1.2.4 HQ AFV Monthly Strength Return

The strength of 547 Sig Tp was listed in the September issue of HQ AFV Monthly Report⁴²⁷ as a new Establishment Strength of 35⁴²⁸, a Supplement of one and a Posted Strength of 31:

⁴²⁵ AWM: AWM 98 HQ AFV – Establishments – AFV – 547 Sig Tp.

⁴²⁶ AWM: AWM 98 HQ AFV – Establishments – AFV – 547 Sig Tp.

⁴²⁷ <http://www.awm.gov.au/collection/AWM98/R723/1/13/1/3/>

⁴²⁸ The increase in establishment was most probably due to the ARDF requirement.



UNIT	ESTD STRENGTH			SUPPLEMENT			ESTD & SUPPLEMENT			POSTED STRENGTH			ATTACHED			TOTAL		
	OFFR	OR	TOTAL	OFFR	OR	TOTAL	OFFR	OR	TOTAL	OFFR	OR	TOTAL	OFFR	OR	TOTAL	OFFR	OR	TOTAL
104 SIG SQN	6	121	127		11	11	6	132	138	5	128	133				5	128	133
DET 152 SIG SQN		17	17					17	17		16	16					16	16
DET 547 SIG TP	2	33	35		1	1	2	34	36	2	29	31				2	29	31

Figure 172: HQ AFV Strength Return for September 1967

23.2 Operations

23.2.1 ARDF Introduction into Service

After extensive trials, the new ARDF system⁴²⁹ was introduced into service in early September. Rod Harper joined Ted Blacker and Mike Conaghan in the flying team.



Figure 173: ARDF Cessna in Flight

⁴²⁹ See Annex I for full story.

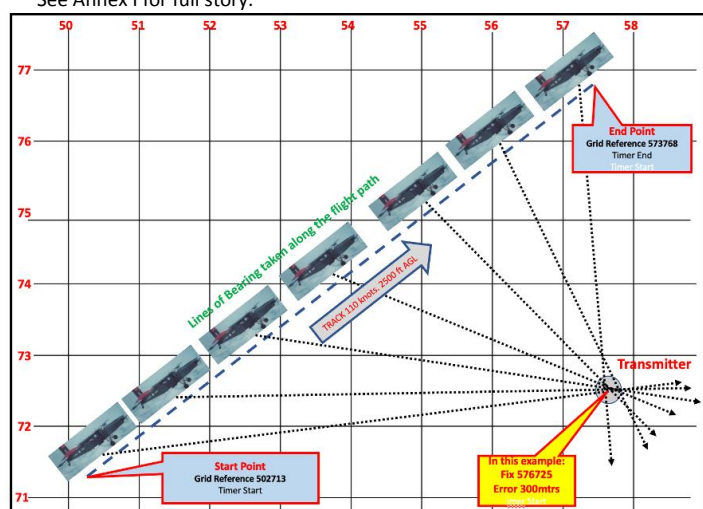




Figure 174: Original ARDF experimental equipment in Cessna – WRE

Note: At this point the thought of danger money for flying arose and naturally Major Cattanauch had already set an argument in motion. A few years later when flying pay came in it was made retrospective to the ARDF Operators.

Special tribute should be paid to the courage of the Troop's ARDF operators. They were mainly volunteers. Their war was dangerous and it was quite amazing that none ever became casualties. They flew at least once and often twice a day, every day of the year without respite, at low altitudes over enemy territory.

They always flew at low altitude, along straight paths within machine gun range with no manoeuvre or evasion allowed. Not only was enemy fire a constant hazard but on several occasions the aircraft received ground fire.

The ARDF aircraft flew in an environment where fast flying jet attack aircraft, flying close to the speed of sound, could easily have collided with them. Several near collisions did occur, sometimes being avoided by a matter of metres.

The Book *Possums and Bird Dogs*⁴³⁰ reported:

Airborne radio direction finding operations quickly became a major commitment for 161's fixed wing aircraft, with daily tasks requiring two sorties^[431] of two hours each. The aircraft carried specialist equipment and an operator from the Signals Troop. The flying itself was quite demanding, with accurate results depending largely on the pilot's ability to position his aircraft accurately and to fly a constant heading and airspeed while the operator was recording data. The degree of difficulty increased as the enemy became aware of the purpose of these sorties and began to implement countermeasures. For example, an enemy operator observing the aircraft could tell when it was starting a recording run and cease transmitting. Or an enemy commander might send his operator off to a site remote from the main force location to carry out transmissions and thus mislead the task

⁴³⁰ Nolan, Peter (2012-03-15). *Possums and Bird Dogs: Australian Army Aviation's 161 Reconnaissance Flight in South Vietnam* (Kindle Locations 1585-1608). Allen and Unwin. Kindle Edition.

⁴³¹ In this document sometimes referred to as a "mission" (Sortie = an operational flight by a single aircraft (as in a military operation))



force intelligence staff as to the location of the enemy headquarters. It became very much a cat and mouse affair. As noted, 547's operations were very hush-hush. However, while the need for security was recognised, it was not possible to conceal from 161's technical personnel the purpose of the intelligence-gathering sorties. The Cessnas had to be fitted with the direction finding equipment, including the externally visible, wheel-shaped housing of the antenna. Newcomers to 161 would raise their eyebrows, but would be warned that the topic was off limits by a finger raised to the lips, rolling eyeballs and a hissed warning. The 547 sorties thus became commonly known as 'shush' missions.

Security requirements meant that 547 operators were largely unrecognised for their role. They deserved high commendation for their work and the risks they shared with the Possums who flew them.

23.2.2 No Fun for a Scientist

Zeb found out that lying down on his bunk could be just as dangerous as flying. After returning from one sortie he discovered a three foot cobra under his sheets. He quickly despatched it with his machete.

23.2.3 ARDF Control Equipment

On 23 September, the Troop submitted a RVE⁴³² for additional equipment that included: two AN/VRC-46s⁴³³ to control local ARDF operations, a AN/PRC64⁴³⁴ for use as a training and calibration beacon, Akai XV Tape Recorders⁴³⁵ for use in the ARDF Aircraft and Set Room. And RC-292 Antennas⁴³⁶ for communication to the ARDF Aircraft.

⁴³² AWM 98 R985/2/73.

⁴³³ See Footnote 297 above. AN/RC46 similar to VRC-47 with slightly different components.

⁴³⁴ The AN/PRC-64 is a transistorised HF transmitter receiver developed for US Special Forces. The transmitter and receiver are independent, and each have 4 channels, set by individual crystals. The frequency coverage is 2.2 to 6 MHz. The transmitter can produce 5 watts output on CW, and 1.5 watts output on AM. The power is provided by a single plug in dry battery, type BA1509. There is no provision for external power.



⁴³⁵ Akai XV Tape Recorder. Akai Tape Recorders were fitted in the ARDF system. Additional recorders were required to play back any recorded material.



⁴³⁶ See Footnote 377.



23.2.4 Station Set-up

The VRC-46s were to be fitted as a dual station. One RT-524 (Transmitter/Receiver) was used on the local link to the Cessna aircraft and the other on the US ARDF support net. Both stations were to be fitted with a TSEC/KY-8 or TSEC/KY-38⁴³⁷ for secure voice transmission.

23.2.5 ARDF Trial Results

On 24 September, DSD sent a signal to AUSLO(W)⁴³⁸ regarding the ARDF Trials

*S E C R E T COMINT CHANNELS
ARDF.
THANKS YOUR 221738.⁴³⁹*

2. SHORT ANSWER TO PARA 2 IS THAT NO (R) NO DETAILS HAVE BEEN PUBLISHED. EQUIPMENT IS STILL HIGHLY EXPERIMENTAL AND UNDOUBTEDLY WILL BE SUBJECT TO SEVERAL MODIFICATIONS. INDEED, ONE OF THE REASONS FOR THE OPERATIONAL TRIALS IS TO DETERMINE JUST WHAT SORT OF MODS WILL BE NECESSARY.

3. METHOD OF OPERATION [corrupt] WILL BE TAILORED TO MEET

[much redaction]

DONE AND WE WILL THEN SPECIFY PROCEDURES TO BE EMPLOYED.

4. AIRCRAFT DOES NOT (R) NOT HAVE ANY SOPHISTICATED NAVAIDS FITTED SO VJSUAL FLYI NG—CONDITIONS ARE REQUIRED.

5. EQUIPMENT CONSISTS OF TWO FERRITE ROD AERIALS (TUNEABLE) BOTH MOUNTED IN SAME PLANE BUT AT APPROX SIXTY DEGREES TO EACH OTHER. AERIALS ARE CONTAINED IN A +POD+ WHICH PROJECTS BELOW FUSELAGE (RETRACTABLE FOR LANDING/TAKE OFF) AND ROTATE WITHIN +POD + . OPERATOR TUNES SIGNAL ON RACAL RA-217 RX THEN ROTATES AERIAL UNTIL EQUAL AMPLITUDE (DISPLAYED ON CRT) OBTAINED FROM EACH OF THE TWO AERIALS, MAXIMUM SIGNAL RATHER THAN NULL IS USED. OBVIOUSLY MORE COMPLICATED THAN ABOVE (E.G. ONE HAS TO ENSURE THAT BOTH AERIALS HAVE EXACTLY THE SAME SENS ITI VITY/PICK UP) BUT THE ABOVE WILL PROBABLY BE SUFFICIENT FOR TIME BEING.

4. MUST AGAIN STRESS THAT IT IS EXPERIMENTAL AND COULD BE RADICALLY ALTERED AFTER (OR DURING) TRIALS.

⁴³⁷ See Footnote 286 above for KY-8. TSEC/KY-38 was a half-duplex manpack voice encryption device, developed by the United States National Security Agency (NSA) around 1964. The device is part of the NESTOR family of speech encryption devices. It is compatible with the KY-8 vehicular unit and the KY-28 aircraft unit. In late 1968, the ARDF Operator in the aircraft had a PRC-77 (updated PRC-25) with KY-38 to communicate with ARDF C control.



⁴³⁸ DSD Declassified, 547 Sig Tp in Vietnam (tranche2).

⁴³⁹ Not located.



23.3 Electronic Warfare

On 7 September HQ 104 Sig Sqn issued a paper relating to VC/NVA Electronic Warfare⁴⁴⁰ Capability⁴⁴¹.

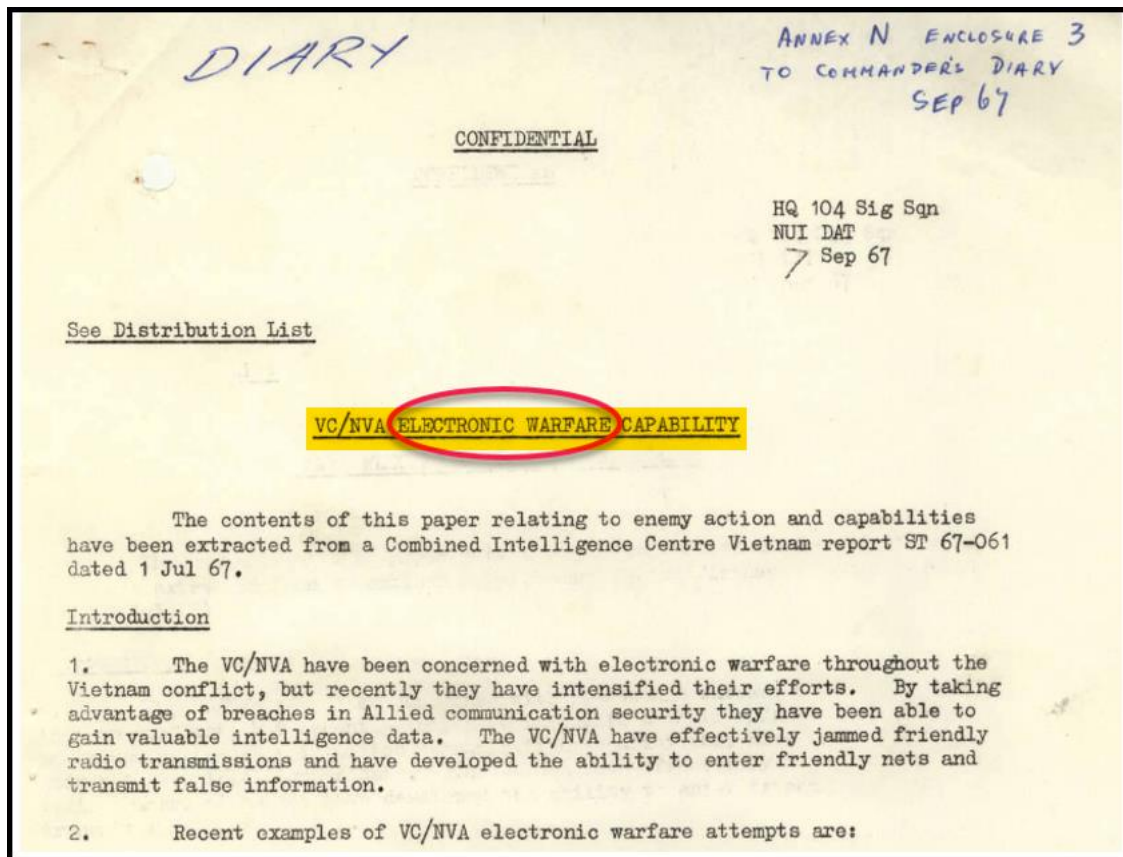


Figure 175: 104 Sig Sqn Diary Extract

⁴⁴⁰ Note use of the term Electronic Warfare.

⁴⁴¹ AWM95 6/2/6 104 Sig Sqn Commanders Diary 1 – 31 Sept 67.



CHAPTER 24 – OCTOBER 1967

24.1 Personnel

24.1.1 Arrivals and Departures

There was only one change to Troop manning in October.

Arrival

11 October

Warrant Officer Jack Parker

Departure

31 October

Warrant Officer Graham Stewart

24.1.2 Troop Sergeant Major Handover

The handover of TSM duties from Graham Stewart to Jack Parker was completed.



Figure 176: Bob Howell and Jack Parker

24.1.3 Visitors

In late October, the CO of 7 Sig Regt, Lieutenant Colonel Reg Williams, and the OC of 121 Sig Sqn (Singapore), Major Peter Taylor, visited the Troop⁴⁴². The officers were en-route from Singapore to Hong Kong.

Peter succumbed to the temptation to taste the local 33 Brand beer, better known as Ba Muoi Ba. He blamed this brew for his subsequent weeks of illness.

⁴⁴²Sic – taken from Blue Book - Not mentioned in Monthly Report.



The Monthly Report also shows that on 18/21 October Mr Williams [DSD] and Mr Luckman [DSDLO] visited the unit.

Officers from 335 RRCoy, 509 RR Gp and 303 RR Bn visited on 30 Oct as part of the planning for 'Operation Santa Fe'⁴⁴³.

24.1.4 Increase to Manning

The CO brought the news that the Troop was soon to receive an increase of another five Op Sigs.

24.1.5 HQ AFV Monthly Strength Return

The strength of 547 Sig Tp was listed in the October issue of HQ AFV Monthly Report⁴⁴⁴ as an Establishment Strength of 35, a Supplement of one, and a Posted Strength of 32:

UNIT (a)	ESTB STR			SUPPLEMENT			ESTB & SUPPLEMENT			POSTED STRENGTH			ATTACHED			TOTAL		
	OFFR (b)	OR (c)	TOTAL (d)	OFFR (e)	OR (f)	TOTAL (g)	OFFR (h)	OR (i)	TOTAL (j)	OFFR (k)	OR (l)	TOTAL (m)	OFFR (n)	OR (o)	TOTAL (p)	OFFR (q)	OR (r)	TOTAL (s)
DRT 547 SIG TP	2	33	35	1	1	2	34	36	2	30	32					2	30	32

Figure 177: HQ AFV Monthly Strength return for October 1967

24.2 Operations

24.2.1 Troop Briefings

In October, Jim Brockett started giving weekly briefings on intelligence matters and allied operations to the Troop. They were supplemented by talks on other pertinent matters. Barry Hampstead gave an 'enthraling' lecture on incendiaries and explosives. This was most appropriate in view of the incendiaries placed around cryptographic equipment and the requirement to continually destroy classified matter.

24.2.2 ARDF Trials and Introduction into Service

Zeb Jefferies completed introducing the new ARDF equipment into service and departed for Australia on 17 October.

⁴⁴³ **Operation Santa Fe** was a security operation to be conducted by the US 1st Bde 9th Inf Div and 1ATF and the ARVN 18th Division against the May Tao Secret from 3 November 1967 to 5 January 1968. The operational plan was to destroy the VC 5th Div base in the May Tao Secret Zone and to reopen and secure a 60km stretch of highway 1 from Xuan Loc to the II Corps boundary that had been closed by VC activity since 1962

⁴⁴⁴ <http://www.awm.gov.au/collection/AWM98/R723/1/13/2/>



24.2.3 547 Sig Tp Progress Report for 1-31 Oct 67

The 547 Sig Tp Progress Report for 1-31 Oct 67⁴⁴⁵ stated:

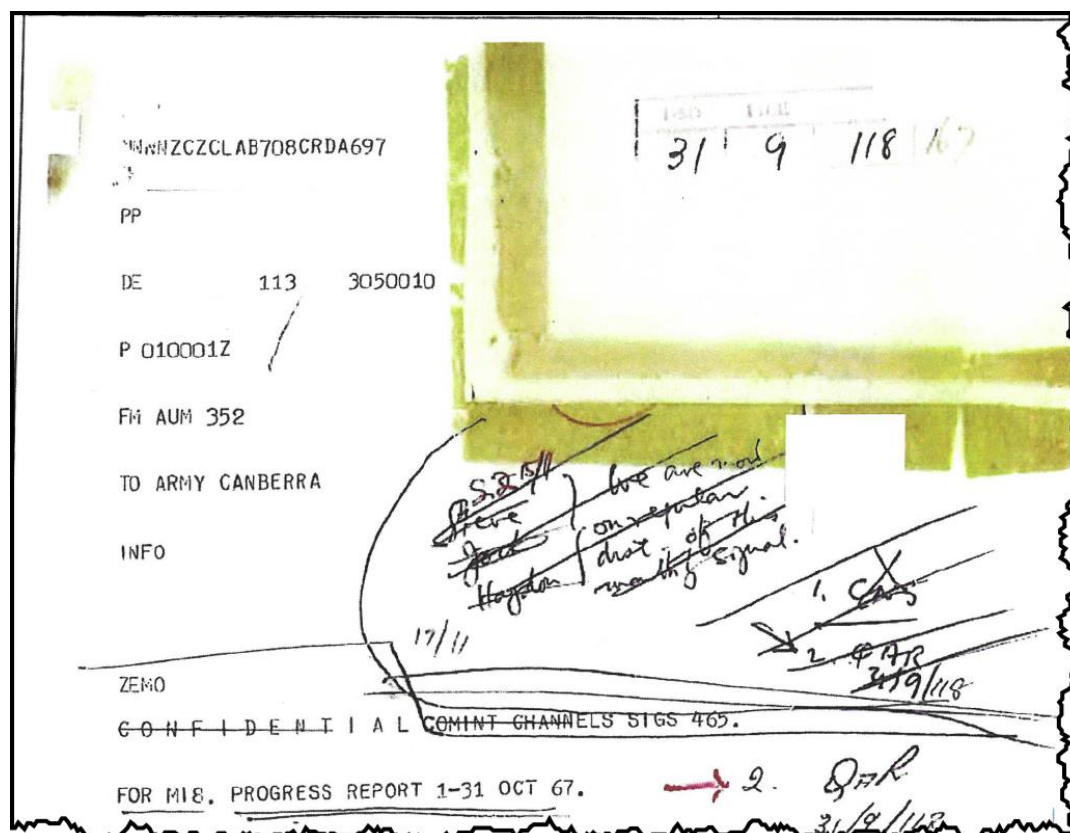


Figure 178: AUM 352 Progress Report 1-31 Oct 67⁴⁴⁶

1. SET ROOM
ALFA POSITIONS 3X15 3/4 HR DPM
 4X9 1/4 HR DPM
 1X8 1/2 HR DPM
 1X10 1/2 HR DPM ARDF TIP OFF ⁴⁴⁷

BRAVO. WATCH HOURS 50 HRS PER WEEK

2. TASKING
ALFA. **DUE TO SEVERAL WEEKS OF INACTIVITY ON KNOWN TASKS** AND TO UTILISE THE SET TIME TO ITS FULL ADVANTAGE, ACTIVE PRIORITY COVER HAS BEEN PLACED ON 21/2 POSITIONS WHILE THE REMAINING POSITIONS ARE USED FOR SEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT AND A RECOVERY PROGRAMME. ALSO DUE TO THIS MINIMUM OF VC RADIO COMMUNICATIONS [redacted] AND USM 626 HAVE BEEN INFORMED THAT AUM 352 CAN ASSIST THE GENERAL SIGINT EFFORT BY ACCEPTING OUT OF AREA COVER UNTIL THERE HAS BEEN A REACTIVATION OF 5 LID RADIO COMMUNICATIONS

⁴⁴⁵ Documents received from ASD December 2015. and now available at <https://www.asd.gov.au/about/history/declassified>.

⁴⁴⁶ Note: Reports still only being sent to MI8 and then passed on to DSD.

⁴⁴⁷ These figures would equate roughly to: 7 intercept positions manned 0800 – 1700, 3 positions manned 1700 – 2400, 1 position 2400 – 0800 and one position for ARDF control 0800 – 1700 (times approximate).



*BRAVO. COVER*⁴⁴⁸

- | | |
|------------------------------|---------------|
| 1. VCMB 05407 | 5. VCMB05422 |
| 2. VCMB 05423 ⁴⁴⁹ | 6. VCMB N4558 |
| 3. VCMB 05429 | 7. VCMB J0037 |
| 4. VCMB 05409 | 8. VCMB Y9001 |

SUPPLEMENTARY VCMB 00605, VCMB 009815, VCMB 00808 05411
DEVELOPMENT DEV 139, 086,145, 144

SEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT

1. 5000-5250 KCS
2. 5250-5500 KCS
3. 5500-5750 KCS
4. 5750-6000 KCS

3. ARDF

US DIRECT SUPPORT AIRCRAFT WAS WITHDRAWN ON 18 OCT AND WAS RETURNED TO SUPPORT COMBINED AUST/US OPERATION SANTE FE

*BRAVO. AUST ARDF*⁴⁵⁰

ALFA. HOURS FLOWN DAYLIGHT 97 NIGHT 15
GRADINGS GOOD 16 FAIR 25 POOR 12
FIXES NIGHT 3
GRADINGS FAIR 3
BEACON TARGETS 30
GOOD 20 FAIR 10

4. SIG CENTRE

OUTAGES FOR OCTOBER WERE 3.5 PERCENT

5. EQUIPMENT

RVE3/671 APPROVED. RVES 4 THROUGH TO 8 INCLUSIVE NOT YET APPROVED.

6. NEW WORKS PROJECT

ALFA. INSTALLATION OF CEILING FANS IN THE OPERATIONS BUILDING HAS BEEN APPROVED AND WOK WILL COMMENCE ON RECEIPT OF FANS FROM ORDNANCE.
BRAVO. NEW BUILDING CONSTRUCTION APPROVED. DUE TO SHORTAGE OF MATERIAL AND HIGHER BUILDING PRIORITIES WORK MAY NOT START BEFORE DECEMBER.

7. ADMINISTRATION

ALFA. VISITORS

6/7 OCT MR LUCKMAN ROUTINE
18/21 OCT MR WILLIAMS, MR LUCKMAN
23/24 OCT MAJ HOLAWAY [REDACTED], MR C OWINGS [REDACTED]
(DETAILED EXAMINATION OF ARDF SYSTEM AND EQUIPMENT)
19 OCT MAJ CAREY SO SIGS AFV
24 OCT MAJ TRUMAN [CORRUPTED]
30 OCT LT MCCAULEY 335 RR COY,
CAPT BROWN 509 GROUP,
CAPT MELANON 303 RR BN
(PLANNING FOR OPERATION SANTA FE)

BRAVO. LEAVE R&R

18/25 OCT SGT. HAMSTEAD [sic] AUST
26/31 OCT SGT. BULL SPORE
SGT. HOWELL SPORE

⁴⁴⁸ The authors have attempted to find out the names of units the notations served from many ex-Troop Operators. Unfortunately, memories are blank. Possibilities: VCMB05437 HQ 274 VC Regt to 3 Battalions, VCMB05423 HQ VC 5 Inf Div to subordinates.

⁴⁴⁹ HQ Gp RSG84 – to 5 subordinates.

⁴⁵⁰ It is unfortunate that there is no actual list of fixes for the month. It is not known when this commenced. ASD documents only have reports for the later stages of the deployment.



31/4 HOV SGT. JONES SPORE
R&C
7/9 OCT SIG CLARKE
10/12 OCT SIG HALL
13/15 OCT LCPL CONAGHAN
LCPL TOWNSEND

CHARLIE. HOSPITALISATION
DELTA. PROMOTION.
CPL BRADLEY TO T/SGT,
FOXTROT. I RETENTION OF POSTING.
LCPL MAHERS APPLICATION WAS APPROVED MEMBER TO RTA NO LATER
THAN 15 DEC
GOLF. MOVEMENT.
MARCHED IN W02 J.P. PARKER 11 OCT
MARCHED OUT W02 G.G. STEWART 31 OCT

24.2.4 Rod Harper's Joy

There are many stories that exemplified the excellence of the Op Sig. One event by Rod Harper typifies how operators approached their work:

In between his normal ARDF tasking duties. Rod was doing some Search and Development (continually searching the HF band for new NVA/VC transmissions) when he tuned in to a Vietnamese plain language transmission that sounded different from the norm.

The use of plain language by any NVA/VC target was extremely rare and there were many Army of the Republic of Vietnam (ARVN) in the HF band transmitting in plain language. He continued to log the transmission while at the same time searching on his second receiver.

Fortunately, he came across a station asking for corrections to text. He had recovered the complete communications link.

Within minutes, the operating procedures used by the target made it apparent that he had located a new VC target.

It transpired that the traffic was being transmitted in plain language because an American patrol was very close to the VC position and they simply didn't have time for encrypting the text.

Just another day at the office



Figure 179: Rod Harper



24.2.5 Nui Dat on Stand-To⁴⁵¹

The book *The Official History of Australia's Involvement in South East Asian Conflicts 1948-1975*, records a story about Nui Dat being placed on stand-to for five days was related.⁴⁵²

... Sigint findings were not infallible though. When Captain R.J. Brockett, the principal linguist in the unit in 1967, was in Hong Kong, a message was intercepted and deciphered by the troop in August or September. On translation, it seemed to indicate that Viet Cong forces were moving to attack the task force area. Brigadier Graham ordered a 'Red Alert'. For five days the units 'stood to' each night and observed other precautionary measures. When Brockett returned he re-translated the message to read, 'We are moving towards the area where we ambushed the Australians'. That ambush had occurred about a month previously. When the new translation was taken to Graham he chuckled and said, 'It was a good training exercise.' The Red Alert was cancelled ...

The above differs from Troop members' recollection of the event.

Barry Hampstead's account:

Sergeants John Bull (Cryptographer) and Bob Howell (Set Room Supervisor) took off on R & R to Singapore a week after I got back from Australia (25 October 1967) and at the same time, Captain R.J. (Dave) Brockett decided it was time that he went for a visit with the American 303rd Radio Research battalion at Long Binh. It was late on the Sunday after their departure when we became aware that several Dust Off choppers had landed at the Heli Pad which serviced the Field Hospital located not far from 547's compound. Captain Bill Hughes arrived soon after and advised that an Infantry patrol had come under heavy fire during one of their operations in the Nui Thi Vai area about 8km to the north west of the Task Force. It was a measure of how blasé we had become because the arrival of the choppers had hardly raised more than passing interest. Then, on the following Tuesday afternoon, a message was intercepted in the set room (by Corporal Bob Maher) and the code broken and translated by Corporal Peter Bradley. Peter's translation indicated that the radio station serving the VC unit involved in Sunday's contact had made: "We are going to attack the Australians." That grabbed our attention. A hard (typed) copy was produced and I took the message together with the ARDF 'fix' - obtained at the time of the transmission - to the GSO2 (Int) (Task Force Intelligence Officer), Major Jim Furner. Jim Furner was great value and very popular with all at 547 Sig Tp because of his down to earth manner. He often used to visit our compound and it was not unusual for us to see him heading down through the Task Force area in his green trousers and white singlet - no hat and no weapon - just so that he could spend time with 'his' operators and the TA staff - keeping his finger on the pulse, so to speak.

When I passed Peter's translation to Major Furner he didn't get excited. He had a good look at the message, a long look at his maps and then commented that the Task Force might have to fire a few guns at the vicinity of the ARDF 'fix'. I then left his office and returned to 547.

It was only shortly after my return that I was summoned to the Comcen. The Comcen operator informed me that Dave Brockett was on the other end of the teleprinter link at Long Binh and needed to 'speak' to me about 'the message' which, of course, had been transmitted in its raw (encrypted) form to all and sundry on the Sigint network as soon as we got it from the set room. Dave proceeded to advise me (through a teleprinter operator) that the message did not translate to "we are going to attack the Australians" BUT to "we are going to where we attacked the Australians" which any reader will agree is significantly different. He then told me that I should have supervised Peter during his translation to

⁴⁵¹ Stand-To. Stand-To is the military term for the state of readiness for action or attack. In 1 ATF it meant that all bunkers and weapon pits had to be fully manned, and blackout and noise conditions enforced.

⁴⁵² *The Official History of Australia's Involvement in South East Asian Conflicts 1948-1975* by Ian McNeill and Ashley Ekins: *On the Offensive* Part 1: A province for a battlefield: Phuoc Tuy Province, 1967, page 62.



which I replied along the lines of it being rather difficult as I was neither a cryptographer nor a linguist. Ignoring my sarcasm he instructed that I was to immediately contact Major Furner and advise him of the situation. I signed off as soon as possible and with Peter Bradley in tow, returned to Major Furner's office. Jim Furner was unperturbed and called one of the Task Force Intelligence Unit linguists to view Peter's translation. The linguist's comments were along the lines of, "It could be either," such were the vagaries of the Vietnamese language. Certainly, the Major could have made a real song and dance about things but instead he elected to take no chances and decided to leave the Task Force on the Stand To he had recommended to the Task Force Commander (Brigadier Graham) for that evening. All he said to us was, "Not to worry. It'll be good practice for them." Peter and I returned to 547 somewhat chastened but consoled by the thought that we had done something about what was considered to have been a threat. The Task Force had a night without beer and movies and was probably better for it. For the record, the guns were fired and there were no out-of-the-ordinary VC activities that evening.

24.2.6 VC Operators

At times the Troop intercept operators had admiration for the enemy radio operators.

Barry Hampstead related:

Certainly, we found that artillery and B-52 strikes didn't seem to affect the radio stations too much. This was evidenced by Mike Conaghan's experience one day when his pilot was advised that a B-52 strike was about to take place in their area of operations. Mike recalls that the pilot left the area but continued to fly outside the strike zone until such time as the all clear was given. Mike's target at the time was a military intelligence element which had been designated 303E and which was due to 'sked' at 3pm local time. 303E's last known location was within the area of the strike and when 3pm came and went with nothing heard of the VC station we began to think that maybe, for once, the Yanks had had some success. It was really no great surprise when about 5 minutes after the attack finished, 303E came up on the air, first with a series of V's followed by his call signs and contact procedures. I am sure I wasn't the only one who had a grudging admiration for the skills of the Viet Cong tunnel builders who had provided the protection which allowed the VC operator to get back on the job so soon. We generally agreed that the operator must have been a cool character as well. Mike 'fixed' the transmitter in basically the same location as previously held so there was no doubt the 303E had been right in the line of fire.

The Commander 1 ATF later wrote:

The enemy was largely inhibited from widespread use of radio by his knowledge that our intercept capability and technical expertise in the difficult field of communications intelligence were just too good to take risks with.

Even when the enemy messages could not be decoded, invaluable information was still obtained from them. Task Force Signalmen were tireless in their ingenuity in keeping one jump at least ahead of the opposite numbers.

Major General S. C. Graham, AO, DSO, OBE, MC. (Commander January 1967 to October 1967)



24.2.7 Confirmation of AUM 52 Results

On 11 October, DMI (MI8) sent a signal to AUM352 and DSD on a study of (possibly Sigint Reports) to collateral assessment⁴⁵³:

*S E C R E T SAVIN
FROM MI8.
REF A 2/G10/VCM/T1018-66
REF D 2/G10/VCM/T1019-66
REF C 2/G10/VCM/T1020-66
KEF d 2/G10/VCM/R259-66
REF E 2/G10/VCM/R261-66.*

*BASED ON STUDY OF REFERENCE SIGNALS AND COLLATIERAL INFORMATION DESK
MADE THE FOLLOWING ASSESSMENT TO 110200Z.*

ONE.

*ORIGINAL MESSAGES FROM RAD 137 BRAVO TO 137 ALPHA REFS A AND B
INDICATED VC INTEREST IN NUI TH VAI AND NUI ONG TRINH AREA.
THESE INTERCEPTS TENDED TO CONFIRM 7 OCT MOVE OF 274 REGT TO
WESTERN PHUOC TUY (REF D) AND IT WAS FELT THAT RAD 137 ALPHA WOULD
SOON BE RELOCATED BY ARDF IN VICINITY OF NEW 274 LOCATION. THIS HAS
NOW OCCURRED IN REF E ALTHOUGH THE LOCATION OF RAD 137 ALPHA AS
BEING QUOTE 6 KM WNW OF 274 REGT UNQUOTE HAS BEEN QUERIED
SEPARATELY.*

TWO.

REGARDING REF C THE FOLLOWING POINTS APPEAR VALID.

*ALPHA. MENTION OF QUOTE COMMANDOS UNQUOTE (AS ALSO IN REF A) TIES
IN WITH KNOWN DEPLOYMENT OF SAS PATROLS AT THE TIME SPECIFIED.*

*BRAVO. DESCRIPTION OF AUST FORCES LOCATIONS AT QUOTE LO CAT LON AND
LO CAT NHO UNQUOTE SUGGEST NICKNAMES FOR TERRAIN POINTS RATHER
THAN PROPER names OF KNOWN VILLAGES/HAMLETS ETC. HQ 5 RAR, D COY
AMD C COY ON NIGHT 7/8 OCT WERE DISPERSED ON TWO FEATURES IN SQUARE
YS2869, POSSIBLY ASSOCIATED WITH FOREGOING.*

*CHARLIE. ALTHOUGH TANKS ARF MENTIONED IT SEEMED LIKELY THAT ARMoured
VEHICLES WERE MEANT, FITTING IN WITH 5 RAR USE OF APCs DURING
PERIOD.*

*DELTA. THE REFERENCE TO QUOTE C5 BASE UNQUOTE IN CONNECTION WITH
THE PROXIMITY OF COMMANDOS ON 4 OCT, SIZE OF BASE AND NUMBERS OF
PORTERS REQUIRED, AND DISTANCE OF ONE KILOMETRE FROM OUR FORCES
(BRAVO ABOVE) INDICATES THAT C5 WAS THE BASE DISCOVERED BY C COY
5 RAR AT YS 283712 ON 9 OCT.*

THREE.

*FROM FOREGOING IT APPEARS CERTAIN THAT RAD 137 BRAVO IS LOCATED
IN THE THI VAI/LONG TRINH AREA ALTHOUGH NOT YET ISOLATED BY ARDF.*

FOUR.

⁴⁵³ AWM: AWM 98 HQ AFV – Establishments – AFV – 547 Sig Tp.



IT CANNOT YET BE ASCERTAINED WHETHER OR NOT THESE 274 REGT ELEMENTS WILL WITHDRAW FROM THE SCENE HAVING NOW LOST THE C5 BASE. HOWEVER IT SEEMS LIKELY THAT 274 REGT MUST HAVE INTENDED SURVEILLANCE AND PROBABLY FOLLOW-UP ACTION AGAINST ROUTE 15 TRAFFIC OTHERWISE RAD 137 BRAVO WOULD NOT HAVE BEEN IN A POSITION TO REPORT ON ACTIVITIES IN THE AREA IN THE FIRST PLACE. THUS IT IS POSSIBLE THAT 274 REGT MAY CLOSE ON ROUTE 15 NOW THAT 5 RAR ELEMENTS HAVE DEPLOYED OFF THE HILLS.

FIVE

FIRST EVIDENCE OF THE ENEMY'S INTENDED COURSE OF ACTION IS LIKELY TO COME FROM SIGINT AND IF ACTION AGAINST ROUTE 15 IS PLANNED WE CAN EXPECT TO SEE MORE TRAFFIC FROM RADS 137 ALPHA AND BRAVO AND THE POSSIBLE RE-EMERGENCE OF 5 VC DIV OP RAD 196 BRAVO. WE ARE WATCHING THIS SITUATION CAREFULLY AND WILL BE PARTICULARLY INTERESTED TO SEE THE NEXT ARDF LOCATION RAD 137 BRAVO.

DESK GRATEFUL FOR COMMENTS FROM BOTH ADDRESSES ON ASSESSMENT CLN IN PARTICULAR COMMENTS FROM 1TF ON ABOVE ASSESSMENT AND IDEAS CONTAINED IN TWO ALPHA TO DELTA INCLUDING DIFFERENCES IN 1TF ASSESSMENT WILL BE APPRECIATED. DM I WOULD APPRECIATE ANY COMMENTS BY COMD 1TF ON ABOVE ASSESSMENT

24.3 US Artillery and Airstrikes against Fixes

As mentioned in Paragraph 9.3.1 some US Commanders had ordered that a minimum of three rounds of heavy artillery be placed on each [fix] location⁴⁵⁴, and, if the target is of known tactical significance, an immediate tactical airstrike against the location. In a document dated 17 Nov 67⁴⁵⁵, the after action report for the USAF fixes noted in or around the 1 ATF TAOR contained the following:

1. On 21 Oct, B Company, 4th BN, 12th Inf Regt conduct an airmobile assault in the vicinity of YS070 925 based on a concentration of ARDF fixes in that area. Results were 3 US KIA and 2 VC KIA (BC).
2. At 1240H, artillery was fired at 4 VC with unknown results. At 1630, in the vicinity of YS074 933, one bunker was destroyed. Inside were found bloody bandages, miscellaneous clothing and 15 rounds of M-1 ammunition. 2 Sampans were discovered nearby. Another bunker was found at YS077 925 which contained 1 US carbine, 6 blasting caps, 4 fragmentation grenades, 2 Chicom carbines, 12 Chicom grenades, 1 BH-10, 1 US Claymore and 500 feet of claymore wire. C Company of the same unit found a hospital complex nearby consisting of 1 bunker and 3 military structures. Also found were 50 pounds of rice, 100 syrettes of unknown type medicine, 15 rounds of M-14 ammunition, miscellaneous clothing and 1 mortally wounded VC. At YS070 939, a light fireteam fired on a bunker resulting in 2 VC KIA and 1 VC WIA. Compass Dart [⁴⁵⁶] provided one fix on both the 19th and 21st, in this immediate area on mission 530.

⁴⁵⁴ It is not known whether 547 ARDF aircraft took any of the fixes. The Troop most certainly would have been covering any communications from this area.

⁴⁵⁵ <http://ec47.com/storage/UserFileFolder/1F.pdf>

⁴⁵⁶ Codeword for USAF ARDF Missions.

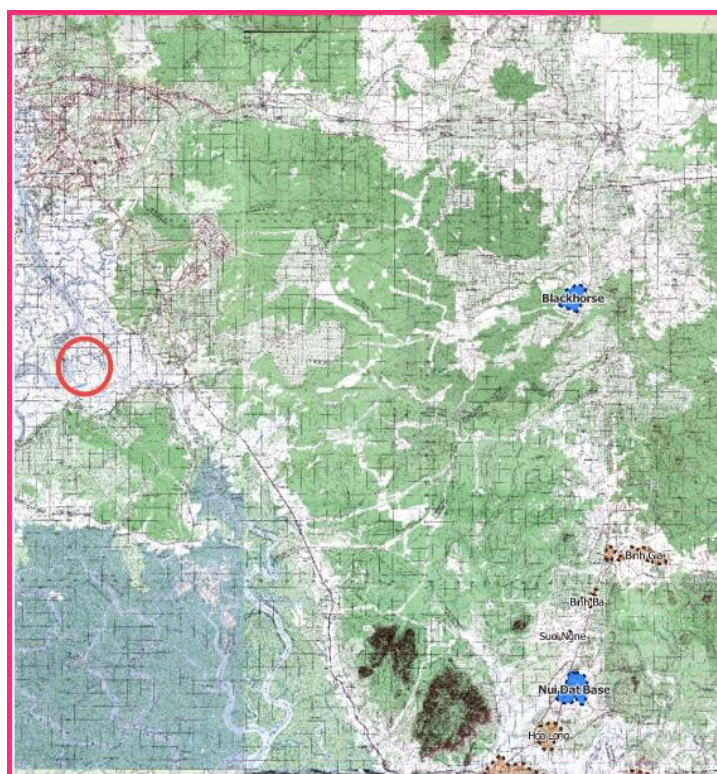


Figure 180: Location of fixes

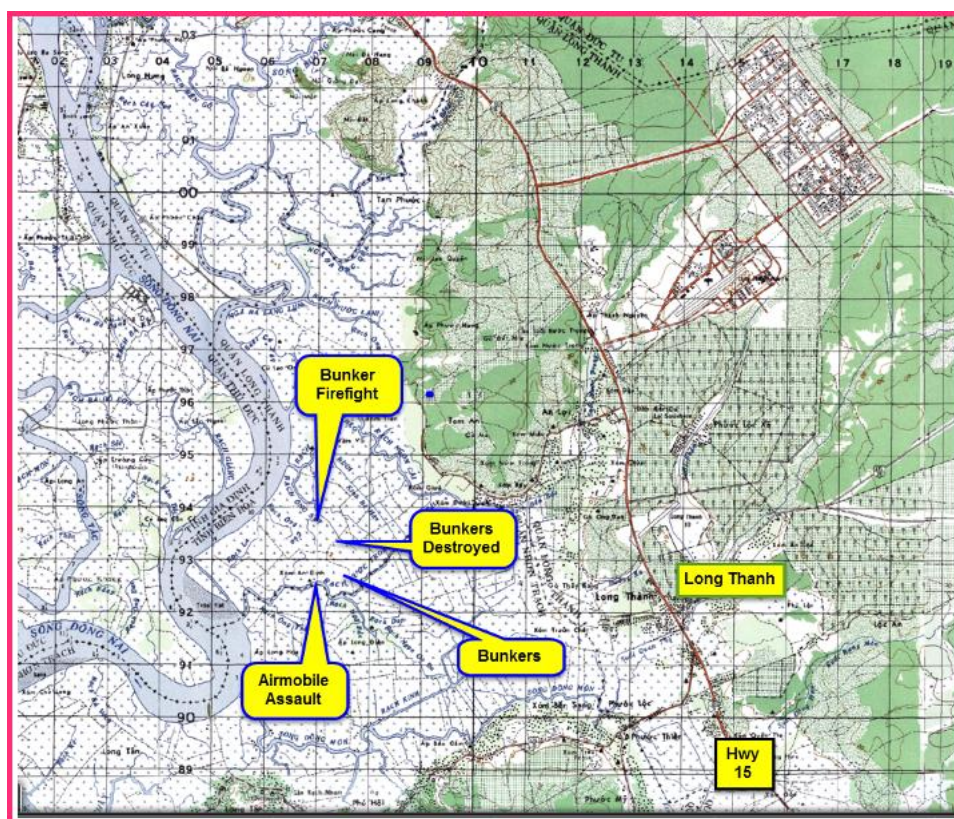


Figure 181: Location of actions



CHAPTER 25 – NOVEMBER 1967

25.1 Personnel

25.1.1 Arrivals and Departures

In November there was an increase in Op Sigs arriving: and only one departure.

Arrivals

13 November

Corporal Dick Schafer

20 November

Corporal Trevor Herd

Signalman Clive Clarke

28 November

Signalman Paul Talbert

Signalman Bill Pearton

Departures

21 November

Signalman Neville Derry

25.1.2 Leave

25.1.2.1 Rest and Recuperation Leave

Rest and Recuperation (R&R) leave provided a brief respite from the dust, noise and work of Nui Dat. The US authorities extended this service to Australian troops and ran it as a very effective organisation. Up to a week could be spent in Manila, Taipei, Hong Kong, Bangkok, Singapore, Penang, or for the homesick, back in Australia. Those who spent their R&R in Toowoomba usually returned with several dozen meat pies donated by Mr Meagher of Dianne Bakeries Toowoomba. The pies were of the best quality and absolutely impossible to obtain in Vietnam. In appreciation for his kind gesture the Troop presented Mr Meagher with a Task Force plaque.

25.1.2.2 Rest and Convalescence

The other means of enjoying an official rest was to go to the Rest and Convalescence (R&C) Centre for a maximum of five days. The centre was located at Vung Tau where beach space and recreational facilities were available. The night life had a glittering if sleazy quality, the only hazards being the local loutish lads known as 'cowboys' and the avaricious bar girls.



Figure 182: R&C Centre Vung Tau #1



Figure 183: R&C Centre Vung Tau #2

25.1.3 HQ AFV Monthly Strength Return

The strength of 547 Sig Tp was listed in the November issue of HQ AFV Monthly Report⁴⁵⁷ as a new Establishment Strength of 35, a Supplement of one, and a Posted Strength of 33:

UNIT (a)	ESTB STR			SUPPLEMENT			ESTB & SUPPLEMENT			POSTED STRENGTH			ATTACHED			TOTAL		
	OFFR (b)	OR (c)	TOTAL (d)	OFFR (e)	OR (f)	TOTAL (g)	OFFR (h)	OR (i)	TOTAL (j)	OFFR (k)	OR (l)	TOTAL (m)	OFFR (n)	OR (o)	TOTAL (p)	OFFR (q)	OR (r)	TOTAL (s)
DET 547 SIG TP	2	33	35	1	1	2	34	36	2	31	33		2			31	33	

Figure 184: HQ AFV Monthly Strength Return for November 1967

⁴⁵⁷ <http://www.awm.gov.au/collection/AWM98/R723/1/13/2/>



25.2 Administration

25.2.1 Building Projects Continue

During the month weapon pits were improved and in the interests of fitness, a volley ball court erected.

25.2.2 Community Assistance

During brief periods off duty, Captain Hughes took members of the Troop to the village of Ap Suoi Nghe⁴⁵⁸ to assist in the erection of new dwellings for the Vietnamese inhabitants.

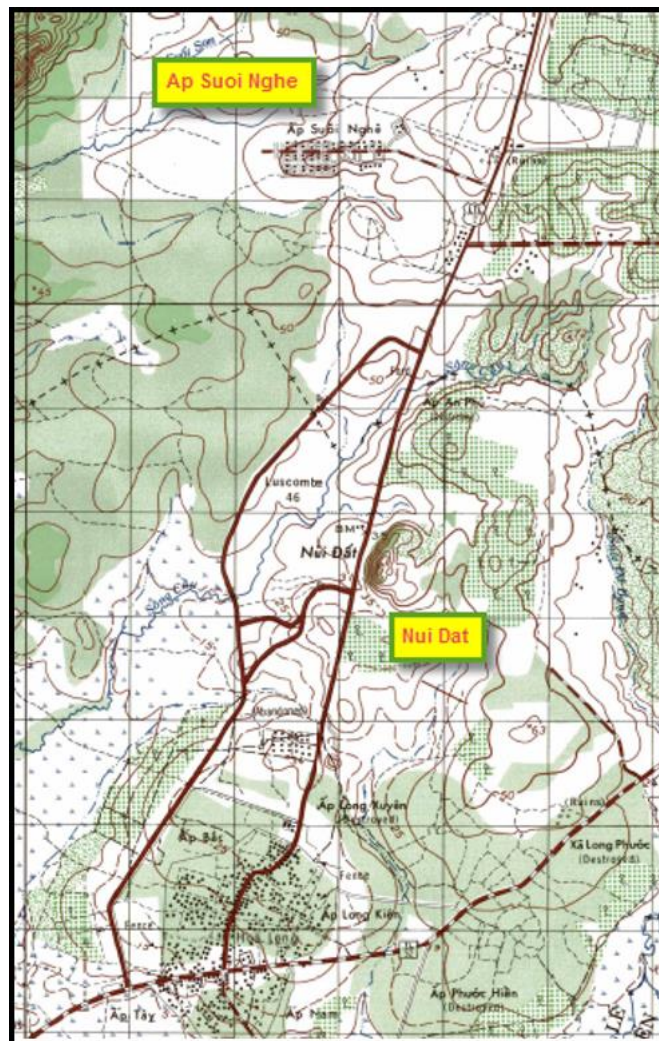


Figure 185: Ap Suoi Nghe Location

⁴⁵⁸ Ap Suoi Nghe was a refugee resettlement village, two miles north of the task force base at Nui Dat. The village was under the sponsorship and assistance of Australian troops through the 1st Australian Civil Affairs Unit.



Figure 186: Ap Suoi Nghe

25.3 Operations

25.3.1 ARDF Report 7- 20 Nov

The following report was signalled from AUM350 to MI8 on 22 Nov⁴⁵⁹:

[very poor copy]

FOR MI8. [corrupt] REPORT NO 18

1. ARDF (PHUOC TUY AREA)

A. PERIOD OF REPORT 7 – 20 NOV

B. FLYING TIME 26 HRS

C. RESULTS [corrupt]

2. TRAINING

A. HARPER FULLY TRAINED

B, SGT HOWELL HAS COMMENCED TRAINING.

3. EQUIPMENT

NO SERIOUS FAULTS

4. ARDF (MR6)⁴⁶⁰

ON [corrupt] AUST ARDF MISSION FLOWN FROM LUSCOMBE FIELD TO PHANG RANG
WITH OVERNIGHT STAY, EIGHT STATIONS WERE FIXED AND OPERATOR

⁴⁵⁹ DSD Declassified, 547 Sig Tp in Vietnam (tranche2).

⁴⁶⁰ Email from Ernie Chamberlain to Bob Hartley 1 May 2022: Military Region 6 encompassed the provinces of : Quang Duc (Gia Nghia), Tuyen Duc (Da Lat), Ninh Thuan, Lam Dong, Binh Thuan, and Binh Tuy (both Binh Thuan and Binh Tuy were on the coast).



STATES THAT ANOTHER 17 STATIONS SUSPECTED OF BEING IN MR6 WERE HEARD BUT NOT FIXED ON THIS FLIGHT. THESE FLIGHTS WILL CONTINUE THOUGH THEY ARE OF USE TO SIG INT IN GENERAL AND ANT EXCUSIVELY [corrupt] 1ATF.

25.3.2 ARDF Flying Hours

The total ARDF flying hours for the month were⁴⁶¹:

Year	Month	Flying hours	Total Fixes	Good <1000mts	Fair 1-2000Mts	Poor >2000 Mts	Cut	Missions Lost	Remarks
1967	Nov	73	57	14	36	7		2	Plus 2 hrs night

25.3.3 Enemy Organisation

25.3.3.1 Intelligence Review

The HQ 1ATF Intelligence Review No 14 dated 5 Nov 67, covering the October Period⁴⁶² listed the General Enemy Situation and Enemy Strengths as:

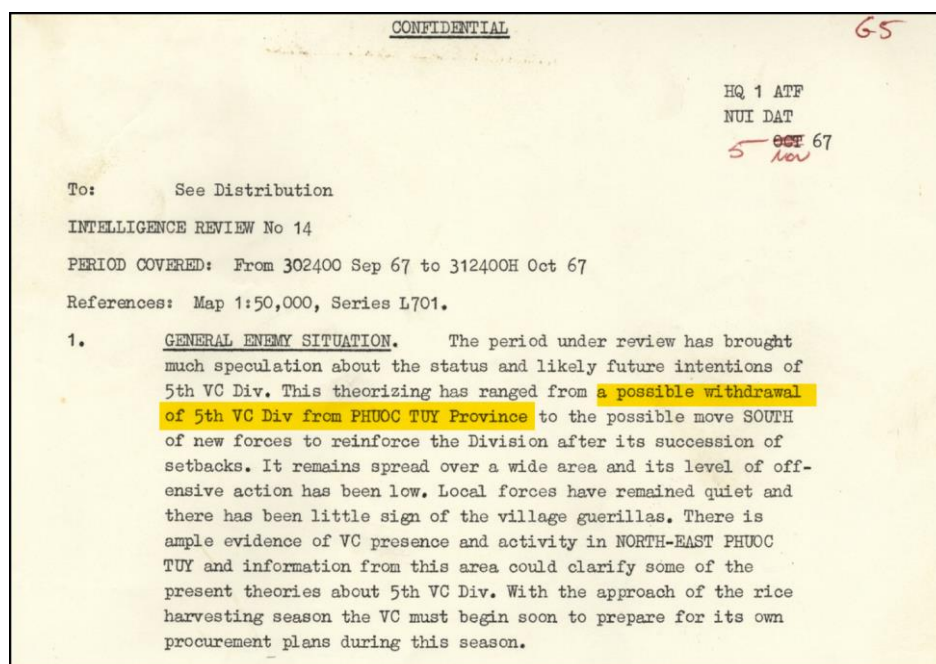


Figure 187: General Enemy Situation

⁴⁶¹ Compiled from MI8 Records held at ASD archives.

⁴⁶² AWM95 Commanders; Diaries HQ Units 1/4/69 HQ 1ATF Annexes E-G-J [1-30 Nov 2967].



Annex 'A' to
1 ATF INT REVIEW No 14
Dated Nov 67

ENEMY STRENGTHS AND LOCATIONS		
UNIT	STRENGTH	LOCATION
HQ 5 VC Div	100	MAI TAO vic YS8094
274 VC Regt	1200	HAT DICH
275 VC Regt (-)	900	War Zone 'D' vic YT 3040
1 Bn 275 VC Regt	300	NORTH EAST PHUOC TUY *
50 Trg Bn	150	YS 7589
D445 Bn	400	SONG RAI vic YS5781
BAC NINH Bn	400	Unlocated
C41	60	YS 3080
C23	30	XUYEN MOC Area
C25	60	LONG HAI Hills
Group 84	900	THUA TICH (YS6181)

* Not positively identified. May have rejoined 275 VC Regt in War Zone 'D'.

Figure 188: Enemy Strength and Locations

25.3.3.2 5 VC Div

The following graphic is an extract from a 1ATF Document⁴⁶³ that shows the main enemy units under 5 VC Div control in November 1967. Not all the units shown had HF communications. The HQ, 274 Regt, 275 Regt, Military Staff (MR7), and 84 RSG were on full cover at the Troop.

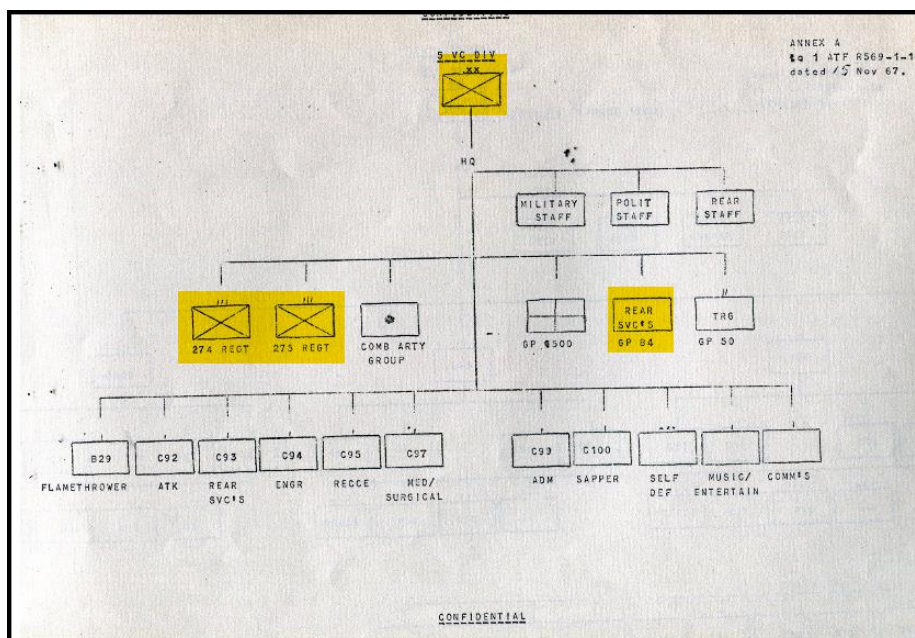


Figure 189: 5 VC Div Organisation

⁴⁶³ Graphic courtesy of Brigadier (Ret) Ernest Chamberlain, (Aust Int).



25.3.4 US ARDF

The following ARDF Identification Report, which is part of an unspecified report is included for information⁴⁶⁴:

SECRET SAVIN

31 9 118 126
B62
ITN 12-66
PAR
31/9/118

V. SUPPORT RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT

A. TRAFFIC ANALYSIS

1. ARDF IDENTIFICATION

The following ARDF statistical data is submitted for the month of November 1966:

	01	02	03	04	05	06	07
A/C AVAIL	38	41	37	33	44	46	45
A/C MAINT	27	24	28	23	21	19	28
SORTIES	35	36	39	41	39	38	37
HRS/MIN OPNL	157/40	168/25	160/25	169/18	168/00	77/55	151/41
TOTAL FIXES	66	97	68	77	79	48	65
With C/SS	47	76	65	57	59	28	52
Without C/SS	19	21	12	20	20	12	13
TOTAL IDENTIS	18	22	13	20	15	9	24
Field	18	22	13	20	15	9	24
B6	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
PCT FIXES IDENT	27%	28%	19%	26%	19%	22%	38%
With C/SS	38%	26%	23%	35%	25%	32%	46%
PCT FIXES U/I	73%	80%	71%	64%	71%	68%	62%

	08	09	10	11	12	13	14
A/C AVAIL	44	39	47	44	45	44	46
A/C MAINT	26	20	23	28	27	28	26
SORTIES	34	35	39	36	35	34	36
HRS/MIN OPNL	159/50	156/00	158/00	151/00	156/45	164/30	167/45
TOTAL FIXES	85	70	68	55	63	72	64
With C/SS	63	46	51	35	38	59	49
Without C/SS	22	24	17	20	25	13	15
TOTAL IDENTIS	27	16	17	21	24	17	18
Field	16	12	11	14	16	12	12
B6	11	4	6	7	8	5	6
PCT FIXES IDENT	18%	17%	25%	38%	38%	23%	28%
With C/SS	26%	26%	33%	60%	63%	38%	36%
PCT FIXES U/I	72%	73%	75%	62%	62%	77%	72%

	15	16	17	18	19	20	21
A/C AVAIL	46	48	48	30	25	40	36
A/C MAINT	26	24	25	31	26	33	38
SORTIES	32	33	37	39	32	36	38
HRS/MIN OPNL	137/30	150/50	176/30	136/50	155/15	152/15	151/50
TOTAL FIXES	43	68	67	52	51	73	65
With C/SS	37	49	52	40	45	47	53
Without C/SS	6	19	15	12	16	26	12
TOTAL IDENTIS	20	14	24	20	21	17	23
Field	16	13	13	14	17	11	22
B6	4	2	11	6	4	6	2
PCT FIXES IDENT	46%	28%	19%	26%	24%	15%	34%
With C/SS	54%	28%	35%	38%	34%	23%	35%
PCT FIXES U/I	54%	80%	81%	74%	76%	85%	66%

Figure 190: US ARDF Identification Report

⁴⁶⁴ DSD Declassified, 547 Sig Tp in Vietnam (tranche2).



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CHAPTER 26 – DECEMBER 1967

26.1 Personnel

26.1.1 Arrivals and Departures

In December three men marched in and two departed.

Arrivals

11 December

Corporal Roy Johnston

18 December

Corporal John Murray

Signalman Dennis Stone

Departures

6 December

Signalman John Zeller

13 December

Corporal Bob Maher

26.1.2 Employment Areas

Corporal Roy Johnston became the Troop clerk and John Murray and Dennis Stone joined the Set Room.



Figure 191: Roy Johnson

26.1.3 161 Recce Flt Fixed Wing Pilots

In December, 2nd Lieutenant Stephen Tizzard joined 161 Recce Flt as a fixed wing pilot.



26.1.3.1 HQ AFV Monthly Strength Return

The strength of 547 Sig Tp was listed in the December issue of HQ AFV Monthly Report⁴⁶⁵ as a Strength of 35, a Supplement of two, and a Posted Strength of 36:

UNIT (a)	ESTB STR			SUPPLEMENT			ESTB & SUPPLEMENT			POSTED STRENGTH			ATTACHED			TOTAL		
	OFFR (b)	OR (c)	TOTAL (d)	OFFR (e)	OR (f)	TOTAL (g)	OFFR (h)	OR (i)	TOTAL (j)	OFFR (k)	OR (l)	TOTAL (m)	OFFR (n)	OR (o)	TOTAL (p)	OFFR (q)	OR (r)	TOTAL (s)
DIST 547 SIG TP	2	33	35	1	1	2	34	36	2	34	36					2	34	36

Figure 192: Strength Report 31 December

26.1.3.2 Troop Manning

The following graphic shows the probable organisation of the Troop on 31 December:

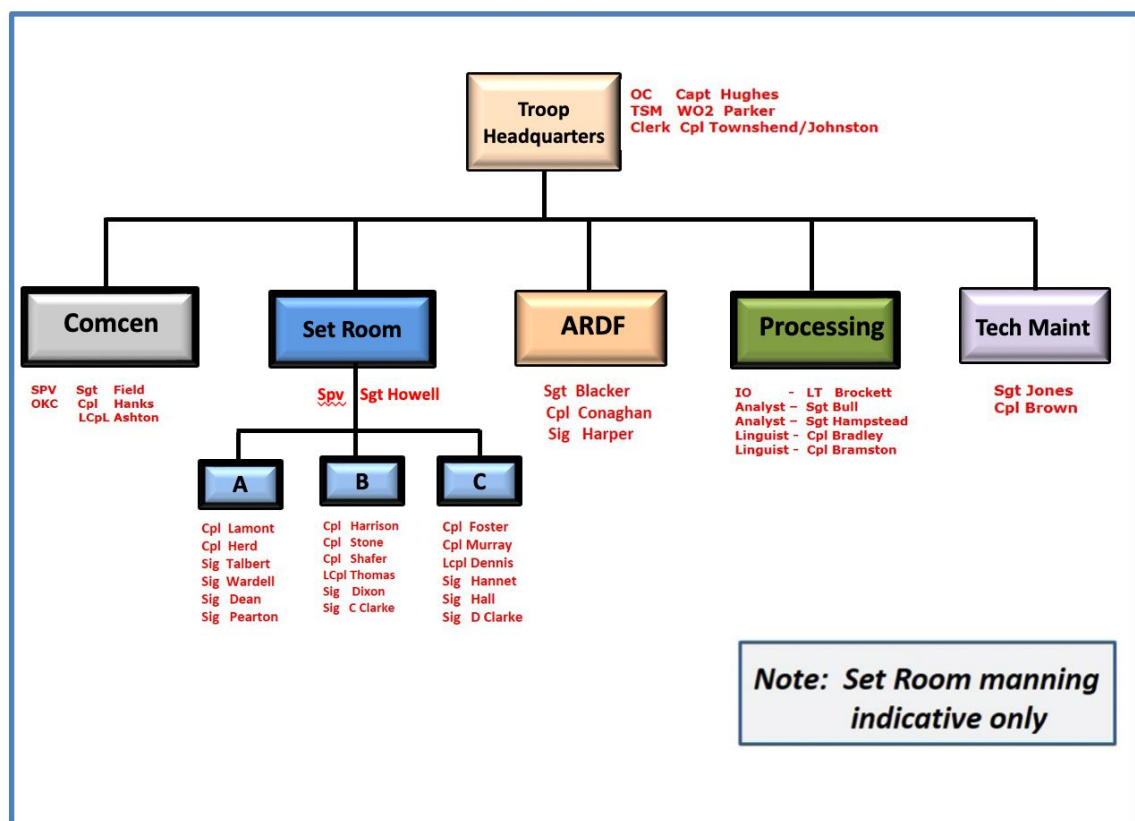


Figure 193: Troop Manning December 1967

⁴⁶⁵ <http://www.awm.gov.au/collection/AWM98/R723/1/13/3/>



26.2 Operations

26.2.1 ARDF Report 1 – 15 Dec

On 17 December AUM 352 signalled MI8 ARDF Report No 20⁴⁶⁶:

CONFIDENTIAL COMINT CHANNELS
SIGS 569.
FOR MI8. ARDF REPORT NO. 20.

1. ARDF

- A. PERIOD OF REPORT 1-15 DEC INCL
- B. FLYING TIME DAY 52 HOURS NIGHT 8 HOURS
- C. RESULTS 32 LIVE TARGET FIXES
- D. CLASSIFICATIONS: GOOD 2, FAIR 24, POOR 4, CUTS 2.
- E. GENERAL: **NO FLYING IN MR6** DURING PERIOD OF REPORT AS REACTIVATION OF INTEREST IN 1 ATF AREA.

2. EQUIPMENT.

FROM 1-3 DEC NO FLYING DUE TO TWO FAULTY RA17 RECEIVERS. ONE REPAIRED BY TAKING 3RD MIXER STAGE MODULE FROM OTHER SET WHICH STILL HAS DIFFICULT TO LOCATE INTERMITTENT FAULT. THIS SET AT PRESENT WITH RAEME WHO STATE IT CANNOT BE REPAIRED IN THEATRE. ISSUED AND REPLACEMENT SET URGENTLY REQUIRED. AS WHOLE ARDF EFFORT RELIES ON TWO RECEIVERS AT PRESENT IN EQUIPMNT: INDENT NO RM 1/67 SUBMITTED TODAY TO [redacted]

26.2.2 547 Sig Tp Progress Report for 1-31 Dec 67

The 547 Sig Tp Progress Report for 1-31 Dec 67⁴⁶⁷ stated:

Declassified by ASD - 3/12/2015
Information removed for national security and/or personal sensitivities

2020054111

PP

DE 014 0010030

PR 0100012 ✓

IN AUM 352

TO ARMY CANBERRA

INFO

DSD

ACM

SECRET SAVIN SIGS 615

FOR MI8. PROGRESS REPORT 1 - 31 DEC 67.

31 9 118 187

AD(Q)

Copy on 1/1/38

Figure 194: AUM 352 Progress Report 1 - 31 Dec 67⁴⁶⁸

⁴⁶⁶ DSD Declassified, 547 Sig Tp in Vietnam (tranche2).

⁴⁶⁷ Documents received from ASD December 2015. and now available at <https://www.asd.gov.au/about/history/declassified>.

⁴⁶⁸ Note DSD now included as an addressee.



1. SET ROOM

ALFA POSITIONS 1 X 24 HR DPM
 3 X 16 1/4 HR DPM
 2 X [CORRUPT] 1/4 HR DPM
 1 X 9 1/4 HR DPM
 1 X 8 1/2 HR DPM
 1 X 10 1/2 HR DPM ARDF ⁴⁶⁹

BRAVO. WATCH HOURS 52 HOURS PER WEEK

CHARLIE. TRAINING. HERD AND CLARKE CAPABLE OF WORKING ANY POSITION IN SET ROOM. TALBERT PEARTON, MURRAY AND STONE PROGRESSING FAVOURABLY. NO PROBLEMS ANTICIPATED.

2. TASKING

ALFA COVER⁴⁷⁰

1. VCMB00607	8. VCMBJ0200
2. VCMB00603	9. VCMBJ0208
3. A. VCMB05407	
B. VCMB05434	10. VCMB05422
4. VCMB05423	11. VCMBJ0186
5. A. VCMB05429	12. VCMB00614
B. VCMB05432	
6. VCMB79004	13. VCMB J0149
7. VCMBY9004	14. VCMBJ0153
	15. VCMBJ0148
	16. VCMBJ0174

SUPPLEMENTARY VCMB00628, 00813, 00816

DEVELOPMENT VCXB 109, 123, 134, 155, 157, 61, 614

BRAVO. THERE HAS BEEN A REACTIVATION OF VC RADIO COMMUNICATION IN THE AUM352 TAOI. PREVIOUSLY KNOWN LINKS/NETS ARE REAPPEARING AND THERE IS AN INCREASE IN U/I ACTIVITY WITH SEVERAL LINKS/NETS ON DEVELOPMENT.

3. ARDF

ALFA. NO FURTHER INFORMATION ON PROPOSED ARDF REPLACEMENT AIRCRAFT.

BRAVO. THE AUST ARDF SYSTEM IS PROVING ITS WORTH BY THE INCREASE IN ARDF FIXES DUE TO THE INCREASE IN VC COMMUNICATIONS ACTIVITY IN 1 ATF TAOI.

CHARLIE. ARDF REPORT TO 31 DEC 67 INCL

1. TOTAL FIXES – 90
2. GRADINGS. GOOD 19 FAIR 40 POOR 15 CUTS 8
3. TOTAL FLYING HOURS – DAYLIGHT 107 HRS
NIGHT 8 HOURS
4. NO FLYING 1/3 DEC INCL – EQUIPMENT FAULT
16 DEC AIRCRAFT SERVICE
23 DEC A.M. AIRCRAFT GROUNDED ENGINE TROUBLE.

5. MRDF⁴⁷¹

A FORMAL REQUEST WAS MADE TO AFV/1 ATF FOR A MRDF SITE WITHIN 1 ATF DEFENCE AREA. AFTER AN INSPECTION BY MRDF SURVEY TEAM A SUITABLE SITE WAS FOUND AND NEGOTIATIONS ARE UNDER WAY BETWEEN 1 ATF AND [Redacted] BEFORE FINAL ACCEPTANCE. THIS MRDF STATION WAS FROM THE WHITE BIRCH

⁴⁶⁹ These figures would equate roughly to: 8 intercept positions manned 0800 – 1700, 3 positions manned 1700 – 2400, 1 position 2400 – 0800 and one position for ARDF control 0800 – 1700 (times approximate).

⁴⁷⁰ Following numbers equate to priority.

⁴⁷¹ Medium Range Direction Finding.



COMPLEX ^[472] AND WAS LOCATED AT BIEN HOA WHICH HAS PROVEN AN UNSUITABLE SITE. IF ACCEPTED IT IS EXPECTED THAT THE RELOCATION WILL BE COMPLETE BY 31 JAN 68.

5. SIGNAL CENTRE

OUTAGES FOR NOVEMBER WERE 2.5 PERCENT.

BRAVO. NOW THAT EXCLUSIVE AFV SECURE CIRCUIT IS OPERATIONAL REQUEST PERMISSION TO RETURN BID 60 ^[473] EQUIPMENT TO SO SIGS AFV. IF THIS IS APPROVED ASG/534/2 FROM DSD WILL NOT BE REQUIRED.

6. EQUIPMENT

ALFA. THE EQUIPMENT FROM 110 SIG SQN ON LOAN FOR THE SECURE COMMS LINK WILL BE TRANSFERRED TO AUM352 ON THE SPS ACCOUNT.

BRAVO. TWO NAGRA⁴⁷⁴ RECORDERS WERE DECLARED BLR BY RAE. THE ADDITIONAL RECORDERS HAVE BEEN RECEIVED AND ARE IN SERVICE. THE TWO U/S RECORDERS WILL BE RETAINED FOR SPARES PENDING THE ARRIVAL OF REPLACEMENTS.

CHARLIE. ONE RA217 RECEIVER⁴⁷⁵ ALSO BLR BY RAEME. THIS WILL BE RETAINED FOR SPARES PENDING ARRIVAL OF ADDITIONAL 5 RECEIVERS.

⁴⁷² <http://michigantoday.umich.edu/a8069/> We 3rd RRU intercept operators and ground-based direction finders rotated on three eight-hour shifts in a windowless "listening post" building, covertly named White Birch.

⁴⁷³ <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/BID/60> **BID/60 (Singlet)** was a British encryption machine. It was used by the British intelligence services from around 1949 or 1950 onwards. The system is a rotor machine and would appear to have used 10 rotors. There are some apparent similarities between this machine and the US / NATOKL-7 device. <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/BID/60>



⁴⁷⁴ Nagra Tape Recorder.



⁴⁷⁵ RA17 primarily used in ARDF.



DELTA. SL 9/67 HAS BEEN APPROVED. NO MODIFICATION HAS BEEN RECEIVED OF RVE 5/67 BEING APPROVED.

7. NEW WORKS

ALFA. CEILING FANS NOT RECEIVED BY 2 COMP ORD FROM AUST.

BRAVO. 3 BN AND ARMD TROOP RETAIN PRIORITY FOR BUILDING MATERIAL WITHIN 1 ATF. THERE IS STILL NO RELEASE TO OTHER UNITS.

8. FM NET

A FM NET TO 303 RR BN, 409 RR DET AND 335 R COY HAS BEEN ESTABLISHED USING A R 292 AERIAL ON A 75 FT DECO MAST. EXCELLENT RESULTS ON KY-8 EQUIPMENT EXCEPT TO 303 RR BN WHERE CLEAR COMMS ONLY ARE USED THEREBY RESTRICTING ITS USE.

9. ADMINISTRATION

ALFA. VISITS

6 DEC MR LUCKMAN 175 RR COY. WO1 POUND (MRDF SITE RECONNAISSANCE)

7 DEC SQN LDR BAITHOUSE TEL 2 DEPT OF AIR, FLT LT STRATFORD (CURTESY [sic])

21 DEC MR THYU R LEE G MR LUCKMAN, CWO MORRIS L RITTER 1[REDACTED] CWO POUND 175 RR COY (MRDF SURVEY)

BRAVO. LEAVE

R&R

11./10 [garbled] W.E. HUGHES TAIPEH

2/7 DEC SGT R.E. FIELD BANGKOK

15/22 DEC SIG D.A. WARDELL AUSTRALIA

R&C

2/4 DEC SIG F.N. DENNIS

SIG R.G. HANNETT

HOSPITALISATION.

[redacted]

DELTA. PROMOTION EXAMINATIONS

QUALIFIED SUBJECT C FOR CPL

SIG R.G. HANNETT

SIG R.J. HARPER

FOXTROL. MOVEMENT

(SEE STRENGTH RETURN FOR DEC)





26.2.3 Commanding General of the 9th Infantry Division Signal

On 20 December 1967, Major General G. O'Connor, Commanding General of the 9th Infantry Division sent the following signal to CG [sic] 1st ATF for information CO 509th RR Gp and CO 303rd RR Bn:⁴⁷⁶

CONFIDENTIAL

1. I WOULD LIKE TO EXPRESS MY APPRECIATION FOR THE OUTSTANDING COMINT SUPPORT PROVIDED TO THE 9TH INFANTRY DIVISION BY YOUR 547TH SIGNAL TROOP. AS YOU PROBABLY KNOW, WE RELY ON THE 547TH FOR SUPPORT IN THE ENTIRE EASTERN PORTION OF OUR TAOR. THEIR WORK IN CONJUNCTION WITH OUR 335TH RADIO RESEARCH COMPANY HAS BEEN OUTSTANDING.
2. I HAVE BEEN MOST IMPRESSED BY THE PROFESSIONALISM DISPLAYED BY THE UNIT AS WELL AS THE SPIRIT OF TEAMWORK THEY HAVE DEMONSTRATED IN DEALINGS WITH MY STAFF. THE EFFORTS OF THE TROOP TO SATISFY 9TH DIVISION EEI REQUIREMENTS DURING OPERATIONS PADDINGTON, AKRON, RILEY AND SANTA DE [sic] ARE PARTICULARLY WORTHY OF PRAISE.
3. I EXTEND MY SINCERE THANKS FOR YOUR EFFORTS IN THIS CRITICAL AREA OF INTELLIGENCE COLLECTION. I LOOK FORWARD TO OUR CONTINUED CLOSE COOPERATION IN ALL AREAS AND IN THE FIELD OF COMMUNICATIONS INTELLIGENCE IN PARTICULAR.

26.2.4 US Army Medium Range Direction Finding

The US Army operated a static medium-range direction finding net called Whitebirch. Whitebirch was manned by ASA operators. A partly declassified NSA history offers a stark appraisal of this early MRDF effort: *"The WHITEBIRCH net was a failure. It had the lowest fix rate in the Pacific, and it was constantly short of manpower."*

26.2.5 DSD VC Working Aid

On 11 December, DSD released DSD Working Aid No 5/67, *Analysis of Type of Reporting by Radio Stations of VC 5th Light Infantry Division Passing Readable Traffic*⁴⁷⁷:

⁴⁷⁶ ASD archives of 547 Sig Tp material.

⁴⁷⁷ DSD Declassified, 547 Sig Tp in Vietnam (tranche2). Extracted information has been placed in the relevant months above.



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<u>DSD VC WORKING AID NO. 5/67</u>																																		
<u>ANALYSIS OF TYPE OF REPORTING BY RADIO</u> <u>STATIONS OF VC 5TH LIGHT INFANTRY</u> <u>DIVISION PASSING READABLE TRAFFIC</u>																																		
<table style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <thead> <tr> <th style="width: 10%;"></th> <th style="width: 50%; text-align: center; font-weight: normal; font-size: 0.8em;"><u>CONTENTS</u></th> <th style="width: 40%; text-align: center; font-weight: normal; font-size: 0.8em;"><u>PARAGRAPH</u></th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">I</td> <td>INTRODUCTION</td> <td style="text-align: center;">1</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">II</td> <td>GENERAL</td> <td style="text-align: center;">2 - 7</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">III</td> <td>CONCLUSIONS</td> <td style="text-align: center;">8 - 9</td> </tr> <tr> <td colspan="3" style="padding-top: 10px;">ANNEX A : LINK BY LINK DESCRIPTION OF TYPES OF REPORTING</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>				<u>CONTENTS</u>	<u>PARAGRAPH</u>	I	INTRODUCTION	1	II	GENERAL	2 - 7	III	CONCLUSIONS	8 - 9	ANNEX A : LINK BY LINK DESCRIPTION OF TYPES OF REPORTING																			
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<u>DISTRIBUTION:</u> <table style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse; margin-top: 10px;"> <tr> <td style="width: 30%;">GCHQ</td> <td style="width: 20%; text-align: center;">1 - 2</td> <td style="width: 30%;">AD(C)</td> <td style="width: 20%; text-align: center;">20</td> </tr> <tr> <td>DIRNSA</td> <td style="text-align: center;">3 - 6</td> <td>SUSLO(M)</td> <td style="text-align: center;">21</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td style="text-align: center;">7 - 9</td> <td>DH</td> <td style="text-align: center;">22</td> </tr> <tr> <td>AUM 352</td> <td style="text-align: center;">10 - 12</td> <td>DHV</td> <td style="text-align: center;">23</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td style="text-align: center;">13 - 16</td> <td>CN</td> <td style="text-align: center;">24 ✓</td> </tr> <tr> <td>GCO(S)</td> <td style="text-align: center;">17 - 18</td> <td>CN5</td> <td style="text-align: center;">25 - 26</td> </tr> <tr> <td>MI8</td> <td style="text-align: center;">19</td> <td>CR</td> <td style="text-align: center;">27</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td></td> <td>Spares</td> <td style="text-align: center;">28 - 29</td> </tr> </table>			GCHQ	1 - 2	AD(C)	20	DIRNSA	3 - 6	SUSLO(M)	21		7 - 9	DH	22	AUM 352	10 - 12	DHV	23		13 - 16	CN	24 ✓	GCO(S)	17 - 18	CN5	25 - 26	MI8	19	CR	27			Spares	28 - 29
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Figure 195: DSD Working Aid Front Page



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- 2 -

ANALYSIS OF TYPE OF REPORTING BY RADIO STATIONS OF VC 5TH LIGHT INFANTRY DIVISION PASSING READABLE TRAFFIC

I. INTRODUCTION

The aim of this research project was to analyse the type of reporting by radio stations of the VC 5th LID passing readable traffic.

II. GENERAL

2. A total of 573 readable messages intercepted between October 1966 and August 1967 were examined. These messages were passed on 15 links, two of which were so-called Military Affairs or Command links and a third was a link on the Watch Net. The remaining 12 links served unidentified tactical Military Intelligence elements of the VC 5th LID.

3. The majority of messages contained the type of reporting to be expected from field-unit observation posts. These dealt with reports on "enemy" road convoys, aircraft activity, coastal shipping, reports of troop deployments and movements, and post-action reports on contacts with the "enemy". Some of the reports on convoys and shipping were very detailed, listing vehicle loads and ships' cargoes. Some of their information apparently came from the local "District Committee" or "Agent Network", within which some of the MIE's had contacts. An obvious concern over the use of chemicals by the Allies was reflected in some messages. One such message reported that the "enemy" was "spraying poisonous chemicals". The remainder of the traffic dealt with routine administrative matters, such as personnel movements, resupply and other "house-keeping" affairs.

4. It is felt that some of the MIE's may be not more than just observation posts or standing patrols, the tasks of which are to occupy suitably concealed positions and report upon enemy activity without risking exposure.

5. The average strength of these MIE's appears to be at least eight to ten men. One of the MIE's was reduced to four men, but reported that because of this, it could not carry out its assigned tasks. The personnel comprising an MIE do not always remain in one group, but are sent out on reconnaissance in smaller groups or even individually.

6. Examination of traffic passed on the link between 303A and 303B in the period October 1966 to December 1966 tends to disprove the identification of 303B as a TMIE. Messages mention, inter-alia, ammunition delivery and training (both political and military). The

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Figure 196: DSD Working Aid Page #2



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- 3 -

context of the messages implies that the station was being initially deployed. It could be commented that it seems unlikely that a small TMIE would require delivery of ammunition, but would rather carry its own limited requirements on the man. Furthermore, it is thought that training would hardly be carried out once the MIE was deployed. Between 28th October 1966 and 1st May 1967, their link was inactive. When it was re-activated, all names and cover designators used in the earlier period were replaced by new ones. Reporting was of the normal MIE style concerning enemy activity. The link has been inactive since 19th May 1967, when 303 B was ordered to "completely withdraw".

7. A link by link description of the types of reporting by radio stations passing readable traffic is appended to this report as Annex A.

III. CONCLUSIONS

8. The types of reporting by subscribers studied in this report tends to confirm their roles, with the possible exception of 303B.

9. Evidence against the identification of 303B as a TMIE is very scant and may be the result of different shades of meaning being imposed by translation from Vietnamese.

Figure 197" DSD Working Aid Page #3



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- 4 -

LINK	PERIOD	TOTAL MSGs.	SUBJECT OF REPORTS/COMMENTS
303A-303B MIS HQ 54D- U/I MIE [i]	19 Oct-31 Dec 66	14	Admin msgs dealing with rice and med supps, sig arrangements, ammo delivery, political and other training and recce. Reference made to a "new base". One msg to 303 B was addressed to an "Arty Gp". Comments: The exchange of t/c of this nature indicates the probable initial deployment of the entity served by station 303 B.
" "	1 Apr-31 May 67	9	Reports on "enemy" activity incl on 1 May 67, "70 M113's ^[ii] which transported two puppet companies ... (to XUYEN MOC)". Comments: [i] This link was inactive from 28 Oct 66 to 1 May 67. When it was reactivated, all names and cover designators used in the earlier period were replaced by different cover. The link has not been active since 19 May 67 when 303 B was ordered to "completely withdraw". [ii] 70 M113's could move approx. 1 1/2 battalions.
303A-303C MIS HQ 5 LID U/I MIE	19 Oct-31 Dec 66	28	Reports on spotter aircraft and sub- sequent arty fire tasks. Airstrikes and recce by F-105's mentioned. Other msgs concerned "enemy" convoys along Highway 1 and troop activities. On 1 Dec 66, 303C was warned "Pay attention to [1U] and C123's which are releasing chemicals. If they are released, report immediately in accord with the SOI of the watch facility". (T1352) Comment: This concern about the use of 'chemicals' by the "enemy" is reflected in later messages also.
" "	1 Jan-31 Mar 67	2	303C was ordered to report on aircraft working from REN LA [not located].
" "	1 Apr-31 May 67	27	On 15 May 67, the team was ordered to "closely observe the road between BINHGIA [YS4077] and XUAN SON [YS5677]" (T875). During this period it reported mainly on road movement and artillery action.

Figure 198: DSD Working Aid Page #4

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- 5 -

LINK	PERIOD	TOTAL MSGS.	SUBJECT OF REPORTS/COMMENTS
303A-303C (Cont'd.)	1 Jun-31 Aug 67	34	Continued to report on road convoys, air movement and "enemy" activities. It watched and reported on coastal shipping.
303A-303D MIS HQ 5 LTD U/I MIE	19 Oct-31 Dec 66	32	This link was used predominantly to report on coastal shipping. It also reported on convoys and air activity in the VUNG TAU/HAM TAN area. The outstation was ordered to "get in touch with the district[i] to confirm what the boats were carrying". (T1332). In a similar msg it was warned to "take precautions against chemicals. If chemicals are released, take action" (T1356). On 22 Nov 66, 303D sent a msg complaining that the "element is not capable of carrying out the mission with 4 people up here. Suggest send additional people for guard duty" (T1347). Comment: [i] Probably the District Committee.
" "	1 Jan-31 Mar 67	78	Continued to report mainly on shipping. Reference to Allied sweep ops on 22 Jan 67. On 25 Jan 67 "3 Dakotas were spraying poisonous chemicals along the coast from HEP HOA [YS 8873] to the HO LINH mountains [YS 8873]". (T235). 303D also reported on aircraft activity around HAMTAN [YS 9864], and on the construction of some buildings by the Americans.
" "	1 Apr-31 May 67	68	Continued to report on sea and air activity. On 19 May 67 it was ordered to move the "whole cell back to the road". (T920).
" "	1 Jun-31 Aug 67	32	Road convoys along Highway 2 troop movements and air activity were reported on. Also reports of clashes. On 28 Jun 67, 303D reported that his "station is continually being cut off at the bridge here". Comment: Possible reference to land line comms.

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Figure 199: DSD Working Aid Page #5



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- 6 -

LINK	PERIOD	TOTAL MSGs.	SUBJECT OF REPORTS/COMMENTS
303A-303E MIS HQ 5 LID U/I MIE	1 Jan-31 Mar 67	47	Reporting on activity along Highway 1 and Provincial Route 333. A message disclosed that the strength of this MIE at about 14 Jan 67 was 8 men. As four of these had "gone back", "there is nobody to cover the enemy situation at VO DAT [YT 7433], TAN LINH [YT 9326] and the ONG DON intersection [YT 6303]". (T0126). Reports also disclosed problems in carrying rice, a sweep up by U.S., Aust., and ARVN troops in the DUC THANH area [YS 4680] on 26 Mar 67. The team was told to report in detail on standard operating procedures of convoys, e.g., spacing of vehicles, escorts, flank protection.
" "	1 Apr-31 May 67	68	Continued reporting on convoys, movement of personnel, clashes and reports of construction by U.S. troops. On 15 May 67 there was a report that "one of our cadre at MAY TAU Mountain [YS 7491] went over to the CHIEU HOI" (T876).
" "	1 Jun-31 Aug 67	24	Reported on enemy activity, road convoys and air movements.
303A-303G MIS HQ 5 LID U/I MIE	1 Jun-31 Aug 67	16	Reported on convoys along Highway 2 and on troop activity. A report on 23 Jul 67 mentioned that a sweep op by Aust and Korean troops was taking place in the possible area of "Slope 30" [YS 4680].
136A-136C MAS HQ 5 LID MAS 275 Regt	1 Jan-31 Mar 67	1	Message dealt with an unsuccessful radio sked.
136A-136D MAS HQ 5 LID - MAS 274 Regt	1 Jan-31 Mar 67	6	Detailed reports of convoys in the XUAN LOC area [YT 4009] and a msg detailing targets and the plans to attack them.

Figure 200: DSD Working Aid Page #6



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- 7 -

LINK	PERIOD	TOTAL MSGs.	SUBJECT OF REPORTS/COMMENTS
199A-1990 HQ 5 LID - U/I Ele- ment on Watch Net	1 Jan-31 Mar 67	1	A msg from NAM TAN ^[i] to HIEU ^[2] at HQ 5 LID stating; "as of 1 Mar... it seems the final phase will be completed by 5 Mar. On or about 7 Mar we will return to HQ ..." Comments: [i] Collateral holds as Chief of Staff, HQ 5 LID. [ii] Previously assoc with MIS 5 LID.
309A-309B MIS 275 Regt Sub MIE	1 Jan-31 Mar 67	5	Situation reports on the "enemy" in the area of AI BI [YS 4382], DUC THANH [YS 4680] and SOUI RAM [YS 4498]. Administrative traffic.
" "	1 Apr-31 May 67	2	Dealing with movement of cadre.
" "	1 Jun-31 Aug 67	3	Reports disclosed illness [malaria] and lack of rice at 309B.
4178A-4178B Poss HQ 275 Regt - Poss U/I subordin- ate 275 Regt	1 Apr-31 May 67	2	A msg for 4178A on 15 May 67 stated that "command of the company had been handed over to you". The other stated that "all is well" (at 4178B)
4191A-4191B HQ 274 Regt HQ 3 Bn 274 Regt.	1 Jun-31 Aug 67	1	Request for ammo and weapons.
4191A-4191D HQ 274 Regt HQ 2 Bn 274 Regt.	1 Jun-31 Aug 67	7	Sitreps and reports on clashes with "enemy". Several reflections of Allied sweep ops.
137A-137U/I MIS 274 Regt U/I Sub MIE	1 Jun-31 Aug 67	7	Reporting on clashes and allied ops including on 15 Jul 67 a landing by 2 bns and an arty unit at CAM MY [YS 4766]. A msg on 2 Jul 67 from 137A stated that "the observation station is to withdraw" ... "when withdrawing ... fill in all trenches and destroy all traces (of your presence)". (T1048).

Figure 201: DSD Working Aid Page #7



PART 4

1968



547 Signals Troop
Nui Dat



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APTER 27 – JANUARY 1968

27.1 Personnel

27.1.1 Arrivals and Departures

There was a large changeover of personnel in January.

Arrivals

17 January

Staff Sergeant Don Appleby

Signalman Robert Rolleston

23 January

Corporal Ken Trewartha

Signalman Dennis Nicholson

29 January

Corporal Bruce Fitzsimmons

Signalman John Bailey

Departures

9 January

Corporal Lance Townsend

Signalman John Dean

30 January

Corporal Clem Foster

Signalman Dave Wardell

27.1.2 Employment Areas

Don Appleby assumed the Comcen supervisor role and was joined by Bruce Fitzsimmons. Bob Rolleston, Ken Trewartha, Dennis Nicholson and John Bailey joined the Set Room.

27.1.3 HQ AFV Monthly Strength Return

The HQ AFV Monthly Return for January 1968 showed no change to the Det 547 Sig Tp Establishment⁴⁷⁸:

27.2 Administration

27.2.1 Sandbag Filling

Replacing sandbags for the compound, fighting pits and accommodation tents was always an on-going project.

⁴⁷⁸ <http://www.awm.gov.au/collection/AWM98/R723/1/13/3/>



27.2.2 Accommodation and Protection

In the junior ranks accommodation area, weapon pits and mortar protection shelters were refurbished with new sandbags. The shelters were dark, dingy, musty and uninviting, nothing but rocket or mortar fire could induce the soldiers to enter them.



Figure 202: Sandbag filling work party



Figure 203: Snow Turner meeting some of the local children

Note the weapons in easy reach of the children



27.3 Operations

27.3.1 ARDF Report No 21

The ARDF Report No 21 for the period 1 – 12 Jan contained⁴⁷⁹:

*S E C R E T SAVIN SIGS23.
FOR M18. ARDF REPORT N021*

1. ARDF

- A. PERIOD OF REPORT 1-12 JAN INCL*
- B. FLYING TIME DAY 38 HRS NIGHT 4 HRS*
- C. RESULTS 70*
- D. CLASSIFICATION GOOD 12 FAIR 40 POOR 11 CUTS 7*
- E. NO FLYING 11 JAN - AIRCRAFT MAINTENANCE*

2. COMMENTS

ALFA. THE EXCELLENT RESULTS THIS PERIOD ARE DUE TO THE INCREASE IN RADIO COMMUNICATIONS IN AUM 352 AREA OF RESPONSIBILITY. FOR THE SAME PERIOD THE US ARMY DIRECT SUPPORT AIRCRAFT OBTAINED 43 FIXES ON THE SAME AREA FLYING 48 HRS

BRAVO. CAPTAIN BERNIE FORREST, OC FIXED WING AIRCRAFT AT 161 RECCE FLIGHT HAS REPORTED THAT THE ARDF AIRCRAFT HAS NARROWLY AVOIDED A COLLISION ON THREE OCCASIONS DURING THE PAST MONTH. REASONS GIVEN ARE THAT THERE IS A GREATER NUMBER OF AIRCRAFT/CHOPPERS IN AREA DURING OPERATIONS AND THAT PILOTS ATTENTION TO HIS INSTRUMENTS AND FIXING HIS POSITION ON THE GROUND BY VISUAL MEANS WHEN TRYING TO FLY A STRAIGHT PATH FOR FIXES DOES NOT ALLOW THE PILOT TO OBSERVE OTHER AIRCRAFT IN AREA. THIS MUST SUPPORT OUR REQUEST FOR NAVAGATIONAL AID IN AIRCRAFT.

CHARLIE. COL MCLEES J2 MACV SPECIAL PROJECTS, WITH DODSPECREP WILL BE VISITING THIS UNIT ON 22 JAN TO DISCUSS ARDF AIRCRAFT. WILL SIGNAL RESULTS OF DISCUSSION.

3. DURING MY HOSPITALISATION A MRDF TEAM VISITED AREA ALUMN AND DECIDED AGAINST MRDF SITE. REASON NOT KNOWN TO THIS DATE.

4. ALL MR6 COVER HAS BEEN DROPPED DUE TO ALL OUT EFFORT IN OUR OWN AREA.

⁴⁷⁹ DSD Declassified, 547 Sig Tp in Vietnam (tranche2).



27.3.2 547 Sig Tp Progress Report for 1-31 Jan 68

The 547 Sig Tp Progress Report for 1-31 Jan 68⁴⁸⁰ stated:

1. SET ROOM
 - ALFA. POSITIONS 3 X 15-3/4 HR DPM
 - 4 X 9-1/4 HR DPM
 - 1 X 24 HR DPM
 - 1 X 10 1/2 HR DPM ARDF ⁴⁸¹

BRAVO. WATCH HOURS. 52 HOURS PER WEEK

CHARLIE. TRAINING. HERD, CLARKE, TALBERT, PEARTON, MURRAY AND STONE CAPABLE OF WORKING ANY POSITION IN SET ROOM. TREWARTHA AND NICHOLSON PROGRESSING FAVOURABLY.

2. TASKING
 - ALFA. PRIORITY
 - [Tasking similar to December 1967]

- | | |
|--------------|---------------|
| 1. VCMB0060 | 9. VCMBY9004 |
| 2. VCMB00603 | 10. VCMBY9006 |
| 3. VCMB00618 | 11. VCMBJ0219 |
| 4. VCMB05407 | 12. VCMB0253 |
| 5. VCMB05423 | 13. VCMBJ0247 |
| 6. VCMB05429 | 14. VCMBJ0186 |
| 7. VCMBJ0236 | 15. VCMBY9007 |
| 8. VCMBY9003 | 16. VCMB00605 |

SUPPLEMENTARY

VCMB00628 VCMB00813
VCMB0808 VCMB05432
VCMB05434

DEVELOPMENT

VCXB 121, 166, 168, 169, 170

SEARCH BAND

POSN 3. 5000 – 5250 KCS
POSN 4. 5250 – 5500 KCS
POSN 5. 5500 – 5750 KCS
POSN 6. 5750 – 6000 KCS

BRAVO. ACTIVITY DURING OPERATION COBURG HAS DECREASED BUT THERE IS EVERY INDICATION THAT 5 L.I.D. HQ NORTH HAS REJOINED 5 L.I.D. SOUTH. IT CAN BE EXPECTED THAT 275 REGT AND POSSIBLY 88 NVA REGT MAY HAVE RETURNED. IF THIS IS SO THEN INCREASED ACTIVITY CAN BE EXPECTED ON THE REALLOCATION OF THESE UNITS AFTER THE TET OFFENSIVE.

3. ARDF 1 - 31 JAN INCLUSIVE
 - ALFA. (1) TOTAL FIXES – 119
 - (2) GRADINGS. GOOD 19 FAIR 69 POOR 17 CUTS 14
 - (3) TOTAL FLYING HOURS – DAYLIGHT 90 HRS
NIGHT 8 HOURS
 - (4) NO FLYING 13 JAN, AIRCRAFT US

⁴⁸⁰ Documents received from ASD December 2015. and now available at <https://www.asd.gov.au/about/history/declassified>.

⁴⁸¹ These figures would equate roughly to: 8 intercept positions manned 0800 – 1700, 4 positions manned 1700 – 2400, 1 position 2400 – 0800 and one position for ARDF control 0800 – 1700 (times approximate).



22/23 JAN AIRCRAFT ROUTINE SERVICE

BRAVO. (1) CONFERENCE WITH COL SIMPKIN AT 161 RECCE FLIGHT AND **DISCUSSED PROPOSED NEW AIRCRAFT**. HE STATES THAT J2 MACV AGREE OUR SYSTEM OBTAINS FIXES MORE QUICKLY THAN US SYSTEM BUT THEY REQUIRE MORE PROOF OF ACCURACY OF EQUIPMENT. I HAVE PREVIOUSLY REQUESTED

(A) THAT US ARDF AIRCRAFT FLY SAME MISSIONS AS OUR AIRCRAFT AGAINST BEACON FROM KNOWN LOCATIONS.

(B) THAT TWO US ARMY OPERATORS BE DETACHED TO WORK OUR SYSTEM AND REPORT BACK TO 509 RR GROUP.

2. [Redacted] AND 509 RR GROUP AGREE THAT THIS WOULD BE IDEAL BUT NOTHING HAS BEEN DONE. COL SIMPKIN AND SELF WERE TO VISIT [Redacted] ON 31 JAN BUT DUE TO TET VC OFFENSIVE IN SAIGON BOTH MEMBERS CONFINED TO BOQS. CONFERRED WITH SO SIGS 1 FEB AND CONFERENCE CANCELLED AS COL SIMPKIN IS TO FLY OUT OF SAIGON ON FIRST AVAILABLE AIRCRAFT.

3. SUGGESTIONS IN (A) AND (B) HAVE BEEN VERBAL TO DATE. WILL SEND IN SIGNAL FORM TODAY AND KEEP YOU INFORMED.

4. MRDF

NEGOTIATIONS FOR AN MRDF SITE AT 1ATF FELL THROUGH IN EARLY JANUARY DUE TO ABSENCE OF DEPUTY COMMANDER AND HUGHES BOTH IN HOSPITAL. NEGOTIATIONS HAVE BEEN REOPENED AND UNITS CONCERNED VISITED AUM352 ON 29 JAN AND INSPECTED PROPOSED SITE AT YS442669 (SEE YOUR MAP OF AREA). DEPUTY COMMANDER, COL DUNSTAN AGREE TO OUR REQUEST FOR THIS AREA BUT FINAL DECISION TO COME FROM COMD 1 ATF WHO IS AWAY ON OPERATION COBURG. HE IS EXPECTED TO RETURN ON 4 FEB AND I FEEL SURE THAT COMMANDERS DECISION WILL BE FAVOURABLE.

5. SIGNAL CENTRE.

ALFA. OUTAGES FOR NOVEMBER 9.5 PERCENT.

BRAVO. BID 60 EQUIPMENT RETURNED TO 110 SIG SQN.

6. EQUIPMENT

FIVE RA217 RECEIVERS ARRIVED, FOUR UNSERVICEABLE. DETAILS OF FAULTS WILL BE SIGNALLED TO [Redacted].

7. NEW WORKS

DCRE WILL NOT RELEASE BUILDING MATERIALS UNTIL MARCH AS 1 ATF HAVE EXCEEDED THEIR ALLOCATION MATERIALS FROM US SOURCES. 3 BN REQUIREMENTS NOT YET COMPLETED. FANS FOR OPERATIONS ROOM ARE TO BE ISSUED FROM AUSTRALIA AND ARE EXPECTED IN FEBRUARY.

8. ADMINISTRATION

ALFA. VISITORS

7 JAN LT COL HOLLAWAY [REDACTED], MAJ DECHER 303 RR BN, MAJ MILLER 303 RR BN, CWO1 RITTER 175 RR COY (MRDF SURVEY TEAM)

22 JAN COL THOMPSON JS MACV, LT COL MCLEES, J2 MACV, MR RON MCANALAN (NSAPACREP)(C) MAJ COLLELLO ACC 509 RR GROUP (ARDF SURVEY TEAM)

29 JAN COL R H BYE 509 RR GP, MAJ ADAMS 175 RR COY, MR T R LEE NSAPACREP (C) MAJ BRYDON 175 RR COY (MRDF SURVEY TEAM)

BRAVO. LEAVE.

R AND R CPL LAMONT 16/22 JAN AUSTRALIA

CAPT BROCKETT 25/31 JAN HONG KONG 1/12 FEB ARL

R AND C (VUNG TAU) SGT J R BULL 25/26 JAN

SGT R FIELD 13/15 JAN

CPL C FOSTER 10/11 JAN

SGT E JONES 8/10 JAN

CHARLIE HOSPITALISATION. [Redacted]



27.3.3 Recommended ARDF Improvements

On 26 January, AUM350 signalled MI8 reference ARDF improvements⁴⁸²:

*S E C R E T COMINT CHANNELS SIGS 103/68.
FOR MI8*

YOUR 120050Z. ARDF REPORT FROM 1 NOV 67 TO 31 JAN 68 INCL/

1. TOTAL FIXES 266.

*GRADINGS GOOD 52 FAIR 153, POOR 39. CUTS 22.
TOTAL FLYING TIME - 288 HOURS*

2. SUGGESTED IMPROVEMENTS TO EQUIPMENT.

*A. A FACILITY TO SWITCH TO EITHER ANTENNA AT ANYTIME. REASON: AUDIO
NULL FOR AURAL FIX*

*B. FLEXIBLE-LIGHT TO BE FIXED TO TOP OF EQUIPMENT FRAME. RESPN
OPERAT IORS NIGHT FLYING LIGHT.*

*C. TELESCOPIC LIGHT SHADE FITTED TO SCOPE WITH RUBBER PROTECTION
FOR THE FACE. REASON: TO OVERCOME REFRACTIVE ERROR,
THE CRQ HOOD CARDBOARD (LP) IS NOT SUITABLE.*

*D. DEVICE TO LOCK. ANTENNA ASSEMBLY AND MAIN EQUIPMENT FRAME TO
AIRCRAFT SEAT RAILS BE CONSTRUCTED OF MATERIAL OTJHER THAN ALUMINIUM
REASON: THREAD OF ALUMINIUM LOCKING DEVICE TENDS TO C OSS THREAD
AND STRIP*

27.3.4 NVA/VC Imitative Communications Deception

In January, HQ 1 ATF issued The Troop Information Sheet No 78 that included information on an NVA ICD incident⁴⁸³:

(C) Other Activity.

10. 25th US Inf Div reported a VC communications deception attempt to interfere with tactical operations of 4/49th Inf in the "FISH HOOK" area on 5 Jan 68. A voice with an Australian accent stated that he was a member of an Australian team inserted by "the 173rd" and requested MANCHU 6 (CO, 4/49) refrain from further artillery firing in the area. The obviously fake request was not honoured. A check with 1 ATF reaffirmed that no Australian personnel were out of their TAOR and that none were missing. (II FFORCEV Comment: This is the third incident in recent months of a VC attempt at communications deception. This is a further indication of the VC capability to monitor US radio traffic for the gaining of intelligence. The VC have an English language capability and the equipment necessary to utilize communications intercept to their advantage, while at times attempting communications deception, as in this case. All units must stress all aspects of communications security if we are to deny the VC this source of intelligence.) (II FFORCEV Perintrep 1-68)

Figure 204: Extract from HQ 1ATF TIS No 78

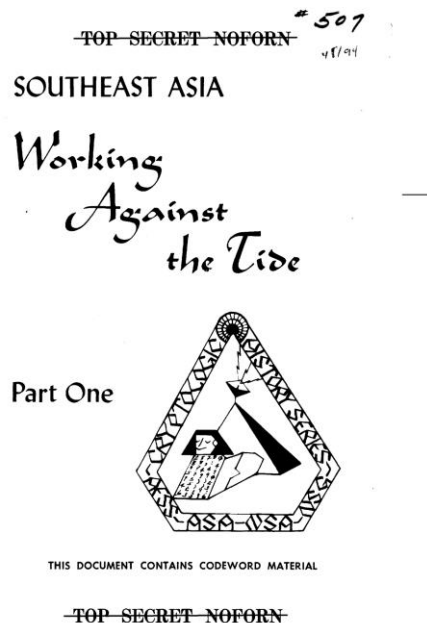
⁴⁸² DSD Declassified, 547 Sig Tp in Vietnam (tranche2).

⁴⁸³ <http://www.awm.gov.au/collection/AWM95/1/4/80/>



27.3.4.1 NSA Report

NSA Reported the incident⁴⁸⁴ in their June 1970 magazine *Working Against the Tide*⁴⁸⁵



The incidence of enemy ICD efforts against U.S. forces, especially in I and II Corps Tactical Zones, increased several fold in 1968. For example, on 6 January 1968 in northern Tay Ninh Province there occurred what became known as the "Australian ICD Incident." It is one of the most sustained and better-documented examples during the war of an enemy attempt—fortunately unsuccessful—at imitative communications deception. While a battalion of the 2d Brigade, U.S. 25th Infantry Division, was conducting a search and destroy mission, an intruder entered the battalion command net and for nearly ten hours was engaged in a running tactical exchange of information. The intruder, purporting to be of an Australian unit operating near the 2d Brigade battalion, declared that he wanted to establish liaison so as not to interfere with the U.S. battalion's operations. The intruder gave his position as "about 23 meters" to the north of the battalion, and stated he was from the "Australian 173d Unit" on a separated search and destroy mission.

Although the intruder's accent seemed to be Australian, although he had entered the battalion net using the battalion's call sign, and although his methods conformed to normal Allied operational transmissions procedures, his responses to challenges and authentications were evasive. Lt. Col. John M. Henchman, the U.S. battalion commander, suspected an enemy ICD ruse. The "Australian" could not be as close as 23 meters to the battalion, did not know the authentication code, and could not or would not give his exact location and direction of movement, first pleading a different set of maps from those used by Colonel Henchman's battalion, then stating that his unit was lost.

⁴⁸⁴ Live tapes of the incident were subsequently used in the EW Courses conducted at 7 Sig Regt in 1974.

⁴⁸⁵ https://www.nsa.gov/portals/75/documents/news-features/declassified-documents/cryptologic-histories/work_against_tide.pdf



Instructing his radioman to keep the exchange with the "Australian" going, Colonel Henschman, using other communications, checked and found that there were no Australian units in Tay Ninh Province and no unit called the Australian 173d existed. He thereupon plotted several locations from which the intruder could be transmitting and called down artillery fire on the areas. Finally reflecting in his transmissions that Henschman had had a near miss, the intruder asked that the artillery cease firing on "friendly forces." A few more rounds of "friendly fire" and the "Australian" suddenly broke off and presumably left the scene. A subsequent examination of the area of the enemy's operation brought moderate contacts with Viet Cong and uncovered some empty enemy base camp installations, but no "Australian."

*The result of this enemy ICD attempt was negligible. Incoming traffic that would have used the battalion command net was interrupted for about ten hours while the "Australian" was kept on the net at Colonel Henschman's pleasure, but battalion operations continued to be directed on alternate company nets.**

The enemy's success in posing as a valid U.S. net subscriber was in direct proportion to his intimate knowledge of U.S. communications procedures, frequencies, and the personalities of those who communicated. The only way the enemy had of acquiring such deep familiarity with U.S. communications was through his own successful SIGINT operations.



27.3.5 Captured Enemy Radios and Code Books

The HQ 1ATF Troop Information Sheet No 79 included details of what actions Australian troops were to undertake when NVA/VC radios or code books were discovered⁴⁸⁶

<u>Section 3</u>	<u>Discussion Point</u>	<i>1ATF Troops Information Sheet No. 79 14-20 Jan 68.</i>	
<u>Enemy Communications Intelligence.</u>			
23. Of the many types of intelligence information to be gleaned from captured enemy documents, among the most valuable- and most perishable-is enemy cryptologic and signal information. While documents relating to enemy frequencies, call signs, codes and even SOIs are the keys which will unlock the secret of his communications, they are useful only during the time for which they are in force. This period of time may be limited to days, or even hours.			
24. Keeping the importance of timeliness in mind, it is imperative for all personnel to be familiar with where these documents may be found and be knowledgeable of the manner in which communications-related documents can be quickly identified and processed.			
25. Enemy cryptologic and/or signal documents may be found anywhere. In the past they have been discovered in tunnels, in batches of mixed documents and on enemy dead. Further, they appear in many forms. This extremely sensitive information may appear in notebooks, on type-written sheets, inside clear plastic covers or sealed packets, or even written on scraps of tissue paper.			
26. To most personnel the format and written language of enemy communications documents are unfamiliar. However, there are certain recurring words and abbreviations which will normally accompany the documents and will assist in identifying documents of this type. A partial list of these key words and abbreviations includes the following:			
<u>KEY WORDS</u>		<u>KEY ABBREVIATIONS</u>	
Message	BAN VAN	Antenna	ANT
Telephone	DIEN THOI;	Cryptologic	CY
	HUU TUYEN DIEN	Radio Station	DD
Radio	VO TUYEN DIEN	Telephone	DT; HDT
Liaison; communications	LIEN LAC	Liaison; communications	LL or L ²
Code	MA	Radio Communications	TT or T ²
Name; callsign	TEN	Radio	VTD
Frequency	SONG		
Transmit-Receive	PHAT-TU		
Battery	PIN; PINNE; PILE		
27. Once enemy signal documents have been captured and identified, it is essential that they be expeditiously exploited and to this end they should be returned to the Hq as quickly as possible			
<u>CONFIDENTIAL</u> <i>(Extracted from USARV Weekly Combat Intelligence Review 23 Jan 68)</i>			

Figure 205: Extract from HQ 1ATF TIS No 79

⁴⁸⁶ Ibid.



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CHAPTER 28 – FEBRUARY 1968

28.1 Personnel

28.1.1 Arrivals and Departures

Changeover of personnel continued during February.

Arrivals

5 February

Corporal Fred Hawkes

Sergeant William Dunn

12 February

Signalman Mark Pritchard

Signalman Ray Turner

16 February

Major Peter Murray

Departures

6 February

Corporal Dennis Hanks

Signalman Hugh Dixon

Signalman Ray Hannett

12 February

Sergeant Eddie Jones

Signalman Flinders Dennis

28.1.2 Employment Areas

Fred Hawkes and Ray Turner were assigned to the Set room, Mark Pritchard to the Comcen and Bill Dunn became the Senior Technician.

28.1.3 In-Coming Officer Commanding

Major Peter Murray arrived to assume command of the Troop when Bill Hughes departed.

28.1.4 Departure from Australia

Major Murray's description of his departure from Australia, and arrival in Vietnam, is worth noting as it was typical of how all personnel fared:

Drafts reported to Mascot Airport, Sydney, at 11.30 p.m. After the usual farewells and roll calls we boarded the big Boeing bound for Perth. There we took on a contingent of SAS and flew to Singapore. On landing we donned white shirts which we had been ordered to carry in our packs. The Singapore Government refused to allow soldiers to pass through Singapore to Vietnam but agreed that 200 fit young men wearing khaki trousers, black boots and other military trappings couldn't possibly be soldiers if they wore white shirts! We filed off the aircraft to an airport restaurant for a two hour breakfast. After breakfast we returned to the aircraft at 9 a.m., replaced our white shirts with khaki, and took off for Vietnam



We landed at Tan Son Nhut at 10 a.m, one of Saigon's three large airfields. This airfield must have been one of the busiest in the world. Huge passenger jets, bombers heavy with under slung bombs, fighters with napalm or rocket pods drooping from their wings, helicopter gun-ships, small Cessna type observation aircraft and Hercules cargo planes come and go like peak hour traffic in Swanston Street Machine gun fitted jeeps hurtle around the enormous base driven by wild eyed African Americans who struck more terror into our hearts than any VC could. We assembled into an empty bay, sorted our gear and we were hustled aboard a Caribou aircraft bound for Nui Dat ... In 30 minutes we touched down on the dusty strip called Luscombe field at Nui Dat at 2 p.m. From Sydney to the combat zone in 14 hours!



From left to right 547 SIG TP: Rod Harper, Trevor Herd, Mike Conaghan and Fred Hawkins.
1967 - 1968

Figure 206: Four of the operators contemplating

28.1.5 HQ AFV Monthly Strength Return

The HQ AFV Monthly Return for February 1968 showed the Det 547 Sig Tp Establishment of 35, a Supplement of one and a Posted Strength of 38 (including an extra officer)⁴⁸⁷⁴⁸⁸:

UNIT	ESTB OFFR	STR (b)	TOTAL (c)	SUPPLEMENT			EST & SUPPLEMENT			POSTED STRENGTH			ATTACHED			TOTAL		
(a)	(b)	(c)	(d)	OFFR (e)	OR (f)	TOTAL (g)	OFFR (h)	OR (i)	TOTAL (j)	OFFR (k)	OR (l)	TOTAL (m)	OFFR (n)	OR (o)	TOTAL (p)	OFFR (q)	OR (r)	TOTAL (s)
(a)	(b)	(c)	(d)	(e)	(f)	(g)	(h)	(i)	(j)	(k)	(l)	(m)	(n)	(o)	(p)	(q)	(r)	(s)
DET 547 SIG TP	2	33	35	1	1	2	34	36	3	35	38					2	36	38

Figure 207: HQ AFV Monthly Strength Return for February 1968

⁴⁸⁷ Handover of OCs at the date of report.

⁴⁸⁸ <http://www.awm.gov.au/collection/AWM98/R723/1/13/4/>



28.2 Operations

28.2.1 ARDF Questions Answered

On 9 February, MI8 signalled AUM352 reference ARDF questions⁴⁸⁹:

FM MI8. YOUR SIGS 052 OF 020030Z. PROGRESS REPORT 1-31 JAN 68.
ARDF. [See para 28.2.2]

ONE. FROM YOUR COMMENTS IN PARA 3 IT WOULD APPEAR THAT CERTAIN FACTS ARE CURRENTLY MISUNDERSTOOD. **WE ARE NOT DEVELOPING AN ARDF SYSTEM FOR USE BY ARMY** AND THEREFORE WE ARE NOT OUT TO PROVE THE

[much redaction]

RECEIVED BY AHQ.

TWO. ALTHOUGH IT SHOULD NOT BE CONNECTED WITH OUR REQUEST FOR AIRCRAFT CMM **WE HAVE NO OBJECTIONS TO TRIALS BEING CONDUCTED BETWEEN AUST AND ARDF AIRCRAFT AGAINST BEACON TRANSMISSIONS.** CAN SEE LITTLE POINT IN OPERATORS BEING DETACHED DUE TIME REQUIRED FOR TRAINING PRIOR ACCURATE RESULTS BEING OBTAINED. RESULTS OF TESTS BY BOTH SYSTEMS AGAINST BEACON TRANSMISSIONS SHOULD BE SUFFICIENT TO JUDGE ACCURACY.

THREE. REQUEST CONFIRMATION ASP IF FACTS AS OUTLINED IN PARA ONE ARE CORRECT AND IF SO IS THIS THE REASON FOR LACK OF ACTION IN ANSWERING COMD AFV REQUEST FOR AIRCRAFT. '

28.2.2 ARDF Report No 22

The ARDF Report No 22 for the period 1 – 16 February contained⁴⁹⁰:

S E C R E T COMINT CHANNELS SIGS85.
FOR MI8. ARDF REPORT N022

1. ARDF

A. PERIOD OF REPORT 1-16 FEB 68

B. FLYING TIME:

[corrupt] DAY 59 HRS

NIGHT NIL

C. RESULTS 58

D. CLASSIFICATION GOOD 14 FAIR 27 POOR 8 CUTS 9

E. NO FLYING 1 FEB EQPT DEFECT

2 FEB EQPT DEFECT

2. QUARTERLEY REPORT BEING COMILED AND WILL BE FORWARDED BY 26 FEB.

28.2.3 547 Sig Tp Progress Report for 1-29 Feb 68

The 547 Sig Tp Progress Report for 1-29 Feb 68⁴⁹¹ stated:

1. SET ROOM

ALFA. POSITIONS 1 X 24 HR DPM

⁴⁸⁹ DSD Declassified, 547 Sig Tp in Vietnam (tranche2).

⁴⁹⁰ DSD Declassified, 547 Sig Tp in Vietnam (tranche2).

⁴⁹¹ Documents received from ASD December 2015. and now available at <https://www.asd.gov.au/about/history/declassified>.



3 X 15-3/4 HR DPM
3 X 9-1/4 HR DPM
1 X 8 HR DPM

BRAVO. WATCH HOURS 52 HRS PER WEEK
CHARLIE. TRAINING
PRITCHARD UNDER TRAINING.

2. TASKING

1. VCMB05430	9. VCMBY0008
1A VCMB00607	10. VCMBY0007
2. VCMB00603	11. VCMBJ0239
3. VCMB00618	12. VCMB05435
4. VCMB05407	13. VCMBY9010
5. VCMBY9007	14. VCMBY9011
6. VCMB05423	15. VCMBY9012
7. VCMB05429	16. VCMB00605
8. VCMBJ0225	

DEVELOPMENT
VCXB 177, 188 (suspect 05429)

SEARCH BAND
POSN 3. 5000 – 5250 KCS
POSN 4. 5250 – 5500 KCS
POSN 5. 5500 – 5750 KCS
POSN 6. 5750 – 6000 KCS
POSN 7. 4 – 8 MCS
POSN 8. 4 – 8 MCS

3. ARDF 1 – 29 FEB INCLUSIVE

ALFA. (1) TOTAL FIXES – 124
(2) GRADINGS. GOOD 17 FAIR 76 POOR 13 CUTS 18
(3) TOTAL FLYING TIME – DAYLIGHT 115 HRS
NIGHT NIL
(4) NO FLYING 1 FEB/13 FEB – EQPT DEFECTS

4. MRDF

ALFA. HEARABILITY TEAM FROM 175 RR COY ATTACHED TO AUM352 FOR TESTS ON MRDF REQUIREMENTS. TESTS TO DATE SUCCESSFUL AND MRDF UNIT EXPECTED ABOUT 15 MARCH.

5. SIGNAL CENTRE

OUTAGES FOR FEBRUARY 12 PERCENT.

6. EQUIPMENT

ONE RA217 RECEIVER TO BE REPLACED. REMAINDER OK.

7. NEW WORKS.

NO CHANGE FROM PREVIOUS REPORT.

8. ADMINISTRATION

ALFA, LEAVE,
R&R SIG HARPER 17/22 FEB HONG KONG
SIG HALL 26 FEB - 2 MAR AUSTRALIA
SIG CLARKE 26 FEB - 2 MAR AUSTRALIA

BRAVO HOSPITALISATION,

CHARLIE. MOVEMENT



SEE STRENGTH RETURN

28.2.4 Summary of Main ARDF Fixes

The following table is a summary of the main ARDF fixes for February 1968⁴⁹²:

Date	Loc	Ident	Unit
10-Feb-68	YT0937	RAD 4069A	HQ 9 LID
16-Feb-68	YT2129	RAD 085H	HQ 5 LID
17-Feb-68	YS2386		HQ NVA 174 Regt
22-Feb-68	YT0128	RAD 303B	MIS 5 LID
24-Feb-68	YT0625	RAD 303?	MIE 5 LID
25-Feb-68	YT0524	RAD 136A	HQ VC 5 LID (South)
25-Feb-68	YT3037	RAD 372C	HQ 5 LID Elem
25-Feb-68	YT2837	RAD 297F	HQ 5 LID Elem
28-Feb-68	YS0896	RAD 4191B	HQ VC 3 Bn 274 Regt

28.2.5 ARDF Results

In later months ARDF results were produced similar to the following:

DATE	TIME	IDENTITY	FREQ	GOOD	FAIR	POOR	CUT	GRID REF	RADIUS
01JA71	0935	B4165	05263		X			Y8554954	1500
02JA71	0210	H0095	05595		X			YT362028	1000
	0237	H0084	05581		X			Y8331976	1000
	0508	B4223	05483		X			Y8185892	1000
03JA71	0215	H0084	05347		X			Y8305988	1000
	0705	H4000	05591		X			YT257076	1000
	0745	F0201	05610	X				Y8693950	0750
	0810	H0135	05446	X				YT082243	0750
	0905	B4223	05453	X				Y8186883	0500
04JA71	0307	B4223	05454	X				Y8188881	0500
	0640	U/I	05721		X			Y8315959	1500
	0725	U/I	05645				X	YT310118	0000
	0801	B4888	05735	X				YT783269	0500
	0845	H1523	05582		X			Y8711111	1000

Figure 208: (1971) Example ARDF Results

⁴⁹² Compiled by Bob Hartley from 547 Sig Tp Activity Reports supplied by ASD. No Monthly ARDF Reports available.



28.3 TET⁴⁹³ Offensive

28.3.1 Offensive Launched

In the early hours of 31 January 1968, the NVA and VC launched heavy ground, rocket and mortar attacks against most of the country's provincial capitals and cities. Saigon, Hue, many district capitals and other smaller towns came under fire. This was the beginning of the TET Offensive. The TET offensive was to last until 1 April⁴⁹⁴.

Barry Hampstead recalled:

Notwithstanding what has been previously written by a variety of people, not much of anything happened at Nui Dat. Certainly, I remember being woken by blasts of the Task Force siren early on the morning of 1 February 1968 following which members of 547 Sig Tp reported to SSM Jack Parker at our compound as required. We took up our assigned defensive positions and settled down to a nervous wait. Nothing happened.

Barry later wrote:

Dennis Nicholson has recalled in a post on the 7 Sig Regt Internet Forum, that on the morning of 1 February 1968, he heard mortars impact in the area to the west of Battery A, 1/83 Artillery (US), who were based in the south-western corner of the task force area.

Ian McNeill and Ashley Ekins in their book, On the Offensive pages 306-307, report: "About 45 minutes after the attack in Ba Ria began, an area 300 metres west of the 'Heavyweight' compound occupied by battery 'A' 1/83 Artillery (US), close to the south-western corner of 1ATF base, received approximately 40 rounds of 82mm mortar. About 25 of these rounds, suspected initially to be delay-fused, failed to detonate ...Two RPG missiles were also directed at the American's compound.

I have to admit that if I'd known about the above at the time it occurred, I would not have been as blasé as I may appear to have been. Sometimes, the less we know, the better off we are.

28.3.2 Operation COBURG

The 1 ATF forces involved in Operation COBURG⁴⁹⁵ felt the full brunt of the TET Offensive. Operation COBURG was a 1ATF operation outside Phuoc Tuy Province in Bien Hoa Province in an area east of Long Binh.

28.3.3 FIRE SUPPORT BASES

Fire Support Bases (FSB) Anderson and Harrison were established in the Area of Operations (AO).

⁴⁹³ TET, or Vietnamese New Year, is the most important celebration of Vietnamese culture.

⁴⁹⁴ Email from Ernie Chamberlain 13 Dec 2015: *According to US intelligence staffs, the 1st Phase of the Tết 1968 Offensive concluded on 6 April; the 2nd Phase - lasting 36 days, ended on 14 June; and the 3rd Phase lasted 33 days (18 August until early September 1968).* - Sorley, L., *Vietnam Chronicles: The Abrams Tapes*, ... op.cit., 2004, p.173. *For the first phase in Phuoc Tuy, in summary: D445 attacked Baria Town early on 31 January, and elements of 3RAR helped clear them from the Town (2RAR and 7RAR were approaches to the Biên Hòa and Long Binh base areas (Operation Coburg). Then, 3RAR assisted in clearing the enemy out of Long Dien Town.*

⁴⁹⁵ Operation Coburg took place in the period 24 Jan - 1 Mar 1968.



Figure 209: Operation Coburg Area of Operations

28.3.4 The Travels of Bill Hughes

Barry Hampstead wrote:

Dave Brockett was on R&R in Hong Kong⁴⁹⁶ and Bill Hughes had gone to Saigon for several days and was well settled in his Bachelor Officer Quarters (BOQ) when the offensive broke out.

On the morning of 31 January. – and well aware of the seriousness of the situation - he began investigating the possibility of a return to Nui Dat. He was told that he had absolute 'zero' priority so far as air travel was concerned and was advised to twiddle his thumbs at the BOQ because he was 'there for the duration'. Bill found out that the only possible way he could get back to the Task Force was if he managed to wangle his way on board a chopper from Free World HQ in Cholon to where the Task Force Forward HQ was located at Operation Coburg in Bien Hoa province. Then, if he was lucky, he might manage another ride back to Nui Dat.

The slightest chance of a return to 1ATF was all that Bill required and, next morning (1 February), he left his BOQ, caught a Saigon taxi-they continued to run throughout the offensive - and made his way to Cholon. Once there, Bill used his charm to find a seat on a chopper heading for 'Coburg' where he caused a stir by turning up in his polyester uniform. He then spent several hours speaking with the Task Force Intelligence Officer (IO), Major Geoff Cameron, before once more conning a chopper ride back to the relative safety of Nui Dat.

Bill eventually strolled into the 547 compound at about 5pm on 1 February, almost two days after the offensive against Saigon began. We gave him a big cheer. It was almost like seeing our dad come home.

⁴⁹⁶ Hong Kong 25-31 Jan Hong Kong, 1-12 feb ARL [As per Monthly Report]



Bill was given pride of place at the administrative parade and was fitted with a combat helmet covered with bullet holes and red splashes. Jack Parker and Barry Hampstead introduced him as the Saigon veteran and invited him to recount his experiences. Never one to be caught out, he responded in his inimitable style as the modest hero.

28.3.5 FSB Briefings

After briefing the Troop on his activities at the FSBs, Bill arranged for Barry Hampstead (Processing/Int Section) to go to AO Coburg to brief the Task Force Int Officer on how 547 Sig Tp analysed and saw the situation from a 547 Sig Tp Sigint perspective.

Barry Hampstead recalled:

Later that evening, I wondered if I should have cheered so loudly when Bill returned to the fold. He advised me that he had arranged for me to go to 'Coburg' to speak with Major Cameron where I was to brief him on the situation so far as 547 saw things.

I wasn't all that thrilled to be heading for 'Coburg' but to be honest, I was more concerned about what I was going to tell the IO. Bob Howell and his team continued their operations as usual during the period of the offensive but things were fairly quiet. In any case, armed with as much information as I could gather and after swapping my 9mm pistol for an SLR, I left Nui Dat early the next morning on a scheduled 'Huey'. We headed for 'Coburg'.

My briefing to Major Cameron didn't take long and he was reasonably happy with what I had to pass to him. In turn, he advised that the commanders were having trouble deciding which VC units were taking part in the offensive and I promised to have a close look at any Yank Airborne Radio Direction Finding (ARDF) fixes that may have been sent to us but which normally didn't provide much interest to 547 because they were often outside our TAOR. Our own ARDF teams continued to operate within the Phuoc Tuy area.

These type of briefings enhanced the reputation of 547 Sig Tp activities

Back at Nui Dat after a fairly quiet day at the 'war', I got stuck into the Yank signals containing their ARDF results and after fiddling with some of the calls copied by the Yank operators (and in consultation with Bob Howell), I was able to send a signal which indicated that a radio station known to serve an element of 274 VC Regiment (and which had been copied by our own ops albeit with the correct calls), was fixed by a Yank ARDF team just southeast of Saigon. I sent a Tacrep⁴⁹⁷ to Major Cameron, hoping that our information reached him quickly and that the system wasn't too bogged down with the 'Flash' signals which had become the norm in SVN.

28.3.6 Prior to TET

The book *Vietnam: The Complete Story of the Australian War*⁴⁹⁸ reported the following:

Australian Major William E. Hughes, OC 547 Signals Troop also noted, years later:

⁴⁹⁷ Tacrep. Tactical Report used by Sigint.

⁴⁹⁸ McKay, Gary; Davies, Bruce (2012-07-25). *Vietnam: The complete story of the Australian war* (Kindle Locations 6395-6403). Allen and Unwin. Kindle Edition.



The lack of enemy transmissions, from around 10 January 1968, across the frequency bands most commonly used by the Viet Cong, failed to detect any transmissions by 274 and 275 Regiments or their sub-units. It appeared . . . that 5 Viet Cong Division had disappeared completely from the airwaves.

According to the 5th Viet Cong Division's history, the division had moved well away from Phuoc Tuy Province in September 1967. During the period before Tet 1968 they were retraining and, in accord with their usual routine, radio silence would have prevailed. If their radio silence only became apparent on 10 January 1968 then they were much smarter with their signals behaviour than 547 Troop gave them credit. No one had picked that they had gone far away from Phuoc Tuy Province.

28.3.7 856th Radio Research Detachment Long Binh

Detailed at Annex J is an article that may help to explain why the operators at 547 Sig Tp heard little or nothing of the radio stations serving elements of 274 and 275 Regiments in the lead-up to and during the TET Offensive.

The US Army ASA 856th Radio Research Detachment⁴⁹⁹ was assigned in direct support to the 199 Light Infantry Brigade (199 LIB).

Extract from the book *Days of Valor*⁵⁰⁰:

Another source of operational intelligence was the 856th Radio Research Detachment. Only a few members of the brigade knew of the existence of this highly secretive unit. The 856th was a 50-man unit working to support the 199th LIB and other US units through the collection, analysis, and dissemination of signal intelligence. This organization intercepted radio traffic of the North Vietnamese Army and Viet Cong. Part of the collection effort was Radio Direction Finding (DF). The DF effort was conducted by three PRD-1 teams. These two-man teams were forward deployed with US forces with their PRD-1 Direction Finding equipment. The PRD-1 was World War II vintage equipment with limited range. Typically, the DF teams would set up on a fire support base where they would set up their equipment and go about the business of scanning the airwaves for enemy transmitter sites and determining bearings to these sites. Once a site was identified, the team would report their results to other DF teams that would attempt to identify the same site. The information was also passed back to the 856th headquarters where the bearings from the field teams were plotted on a map. The idea was to gain a "tight fix" on the site using triangulation, or by identifying a small triangle encompassing a small area where the enemy transmitter was located. The information was then passed to the 199th Brigade's commander. The brigade commander could pursue several courses of action. He could order artillery or mortar fire on the target to attempt to destroy it, or he could employ his aviation fire

⁴⁹⁹ <http://www.geocities.ws/Pentagon/Bunker/3946/856th/856th.html>: On April 6, 1966 the 856th Radio Research Detachment was reborn and assigned to the 199th Light Infantry Brigade. Most of the missions of the U.S. Army Security Agency were highly classified during the war effort. Secret cover designations (radio research designations) were used in lieu of the actual unit designations on unit lists and reports. So the 856th Army Security Agency Detachment became the 856th Radio Research Detachment (RRD) for service in Vietnam.

The 856th RRD was the only direct support unit to the 199th Light Infantry Brigade (LIB) to deploy with the 280-man advance party to Vietnam in November 1966. The 199th LIB, trained for counterinsurgency warfare, provided security in the III Corps tactical zone around the Long Binh complex, the Bien Hoa Air Base and other vital areas in and around the city of Saigon. The 856th RRD at that time was a 51 - man unit; an infantry officer (usually a captain) was the unit's commanding officer. The unit commander worked in coordination with the 199th's infantry commanders, offering them a means to check their signal security and improve their communications capabilities.

The overall mission of the 856th RRD was to locate enemy radio transmitters (enemy crystal radio sets) by use of triangulation techniques. The unit used three direction - finding tracking teams located at three different listening post sites, usually forming a triangle with one another. They intercepted, located and pinpointed Viet Cong transmitters. This information was then forwarded to the base camp operations center for interpretation and analysis. If the information was good, an artillery barrage would be called in on the enemy position.

As the result of the unit's Vietnam service, it received the Valorous Unit Award for combat actions during the Tet Offensive of 1968, three Meritorious Unit Commendations, three Vietnamese Cross of Gallantry - with Palm awards, and two Vietnamese Civil Action Honor Medals (First Class).>

⁵⁰⁰ Robert Tonsetic. *Days of Valor: An Inside Account of the Bloodiest Six Months of the Vietnam War*. Kindle Edition



support elements to neutralize the site. He could also direct that his ground forces attempt to locate the enemy site and destroy it, or attempt to capture it intact. In all cases time was of the essence since the enemy typically moved their transmitters on a routine basis after going on the air, and they rarely used the same site twice. Since the enemy knew that US forces were capable of locating their transmitters, they often remoted their radios and antennas to distances of a mile or more from their headquarters.

Specialist-five Dave Parks led one of the PRD-1 teams that supported the 199th LIB. Parks recalled that the enemy radio traffic continued to increase throughout the month of January, a strong indicator that the enemy was up to something. While the 856th Radio Detachment provided signal intelligence to the 199th LIB, the 179th Military Intelligence (MI) Detachment provided all other intelligence. From 15 through 25 January 1968, numerous reports were received that indicated units of the 5th VC Division as they moved out of War Zone D toward their Tet targets. By 27 January, the 5th VC Headquarters was located in eastern Uniontown, while the division artillery and supporting divisional units were confirmed to be in the central portion of AO Columbus. The division's assault regiments, the 274th and 275th VC Regiments, were also located in AO Columbus and Uniontown. The movement of these two regiments, numbering almost 3,000 men, gave a clear indication of an impending attack. Assisting the 274th and 275th Regiments was the U-1 Local Force Battalion. This battalion provided reconnaissance support, communication liaison, and guides to for the main force regiments as they infiltrated into the Bien Hoa and Long Binh areas. The 179th Order of Battle specialists were also trying to locate the 88th NVA Regiment, which was known to operate with the 5th VC Division. US intelligence units were not able to locate the 88th. An unaccounted for NVA Regiment of 1,500 hard-core regulars, weighed heavily on Colonel Davison's mind. He realized that his own brigade was opposed by a division-size force of three regiments. Despite the large number of VC/NVA forces pouring into the 199th's AO s, enemy contacts with brigade forces were few....

....Bien Hoa Airbase-2300 Hours, 30 January 1968

Specialist Dave Parks was puzzled when around 2300 hours on 30 January, enemy radio traffic "petered out to nothing, nothing at all." Parks further recalled that "This was surprising, very unusual, I'd never heard nothing beforeWe switched off, taking turns on the knobs, that is, turning the frequency knob while straining to hear an enemy radio. Neither of us were able to bring one up-the whole NVA-VC radio world had gone silent." Parks got on his radio and contacted his teammates at other sites who reported the same anomaly.. Then he radioed the 856th Detachment's duty officer at Long Binh. The duty officer confirmed what Parks was thinking. The enemy had gone to radio silence everywhere. To signal intelligence analysts this meant one thing: a major attack was about to begin.



CHAPTER 29 – MARCH 1968

29.1 Personnel

29.1.1 Arrivals and Departures

Change-over of personnel continued during March.

Arrival

12 March

Captain Steve Zagon

Departures

11 March

Corporal Dennis Nicholson (Medevac)

12 March

Captain Bill Hughes

29.1.2 Changeover of Command

On 11 March Major Peter Murray assumed Command of the Troop.

29.1.3 Intelligence Officer

Steve Zagon commenced a hand-over from Dave Brockett as the Troop Int Officer and 2IC.



Figure 210: Captain Steve Zagon⁵⁰¹

29.1.4 HQ AFV Monthly Strength Return

The strength of 547 Sig Tp (less Det) was listed in the March issue of HQ AFV Monthly Report⁵⁰² as an Established Strength of 35, a Supplement of one, and a Posted Strength of 34.

⁵⁰¹ Photo courtesy Jeff Payne.

⁵⁰² <http://www.awm.gov.au/collection/AWM98/R723/1/13/3/>



29.2 Administration

29.2.1 Troop Buildings

29.2.1.1 Completed Buildings

As mentioned previously, when entering the compound, the building to the right was the operations building containing the set room, ARDF and processing section. Opposite, to the left was the Troop HQ building housing the Comcen, OC's Office, Orderly Room and a Technical Maintenance workshop at the rear. A Q-Store tent was north of the operations building.

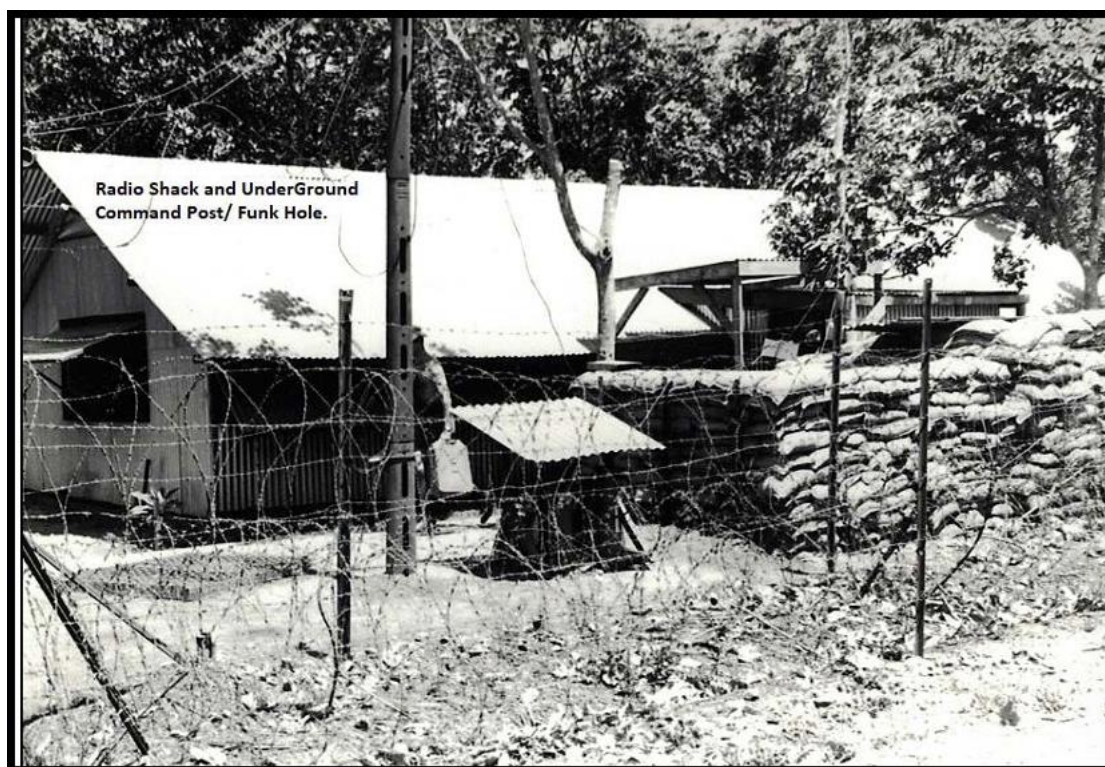


Figure 211: Operations building. Command Bunker outside the entrance. ⁵⁰³

29.2.1.2 Processing/Intelligence Building

On 21 March, Construction began in another building to house stores and the Intelligence/ Processing Staff. This building was to be located north of the Operations Building, connected by a covered walkway, and large enough to convert the eastern end into a Troop Canteen.

⁵⁰³ Photo courtesy Jock Lamont.



29.3 Operations

29.3.1 547 Sig Tp Progress Report for 1-31 Mar 68

The 547 Sig Tp Progress Report for 1-31 Mar 68⁵⁰⁴ stated:

1. SET ROOM
ALFA. POSITIONS 3 X 15-3/4 HR DPM
4 X 9-1/4 HR DPM
1 X 8 HR DPM⁵⁰⁵

BRAVO. WATCH HRS 53 HRS PER WEEK

CHARLIE. IN TRG NIL

2. TASKING
ALFA. PRIORITY TASKS

1A VCMB00607	9. VCMBY9008
1B VCMB05430	10. VCMBY9007
2. VCMB00618	11. VCMB05435
3. VCMBJ0338	12. VCMBY9010
4. VCMB05407	13. VCMBY9011
5A VCMBJ0265	14. VCMBY9012
5B VCMBY9013	15. VCMB00605
6. VCMB05423	16A VCMB00628
7. VCMB05429	16B VCMBN4642
8. VCMBJ0225	

DEVELOPMENT
VCXB 177, 181

SEARCH BAND
POSN 3. 5000 – 5250 KHZ⁵⁰⁶
POSN 4. 5250 – 5500 KHZ
POSN 5. 5500 – 5750 KHZ
POSN 6. 5750 – 6000 KHZ

BRAVO. GEN OBSNS.

1. ALL OF HQ 5 DIV (INCL MI AND MA ELMS) CONG [SIC] TOGETHER AT YT3525. ON 22 MAR ARDF FIXED AN UNIDENTIFIED ELM OF B3 FRONT TO BE COLOCATED WITH HQ 5 DIV.
2. MI ELMS CONTINUE REPORTING ON HWY ONE TP AND VEH MOV. REPORTING OF US POSNS AT 11 ACR BASE (YS4497) IS NOW INTENSIVE.
3. GP 84 (REAR SERVICES) MOVED FROM NUI DINH MTNS TO PRE-TET LOC NORTH OF THUA TICH (YS5892).
3. ARDF 1 – 31 MAR INCLUSIVE
ALFA. (1) TOTAL FIXES – 66
(2) GRADINGS. 4 GOOD 43 FAIR 5 POOR 14 CUTS
(3) TOTAL FLYING TIME – DAYLIGHT 84 HRS
NIGHT NIL

BRAVO. 4 DAYS FLYING LOST DUE AC AND EQPT FAULTS

⁵⁰⁴ Documents received from ASD December 2015. and now available at <https://www.asd.gov.au/about/history/declassified>.

⁵⁰⁵ No ARDF position included and it appears that the sets are not manned 2400-0800 approx. These figures would equate roughly to: 8 intercept positions manned 0800 – 1700 and 3 positions manned 1700 – 2400 (times approximate).

⁵⁰⁶ Note change from KCS to KHZ.



2 DAYS NO FIXES AS AC SEARCHED UNSUCCESSFULLY ALONG SE COAST PHUOC TUY IN SP OP PINAROO.

4. MRDF
HEARABILITY TEAM DEPARTED 6 MAR. OVERALL RESULTS EXCELLENT. PROPOSED SITE APPROVED AND CLEARING OF RUBBER ALMOST COMPLETE. HAVE ADVISED 303 RR BN THAT SITE READY AND EXPECT INSTL TO ARRIVE MID APR.
5. SIGCEN
OUTAGES FOR MAR ONE PERCENT
6. EQPT
A. TWO MODIFIED R5223 AND ONE RA329⁵⁰⁷ ON TRIAL [CORRUPT] ONE RA325 ⁵⁰⁸AWAITING PARTS. ESTABLISHING COMPLETE SPARE PARTS HOLDINGS AS FORMER SYSTEM NOW UNSUITABLE.
B. RVE10/68 FOR ONE GEN SET DIESEL 22 KVA AND ONE TFR 15 KVA IN LIEU TWO GEN SETS 5 KVA SUBMITTED 30 MAR.
7. NEW WORKS
FLOOR OF NEW BLDG COMMENCED THIS WEEK BUT DO NOT EXPECT FURTHER WORK UNTIL MAY DUE SHORTAGE MATERIALS FROM US SOURCES.
8. SSL PROJECT⁵⁰⁹
RECORDINGS FORWARDED 28 MAR.
9. VISITORS IN
A. MAJ ADMS 175 RR COY MR T LEE NSAPACREP TO DISCUSS MRDF.
B. MR LUCKMAN DSD FOR LIAISON (AND BEER RATION)
10. A. R AND R LEAVE. SGT BRADLEY 18-24 AUST
SIG ASHTON 11-17 AUST
SSGT BLACKER 25-31 AUST
B. R AND C LEAVE CPL LAMONT AND CPL HARRISON 16-18
LCPL THOMAS AND CPL CONAGHAN 19-21
C. DETS SSGT APPLEBY AND SGT FIELD TO 303 RR BN 8 – 10.
D. HOSP [Redacted]
E. MOV SEE STRENGTH RETURN
11. FOR CO 7 SIGS AND CATTANACH. WILL CONTINUE CONSIGNMENTS AS DISCUSSED WITH HUGHES. UNDERSTAND REQUIREMENTS ARE TWO TINS AND TWO CARTONS PER MONTH RESPECTIVELY. HAS LT COL WHITE HAVE ANY REQUIREMENT QUERY.

⁵⁰⁷ The Racal RA-329 units comprised a Racal RA-217D HF receiver and Racal MA323 FSK unit mounted in a "ruqqedised" casing.



⁵⁰⁸ Not identified.

⁵⁰⁹ Single Station Location. First time SSL noted.



29.3.2 Summary of Main ARDF Fixes

The following table is a summary of the main ARDF fixes for March 1968⁵¹⁰:

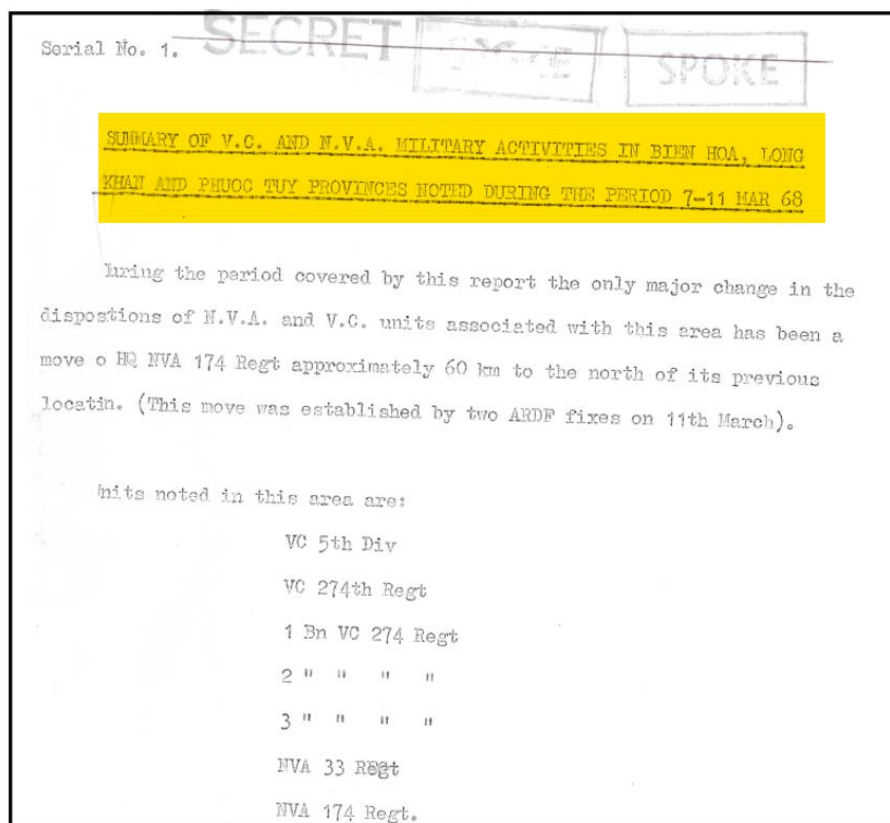
Date	Loc	Ident	Unit
2-Mar-68	YT3503		HQ NVA 33 Regt
3-Mar-68	YT3202	RAD 4191D	HQ VC 2 Bn 274 Regt
5-Mar-68	YT0330	RAD 4191C	HQ VC 1 Bn 274 Regt
5-Mar-68	YT3202	RAD 4191D	HQ VC 2 Bn 274 Regt
5-Mar-68	YT1125	RAD 303C	MIE of 5 LID
5-Mar-68	YT0925	RAD 303A	MIS 5 LID
5-Mar-68	YS 3296	RAD 4191D	HQ VC 2 Bn 274 Regt
5-Mar-68	YT0929	RAD 5461A	Arty Elem 5 LID
5-Mar-68	YT2900	RAD 4191D	HQ VC 2 Bn 274 Regt
5-Mar-68	YT2700	RAD 4191D	HQ VC 2 Bn 274 Regt
6-Mar-68	YS3164	RAD 4241H	MIE C5
8-Mar-68	YS3391	RAD 4191A	HQ VC 274 Regt
10-Mar-68	YS3067	RAD 4887E	HQ COSVN 84 RSG
11-Mar-68	YT1844		HQ NVA 174 Regt
11-Mar-68	YT2518		HQ VC 5 Div
11-Mar-68	YS1898	RAD 303C	MIE of 5 LID
15-Mar-68	YS3669	RAD 4157A	HQ COSVN 84 RSG
15-Mar-68	YS3369	RAD 4157A	HQ COSVN 84 RSG
17-Mar-68	YT3018	RAD 4191A	HQ VC 274 Regt
17-Mar-68	YS5195	RAD 303E	MIE of 5 LID
17-Mar-68	YS5394	RAD 303E	MIE of 5 LID
19-Mar-68	YT2030	RAD 4191A	HQ 274 Regt
19-Mar-68	YT2129	RAD 4191A	HQ VC 274 Regt
20-Mar-68	YS3663	RAD 4887E	HQ COSVN 84 RSG
21-Mar-68	YT2617	RAD 4191C	HQ VC 1 Bn 274 VC Regt
25-Mar-68	YT2319	RAD 4191C	HQ VC 1 Bn 274 VC Regt
27-Mar-68	YT2015	RAD 4191C	HQ 1 Bn 274 VC Regt

⁵¹⁰ Compiled by Bob Hartley from 547 Sig Tp Activity Reports supplied by ASD. No Monthly ARDF Reports available



29.3.3 Weekly Enemy Summaries

It appears that the Troop commenced compiling *Weekly Summaries of Enemy Activities*⁵¹¹ recovered by the Troop in the Australian AO⁵¹². The first summary noted as Serial No. 1. is very brief and contained an attached A3 size⁵¹³ sketch map⁵¹⁴.

Figure 212: Summary Sheet No 1⁵¹⁵

Note:

The authors have not been able to establish why this and later Summaries and maps did not include Local Force Battalions and Companies

Note:

Readers will also note that there is no laid down format or structure of future Summaries and Maps, including unit identities and abbreviations. Authors appear to have their own choice.

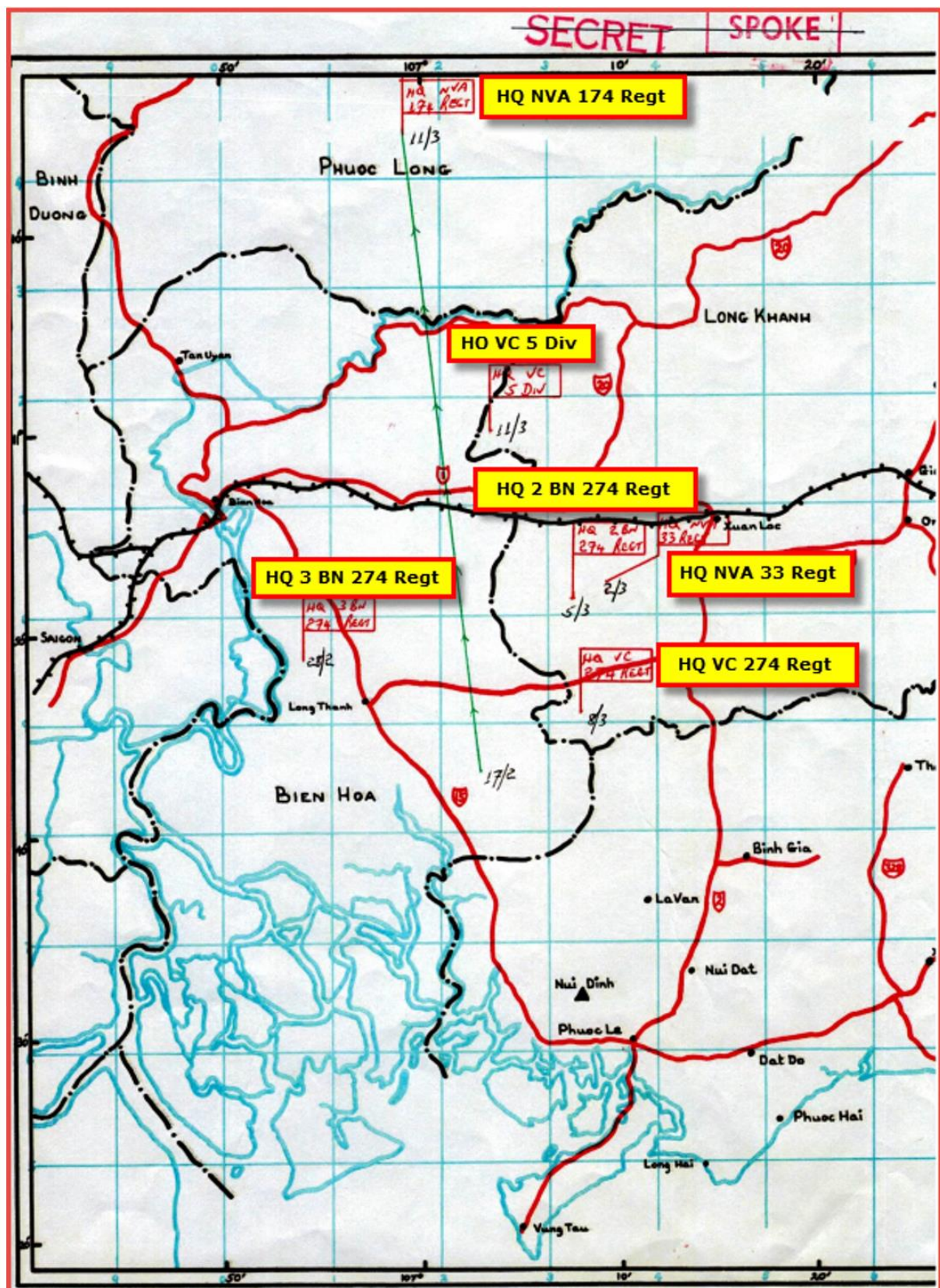
⁵¹¹ The summaries only report on the major units associated with VC 5th Div. The local force battalions are not seen until March 1970.

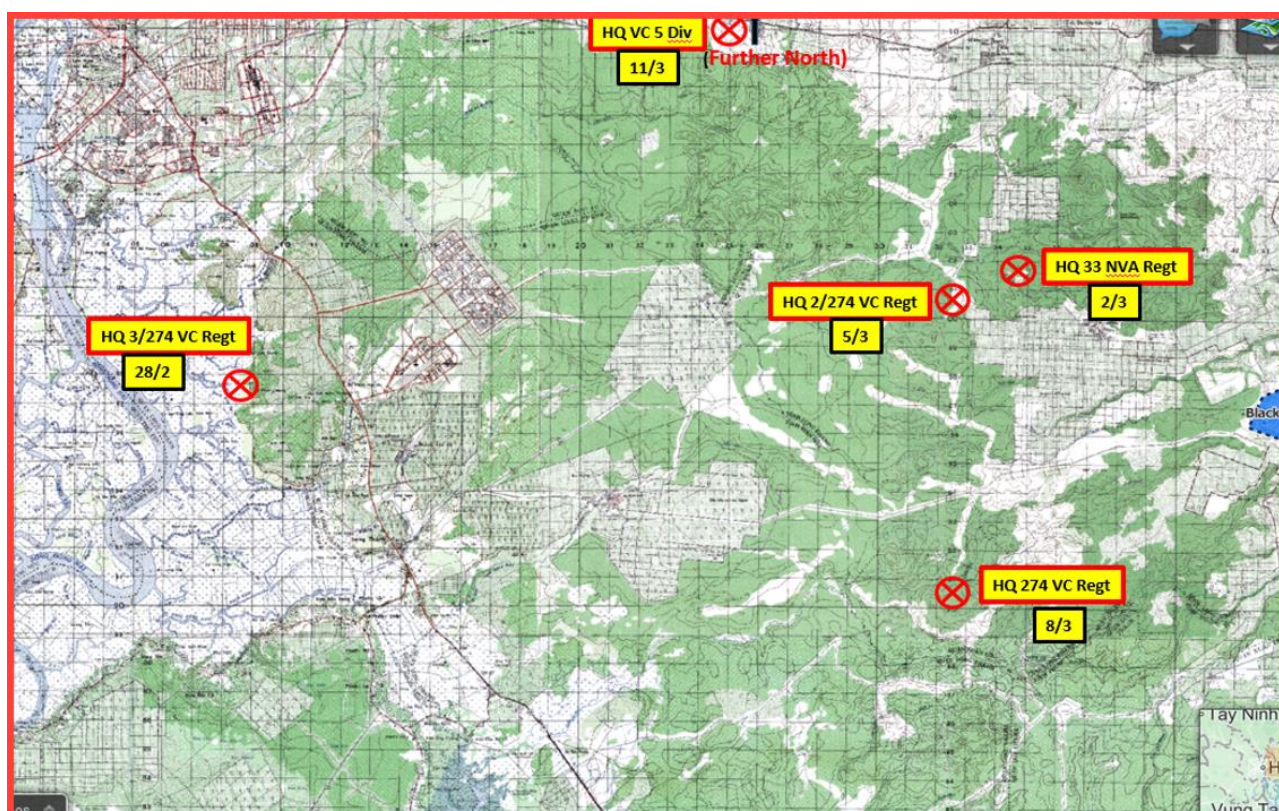
⁵¹² ASD archives of 547 Sig Tp material.

⁵¹³ 420 x 297mm. Future maps will only be displayed below when there is a significant event.

⁵¹⁴ Documents received from ASD December 2015.

⁵¹⁵ Note that NVA 33 and 174 Regts are not included in the summaries but shown on the maps.

Figure 213: Part of sketch map⁵¹⁶

Figure 214: Plotted on a military map⁵¹⁷

29.3.4 Troop General Summary

The Summary for the period 15 to 22 March⁵¹⁸ contained the following information⁵¹⁹: **(Copied verbatim – original too poor to insert)**

General Summary of Movements

The HQ VC 5th LID⁵²⁰ (South) (RAD 136A) has not been observed in any movement since located in its present position on 25th Feb.

The HQ VC 5th LID Element (RAD 4138A) also has not been observed in any movement since located in its present position on 29th Jan.

An interesting development is the movement of the HQ VC 274th Regt (RAD 4191A) to the north of the Song Dong Nai⁵²¹ River on the 20/3. This entity was previously fixed by ARDF on 17/3. This represents a move of approximately 15 km.

⁵¹⁶ No actual locations were given in the summary and due to the size of the map, locations are not very accurate. [Highlighted unit identities inserted by authors.] All sketch maps were A3 size and only the main portion has been copied.

⁵¹⁷ Plotted by Bob Hartley.

⁵¹⁸ Documents received from ASD December 2015.

⁵¹⁹ The majority of the summaries are copies of carbon duplicates and do not reproduce well enough for insertion.

⁵²⁰ LID = Light Infantry Division.

⁵²¹ The Đồng Nai River (sông Đồng Nai) is a river in Vietnam that originates in the Central Highlands region of the southern portion of the country. It is approximately 586 km in length. It gives its name to Đồng Nai Province.



The 1st Battalion VC 274 Regt (RAD4191C) has apparently followed its control and has moved approx 15 km north of its last position on 5/3. This new location is in the same approx. area as that the HQ VC 274 Regt occupied prior to its move.

The 2 Battalion VC 274 VC Regt (RAD 4191D) however has not been observed in any movement since last located in its present position on 5/3.

The two entities of HQ COSVN Rear Services Group 84 (RADs 4157A and 4887E) have not been observed in any significant movement since last located in the Nui Dinh Hills area.

General Summary of Communications

The HQ VC 5th LID (RAD 136A) has not been observed in communications during the period covered.

The HQ VC 274th Regt has communicated with its subordinates 1, 2 & 3 Battalions (RADs 4191C, 4191D & 4191B) with much traffic being passed between 4191A & 4191C and 4191A & 4191B.

HQ COSVN Rear Services Group 84 (RAD 4887E) was noted in attempts to establish communications with 4887D (an unidentified entity) and an unidentified entity of the same link as itself but met with limited success and no messages were exchanged.

HQ COSVN Rear Services Group 84 (RAD 4157A) has communicated with its subordinates 4157B, 4157C, 4157D but with negligible traffic being exchanged.

The MIS ⁵²² of VC 5th LID (RAD 303A) has attempted to communicate with the MIE [⁵²³] of 5 LID (RAD 303B) but met with no success.

The MIS of VC 5th LID (RAD 303A) has established communications with another MIE of 5 LID (303C) but passed only a few messages.

However, yet another MIE of 5 LID (RAD 303E) has continued its activity in reporting to its control (303A) regarding troop and transport deployments in the Xuan Loc/Suoi Ram area⁵²⁴.

The following information was extracted from the Enemy General Summary for the period 22 to 29 March⁵²⁵:

General Summary of Movements

HQ VC 5 LID located on 24/3 approximately 12 kms from its normal position.

HQ 274 VC Regt has not been noted in any movement.

1 Bn 274 VC Regt noted in a north-western direction on 25/3 and later relocated in a south-westerly direction.

2 Bn 274 VC Regt no change.

Neither of the entities serving HQ RSG have been noted in any significant movements⁵²⁶.

General Summary of Communications

There was little traffic passing between HQ VC 5th LID and HQ VC 274 Regt.

HQ 274 VC Regt communicated with 1 Bn daily with a reduced volume of messages being passed.

HQ 274 VC Regt was not seen communicating with 2 Bn.

⁵²² MIS = Military Intelligence Section.

⁵²³ MIE = Military Intelligence Element.

⁵²⁴ This indicates that the Troop was able to decrypt the traffic passing between the entities.

⁵²⁵ Documents received from ASD December 2015. and now available at <https://www.asd.gov.au/about/history/declassified>.

⁵²⁶ It is unclear if these notes mean that the entities have not been heard transmitting, not fixed or fixes indicated no movement.



The 5th LID MIS has continued communicating with its subordinate MISs. MIE (RAD 303E) is still located in the Xuan Loc/Suoi Ram area and continues to report on troop and transport movements⁵²⁷.

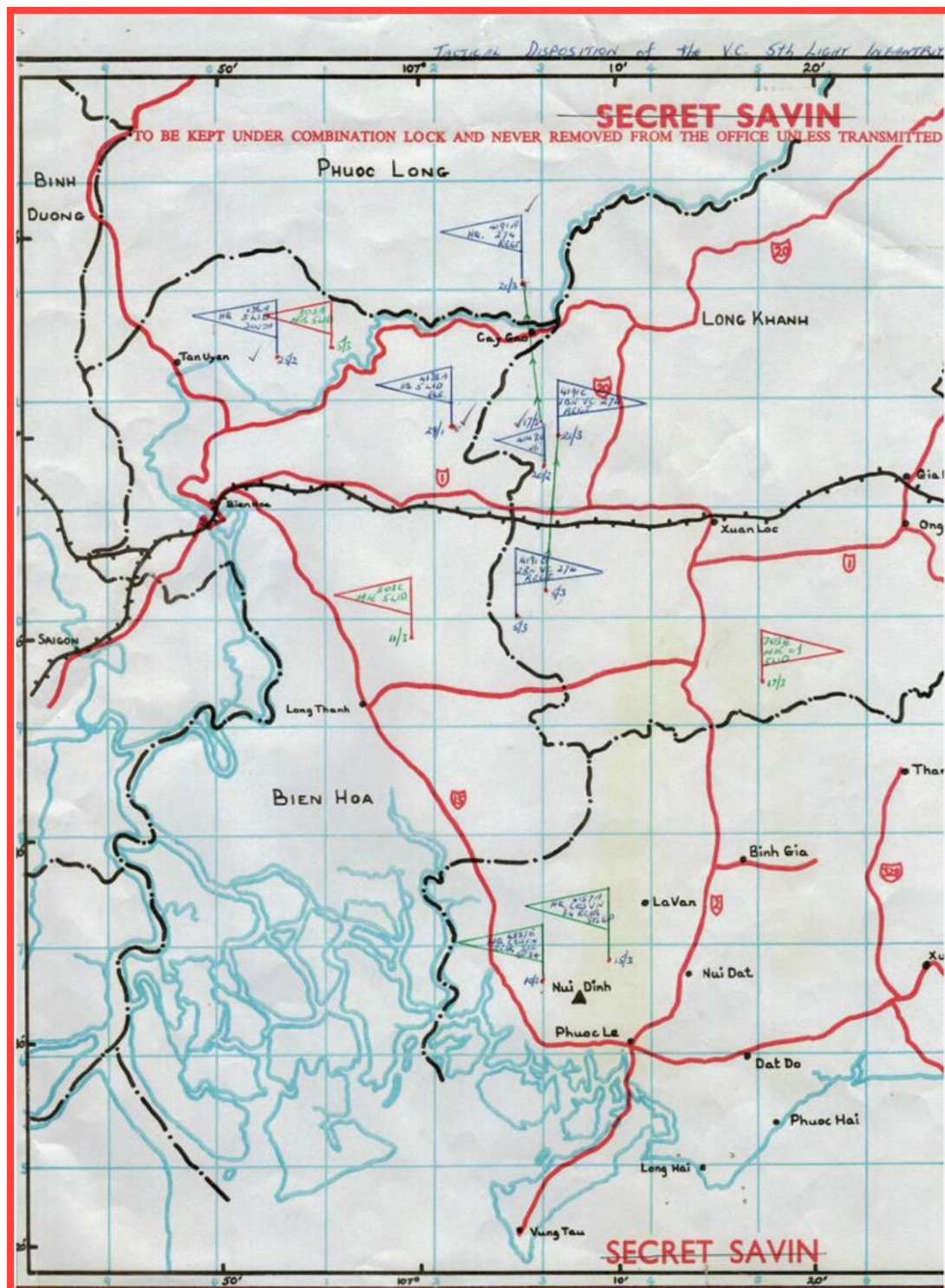


Figure 215: Summary Map 15 - 22 March 1968

⁵²⁷ It is unclear if these notes mean that the entities have not been heard transmitting, not fixed or fixes indicated no movement.



Time Covered. 22/3/68 to 29/3/68.

GENERAL SUMMARY OF THE 5th LIGHT INFANTRY DIVISION.

136A. H.Q. V.C. 5th Light Infantry Division.	Mil. Intell. Elements of V.C. 5th L.I.D.
H.Q. V.C. 274th Regiment.	H.Q. Rear Services Group 84.
1st Battalion V.C. 274th Regt.	H.Q. 9th Light Infantry Division.
2nd Battalion V.C. 274th Regt.	Possible new rad 1103B (ex- rad 303B)

(A) Summary of Movements.

(i) The H.Q. V.C. 5th L.I.D. (Rad 136A) has been noted in movement from its position on to a new position on located by ARDF on 24/3 approx. 1.2 kms. from former position.

(ii) The H.Q. 274th Regt. (Rad 4191A) since its spectacular re-location on the 19/3 has not been noted in any movements.

(iii) The 1st Battalion V.C. 274th Regt. (Rad 4191C) appeared to be following its control when noted in a north-westerly direction on 25/3. However since then it has been re-located in a south-westerly direction from its former position.

(iiii) The 2nd Battalion V.C. 274th Regt. (Rad 4191D) has not been noted in any movement since located by ARDF at its present position as per map.

(v) With the exception of rad 303A (Mil Intell. Section of 5 L.I.D.) none of the Military Intelligence Elements have been observed in any movement. Rad 303A however has been re-located in a north-easterly direction following a parallel path to the H.Q. V.C. 5th L.I.D.

(vi) Neither of the entities serving the H.Q. Rear Services Group (Rads 4157A and 4837E) have been noted in any significant movements.

(B) Summary of Communications.

(i) The H.Q. V.C. 5th L.I.D. (Rad 136A) has been contacting its subordinate the H.Q. V.C. 274th Regt. (Rad 136D) with limited exchange of messages.

(ii) During the period covered the H.Q. V.C. 274th Regt. (Rad 4191A) has communicated with the 1st Battalion V.C. 274th Regt daily with a continually reducing volume of messages being exchanged.

(iii) However the H.Q. V.C. 274th Regt. (Rad 4191A) does not appear to have a close interest in communicating with its subordinate, the 2nd Battalion V.C. 274th Regt (Rad 4191D) as it has not been observed in any attempts to communicate during the time covered.

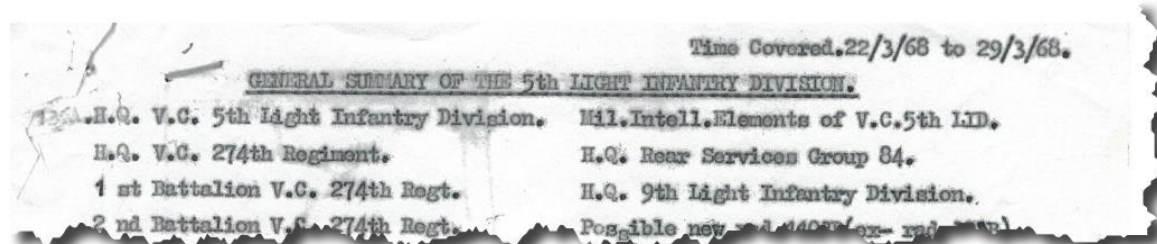
(iiii) There have been continuing exchanges of ~~com~~ messages between the M.I.S. of the 5th L.I.D. (Rad 303A) and its two Military Intelligence Element subordinates (Rads 303C and 303E). Rad 303E is still located in the Xuan Loc/Suoi Ram area and continues to report on troop and transport movements.

(v) Limited exchanges of messages between the H.Q. Rear Services Group 84 and its subordinates have been observed.

Note. The ex-Rad 303B is now being regarded as the possible 1103B which is ~~communicating~~ communicating with its ~~possible~~ ^{possible former} control 1103A (Rad 303E). This change has occurred because of the unusual nature of the lateral working within the Military Intell. Net of the V.C. 5th L.I.D.

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BY ASD
SIGNED BY:
DATE: 12/8/2015

Figure 216: Summary 22 - 29 March 1968

Figure 217: General Summary 22 Feb - 29 Mar 68⁵²⁸

Time covered. 22/3/68 to 29/3/68
GENERAL SUMMARY OF THE 5th LIGHT INFANTRY DIVISION

1. H.Q. V.C. 5th Light Infantry Division	Mil. Intell. Elements of V.C. 5th LID.
H.Q. V.C. 274th Regiment.	H.Q. Rear Services Group 84.
1st Battalion V.C. 274th Regt.	H.Q. 9th Light Infantry Division.
2nd Battalion V.C. 274th Regt.	Possible new rad 1103B (ex- rad. 303B).

(A) Summary of Movements

- (i) The H.Q. V.C. 5th L.I.D. (Rad 136A) has been noted in movement from its position on to a new position on located by ARDF on 24/3 approx. 12 kms. from former position.
- (ii) The H.Q. 274th Regt. (Rad 4191A) since its spectacular re-location on the 19/3 has not been noted in any movements.
- (iii) The 1st Battalion V.C. 274th Regt. (Rad 4191C) appeared to be following its control which noted in a north-easterly direction on 25/3. However since then it has been re-located in a south-westerly direction from its former position.
- (iiii) The 2nd Battalion V.C. 274th Regt. (Rad 4191D) has not been noted in any movement since located by ARDF at its present position as per map.
- (v) With the exception of rad 303A (Mil Intell. Section of 5 L.I.D.) none of the Military Intelligence Elements have been observed in any movement. Rad 303A however has been re-located in a north-easterly direction following a parallel path to the H.Q. V.C. 5th L.I.D.
- (vi) Neither of the entities serving the H.Q. Rear Services Group (Rads 4157A and 4887E) have been noted in any significant movements.

Summary of Communications

- (1) The H.Q. V.C. 5th L.I.D. (Rad 136A) has been contacting its subordinate the H.Q. V.C. 274th Regt. (Rad 136D) with limited exchange of messages.
- (ii) During the period covered the H.Q. V.C. 274th Regt. (Rad 4191A) has communicated with the 1st Battalion V.C. 274th Regt daily with a continually reducing volume of messages being exchanged.
- (iii) However the HQ. V.C. 274th Regt. (Rad 4191A) does not appear to have a close interest in communicating with its subordinate, the 2nd Battalion V.C. 274 Regt (Rad 4191D) as it has not been observed in any attempts to communicate during the time covered.
- (iiii) There have been continuing exchanges of messages between the M.I.S. of the 5th L.I.D. (Rad 303A) and its two Military Intelligence Element subordinates (Rads 303C and 303E). Rad 303E is still located in the Xuan Loc/Suoi Ram area and continues to report on troop and transport movements.
- (v) Limited exchanges of messages between the H.Q. Rear Services Group 84 and its subordinates have been observed

Note. The ex-Rad 303B is now being regarded as the possible 1103B which is

⁵²⁸ The majority of the Summaries are too poor to insert, so the majority (possibly all) have been transcribed and in the main errors and corruptions have been included as originally inserted.



Communicati9ong with its possible control 1103A (possibly former Rad 303E). This change has occurred because of the unusual nature of the lateral working within the Military Intell. Net of the V.C. 5th L.I.D.

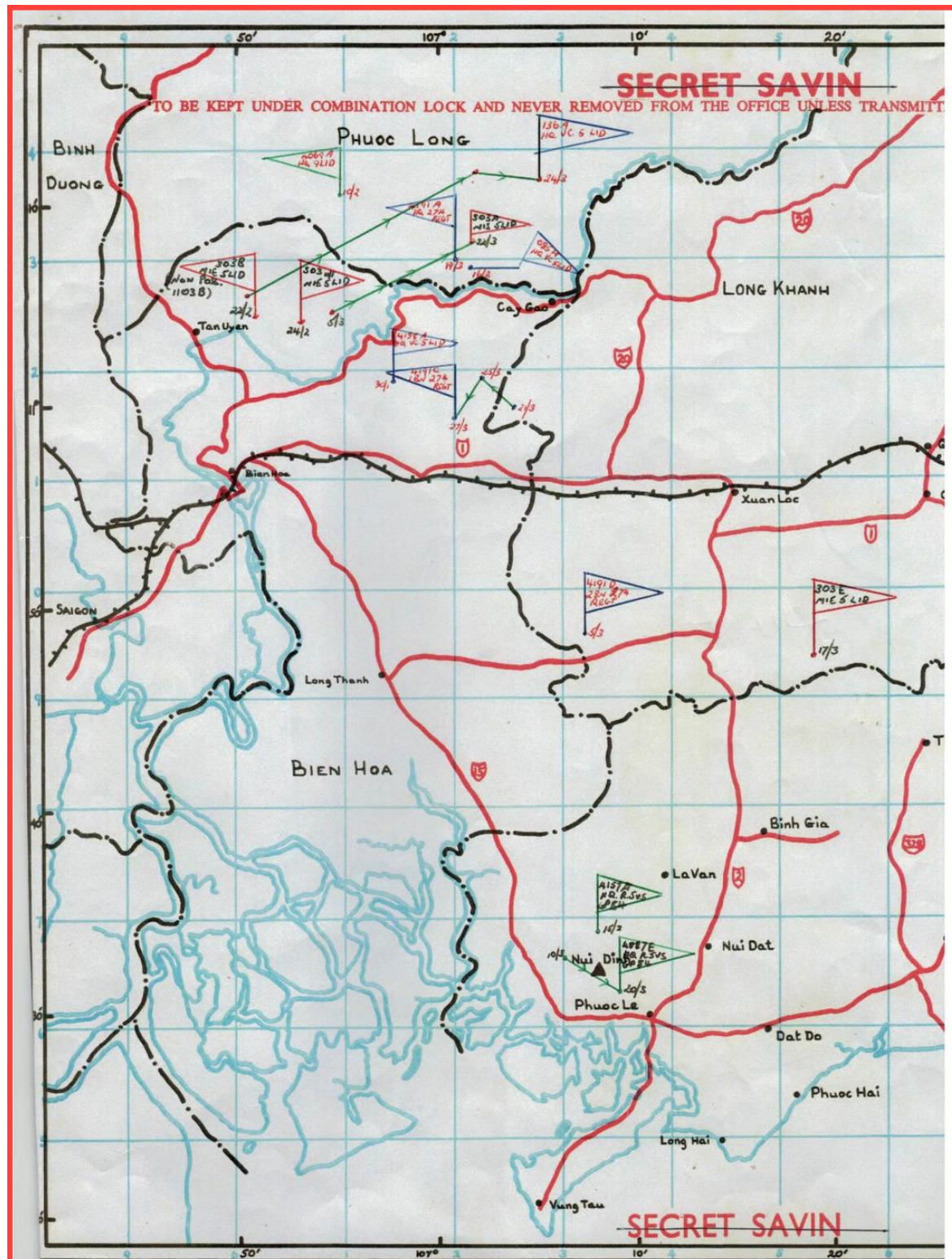


Figure 218: Map Summary 22 - 29 March 1968



29.3.5 Communications Nets/Links

The following is a reconstruction of the nets and /or links recovered as mentioned in the above summaries:

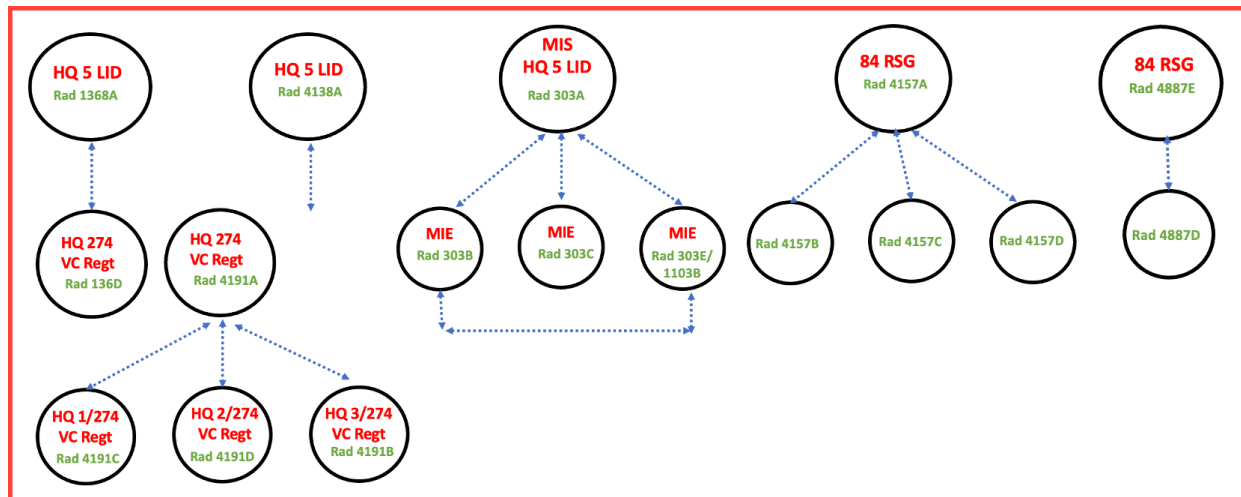


Figure 219: Recovered Communication Nets/Links⁵²⁹

⁵²⁹ Compiled by Bob Hartley.



CHAPTER 30 – APRIL 1968

30.1 Personnel

30.1.1 Arrivals and Departures

April saw a large change-over of personnel.

Arrivals

15 April

Sergeant Jim Brill

16 April

Corporal Warner Madden

Signalman John Middleton

22 April

Sergeant Laurence Duell

Sergeant James Kinder

Corporal Hayden Hunter

30 April

Staff Sergeant John Thorpe

Corporal John Hunter

Corporal Tom Williams

Departures

2 April

Sergeant Bob Field

15 April

Captain Richard Brockett

23 April

Corporal Mike Conaghan

Corporal Roger Harrison

30 April

Sergeant John Bull

Sergeant Barry Hampstead

Sergeant Robert Howell

Corporal Robert Lamont

30.1.2 Employment Areas

Jim Brill and Jock Kinder were initially allocated to the Set Room and after a few weeks were transferred to the ARDF team. Laurie Duell, Tom Williams, John Hunter and Hayden Hunter joined the Processing Section. John Thorpe assumed the duties of Set Room Supervisor and Tex Middleton also went into the Set Room.



30.1.3 161 Recce Flt Fixed Wing Pilots

In April, 2nd Lieutenant Richard Tippet joined 161 Recce Flt as a fixed wing pilot.

30.1.4 Hoa Long Dance and Dat Do Dogs

In April a notice was displayed asking for interested persons to attend a dance at the Hoa Long⁵³⁰ Rice Mill the following Saturday night. The dance was supposed to be sponsored by the Young South Vietnamese Ladies for Freedom and Democracy Association. The details, covering transport, dress and weapons was presented on a phoney sheet. The whole thing had actually been dreamed up by 104 Sig Sqn and while it looked like the genuine article everyone except the new arrivals knew it to be a joke.

On the Saturday, Laurie Duell, Tom Williams, Haydon Hunter and John Hunter arrived ready to go at 104's transport lines. After being reprimanded by 104's orderly sergeant, Sergeant Max Hardy, for not wearing ties they were taken for a two-hour drive around the task force area then unceremoniously returned to 104's lines.



Figure 220: Hoa Long Dance sign later placed by MPs

30.1.5 The Born Losers

Laurie Duell became known as the 'born loser' after that incident. After all who else would stand stark naked in a tropical downpour enjoying a wash only to be confronted by a helicopter depositing visiting US Red Cross girls.

Snowy Turner was not much luckier. He was selected for a week's detachment to 145th Radio Research Company⁵³¹ at Long Binh but managed to catch the wrong Caribou out of Luscombe

⁵³⁰ Hoa Long was a previously VC-controlled village just south of Nui Dat.

⁵³¹ This was the start of an on-going exchange of operators with sister US Sigint stations.



Field. Snowy was missing for three days. When he finally turned up it was discovered that he had actually been flown out to FSB Hotel 3 well within the depths of tiger country.

30.1.6 Anzac Day Flight

Rod Harper recalls:

*ANZAC day of 1968 started early with a few coffee royals with the Troop and by the time I was scheduled to fly at 0800 hrs I really didn't need a plane. I fell asleep on the return flight and the pilot cut the engine... He p****d himself laughing when he saw my reaction. We had a good rapport with them and, once off the deck, there was no rank. It was a welcome relief to be free of the ground level heat and humidity.*

30.1.7 HQ AFV Monthly Strength Return

There was no change to the Establishment Strength of the Troop in April⁵³²:

30.2 Operations

30.2.1 547 Sig Tp Progress Report for 1-30 Apr 68

The 547 Sig Tp Progress Report for 1-30 Apr 68⁵³³ stated:

1. SET ROOM
ALFA. POSITIONS 3 X 16 HR DPM
 4 X 9-1/4 HR DPM
 1 X 8 HR DPM⁵³⁴

BRAVO. WATCH HOURS 55 HRS PER OP PER WEEK.

CHARLIE. IN TRG NIL.

2. TASKING
ALFA. PRIORITY TASKS

1. VCMB05437	9. VCMBY9008 [sic]
2. VCMB00618	10. VCMBN4659
3. VCMB05436	11. VCMB05435
4. VCMBJ0234	12. VCMBY9012
5. VCMBN4669	13. VCMB00628
6. VCMB05439	14. VCMBN4624
6. VCMB05423 [sic]	15. VCMBY9015
7. VCMBY9014	16. VCMB05422

DEVELOPMENT
VCXB209, 201, 202

SEARCH BAND
POSN 3. 5000 – 5250 KHZ
POSN 4. 5250 – 5500 KHZ

⁵³² <http://www.awm.gov.au/collection/AWM98/R723/1/13/3/>

⁵³³ Documents received from ASD December 2015.

⁵³⁴ No ARDF position included and it appears that the sets are not manned 2400-0800 approx. These figures would equate roughly to: 8 intercept positions manned 0800 – 1700 and 3 positions manned 1700 – 2400 (times approximate).



POSN 5. 5500 – 5750 KHZ
POSN 6. 5750 – 6000 KHZ
1300Z TO 1600Z 4000 – 6000 KHZ

3. ARDF 1 – 30 APR INCLUSIVE
 - A. TOTAL FIXES – 118
 - B. GRADINGS. 17 GOOD 71 FAIR 10 POOR 20 CUTS
 - C. FLYING TIME 96 HRS DAYLT NIL NIGHT
 - D. 1 DAYS FLYING LOST DUE EQPT FAULTS
 - E. TECH NOTES. EXPERIENCED MINOR FAULTS WITH RA217S AND AKAI RECORDERS. FEEDER IN ANTENNA ASSEMBLY WENT OPEN CCT. NEW CLAMP FITTED TO ANTENNA MOUNTING ASSEMBLY AND BRADLEY TYPE 149 CRO REPLACED BY TEKTRONIX TYPE 422 CRO. NEW CRO IS BIG IMPROVEMENT⁵³⁵.
 - F. GEN. WET SEASON BEGAN 2 DAYS AGO. WILL BE INTERESTING TO NOTE EFFECT ON ARDF.
4. SIGCEN
OUTAGES FOR APR 13 PERCENT. TROUBLE MOSTLY AT LONG BINH BUT NO SERIOUS DELAYS RESULTED. USED COURIER ONE DAY TO DELIVER AND COLLECT TFC BY HAND.
5. EQPT.
 - A. HAVE RECEIVED ADVICE THAT 6625-66-026-3600 COUNTER ASSEMBLY ELECTRONIC DIGITAL 0-500 MHZ IS ON THE WAY BUT ADVISED TO BORROW 6625-66-024-1872 OSCILLATOR AUDIO RF HEWLETT PACKARD MODEL 208A FROM 104 SIG SQN AS REQUIRED. THIS SIT UNSATISFACTORY AS BOTH WKSPS REQUIRE EQPT CONTINUALLY. COULD YOU ENDEAVOUR OBTAIN ITEM.
 - B. NOW THAT WE OPERATE 3 VHF RADIO TRANSCEIVERS (AUST ARDF CMM US ARDF CMM DSU COMD NET) SOURCE OF 24 VOLTS IS VERY IMPORTANT. TRYING TO GET AWAY FROM BTYS AND BTY CHARGERS. UNIT INDENTED FOR SUITABLE [corrupt] (6130-[corrupt] 6711-7424) POWER SUPPLY LOW VOLTAGE DC OUTPUT 4-32 VOLTS) IN MAR 67 BUT HAVE RECEIVED CONFLICTING STORIES FOR FAILUE TO SUPPLY INCL OUT OF STOCK CMM REPAIRS IN HAND CMM ANEW EQUIPMENT BEING NAMUFACTURED, CAN YOU HELP. SPS ITEM KNOWN AS WESTINGHOUSE BATTERY ELIMINTOR WOULD BE GOOD IF STOCKS AVAL.
 - C. REQUIRE CERTAIN LEADS FOR INTERCONNECTING RA217 MODULES UNDER REPAIR. WILL DISCUSS SEPARATELY.
 - D. MODIFIED R5223 TRIALS COMPLETED AND REPORT BEING PREPARED.
6. NEW WORKS
NEW BLDG COMPLETED EXCL INTERNAL PARTITIONING.
7. MRDF.
SITE LEVELLED CMM EQPT AND ANTENNAS INSTALLED. STA IN OPS BUT NO ASSESSMENT OF ACCURACY YET.
8. SSL.
 - A. HAVING SOME DIFFICULTY OBTAINING REPEAT OF RECORDINGS BY ENEMY STAS BUT PERSEVERING.

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B. CONTINUOUS RECORDING OF AUST TX OBTAINED AND WILL BE FWDED DIRECT TO WRE 2 IN MAY.

9. VISITORS.
*15/16 APR. MAJ ADAMS CO 175 RR COY,
 MR C LUCKMAN DSD
 18 APR. MAJ T FARRILL 146 AVN CO,
 CAPT F RITTERSPACH 146 AVN CO
 29 APR. COL GRAHAM J2 MACV,
 MAJ OVERCASH J2 MACV,
 MR JORDAN NSAPCREP (C)
 MAJ GERAHTY HQ AFV.*
10. ADMINISTRATION
*A (.) R AND R LEAVE (.)
 WO PARKER 9-16 APR AUST
 CPL SCHAFER 16-23 APR AUST
 B(.) R AND C VUNG TAU
 SIG D T CLARKE SIG HALL 5-7 APR
 SGT BRAMSTON 2-4 APR
 CPL HERD CPL CLARKE 13-15 APR
 SIG HARPER 21-23 APR
 C (.) HOSPITAL
 DETS.
 MAJ MURRAY 18-19 APRIL NRV AND 146 AVN CO
 CAPT ZAGON 15 APR 175 RR COY
 SGT BRADLEY 15 APR 175 RR COY*

30.2.2 Summary of Main ARDF Fixes

The following table is a summary of the main ARDF fixes for April 1968⁵³⁶:

⁵³⁶ Compiled by Bob Hartley from 547 Sig Tp Activity Reports supplied by ASD. No Monthly ARDF Reports available



Date	Loc	Ident	Unit
15-Apr-68	YT2437	RAD 2211C	Arty Elem 5 LID
15-Apr-68	YT6122	RAD 4138A	Elem 5 LID
16-Apr-68	YS4994	RAD 303E	MIE VC 5 LID
17-Apr-68	YT2937	RAD 297F	HQ VC 5 LID
17-Apr-68	YT2427	RAD 303A	MIS HQ VC 5 LID
17-Apr-68	YT2317	RAD5594D	HQ 1 Bn VC 274 Regt
17-Apr-68	YS5489	RAD 4157A	HQ COSVN 84 RSG
18-Apr-68	YT6015	RAD 4138A	Elem 5 LID
20-Apr-68	YT2909	RAD 303C	MIE 5 LID
20-Apr-68	YS6087	RAD 4157A	HQ COSVN 84 RSG
24-Apr-68	YS6189	RAD 4157A	HQ COSVN 84 RSG
24-Apr-68	YS6489	RAD 4138B	HQ COSVN 84 RSG
25-Apr-68	YT2929	RAD 4800A	HQ VC 5 LID
25-Apr-68	YT2435	RAD 1141A	HQ VC 274 Regt
25-Apr-68	YT2330	RAD 5594A	HQ VC 274 Regt
25-Apr-68	YT2108	RAD 303C	MIE 5 LID
27-Apr-68	YT2528	RAD 303A	MIS 5 LID
27-Apr-68	YT2931	RAD 559W	HQ VC 274 Regt
27-Apr-68	YT2725		HQ 1 Bn VC 274 Regt
28-Apr-68	YS4898	RAD 303E	MIE 5 LID
28-Apr-68	YS5891	RAD 4157A	HQ COSVN 84 RSG
29-Apr-68	YT5034	RAD 303A	MIS 5 LID
29-Apr-68	YS3789	RAD 2211C	Arty Elem 5 LID

30.2.3 Comd 1ATF Briefings

Each day at 1700 hrs, a 547 Sig Tp representative (normally the Int Officer) visited Task Force HQ and briefed the Commander plus all officers cleared to receive Sigint, on all current Sigint material. At other times if there were matters of immediate concern the GSO2 (Int) and Ops Staff would be informed immediately.

30.2.4 SAS Support

The book *Warrior Elite*⁵³⁷ reported on 547 Tp activities⁵³⁸:

An equally important supporting unit [to SAS] was the 547 Signal Troop, whose role was to provide signals intelligence to the Task Force and the SAS in particular. They were based at Nui Dat in their own secure compound with the highest top-secret classification. At first they were regarded as a 'post office', receiving and passing on signalling from the big American operation, but through their own ingenuity they were soon producing localised intelligence of enormous potential value to the Task Force. Their principal resources were stationary intercepts of enemy radio signals through their Nui Dat receiver, which they greatly enhanced with a towering aerial made from star pickets; and high-frequency airborne radio direction-finding (ARDF) equipment that flew over the Australian area of responsibility in Cessna 180s of the 161 Reconnaissance Squadron. The radio chatter, collected by operators in a steamy galvanised-iron 'set room', was decrypted and translated by the troop's experts on site. The ARDF operation – where up to 100 sorties were flown each month from nearby

⁵³⁷ Macklin, Robert (2015-08-25). *Warrior Elite: Australia's special forces – from Z Force and the SAS to the wars of the future* (Kindle Locations 1825-1834). Hachette Australia. Kindle Edition.

⁵³⁸ The activities of 547 Sig Tp are now mentioned in several books. Not all are accurate and somewhat overstated.



Luscombe Field – was able to track down enemy radio operators in the field and direct SAS patrols to the source.

30.2.5 US Army DF Site

In April, off-duty members of the Troop cut down hundreds of rubber trees in the area near 2 RAR (ANZAC) Bn to prepare a site for an incoming US Army HF DF team. The US team, led by Staff Sergeant Sieber, worked hand in glove with the troop and they stayed in Nui Dat until 1969 when they moved to Long Binh.

30.2.6 Troop Enemy Summaries

Enemy General Summary for the April⁵³⁹:

30.2.6.1 29 Mar – 4 Apr 68

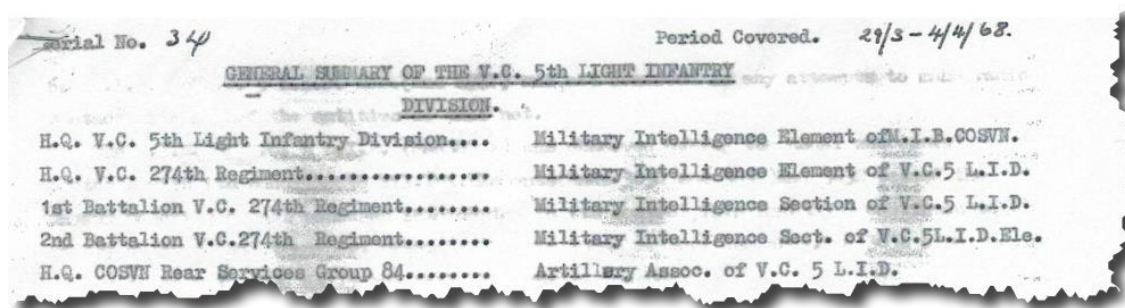


Figure 221: General Summary 29 March - 4 April 1968

GENERAL SUMMARY OF THE V.C. 5TH LIGHT INFANTRY

DIVISION

H.Q. V.C. 5 th h Light Infantry Division	Military Intelligence Element of M.I.B. COSVN
H.Q. V.C. 274 th	Military Intelligence Element of V.C. 5 L.I.D.
1st Battalion V.C. 274 th Regiment	Military Intelligence Section of V.C. 5 L.I.D.
2nd Battalion V.C. 274 th Regiment	Military Intelligence Sect. of V.C. 5 L.I.D. Ele
H.Q. COSVN Rear Services Group 84	Artillery Assoc. of V.C. 5 L.I.D.

(A) General summary of Movements.

1. The H.Q. V.C. 5th Light Infantry Division (Rad 136A) has not been observed in any significant movements since last firmly located on 24 March.
2. The H.Q. VC 274th Regiment (Rad 4191C) has not been observed in any significant movement since last located on 22 March at its present location.
3. 1st Battalion V.C. 274th Regiment (Rad 4191C) located as per map on 25 March has been re-located by ARDF on 2 April approximately 10 kilometres East of its former position.
4. 2nd Battalion V.C. 274th Regiment (Rad 4191D) has not been observed in any significant movements since last firm location on 5 March. (Note. This entity will not be included in subsequent reports until such time as it has been observed in significant movements.)
5. The H.Q. COSVN Rear Services Group 84 (Rad 4157A) has returned to the approximate

⁵³⁹ ASD archives of 547 Sig Tp material.



area it occupied prior to the Tet offensive. This movement has re-located it on the Phuoc Tuy/Long Khanh border area approximately 30 kilometres North-East of its location on 15 March. The other entity serving the HQ. Cosvn Rear Services Group 84(Rad 4887E) has not been observed in any significant movement since 22 March.

6. The Military Intelligence Element of Military Intelligence Bureau GOSVN (Rad 4241H) has not been observed in any significant movement since located on 6 March. As per map.

7. Military Intelligence Section H.Q.V.C. 5th L.I.D. (Rad 530 AF) also has not been noted in any movement during the period.

8. Military Intelligence Section H.Q. V.C. 5th L.I.D. (Element (Bad 297F) since located on 25 March has not been observed in any significant movement.

9. Military Intelligence Element (Rad 303E) continues to remain in the Xuan Loc/Suoi Ram area.

10. The Artillery Association /element of the V.C. 5th L.I.D. (Rad 5461 A) has been observed in a spectacular re-location far North-East of the immediate area of interest. This movement places it in Phuoc Long province.

(B). General summary of Communications.

1. H.Q. V.C. 5 LID. (Rad 136A) has been observed making contact with its subordinate H.Q. V.C. 274th Regt. (Rad 136D). However no messages were exchanged.

2. H.Q. V.C. 274th Regt. (Rad 4191A) has been observed in radio contact with its subordinate 1st Bn.V.C. 274 Regt (Rad 4191C) with a reasonable volume of messages exchanged. However no contact was established with 2 Bn V.C. 274 Regt (Rad 4191D).

3. H.Q. Cosvn Rear Services Group (Rad 4157A) was not observed in any communications with its subordinate (Rad 4157B) during the period covered. While [corrupt] Rad 4837E had established communications with its control (Rad 4887D) no messages were exchanged.

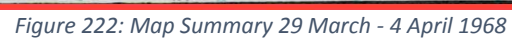
4. The. M.I.E. of M.I.B. Cosvn (Rad 424.H) while having contact with its control (Rad 4241A) did not pass any messages.

5. Although being successful in establishing contact with its control (Rad 530 A) the M.I.S. of H.Q. 5 L.I.D. (Rad 530 AF) did not pass any messages.

6. M. I. S. of H.Q. 5 L.I.D. Ele. (Rad 297F) was not observed in any attempts to make radio contact with any of the entities of this net.

7. The M.I.S. of H.Q. 5 L.I.D. (Rad 303 A) was observed making the usual successful contact with its subordinate Mil. Int. Elements (Rads 303C and 303E) Rad 303E passed the majority of all messages intercepted to its control. This Rad(303E) continues to report on troop and transport movements in the Xuan Loc/Suoi Ran area. Rad 303A also communicated with 303C daily but with few messages passed.

8. The Artillery Associated with V.C. 5 L.I.D. (Rad 5461 A) has not been observed in any communications.





30.2.6.2 5 - 14 Apr 68:

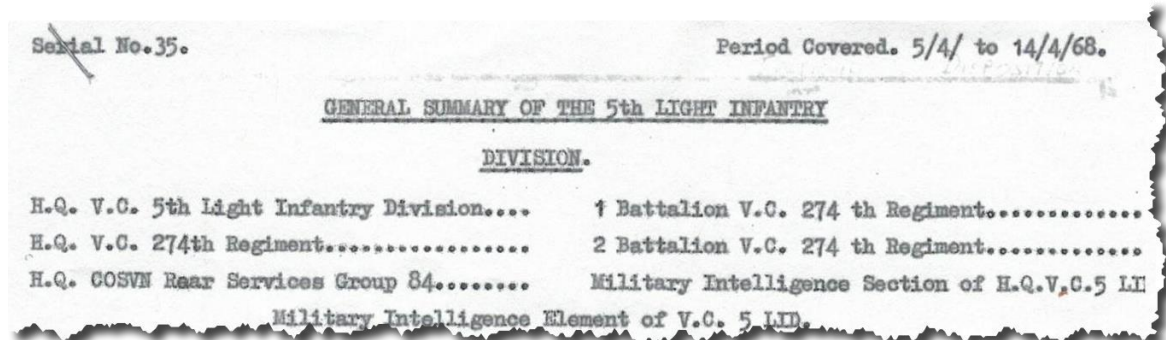


Figure 223: General Summary 5 – 14 April 1968

A. General Summary of Movements

1. The H.Q. V.C. 5th Light Infantry Division (Rads 136A and 372C) has not been observed in any significant movements during the period, covered. However another entity of the H.Q. V.C. 5th LID (Rad 4138A) - serving as control for the H.Q. Cosvn Rear Services Group 84 - has been re-located as per map. This entity was last firmly located by ARDF on 19/1/68.
2. The H.Q. V.C. 274th Regiment (Rad 4191A) has apparently remained static during the time covered.
3. Since the movement of the H.Q. Cosvn Rear Services Group 84 (Rads 4138b and. 4157A) on 2 April from the Nui Dinh Hills to its present general location as per map, no significant movements have been noted.
4. The 1 Battalion V.C. 274th Regt. (Rad 4191C) has again returned to its general area of occupation prior to its move of approximately 11 kilometres East on 2 April.
5. The 2 Battalion V.C. 274th Regt. (Rad 4191D) has remained static during the time covered.
6. The Military Intelligence Section of V.C. 5th LID. (Rads 53OAF and 303A) have not been observed in any outstanding movements since firmly located in March.
7. Neither of the Military Intelligence Elements of V.C.5th LID) (Rads 303C and O3E) have been noted in any definite movements within the period covered.

B. General Summary of Communications.

1. No exchange of messages has been observed on either of the links with Rads 136A and 372C (H.Q.V.C.5th LID).
2. A reasonable amount of traffic has been passed between the H.Q. V.C.274th Regt (Rad 4191A) and the 1 Bn V.C. 274th Regt (Rad 4191c). An interesting development is the close association of the 1 Bn and 3 Bn V.C. 274th Regt.(Rad 4191B).
3. The H.Q. Cosvn R.S. Gp.84 had little contact with its control H.Q.V.C.5th LID(Rad 4138A).
4. The MIS of V.C. 5th LID (Rad 53OAF) was observed passing a few messages to its control Military Intelligence Bureau Cosvn (Rad 530A).
5. The normal volume of traffic was observed on the Military Intelligence Elements of V.C. 5th LID net (Rads 303A,303C,303E) with contact being made and a regular exchange of messages

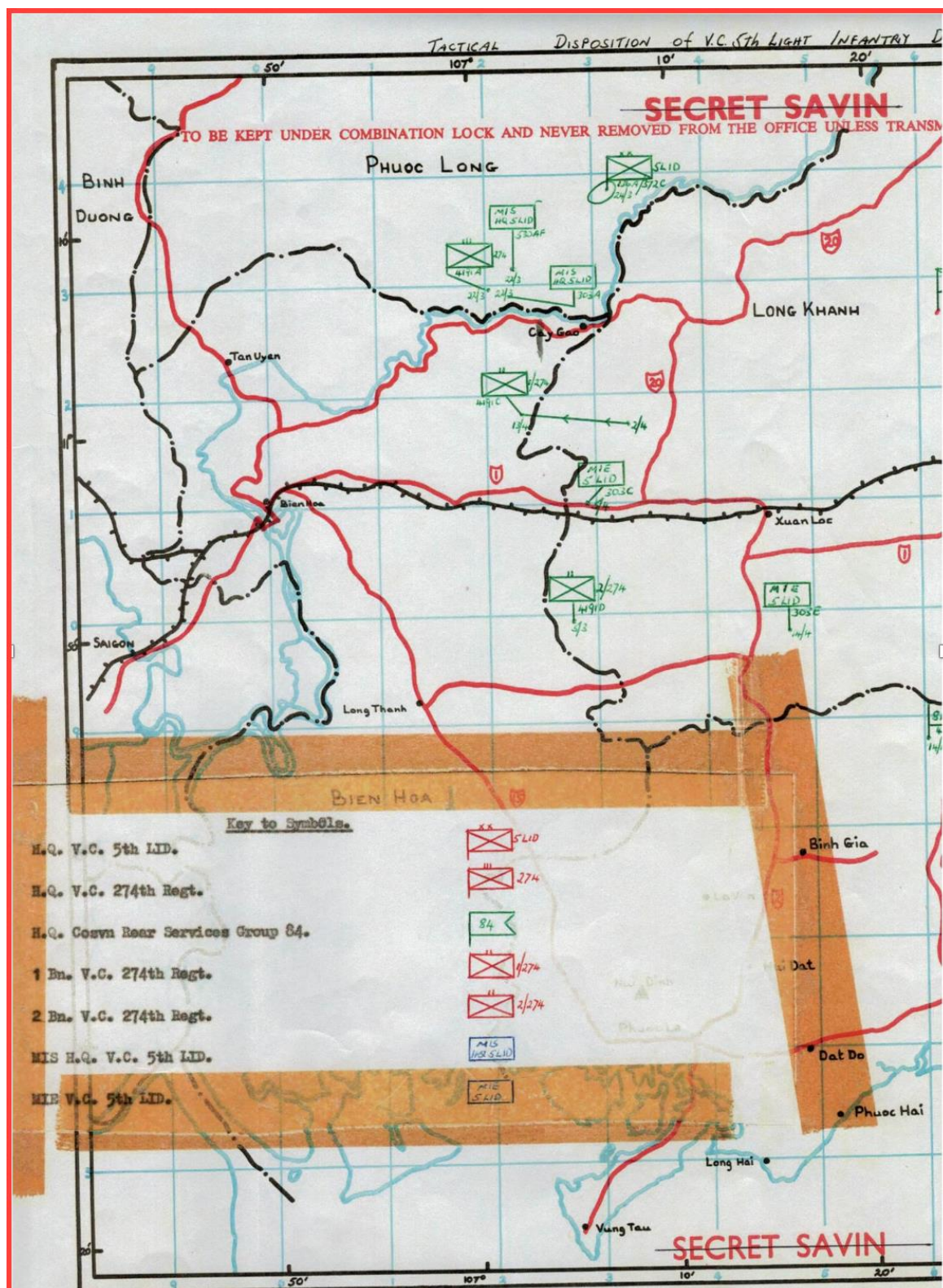


Figure 224: Map Summary 5 - 14 April 1968 #1

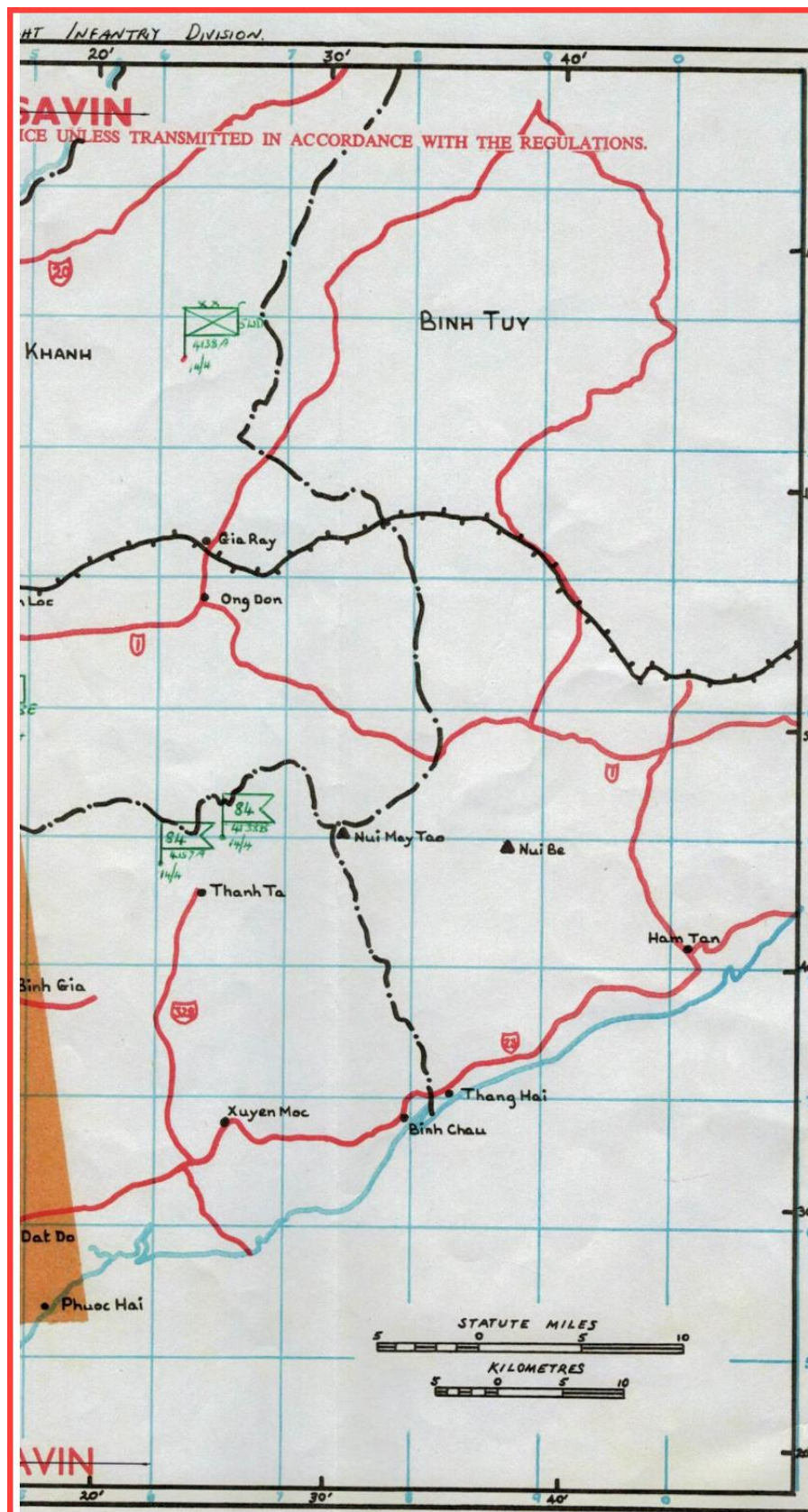


Figure 225: Map Summary 5 - 14 April 1968 #2



30.2.6.3 15 - 25 Apr 68:

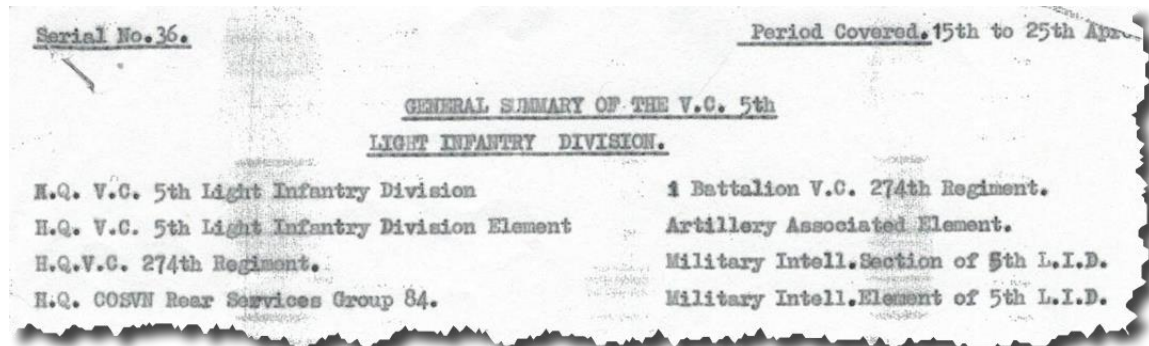
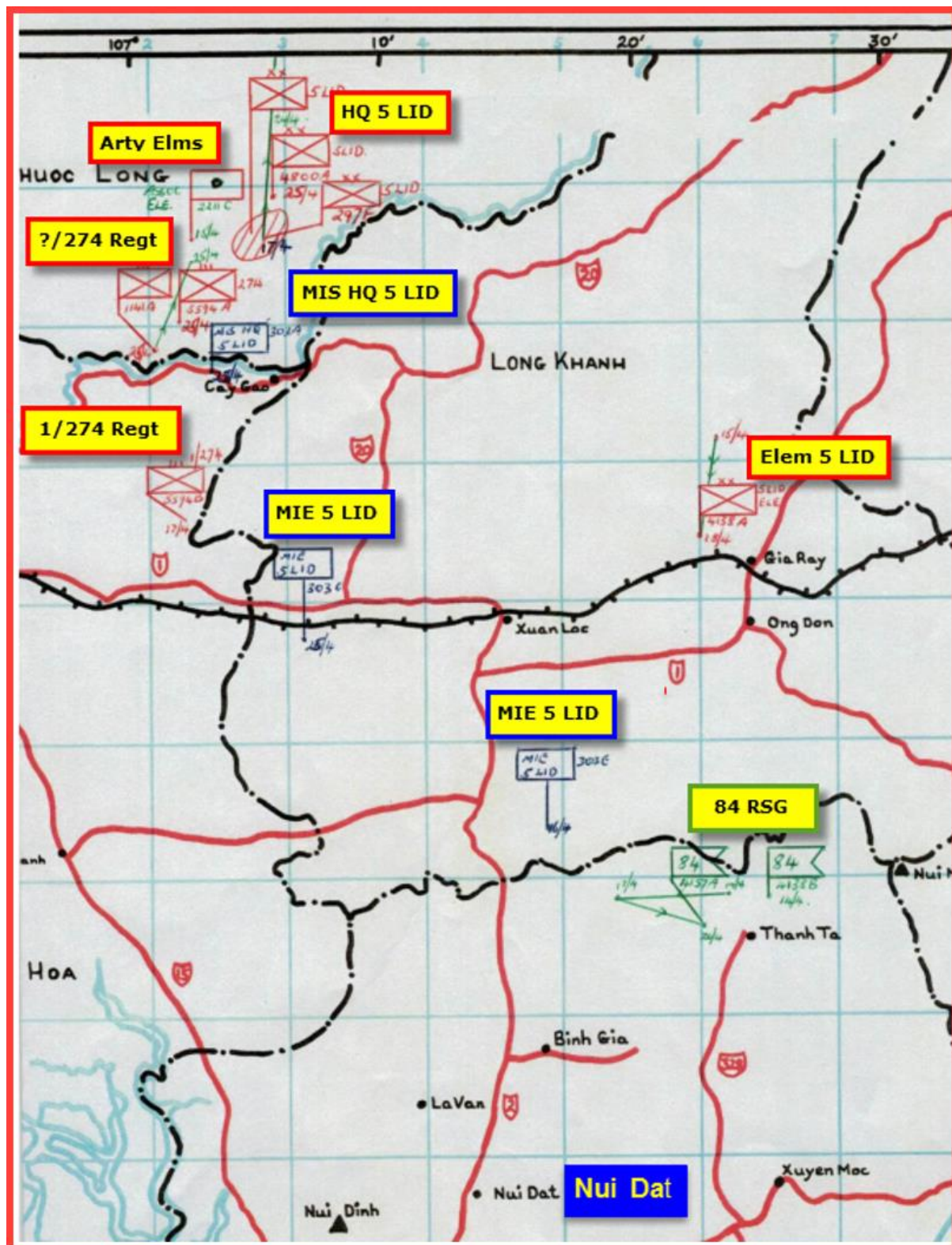


Figure 226: General Summary 15 – 25 April 1968

- A. (i) One entity of the H.Q. V.C. 5th LID (Rad 4800A previously Rad 136A has made no apparent movements since being located as per map.
(ii) Another entity of the H.Q. V.C. 5th LID (Rad 297F) has been observed re-locating to the north-east on 25 April. This new location places it approximately 15 kilometres from its previous location on 17 April.
- B. The H.Q. V.C. 5th LID Element (Rad 4138A) has re-located approximately 7 kilometres south south-west from its position on 15 April.
- C. (i) An entity serving the H.Q. V.C. 274 Regt (Rad 1141A) has been observed in a re-location movement to the north-east. This latest move on 25 April places this entity approximately 7 kilometres from its former position.
(ii) The other entity of the H.Q. V.C. 274th Regt. (Rad 5594 A) has not been observed in any significant movements since firmly located by ARDF on 25 April.
- D. While one entity of the H.Q. Cosvn Rear Services group 84 (Rad 4157A) made a westerly movement of approx. 7 kilometres on 17 April and yet another move to the south-east on 20 April, of approx. 6 kilometres, the other entity (Rad 4138B) was not observed in any significant positional change.
- E. The 1 Battalion V/C. 274th Regt (Rad 5594B) has apparently remained static since firmly located by ARDF on 17 April.
- F. The Arty. Assoc. Element of V.C. 5th LID (Rad 2211C) has not been noted in any significant movement since being firmly located on 15 April.
- G. The Military Intelligence Section of the V.C. 5th LID (Rad 303A) and its subordinates the Military Intelligence Elements of V.C. 5th LID (Rads 303C and 303E) were not noted in any significant movements during the period covered. Rad 303B however was noted in expedient movements to facilitate the continued reporting on the allied troops stationed in the Xuan Loc/Suoi Ram area.
- H. No significant alterations to the volume of communications have been noted during the time covered. An interesting development is the re-entry of Rad 303B into the military Intelligence communications of V.C. 5th LID after an absence of several weeks.

Figure 227: Map graphic for period 15 - 25 Apr⁵⁴⁰

⁵⁴⁰ Unit identities inserted by author for clarity.



CHAPTER 31 – MAY 1968

31.1 Personnel

31.1.1 Arrivals and Departures

There was one arrival and several departures in May:

Arrival

21 May

Corporal Dave Priebbenow

Departures

1 May

Signalman Geoff Hall

8 May

Sergeant Peter Bradley

Sergeant John Bramston

12 May

Signalman Rod Harper

14 May

Corporal Peter Ashton

Corporal James Thomas

31.1.2 Employment

Dave Priebbenow joined the Technical Maintenance Team.

31.1.3 Visitors

On 7/8 May, Lieutenant Colonel Whyte (MI8 DMI) visited the troop. On 11 May, Lieutenant Colonel Hockney from D Sigs Canberra paid a brief visit.

31.1.4 161 Recce Flt Fixed Wing Pilots

On May, 2nd Lieutenants David Gerrard and Peter Muir joined 161 Recce Flt as a fixed wing pilot.

31.1.5 Notable Visitor

One notable visitor around this time was Brigadier General George S. Patton Jnr, the son of old 'Blood and Guts' Patton. He arrived in full battle order - steel helmet, grenades strapped on his belt, an M16 in his hand, a low slung pistol on his right side and a mean looking Colt Cobra in a shoulder holster. Squatting in front of the big wall map he chewed on an unlit cigar as he received the usual briefing from Steve Zagon. On conclusion of the briefing he jumped up and slapping Steve squarely on the back barked in a heavy drawl *"That's great stuff fellas! Keep it up! Remember, you find 'em and I'll kill 'em!"* With that he strode off, grenades and guns slapping against his sides, leaving the operations staff rolling with uncontrollable laughter.



Figure 228: General George S. Patton Jnr

31.2 Administration

31.2.1 WOs and Sgts Move

May saw considerable changes to the compound layout. The tents of the OC, Warrant Officers and Sergeants were vacated and the personnel moved to the 104 Sig Sqn Officer and Senior NCO lines.



Figure 229: 104 Sig Sqn Sgts Mess

31.2.2 Junior Ranks Accommodation

The junior ranks continued to occupy tents parallel and close to the western fence of the Troop compound.

31.2.3 HQ AFV Monthly Strength Return

There was no change to the Establishment Strength of the Troop in May⁵⁴¹:

⁵⁴¹ <http://www.awm.gov.au/collection/AWM98/R723/1/13/3/>



31.3 OPERATIONS

31.3.1 Liaison Visits

About this time the work of the Troop was receiving recognition from the allied forces. The Troop's timely results had been brought to the attention of Lieutenant General Bruce Palmer Jnr, Commanding General of the II FFV. General Palmer insisted that a liaison officer visit the Troop every morning by helicopter to collect and see the latest results obtained by the Troop. On several occasions Steve Zagon received commendations⁵⁴² on behalf of the Troop for the standard of information being delivered.

31.3.2 Major Payne SSO II FFV

Major Bob Payne was the commander of the US Army Special Security Detachment, under the control of the Army Assistant Chief of Intelligence, and was attached to support the II FFV Commander. His title was Special Security Officer (SSO). As the SSO, he was responsible for the sanitisation of Special Intelligence (SI = Sigint). Specifically, it is where all source intelligence was effectively fused prior to briefings. He also became the LO for II FFV /547 Sig Tp.

31.3.3 Commander of the 9th U.S. Infantry Division

Brigadier General O'Connor, Deputy Commander of the 9th U.S. Infantry Division, also noticed the Troop's results. Radio Research elements of his division and of the 2nd Cavalry Division worked as out-stations of the Troop at times.

31.3.4 175 RR Co MRDF Det

The MRDF Det commenced operations in Nui Dat.

Phil Rutherford wrote⁵⁴³:

The detachment, under command of a US Staff Sergeant by the name of Seiber with additional personnel from Detachment 1 at Tay Ninh, duly arrived by truck, jeep and C130 Hercules aircraft. The US detachment of about 6 to 10 men traveled by road from Bien Hoa in time to welcome their AN/TRD-23 DF equipment⁵⁴⁴, delivered by a Sikorsky CH-54 SkyCrane heavy lift helicopter. With the assistance of men from 547 Sig Tp they soon had the area cleared enabling the newly arrived American DF operators and technicians to quickly set up the DF shelter and erect the antennae on the open area. Tents were put up under the rubber trees and within a short period the

⁵⁴² There is no record of any official commendation being received.

⁵⁴³ Courtesy Phil Rutherford: *547 Signal Troop and the American Security Agency*, Phil Rutherford PH.D, 2020.

⁵⁴⁴ Similar TRD-23A set up at Tay Ninh. (oldspooksandspies.org)





Americans had established a restricted zone and settled down to begin operations.

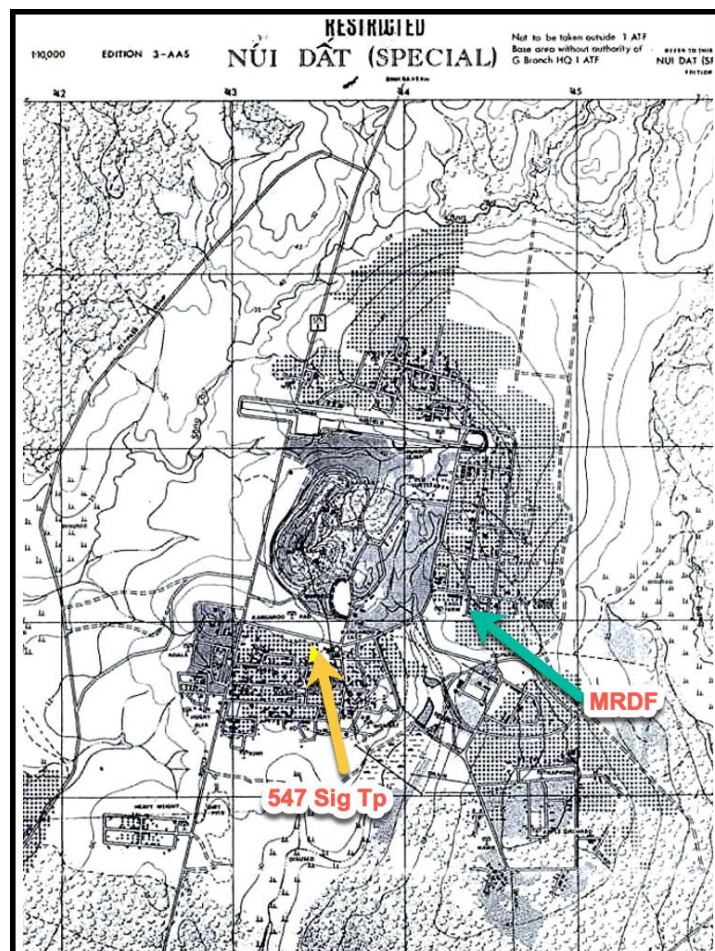


Figure 230: MRDF Location within Nui Dat



Figure 231: MRDF Set up after establishment - note antenna field on the right⁵⁴⁵

⁵⁴⁵ 175th RR Facebook.

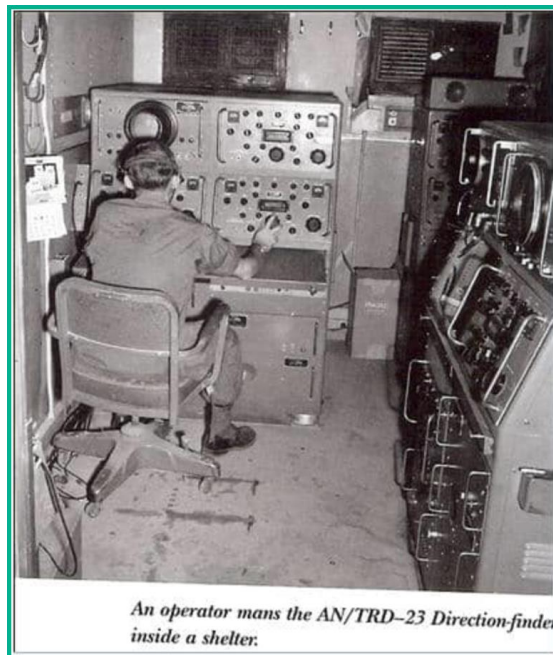


Figure 232: Inside the AN/TRD-23 Shelter⁵⁴⁶

31.3.4.1 547 Sig Tp/MRDF Liaison

After establishment, there was virtually no liaison between the two entities. Later 547 personnel were not aware of the MRDF existence.

31.3.5 547 Sig Tp Progress Report for 1-31 May 68

The 547 Sig Tp Progress Report for 1-31 May 68⁵⁴⁷ contained:

1. SET ROOM
 - A. POSITIONS
 - 3 X 16 HR DPM
 - 4 X 9 3/4 HR DPM
 - 1 X 9 HR DPM ⁵⁴⁸
 - B. WATCH HOURS 55 PER OP PER WEEK
2. TASKING
 - ALFA. PRIORITY TASKS

1. VCMB05437	9. VCMBJ0412
2. VCMB00618	10. VCMBY9008
3. VCMB05436	11. VCMB05435
4. VCMBP8197	12. VCMB00628
5. VCMBN4669	13. VCMBN4642
6. VCMB05429	14. VCMBY9015
7. VCMB05423	15. VCMB05422
8. VCMBN4687	16. VCMBJ0255

⁵⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁴⁷ Documents received from ASD December 2015.

⁵⁴⁸ No ARDF position included and it appears that the sets are not manned 2400-0800 approx. These figures would equate roughly to: 8 intercept positions manned 0800 – 1700 and 3 positions manned 1700 – 2400 (times approximate).



DEVELOPMENT

VCMBY9017

VCMBY9018

VCMBY9019

[9 X VCXB]

SEARCH BAND

POSN 3. 5000 – 5250 KHZ

POSN 4. 5250 – 5500 KHZ

POSN 5. 5500 – 5750 KHZ

POSN 6. 5750 – 6000 KHZ

3. ARDF
 - A. TOTAL FIXES – 158
 - B. GRADINGS. 26 GOOD 87 FAIR 7 POOR 38 CUTS
 - C. FLYING TIME 122 HRS DAYLT NIL NIGHT
 - D. ONE DAY LOST DUE AIRCRAFT MAINT
 - E. CONFERENCE PROPOSED FOR 30 MAY WITH NRV (C) **CONCERNING LOAN OF A TWIN ENGINED AIRCRAFT WAS POSTPONED INDEFINITELY** BY DIRECTION OF COMAFV PENDING RESULTS HIS DISCUSSIONS WITH AHQ(I) UNDERSTAND SO SIGS AFV RASING THIS SUBJECT WITH YOU SEPARATELY.
4. **VOICE INTERCEPT.** SOI TAKEN FROM VC RADIO OPERATORS BODY AFTER FIRST ATTACK ON FIRE SUPPORT BASE CORAL **PROMPTED FLY IN TO CORAL OF 3 MAN DET THISTA ON 18 MAY. SINCE 23 MAY TEAM HAVE RECOVERED REGULAR DAILY SKEDS AND TRAFFIC ON ONE 6 STA VC VOICE NET AND ONE 2 STA VC VOICE NETS.** TAPES CURRENTLY BEING ANALYSED. BELIEVE THIS TO BE FIRST EVER VC VOICE INTERCEPT IN 3 CTZ.
5. EQPT. BTY ELIMINATOR ARRIVED. THANKS
6. NEW WORKS. NEW BLDG COMPLETED EXCL INTERNAL PARTITIONING (MATERIAL SHORTAGES AGAIN)
7. VISITORS
 - 2 MAY CAPT WILDMAN 175 RR COY
 - 3 MAY LT NORMAN J2 MACV
 - 7/8 MAY LT COL WHYTE AHQ (DMI)
 - 11 MAY LT COL HOCKNEY AHQ (D SIGS)
 - 17/18 MAY MR LUCKMAN DSD
 - 20 MAY CAPT LLOYD 224 AFV BN
 - 29/30 MAY MR LUCKMAN DSD
 - CAPT MOLLINAX 175 RR COY
8. ADMINISTRATION
 - A. R AND R LEAVE.
 - CPL MURRAY 1-3 MAY AUST
 - CPL TREWARTHA 12-17 MAY AUST
 - CPL HOHNSTON 13-21 HAY AUST
 - SIG TALBERT 6-14 MAR AUST
 - B. R AND C VUNG TAU. NIL
 - C. HOSPITAL, NIL
 - D. DETS
 - MAJ MURRAY 18 – 19 MAY VISIT 303 RR BN AND 175 RR COY.
 - 24 – 25 MAY VISIT AFV AND 146 AVN CO
 - CAPT ZAGON 18 – 20 MAY TO FSB CORAL AND 175 RR COY
 - E. MOV. SEE STRENGTH RETURN



31.4 The Battle of Coral–Balmoral

31.4.1 Overview

The Battle of Coral–Balmoral occurred from 12 May to 6 June 1968. It was a series of actions fought between elements of 1 ATF and the NVA 7th Division and VC units, 40 km north-east of Saigon.

31.4.2 FSB Coral and Balmoral

1 ATF troops established FSBs Coral and Balmoral across the route used by the NVA/VC to depart and approach Saigon and nearby Bien Hoa.

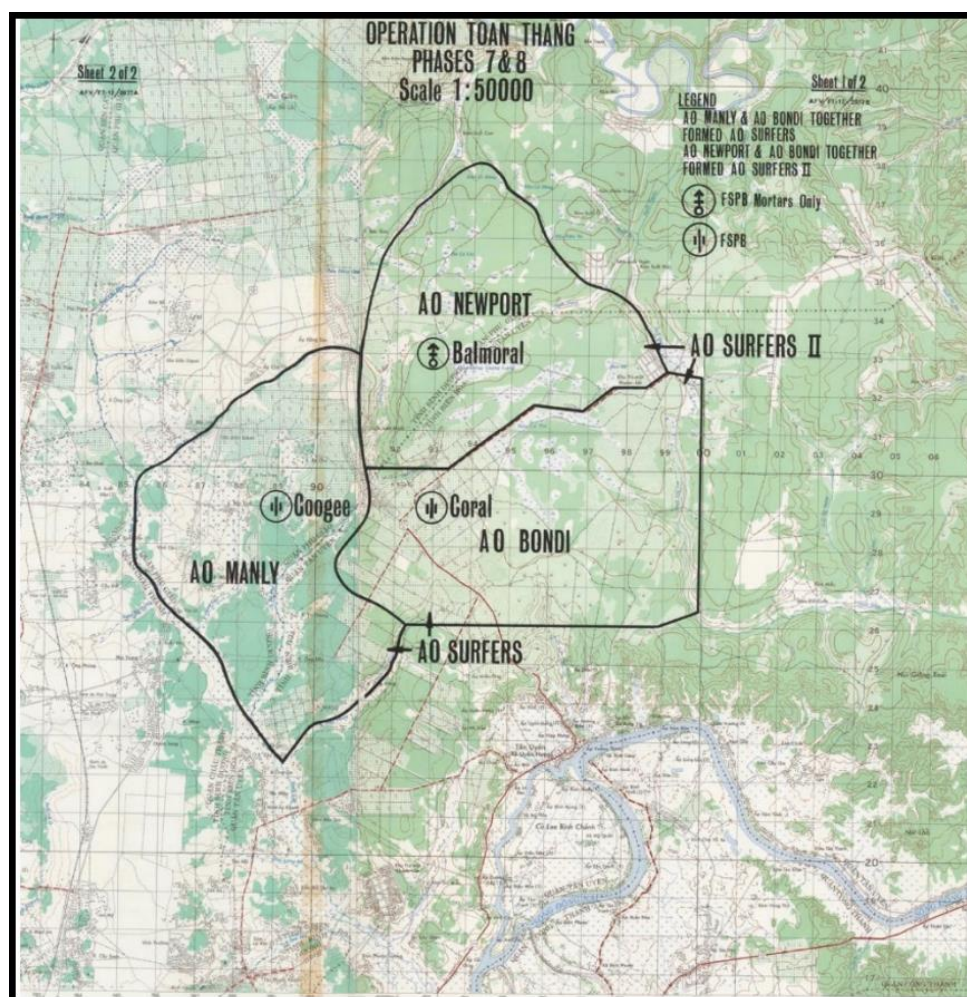


Figure 233: FSB Coral and Balmoral Locations

31.4.3 547 Sig Tp Advice

Based on the advice of 547 Sig Tp officers, [see below extract from video] the Commander of 1 ATF changed the initial insertion point for the Coral operation. Sigint and ARDF had indicated that the first planned insertion point was considered to be dangerously close to an NVA regiment, in fact probably on top of it.



The following is an extract from the video: *Battle of Firebase Coral*. Meanjin Entertainment – A Film by Leonie Jones. University of Southern Queensland⁵⁴⁹:

[Commentator] Bennett ⁵⁵⁰ and Shelton's⁵⁵¹ inability to get a look at the landing zone will have serious consequences the following day.

Meanwhile signals intelligence had received alarming news from American Intelligence.

[Peter Murray⁵⁵²] I can recall Steve Zagon ⁵⁵³ coming to me and saying 'you are not going to believe this but they are going to put the Task Force into an area which we think the Yanks have located a VC Headquarters'.

There were two portraits painted to us; one was that we were going to go into unoccupied ground and sit and wait and probably have to face a Vietnamese force coming out of Saigon. The Yanks said to us that can't be quite true because you're going into an area that we know that there is a North Vietnamese fighting force less its echelon elements, administrative elements, but the fighting component of that force is about where you plan to insert.

[Commentator] But neither Bennett nor Sheldon are told this information.

People like Colonel Bennett, Battalion Commanders were not told of Sigint ...

[Bennett] There was no information at all about enemy within our area of operations ...



Figure 234: Peter Murray during the interview⁵⁵⁴

⁵⁴⁹ <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Q8Lb7gAoCsw>: *Battle of Firebase Coral*. Meanjin Entertainment – A Film by Leonie Jones. University of Southern Queensland.

⁵⁵⁰ Commanding Officer 1RAR.

⁵⁵¹ Commanding Officer 3RAR.

⁵⁵² Officer Commanding 547 Sig Tp.

⁵⁵³ Intelligence Officer 547 Sig Tp.

⁵⁵⁴ Photograph extracted from the video. In the video Peter Murray is 'mistitled' as OC of 110 Sig Sqn. He was OC 547 Sig Tp.



31.4.4 Coral Detachment

On 18 May, a detachment of three men, Jim Brill, Fred Hawkes and Tom Williams deployed from 547 Sig Tp to FSB Coral to conduct Comint activities, primarily VHF voice intercept. To conduct these activities, they had two VHF receivers, two HF receivers and Nagra tape recorders.

31.4.5 Detachment Set-up

Initially they Det set up and operated above ground, but everything was moved underground immediately after they experienced their first attack against the FSB. Between being mortared, rocketed and defending the HQ, the team intercepted many enemy HF nets. The Troop Monthly Report indicated that two VHF nets were found⁵⁵⁵.

Tom Williams later wrote:⁵⁵⁶

In May '68 we came across info regarding enemy VHF voice activities. Intercept would have to be close to the activity. Coral was about to be established and it was decided it could be worth giving intercept a go to see if we could get it firstly and secondly learn what it would yield. Before I knew it I was on my way with Fred Hawkes and Jim Brill. We had a tent in which we worked during the day and for night we had an "L" shaped pit, one part which was not covered had radio sets dug into the wall and the other part, covered, had a couple of stretchers for us to get any sleep we could. We had little info to work with. There was only a little info regarding radio procedures and the equivalent to Q and Z codes. None of us had any experience with voice activity nor the phonetic alphabets that could be used. Apart from that we endured mortar and RPG attacks.

The SOL's that we received and prompted our action were not in use when we arrived at Coral, meaning, Fred, Jim and myself had to start from scratch.

The three of us worked around the clock and whenever Jim or Fred came across suspect activity they would get me to have a listen.

Anything worthwhile was recorded on tape on the Nagra machines that we had there. I think it was on the second day (or night) they had something worthwhile but I had trouble working out what it really was. Their experience told them that it was good and they insisted that I spend more time on it. They were right. The traffic was cypher being passed by an unfamiliar phonetic alphabet. It developed from there. Relevant activity was taped.

I was able to get hold of an example of a phonetic alphabet but it was not the one used in our intercepts. That was why I had initial trouble identifying what Fred and Jim were able to get for me.

SOL's were put together from their efforts and I pieced together the phonetic alphabet and their signals jargon to pass on to successors.

The tapes were sent back to Nui Dat but nothing happened to them there. I would have been the person to listen to them because John Hunter unfortunately had little signals exposure apart from pre-Vietnam training at the factory and what he was picking up on the job.

⁵⁵⁵ US Army Operators/linguists had a lot of trouble intercepting NVA/VC Voice. Extract from NSA Cryptolog dated October 1975. *Within the space of their training they [US Army Linguists] could not achieve - and could not be expected to achieve - the auditory proficiency needed for on-line exploitation of low-level tactical conversations in a combat situation. This special skill being able to think in a language - takes years to develop. Many people never achieve it at all no matter how long or how hard they try. Fortunately for us, the VC had a methodical approach to warfare, and, among other things, were quite conscious of communications security. Thus, except for actual in-combat transmissions, they were quite precise about what could be passed and how various types of information could be handled.*

⁵⁵⁶ Email from Tom Williams to Barry Hampstead 7 Dec 2015.



I think the tapes were sent to DSD. The yanks were informed of our success and they were rapt.

The end result of our work was that we proved it could be done, provided we were close enough. The end-product was of a very perishable nature and gave little time for any action to be taken. The main concern was that gaining the material put operators and linguists at extreme risk and capture was not an option.

After five days we were replaced by John Hunter, Snow Turner and Ken Trewartha. I am unaware of any further attempts after that.



Figure 235: Coral accommodation area⁵⁵⁷

(The sand-bagged protected sleeping/resting area to the left and at a right angle to it is the open part in which we operated at night)



Figure 236: FSB Coral Team, Jim Brill, Tom Williams and Fred Hawkes⁵⁵⁸

(Looking from the other side over the sandbag-protected part to the tent in which we worked during the day)

⁵⁵⁷ Photo courtesy of Tom Williams.

⁵⁵⁸ Ibid.

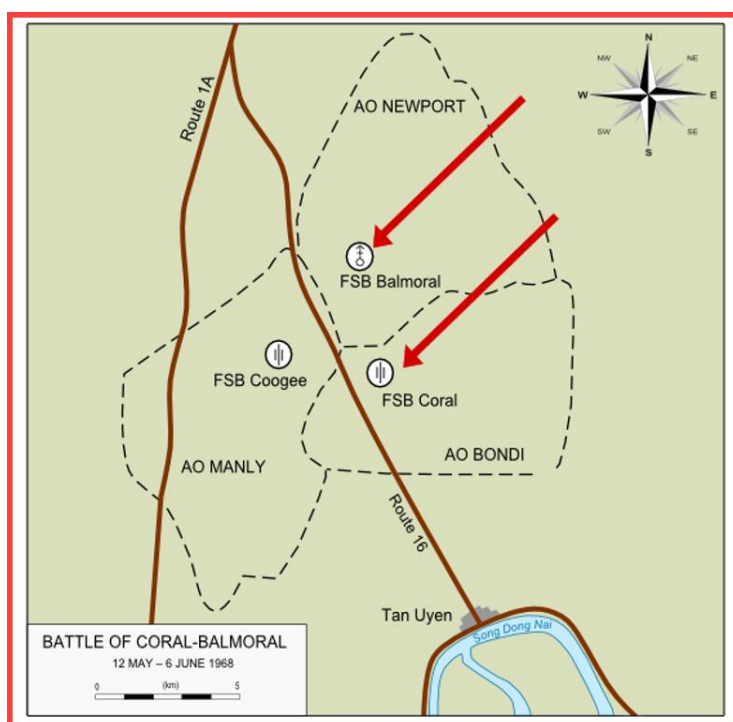


Figure 237: Direction of Attacks⁵⁵⁹

31.4.6 Bombardments

The bombardments soon became routine although the section never really got used to it. They sustained only minor damage to their tents and only one of their sets.

31.4.7 Visitors

Peter Murray and Steve Zagon took it in turns to fly daily between Nui Dat and FSB Coral. They carried Sigint product obtained from other sources for the Task Force Commander.

31.4.8 Detachment Replacement

After six days the team was exhausted and a fresh team of Ken Trewartha, Ray Turner and John Hunter replaced them.

John Hunter wrote⁵⁶⁰:

We did intercept plain voice Vietnamese transmissions but we had trouble translating it and our typed translations contained the phrase [garble]. We sent off quadruple sheets of the translations to our usual friends in Bien Hoa and heard no more.

I listened live at our forward position but heard nothing indicating urgency in the voices. We translated the stuff from tapes intercepted forward. No one was impressed by the material we got. Tom Williams went forward first, I relieved him later and we worked on translation back at 547 later.

⁵⁵⁹ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Battle_of_Coral%E2%80%93Balmoral.

⁵⁶⁰ Email from John Hunter to Barry Hampstead 6 Dec 2015.



Ken Trewartha recalled⁵⁶¹:

After the first det was deployed the Troop was called into the briefing room and the OC (Peter Murray) explained that there had been a major attack at Coral and that the current det would need relief and called for volunteers.

Snow Turner and I did so and were subsequently selected as operators and sent out to the FSB by Chinook, together with John Hunter as the linguist, who I think was 'volunteered'.

At Coral we were met by Jim Brill and shown to the det weapon pit and the tent which was above ground. The tent had received light damage from shrapnel as had the VHF receiver which was on a table during the day and in the pit at night.

We had a brief hand over and were told our task was to listen for NVA comms. When I asked how to recognise them, we were told that NVA had a distinct way of saying 'over' (what it was I don't remember) and if we heard that we should hand over to the linguist, John Hunter.

Our operating method was to, in shifts, do normal search and development, and pass anything of interest over to John.

During the day we worked in the tent and at night moved the receiver into the pit.

That night, or the next, we had a huge downpour of rain. The night after that a major attack was launched on us - we were told later that 250 rounds of rockets and mortar landed on the FSB.

Of course we redoubled our efforts while this was happening, but John didn't recognise anything. In fact, we had no successes during the ten or so days we were deployed.

Eventually, we were told we were being pulled out, to pack up, and wait at the DZ for transport.

When we got to the DZ there was considerable confusion. We were directed to board a Huey, and despite my protests that we had classified material to protect, we were told it would follow us and were ordered to board.

The OC was not happy with me when we returned to Nui Dat without our kit. It was eventually found at Bin Hoa.

Sidebar:

I remember standing up in the pit at night at Coral, lighting a fag and having a round crack past my ear and thinking 'wow, 12 years in the Army and this is the first time I've been shot at!' How dopey In so many ways.

The night after the bombardment, I crawled out of the pit and as I started to emerge I saw squatting a few feet away an NVA soldier. My first sleep deprived thought was that during the night and following the bombardment we had been overrun. We locked eyes, he looked surprised, and I reached for my rifle. Out of the corner of my eyes I caught a glimpse of a GP boot and a pair of greens. It was a burly MP who was guarding an NVA who had walked in to surrender. I felt great relief.

I'm not sure that our deployment was of any great tactical value, but it did show that 547 was willing and able to deploy and it gave a few of us tactical experience.

⁵⁶¹ Email from Ken Trewartha 6 Feb 2019.



Twenty six Australians were killed during the fighting at Coral/Balmoral. Estimates suggest that more than 300 NVA/VC were killed in these actions, but exact figures could not be obtained.

31.5 Unit Citation for Gallantry

In May 2018, the Minister for Veterans Affairs announced the award of the Unit Citation for Gallantry for units deployed in support of FSBs Coral and Balmora⁵⁶²:

The extraordinary gallantry displayed by members of the 1st Australian Task Force (Forward) and associated units deployed to Area of Operations SURFERS during the Battles of Fire Support Bases Coral and Balmoral from 12 May 1968 to 6 June 1968 is being recognised by the Unit Citation for Gallantry.

Members of the Troop who were in-country during the battle are now entitled to wear the citation:

⁵⁶² <https://www.minister.defence.gov.au/minister/dchester/media-releases/australian-army-547-signal-troop-awarded>



Figure 238: : Citation for Gallantry #1



Figure 239: Citation for Gallantry #2



31.6 Troop Enemy Summaries

31.6.1 26 April – 3 May 1968

Troop General Summary for the period to 26 April – 3 May 1968⁵⁶³:

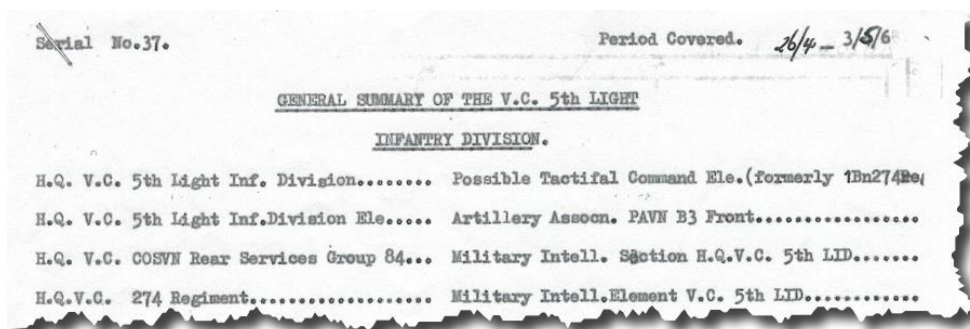


Figure 240: General Summary for 26 Apr - 3 May 68

A General Summary of Movements.

1. No significant movements by H.Q.V.C. 5th LID (Rad 4800A) were noted during the period covered.
- 2» Similarly, ARDF revealed no significant movements by H.Q.V.C. 5th LID Ele. (Rad 4138A) during the period covered.
3. Of the two entities serving the H.Q. Cosvn Rear Services Group 84 (Rads 4138B and 4157A.) operating in the Phuoc Tuy/Long Khanh borders area, only one (Rad 4157A) was observed making any significant movements when it was re-located 5 kilometres to the north-west of its former position on the 24 April.
4. Neither H.Q. V.C. 274 Regt Rad 5594A) or
5. its subordinate, the now Possible Tactical Command Element (Rad 5594B) were observed in significant movements. Rad 5594B was formerly an entity serving 1st Battalion V.C. 274 Regiment (Rad 4191C).
6. An interesting observation was that on 29 April the Artillery Associated of PAVN element (Rad 2211C) was relocated by ARDF approx. 47 kilometres south, south-east of its former position on 27 April. Its new position is in the Long Khanh/Bien Hoa/Phuoc Tuy Provinces border area.
7. Another spectacular re-location was revealed by ARDF when on 29 April, the Military Intelligence Section of H.Q.V.C. 5th LID (Rad 303A) was observed approximately 27 kilometres north-west by west of its previous position on 27 April.
8. Neither entity serving the Military Intelligence Elements of 5th LID (Rads 303C and 303E) were observed in any significant movements by ARDF.

⁵⁶³ ASD archives of 547 Sig Tp material.



B. General Summary of Communications.

No significant deviations from the normal exchanges of traffic occurred during the period covered.

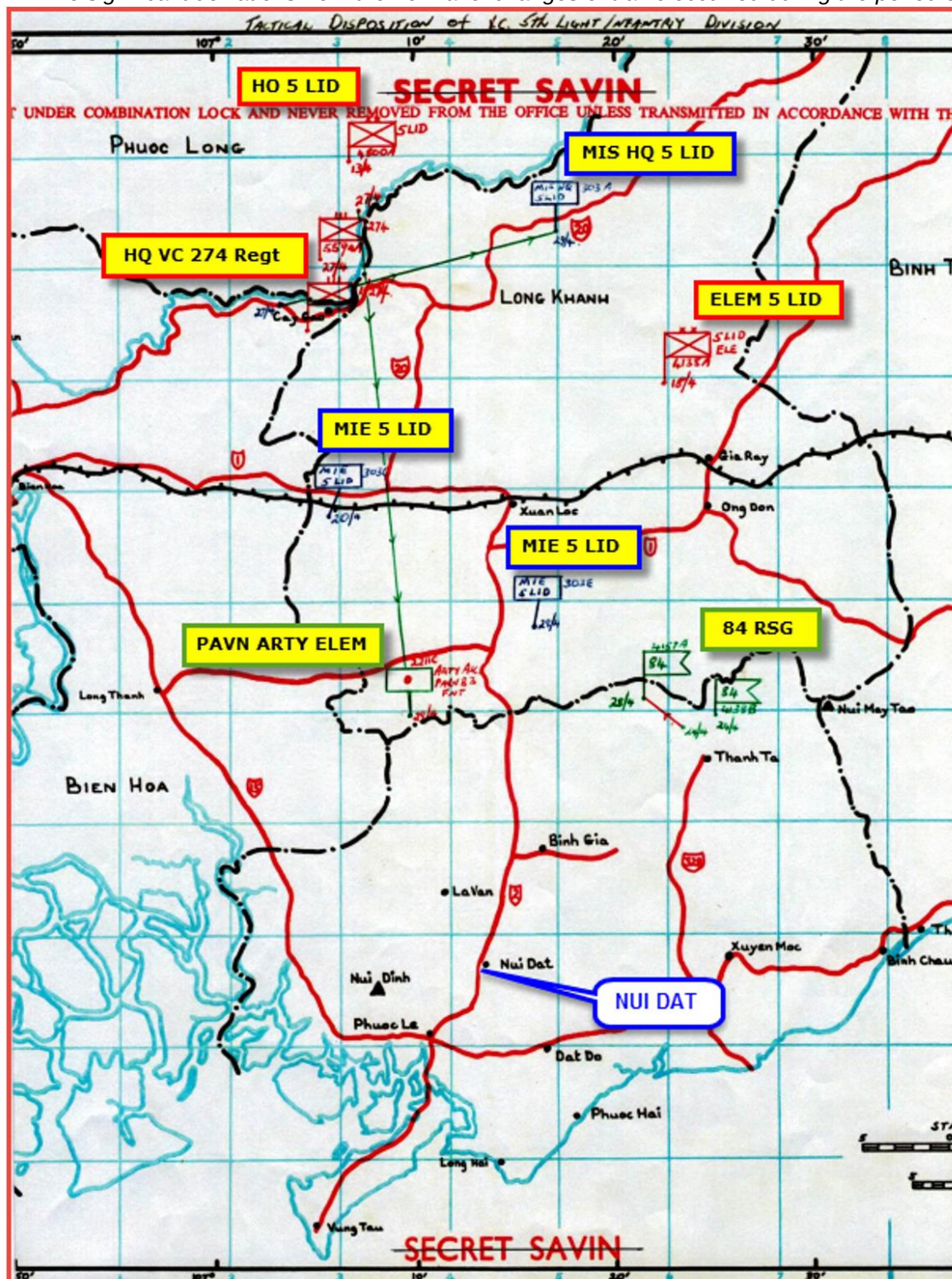


Figure 241: : Summary Map 26 Apr - 3 May⁵⁶⁴

⁵⁶⁴ Ibid.



31.6.2 4 - 23 May 1968

There are no summaries in the ASD files covering the period 3 to 23 May. However, one sketch map is available and inserted below:

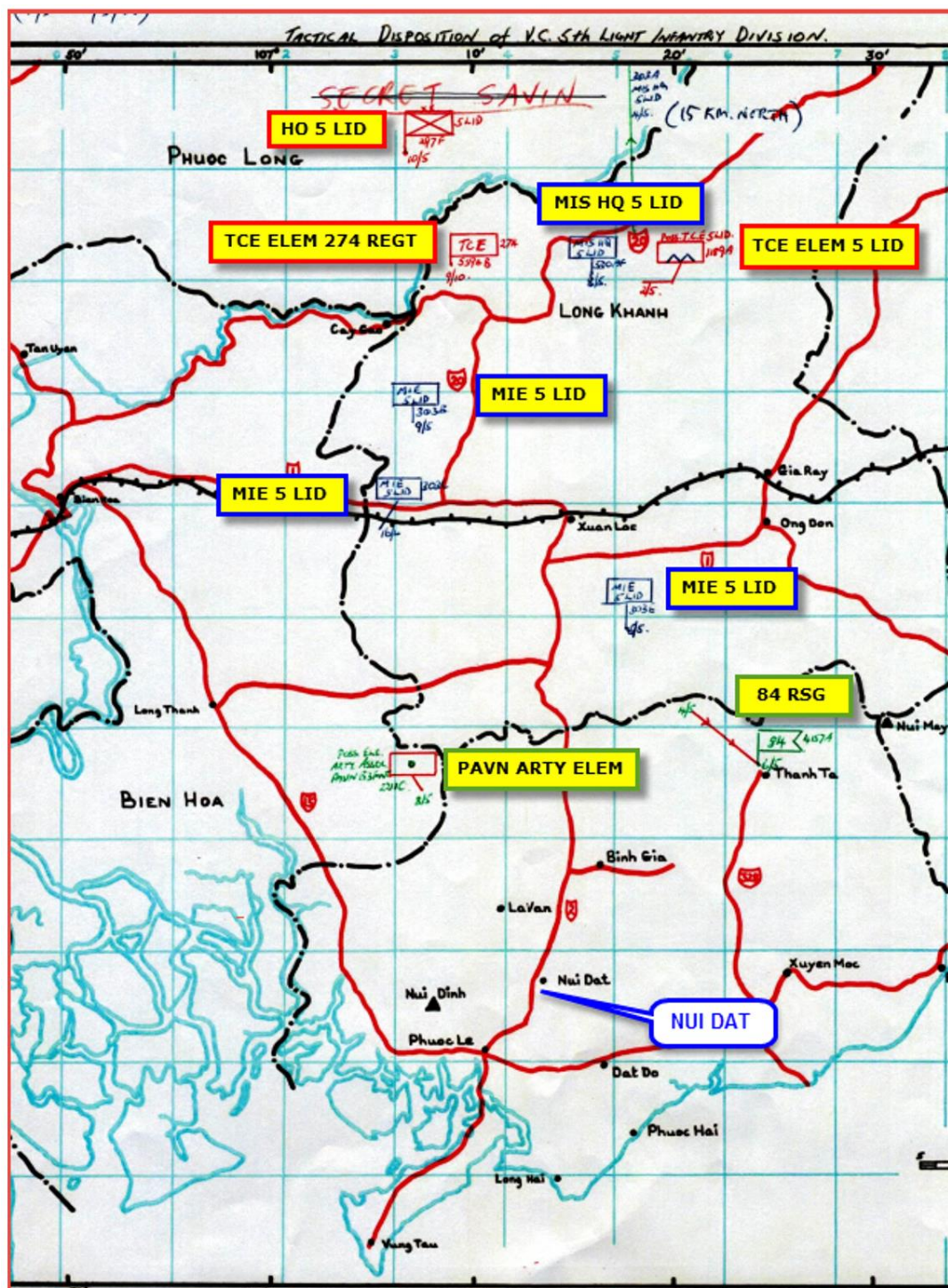


Figure 242: Summary Map 3 - 10 May 68⁵⁶⁵

⁵⁶⁵ Ibid.



31.6.3 24 – 30 May 1968

Troop General Summary for the period to 24 - 30 May 1968⁵⁶⁶:

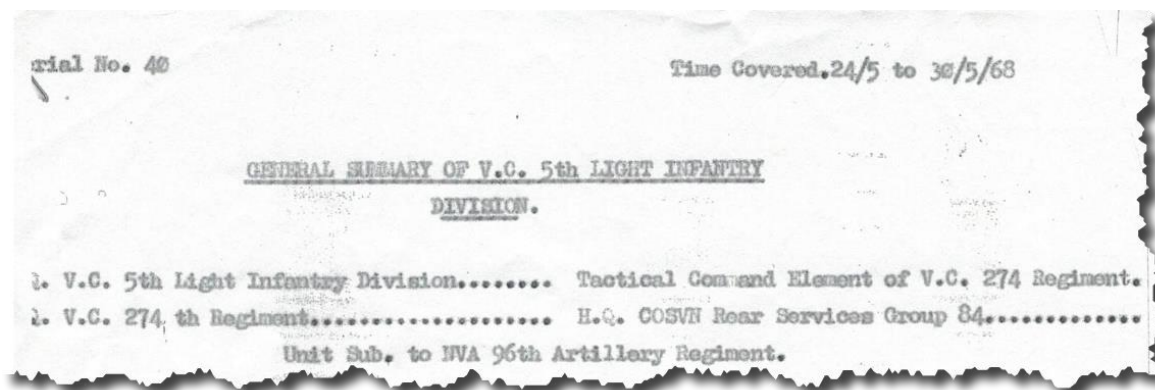


Figure 243: General Summary 24 - 30 May 68

Summary of Movements.

The entity serving the H.Q. V.C. 5th LID) (Rad 4142 A) was located on 2e the May as per map.

(i) The position of an entity serving H.Q. V.C. 274 Regt (Rad 4800E) was confirmed on ?th May.

(ii) Another entity of H.Q. V.C. 274 Regt (Rad 5594 A) was observed in a location approx. 7 kilometres NNW of its position on 22 May.

The Tactical Command Element of 274 Regt (Rad 5594 B) was noted on 29th May approx, Kilometres NW of its position on 19 May.

The location of H.Q. Cosvn Rear Serviices Group 84 (Rad 4157 A) was confirmed by DF on 25 May.

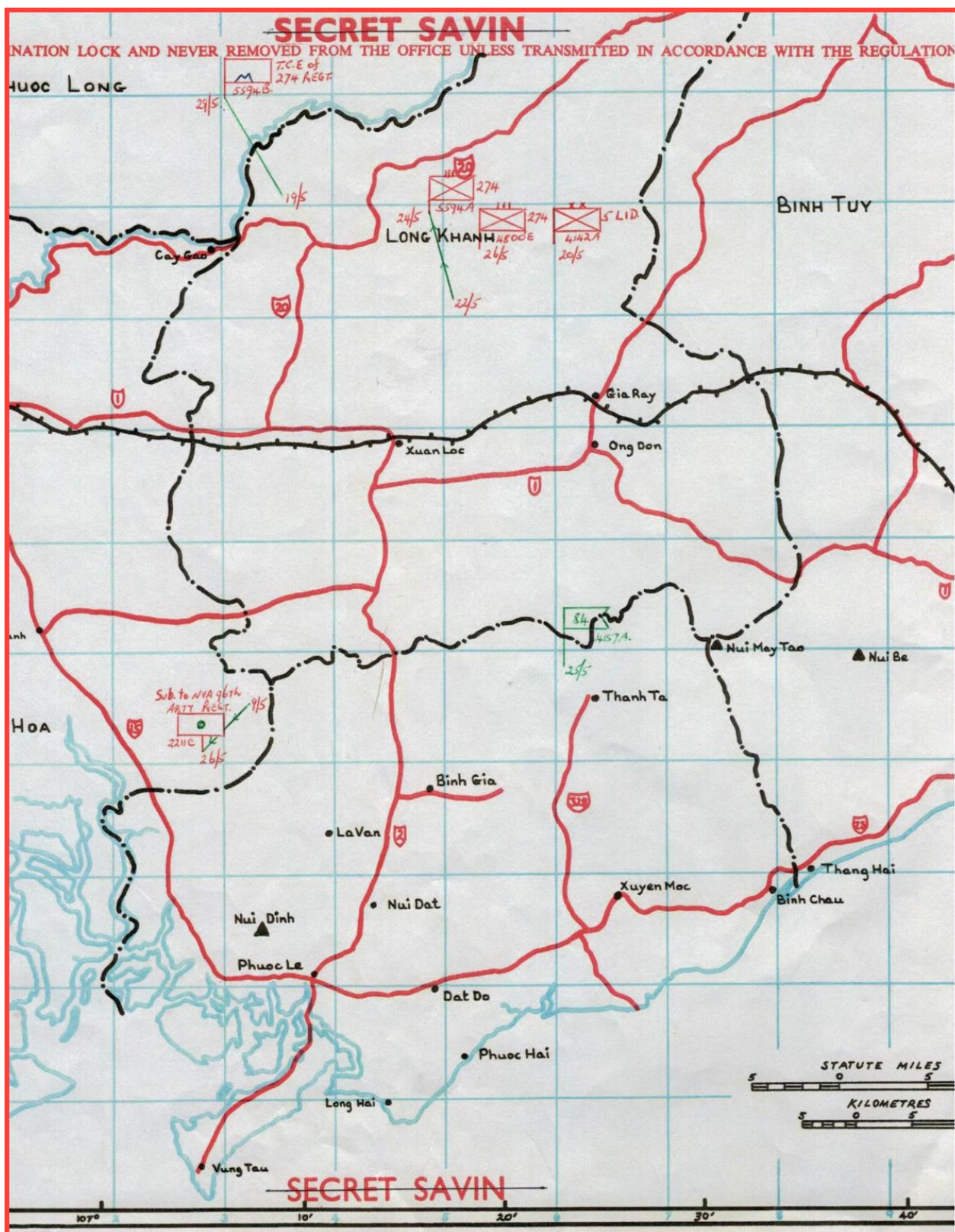
On 26 May a unit subordinate to the NVA 96th Arty Regt (Rad 2211?) re-located to a position approx. 5 kilometres SE of that which it held on 9th May.

The H.Q. V.C. 275th Regt (Rad 085 H) was observed on 25 May at XT 482 358. This places ?? in central BINH DUONG Province.

Summary of Communications.

There has been no apparent significant changes in the number of messagers intercepted during the period covered.

⁵⁶⁶ ASD archives of 547 Sig Tp material.





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CHAPTER 32 – JUNE 1968

32.1 Personnel

32.1.1 Arrivals and Departures

There were five more arrivals and two departures in June:

Arrivals

10 June

Corporal John Grace
Lance Corporal Alan Paterson
Signalman Jack Morgan

18 June

Signalman Bruce Wilson
25 June
Signalman Adrian Lange

Departures

5 June

Corporal Garth Brown
Signalman Daniel Clarke

32.1.2 Employment Areas

John Grace, Alan Paterson, Jack Morgan and Bruce Wilson were assigned to the Set Room and Adrian Lange to the Comcen.



Figure 245: Jack Morgan⁵⁶⁷

⁵⁶⁷ Photo courtesy of Jeff Payne.



32.1.3 161 Recce Flt Fixed Wing Pilots

In June, Major Henry Benson assumed command of 161 Recce Flt⁵⁶⁸.

32.1.4 HQ AFV Monthly Strength Return

There was an increase of one OR⁵⁶⁹ in the Establishment Strength of the Troop in June⁵⁷⁰:

SERIAL	UNIT	ESTABLISHMENT			POSTED STRENGTH		
		OFFR	OR	TOTAL	OFFR	OR	TOTAL
(a)	(b)	(c)	(d)	(e)	(f)	(g)	(h)
26.	Det 547 Sig Tp	2	34	36	2	34	36

Figure 246: HQ AFV Strength Return for June 1968

32.1.5 Troop Manning

The following graphic shows the organisation of the Troop in late June:⁵⁷¹

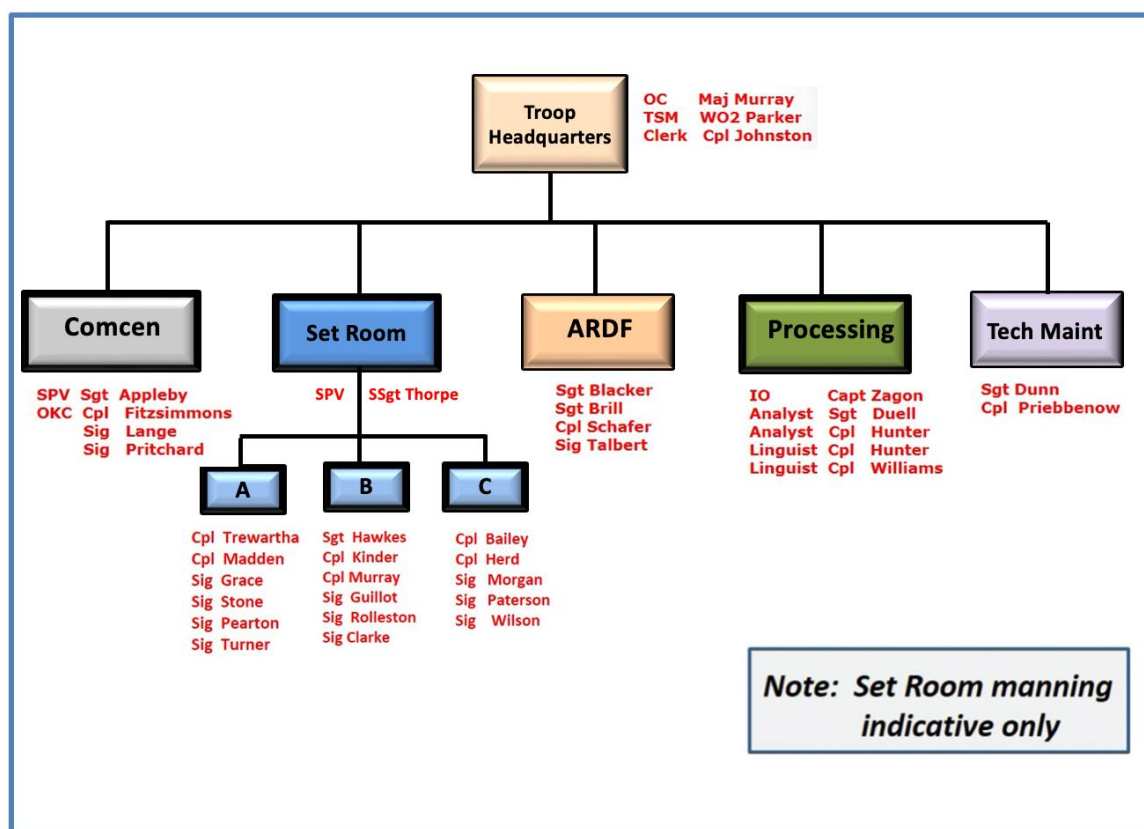


Figure 247: 547 Sig Tp Manning Late June 1968

⁵⁶⁸ Maj Benson was also a fixed wing pilot.

⁵⁶⁹ May have been the extra technician that arrived earlier.

⁵⁷⁰ <http://www.awm.gov.au/collection/AWM98/R723/1/13/3/>

⁵⁷¹ Compiled by Bob Hartley. E&OE.



Administration

32.1.6 Intelligence/Processing Building Completed

In June the new building to house the Processing Section, stores and canteen was completed. A passageway linking the new building to the Operation Room was also constructed.



Figure 248: Intelligence/Processing, Stores and Canteen Building

32.2 Operations

32.2.1 547 Sig Tp Progress Report for 1-30 Jun 68

The 547 Sig Tp Progress Report for 1-30 Jun 68⁵⁷² stated:

1. SET ROOM
 - A. POSNS
 - 3 X 16 1/2 HR DPM
 - 4 X 9 3/4 HR DPM
 - 1 X 9 HR DPM ⁵⁷³
 - B. WATCH HOURS 5 [CORRUPT] ½ HRS PER WEEK
3. TASKING
 - ALFA. PRIORITY TASKS

1. VCMB05437	7. VCMBY9020
1A VCMB00603	8. VCMBY9019
2. VCMBP8197	9. VCMBJ0469
3. VCMB05423	10. VCMB00628
4. VCMB05429	11. VCMBN4642
5. VCMBY9007	12. VCMBY9015
6. VCMB05435	13. VCMXBJ0457

DEVELOPMENT

⁵⁷² Documents received from ASD December 2015.

⁵⁷³ No ARDF position included and it appears that the sets are not manned 2400-0800 approx. These figures would equate roughly to: 8 intercept positions manned 0800 – 1700 and 3 positions manned 1700 – 2400 (times approximate).



VCMBJ0247	VCMBY9028
VCMBY9021	VCMBY9031
VCMBY9022	VCMBY9032
VCMBY9024	VCMBY9033
VCMBY9025	VCMBY9034
VCMBY9026	VCMBJ9034
VCMBY9027	

SEARCH BAND
POSN 3. 5000 – 5250 KHZ
POSN 4. 5250 – 5500 KHZ
POSN 5. 5500 – 5750 KHZ
POSN 6. 5750 – 6000 KHZ
1300Z – 1600Z 4000 – 6000 KHZ

3. ARDF
 - A. TOTAL FIXES – 120
 - B. GRADINGS. 20 GOOD 77 FAIR 6 POOR 17 CUTS
 - C. FLYING TIME 92 HRS
 - D. TWO DAYS LOST (1/2 JUN) PILOT SHORTAGE. (Several flights aborted due to weather)
 - E. PROGRESS ON US AC LOAN. HAVE AGREED TO FLY OUR AC TO TAN SON NHUT FOR EXAMINATION BY USARV AVIATION SAFETY ENGRS AS AT DATE YET TO BE NOTIFIED. ARDF FRAME AND ACCESSORIES ARRIVED FROM WRE.
4. GEN INTEREST.
 - A. **A SAS PTL ATTACKED VC RADIO STA LOCATED BY ARDF IN NUI DINH HILL** FEATURE (10000 YDS WEST OF BASE). RESULT 8 VC KILLED (BC) 3 KILLED (POSSIBLE) RADIO AND SOI CAPTURED [See Para xxxx].
 - B. WIDESPREAD US INTERESTED IN OUR VOICE INTERCEPT REPORTED MAY PROGRESS REPORT.
5. NEW WORKS. INTERNAL PARTITIONING IN NEW BLDG COMPLETED. LAYOUT NOW AS FOLS. OLD BLDG HAS SETROOM AND ARDF. NEW BLDG HAS PROCESSING CMM STORE AND SOCIAL CLUB.
6. VISITORS
15/16 JUN MR LUCKMAN DSD
22/29 JUN SSGT BELCHER 146 AVN
7. ADMINISTRATION
MAJ MURRAY 18 – 19 JUN TO [Redacted]
CAPT ZAGON 28 – 29 JUNE TO 146 AVN CO CMM TARED
SSGT BLACKER AND CPL SCHAFER 7 – 8 JUN TO 146 AVN CO
CPL J HUNTER 9 – 10 JUN TO 175 RR COY



32.2.2 Troop General Summary 31 May – 7 Jun 69

Troop General Summary for the period 31 May – 7 Jun 68⁵⁷⁴:

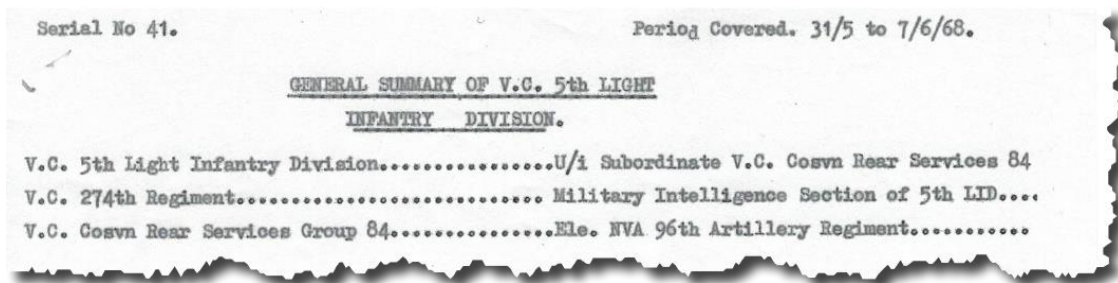


Figure 249: General Summary 31 May - 7 June 1968

General Summary of Movements.

No significant movements were noted of either:

V.C. 5th LID (Rad 4800A)

V.C. 274th Regt (Rads 5594A and 4800E)

??subordinate of Cosvn Rear Services Group 84 (Rad 4157C)

Military Intelligence Section of 5th LID (Rad 303A) since last located as per
Accompanying map.

• [Redacted]

However the HQ Cosvn Rear Services Group 84 (Rad 4157C) was observed on a movement of approx. 7 kilometres to the NNW on 31 May and another of approx. 5 kilometres to the SSW on? ? June.

Element of the NVA 96th Arty Regt (Rad 2211?) was also noted in a re-location of approx. ? kilometres to the NNW on 4 June.

⁵⁷⁴ ASD archives of 547 Sig Tp material.

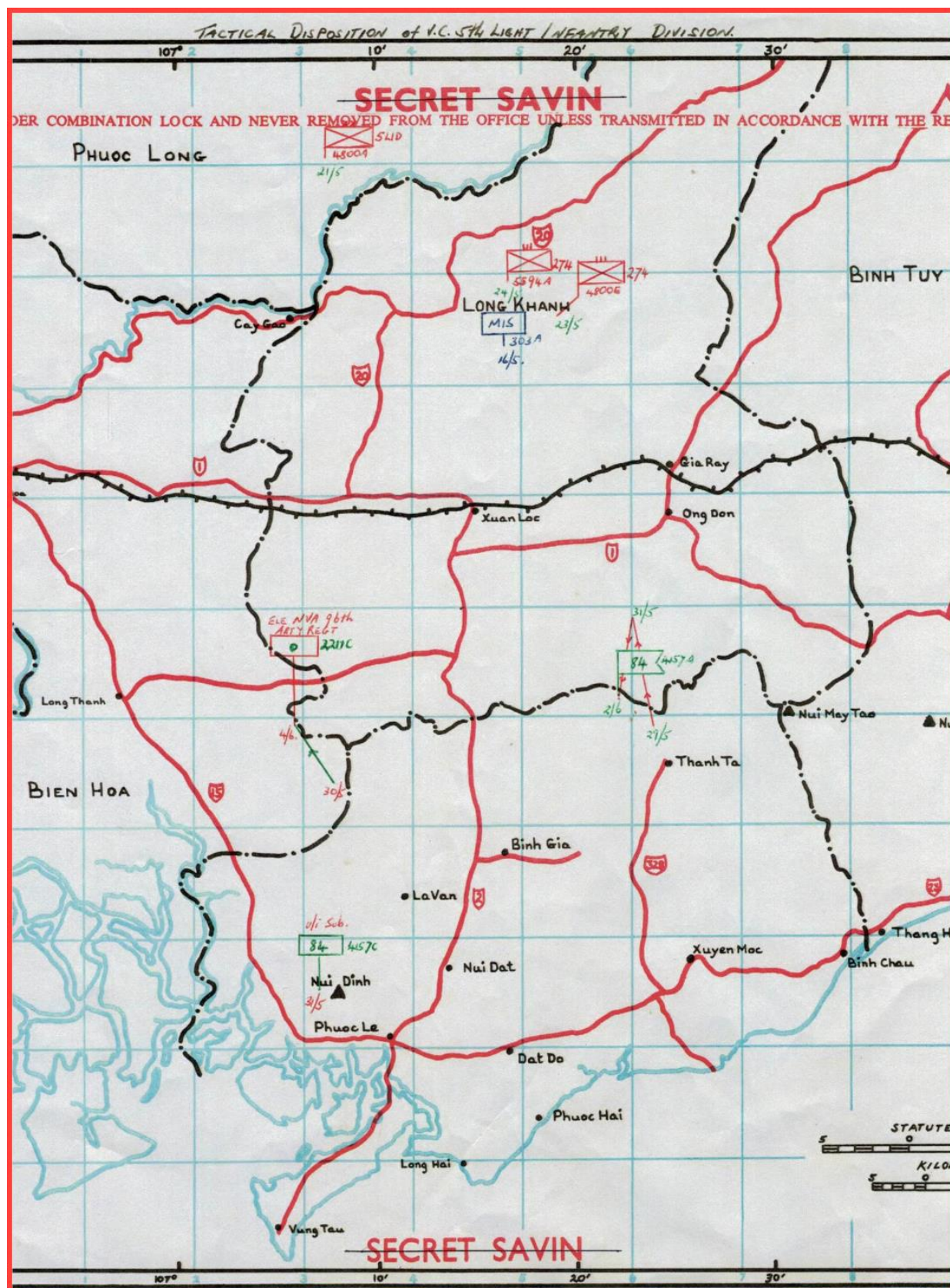


Figure 250: Map Summary 31 May - 7 June 1968



32.2.3 7 -14 June 1968⁵⁷⁵:

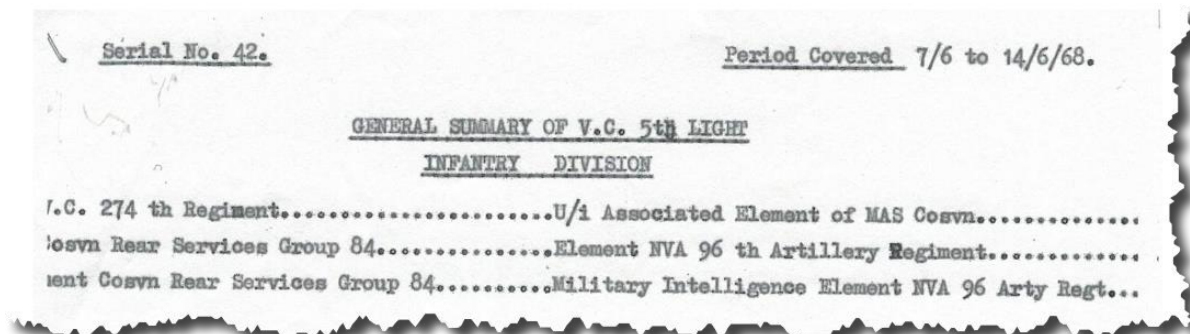


Figure 251L General Summary 7 – 14 June 1968

Summary of Locations.

On 8th June the HQ VC 274 Regt. (Rad 5594A) was observed in a Northerly movement of approximately 2 kilometres. Again on the 12th June this entity was observed approximately 10 kilometres North-east of its position on the 8th. Its latest position was confirmed on 13th June.

The HQ Cosvn Rear Services Group 84 (Rad 4157A) has been static in North-eastern Phuoc Tuy for the past few weeks. This position was again confirmed on the 12th June.

The Element of Cosvn Rear Services Group 84 (Had 4157C) was located in the Nui Dinh Hills in May. This entity has also remained static according to the latest report on 6th June.

An unidentified associated element of MAS COSVN (Rad 4898B) was observed in an Easterly location of approximately 12 kilometres on 6th June.

The location of the Element of VC 96 Arty Regt (Rad 2211C) has not been reported since 4th June when it was located as per map. Regt HQ last observed 22 May in Binh Duong.

The two Military intelligence Elements of 5VC 96 Arty Regt. (Rads 4960 A and 4960B) Has been active in the Binh Duong Province area during the past few weeks.

32.2.4 Capture of VC Radio

On 5 June, a SAS patrol (No 14) was tasked to conduct reconnaissance and ambush in the Nui Dinh/Nui Thai Vi area. On 10 June, a contact at YS335668⁵⁷⁶ resulted in part, with the capture of a home-made radio. The sequence of events follows⁵⁷⁷: [It is not confirmed that this briefing was based on previous fixes and included details of the transmitter station]

⁵⁷⁵ ASD archives of 547 Sig Tp material.

⁵⁷⁶ An ARDF Fix on 10 June placed D445 Bn in the vicinity of YS3466. 547 Sig Tp Monthly Activity Reports held by ASD (Map for June).

⁵⁷⁷ AWM 95 7/11/4 2 SAS Narrative Duty Officers Log Annexes [June 1968] RCDIG1029742.



5 June:

1400	SHQ	OC briefed 14 ptl
------	-----	-------------------

Figure 252: OC Briefed Patrol No 14

7 June:

PRECEDENCE — ACTION <i>ROUTINE</i>	PRECEDENCE — INFO DEFERRED	DATE — TIME GROUP <i>07 0800Z Jun 68</i>	MESSAGE INSTRUCTIONS
From <i>2SAS SON</i>			PREFIX GR
To <i>IATF</i>			SECURITY CLASSIFICATION <i>SECRET</i>
Info			ORIGINATOR'S NUMBER <i>OPS 395</i>

SITREP No 96 FOR PERIOD 061600H TO 071600H (.)

EN (.) Ptl 25 WAS SIGHTED BY 2VC AT YS303734 AT 071200H (.) Ptl CONTINUED MISSION (.)

OWN SIT (.)

Ptl 25 loc YS303734 AT 071340H (.)

Ptl 32 loc YS425778 AT 071510H Nov E (.)

Ptl 23 loc YS569688 AT 070810 Nov S (.)

Ptl 35 INSERTED TO YS340728 AT 071530H (.)

Ptl 12 WAS EXTRACTED AT 061654H AFTER CONTACT (.)

Ptl 14 TO BE INSERTED AT 080730H (.)

Ptl 13 TO BE INSERTED AT 081000H (.)

Figure 253: Sitrep No 96 7 June: Patrol No 14 to be inserted

8 June:

0715	RAAF	SHQ	14 ptl inserted
------	------	-----	-----------------

Figure 254: No 14 Patrol Inserted



PRECEDENCE — ACTION ROUTINE	PRECEDENCE — INFO DEFERRED	DATE — TIME GROUP 080800 Z JUN 68	MESSAGE INSTRUCTIONS
From ASAS SDN		PREFIX GR	
To IATF		SECURITY CLASSIFICATION SECRET	
Info		ORIGINATOR'S NUMBER OPS 396	

SITREP NO 97 FOR PERIOD 071600H TO 081600H (.)

EN (.)

NIL (.)

OWN SIT (.)

PL 23 LOC YS 565672 AT 081415H NOV N (.)

PL 32 LOC YS 432774 AT 1500H NOV SE (.)

PL 25 LOC YS 297133 AT 081445 NOV W (.)

PL 4 LOC YS 342664 AT 081530H NOV SW (.)

PL 35 LOC YS 335721 AT 081600H NOV SW (.)

PL 13 LOC YS 334833 AT 081600H (.)

PL 23 TO BE EXTRACTED AT 090800H (.)

Figure 255: Sitrep No 97 8 June: Patrol No 14 Location

9 June:

5	0930	14	SHQ	In ambush at GR334661
---	------	----	-----	-----------------------

Figure 256: Patrol No 14 in Ambush

10 June:

1430	Possum	SHQ	14 had contact(.) request immediate extraction
1515	SHQ	14	ac on way
1530	SHQ	1ATF	14 extracted

Figure 257: Patrol No 14 In Contact and Extracted

SITREP NO 99 FOR PERIOD 091600H TO 101600H (.)

EN (.)

AT YS335668 14PL CONTACTED 11 PLUS VC IN A BASE CAMP (.) RESULTS 8VC KIA (BC) 3VC KIA (POSS)

1 RADIO TRANSMITTER ENH 1 M2 US CARBINE ENH 1 .45 LIS PISTOL CAPTURED (.)

Figure 258: Sitrep No 99 for 10 June. Radio Transmitter captured



32.2.4.1 Patrol Report

The following Patrol Report was submitted by Lt Simpson:

2 SAS Sqn Ops 108/68		<u>SECRET</u>		Copy No. <u>6</u>	
				2 SAS Sqn	
		<u>PATROL REPORT</u>		NUI DAT	
				// Jun 68	
Recce Amb Ptl/Ptl 14					
Ref: Map VIETNAM XA BINH BA 1:25,000 sheet 6430 111 SE.					
A. <u>Size and Composition of Patrol</u>					
	Lt	G.L.	SIMPSON	Ptl Comd	
	Lcpl	R.	KERKEZ	2ic	
	Pte	J.W.	HARPER	Sig	
	Pte	D.J.	CULLEN	Medic	
	Lcpl	G.H.	LOBB	Rfn	
	Pte	B.	SPOLEN	Rfn	
B. <u>Task</u> Recce Ambush Zone 281					
C. <u>Date Time Out</u> 080730H					
D. <u>Date Time In</u> 101530H					
E. <u>Route</u> Infil by hel to LZ YS347665					
Exfil by winch from YS336657					
For Ptl route see ANNEX 'P'					
F. <u>Terrain</u> Steep mountains with large rocky outcrops and low vine entanglements.					
NO water. Going very hard.					

Figure 259: Patrol Report #1



G. Eh YS347664 at 080830H ptl crossed NW/SE foot pad. Had been used by 1 VC approximately 2 hours before.

YS345663 at 081330H 1 single shot W 300 - 1000 m.

YS345662 at 081345H 1 dog heard barking 400m W.

YS339663 at 090120H 2 single shots W 300 - 400m.

YS338663 at 090930H voices heard 200m SW.

YS338662 at 091100H to 091300H voices heard 100m SW.

YS335663 at 091630H rattling of utensils heard SW 150 m.

YS335663 at 091900H music was heard on a radio SW 100m.

YS335663 at 100603H coughing and talking SW 100m.

YS335662 at 100810H 2 VC moving N approx 30m away. The first was dressed in black and carrying an M1. The second was dressed in shorts and carried an unidentified SMG.

YS335660 at 101100H to 101300H series of single shots heard 200m N.

YS335660 at 101200H music and voices were heard 100m S.

YS335660 at 101235H radio was heard playing "The East is Red" approx 100m S.

YS335659 at 101300H ptl found occupied camp containing approx 15 VC.

YS335659 at 101310H ptl moved into fire positions. At 101315H ptl moved in and attacked camp using small arms, M79 and M60. 6 VC were killed on the initial attack. After the patrol swept the camp 8 VC were found KIA. The VC who escaped opened fire with 3 x M2 carbines. The area of fire was suppressed by M79 and the firing ceased, resulting 3 VC KIA (poss). The camp was searched and 1 home made radio complete, 1 x M2 carbine 1 x 45 pistol and 2 packs containing documents were captured.

Ptl withdrew to the S and made communications with a possum rotary wing ac and were extracted by winch. Whilst moving to a winch point, movement was heard to the NORTH indicating that some VC had escaped from the camp.

H. Map Corrections Nil

J. Results of Encounters with Eh

8 VC KIA (BC)
3 VC KIA (poss)
1 x M2
1 x 45 pistol
1 x home made radio set complete
1 x pack containing documents
1 x pack of clothing and 50 rd ammo.

K. Condition of Patrol Good

SECRET 2.... / L

L. Conclusions and Recommendations Recommend future tasks of this nature in NUI DINH and NUI THI VAI.

M. Additional Remarks by Interrogator Nil

G.L. Simpson
G.L. SIMPSON
Lt
Ptl Comd

K.W. Lunny
K.W. LUNNY
Lt
Ops Offr

Figure 260: Patrol Report #2

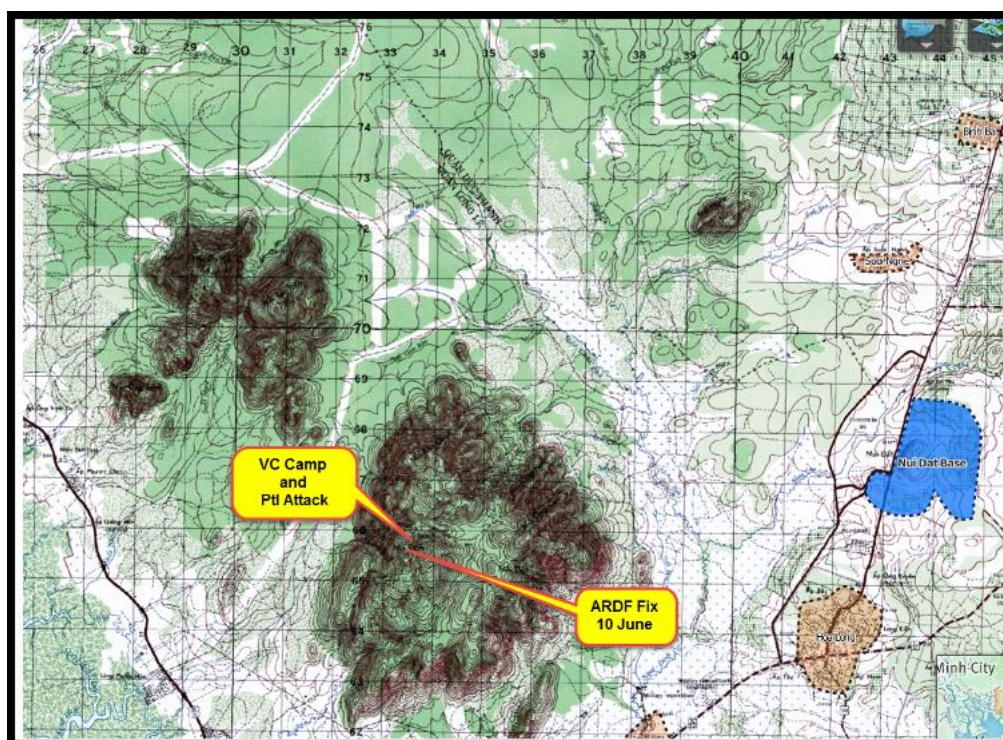


Figure 261: Map showing fix and SAS Patrol Contact

32.2.5 Troop Enemy Summary 14- 21 June 1968

Troop General Summary for the period 14- 21 June 1968⁵⁷⁸:

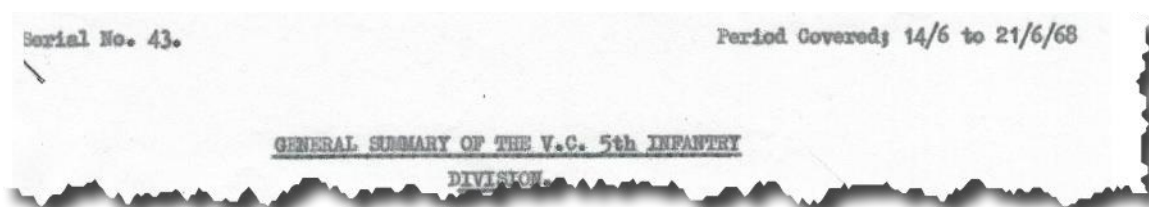


Figure 262: General Summary 14 - 21 June 1968

General Summary of Location..

The HQ V.C. 274th Regiment (Rad 5594A) observed in a movement of approximately ? kilometre WSW on 19 June. This latest move places this entity in Central Long Khanh Prov.

The Tactical Command Element of V.C. 274 Regiment (Rad 5594 B) was noted in a re-location of approximately 20 kilometres SE on 19 June to a position approximately 110 kilometres ?? of the H.Q. V.C. 274 Regt's position in LONG KHANH Province.

The HQ COSVN Rear Services Group 84 (Rad 4157 A) has remained static throughout the reporting period. Its position on the PHUOC TUY/LONGKHANH Border area was again confirmed by ARDF on 19 June.

⁵⁷⁸ ASD archives of 547 Sig Tp material.



An unidentified subordinate of HQ COSVN Rear Services Group 84 (Rad 4157 B) was ?? by ARDF in a position approximately 2 or 3 kilometres East of Highway 20 in eastern LONG KHANH Province»

The Military Intelligence Elements of V.C. 96th Artillery Regiment (Rads 4960 A and??? B) were located by ARDF on 15 and 19 June respectively in northern BINH DUONG Province.

All other entities appearing on map are shown at their latest known locations.





32.2.6 Troop General Summary 21 – 28 Jun 68:

Troop General Summary for the period 21 – 28 Jun 68:

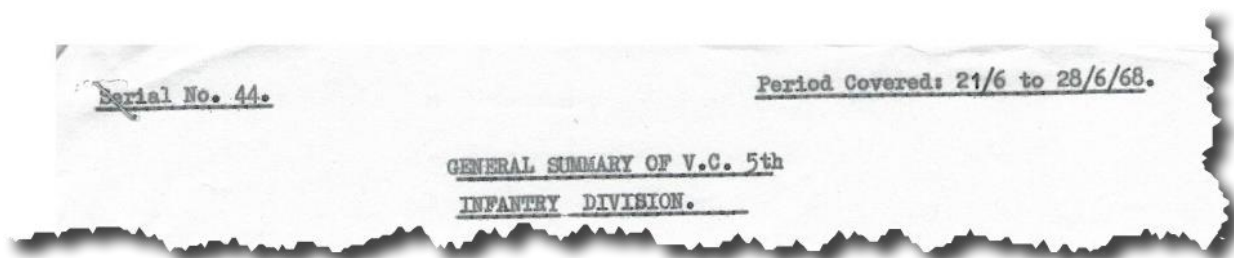


Figure 264: General Summary 21 – 28 June 1968

General Summary of Location..

1. the H.Q. V.C. 274 Regiment (Rad 5594 A) was observed occupying a position on 23 Jun approx 17 kms SE of its position on 22 Jun. Again on 26 Jun this entity was located by ARDF approx 8 kms NNE of its 23 Jun position»
2. The Tactical Command Element of V.C. 274 Regiment (Rad 5594 B) was noted in a South-easterly re-location of approx 12 kms on 26 Jun. This entity is now located approx. 6 kms NE of its control H.Q. V.C. 274 Regt.
3. The possible H.Q. V.C Cosvn Rear Services Group 84 (Rad 4138 B) was located on 26 Jun approx 7 kms SE of its 22 Jun position.
4. An unidentified element of the possible H.Q. COSVN Rear Services Group 84 (Rad 4157 D.) was located by ARDF as per map.
5. The possible subordinate of H.Q. V.C. 96th Artillery Regt (Rad 2211C) who has been in the general PHUOC TUY/LONG KHANH/BIEN HOA Border area for the past few reporting periods, has again been located by ARDF with no significant movements.
6. The two Military Intelligence Elements of V.C. 96th Arty Regt (Rads 4960 A and 4960 B) who have been located in the general BINH DUONG/TAY NINH area, have not been observed in any significant re-locations.

GENERAL COMMENTS ON VOLUME OF COMMUNICATIONS.

1. The link between HQ 274 Regt and its subordinate Tactical Command Element of 274 Regt has been utilised greatly and a high volume of traffic was passed.
2. The possible HQ 96th Arty Regt and its subordinate, the possible subordinate of HQ 96 Arty Regt, were observed exchanging a high volume of messages.

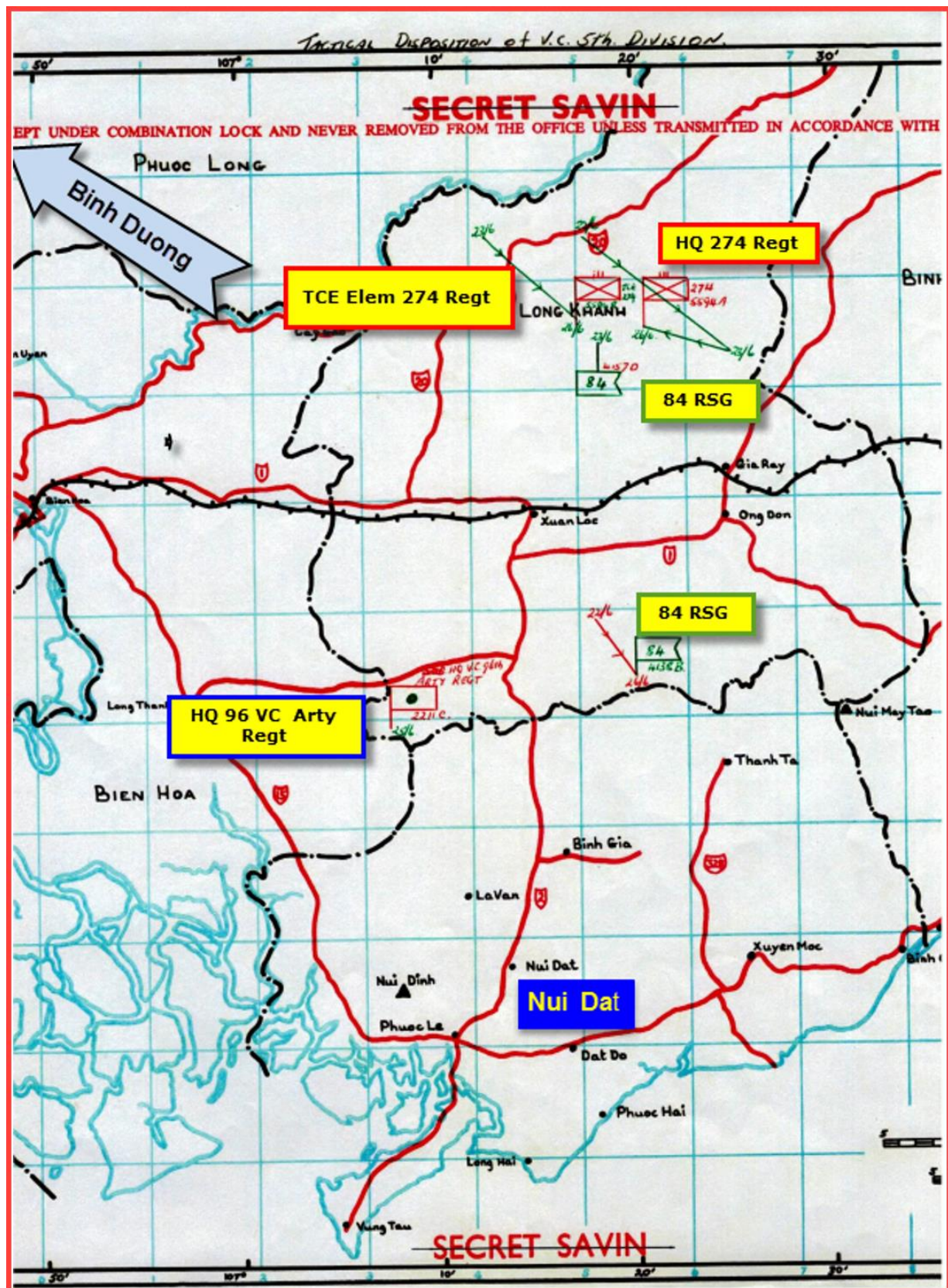


Figure 265: Map Summary 21 - 28 Jun 68



CHAPTER 33 – JULY 1968

33.1 Personnel

33.1.1 Arrivals and Departures

There were no arrivals in July and only one departure.

Departure

23 July

Sergeant Ted Blacker

33.1.2 ARDF NCO I/C Changeover

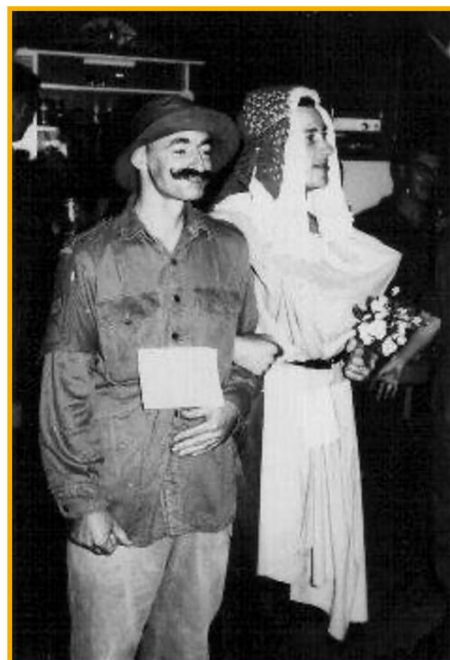
Jim Brill took over as NCO in charge of the ARDF operations from Ted Blacker.

33.1.3 The Wedding

One of the best evenings held at 547 occurred as a result of Fred Hawkes being unable to get Rest and Recuperation (R&R) leave back to Toowoomba for his son's wedding. The Troop secretly planned a Buck's Party on the night of the wedding. Fred was rostered for duty that night to conceal the final preparations from him. At 7 pm he was called into the Troop's newly formed club for the party, and to be informed that a gift of linen had been sent to his son.



Steve Zagon dressed as a minister to conduct the ceremony.



Laurie Duell (complete with flowing gown) as the bride.
Dick Schafer the father of the bride

Figure 266: Wedding Participants



33.1.4 HQ AFV Monthly Strength Return

There was no change to the Establishment Strength of the Troop in July.

33.2 Administration

33.2.1 Establishment of the Canteen

The Troop club owed its existence to a very active committee. Warner Madden, Roy Johnston and Tex Middleton were the main instigators but everyone assisted with labour and cash donations. The committee was given much of what they needed and then 'borrowed' equipment from around the Task Force. A \$10 debenture levy and a private loan financed the purchase of a refrigerator and bar stock.



Figure 267: Bruce (Bilko) Fitzsimmons as the Duty Barman

33.2.2 Junior Ranks Accommodation

The accommodation area for the junior ranks continued to expand to provide more space for the soldiers.



Figure 268: OR's Accommodation #1



Figure 269: OR's Accommodation #2

33.3 Operations

33.3.1 547 Sig Tp Progress Report for 1-30 Jul 68

The 547 Sig Tp Progress Report for 1-30 Jul 68⁵⁷⁹ stated:

SECRET SAVIN
FOR MI8. PROGRESS REPORT 1 -31 JUL 68

1. SETROOM

A. POSNS. 4 X 16 1/2 HRS. 4 X 9 3/4 HRS

B. WATCH HOURS 54 HRS PER MAN PER WEEK

C. IN TRG NIL

E. TASKING PRIORITY

[much redaction]

7 VCMB Y9019

8 VCMB 00637

9 VCMB 00628

10 VCMB Y9019

11 VCMB Y9021

12 VCMB Y9027

13 VCMB J0621

14 VCMB J0612

DEVELOPMENT

VCXB J0659

⁵⁷⁹ DSD Declassified, 547 Sig Tp in Vietnam (tranche2).



VCMBJj0576 NOW VCMBj0637
VCMB Y9025

VCMB Y9033
VCMB Y9037
VCMB Y9038
VCMB Y9039
VCMB Y9040
VCMB Y9043

SEARCH BAND

POSN 3 5000 - 5250 KHZ
POSN 4 3250 - 5500 KHZ
POSN 3 5500 - 5750 KHZ
POSN 6 2750 " 6000 KHZ

1300Z-1600Z 4030 - 6000 KHZ

3. ARDF

A. TOTAL FIXES 100
B. GRADINGS 22 GOOD 57 FAIR NIL POOR 21 CUTS
C. FLYING TIME 105 HRS
D. ONE DAY LOST DUE AC SERVICING/MALFUNCTION.
THREE DAYS LOST DUE INCLEMENT WEATHER. THREE DAYS LOST
DUE ARDF EQPT SERVICING/MALFUNCTION

E. DUE WORSENING WEATHER AND LACK OF SECURE HAVENS FOR
AIRCRAFT IN AREA NORTH OF ROUTE ONE (APPROX NORTHING YT10)
HAVE LIMITED ARDF FLIGHTS TO SOUTH OF THAT LINE

F. STILL NO FURTHER NEWS ON 8 LOAN SINCE MY 240500Z JUL
(TO MI8 ONLY) BUT WILL VISIT DODSPECREP 3 AUG TO SOLICIT MORE
INFO

G. SO SIGS ADVISES THAT COMAFV INTENDS REPLYING TO COMD 1 ATF SIG
(MY SIGINT 145 TO MIS ONLY) TO EFFECT THAT ALTHOUGH HE AGREES WITH
ALL POINTS MADE HE INTENDS TO DELAY STATEMENT TO AHQ UNTIL ARDF
TESTS UN LOANED U8 COMPLETED.

4. SSL. MY APOLOGIES CMM FORGOT TO FWD RESULTS OF DISCUSSIONS
WITH MR TREHARNE SO HERewith SUMMARY.

A. SITE SELECTED IS CLOSE TO BORE 3 [redacted] (SPECIAL) GR 074335/
116783. SITE NOT IDEAL BUT REPRESENTS BEST AVAILABLE COMPROMISE
CONSIDERING PERIMETER SECURITY REQUIREMENTS CMM OUTSTANDING ENGR
WORKS CMM LIMITED SPACE AVAILABLE AND MUTUAL INTERFERENCE PROBLEMS
(IONOSOND VERSUS AUSTCAN TX TO BE INSTALLED AREA 439669 IN PARTICULAR).
IF SSL PROVES SUCCESSFUL AND SPORADIC E REGION PROBLEM CAN BE SOLVED
BETTER SITE COULD BE FOUND IN AREA 435449 AT [redacted] OF EXTENDING
SOUTHERN PEG EEER OF 1 ATF BASE ABOUT [redacted] YDS. THIS IS A MAJOR ENGR
TASK WHEN WIRE CMM MINE FIELDS AND REALLOCATION OF DEF SECTORS
CONSIDERED.

B, DCRE 198 WKS SECT 1 ATF HAS AGREED TO HAVE SELECTED SITE LEVELLED
BY 1 OCT AND TO PROVIDE HARD STANDING FOR GEN SET AND SSL SHELTER.
WILL ALSO PROVIDE ACCESS TRACK FOR VEHS. AERIALS AND FEEDER ROUTES
TO BE CONSTRUCTED BY LABOUR PROVIDED BY HQ 1 ATF SUPERVISED BY 547
SIG TP. AERIAL POLES TO BE PROVIDED BY WRE CMM NOT SURE OF ARRANGEMENTS
FOR FEEDER ROUTE POLES.



C. SUBMITTING FIA FOR LOAN OF 10 KVA 240V GEN SET PERIOD 3 MONTHS FROM 1 OCT. IF SSL SUCCESSFUL WILL RVE GEN SET.

D. RUDIMENTARY WEATHER SHELTERS FOR GEN SET CONSTRUCTED BY 547 SIG TP

E. TELEPHONE LINES REQUIRED CAN BE PROVIDED BY 104 SIG SQN.

F. CRANE AVAILABLE 1 ATF FOR OFFLOADING SSL SHELTER FROM VEHICLE ON ARRIVAL FROM VUNG TAU

F. DO NOT SEE ANY MAJOR PROBLEMS GETTING SSL INTO POSN AND WORKING BY END OCT 68.

5. GEN INTEREST. THERE HAS BEEN CONSIDERABLE EVIDENCE OF [redacted] COMINT ACTIVITY IN SIGNAL TRAFFIC AND FROM COLLATERAL SOURCES. LT COL TRAN VAN DUC ASST PO SUB REGION 1 WHO RALLIED APR 68 STATED RADIO INTERCEPT WAS EASIEST SAFEST AND FASTEST METHOD USED TO OBTAIN INFORMATION. HE STATED EACH DIVISION AND SOMETIMES EACH REGIMENT HAS FOUR MAN TEAM CONSISTING OF OC, RADIO OPERATOR LINGUIST AND MAP SPECIALIST. COMSEC IN 1 ATF HAS BEEN TIGHTENED AND COMD 1 ATF HAS DIRECTED THAT ACCESS TO RADIOS AND TRUNK TELEPHONES DE RESRICTED TO OFFRS/NCOS AWARE OF DANGERS IN BREACHES

6. VISITORS

10/13 JUL MR TREHARNE WRE
18 JUL LT COL PRICE CO 303 RR BN
24 JUL LTCCL WALLS CO 146 AVN CO (RR)
MAJ HORLIK CO ELECT 146 AVN CO (RR)
CAPT RITTERSPACH OPS OFFR 146 AVN CO
28 JUL COL RILEY CO 509 RRG
LTCOL HIMMEL S3 509 RRG
LTCOL PRICE CO 303RR BN

DETS.

MAJ MURRAY 14/15 JUL DODSPECREP AND 146 AVN CO
CAPT ZAGON 27/28 JUL 175 RR COY
CPL HUNTER 25/26 JUL 175 RR COY

7. ADMINISTRATION. OC 104 SIG SON REQUESTED RELIEF FROM ALL ADMIN RESPONSIBILITY FOR 547 SIG TP AS 110 SIG SQN ABOUT TO PLACE ADDITIONAL 20 PERS IN THIS BASE (ADMINISTERED BY 104) TO OPERATE RELOCATED AUSTCAN TX/RX FROM SAIGON. CONFERENCE WITH HQ 1 ATF HAS ARRANGED FOL CHANGES WEF 5 AUG.

A. RATIONS. OFFRS AND OR TO BE RATIONED BY HQ COY 1 ATF. SGTS/WO TO REMAIN 104 SIG SQN.

B. A MATTERS. 547 TO HANDLE ITS OWN PAY PERS DOCUMENTS AND LEAVE.

C. 547 CONTINUES TO OPERATE OWN Q ACCOUNT BUT RESPONSIBILITY FOR PROVISION OF CLOTHING AND NECESSARIES TRANSFERRED FROM 104 TO HQ COY.

D. CHANGES SATISFACTORY FROM 547 TP POINT OF VIEW

33.3.2 ARDF Flying Hours

The total ARDF flying hours for the month were⁵⁸⁰:

⁵⁸⁰ Compiled from MI8 Records held at ASD archives.



Year	Month	Flying hours	Total Fixes	Good <1000mts	Fair 1-2000Mts	Poor >2000 Mts	Cut	Missions Lost	Remarks
1968	Jul	105	100	22	57	-	21	7	

33.3.3 Troop Enemy Summaries

There are only two summaries for July on file. During the month there appears to have been a change in cover/ARDF flights to entities well to the north of the Australian AO.

33.3.4 Troop General Summary 19 - 26 July

Troop General Summary for the period 19 – 26 July⁵⁸¹:

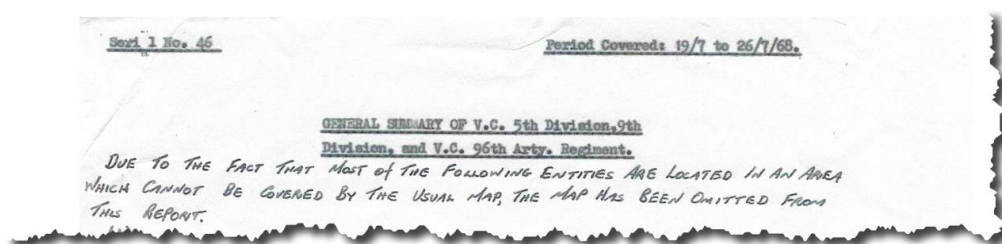


Figure 270: General Summary 19 - 26 Jun 68

(A)

(i) The HQ V.V. 5th Div.(297F) is currently located in north-eastern TAY NINH

Province. This relocation occurred after 29 June before which it was located in LONG KHANH Province.

(ii) The Military Intelligence Section of V.C. 5 Div (Rads 530AF/303A) has remained active with the Military Intelligence Bureau COSVNI although it has not been observed contacting the subordinate Military Intelligence Elements. This entity is located in the same immediate area as H.Q. V.C. 5 Div.

(iii) The HQ V.C. 274 Regiment (Rad 5594 A) has remained static and is located in the Northern LONG KHANH Province.'

(iv) The Tactical Command Element of V.C. 274 Regt. (Rad 5594 B) has not been observed in any significant movement during the reporting period and has remained in the same area as its control, HQ 274 Regt.

(v)The HQ V.C. 275 Regiment has been noted in a position approximate to that occupied by V.C. 5 Div in North-Eastern TAY NINH Province.

(B)

V.C. 9th Division

(I) The HQ 271 Regiment (Rad 086 B) was observed in South-Eastern TAY NINH Province on 22 July.

(II) The HQ 272 Regiment (Rad 086 E) was observed in a position on 23 July approximate to that occupied by 271 Regt on 22 July.

⁵⁸¹ ASD archives of 547 Sig Tp material. (Serial No 45 Missing)



(C)

V.C. 96th Artillery Regiment

(i) The HQ V.C. 96th Artillery Regt and its subordinate Military Intelligence Elements have not been observed in any significant movements since the last reporting period when they were noted in the BINH DUONG Province area.

(ii) The subordinate element of V.C. 96 Arty Regt. is currently located in the East of Central LONG KHANH Province.

33.3.5 Troop General Summary 26 Jul – 2 Aug 68

Troop General Summary for the period 26 Jul – 2 Aug 68⁵⁸²:

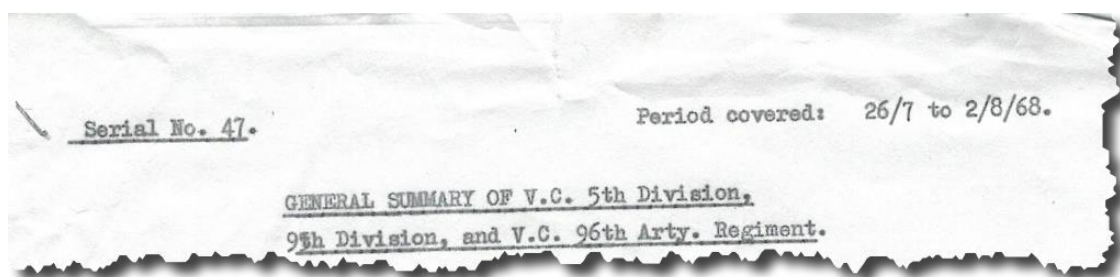


Figure 271: General Summary 26 Jul - 2 Aug 68

Partly reflecting a low level of communications activity for 5th and 9th Divisions no A.R.D.F. fixes have been forthcoming for those units.

A. 5th V.C. Division.

i) The H.Q. 5th Division was last heard on the 29th June and was located in North-Eastern TAY NINH Province.

ii) No contact has been observed between the Military Intelligence Section of V.C. 5th Div. and Military Intelligence Bureau COSVN during the reporting period. The MIS was last located in the same immediate area as HQ V.C. 5th Div.

iii) The HQ V.C. 274 Reg't has been observed in very little communications activity during the reporting period and has remained static in the Northern LONG KHANH Province area for the last few weeks.

iv) The Tactical Command Element of V.C. 274 Reg't has not been noted in communications during the reporting period and was last located in the general area of its control, HQ 274 Reg't.

v) The HQ 275 Reg't has not been observed in communications activity during the reporting period and was last located in the same general area as HQ V.C. 5th Div.

B. V.C. 9th Division.

i) Neither the HQ 271 Reg't nor the HQ 272 Reg't have been located by A.R.D.F. since 22nd July when they were observed in South-Eastern TAY NINH Province.

⁵⁸² ASD archives of 547 Sig Tp material.



C. V.C. 96th Arty Reg't.

i) The HQ V.C. 96th Arty Reg't was relocated on 29th July in the tri-border area of BINH LONG BJNH DUONG and TAY NINH Provinces following an Easterly move of approximately 15kms. from their last observed position.

ii) The Military Intelligence Element and the subordinate Military Intelligence Elements of HQ V.C. 96 Arty Reg't have moved with their parent unit and remain in the same immediate area, as their control, HQ V.C. 96th Arty Reg't.

iii) The subordinate element of HQ V.C. 96th Arty Reg't has not been observed during the reporting period and was last located East of central LONG KHANH Province.

33.3.6 Map for June

The following graphic was included with the Summary for the above period. It appears to be a consolidation for the month. Note the move of the 96 Arty Regt Element and that the Element of 84 RSG is also notated as 445 Bn.

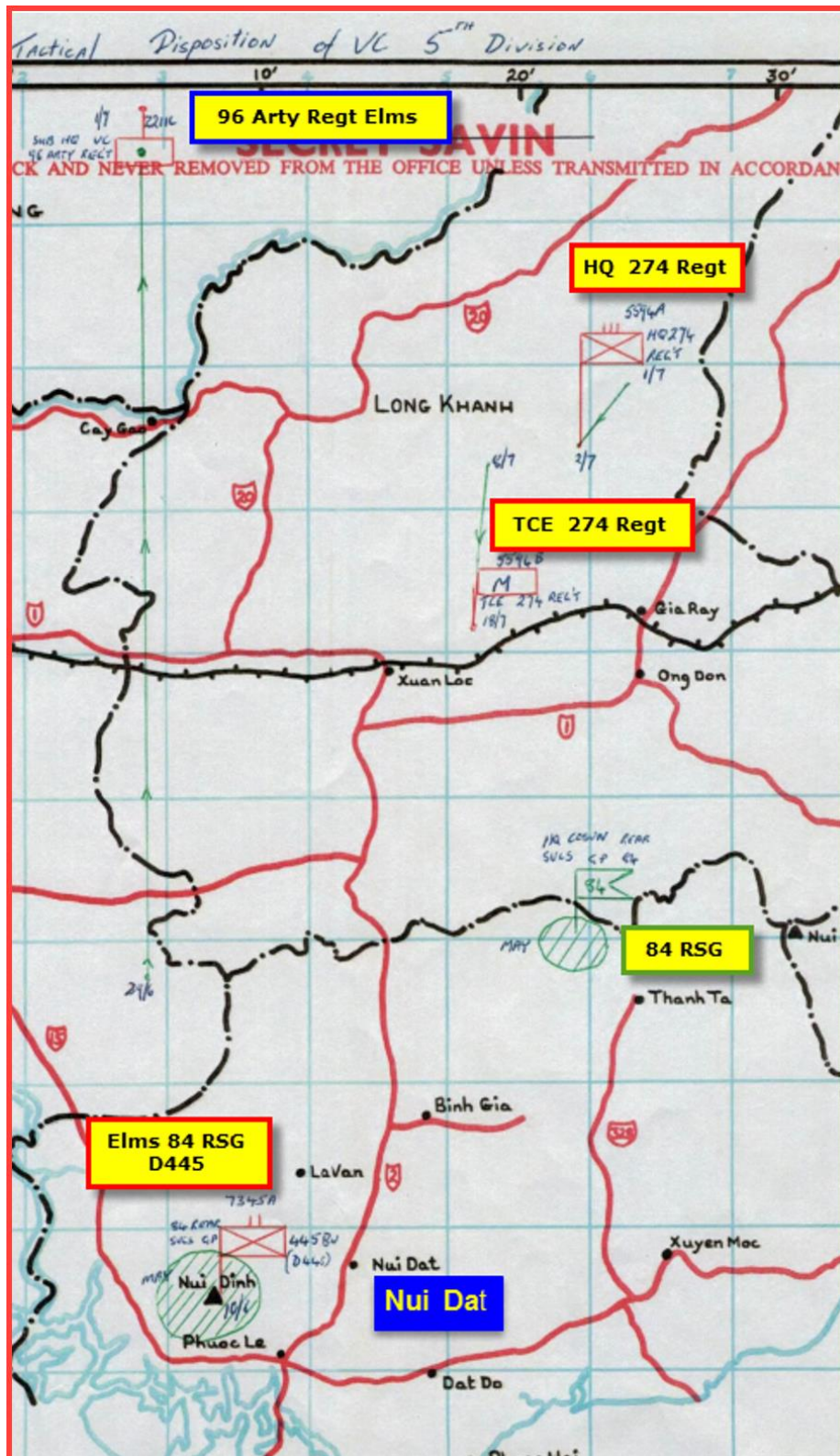


Figure 272: Summary Map for June



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CHAPTER 35 – AUGUST 1968

34.1 Personnel

34.1.1 Arrivals and Departures

There were no arrivals or departures in August.

34.1.2 Visitor

On 28 August, Brigadier Pearson, the Commander 1ATF designate visited the Troop.



Figure 273: Brig Pearson

34.1.3 Operator Exchange

Corporal John Murray exchanged with an operator from 175 RR Co.

34.1.4 161 Recce Flt Fixed Wing Pilots

In August, Captain Barry Donald joined 161 Recce Flt as a fixed wing pilot.

34.1.5 HQ AFV Monthly Strength Return

There was no change to the Establishment Strength of the Troop in August⁵⁸³:

Serial	Unit	Establishment			Posted Strength		
		Offr	OR	Total	Offr	OR	Total
(a)	(b)	(c)	(d)	(e)	(f)	(g)	(h)
27	Det 547 Sig Tp	2	34	36	2	33	35

Figure 274: 547 Strength August 1968.

⁵⁸³ <http://www.awm.gov.au/collection/AWM98/R723/1/13/3/>



34.2 Administration

34.2.1 Vehicle Tac Signs

In early August the Commander 1 ATF noticed that a 547 Sig Tp vehicle did not have a tac⁵⁸⁴ sign visible and questioned the driver. Apparently, the driver replied that he did not know what it should be. Obviously, the Commander was not happy and on 14 August had a signal⁵⁸⁵ sent to Austforce Vietnam requesting advice on what tac sign 547 should have⁵⁸⁶.

34.2.2 Gunship Explosion

On 12 August, a US 'Bandit' gunship exploded on Kanga Pad very close to the 547 Sig Tp perimeter. A live rocket ignited and ended up heading into the Troop living area. Fortunately, it did not explode.



Figure 275: Gunship on fire



Figure 276: Fire from the air

⁵⁸⁴ Tactical Sign. Denoting what unit the vehicle belongs to.

⁵⁸⁵ AWM: AWM 98 HQ AFV – Establishments – AFV – 547 Sig Tp.

⁵⁸⁶ No response on file.



A 104 Sig Sqn member recalled:

*On the morning of the 12 August 1968, two US Army **"Bandit"** Huey gunships from the US Army, 118 Assault Helicopter Company (AHC), 145 Combat Aviation Battalion (CAB), located at the Bien Hoa Airbase **"Bird Cage"** arrived at Nui Dat. The aircraft were to be located at Nui Dat on standby during daylight hours to support our operations - which was a normal practice.*

As we watched from the 104 Sig Sqn area (nothing else to do), the first Huey touched down at the refuelling point. Within a few seconds, fuel started to burn in and around the aircraft and the four man crew abandoned the aircraft with the engine still running. One of the crew may have suffered burns to an arm. The other gunship did a near vertical climb to get out of trouble. Not sure what happened, maybe failure to initially attach the static earth line, or another crew member climbed out before the lead was connected or...

As the burning aircraft was on the other side of the pad from our location with our defence wire between, we all waited for the big bang. Ammo and rockets started exploding from the burning aircraft and some travelled into our wire and one passed into 547 Sig Tp area - into their Boozier area causing a minor wound to one of the guys having a heart starter (or that was the story at the time)⁵⁸⁷. The rockets did not arm as they have to rotate 40 times and four were located in our defence wire after the explosion.

After a while the aircraft blew-up into just bits - with only the engine about 100m from the aircraft's original location as the largest remaining piece.

⁵⁸⁷ This is incorrect. No one at 547 was injured.



The aircraft commander later wrote⁵⁸⁸:

*I am **Garrett Ronning**, I was a Chief Warrant Officer (CWO), US Army, at that time and the **aircraft commander** of the "**other bandit gunship**" on the day. My memory may be faulty in thinking back 35 years to that day but this is how I remember it.*

As we flew in to Nui Dat, it was routine to refuel immediately since we were there on standby in case an Aussie Field Team needed us for close air support. We landed in the refuelling area and rolled the throttle back to idle, unbuckled seat belts and opened up our flak jackets for air. The door gunner and crew chief got out to begin refuelling while the engines and blade were at idle.

I remember that Nick Alexander was my pilot that day. I do not remember who was with Lowell Letts, the aircraft commander of the ship that burned.

The first indication I had that we had a problem was a shout, and someone stepping in my lap to go out my door. I remember us laughing about this later, because I had a size 12 foot print across my lap. We could not figure out how Alexander, being 6'2" tall, could step in my lap and make it out what opening was left of my door - but he did it.

Anyway, when I looked at Lowell's aircraft, it seemed to be on fire everywhere, and pilots and crew were running like mad. I started to get out of my aircraft, then decided to roll the throttle back and fly out. As was stated above, I came out of the refuelling area straight up and fast. I moved about 100 yards away, set the aircraft down, and got out of the ship in time to hear the first explosions. I watched a rocket go shooting across the runway into the Aussie Camp. After several bullets whined overhead, I moved the gunship farther down the runway.

I remember thinking that the Aussie Fire Fighters were crazy, very brave, or both, because they ran right up to the burning ship with little fire extinguishers. The ship was full of at least 12,000 rounds of 7.62 bullets, a case of hand grenades, 14 or more 2.75 rockets, and God only knows what other standard or non-standard weaponry.

I don't remember that any of the crew were injured. It was amazing that we did not blow up any of our Aussie friends. In the following weeks and months when we came to Nui Dat, we took quite a razzing from everyone there - from the tower operators to refuelling crews - for causing the worst attack on Nui Dat in years. I still have the cyclic handle from that burned aircraft.

⁵⁸⁸ Details from the "other bandit gunship" by the Aircraft Commander CWO Garrett Ronning, http://www.au104.org/Veteran_Stories/vetstory36.htm



34.3 Operations

34.3.1 Changes to RAD System

On 1 August, DIRNSA implemented a revised Radio Arbitrary Designator (RAD) System. Under the new system each entity, regardless of case, would be given a Radio Designator (RD) of four numbers preceded by a letter to designate type of function (M-Military, P-Political, etc.⁵⁸⁹.

34.3.2 ARDF Aircraft Mishap

On 26 August, during a normal mission⁵⁹⁰ the ARDF aircraft had to make a forced crash landing after engine failure.

34.3.2.1 Pilot and Crew

The Pilot was Lieutenant Steve Tizzard of 161 Recce Flt and the ARDF operator Corporal Dick Schafer. Neither person received any injuries. The crew, aircraft and equipment were retrieved back to Nui Dat.

34.3.2.2 Events

The HQ 1ATF Commanders Diary for 26 Aug 68 reported⁵⁹¹:

5254	1630H	F/ Nui Dat Arty	Possum 15 (East of Binh Gia) has called MAYDAY.	Dustoff stoodby: SAS ptl diverted to area, further SAS ptl stood by, 161 Recce advised.
5255	1645H	F/ RAAF	Possum 15 is on the ground YS4777; Crew uninjured.	G2 Air advised recovery ac tasked. SAS ptl 12 securing possum.

Figure 277: Comd HQ 1ATF Diary Extract

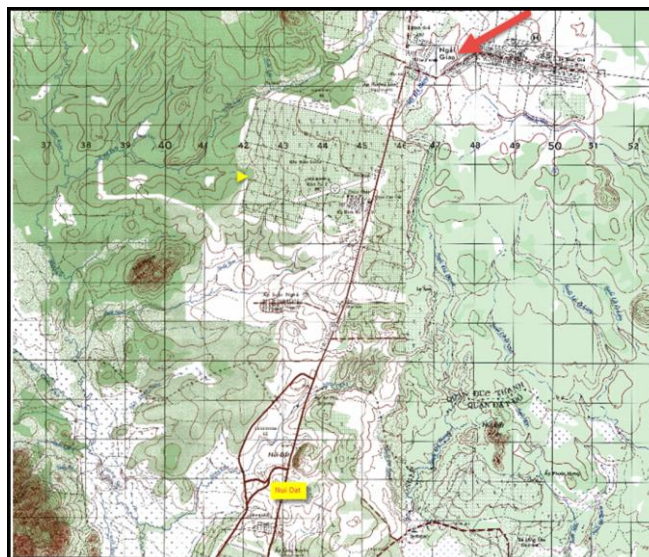


Figure 278: Location of Downed Aircraft

⁵⁸⁹ <https://www.angelo.edu/content/files/22878-a>

⁵⁹⁰ At times "mission" is used by writers to denote "sorties".

⁵⁹¹ AWM RCDIG 1027734



Figure 279: Steve Tizzard and Dick Schafer with the aircraft after recovery



Figure 280: Recovered Aircraft



The book *Possums and Bird Dogs*⁵⁹² reported:

Like all of 161's tasks, shush trips were not without incident. In September 1968 Lieutenant Steve Tizzard and his 547 operator, Corporal Dick Schafer, experienced propeller pitch control problems and force-landed in a wet paddy near the Courtenay rubber plantation 20 kilometres north of Nui Dat. The aircraft was badly damaged but was recovered to Nui Dat by Chinook. Unfortunately, load stability problems led to it being dropped from about 30 metres and it wasn't much good for anything after that.

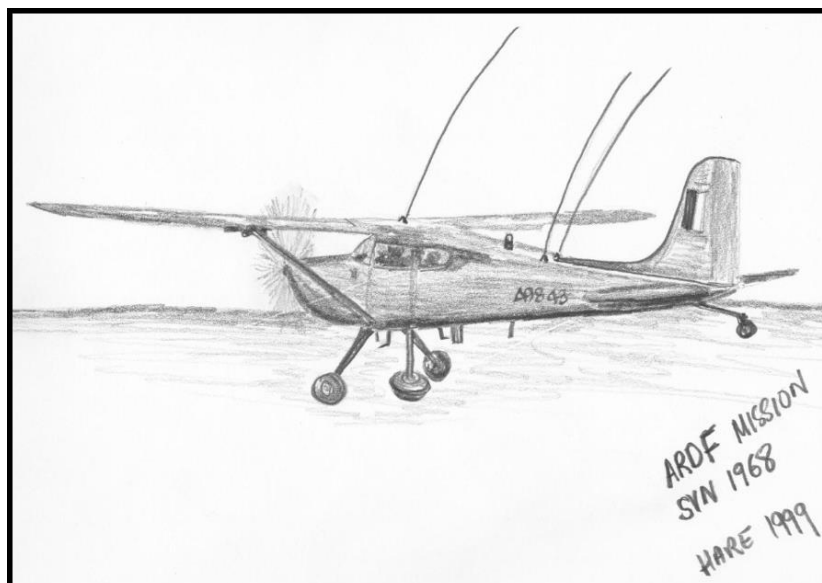


Figure 281: A98-043 in flight⁵⁹³



Figure 282: A98-043 on the ground⁵⁹⁴

⁵⁹² Nolan, Peter (2012-03-15). *Possums and Bird Dogs: Australian Army Aviation's 161 Reconnaissance Flight in South Vietnam* (Kindle Locations 1585-1608). Allen and Unwin. Kindle Edition.

⁵⁹³ Drawing by Denis Hare and passed to Bob Hartley Jan 2019.

⁵⁹⁴ Ibid



34.3.2.3 Pilot's Story

Shown at Annex K is the story of the mishap published in the *AUSTRALIAN AVIATION - May 1991 "OF SHUSH MISSIONS, VOICE SORTIES AND PUCKER FACTORS"* By Don Dennis⁵⁹⁵.

34.3.3 547 Sig Tp Progress Report for 1-31 Aug 68

The 547 Sig Tp Progress Report for 1-31 Aug 68⁵⁹⁶ stated:

1. SET ROOM
 - A. POSNS 4 X 16 1/2 HR DPM
4 X 9 3/4 HR DPM⁵⁹⁷
 - B. WATCH HRS. 54 1/2 HRS PER MAN PER WEEK
2. TASKING
 - ALFA. PRIORITY/TASKS

1. VCMB 05437	10. VCMB 00831 ⁵⁹⁸
2. VCMB 00634	11. VCMB 00637
3. VCMB0 5423/Y9042/Y9047/J0663	12. VCMB 00694 ⁵⁹⁹
4. VCMB Y9055	13. VCMB Y9015
5. VCMB 05429	14. VCMB Y9021
6. VCMB J0067/J0068	15. VCMB Y9027
7. VCMB 05435	16. VCMB J0621
8. VCMB Y9020	17. VCMB J0637
9. VCMB Y9019	18. VCMB Y9038

DEVELOPMENT

VCMB Y9033, Y9046, Y9048, Y9049, Y9050, Y9051, Y9052, Y9053, Y9054, Y9056,
VCXB J0659, Y9046, J0773

SEARCH BANDS- NO CHANGE FROM LAST REPORT

3. ARDF
 - A. TOTAL FIXES – 125
 - B. GRADINGS. 3 GOOD 76 FAIR 16 POOR 30 CUTS
 - C. FLYING TIME 130 HRS
 - D. 3 DAYS LOST INCLEMENT WEATHER
3 DAYS LOST DUE AIRCRAFT SERVICING/MALFUNCTION.
2 DAYS LOST DUE ARDF SERVICING/MALFUNCTION
 - E. RESERVE ARDF EQPT WILL BE TAKEN TO SAIGON 2 SEP 68 BUT STILL NO WORD ON US AIRCRAFT AVAILABILITY.
 - F. WILL SEND SUMMARY (FOR INFO) OF ARDF EQPT DAMAGE RESULTING FROM AIRCRAFTS FORCED LANDING IN PADDY FIELD. ALL DAMAGE NOW REPAIRED AND RESERVE AIRCRAFT IN OPERATIONAL USE.
4. VISITORS
 - 24 AUG [REDACTED]
 - 28 AUG BRIG PEARSON COMD DESIGNATE 1 ATF
 - 29 AUG MAJ R PAYNE SSD II FFV

⁵⁹⁵ This story records the event happening on 24 August and the pilot's callsign Possum 13.

⁵⁹⁶ Documents received from ASD December 2015.

⁵⁹⁷ These figures would equate roughly to: 8 intercept positions manned 0800 – 1700 and 4 positions manned 1700 – 2400 Sets not manned 2400 - 0800 (times approximate).

⁵⁹⁸ MAS COSVN to HQ 274 Regt.

⁵⁹⁹ MIB COSVN to U/I MIE.



DETS

3/5 AUG MAJ P MURRAY 146 AVN CO (RR)

14/15 AUG MAJ P MURRAY HQ AFV

22/23 AUG MAJ P MURRAY 146 AVN CO (RR) 224 AVN BN

26/27 AUG MAJ P MURRAY 509 RR GROUP (ACCOMPANIED BY MAJ CR HOOK SO SIGS AND AVN HQ AFV)

26/27 AUG SGT W DUNN 146 AVN CO

1/5 AUG CPL MURRAY EXCHANGE OPERATOR WITH 175 RR CO (OPS EXCHANGED OCCASIONALLY WITH 175 RR CO FOR MAINT OF GOOD RELATIONS)

5. SPARE PARTS. THANKS FOR YOUR ASSISTANCE WITH AKAI PARTS. NOW ALSO NEED OTHER RUSTRAK COMPONENTS AND WILL SIGNAL SEPARATELY.

34.3.4 DSD Washington Liaison Officer

In August 1968, DSD's liaison officer in Washington summed up AUM350's performance in the following terms⁶⁰⁰:

[Its] intercept efforts are primarily directed against stations serving the VC 5th Division and its subordinates, COSVN [North Vietnam's Central Office for South Vietnam] rear services group 8A, and unidentified communications believed to serve these entities or sub-region 4. [547] has actively developed many of these communications and is responsible for about 60 per cent of the total intercept. [547] traffic is normally complete and is highly accurate. Material provided by [547] is accurately prepared and generally reflects all pertinent activity. ARDF results provided by [547] account for about 60 per cent of the total fixes provided on entities under their purview.

⁶⁰⁰ Extract from ASD's Letter to the DHAAT Inquiry.



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CHAPTER 35 – SEPTEMBER 1968

35.1 Personnel

35.1.1 Arrivals and Departures

There were four arrivals and one departure in September.

Arrivals

10 September

Major Steve Hart

Corporal Tom Oswin

23 September

Warrant Officer Jack Hooker

Corporal John Peters

Departure

17 September

Major Peter Murray

35.1.2 Employment Areas

Jack Hooker to TSM, Tom Oswin went into the Set Room, and John Peters to Tech Maint.

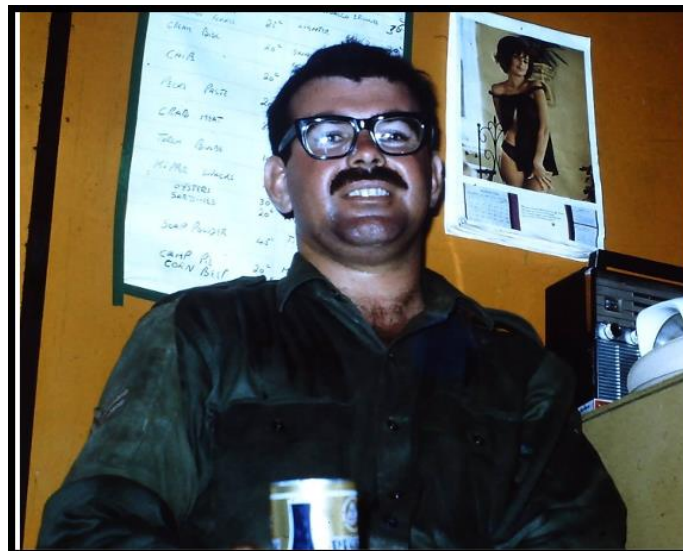


Figure 283: John (Speedy) Peters⁶⁰¹

⁶⁰¹ Photo courtesy Jeff Payne.



35.1.3 HQ AFV Monthly Strength Return

There was no change to the Establishment Strength of the Troop in September.

35.1.4 Troop Command Changeover

On 16 September, Steve Hart assumed command of the Troop. On a visit to Long Binh he was pleasantly surprised to find a 'Guard of Honour', formed by his U.S. colleagues awaiting him.

35.1.5 Changes

Alan Paterson commenced ARDF training and Dick Schafer returned to the setroom.

35.2 Administration

35.2.1 Food Parcels and Care Packages

The various organisations in and around Toowoomba often sent food and care parcels for the Troop. They were always appreciated and all Troop personnel took it in turns to write letters of appreciation to the donors.



Figure 284: Sharing out a food parcel

35.3 Operations

35.3.1 547 Sig Tp Progress Report for 1-30 Sep 68

The 547 Sig Tp Progress Report for 1-30 Sep 68⁶⁰² stated:

⁶⁰² Documents received from ASD December 2015.

*ONE. SET ROOM*

ALFA. POSITIONS 1 X 24 HR
 2 X 16 1/2 HR
 4 X 9 3/4 HR ⁶⁰³
 1 X 9 HRS

BRAVO. WATCH HOURS. [Corrupt] HRS PER MAN PER WEEK.

*TWO. TASKING**ALFA. PRIORITY/TASKS*

1. VCMB05437	13. VCMBJ0656
2. VCMB00634	14. VCMBY9021
3. VCMB05423	15. VCMBY9027
VCMBY9042	16. VCMBJ0621
VCMBY9047	17. VCMBJ0637
VCMBJ0663	18. VCMBN4642
4. VCMBY9055	19. VCMBY9062
5. VCMB05429	20. VCMBJ0458
6. VCMB00839	21. VCMBJ0743
7. VCMB05435	22. VCMBJ0772 ⁶⁰⁴
8. VCMBY9020	23. VCMBY9012
9. VCMBY9019	
10. VCMB00831	
11. VCMB00637	
12 VCMB00694	

DEVELOPMENT

VCMBJ0428	VCMBY9058
VCMBJ0667	VCMBY9060
VCMBJ0668	VCMBY9061
VCMBY9048	VCMBY9066
VCMBY9049	VCMBY9065
VCMBY9052	VCXBJ0659
VCMBY9054	VCXBY9046

SEARCH BAND

POSN 3. 5000 – 5250 KHZ
POSN 4. 5250 – 5500 KHZ
POSN 5. 5500 – 5750 KHZ
POSN 6. 5750 – 6000 KHZ
1300Z – 1600Z 4000 – 6000 KHZ

THREE ARDF

ALFA. TOTAL FIXES – 112
BRAVO. GRADINGS. 7 GOOD 58 FAIR 5 POOR 42 CUTS
CHARLIE. FLYING HOURS 107.20 AND 8.40 HRS TRG
DELTA. 1 1/2 DAYS DUE TO INCLEMENT WEATHER
 4 DAYS LOST DUE AIRCRAFT SERVICING/MALFUNCTION.
 3 1/2 DAYS LOST DUE ARDF SERVICING/MALFUNCTION
*ECHO. PERS FLYING TIMES SHOWING HOURS FOR MONTH AND PROGRESSIVE TOTALS.*⁶⁰⁵

⁶⁰³. These figures would equate roughly to: 7 intercept positions manned 0800 – 1700 and 3 positions manned 1700 – 2400 AND 1 2400 – 0800 (times approximate)..

⁶⁰⁴ HQ MR7 to HQ 74 Arty Regt.

⁶⁰⁵ This is the first time personal flying hours have been seen in reports.



1. SGT BRILL 37.55 HRS 100.40 HRS
2. CPL KINDER 29.55 HRS 29.55 HRS
3. CPL SCHAFER 10.30 HRS 276.35 HRS
4. SIG TALBERT 29.00 HRS 188.35 HRS
5. LCPL PATERSON NIL UNDER INSTR VICE SCHAFER WHO IS NOW BACK IN SETROOM.

FOXTROT. DURING THE MONTH A TOTAL OF 18 MISSIONS WERE ABORTED OR REDUCED. FROM THE 1ST TO 17TH QUALITY OF FIXES OBTAINED SHOWED A MARKED DECREASE, WITH THE CUTS AND POOR FIXES PREDOMINATING. THIS IS MOST PROBABLY DUE TO UNDETECTED FAULTS IN EQPT FOLLOWING FORCED LANDING. AFTER ARDF SERVICE ON 17 SEP QUALITY IMPROVED AND WAS COMPARABLE WITH PREVIOUS MONTHS.

G. HOPE TO COMMENCE AUST ARDF TRIALS IN US U-8D 3 OCT. SIG TALBERT WILL BE TRIALS OPERATOR.

FOUR. SHORT CELL

ALFA. EQPT. FULL CONSIGNMENT ARRIVED SAFELY NO APPARENT DAMAGE. THE TWIN CHANNEL RECEIVER RX PLUS POWER SUPPLY BROUGHT TO NUI DAT AND IS OK.

10 KVA GENERATOR ARRIVED 30 SEP.

BRAVO. INCLEMENT WEATHER CONTINUES TO PROHIBIT ENGR WORKS ON SITE. EVERYTHING GEARED TO GO AS SOON AS SITE COMPLETED (BUT WITH PRESENT WEATHER PATTERN PERHAPS SHOULD ADD, IF EVER COMPLETED).

FIVE. MISCELLANEOUS OPS.

ALPHA. 22.5 KVA DIESEL STAND-BY GENE ARRIVED 30 SEP. WILL HAVE ENGR SVP IN PLACEMENT AND INSTALLATION.

SIX. VISITORS

20 SEP. MAJ GEN MCDONALD COMAFV TO DISCUSS ARDF TRIALS.

20 – 21 SEP. SP5 M SCOTT CIPHER/TG MECH FROM 303 RR BN.

EXCHANGE DET.

DAIY. MAJ R PAYNE SSO II FFV. CISUM COURIER AND INT LIAISON.

SEVEN. VISITS/DETS

9 SEP. SGT DUELL 303 RR BN

12/13 SEP. CAPT S ZAGON SSD II FFV, 175 RR COY

13 SEP. MAJ MURRAY/HART 175 RR CO, 303 RR BN, SSD II FFV

14 SEP. MAJS MURRAY/HART HQ AFV (SO SIGS 2), 509 RRGP, 224 AVN BN

15 SEP. MAJS MURRAY/HART 146 AVN CO

25 SEP. MAJ HART [REDACTED] 146 AVN CO

22 SEP. SGT DUN/CPL PRIEBENOW 146 AVN CO

27 SEP – 1 OCT. SGT DUNN 146 AVN CO

S7 SEP – 29 SEP. IG TALBERT 146 AVN CO

MOST OF THESE VISITS TO 146 AVN CO WERE LIAISON TO TIE UP LOOSE ENDS OF TRIAL.

EIGHT. MOV DURING MONTH

ALPHA. R AND R

1. SSGT APPLEBY 17 - 24 SEP AUST

2. CPL FITZSIMMONS 18 - 24 SEP SINGAPORE

3. SGT HAWKES 24 SEP - 1 OCT AUST

4. SGT DUNN 4 - 16 SEP AUST

BRAVO. R AND C

1. CPL HERD 18 - 20 SEP

2. CPL BAILEY 28 - 30 SEP

3. CPL MURRAY 28 - 35 SEP

4. LCPL STONE 5 - 6 SEP

5. SIG TURNER 22 - 23 SEP



6. SIG PEARTON 5 - 6 SEP

CHARLIE. MARCH INOUT SEE STR RETURN SIGS 390.



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CHAPTER 36 – OCTOBER 1968

36.1 Personnel

36.1.1 Arrivals and Departures

There was one arrival and three departures in October.

Arrival

15 October

Signalman John Lechte

Departures

(?) October

Warrant Officer Jack Parker

29 October

Corporal Dick Schafer

Corporal Roy Johnston

36.1.2 Employment Area

John Lechte, a National Serviceman, took over the duty of Troop Clerk.

36.1.3 ARDF Change

Bruce Wilson joined the ARDF team.

36.1.4 Change of TSM

Jack Hooker assumed the duties of TSM from Jack Parker.

36.1.5 HQ AFV Monthly Strength Return

There was no change to the Establishment Strength of the Troop in October

36.1.6 Operator Exchanges

During the month, the following operator exchanges took place with 175 RR Co⁶⁰⁶:

8 – 15 Oct	LCpl Clive Clarke
15 – 22 Oct	Cpl Trevor Herd
22 – 29 Oct	LCpl Dennis Stone
29 Oct – 5 Nov	Cpl John Bailey

⁶⁰⁶ ASD archives of 547 Sig Tp material.



Figure 285: Manual Morse positions at 175th RR Field Station⁶⁰⁷

36.1.7 Troop BBQ

The Troop often had their own BBQs with rations scrounged from the kitchens and US colleagues.



Figure 286: Troop BBQ #1

⁶⁰⁷ *The Most Secret War: Army Signals Intelligence in Vietnam*, James L. Gilbert Military History Office, US Army Intelligence and Security Command, Fort Belvoir, Virginia. P 100.

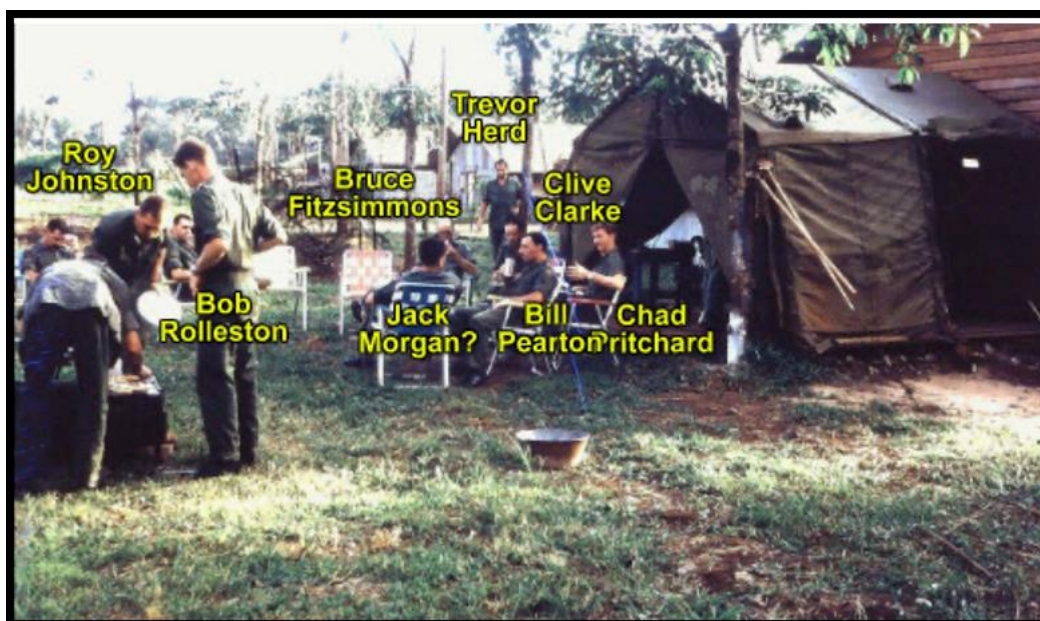


Figure 287: Troop BBQ #2

36.2 Operations

36.2.1 Short Cell

36.2.1.1 New Direction Finding Equipment Arrives

On 29 October, John Duncan, a scientist from WRE, (*given the honorary title of Captain*)⁶⁰⁸, arrived to introduce more experimental equipment, a Single Station Location (SSL) Direction Finding installation, nick-named '*Short Cell*'.

36.2.1.2 Location

The equipment was to be located within the Nui Dat perimeter but away from the Troop's main operational base. A site to the north east of Nui Dat hill was cleared for the new installation. Aerials were erected and equipment shelters installed.

⁶⁰⁸ No other details available. It is probable that, like Major Best (in 1971), he may have been enlisted into the CMF for his visit and given the Rank of Lieutenant, and upgraded to the rank of Captain/Major to meet an appropriate salary scale.



Figure 288: SSL Location



Figure 289: John Peters and Bob (Sadie) Lean⁶⁰⁹ at the site

36.2.1.3 Power

Three 10KVA generators supplied the power.

⁶⁰⁹ CPL Bob (Sadie) Lean was a Linesman with 110 Sig Sqn and had come to assist with the antennas. He had served at 7 Sig Regt previously.



36.2.1.4 Computerisation

The *Short Cell* project was of a much more complex nature than previous ones, demanding the use of a computer. Fortunately, the shelters were air conditioned so it was possible to contend with the electronic and atmospheric problems without the added hazard of climatic heat.

36.2.1.5 Ionosonde

The site of the ionosonde transmitter was close to the Task Force ammunition storage area. One of the early considerations was whether the Cell's high-powered transmitters would activate the ammunition fuses in the bunkers. A technical investigation proving that there was no risk of this, did not, however, stop everyone blaming any sort of electronic interference on them regardless of whether it was turned on or not.

36.2.1.6 Animals

The team found compensations for their starting work every day. A pair of peacocks cavorted around the base of SAS Hill. Small brown deer skirted the edge of the aerial farm and wild pigs searched the undergrowth for roots. Snakes found the coolness beneath the shelters to be a refuge from the sun and small numbers of gurami fish could be found in puddles after the rain.

36.2.1.7 Technical Details

Technical details of the SSL are contained at Annex L.

36.2.1.8 Recollection of Arrival

Steve Hart recalled⁶¹⁰:

The Cell was deployed on the western side of Nui Dat hill, and blast walls were erected around it to protect it from RPG or direct fire from the Task Force perimeter, just the other side of Route 15 [611] and only about 200 metres away.

The antenna arrays were a complex operation to install. All inner and outer (fine and coarse) antennas had to be aligned exactly on magnetic north with only a tolerance of 1 metre height difference at the bases. The exact positioning of the 16 poles had to be within 0.5 metre accuracy. Of course, this was well before the days of GPS!

Initially, this piece of task force real estate had been rejected by all other units due (a) to its proximity to Route 15 and (b) its marshy terrain. When I arrived in Sep 68 with the task of negotiating a significant piece of land to establish the Cell, there weren't many options! Indeed, Peter Murray had already greased the wheels in this regard.

After obtaining the support of the Commander and staff, I had to convince scarce engineer resources to initially clear and level the land and to obtain sufficient laterite (or crushed granite) for the equipment shelter and the four parallel antenna runs, which needed to be placed at the required height tolerance levels. Next, the surveyors came to exactly position the anchor points of the 16 poles, again with extreme accuracy. This did prove to be a problem with engineer, arty and survey surveyors; all having a go and each coming up with different spots!!! If my memory serves me correctly, I finally accepted the surveyors' solution.

A separate, remote shed had to be constructed for the three generators we had shipped to us and this

⁶¹⁰ Article by Steve Hart originally published in the 2/2009 edition of the 7 Sig Regt Association newsletter.

⁶¹¹ Author - This should be Route 2. Route 15 is well to the west.



was sited to the extreme right of the field, towards the old rubbish tip. Later, when a fire spectacularly blew up the unexploded ammo pit adjacent to the rubbish tip, our transmitter was immediately blamed for initiating the explosion, but a subsequent investigation revealed that it was a scrub fire started by a discarded flare.

The next, and most exciting part of the story, was the delivery of the shelter for positioning in the dead centre of the array. I received a phone call from someone (presumably in the Ordnance world) in Vung Tau to advise me that the one and a half ton shelter would be delivered within the next few days. Knowing that the deliverers would obviously know that some sort of crane would be needed, I asked if they had the capacity to drop it exactly where I wanted it. "Oh! We'll get back to you!" was the startled reply.

About three days later, I received a phone call from an American gentleman who told me that "my box" would be delivered at 1200 the next day via a Sky Crane helicopter, and I should be on my pad with a 25 set and a specific frequency, looking for "HOT BOX 15" in order to guide him in. There would be two hauling lines from the opposite corners of the shelter to help swing it into location and there would be only one pass over the site before the pilot unhooked the load and shot through, so I had to get it right!

It is here that I must admit to a certain degree of ignorance and naivety because I had no previous experience of handling slung load cargoes, particularly big heavy containers hung from a Sky Crane. But Jack Hooker (whose baby it was to be) and I trundled off with our radio on the appropriate frequency and awaited the arrival of HOT BOX 15. And right on schedule, this massive machine appeared over the horizon and was guided into the site by us. Now there are some problems trying to communicate by voice over VHF radio with a helo that is churning out about 200 decibels directly over you. Imagine if you will, holding a radio handset in one hand, and at the same time, with a hauling line in the other hand, swinging the heavy slung load as it swayed from both the helo motion and wind was also challenging, all at the same time trying to direct the load controller to slowly lower the winch to allow us to exactly position the beast in its final resting place.

But what I didn't realise was that the down draft of these helos in hover was about 120 kph, and this did wonders with the unpacked laterite pellets that constituted the base. It was like being peppered by a brigade of mafia-toting shot gunners and I don't think there was a square centimetre of our bodies that wasn't lacerated by these pellets.

Eventually, Jack and I just looked at each other with the base of the shelter still about a foot above the deck and, without a word (it was impossible to say anything in any event), we agreed that where it was, was good enough. Once firmly on the ground, the load controller unhooked the load and all the webbing and steel knobs came tumbling down on top of us. SHORT CELL was now in situ. I thanked HOT BOX 15 for the exciting day's entertainment and Hooker and I went back to the troop other ranks for showers and more than the day's ration of beer.



Figure 290: SSL arriving by Chinook Helicopter

36.2.1.9 Nui Dat Tip Fire

As mentioned above, the SSL was located close to the Nui Dat Tip. On one occasion a fire broke out at the tip and there were many explosions from discarded ammunition causing the operators at the SSL site to head for cover.



Figure 291: Tip on Fire



36.2.1.10 Visitors and Results

The Cell was a source of interest to many allied units. Streams of visitors came. Once the complexities of its functions were mastered and the operators and technicians gained confidence, the project went on to produce variable results. The high powered transmissions from the ionosonde were sometimes a nuisance but its returns far outweighed moments of inconvenience.

36.2.2 ARDF

36.2.2.1 ARDF Jottings

Bruce Wilson joined the ARDF team. Paul Talbert was close to leaving and later related some of the interesting times while on ARDF missions.

Paul Talbert relates:

Near the end of 68 I did trials with our equipment with the Americans, having the equipment fitted in what I believed to be a Beechcraft 'Queen Air' but I may be wrong about the type of aircraft. We got a lot of spurious readings due to the hull of that type of aircraft and at the end I don't think it was very successful. However, I did get to spend a few weeks in the company of some great Yanks.

I do remember one occasion when a SAS officer came to have a chat with us and brought in a captured set and chided us for being about 100 metres or so out in our reading of where the transmitter was located. I really still can't believe how they got out such strong signals on occasion on botched together equipment powered by torch batteries soldered together.

I did have one occasion where we were waiting for a sched to come on and we were just flying along Highway 1 watching a line of centurions travelling up the road. I commented to Bluey Tizzard (my pilot) that one of the tanks was an idiot because everyone else was following the track marks left by the tank before him whilst this guy was travelling slightly to the left of their tracks. I had no sooner said it than we saw the tank rear up and nearly topple over backwards before settling back down minus a track... they had hit a little explosive left for them.

Another time with Mr Tizzard we were coming back into Luscombe after a morning op when Tiz lifted off again stating over the radio that the wind off Nui Dat hill was too strong and we went up to Bear Cat to wait for the wind to die down so we could go back and land safely at Luscombe. On arriving at Bear Cat I discovered that it was actually the Friday luncheon put on at the Yank base that was the real reason for the diversion flight.



Figure 292: Paul Talbert ready for an ARDF sortie⁶¹²



Figure 293: Paul Talbert after being issued with an M16⁶¹³

36.2.3 547 Sig Tp Progress Report for 1-31 Oct 68

The 547 Sig Tp Progress Report for 1-31 Oct 68⁶¹⁴ stated:

ONE. SET ROOM

ALFA. POSITIONS 1 X 24 HRS, 2 X 16 1/2 HR, 4 X 9 3/4 HRS, 1 X 9 HRS ⁶¹⁵

BRAVO. WATCH HRS. TASK OPS 53 1/2 HRS PER MAN PER WEEK. DEV OPS 51 HRS PER MAN PER WEEK

⁶¹² Photo courtesy of Paul Talbert.

⁶¹³ Ibid.

⁶¹⁴ Documents received from ASD December 2015.

⁶¹⁵ No ARDF position included and it appears that the sets are not manned 2400-0800 approx. These figures would equate roughly to: 8 intercept positions manned 0800 – 1700 and 3 positions manned 1700 – 2400 and 1 2400 – 0800 (times approximate).



TWO. TASKING

ALFA. PRIORITY/TASKS

- | | |
|-----------------------------|------------------------------|
| 1. VCMB05437 | 11. VCMB00831 |
| 2. VCMB00634 | 12. VCMB00637 |
| 3. VCMB00835 ⁶¹⁶ | 13. VCMB00843 |
| 4. VCMBJ0428 | 14. VCMBY9027 |
| 5. VCMB05423 | 15. VCMBJ0621 |
| VCMBY9042 | 16. VCMBJ0743 |
| VCMBY9047 | 17. VCMBJ0772 |
| VCMBJ0663 | 18. VCMBJ0459 |
| 6. VCMBY9068 | 19. VCMBY9066 |
| 7. VCMBY9055 | 20. VCMBJ0820 ⁶¹⁷ |
| 8. VCMB05429 | 21. VCMBY9064 |
| 9. VCMB00839 | 22. VCXBY9046 |
| 10. VCMB05435 | |

DEVELOPMENT

VCMBY9060

VCMBY9061

VCMBY9065

BRAVO. SEARCH BANDS

NO CHANGE FROM SEP REPORT

THREE ARDF

ALFA. TOTAL FIXES – 141

BRAVO. GRADINGS. 19 GOOD 98 FAIR 4 POOR 20 CUTS

CHARLIE. FLYING HOURS 130.55 AND 3.10 TRG

DELTA. OTHER RELEVANT DETAILS CONTAINED IN CONSOLIDATED HARD COPY REPORT⁶¹⁸
AS REQUESTED IN DSD SIG 132242Z OCT. COPIES WILL BE SENT TO MI8, DSD.

ECHO. YOU MAY BE INTERESTED TO KNOW THAT CESSNAS ARE TO BE WITHDRAWN FROM THEATRE AND REPLACED BY SIOUX HELICOPTERS UNTIL PILATUS PORTERS ENTER THEATRE APPROX MARCH 1969. I HAVE IMPRESSED UPON COMD AFV AND COMD 1ATF (AND OBTAINED THEIR SUPPORT) FOR THE RETENTION OF 2 CESSNAS UNTIL PORTERS ARRIVE. THIS WILL BE SUBJECT OF LATER SIG WHEN MORE DETAILS AVAIL, BUT MATTER RAISED AS A WNG ORDER FOR 2 POINTS. ONE. CONTRACT ENGINEERED MODELS SHOULD BE HASTENED IF AT ALL POSSIBLE AND TWO, EQPTS SHOULD BE CALIBRATED IN PORTERS IN AUST UNDER WRE SUPERVISION. FROM BITTER EXPERIENCE WITH TRIALS IN U8D, THERE ARE TOO MANY PROBLEMS INVOLVED WITH CALIBRATING EQPT/AIRCRAFT IN THEATRE, AND WITH THE LARGER WING SPAN OF PORTER, WOULD EXPECT SOME DIFFICULTY NEAR THE HIGH FREQUENCIES, REQUIRING SCIENTIFIC GUIDANCE. ONE POINT MUST STRESS NOW. INSTALLATION OF ARDF EQPT IN AIRFRAME WILL MINIMISE CALIBRATION DIFFICULTIES IF ANTENNA SHAFT SITUATED ON THE EXACT CENTRE AXIS OF FUSELAGE. IF WE ARE GOING TO CUT A HOLE IN THE AIRCRAFT, LET IT BE WHERE IT IS TO OUR BENEFIT. COMPLETE EXPLANATION WILL FOLLOW IN HARD COPY REPORT OF U-8 TRIALS.

FOUR. SHORT CELL

ALFA. DUNCAN ARRIVED 29 OCT

BRAVO. SITE. NO RAIN FOR 2 WEEKS NOW AND HOPE TO BE OPERATIONAL BY 22 NOV (APPROX).

FIVE. MISCELLANEOUS OPS.

ALPHA. 240/110V TRANSFORMER WIRED INTO MAINS CIRCUIT. 22.5 KVA GENE INSTALLED ON CONCRETE STANDING AND SHED CURRENTLY UNDER CONSTRUCTION. WILL BE WIRED

⁶¹⁶ MAS COSVN to HQ MR7.⁶¹⁷ 2⁶¹⁸ Not located.



INTO MAIN BOARD AND THUS WILL HAVE 240/110 V BACKUP TO ENGRS MAINS. EXPECT COMPLETION IN APPROX. 1 WEEK.

BRAVO. **IN LAST FORTNIGHT, TREMENDOUS DEPTH OF EXPLOITABLE TFC FROM 274 REGT HAS ENABLED COMD 1ATF TO BRING CONTINUOUS PRESSURE TO BEAR ON THEM.**

NEEDLESS TO SAY HE IS DELIGHTED WITH THE END PRODUCT AND HAS PAID ONE INFORMAL VISIT TO SOLDIERS CLUB TO PERSONALLY THANK THEM.

SIX. VISITORS

4 OCT. MR LUCKMAN, SGT EDWARDS 175 RR CO

22 OCT. GEN SIR JOHN WILTON, MAJ GEN MCDONALD, BRIG PEARSON AND ENTROURAGE.

DAILY MAJ PAYNE SSO II FFV.

SEVEN. OP EXCHANGE WITH USM626

8 – 15 OCT LCPL CLARKE, SP5 DELGARDO

15 – 22 OCT CPL HERD, SP5 MCCLELLAN

22 – 29 OCT LCPL STONE, SPT SLIGAR

29 OCT – 5 NOV CPL BAILEY, SP5 SOMSTEDT

EIGHT. VISITS/DETS

20/21 OCT MAJ HART TO 509 GP, NRV (C), 146 AVN CO TO DISCUSS ARDF TRIALS

23 OCT. MAJ HART/SGT DUNN TO NRV (C) TO DISCUSS ARDF TRIALS

NINE. MOVTS DURING MONTH

ALPHA. R&R

CAPT ZAGON 20 - 29 OCT (AUST)

CPL HUNTER 9 - 17 OCT (AUST)

CPL MADDEN 27 OCT ? NOV (AUST)

LCPL MIDDLETON 13 - 19 OCT (S'PORE)

BRAVO R&C.

SIG PEARTON AND PRITCHARD 3-8 OCT.

TEN. ADMIN.

ALPHA . MED.

BRAVO. DISCIPLINE. FOLLOWING PERS CHARGED WITH FOLLOWING OFFENCES.

[Redacted]

1. AWOL 1 DAY
2. OUT OF BILLETS WHILST ON R&C
3. IN AN OUT OF BOUNDS AREA.

[Redacted] FIELD PUNISHMENT.



36.3 1ATF Commanders Commendation

Outgoing Comd 1 ATF later wrote⁶¹⁹:

The intercept unit at Nui Dat was a wonderful source of intelligence and it achieved its greatest success when, as a result of their wonderful information, I was able to send an SAS patrol to destroy a VC logistics element which had been on a rice-buying expedition.

*(Major General R. L. Hughes, DSO.
(Comd 1 ATF October 1967 to October 1968)*

⁶¹⁹ Source not found. It is possible it was sent to the DHAAT.



CHAPTER 37 – NOVEMBER 1968

37.1 Personnel

37.1.1 Arrivals and Departures

There were six arrivals and five departures in November.

Arrivals

12 November

Sergeant Len Scott
Corporal Gordon Greaves
Signalman Keith Hayward

18 November

Signalman Barry Nisbet

19 November

Signalman Anthony Bridges
Signalman Jim Yule

Departures

23 November

Signalman Bill Pearton

26 November

Sergeant Don Appleby
Corporal Trevor Herd
Corporal Clive Clarke
Corporal Paul Talbert

37.1.2 Employment Area

Len Scott took over the reins of I/C Comcen and Troop Barber. Gordon Greaves, Keith Hayward, Barry Nisbet, Tony Bridges and Jim Yule joined the Set Room.



Figure 294: Len Scott at work in the Comcen⁶²⁰

37.1.3 CO 7 Sig Regt Visit

During the period 13 to 16 Nov⁶²¹, the CO 7 Sig Regt, Lt Col AM McDonald visited the Troop. During his stay he also visited US supporting ASA units.

37.1.4 HQ AFV Monthly Strength Return

There was no change to the Establishment Strength of the Troop in November⁶²²:

Serial	Unit	Establishment			Posted Strength		
		Offr	OR	Total	Offr	OR	Total
(a)	(b)	(c)	(d)	(e)	(f)	(g)	(h)
27	547 Sig Tp (less det)	2	34	36	2	36	38

Figure 295: HQ AFV Strength Return for November 1968

37.2 Administration

37.2.1 Armoured Command Vehicle

In late 1968, Steve Hart wrote several submissions for the Troop to be issued with an Armoured Command Vehicle (ACV) to provide the TF Commander and senior staff access to Sigint material when deployed away from Nui Dat at fire support bases. As an aside the ACV would also provide a limited intercept facility for forward intercept. The submission was not met kindly by HQ AFV and it took several months for the allocation of an ACV to be approved.

⁶²⁰Photo courtesy of ASD.

⁶²¹Dates not confirmed.

⁶²²<http://www.awm.gov.au/collection/AWM98/R723/1/13/3/> . Note the change to 547 Sig t Tp title i.e. (less det).



37.2.1.1 Armoured Personnel Carrier

As there were no spare ACVs in-country the Cav Sqn was told to provide an M113 Armoured Personnel Carrier (APC) as an interim measure.

37.2.1.2 Availability

When an ACV became available in early 1969 it replaced the APC and was fitted out by unit technicians for its new role.

37.2.1.3 ACV Callsign

The callsign allocated to the ACV was 85D.

Note:
The Callsign
84D
is also Seen in
Some documents



Figure 296: ACV

37.2.1.4 ACV Story

The story of the ACV is detailed in Annex M.

37.3 Operations

37.3.1 547 Sig Tp Progress Report for 1-30 Nov 68

The 547 Sig Tp Progress Report for 1-30 Nov 68⁶²³ stated:

ONE. SET ROOM
ALFA. POSITIONS 1 X 24 HRS, 2 X 16 1/2 HR, 4 X 9 3/4 HRS, 1 X 9 HRS ⁶²⁴

⁶²³ Documents received from ASD December 2015.

⁶²⁴ No ARDF position included and it appears that the sets are not manned 2400-0800 approx. These figures would equate roughly to: 8 intercept positions manned 0800 – 1700 and 3 positions manned 1700 – 2400 and 1 2400 – 0800 (times approximate).



BRAVO. WATCH HRS. TASK OPS. 53 ½ HRS/MAN/WEEK. DEV OPS 51 HRS/MAN/WEEK

TWO. TASKING

ALFA. PRIORITY/TASKS

- | | |
|-----------------------------|------------------------------|
| 1. VCMB05437 | 12. VCMBJ0913 ⁶²⁵ |
| 2. VCMBY9069 | 13. VCMB00637 |
| 3. VCMB00679 ⁶²⁶ | 14. VCMB00843 |
| 4. VCMB00835 | 15. VCMBJ0885 |
| 5. VCMB05423 | 16. VCMBJ0621 |
| VCMBY9042 | 17. VCMBJ0743 |
| VCMBY9047 | 18. VCMBJ0772 |
| VCMBJ0663 | 19. VCMBJ0459 |
| 6. VCMBJ0901 ⁶²⁷ | 20. VCMBY9066 |
| 7. VCMBY9055 | 21. VCMBJ0820 |
| 8. VCMB05429 | 22. VCMBJ0938 |
| 9. VCMB00839 | 23. VCXBY9046 |
| 10. VCMB05435 | 24. VCMBJ0509 |
| 11. VCMB00831 | |

DEVELOPMENT

VCMBY9060

VCMBN4642

CHARLIE.

SEARCH BAND

POSN 3. 5000 – 5250 KHZ

POSN 4. 5250 – 5500 KHZ

POSN 5. 5500 – 5750 KHZ

POSN 6. 5750 – 6000 KHZ

1300Z – 1600Z 4000 – 6000 KHZ

THREE. ARDF

ALFA. TOTAL FIXES – 120

BRAVO. GRADINGS. 19 GOOD 95 FAIR 1 POOR 5 CUTS

CHARLIE. FLYING HOURS 107.10

DELTA. 1ATF OPS IN LAST 4 WEEK WERE MAJOR CAUSE OF OVERALL REDUCTION IN TOTAL FIXES. THIS DUE TO AC NOT BEING ALLOWED TO ENTER TASK AREA DUE ARTY AND AIR STRIKES, AND EN TGTS REMAINING INACTIVE FOR LONG PERIODS. NOTE HOWEVER THAT QUALITY OF RESULTS HAS IMPROVED.

ECHO. MORE DETAILS IN MONTH WRAP UP HARD COPY REPORT⁶²⁸. ADDITIONAL COPY FROM THIS MONTH WILL BE FWD TO [redacted] AT REQUEST OF CO.

FOUR. SHORT CELL.

ALFA. REGRETTABLE DELAYS HAVE OCCURRED DUE COMPONENT FAULTS AND LACK OF AVAILABLE SPARES. STILL NO ANSWER FROM ORD 4 (MELBOURNE) CONCERNING RADIATION HAZARD TO 1ATF AMMO POINT.

BRAVO. TREHARNE DUE HERE TUESDAY 3 DEC AND WILL KEEP ALL ADDRESSEES INFORMED RE PROGRESS.

FIVE. MISCELLANEOUS OPS.

ALFA. DEPLOYMENT OF TASK FORCE MAIN (FWD) DURING OPS. PRESENT COMDR VERY KEEN TO DEPLOY TASK FORCE MAIN ON ALL OPS, WHICH WILL BE FREQUENT. WE ARE PRESENTED WITH PROBLEM OF SPO TRAVELLING FWD BY CHOPPER DAILY TO BRIEF G2 (INT). AM INVESTIGATING POSSIBILITY OF OBTAINING AN APC (EITHER US OR AUST SOURCE) IN ORDER TO DEPLOY SPEECH SECURE VHF RADIO FWD WITH G2 (INT). THIS COULD BE A FORWARD INTERCEPT PLATFORM FOR LLV (EITHER VHF OR MW) AS WE SAW AT CORAL, AND

⁶²⁵ HQ MR7 to HQ MR4.

⁶²⁶ MIB COSVN to MIE 5 LID.

⁶²⁷ : HQ MR7 to HQ 274 Regt.

⁶²⁸ No hard copy reports located.



IF SUCH LLV EXISTS AND IS EXPLOITABLE. MANY HURDLES TO BE OVERCOME AND AT THIS STAGE IS JUST A GERM OF AN IDEA. WILL KEEP YOU INFORMED RE MATURITY OR OTHERWISE.

BRAVO. POWER. GENE SHED COMPLETE AND EXTERNAL WIRING FROM 22.5 KVA BROUGHT TO CHANGE-OVER SWITCH ON MAIN DISTRIBUTION BOARD. ONLY AWAIT INDOCTRINATED ELECTRICIAN [REDACTED] TO COMPLETE WIRING AND INSERT FUSES TO ALLOW US COMPLETE INDEPENDENCE OF 104 SIG FROR 119 VOLTS

SIX. VISITORS.

12-14 NOV. CAPT GRAHAM (AFV ATO) LIAISON RE RF HAZARDS TO 1 ATF AMMO PT. DAILY. MAJ PAYNE – SSO II FFV OR HIS DEPUTY CAPT MCDONNELL – ASSO II FFV.

SEVEN. OP EXCHANGE WITH USM 62.

29 OCT – 5 NOV CPL BAILEY – SP5 SUHRSTEDT
5 NOV – 12 NOV CPL TREWARTHA – SP4 MECKELL
12 NOV – 19 NOV LCPL MIDDLETON – SP5 BOYD
19 NOV – 26 NOV NO OP TO USM 626 – SP5 TAFOYA DET TO THIS STA.
FROM 27 NOV SP5 FREUND (LINGUIST)
22 NOV – 29 NOV SP4 SEVEREID (COMMCEN OPR)

EIGHT. VISITS/DETS

14 NOV – MAJ HART/CO TO 303 RR BN, 174 RR COY, NRV (C)
15 NOV – MAJ HART/CO TO 224 AVN BN, 146 AVN CO, 509 RR GP
18-20 NOV – SSGT APPLEBY, SGT SCOTT TO 303 RR BN, 175 RR COY LIAISON.
25 NOV – CAPT ZAGON. HQ AFV TO MEET NEW G2 (INT)
12-13 NOV – CPL WILLIAMS TO 175 RR COY LIAISON

NINE. MOVTS DURING MONTH.

ALPHA. R&R.

3 -9 NOV SSGT THORPE (AUST)
15 - 22 NOV SGT DUELL (AUST)
1 - 7 NOV CPL GRACE (BANKOK)
26 NOV 3 DEC CPL PRIEBBENOW (AUST)
23 OCT - 4 NOV CPL MADDEN (AUST)

BRAVO. R&C.

18-22 NOV SGT BRILL
12-16 NOV CPL FITZSIMMONS
12-16 NOV LCPL STONE
25-30 NOV CPL J.E. 'HUNTER
14-16 NOV SIG TALBERT

ECHO⁶²⁹. MARCH IN/OUT

SEE MV SIGS 489 - MONTHLY STR RETURN.

TEN ADMIN.

ALPHA. MED,
[Redacted]

BRAVO. DISCIPLINE
Redacted]

⁶²⁹ No Charlie or Delta in original.



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CHAPTER 38 – DECEMBER 1968

38.1 Personnel

38.1.1 Arrivals and Departures

There was one arrival and three departures in December.

Arrival

3 December

Corporal Barry Poole

Departures

10 December

Corporal John Murray

17 December

Corporal Bruce Fitzsimmons

Corporal Dennis Stone

38.1.2 Employment Area

After a few weeks consolidation in county, Barry Poole was employed as the NCO IC of the SSL operation. Fred Hawkes and Tony Bridges commenced SSL training.



Figure 297: Sharing a Xmas cake from home

38.1.3 Unit Strength

The Troop strength on 31 December was 36 (including John Duncan).



38.1.4 Troop Manning.

The following graphic shows the organisation of the Troop on 31 December:

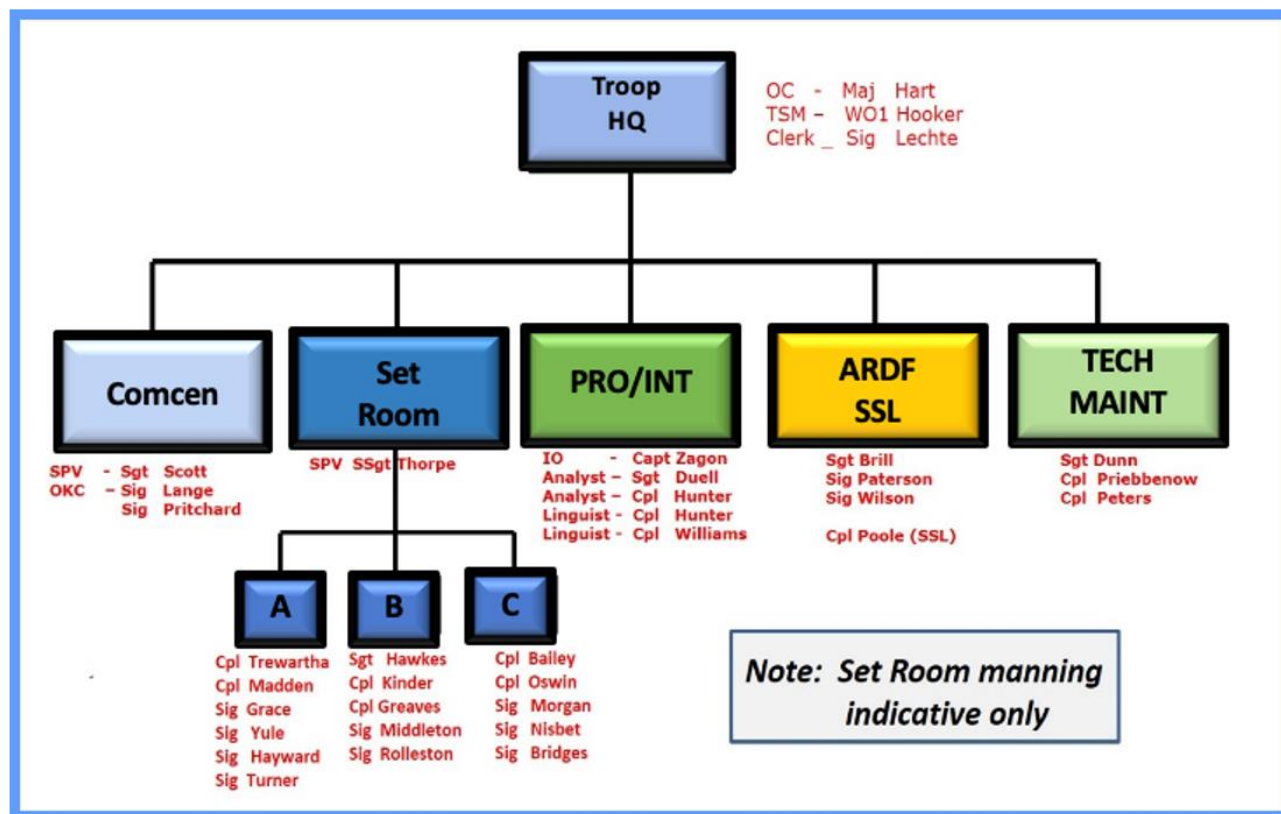


Figure 298: Troop Manning December 1968⁶³⁰

38.2 Administration

38.2.1 104 Sig Tp TAOR Patrols

In December, 104 Sig Sqn was tasked with assisting the Task Force infantry with TAOR patrolling and subsequently an active patrolling program was instituted.

38.2.1.1 547 Sig Tp Not Allowed

547 Sig Tp members were not permitted to partake in the patrols as the orders deploying 547 Sig Tp to Vietnam were very clear that *they were at no time were members to be placed in a position where they could be at risk of being captured by the enemy forces*⁶³¹.

⁶³⁰ Compiled by Bob Hartley. E&OE.

⁶³¹ This did not seem to apply for ARDF personnel nor when personnel were later deployed to Fire Support Bases. In 1967 Captain Richards considered deploying a PRD-1 patrol. Extract from his tape to M18: *The number of sites which are technically suitable on to which to put the PRD-1 are extremely limited. Secondly. You have to put out a protective force to protect them, and the Brigadier says that the minimum force he would put out or allow me to put out with a PRD-1 would be a company and he is not prepared to let a company go just to protect one PRD-1 site.*



Hazardous Operations

20. No person with a detailed comint knowledge will be used on hazardous operations where his capture or interrogation could be a substantial risk to the security of comint.

Figure 299: Extract from Deployment Instruction

38.3 Operations

38.3.1 547 Sig Tp Progress Report for 1-31 Dec 68

The 547 Sig Tp Progress Report for 1-31 Dec 68⁶³² stated:

ONE. SET ROOM

ALFA. POSNS 1 X 24 HRS, 2 X 16 1/2 HR, 4 X 9 3/4 HRS, 4 [sic] X 9 HRS ⁶³³

BRAVO. WATCH HRS. TASK OPS 53 1/2 HRS/MAN/WEEK
DEV OPS 51 HRS/MAN/WEEK

TWO. TASKING

ALFA. PRIORITY/TASKS

- | | |
|--------------|---------------|
| 1. VCMB05437 | 10. VCMB00831 |
| 2. VCMB00679 | 11. VCMBJ0913 |
| 3. VCMBN4737 | 12. VCMBJ0772 |
| 4. VCMB00694 | 13. VCMBY9070 |
| VCMBN4642 | 14. VCMB00637 |
| 5. VCMBJ0663 | 15. VCMB00843 |
| VCMBJ0879 | 16. VCMBJ0621 |
| VCMBJ0881 | 17. VCMBJ0820 |
| 6. VCMBJ0901 | 18. VCMBJ0919 |
| 7. VCMBY9055 | 19. VCMBY9073 |
| 8. VCMB05429 | 20 VCMBY9074 |
| 9. VCMB00839 | |

BRAVO. DEV GROUPS

VCMBJ0174	VCMBJ0253
VCMB07058	VCMBJ0246
VCMB00789	VCMBJ0248
VCMB00834	VCMBJ1007
VCMBJ0720	

CHARLIE. SEARCH BANDS

NO CHANGE FROM NOV REPORT

THREE. ARDF

ALFA.TOTAL FIXES – 165

BRAVO. GRADINGS. 24 GOOD 121 FAIR 6 POOR 14 CUTS

CHARLIE. FLYING HOURS 144.10 TRG 3.30

⁶³² Documents received from ASD December 2015.

⁶³³ No ARDF positions included and it appears that the sets were not manned 2400-0800 approx. These figures would equate roughly to: 8 intercept positions manned 0800 – 1700 and 3 positions manned 1700 – 2400 and 1 2400 – 0800 (times approximate). The 4 x 9 hr positions indicated must be a typo. There were insufficient postitons available to cover the extra 3.



DELTA. OVERALL RESULTS FOR YEAR AS FOLLOWS 1347.15 HRS FLYING TIME. 1451 FIXES GRADED 193 GOOD 835 FAIR 85 POOR 239 CUTS PLUS 99 FIXES UNGRADED (IN MONTH OF MARCH)

ECHO. MONTHLY REPORT PLUS YEARLY WRAP-UP RESULTS WILL BE FWD BY BAG

FOUR. SHORT CELL.

ALFA. EQPT. HAVE HAD SOME PROBLEMS WITH EQPT FAULTS VIZ OLIVETTI DID A TANTRUM BUT NOW REPAIRED, IONOSONDE CURRENTLY UNDER REPAIR. HAVE ALSO HAD SOME PROBS WITH THE TWIN CHANNEL RACAL DUE TO NECESSITY OF HAVING CUT OFF OWN POWER DURING NIGHT. AM CURRENTLY NEGOTIATING TO BRING ENGR MAINS APPROX 1900 YARDS FROM MOVEMENTS BUILDING AT LUSCOMBE IN ORDER TO KEEP RACAL ON ALL NIGHT, WHICH WILL HOPEFULLY KEEP IT STABLE.

BRAVO. CHECK BEARING PROGRAMME. HAD A GREAT DEAL OF TROUBLE (AND SURPRISINGLY, OPPOSITION) FROM ALLIED SOURCES IN OBTAINING PARAMETERS OF US HF STAS IN COUNTRY FOR CHECK BEARING PROGRAMME. WENT TO 509 GP ON SATURDAY AND HAD A GREAT WHINGE THAT WE WERE BEING OBSTRUCTED FOR REASONS UNKNOWN. NEXT DAY THE PARAMETERS STARTED POURING IN, SO SHOULD BE ABLE TO COMMENCE IN EARNEST PROGRAMME AS SOON AS SONDE IS BACK ON AIR.

CHARLIE. TRG. HAWKES AND BRIDGES CURRENTLY UNDER TRG. WILL START WALSH OFF WITHIN NEXT FEW WEEKS.

DELTA. AFV HAS REQUESTED AHQ TO EXTEND JOHN DUNCAN BY ONE MONTH. ALSO HAVE TAKEN OUT REAL ESTATE OPTION ON 2 GOOD SITES FOR THE NEW SONDE WHEN IT ARRIVES. ONE (IF CHOSEN) MAY REQUIRE EXTN OF PERIMETER FENCE BUT HAVE NO VIOLENT REJECTION OF THIS PROPOSAL.

FIVE. MISCELLANEOUS OPS.

ALPHA. CURRENTLY WORKING A VHF/KY-8 SPEECH SECURE VOICE CIRCUIT TO G2 (INT) AT TF FORWARD. THIS HAS BEEN IN FOR ABOUT 3 WEEKS AND HAS PROVED BOTH SUCCESSFUL AND TIMELY. COMD 1 ATF HAS ASSURED ME THAT HE HAS PRESSED FOR AN ACV EXCLUSIVE FOR G2 (INT) USE WHICH WILL BE INSTALLED WITH ON-LINE TELEPRINTER SECURE CIRCUIT WHEN TF DEPLOYED FWD.

BRAVO. POWER. FINAL WIRING COMPLETED AND NOW EXCLUSIVELY ON ENGR MAINS FOR ALL POWER WITH 22.5 KVA BACK-UP. 2 X 10 KVAS BEING PREPARED FOR RETURN TO AUST.

CHARLIE. TECH MAINT. UNDERSTAND FROM MECHS THAT CERTAIN POWER TOOLS [Redacted] WOULD APPRCIATE YOUR ASSISTANCE IN OBTAINING (FOR TRANSFER) THE FOLLOWING ITEMS.

1 X ELECTRIC DRILL (1/4 IN CHUCK SIZE)
1 X ELECTRIC DRILL (5/8 IN CHUCK SIZE)
1 X ELECTRIC GRINDER
1 X SET OF DRILLS FOR LARGE DRILL (I.E. IN EXCESS OF 1/4 IN DRILLS)
ABOVE ITEMS WOULD BE MOST USEFUL IN OUR MAINT SHOP.

SIX. VISITORS

8 DEC COL WHITELAW DEP. INSPECT HIGH DIVINE AND SHORT CELL.
9 DEC. GP CAPT JA WEDDELL. JOINT SERVICES COMMS COMMITTEE
10 DEC. MR QUERENSBURY, MR JENKINS, MR SELBY ALL NRV (C) VISIT AND DISCUSS SHORT CELL.
11 DEC. MAJ R COLEBATCH, GSO2 (INT) HQ AFV, MR LUCKMAN
12 DEC. COL BALDWIN C OF S HQ AFV
18 DEC. LT GEN DALY CGS AND ENTOURAGE.
25 DEC. FATHER XMASS. WAS ENGAGED WITH EMPTY BEER CANS AND XMAS CARDS. MADE OFF TO THE NORTH PROPELLED BY REINDEER. NIL FRIENDLY CAS. EN CAS UNKNOWN.
DAILY. MAJ PAYNE SSO II FFV



SEVEN. OPR EXCHANGE TEMPORARILY SUSPENDED DUE SHORTAGE OF EXPERIENCED OPS.

EIGHT. VISITORS/DETS

7-8 DEC. MAJ HART 146 AVN CO/HQ AFV

28-29 DEC. MAJ HART/CAPT DUNCAN 146 AVN CO/509 RR GP

NINE. MOVEMENTS DURING MONTH.

ALPHA. R & R (ALL TO AUST)

26 NOV - 3 DEC CPL PRIEBENOW

3-10 DEC CPL KINDER

9-15 DEC CPL WILLIAMS

20 - 23 DEC LCPL PATERSON

BRAVO. R & C.

17-23 DEC SGT H. HUNTER

17-19 DEC CPL BAILEY

CHARLIE. MARCH IN/OUT.

FURTHER TO MY SIGS 56A. CPL J.A. MURRAY M/O 10 DEC 68.

REGRET PREVIOUS OMISSION.

TEN. ADMIN.

ALPHA. MED,

[Redacted]

BRAVO. PROMOTIONS. CPL H. HUNTER PROMOTED T/SGT 17 DEC



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PART 5

1969





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CHAPTER 39 – JANUARY 1969

39.1 Personnel

39.1.1 Arrivals and Departures

In January there were seven arrivals and three departures.

Arrivals

7 January

Corporal Murray Chamberlain

Signalman Earl Rush

Signalman Jeffery Payne

19 January

Corporal Brian Kinsella

25 January

Corporal Ken Perry

26 January

Corporal John Harding

Corporal Malcolm Onn

Departures

14 January

Lance Corporal Bob Rolleston

28 January

Corporal John Bailey

Corporal Ken Trewartha

39.1.2 Employment Areas and Promotion

Earl Rush, Jeff Payne, Ken Perry and Mal Onn joined the Set Room. Brian Kinsella to Processing. Murray Chamberlain to the Comcen, and John Harding to Tech Maint. A few weeks later John Harding was promoted to Sergeant and Jeff Payne joined the ARDF team.



Figure 300: Newbies



39.1.3 HQ AFV Monthly Strength Return

There was no change to the Establishment Strength of the Troop in January,⁶³⁴ although the Posted Strength was increasing due to the arrival of the SSL:

SERIAL	FORMATION/UNIT	ESTABLISHMENT			POSTED STRENGTH		
		OFFRS	OR	TOTAL	OFFR	OR	TOTAL
(a)	(b)	(c)	(d)	(e)	(f)	(g)	(h)
33	547 Sig Tp (less det)	2	34	36	3	37	40

Figure 301: Strength Return

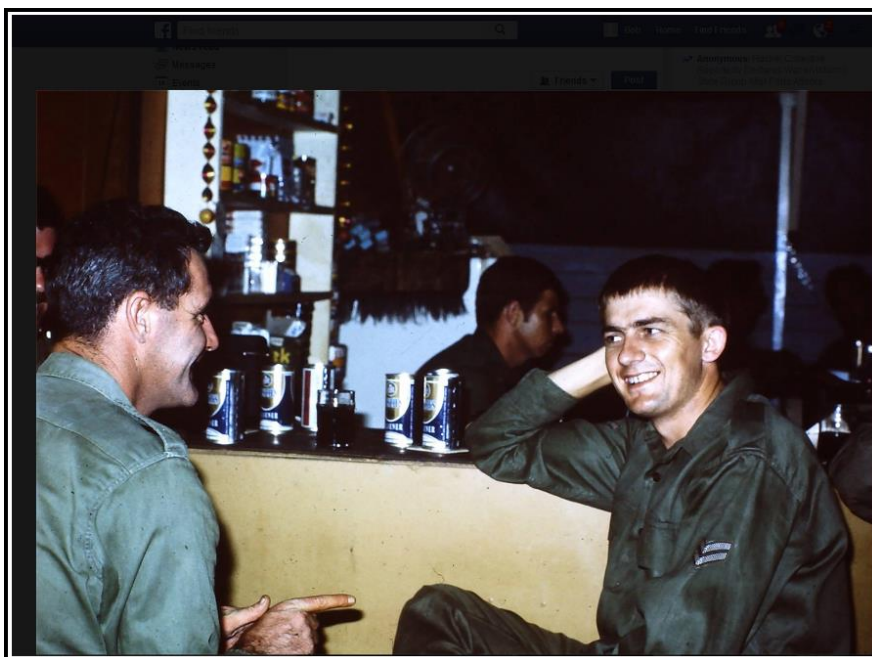


Figure 302: Earl (Minjak) Rush and Gordon (Aspro) Greaves in deep conversation⁶³⁵

39.2 Operations

39.2.1 547 Sig Tp Progress Report for 1-31 Jan 69

The 547 Sig Tp Progress Report for 1-31 Jan 69⁶³⁶ stated:

S E C R E T COMINT CHANNELS SIGS 052
FOR MI8. PROGRESS REPORT 1-31 JAN 69.

ONE. SET ROOM.

ALPHA. POSNS. 1 X 24 HRS. 2 X 16 AND ONE HALF HOURS, 4X9
AND THREE QUARTER HRS, 4X9 HRS.

BRAVO. WATCH HRS. TASK OPS 53HRS/MAN/WEEK
DEV UPS 51 HRS/MAN/WEEK.

⁶³⁴ <http://www.awm.gov.au/collection/AWM98/R723/1/13/5/>

⁶³⁵ Photo courtesy of Jeff Payne.

⁶³⁶ DSD Declassified, 547 Sig Tp in Vietnam (tranche2).



TWO. TASKING

[much redacting]

8. VCMB Y9055 9. VCMB 05429
 10. VCMB 00831 11. VCMB J0913
 12. VCMB J0772 13. VCMB Y9070
 14. VCMB 00637 15. VCMB 00667⁶³⁷
 16. VCMB 00320 17. VCMB 05442⁶³⁸
 18. VCMB Y9073 19. VCMB Y9074
 20. VCMB Y9075 21. VCMB 01115
 NOTE. DEC PR I 5 (VCMB 00663, 00879, 000881)
 NOW NOTATED VCMB 05423.

BRAVO. DEV GROUPS

VCMB 00709 VCMB Ji115
 VCMB 00253 VCMB 00246

CHARLIE. SEARCH BANDS.
 NO CHANGE FROM NOV REPORT.

THREE. ARDF.

ALPHA. TOTAL FIXES - 17- (NEW MONTHLY RECORD)

BRAVO. GRADINGS. 38 GOOD 114 FAIR 1 POOR 8 CUTS.

CHARLIE. FLYING HOURS. 146.00

DELTA. ONLY 4 MSNS ABORTED DURING MONTH-
 1 DUE INCLEMENT WEATHER 3, 3 DUE
 ARDF SERVICE. NO AC OR EQPT
 MALFUNCTIONS DURING MONTH,

ECHO. FULL DETAILS FOLLOWING IN MONTHLY
 WRAP-UP REPORT.

FOUR* SHORT [garbled]).

ALPHA. EQPT. COVENTRY CLIMAX GENE PACKED
 UP AND AWAITING ELECTRICAL OVERHAUL
 AT 106 FD WKSPS. ENGRS MAINS CABLE
 RUN INTO CHANGE- OVER. SWITCHBOARD TO
 PROVIDE CONTINUOUS POWER TO TWIN—CHANNEL RACAL.
 CONSTRUCTING ALL-WEATHER GENE SHED
 ON SITE AND BURYING ALL CABLES.
 BRAVO. CHECK BEARING PROGRAMME. CURRENTLY
 HAVE 110 SIG SON FROM VUNG TAU ON
 TESTS THROUGHOUT DAY. HOPE TO HAVE
 SIMILAR ARRANGEMENT FROM FSB JULIA
 (TF HQ MAIN) IN NEXT FEW DAYS, AT
 REQUEST WRE WE ARE CONCENTRATING
 ON SHORT RANGE (LESS THAN 50 KMS).
 BEARINGS GOOD, BUT RANGES STILL
 TEND TO BE ERRATIC. CURRENTLY
 USING NEW WRE COMPUTER PROGRAMME FOR

⁶³⁷ FE MIB COSVN to U/I MIE.

⁶³⁸ HQ MR7 to HQ Gp 84 RSG.



CONSOLIDATED MEAN CO-ORDINATES, WHICH APPEARS TO PRODUCE FAIR RESULTS PROVIDING SUFFICIENT READINGS ARE FED IN. IONOSPHERE CONTINUES TO BE UNSTABLE, MAKING RESULTS SOMEWHAT HAPHAZARD, SUSPECT THIS IS DEFINATELY AFFECTING RANGE RESULTS AND COULD BE DUE TO (ALPHA) SUNSPOT ACTIVITY (BRAVO) SUMMER IONOSPHERi CONDITIONS.

CHARLIE. DUNCAN DUE TO RTA 4 FEB AND IS PRODUCING INITIAL REPORT BEFORE HE LEAVES. HE CONSIDERS MANY MONTHS OF TRESTS WILL STILL BE NEEDED BEFORE PROJECT CAN BE FULLY EVALUATED (OUR SIGS 023 OF 1603402 JAN - NOT TO DSD, REFERS). WILL WAIT FOR HIS FINAL REPORT AMD RECOMMENDATIONS BEFORE DISCUSSING WITH YOU POSSIBILITY (OR OTHERWISE) OF TP INCREASE. CURRENTLY HAVE LCPL. POOLE AND SIG BRIDGES UNDER INSTR AND THEY APPEAR TO HAVE MASTERED EQPTS MYSTERIES.

FIVE. MISCELLANEOUS OPS

ALPHA. EXPECT THAT OPS COMMS CCT (ANALYST TO ANALYST INFORMAL SECURE TELEPRINTER) WILL SHORTLY BE INSTALLED FROM 175 RR CO TO OUR PROCESSING SECTION. MOST OF EQPT WILL BE PROVIDES FROM RESOURCES.

BRAVO. YESTERDAY RECEIVED AN APC AS A TEMPORARY IN LIEU ISSUE BEFORE AN ACV IS DELIVERED EX AUST.

ISSUE MADE ON THE APPROVAL OF COMD AFV. CURRENTLY INSTALLING A [redacted] SECURE VHF VOICE CIRCUIT, TOGETHER WITH LASH-UP SECURE PRINTER CCT AS A BACK UP TO VOICE. THIS MAYBE NECESSARY IN VIEW PLANNED MOVE OF TF MAIN TO AREA AS PART OF OVERALL II FFV PLAN. IF THIS EVENTUATES,

WE WILL BE OUT OF VHF RANGE AND AM CONSIDERING USING G2(I NT) SECURE VOICE DIRECT TO SSO II FFV AT [redacted] IN ANY EVENT, PRINTER WILL NOT RPT NOT BE USED FOR PASSAGE OF CODEWORD END PRODUCT MATERIAL, EVEN IF WE HAVE TO REVERT TO ZAGON GOING FWD IN CHOPPER TO BRIEF COMDR. APC GOING FWD TODAY, AND MECHS AND I WILL COMPLETE INSTL AND TESTS OUT THERE.

CHARLIE. FOR INFO OFFICIAL [redacted] ACCEPTANCE OF AUST USE OF SECURE VOICE CRYPTO EQPT (([redacted]) IS NOW THROUGH. NESTOR KEYLISTS FOR THESE EQPTS ARE NOW ENDORSED FOR



/AUST USE ONLY. 104 SIG SON CURRENTLY EQUIPPED WITH [redacted] ON II FFV
COMD NET.

[corrupt]

5 JAN. CAPT [corrupt] .OPS OFFR 175 RR COY
10-12 JAN. CLIVE LUCKMAN.
22 JAN MAJ REG COLEBATCH - G2 (INT) AFV AND
MAJ WADE WILLIAMS - SSO MACV
23 JAN. LT COL HQCKNEM, MAJ HOOK - INCOMING/OUTGOING KSO AFV
24 JAN. COL MCKENZIE NEW D COMDR 1 ATF
31 JAN. CAPT WIESSEL - G3(INT) AFV.
DAILY. MAJ BOB PAYNE - SSO II FFV

SEVEN, VISITS/DETS
18-19 JAN. MAJ HART. HQ AFV
23-29 JAN. CPL KINSELLA, SGT DUELL - 175 RR CO

EIGHT. MOVS DURING MONTH.
ALPHA. - R&R
15-21 JAN LCPL MORGAN - SINGAPORE
30JAN - 5 FEB. CPL J. HUNTER - TAIPEH

BRAVO. R&C
1-6 JAN. SIG WILSON
21-25 JAN. CPL T. WILLIAMS
31 JAN - 5 FEB. CPL MADDEN
CHARLIE. MARCH IN/OUT
SEE MY SIGS 051

NINE ADMIN.

ALPHA. MED
[redacted]

BRAVO TP ACCN/LIVING AREA.

4 NEW TENTS ERECTED AND SAND RAGGED NORTH OF TP COMPOUND, MAKING TOTAL
OF 8 TENTS IN THIS AREA. MORTAR PITS COMPLETED, 3 NEW FIGHTING PITS
UNDER CONSTR. NEW TOILET AND SHOWER BLOCK IN THIS AREA 90 PERCENT
COMPLETE

[corrupt]

DELTA. Q MATTERS. WOULD APPRECIATE ASP COPY OF TWET 4044 AND ANSWER
TO QUERIES RAISED IN MY SIGS 558 (YOUR 902 REQUESTED RE-RUN) AM CON-
TEMPLATING CONSIDERABLE RVE ACTION IF FUTURE, BUT REQUIRE TWET AND
WOULD LIKE TO DISCUSS EQPT (REQUIREMENTS WITH YOU, WHEN ARE YOU DUE
FOR YOUR NEXT HOLIDAY HERE. QUERY.

39.2.2 ARDF

39.2.2.1 ARDF Fixes

Over the previous few months there had been considerable analysis of ARDF fixes on the various enemy entities. Analysis revealed several clusters of what appeared to be the main operating locations of the various headquarters. Based on this information, 1ATF operations could be



targeted within specified areas where probable VC/NVA camps and/or bunker systems could be found.



Figure 303: Example of ARDF Cluster Analysis

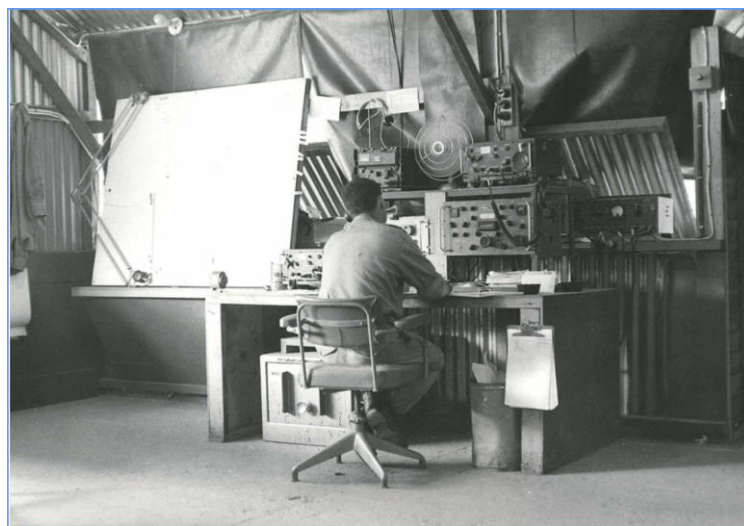


Figure 304: ARDF Control Position - Plotting Board to the left



39.2.2.2 ARDF Flying Hours

The total ARDF flying hours for the month were⁶³⁹:

Year	Month	Flying hours	Total Fixes	Good <1000mts	Fair 1-2000Mts	Poor >2000 Mts	Cut	Missions Lost	Remarks
1969	Jan	146	161	38	114	1	8	4	

39.2.3 Set Room

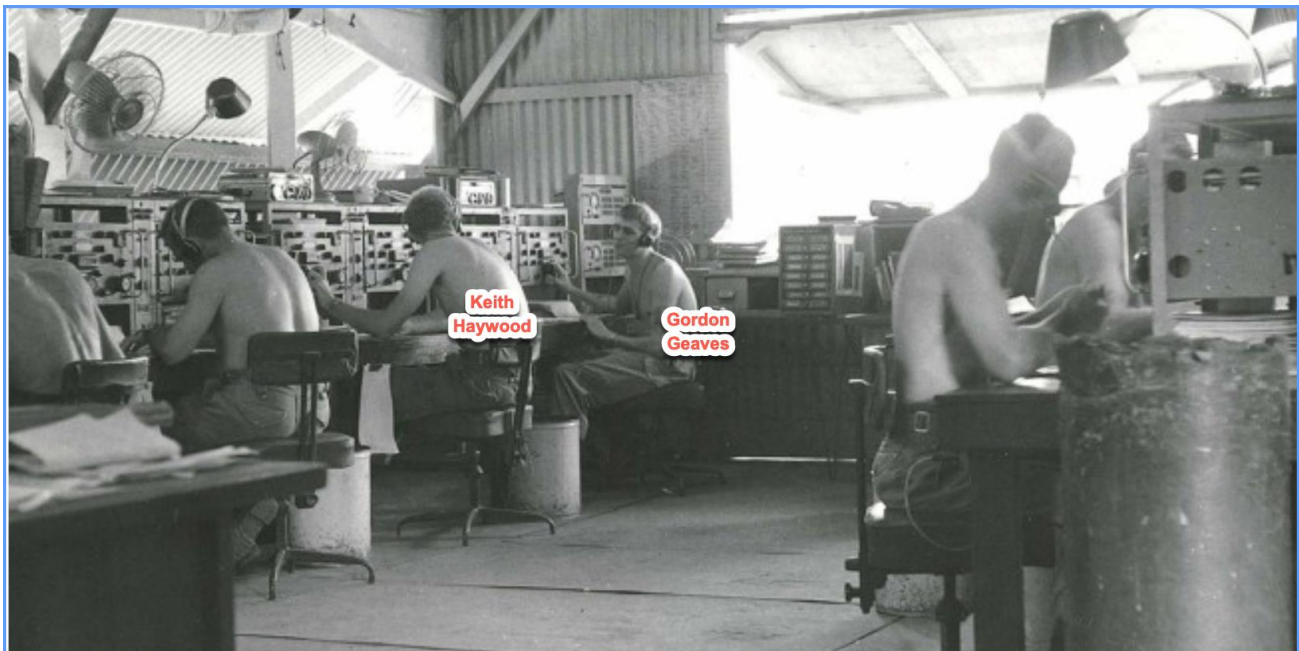


Figure 305: Set Room

⁶³⁹ Compiled from MI8 Records held at ASD archives.



Figure 306: Set Room Main Tasking Board

39.2.4 Int/Processing

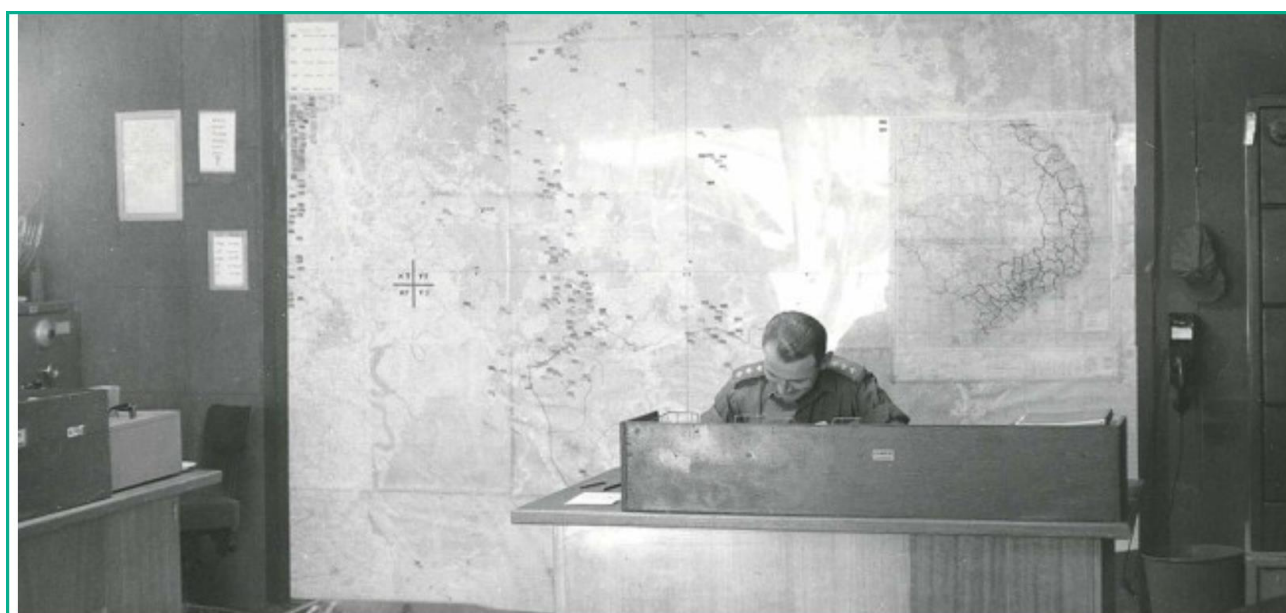


Figure 307: Intelligence Officer/Senior Processing Officer Capt Steve Zagon



Figure 308: Analyst Hayden Hunter

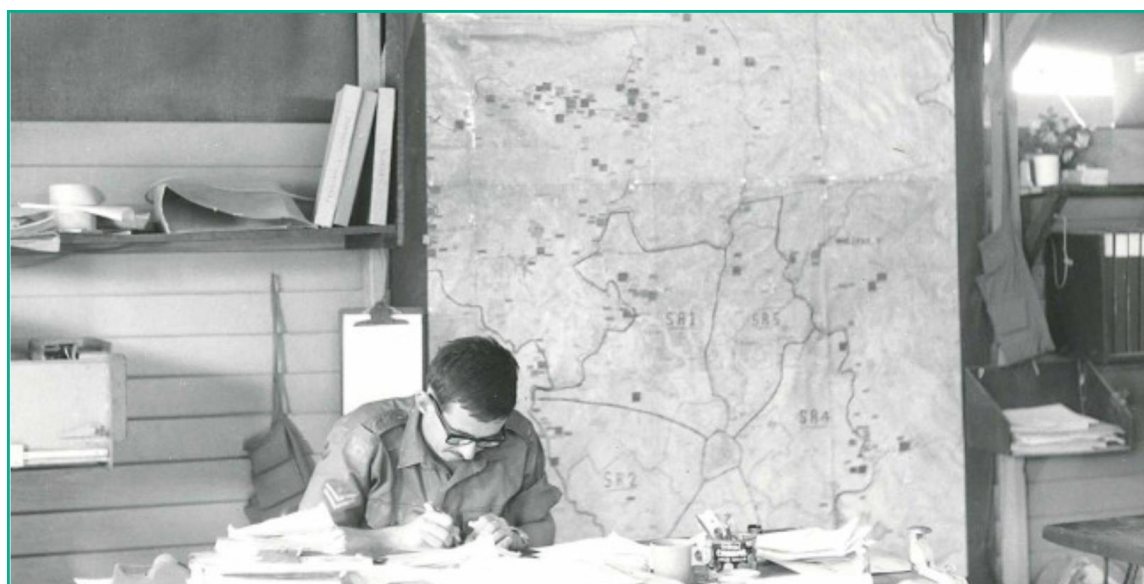


Figure 309: Analyst Brian Kinsella

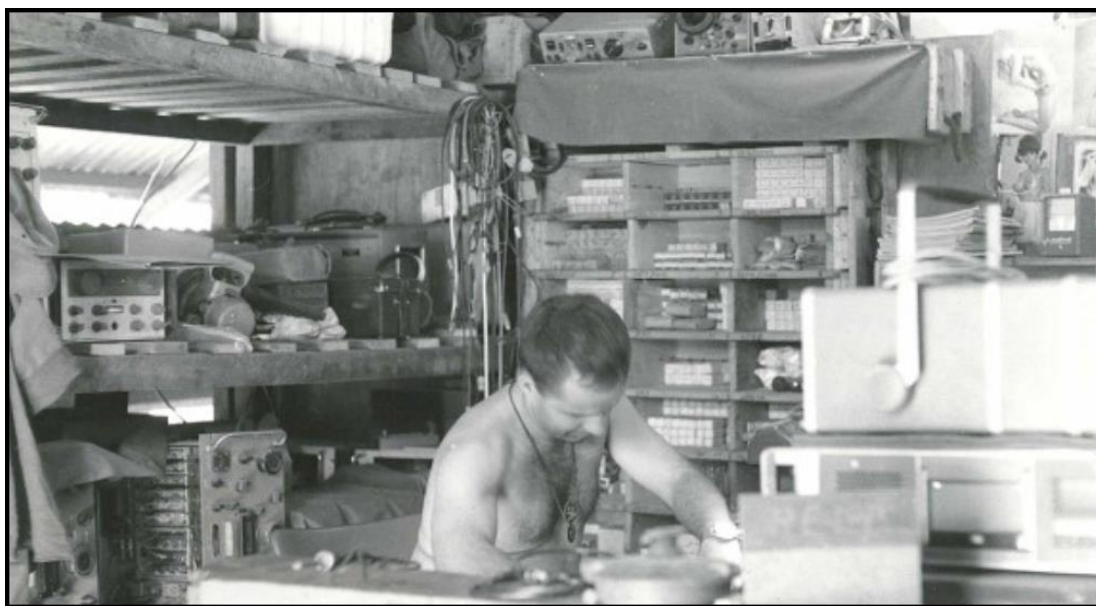


Figure 310: John Harding in Tech Workshop



CHAPTER 40 – FEBRUARY 1969

40.1 Personnel

40.1.1 Arrivals and Departures

In February there were five arrivals and departures.

Arrivals

6 February

Corporal Daryl McPhee

7 February

Signalman Michael Guillot

Signalman Robert Baldwin

18 February

Sig Roger Thompson

22 February

Sergeant Robert Hartley

Departures

4 February

Sergeant Laurie Duell

11 February

Sergeant Bill Dunn

Sergeant Fred Hawkes

Signalman Ray Turner

12 February

Signalman Mark Pritchard

40.1.2 Employment Areas

Daryl McPhee, Mick Guillot and Bob Baldwin joined the Set Room. Roger Thompson, a National Serviceman, took over as the Troop Clerk. Bob Hartley replaced Jim Brill as the NCO IC ARDF.

40.1.3 John Duncan

After the successful introduction into service of the SSL, John Duncan departed on 4 February.

40.1.4 Bill Dunn's Commendation

Bill Dunn received a Service Commendation for his work in 547 Sig Tp. in the 1998 End of War List it was upgraded to a Commendation for Distinguished Service⁶⁴⁰.

⁶⁴⁰ The Commendation for Distinguished Service replaced the MID.



Veteran Search Result

Name: DUNN, William
Service No: 16758
Service: Army
Date Of Birth: 19/10/1932
Rank: (Temporary) Sergeant
Place Of Birth: Brisbane QLD AUSTRALIA
Corps: Royal Australian Corps of Signals
National Service: No
[view the Certificate](#)
[provide feedback for this Service Record](#)
[permission for use of service badge for commemorative purposes](#)

Honour(s)		
Commendation For Distinguished Service		
Summary of Unit Name(s)	Start Date	End Date
547 Signal Troop	05/02/1968	11/02/1969

Figure 311: Bill Dunn Commendation⁶⁴¹

40.1.5 HQ AFV Monthly Strength Return

There was no change to the Establishment Strength of the Troop in February⁶⁴²:

SERIAL	FORMATION/UNIT	ESTABLISHMENT			POSTED STRENGTH		
		OFFRS	OR	TOTAL	OFFR	OR	TOTAL
		(c)	(d)	(e)	(f)	(g)	(h)
32	547 Sig Tp (less det)	2	34	36	2	37	39

Figure 312: HQ AFV Strength Return for February 196

40.1.6 A Noisy ARDF Handover

During the process of handing over ARDF Operations to Bob Hartley, Jim Brill had to also hand over his M16 Rifle. Bob had no experience with the M16 and asked Jim for a quick lesson on the weapon. After loading a full magazine and cocking the weapon Jim was explaining the operation of the safety catch and said “... see, if I press the trigger nothing will happen, the weapon is perfectly safe.” **Wrong demonstration.** The weapon fired. The expended round ricocheted around the room and the spent round was never found. There were immediate yells from the Set Room and people rushed around everywhere expecting the worst. The only casualties were some of the neatly folded laundry with a hole through it and two very pale looking Sergeants. There was a quick phone call to the HQ 1 ATF duty officer to advise him that we were not under attack. Jim subsequently had a few dollars removed from his pay for having an unauthorised discharge.

⁶⁴¹ <http://www.vietnamroll.gov.au/VeteranDetails.aspx?VeteranId=1258115>

⁶⁴² <http://www.awm.gov.au/collection/AWM98/R723/1/13/5/>



40.1.7 547 Sig Tp Establishment

On 16 February 1969, Army Canberra sent the following signal to Austforce Vietnam⁶⁴³:

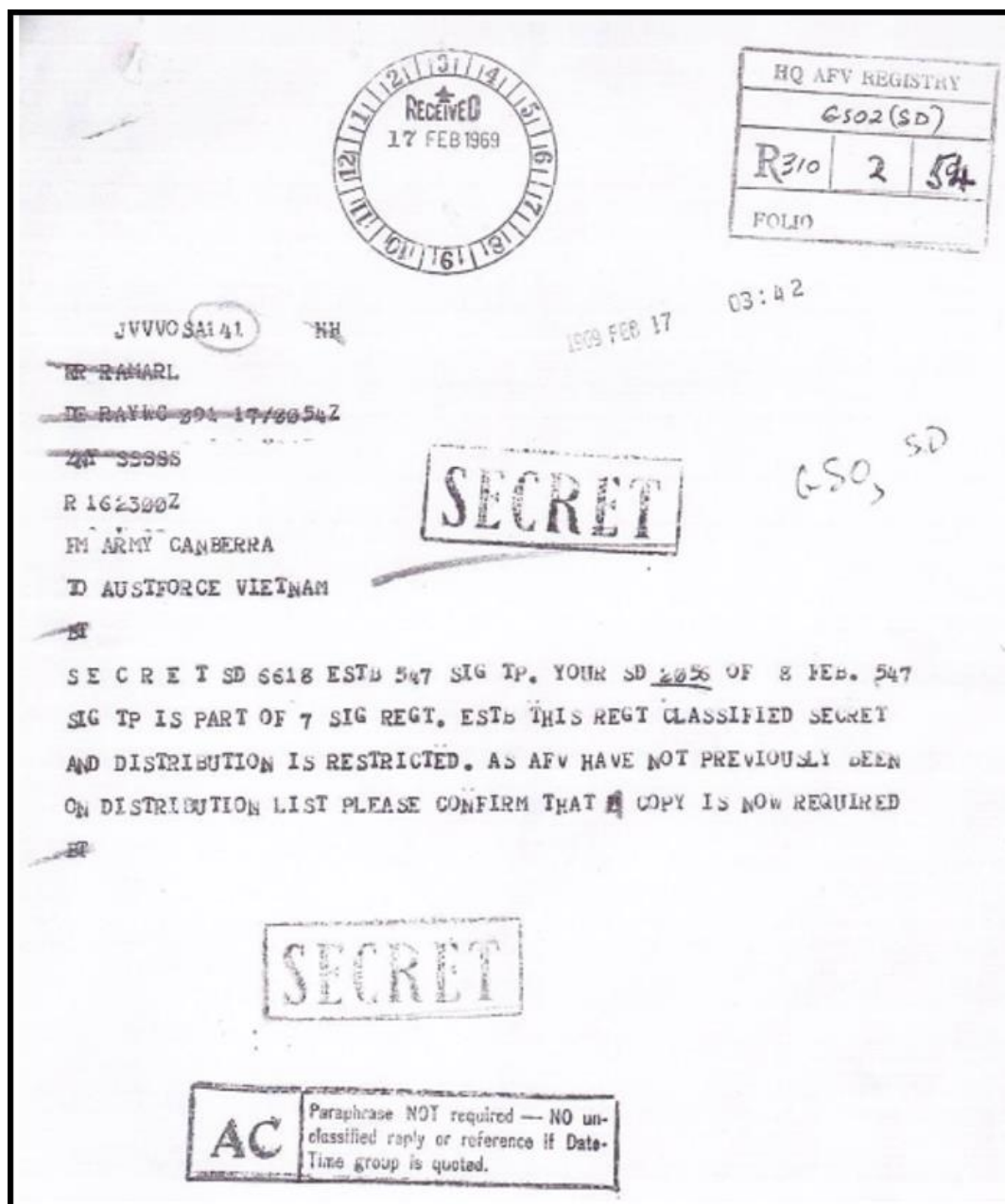


Figure 313: Establishment Classification

(Unfortunately, the previous and follow up signals have not been recovered.)

⁶⁴³ AWM: AWM 98 HQ AFV – Establishments – AFV – 547 Sig Tp.



40.2 Administration

40.2.1 Canteen Working Well



Figure 314: A Few drinks in the canteen⁶⁴⁴



Figure 315: 'What are the odds?'⁶⁴⁵

⁶⁴⁴ Photo courtesy of Jeff Payne.

⁶⁴⁵ Ibid.

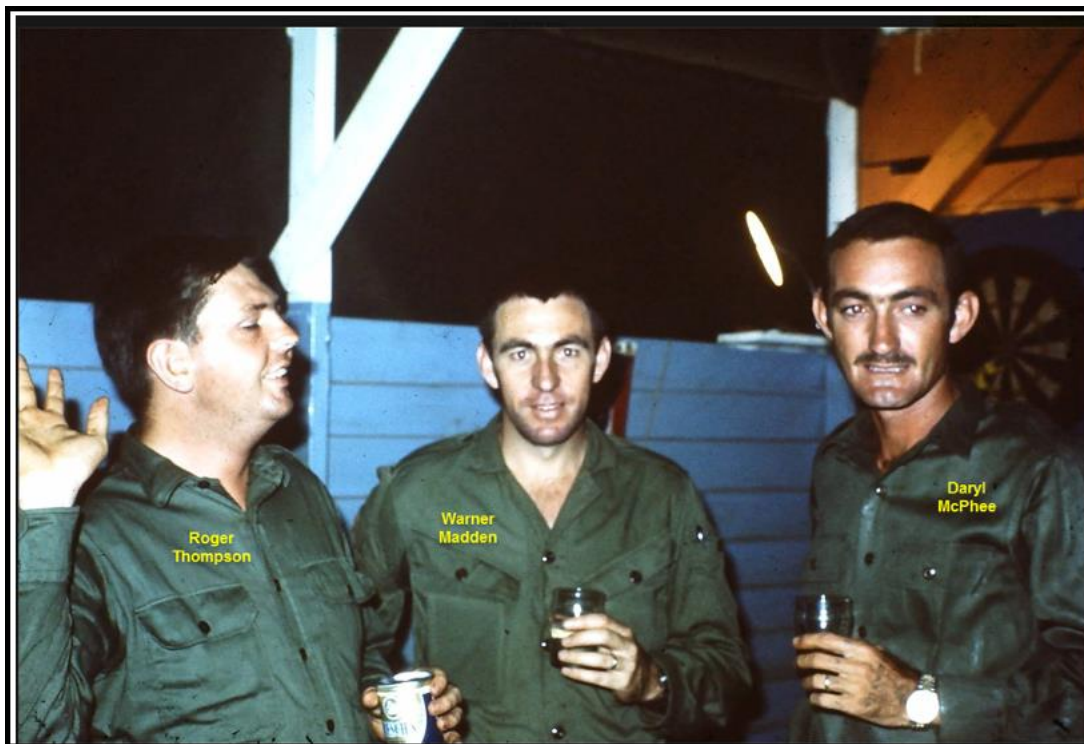


Figure 316: Farewell/welcome drinks⁶⁴⁶

40.3 Operations

40.3.1 547 Sig Tp Progress Report for 1 – 28 Feb 69

The 547 Sig Tp Progress Report for 1-28 Feb 69 ⁶⁴⁷ stated:

*S E C R E T SPOKE SIGS 110
FOR M18. PROGRESS REPORT 1-23 FEB 69.*

ONE. SET ROOM.

ALPHA. POSSN. 1X24 HRS, 2X16 1/2 HRS, 4X9 3/4 HRS, 4X9 HRS.

BRAVO. WATCH HRS. NO CHANGE FROM JAN REPORT.

*CHARLIE. SHIFT SYSTEM. NEW SYSTEM IN OPERATION FOR
A MONTH PROVIDES SAME COVER AND WATCH HOURS BUT REDUCED TIME FOR
TP WORK PARADES. THUS OPS HAVE A LITTLE MORE REST TIME.*

*TWO. TASKING.
.AALPHA. PRIORITY/TASK.*

- | | |
|---------------|---------------|
| 1. VCMB 05437 | 2. VCMB00831 |
| 3. VCMB 00697 | 4. VCMB00694 |
| 5. VCMB 00721 | 6. VCMB J0901 |
| 7. VCMB J0913 | 8. VCMB J0072 |

⁶⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁶⁴⁷ DSD Declassified, 547 Sig Tp in Vietnam (tranche2).



9. VCMB Y9070	10. VCMB J0820
11. VCMB 00667	12. VCMB 05442
13. VCMB 05443	14. VCMB 05423
15. VCMB J1028	16. VCMB J1078
17. VCMB J0509	18. VCMB J0428
19. VCMB J1131	20. VCMB J0459
21. VCMB J11226	22. VCXB J3636

BRAVO. DEV GROUPS.

VCMB 30709 VCMB J0423
VCMB Y9373 VCMB J0246

CHARLIE. SEARCH BANDS. NO CHANGE FROM LAST REPORT

THREE. ARDF.

ALPHA. TOTAL FIXES - 17° (NEW MONTHLY RECORD)

BRAVO. GRADINGS - 40 GOOD , 114 FAIR, 6 POOR 19 CUTS.

CHARLIE. FLYING HRS -133.40 HRS PLUS 2 HRS TRG.

DELTA. ONLY 1 MSN ABORTED DURING MONTH DUE TO ARDF MALFUNCTION.
REPAIRS COMPLETED THAT EVENING. SGT HARTLEY NOW IN TRG AS SECT
IC (ELECT), WILL ASSUME CON 15 MAR. SIG PAYNE TO START TRG 15 MAR.

ECHO. FULL DETAILS IN MONTHLY REPORT.

FOUR. SHORT CELL.

ALPHA. EOPT.

(1) COVENTRY CLIMAX NOW BACK AFTER COMPLETE REWIRING OF ELEC SIDE.

(2) FIA 10 KVA ALSO PACKED UP DURING MONTH (TRANSISTOR IN ELEC
CONTRML CIRCUIT). NOW REPAIRED AND OPERATIONAL.

(3) RACAL TWIN-CHANNEL OUT FOR 2 DAYS WITH UNBALANCED CHANNEL.
ALSO INTERMITTANCE WITH RF ATTENUATOR SWITCH. NOW OK.

(4) TRENCHES FOR BURYING AERIAL CABLES 75 PER-CENT COMPLETE.

BRAVO. CHECK BEARING ON SAIGON ONLY AT PRESENT. 110 SIGS DROPPED
SKEDS WHEN HMAS SYDNEY WAS DOCKED AND 104 SIGS DROPPED
SKEDS WHEN TF HQ MOVED FROM [redacted] TO BIEN HUA PROVINCE.
110 SIGS WILL BE REQUESTED TO RECOMMENCE TX ASAP. CSO IS TO
ISSUE A SIG INSTR FOR NEW TRIAL TO COMMENCE APPROX 17 MAR.

CHARLIE. SSL INTERIM REPORT. COPIES TO ADDRESSEES DESPATCHED
27 FEB BY SAFE HAND (HVCCO). MODIFICATION TO CONTROL
BOX (WRE T 6169 NOTAL) COMPLETE. SEPARATE SIG BEING
SENT TO WRE.

FIVE. MISCELLANEOUS OPS.

ALPHA. TF HQ NOW DEPLOYED FWD IN BIEN HOA PROVINCE. G2 (INT) HAS
SECURE COMMUNICATIONS TO SSO II FFV ON 303 RR BN COMAND FM NET.

BRAVO. HAVE DISCUSSED SECURE PRINTER LINK WITH CSO.



UNDERSTAND HE IS SUBMITTING REQUEST FOR THE ISSUE OF 2 COPIES OF KW7 KEYLISTS FOR USE BETWEEN MYSELF AND G2 (INT) WHEN FWD. WOULD APPRECIATE FAVOURABLE CONSIDERATION OF THIS REQUEST

CHARLIE. AFV HAVE NOW OBTAINED ON LOAN FROM [redacted] INITIALLY THESE WILL BE DEPLOYED TO PROVIDE PARALLES WKG TF HQ TO MAIN UNITS. NONE TO BE PROVIDED TO LO [corrupt] WITH ARVN UNITS. HE HAS PROMISED ME 2 ON THE NEXT ISSUE AND I WILL INSTALL ONE IN ARDF AC TO PROVIDE ME WITH SECURE STEERAGE.

DELTA. ONE THE NI OF 22/23 FEB WE RECEIVED APPROX 50 ROUNDS OF 82 MM MORTAR ALL LANDING IN VICINITY OF WESTERN END OF LUSCOMBE STRIP. NO DAMAGE WAS SUSTAINED BY SSL AND IT IS BELEIVED NOT ONE ROUND LANDED INSIDE INNER PERIMETER WIRE.⁶⁴⁸

SIX. VISITORS.

4 FEB. BRIG TANCRED- COMD 23 COMMEL BDE (ORIENTATION VISIT ON REQUEST OF COMD 1ATF)
8 FEB. LT COL KAHN - CO 5 RAR (FOR INDOC AND BRIEFING).
12 FEB. MAJ BEASLEY -OC SAS SQN (FOR INDOC)
MAJ WADE- OUTGOING OC SAS (FOR DEINDOC)
19 FEB. CLIVE LUCKMAN- FROM 175 RR COY.
MAJ BOYCE - (NEW OPS OFFR 146 AVN COY)
CAPT CHANDLER, LT RASMUSSEN, CWO RIVEN (ALL FROM 146 AVN COY).
DAILY. MAJ PAYNE - SSO 11 FFV.

SEVEN. VISITS/DETS.

5 FEB. MAJ HART - TO 303BN/175 COY TO DISCUSS PROBLEMS ASSOCIATED WITH PASSAGE OF MATERIAL TO CONSUMERS DEPLOYED FWD.
6 FEB. SGT DUNN, CPL PETERS, CPL HARDING TO 146 AVN COY, 455 SIG DET (TSN).
7 FEB. CAPT ZAGON TO 175 COY. LIAISON
16 FEB. SGT HUNTER, CPL GREAVES TO 175 COY. LI ASON ON DEV GROUPS.
23 FEB. CPL KINSELLA TO 175 COY. LIAISON

40.3.2 ARDF Flying Hours

The total ARDF flying hours for the month were⁶⁴⁹:

Year	Month	Flying hours	Total Fixes	Good <1000mts	Fair 1-2000Mts	Poor >2000 Mts	Cut	Missions Lost	Remarks
1969	Feb	134	179	40	114	6	19	1	

⁶⁴⁸ It has not been confirmed, but suspected that his was a VC welcome for Bob Hartley.

⁶⁴⁹ Compiled from MI8 Records held at ASD archives.



40.4 SSL

40.4.1 AUM352 SSL Report

On 3 February, AUM350 signalled a Short Cell Report to MI8, DSD, Weapons Salisbury (WRE) and possibly 7 Sig Regt⁶⁵⁰:

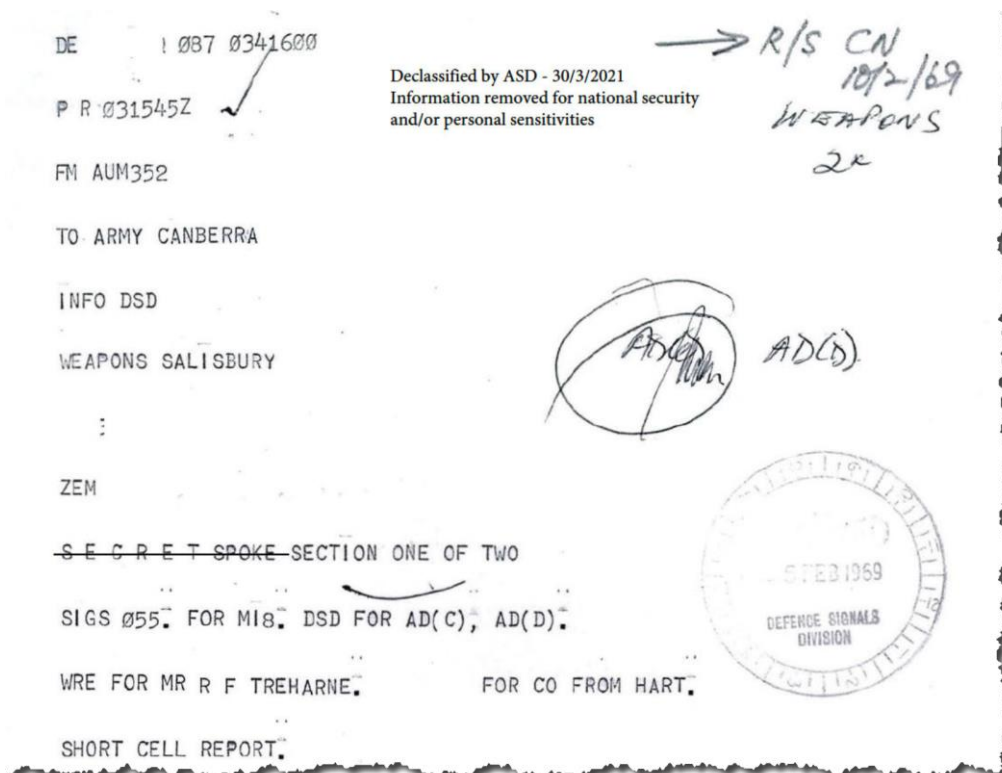


Figure 317: Short Cell Report 3 Feb 69⁶⁵¹

SHORT CELL REPORT.

ONE. CAPT JOHN DUNCAN DUE RTA 4 FEB. I HAVE TO HAND HIS DRAFT COPY OF TECHNICAL NOTES COVERING THE INSTALLATION AND PRELIMINARY TESTS OF SHORT CELL SYSTEM AT NUI DAT WHILST ALL ADDRESSEES WILL RECEIVE A COPY OF THE FINAL REPORT IN DUE COURSE, I THOUGHT IT EXPEDIENT AT THIS TIME TO FORWARD A BRIEF RESUME OF THE RESULTS OF BEARING AND RANGE PROGRAMME, AS WELL AS HIS CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS.

TWO. IN GENERAL, THE TRAILS WERE RETARDED BY A LACK OF SUITABLE TARGET TRANSMISSIONS FOR OUR CHECK BEARING PROGRAMME MOST ALLIED SERVICE STATIONS IN THE FREQ BAND OF INTEREST ARE MULTI TONE TRANSMISSIONS AND ARE LESS SUITABLE FOR TESTING THAN INTERRUPTED CARRIER TRANSMISSIONS. DESPITE OVERTURES TO VARIOUS AGENCIES IN THE COUNTRY FOR ASSISTANCE IN PROVIDING TEST TRANSMISSIONS, IT WAS NOT UNTIL 2 A JAN THAT WE WERE ABLE TO ARRANGE SUITABLE TRANSMISSIONS FROM [redacted] SIG SQN IN [redacted] FOR SHORT

⁶⁵⁰ DSD Declassified, 547 Sig Tp in Vietnam (tranche2).

⁶⁵¹ Signal sent in two parts.



HAUL (LESS THAN KMS) TESTS. UP TO THIS DATE, TESTS FOR LONG HAUL (IN EXCESS OF [redacted] KMS) WERE CARRIED OUT USING 2 COMMERCIAL STATIONS

THREE. LONG HAUL TASKS'. MORE THAN 20 TASKS, CONSISTING OF BETWEEN 4 AND 20 COMPLETE BEARING AND RANGE RESULTS, WERE TAKEN ON A COMMERCIAL FSK TX IN . COMPUTER ANALYSIS OF EACH RESULT SHOWED AN ACCURACY OF PLUS OR MINUS [redacted] DEGREES AND PLUS OR MINUS [redacted] KMS; HOWEVER, FOR REASONS NOT YET ESTABLISHED, APPROX FIVE PERCENT OF THESE RESULTS GAVE A GOOD BEARING, BUT WITH A POSITIVE ERROR IN RANGE OF TEN TO FIFTEEN PERCENT. THE SAME PATTERN OF RESULTS WERE OBTAINED ON THE SECOND [redacted] STATION, A RVN FORCES VOICE STATION ON [redacted] KHZ. ALTHOUGH IN EXCESS OF [redacted] KMS AND CONSEQUENTLY CONSIDERED UNSUITABLE FOR TILT CORRECTION, TILT READINGS WERE TAKEN. IN A FEW CASES, TILT CORRECTION IMPROVED ANGLE ERROR, BUT SLIGHTLY INCREASED RANGE ERROR.

FOUR. SHORT HAUL TASKS. A NUMBER OF TASKS WERE COMPLETED ON A HAND SPEED MORSE TX AT [redacted] AS EXPECTED RESULTS WERE IMPROVED BY USING * LAYER TILT CORRECTION. HOWEVER RESULTS OFTEN PRODUCED A LARGE POSITIVE RANGE ERROR, IN ONE CASE UP TO [redacted] PERCENT, BUT AVERAGING APPROX [redacted] PERCENT. AT THE MOMENT THERE IS NOT SUFFICIENT DATA TO EXPLAIN THESE ERRORS; MOST OF THE RESULTS WERE TAKEN IN THE EARLY MORNING BEFORE THE MAGNETIC EQUATORIAL SPORADIC E (MEQES) LAYER DEVELOPES. HOWEVER, IT IS ASSUMED THAT THE ERRORS WERE DUE TO AN IONOSPHERIC PHENOMENA, POSSIBLY CAUSED BY BENDING THROUGH A VERY WEAK MEQES LAYER THAT WAS NOT DICERNABLE ON OUR LOW-POWERED SONDE.

FIVE. CONCLUSIONS. PRESENT INDICATIONS ARE THAT THE EQPT IS OPERATIONALLY USEFUL FOR APPROX 2 HOURS AFTER SUN RISE AND 2 HRS BEFORE SUNSET. ON OCCASIONS DURING THE DAY, IT IS POSSIBLE TO USE MEQES AND F LAYERS? IN PERIOD 7-14 DEC APPROX, A STRONG MEQES LAYER WAS AVAIL DAILY FOR PERIODS UP TO 2 HRS. IT IS NOT KNOWN WHETHER THESE WERE EXCEPTIONAL CONDITIONS OR SEASONAL EFFECTS. SINCE JAN 13, ON ONLY 3 OCCASIONS DURING THE DAY WAS THE MEQES LAYER DENSE ENOUGH FOR SSL OPERATION IN GENERAL, THE GREATEST DIFFICULTY IS THE MEQES LAYER, WHICH PERSISTS FROM 2 HRS AFTER SUN RISE TO 2 HRS BEFORE SUNSET. DURING THIS PERIOD IT IS OFTEN TOO WEAK TO BE USED AS A NORMAL ES, BUT JUST STRONG ENOUGH TO MODULATE SIGS USING THE F LAYER, THUS MAKING IT DIFFUCULT TO OPERATE SSL SYSTEM. IT IS HOPED THAT A MORE POWERFUL SONDE WILL BE FITTED INTO NUI DAT, IN ORDER TO PROVIDE CONTINUOUS AUTOMATIC IONOGRAMS. IT IS ESSENTIAL THAT EVALUATION TESTS AND NORMAL TASKING CONTINUES. TO ACHIEVE THIS, ADDITIONAL STAFF MUST BE POSTED INTO THE AREA. ALTHOUGH USEFUL OPERATING HOURS MAY BE LIMITED, IT HAS ALREADY CONFIRMED KNOWN [redacted] TASKS MANY TIMES AND HAS BEEN AN AID FOR THE TASKING OF ARDF ON SEVERAL OCCASIONS. ON 1 FEB, SSL LOCATED [redacted] R EGT, WHICH HAD MOVED AND COULD NOT BE FOUND BY ARDF. ARDF WAS TASKED IN THE GENERAL AREA AND THE HQ WAS RECOVERED.

SIX. RECOMMENDATIONS. AT LEAST 2 OPERATORS AND 1 TECHNICIAN SHOULD BE IMMEDIATELY POSTED TO THIS UNIT. EVALUATION TESTS, NORMAL TASKING AND IONOGRAMS SHOULD CONTINUE TO BE TAKEN AND ROPY OF RESULTS SENT TO WRE FOR ANALYSIS.

SEVEN. MY RECOMMENDATIONS. IN AGREEMENT WITH DUNCAN. I CONSIDER THE EQPT HAS TREMENDOUS SIGINT POTENTIAL IN 2 MAIN FIELDS.

ALPHA. IN THE DETERMINATION OF A GENERAL AREA RESULT, WHICH MAY



SUBSEQUENTLY BE USED TO TASK THE ARDF AC.

BRAVO. IN LOCATING DEVELOPEMENT GROUPS BOTH INSIDE AND OUTSIDE PROVINCE, TO THE IMPROVEMENT OF OVERALL, IN THEATRE SIGINT RESULTS. AT PRESENT, THE EQPT APPARENTLY POSSESSES LIMITED OPERATING CAPABILITY.' THIS IS PRIMARILY DUE TO IONOSPHERIC PHENOMENA WHICH IS AS YET UNEXPLAINED. THIS PHENOMENA MAY EXIST BECAUSE WE ARE LEAVING A PERIOD OF MAXIMUM SUN SPOT ACTIVITY, OR EVEN DUE TO SUMMER(SEASONAL) INFLUENCES. IT MAY POSSIBLY BE PROVED THAT WINTER CONDITIONS WILL ALLOW A MORE EXTENSIVE USE OF THE EQPT. THIS WOULD BE A GREAT ADVANTAGE, BECAUSE OF THE REDUCED USE OF ARDF DURING THIS PERIOD. IN ANY EVENT, FURTHER USE OF THE EQPT CAN ONLY INCREASE OUR KNOWLEDGE OF THE IONOSPHERE IN THIS AREA, AND ASSIST IN DEVELOPING OPERATING TECHNIQUES TO COMBAT (OR EXPLOIT) THE IONOSPHERIC BEHAVIOUR. FURTHER, MILITARY OPERATIONAL EXPERIENCE WITH THE EQPT IS ESSENTIAL, SHOULD THE ARMY BE EQUIPPED WITH SSL -IN THE FUTURE, AND TASKED WITH A STRATEGIC COMMITMENT

EIGHT. CURRENTLY, I AM EMPLOYING 2 OPERATORS ON THE SSL PROGRAMME. THIS HAS, NATURALLY, REDUCED THE COLLECTION CAPABILITY FOR MY PRIMARY ROLE, DIRECT SIGINT SUPPORT TO 1 ATF. IF, AS A RESULT OF THIS REPORT, IT IS AGREED THAT SHORT CELL IS TO REMAIN IN [redacted] FOR OPERATIONAL AND/OR SCIENTIFIC PURPOSES (WHICH I BELEIVE IT SHOULD), I MUST REQUEST ADDITIONAL PERSONNEL, AS A MINIMUM, 2 OP SIGS WOULD BE REQUIRED, THIS WOULD GIVE ME A TOTAL OF 26 OP SIGS (INCL 1 RFT IN THEATRE)', THIS WOULD BE SUFFICIENT TO MAINTAIN MY PRESENT TASKING COMMITMENT, DEVELOPEMENT SECT, ARDF SECT, SSL AND ALSO CATER FOR R AND R, R AND C, SICKNESS, ETC. THE ADDITIONAL OP SIGS SHOULD BE 1 X SGT, 1 X SIG. IN ADDITION, THE TECH CURRENTLY HERE ON AHQ ATT SHOULD BE RETAINED AS PART OF A TP INCREASE. FURTHER, I WOULD REQUEST A SIG OKC, TO BRING MY TOTAL OKC STR TO 4. AT PRESENT I HAVE BEEN MISEMPLOYING A CPL OP SIG FOR 2 MONTHS AS A COMCEN OPERATOR. IT IS JUST NOT POSSIBLE TO RUN A CONTINUOUS [redacted] WITH ONLY 3 OPERATORS. FINALLY, I REQUEST A STOREMAN TECH SIGS TO BOOST MY PRESENT ADMIN STAFF OF ONE. THE CLERK ON TP ESTBL IS RESPONSIBLE FOR ADMIN, VARIOUS Q FUNCTIONS, D PAY., ADMIN AND PAY ARE IN THEMSELVES FULL TIME JOBS. THE Q ASPECTS ARE LARGE AND COMPLEX, WITH EQPT DISTRIBUTED IN A TP Q ACCOUNT, AN SPS ACCOUNT AND CIPHER ACCOUNT. IN ADDITION, WE HOLD A GREAT AMOUNT OF [redacted] SIGINT EQPT, WHICH MUST BE ACCOUNTED SEPARATELY. THE INTRODUCTION OF SSL WILL FURTHER COMPLICATE THE Q PROBLEM, IN ADDITION TO INCREASING THE PAPER WARFARE IN TERMS OF INDENTS, SPARES, ETC.

NINE. TO SUMMARISE, I WOULD REQUEST AND INCREASE OF 5 (2 OP SIGS, 1 SGT, 1 SIG, 1X SIG TECH ELEC, 1 SIG OKC, 1 SIG STOREMAN. THE POINT FOR CONSIDERATION NOW, OF COURSE, IS WHETHER OR NOT YOU CONSIDER WE HAVE A STRONG ENOUGH CASE, ON THE BASIS OF THIS REPORT, TO GO OPERATIONAL. I WILL OF COURSE BE SUBMITTING A REPORT TO COVER JOHN DUNCANS. BOTH COMD 1 ATF AND COMAFV ARE VITALLY INTERESTED IN THE PROJECT, AND WILL INSIST ON A REPORT. THIS WILL NECESSITATE RECOMMENDATIONS, AND I WOULD APPRECIATE YOUR VIEWS ASAP. REGARDS



40.4.2 MI8 Response

On 7 February, MI8 responded to AUM352, DSD and Weapons Salisbury on the SSL Report sent by AUM352 on 3 February⁶⁵²:

S E C R E T COMINT CHANNELS/MI8/966

*FROM MI8. SHORT CELL. YOUR SIGS 055.
ONE. THANK YOU FOR INTERIM REPORT ON PROGRESS^OF TRIAL. MI8
REACTION AS FOLLOWS*

*ALFA. RESULTS OBTAINED TO DATE ARE ENCOURAGING BUT INSUFFICIENT
ON WHICH TO BASE FIRM RECOMMENDATIONS AT THIS STAGE.*

*BRAVO. RESULTS INDICATE THAT TECHNIQUE COULD BE OF OPERATIONAL
IMPORTANCE AT TF LEVEL AND WOULD EVEN AT THIS STAGE BE OF LIMITED
BENEFIT ON TARGETS BEYOND [redacted]*

*CHARLIE. ADDITIONAL TRIALS OF BETWEEN 1-2 MONTHS ARE REQUIRED IN
ORDER TO OBTAIN ADDITIONAL DEPTH OF RESULTS AND A GREATER KNOW—
LEDGE OF THE PROBLEM INVOLVED.*

*DELTA. RESULTS OBTAINED DURING ANY EXTENDED TRAILS PERIOD MUST BE
SIGNALLED TO WRE FOR DAY TO DAY EVALUATION AND QUICK REPOSE
SUPPORT.*

*FOXTROT. YOUR REPORT DOES NOT INDICATE THE PRODUCTIVITY
OF EQUIPMENT. APPRECIATE THIS TIED UP WITH OBTAINING SUITABLE
CHECK BEARINGS AT REQUIRED TIMES BUT INTERESTED TO KNOW TIME
REQUIRED TO OBTAIN RESULTS.*

*TWO. SUGGEST YOU INTERIM REPORT TO COMD 1ATF/AFV SHOULD INCLUDE
THE FOLLOWING POINTS*

*ALFÄ. INITIAL PROBLEMS OF SITING CMM ERRECTION CMM EQUIPMENT
FAILURE CMM TRAINING AND OBTAINING A SUITABLE CHECK BEARING
PROGRAMME REDUCED THE EFFECTIVE TRIAL PERIOD TO APPROX 4 WEEKS.
RESULTS OBTAINED DURING THIS PERIOD ARE SUFFICIENTLY ENCOURAGING
TO INDICATE THAT THE SYSTEM HAS GREAT POTENTIAL AS A VALUABLE ADD-
IITIONAL INTELLIGENCE AND FOR USE WITH 1ATF*

*BRAVO. A FURTHER MINIMUM TRIALS PERIOD OF TWO MONTHS WILL HOWEVER
BE REQUIRED TO OBTAIN ADDITIONAL INFORMATION OF THE TECHNIQUES
INVOLVED AMD A GREATER DEPTH OF RESULTS FOR SCIENTIFIC STUDY.
IT SHOULD THEN BE POSSIBLE TO MAKE FIRM RECOMMENDATIONS ON THE
FUTURE OPERATIONAL ROLE FOR THIS EQUIPMENT.*

*CHARLIE. DETAILED GUIDE LINES ALONG WHICH THE ADDITIONAL TRIAL
SHOULD FOLLOW WILL BE FORWARDED FROM AUSTRALIA AFTER DISCUSSIONS
BETWEEN WRE/DSD/MI8 ON. THE RESULTS TO DATE.*

*DELTA. IF FURTHER TRIALS ARE AGREED BY COMD CMM CONSIDERATION WILL
NEED TO BE GIVEN FOR THE ATTACHMENT OF AN ADDITIONAL 2-3 OPERATORS
TO 547 SIG TP IN ORDER TO REDUCE THE PRESENT LOAD ON THAT TROOPS*

*OPERATIONAL CAPACITY. (SUCH ATTACHMENTS SHOULD BE REQUESTED FROM
YOUR END).*

THREE. A BRIEF ALONG THE LINES INDICATED ABOVE HAS BEEN PASSED TO

⁶⁵² DSD Declassified, 547 Sig Tp in Vietnam (tranche2).



DCGS (COMD AFV DESIGNATE) BY MI8.

FOUR. WILL DISCUSS THE WHOLE QUESTION OF STRENGTH INCREASES FOR AUM352 WITH DSD IN ORDER TO OBTAIN THEIR AGREEMENT AND SUPPORT PRIOR TO ANY SUBMISSION BY YOU TO COMO 1 ATF. REGRET NOT POSSIBLE AT THIS STAGE TO USE SHORT CELL AS VEHICLE ON WHICH TO BASE ESTABLISHMENT INCREASES.

40.4.3 SSL Future Trials Agreed

On 19 February, at 0010Z, MI8 further responded to DSD, 121 Sig Sqn (Singapore) and AUM352, on the SSL trials in Vietnam⁶⁵³:

S E C R E T COMINT CHANNELS MI8/1003

FROM MI8. SSL TRIALS IN VIETNAM

ONE. DCGS HAS AGREED THAT A FURTHER PER IOD OF TRIALS WILL BE UNDERTAKEN FOR A TWO MONTH PERIOD WEF 14MAR69 TO GAIN ADDITIONAL INFORMATION PRIOR TO A DECISION ON THE FUTURE OPERATIONAL ROLL OF THIS EQUIPMENT.

TWO. IN ORDER THAT THE OPERATIONAL CAPACITY OF AUM352 IS NOT IMPAIRED DURING THIS NEW TRIALS PERIOD CMM DSD HAS AGREED THAT THREE OPERATORS MAY BE WITHDRAWN FROM [redacted] FOR DUTY WITH AUM352 FOR A PERIOD OF UP TO THREE MONTHS WEF 10MAR69.

THREE. REQUEST YOU ADVISE ASP NAMES OF SELECTED OPERATORS IN ORDER THAT DETACHMENT ORDERS MAY BE ISSUED BY CARO.

FOUR. ADDITIONAL INFORMATION WILL BE SIGNALLED TO AUM 352/DSD [redacted] ON THE CONDUCT OF THE NEW TRIALS ASP

40.4.4 MI8 Decisions on Future Trial

At 192230Z, MI8 signalled to AUM352, DSD and Weapons Salisbury details of a conference held in Canberra on 13 Feb to discuss the results of the trials⁶⁵⁴:

S E C R E T COMINT CHANNELS MI8/1007

FROM MI8. SSL.

ONE. A CONFERENCE WAS HELD IN CANBERRA 13 FEB BETWEEN ARMY/WRE/DSD TO DISCUSS THE RESULTS SSL TRIALS BEING CONDUCTED BY AUM 352. THE FOLLOWING OBSERVATIONS WERE MADE
ALFA. TRIAL RESULTS TO DATE INDICATE THAT THE SSL HAS SHOWN DEFINITE BUT LIMITED PROSPECTS FOR USE AS AN OPERATIONAL AID AT TF LEVEL

BRAVO. MORE DETAILED TRIALS ARE REQUIRED AGAINST KNOWN TRANSMITTERS IN ORDER TO GAIN A GREATER DEPTH OF TECHNICAL PERFORMANCE DATA PRIOR TO ANY FURTHER TESTING AGAINST OPERATIONAL TARGETS.

⁶⁵³ DSD Declassified, 547 Sig Tp in Vietnam (tranche2).

⁶⁵⁴ DSD Declassified, 547 Sig Tp in Vietnam (tranche2).



CHARLIE. PRESENT INDICATIONS ARE THAT THE SYSTEM COULD HAVE AN OPERATIONAL ROLE FOR PERIODS OF UP TO 2 HOURS POST SUN RISE AND 2 HOURS PRE SUNSET

TWO. PRIOR TO ANY RECOMMENDATIONS BEING MADE ON THE POSSIBLE INTRODUCTION OF THIS EQUIPMENT INTO OPERATIONAL SERVICE MORE DETAILED INFORMATION WILL BE REQUIRED ON THE FOLLOWING ASPECTS

ALFA. DEFINITE TIMINGS ARE REQUIRED AS TO THE ACTUAL PERIODS IT MAY BE EXPECTED THAT THE SSL COULD ACCEPT OPERATIONAL TARGETS. CONFIRMATION OF THESE TIMINGS WILL NEED TO BE PROVEN BY A DEPTH OF ACTUAL RESULTS AGAINST KNOWN TRANSMITTERS

BRAVO. PARTICULAR ATTENTION SHOULD BE PAID TO THE PERIODS IMMEDIATELY POST SUN RISE CMM PRE SUN SET AND POST SUN SET AS THESE TIMES WOULD BE OF OPERATIONAL IMPORTANCE IN THE EVENT OF THIS EQUIPMENT BEING USED OPERATIONALLY

CHARLIE. IF CMM AS EXPECTED CMM THE SSL HAS VERY DEFINITE LIMITATIONS AS TO THE HOURS IT MAY BE USED CMM POSITIVE INFORMATION WILL BE REQUIRED ON WHAT PRODUCTIVITY MAY BE EXPECTED DURING THE TIMES THE SYSTEM IS USABLE

DELTA. DETAILS OF THE BEARING AND RANGE ACCURACY THAT MAY BE EXPECTED WILL BE REQUIRED FOR TARGETS BOTH BELOW AND ABOVE [redacted] KMS. THESE RESULTS TO BE BASED ON RESULTS AGAINST KNOWN TRANSMITTERS

ECHO. IF RANGE ESTIMATE IS NOT POSSIBLE AT CERTAIN PERIODS TESTS SHOULD BE CONDUCTED TO DETERMINE IF IT IS POSSIBLE TO OBTAIN LINE BEARING ONLY RESULTS DURING THESE PERIODS

THREE. APART FROM ANY OPERATIONAL NEED THAT MAY ARISE TESTS DURING THE FIRST MONTH OF THE NEW TRIAL PERIOD SHOULD BE CONDUCTED ONLY AGAINST KNOWN TRANSMITTERS IN ORDER TO GAIN MAXIMUM TECHNICAL INFORMATION

FOUR. IN ORDER TO GAIN THE ADDITIONAL INFORMATION REQUIRED CMM DCGS HAS APPROVED SUBJECT TO AGREEMENT BY COMD AFV AND COMD 1 ATF THAT AN ADDITIONAL TRIAL PERIOD OF 2 MONTHS WEF 14 MAR 69 WILL BE UNDERTAKEN

FIVE. RESPONSIBILITIES FOR ACTION IN THE NEW TRIAL PERIOD WILL BE AS FOLLOWS

ALFA. WRE.

(1) DETAILED INSTRUCTIONS TO AUM 352 ON THE METHOD THE TRIALS WILL FOLLOW IN ORDER TO GAIN THE ADDITIONAL INFORMATION LISTED ABOVE

(2) PROVISION OF TWO [redacted] TO AUM 352 FOR USE ON TEST TRANSMITTERS

(3) DAY TO DAY ANALYSIS OF RESULTS OBTAINED

(4) PROVISION OF TRIAL REPORT WITHIN 14 DAYS OF THE CONCLUSION OF THE TRIAL.

BRAVO. MI8.

PROVISION OF THREE OPERATORS FROM 121 SIG SQN FOR ATTACHMENT TO



AUM 352 FOR THE PERIOD OF THE NEW TRIALS

CHARLIE. DSD.

*TO AGREE THE TEMPORARY WITHDRAWAL OF THREE OPERATORS FROM
FOR THE DURATION OF THE TRIAL*

DELTA. AUM 352.

(1) PROVISION OF ANY ADDITIONAL MANPOWER REQUIRED FOR THE TRIAL

(2) CONDUCT OF THE TRIALS ALONG THE LINES LAID DOWN BY WRE

(3) DAILY SIGNALLING OF THE RESULTS OF THE TRIALS TO WRE

*(4) PROVISION OF AUTOMATIC KEYERS AND LIAISON WITH CSO HQ AFV TO
ENSURE THAT TRANSMITTERS ARE KEYED AT THE REQUIRED TIMES*



CHAPTER 41 – MARCH 1969

41.1 Personnel

41.1.1 Arrivals and Departures

In March there were four arrivals and departures.

Arrivals

3 March

Captain Brian Doyle

4 March

Corporal Peter Jenkins

8 March

Signalman Neville Hampton

Signalman Paul Stock

Departures

4 March

Signalman John Lechte

11 March

Corporal Tom Williams

19 March

Captain Steve Zagon

Corporal Alan Paterson

41.1.2 Employment Areas

Brian Doyle was to assume the position of Int Officer and 2IC. Neville Hampton and Paul Stock were posted in from Singapore for a short detachment to cover the SSL trials and were employed in the Set Room. Peter Jenkins joined the Processing crew.

41.1.3 DSD Visitor

Mr John Murdoch from DSD visited the Troop from 20 to 23 March. During his stay he went on a sortie with Bob Hartley in the ARDF aircraft⁶⁵⁵ and accompanied Steve Hart on a visit to FSB Julia to visit the Commander 1 ATF, Brigadier Pearson.

41.1.4 DSD LO

Clive Luckman returned to Australia on 24 March after an extended tour, and was replaced by David Churchus as the DSD LO at Bien Hoa.

⁶⁵⁵ Bob Hartley was the Operator, and in later years when they met up again, John informed Bob that on return to Australia he was in all sorts of trouble from the DSD hierarchy for going on the flight – it was too dangerous!!



41.1.5 Commander 1ATF Visits and

Brigadier 'Sandy' Pearson had assumed command of 1ATF in October 1968. After assuming duty he paid many visits to the Troop as he had had previous exposure to Sigint and was well aware of the potential value of intelligence that could be produced.

41.1.6 Security Measures

The Commander was also aware of the strict personal security measures placed on the Troop and the need for Troop personnel to have a facility where they could relax and discuss daily activities without being overheard.

41.1.7 HQ AFV Monthly Strength Return

There was no change to the Establishment Strength of the Troop in March⁶⁵⁶:

SERIAL	FORMATION/UNIT	ESTABLISHMENT			POSTED STRENGTH		
		OFFRS	OR	TOTAL	OFFR	OR	TOTAL
(a)	(b)	(c)	(d)	(e)	(f)	(g)	(h)
32	547 Sig Tp (less det)	2	34	36	2	35	37

Figure 318: HQ AFV Strength Return for March 1969

41.2 Administration

41.2.1 Gun Picquet Duties

As has been previously mentioned, the Troop was located in the Signals Area and 'hosted' by 104 Sig Sqn. Being part of the complex required the Troop to supply members to be rostered as sentries at the main gun bunker. These duties were undertaken when the operators were not required in the Set Room. There were several lighter moments of this duty.

Barry Nisbet recalled⁶⁵⁷:

As I had not been to Canungra I had never fired, or even held an M60 machine gun. When we started eating at 104, instead of HQ, the sigs had to pull guard duty in a pit overlooking the chopper pad and the big thing in front of me was, apparently an M60. I said to the 104 bloke who was going off "I don't know how to work this thing". He said "if you see someone you don't know just throw it at them". I did have my SLR.

Barry also recalled during a 1 ATF stand to:

Another night when the alarm sounded at Nui Dat we grabbed our rifles and headed into the compound to get into the big bunker. At the door stood the TSM Jack Hooker who said "Do you need any more ammo". A cheeky young bloke that I shared a tent with said "I haven't used up this lot yet".

⁶⁵⁶ <http://www.awm.gov.au/collection/AWM98/R723/1/13/5/>

⁶⁵⁷ Email to Bob Hartley.



41.2.2 Building Enhancements

On one of Brig Pearson's visits, he agreed that the social facilities were inadequate and approved extensions to the Troop club.

41.2.3 Building Materials Organised

Taking the task on board, Jack Hooker returned from liaison visits to Task Force engineers with fifty bags of cement, 250 sheets of galvanised iron, as well as timber and paint. The building programme increased in tempo.

41.2.4 New Ablutions Blocks

New shower and toilet blocks were constructed just outside the compound and these were soon added to by the construction of a laundry. The showers and laundry were fitted with a hot water system.



Figure 319: New Shower and Toilet Blocks



Figure 320: Friendly Toilet Block



Figure 321: New urinal under construction

41.2.5 Another Building

It was also decided that another building was required to provide accommodation for the Troop officers and a larger stores area thus freeing up more space for the Troop Club. A block of concrete was laid for the construction of a further building to the north of the OC Office/Orderly Room/Comcen/Tech Maint Building.

41.2.6 SSL Travel Movements

Whenever the crew from the SSL site had to return to the Troop after dark, they had to inform HQ 1ATF and the SAS Ops Room of their movement details>



191250H	1 ATF Rear	SHQ		Pers from 547 Sig Tp mov from 547 Sig Tp to radio field LUSCOMBE between the hours of 0615 - 2000 on fol dates 19, 20, 21, 22 Mar 69 (.)
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Figure 322: SSL Road Movement 19 Mar⁶⁵⁸

211950H	547 Sigs	SHQ		Advise veh mov from aerial farm to their loc via LUSCOMBE road.
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Figure 323: SSL Road Movement 21 Mar⁶⁵⁹

41.3 Operations

41.3.1 547 Sig Tp Progress Report for 1 – 31 Mar 69

The 547 Sig Tp Progress Report for 1 – 31 Mar 69⁶⁶⁰ contained:

S E C R E T SPOKE SIGS 187
FOR M18. PROGRESS REPORT 1-31 MAR 69.

ONE. SET ROOM.

ALPHA. POSNS. 1X24 HR, 2X17 TO 171/2 HRS, 4X93/4 HRS.,
4/9 HRS.

BRAVO. WATCH HRS. NO CHANGE FROM JAM RE°ORT

TWO. TASKING.

ALPHA. PRIORITY/ TASK. ' .

- | | |
|------------------------------|-----------------|
| 1. VCMB 05437 | 11. VCMB 00679 |
| 2. VCMBPP619 | 12. VCMB 00667 |
| 3. VCMB 00831 | 13. VCMB J 0913 |
| 4. VCMB 00835 | 14. VCMB J0820 |
| 5. VCMB 05443 | 15. VCMB Y9370 |
| 6. VCMB 05423 | 16. VCMB J3772 |
| 7. VCMB JI131 | 17. VCMB 35442 |
| 8. VCMB JI 078 | 13. VCMB J0423 |
| 9. VCMB J1226 ⁶⁶¹ | 19. VCMB J0459 |
| 10. VCME 00694 | 20. VCMB Y9079 |

NOTE. STRONG OVERTURES TO 175 PR COY TO HAVE VCMB 00619
REMOVED FROM TASKING AND ACCEPT IN LIEU SEVERAL NOTATIONS SERVING
VC HQ SVN FWD ELM NO 2 LOCATED GENERAL AREA YT 3050(BIEN HOA
PROVINCE). THESE NOTATIONS WORK TO 5 DIV, MR-7, SR -4 AND SUBORDINATE
REGTS AND CONSEQUENTLY ARE OF PRIJARY INTEREST TO US

BRAVO. DEV GROUPS.

VCMB J0509 VCMB Y9079
VCMB 00709 VCXB J1883

⁶⁵⁸ RCDIG1029882 AWM95, 7/12/11 3SAS Duty Officer's log Annexes 1-31 Mar 69

⁶⁵⁹ Ibid.

⁶⁶⁰ DSD Declassified, 547 Sig Tp in Vietnam (tranche2).

⁶⁶¹ Poss HQ 5 LID to HQ MR7.



CHARLIE. SEARCH BANDS
NO CHANGE FROM PREVIOUS REPORTS

THREE. ARDF.

ALPHA. TOTAL FIXES - 171

BRAVO. GRADINGS - 24 GOOD, 118 FAIR, 5 POOR

24 CUTS.

CHARLIE. FLYING HRS - 132.35 HRS PLUS 5.30 HRS TRG

DELTA . 3 MSNS ABORTED DUE TO AC SERVICE THESE ALSO USED FOR ARDF
SERVICE AND ADDITIONAL 3 MSNS ABORTED/REDUCED DUE TO ARDF MALFUNCTIONIC
FULL DETAILS IN MONTHLY REPORT.

FOUR. SHORT CELL.

SECOND SERIES OF TRIALS COMMENCED ON 19 MAR 69 WITH 15 MINUTES
OBSERVATIONS 'ON TRANSMITTERS PROVIDED BY 110 SIG SQM FROM LONG
BINH BEARCAT AND VUNG TAU AND RTT COMMERCIAL FROM SAIGON. TRIAL SR
HAVE RUN SMOOTHLY AND ONLY 2 SKEDS WERE LOST (BOTH ON 28 MAR)
DUE TO TWIN CHANNEL RECEIVER PROBLEMS. IONOSPHERIC STORMS FROM
16-25 MAR CAUSED POOR RESULTS TO BE OBTAINED. OBSERVATIONS RECOMMENCED
THIS MORNING, THE START OF THE THIRD WEEK/

FIVE. MISCELLANEOUS OPS.

ALPHA. DIRNSA RECOGNITION OF AUM352 WORK IN DEVELOPING THE MR CONTROL
KNOWN AS T-7. DURING THE MONTH DIRNSA ISSUED A SIGNAL OFFICIALLY
REOGNISING EXISTENCE AND EXTENT OF MR-7, THE MAJORITY OF WHICH
DEVELOPMENT WAS CONDUCTED BY THIS STA., A LENGTHLY DIGEST OF THE
DEVELOPMENT IS AVAILABLE IF REQUIRED.

BRAVO . LETTER REQUESTING FORMAL APPROVAL FOR TELEPRITER CCT FWD
FOR DEDICATED SIGINT END-PRODUCT DESPATCHED TO SRV (C), MI8, DSD
27 MAR 69. ACV FOR THE INSTALLATION OF EQPT ARRIVED SVN
28 MAR AND INSTALLATION WILL COMMENCE SOONEST.

CHARLIE. OPS COMM CCT TO 175 RR CO. STILL NO DECISION ON CIRCUIT
BEARER FOR THIS CIRCUIT. THIS A US RESPONSIBILITY. IF CCT COMES
THROUGH BEFORE APPROVED RVE, (WHICH REQUESTED ADDITIONAL TG EQPT)
MAY HAVE TO SCROUGE OR STEAL TG EQPT TO TERMINATE.

SIX. VISITORS.

DAILY. MAJ PAYNE - SSO 11 FFV,

4-5. MAJ JOE FRERKIN - CO 175 RR COY

13 MAR. [redacted]

20-23 MAR . MR LUCKMAN, MR MURDOCH, MR CHURCHES

20 MAR. [redacted]

SEVEN. VISITS.

4. MAR.' MAJ HART- ACCOMPANY CSO TO 509 RR GP AND NRV (C)

CAPTS DOYLE/ZAGON VISITED AS FOLLOWS

10 MAR 146 AVN CO, AFV

11 MAR – II FFV, 175 RR CO

27 MAR MAJ HART/ SGT HUNTER -175 RR COY



TO DISCUSS TASKING

7. MAR: - CPL WILLIAMS/CPL JENKINS - 175 R5 COY

EIGHT. OPR EXCHANGE

*THIS PROGRAMME NOW REVITALISED. LCPL PATTERSON TO 175 RR COY
FROM 25 MAR. SP5 LÉSSQR TO NUI DAT, BOTH A PERIOD OF ONE WEEK.*

41.3.2 Officer Commanding Special Air Service Squadron Visits

When the new OC of the Special Air Service (SAS) Squadron, Major Beesley, arrived he made many regular visits to the Troop to get the latest Sigint information on enemy locations when planning operations and before patrols departed.

41.3.3 Troop VC/NVA Activities Summaries

The Troop Summaries of VC and NVA Military Activities in Bien Hoa, Long Khanh and Phuoc Tuy Provinces for the Periods 18 – 20 March and 20 – 27 March 69 contained the following⁶⁶²:

41.3.3.1 18 – 20 March

NVA 33rd Regt

A move by HQ NVA 33rd Regt of approximately 40 Km to the north of its previous location was first noted on 12th March. Subsequent ARDF fixes have confirmed the move.

Other Units

No significant change.

Unit Locations

HQ VC 5th Div

LONG KHANH/BIEN HOA border area approx 35 km NE of SAIGON.

HQ VC 274 Regt

LONG KHANH/PHUOC TUY/BIEN HOA border area.

HQ 1 BN VC 274 Regt

LONG KHANH/PHUOC TUY/BIEN HOA border area.

HQ 2 BN VC 274 Regt

LONG KHANH/BIEN HOA border area APPROX 45 km E of SAIGON.

HQ 3 BN VC 274 Regt

BIEN HOA/ Central Military District border area approx 20 km E of SAIGON.

NVA 33rd and 174th Regts

NW of LONG KHANH

⁶⁶² ASD archives of 547 Sig Tp material.

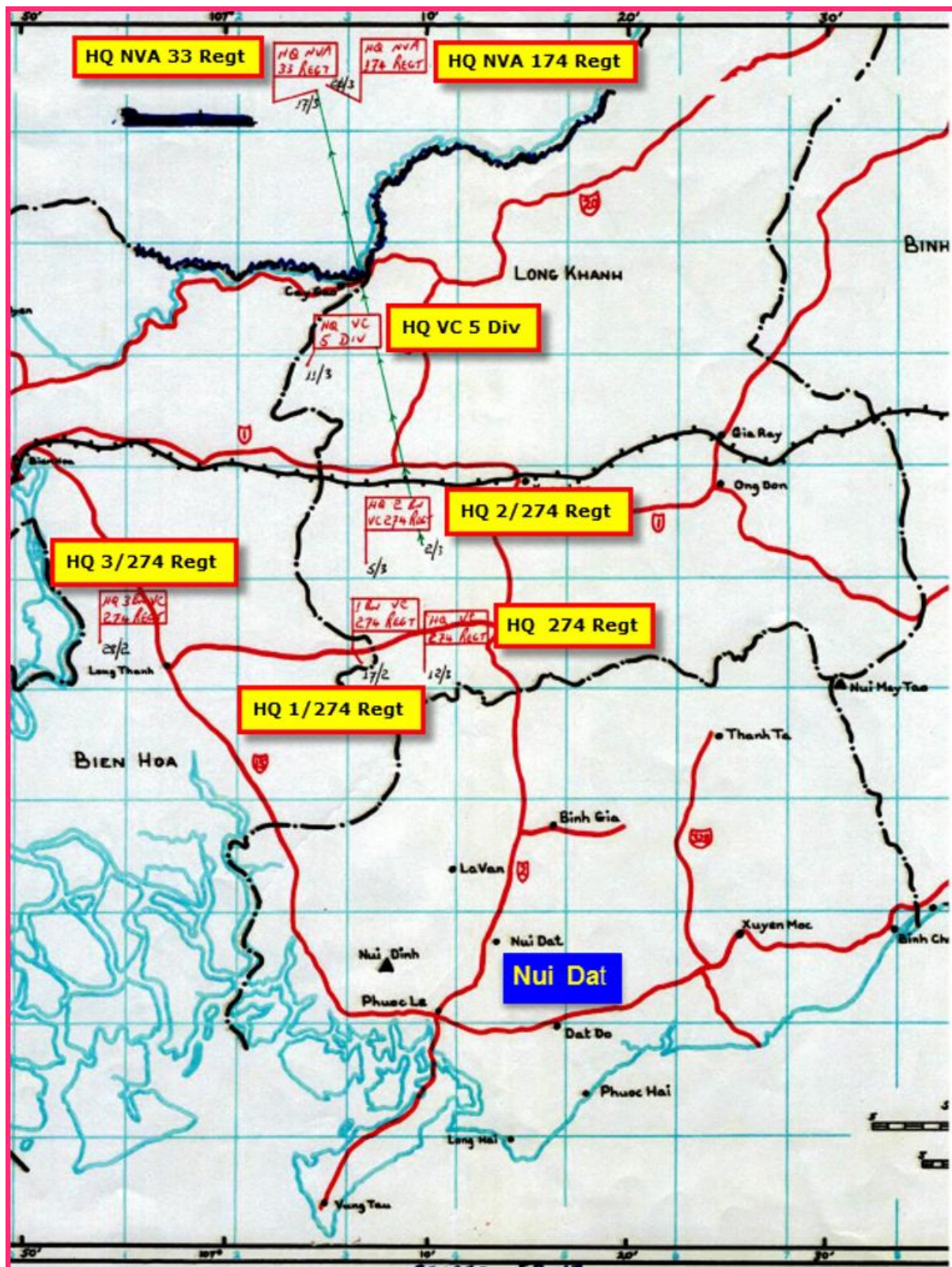


Figure 324: VC/NVA Activities Map - 20 Mar 69⁶⁶³

⁶⁶³ Ibid.



41.3.3.2 20 - 27 March:

HQ VC 5th Div

Since 11th March, 5th Div HQ has moved approximately 30 km NE and is now located N of the DONG NAI River, 60 km NE of BIEN HOA.

HQ NVA 174th Regt

Headquarters NVA 174th Regt have moved approximately 20 km since 11th March and are now located in close proximity to HQ 5th Div.

HQ NVA 33rd Regt

During March the Regiments HQ have moved approximately 18 km SE and are now located in the LONG KHANH/PHUOC TUY border area, 55 km NE of BIEN HOA.

Other Units

No significant change.

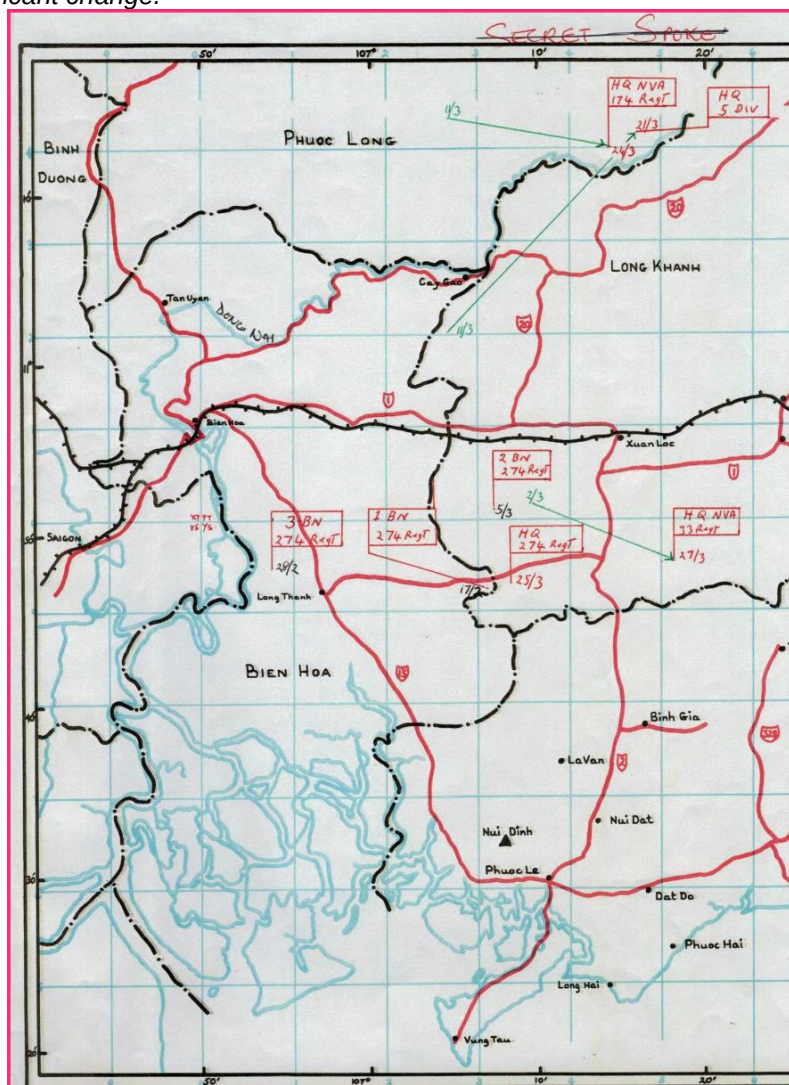


Figure 325: Summary Map 20 - 27 Mar 69⁶⁶⁴

⁶⁶⁴ Ibid.



41.3.4 VC Transmitter

The following item regarding monitoring of VC transmissions was found on the 3SAS Duty Log for 20 Mar⁶⁶⁵. No further details found.

201750H	RR A	SHQ		Fm monitor of VC transmitter (.) Two VC coys each side this loc (.) Possible attack BINH BA tonight (.)
201845H	1 ATF Rear	SHQ		Req CS and freq of VC traffic supplying info to monitor (.)
201845H	Ptl 33	SHQ		Loc YS 372800 (.) Mov E (.)
201900H	Arty Tac	SHQ		Req ground clearance for arty fire from DUC THANH into YS 427840 YS 432833 YS 432821 YS 430836 YS 433826 YS 436816 between 201900 - 1930H (.)
201945H	RR A	SHQ		Fm relay no further info on VC CS and freq (.)

Figure 326: 3SAS Duty Officer Log VC Transmission

41.3.5 ARDF Flying Hours

The total ARDF flying hours for the month were⁶⁶⁶:

Year	Month	Flying hours	Total Fixes	Good <1000mts	Fair 1-2000Mts	Poor >2000 Mts	Cut	Missions Lost	Remarks
1969	Mar	132	171	24	118	5	24	6	

⁶⁶⁵ RCDIG1029882 AWM95, 7/12/11 3SAS Duty Officer's log Annexes 1-31 Mar 69

⁶⁶⁶ Compiled from MI8 Records held at ASD archives.



CHAPTER 42 – APRIL 1969

42.1 Personnel

42.1.1 Arrivals and Departures

In April there were five arrivals and six departures.

Arrivals

2 April

Staff Sergeant Daryl Houghton
Corporal Roy Dean
Corporal Frank Finch
Corporal Harry Martin

16 April

Corporal Stanley Marks

Departures

April

Sergeant Hayden Hunter

9 April

Staff Sergeant John Thorpe
Sergeant Jim Brill
Sergeant James Kinder
Corporal Warner Madden
Lance Corporal John Middleton

42.1.2 Employment Areas

Daryl Houghton was posted into the Processing area. Roy Dean, Frank Finch, Harry Martin and Stan Marks moved into the Set Room. After a few weeks Stan Marks was promoted to Sergeant and took over as NCO IC of the Set Room, Frank Finch moved into the ARDF Section, and due to his previous occupation as a carpenter, Harry Martin became the supervisor of building projects.

42.1.3 HQ AFV Monthly Strength Return

There was no change to the Establishment Strength of the Troop in April⁶⁶⁷:

42.1.4 161 Recce Flt Fixed Wing Pilots

In April, 2nd Lieutenant Anthony Sedgers joined 161 Recce Flt as a fixed wing pilot.

⁶⁶⁷ <http://www.awm.gov.au/collection/AWM98/R723/1/13/5/>



42.2 Administration

42.2.1 SSL Road Movement

Road movement after dark from the SSL to the Troop continued in April:

EVENT				
36	022005H	547 Sig Tp	SHQ	Sigs mov along route 2 to LUSCOMBE (.)

Figure 327: Road Movement 2 April⁶⁶⁸

032005H	Sig Tp	SHQ	Moving back to loc via LUSCOMBE and 4 RAR (.)
---------	--------	-----	---

Figure 328: Road Movement 3 April⁶⁶⁹

081905H	547 Sig Tp	SHQ	Vehicle mov along route 2 in 5 mins (.)
---------	------------	-----	---

Figure 329: Road Movement 8 April⁶⁷⁰

301940H	547 Sig Tpn	SHQ	Veh mov along rd from LUSCOMBE to TFMA (.)
---------	-------------	-----	--

Figure 330: Road Movement 30 April⁶⁷¹

42.2.2 B52 Strikes

B-52 strikes often occurred around the province.

Barry Nisbet wrote⁶⁷²:

One night we were woken up by a heavy rumbling which was a B-52 strike somewhere not a long way off. I shared a tent with Roy Dean and Tony Bridges and we decided that if the Yanks had made a mistake and were walking a strike towards the Dat there was no point in hiding under a layer of sandbags so we stayed in bed. You will notice we survived.

42.3 Operations

42.3.1 547 Sig Tp Progress Report for 1 – 30 Apr 69

The 547 Sig Tp Progress Report for 1 – 30 Apr 69 ⁶⁷³ contained:

*S E C R E T SPOKE SIGS262
FOR M18. PROGRESS REPORT 1-30 APR 69.*

ONE. SET ROOM

⁶⁶⁸ AWM RCDIG1029883, AWM95,, 7/12/12 Commanders Diary 3 SAS Annexes (1-31 Apr 69).

⁶⁶⁹ Ibid.

⁶⁷⁰ Ibid.

⁶⁷¹ Ibid.

⁶⁷² Email to Bob Hartley.

⁶⁷³ DSD Declassified, 547 Sig Tp in Vietnam (tranche2).



ALPHA. POSNS. NO CHANGE FROM MAR

BRAVO, WATCH HRS. NO CHANGE FROM MAR

TWO. TASKING,

ALPHA. PRIORITY/TASK.

- | | |
|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| 1. VCMB 05437 | 2. VCMB 00831 |
| 3. VCMB J0901 | 4. VCMB Y9080 |
| 5. VCMB 05443 | 6. VCMB 00835 |
| 7. VCMB 05423 | 8. VCMB J1131 |
| 9. VCMB J1078 | 10. VCMB Y9082 |
| 11. VCMB J1226 | 12. VCMB0 0694 |
| 13. VCMB 00679 | 14. VCMB 00667 |
| 15. VCMB J0913 | 16. VCMB J0820 |
| 17. VCMB 05444 ⁶⁷⁴ | 18. VCMB J0772 |
| 19. VCMB 05442 | 20. VCMB 05445 ⁶⁷⁵ |
| 21. VCMB J0459 | 22. VCMB Y9079 |

BRAVO DEV GROUPS. VCMB J0509

CHARLIE. SEARCH BANDS. NO CHANGE.

THREE. ARDF.

ALPHA. TOTAL FIXES - 112

BRAVO. GRADINGS - 4 GOOD, 76 FAIR, 12 POOR, 30 CUTS.

CHARLIE. FLYING HRS - 147.40

DELTA. 9 MSNS ABORTED DUE TC ARDF MALFUNCTION/SERVICE.

ECHO. NOTE THAT EVEN WITH AN INCREASE IN FLYING HRS A CONSIDERABLE REDUCTION IN FIXES WAS OBTAINED. CONSIDERABLE PERIODS WERE LOST TRYING TO LOCATE INTERMITTENT FAULT IN CRO (UNSUCCESSFULLY), REWIRING PROBLEMS, AND A GREAT NUMBER OF BEACON RUNS, TRYING TO IMPROVE ACCURACY OF SYSTEM. SEE MY SIGS252 (NOT TO [redacted]) RE PROBLEMS OF ACCURATELY LOCATING EXACT CENTRE LINE OF ARDF EQPT.

FOXTROT. CPL FINCH COMMENCED GROUND TRG 30 APR

FOUR. SSL.

PHASE 2. OF SECOND SERIES OF TRIALS COMMENCED 22 APR WITH OBSERVATIONS ON VC TGTS IN 2 WATCHES. RESULTS TO DATE PROVE PROMISING, ALTHOUGH SYSTEMATIC ERROR ON SHORT RANGE TGTS STILL NOT FULLY UNDERSTOOD AT THIS TIME (SEE WRE SIG OF 280131Z APR). TRIALS STILL HAVE ANOTHER 2 AND ONE HALF WEEKS TO RUN.

FIVE. MISCELLANEOUS OPS.

ALPHA. OPS COMMS. CCT NOT OPENED 01 MAY DUE LOSS OF KEYING LINES AT [redacted] (BELEIVE HIT BY LIGHTNING)

⁶⁷⁴ HQ MR7 to U/I.

⁶⁷⁵ Ibid.



WE ARE FULLY INSTALLED AND AWAITING CALL. TG EQPT ARRIVED BY STAFF RELEASE ON BASIS RVE SUBMITTED.

BRAVO. ACV FOR G2(I NT) IN COMPOUND AND INSTALLATION ABOUT TO START. CONSIDERABLE DELAY IS EXPECTED IN OBTAINING ITEMS OF EQPT DUE TO ORD DEMAND GOING BACK TO AUST. MAY HAVE TO LASH UP INITIALLY AND PROGRESSIVELY IMPROVE INSTLN AS STORES BECOME AVAILABLE.

SIX. VISITORS.

17 APR. LT COL KHAN- CO 5 RAR
21 APR. MR CHURCHES - DLO
SGT SAWYERS - SSO OFFICE II FFV.
22 APR. MR JENKING, FOX, OWINGS, MINAHAN - NRV(C)
23 APR. [redacted]
27 APR. [redacted]
28 APR. LT COL WHYTE - DM I
DAILY. MAJ PAYNE - SSO II FFV.

SEVEN. VISITS/DETS
7-9 APR. SGT HOUGHTON/HUNTER TO [redacted]
14 - 21 APR. [redacted]

THROUGHOUT MONTH. OPR EXCHANGE WITH [redacted] ON A WEEKLY BASIS

1-3 APR. SGT HARTLEY/BRILL TO 146 AVN CO
20-21 APR. SSGT HARTLEY TO 146 AVN CO

42.3.2 SSL Trial Phase Two

On 18 April, AUM352 signalled Weapons Salisbury (WRE IS Group), MI8 and DSD details of the Short Cell Trail Phase Two⁶⁷⁶:

S E C R E T SPOKE SIGS 227

REF WEAPONS T513/1/4 OF 150230Z. SHORT CELL TRIAL PHASE TWO,

ONE. STEERAGE. EXACTLY AS OUTLINED IN PARA 2(B) OF REF. PASSAGE OF SENSITIVE INFO BY OTP (COMUS). REPORTING. RESPONSIBILITY OF COMPUTER OPERATOR. RESULTS TO BE PASSED WHEN CONTROLLER (DFC) IS NOT STEERING RESULTS TO BE PASSED OVER SAME INTERCOM (FOR THE TIME BEING). IF WE FIND WORK LOAD TOO GREAT OR A MORE PRACTICAL METHOD CAN BE DEvised WE MAY REQUEST EXTRA INTERCOMM UNITS, BUT CANNOT SEE REQUIREMENT AT THIS TIME.

TWO. CHECK BEARINGS. VUNG TAU WILL OPERATE 0045Z - 0100Z AND 0815Z - 0830Z DAILY. CHECKS ON SAIGON WILL BE AT ANY SUITABLE TIME DURING WATCHES.

THREE. PRIORITY. SO THAT YOU WILL UNDERSTAND ACTUAL PRIS AND NOTATION IN SIGANLLED REPORTS (SEE PARA 5 BELOW), HEREWITH LISTED OUR PRESENT PRIORITIES AND DESCRIPTION OF NOTATION.

1. 05437 - HQ 274 REGT TO 3 BNS
2. 00831 - MAS COSVN TO HQ 274 REGT
3. J0901 - HQ MR7 TO HQ 274 REGT
4. Y9080 - U/I (APPROX YS131848) TO U/I (APPROX YS2686)

⁶⁷⁶ DSD Declassified, 547 Sig Tp in Vietnam (tranche2).



5. 05443 - GP 84 RSG - CQ WORKING
6. 00835 - MAS COSVN TO HQ MR7
7. 05423 - HQ GP 84 RSG TO 5 U/I SUBORDS
8. J1131 - U/I TO 2 U/I SUBORDS
9. J1078 - HQ MR7 TO HQ 33 NVA REGT
10. J1266 - U/I TO U/I
11. J1227 - U/I TO U/I
12. J1228 - U/I TO U/I
13. J1265 - U/I TO U/I
14. J1226 - POSS HQ 5 DIV TO POSS HQ MR7
15. 00694 - MIB COSVN TO U/I MIE
16. 00679 - MIB COSVN TO MIE HQ 5 DIV
17. 00667 - FE MIB COSVN TO U/I MIE
18. J0913 - HQ MR7 TO HQ SR 4
19. J0820 - HQ MR 10 (POSS) TO HQ MR 7
20. 05444 - HQ MR7 TO U/I
21. J0772 - HQ MR7. TO HQ 74 ARTY REGT
22. 05442 - HQ MR7 TO HQ GP 84 RSG
23. 05445 - HQ MR7 TO U/I
24. J0459 U/I TO U/I
25. Y9079 U/I (APPROX YS 3790) TO U/I (APPROX YS 2686)

DEV GROUPS - 05414, 00709, Y9081, J1883
 ANY OTHER NOTATION IN REPORTS WILL BE DEV ITEMS.

FOUR. TO CLEAR UP SLIGHT AMBIGUITY RE GRADINGS OF CHECK TARGETS IN
 PARA 2 (E), WE ARE ASSUMING FOLLOWING

COG - RESULT 1000 METRE RADIUS OR BETTER
 COF - RESULT BETWEEN 1000 METRE AND 3000 METRE RADIUS
 COP - RESULT GREATER THAN 3000 METRE RADIUS IF YOU WISH VARIATION TO
 THIS INTERPRETATION PSE ADVISE EARLIEST

FIVE. SIGNALLED REPORTS. SINCE WE WILL BE FORWARDING TWO SEPARATE
 TYPES OF TARGETS (I.E. OPERATIONAL AND KNOWN CHECK BEARINGS), WILL
 FOLLOW TWO SEPARATE FORMATS. FOR KNOWN CHECK BEARING TGTS, WILL
 FOLLOW FORMAT PREVIOUSLY AGREED IN MY SIGS 113 OF 060855Z/MAR PARA

5 (I.E. THIS WILL INCLUDE ERRORS).

FOR OPERATIONAL TGTS, WILL SIGNAL RESULTS ACCORDING TO FOLLOWING FOR
 FORMAT

2. TASK NOTATION (IE 05437) FOLLOWED BY EXACT STATION, ITS TX CALLSIGN
 (THIS FOR OUR OWN CHECKING PURPOSES) AND TX FREQ. (I.E. CT/ABC/5670

WILL REPRESENT CONTROL, C/S ABC, TRANSMITTING ON 5670 KHZ. OTHER LIKE LY
 ABBREVIATION IS OS MEANING OUTSTATION)

- A. TIMES OF [corrupt]
- B. NO OF SHOTS TAKEN
- C. MEAN COORDS
- D. OTHER SOURCE RESULT, INCL GRADING. (THIS WILL CONTAIN UTM GRID
 REFERENCE, ITS GRADING AS PER PARA 4, THE TIME OF SUCH FIX AND
 NATIONAL SOURCE I.E. EITHER (US) OR (AUST)).
- E. STANDARD DEVIATION OF EASTINGS
- F. STANDARD DEVIATION OF NORTHINGS
- G. STANDARD SSL NO RESULT TRI GRAPH
- H. IONOSPHERIC TRIGRAPHS
- J. COMMENTS

SIX. THE PHASE ONE METHOD OF USING BRAKKETED FIGURE WITHIN THIS FOR-



MAT TO INDICATE DIFFERENT SKEDS WILL BE CONTINUED UNLESS YOU HAVE OBJECTIONS. FOR CLARITY, A SEPARATELY HEADED FORMAT WILL BE USED FOR CONTROL AND EACH OUTSTATION WHERE THIS IS NECESSARY (E.G. 05437). ALL OPERATIONAL TASKS WILL BE LISTED FIRST, ALL KNOWN CHECK PROGRAMMES LAST, AND WILL BE PROCEEDED WITH CAVEAT QUOTE CHECK UNQUOTE TO REMIND YOU OF DIFFERENT FORMAT.

SEVEN. EXAMPLE. A TYPICAL RESULT WILL BE AS FOLLOWS:-

1. 21 APR 69
 2. 05437 (CT/ABC/5670)
 A. (1) 2330 - 2335 (2) 0230 - 0245 (3) 0330 - 0335 ETC
 B. (1) 3 (2) 5 (3) NIL ETC
 C. (1) 7 31911 772 (2) 7 252 11519 (3) NIL ETC
 D. YS356682 COG AT 0245Z (AUST)
 YS331725 COF AT 0335Z (US) ETC
 AND STE
 3. 05437 (OS/XYZ/5840)
 A(I) 2335 - 2345 (2) 03-0 - 0345 ETC
 AND SO ON
 FOLLOWED BY ALL NOTATIONS, FINISHED WITH KNOWN CHECKS VIZ
 21. CHECK VUNG TAU 5425 KHZ (729811448)

EIGHT. FOR YOUR INFO, CONVERSION OF UTM TO MERCATORS GRIDS ARE AS FOLLOWS:-
 EASTINGS:- Y EQUALS 7, X EQUALS 6, W EQUALS 5 ETC
 NORTHINGS:- T EQUALS 12, S EQUALS 11, R EQUALS 10 ETC

NINE. REF PARA 2 (C) YOUR SIGNAL. NOT ENTIRELY SURE WHETHER YOU WANT

US TO COMPLETELY DROP A TASK IF HIGHER PRIORITY COMES UP, OR WHETHER YOU WISH US TO TAKE OUR 4 READINGS AND THEN TAKE UP THE HIGHER TASK. IF FOR EXAMPLE, WE HAVE HAD A FIX ON CT 274 AND WERE COVERING PRI 13 WHEN 05437 CAME UP AGAIN, DO WE DROP 13, OR FINISH IT FIRST. PSE CLARIFY.

TEN. PHASE TWO WILL COMMENCE 2330Z 21 APR. SIGNALLED RESULTS BY COM-NT CHANNELS AFTER EACH WATCH. MI8 AND DSD. PSE INDICATE IF YOU REQUIRE COPIES OF THESE RESULTS. LAST PHASE RESULTS WERE SENT TO WRE ONLY.

ELEVEN. WRE SIG OF 110415Z. PARA 2 (E). PSE SPELL OUT MEANING OF YR STATEMENT QUOTE SHOULD BE POSSIBLE TO GRADE CONFIDENCE IN RESULT DEPENDING ON WHETHER TILT CORRECTLY APPLIED OR NOT FOR A PARTICULAR SHOT UNQUOTE. ALL WE DO IS FEED THE TILT READINGS INTO THE COMPUTOR, SO WOULD HAVE NO IDEA WHETHER IT IS APPLIED CORRECTLY OR OTHERWISE. WOULD APPRECIATE CLARIFICATION, REGARDS

42.3.3 ARDF

42.3.3.1 ARDF Flying Hours

The total ARDF flying hours for the month were⁶⁷⁷:

⁶⁷⁷ Compiled from MI8 Records held at ASD archives.



Year	Month	Flying hours	Total Fixes	Good <1000mts	Fair 1-2000Mts	Poor >2000 Mts	Cut	Missions Lost	Remarks
1969	Apr	147	112	4	26	12	30	9	

42.3.3.2 ARDF Problems for Operators

Not all operators at AUM352 were happy with the ARDF operations, especially when the US Army were flying in the area.

Roy Dean recalled⁶⁷⁸:

While the ARDF was certainly a wonderful help it could at times be a bloody nuisance if you were copying a task and he just stopped sending and the reason was that an ARDF plane was in the area, when the plane left it was touch and go if he came back up on the same spot he went down on. I must admit though that our ARDF was not the cause of this happening a lot because as you know they could take shots on a station while flying away from the target, unlike the American system where the plane had to fly towards the target.

42.3.4 OPSCOM

In April the Troop submitted a Request for Variation to Establishment (RVE) for telegraph equipment to establish a Sigint Operators Communication (OPSCOM) circuit between the Troop and Bien Hoa⁶⁷⁹. The OPSCOM was to enable timely intelligence officer-Intelligence officer and analyst-to-analyst exchanges. The RVE was subsequently approved and the OPSCOM established.

42.3.5 Troop VC/NVA Activities Summary

The Troop Summary of VC and NVA Military Activities in Bien Hoa, Long Khanh and Phuoc Tuy Provinces for April were as follows^{680 681}:

42.3.5.1 27 March - 2 April 69

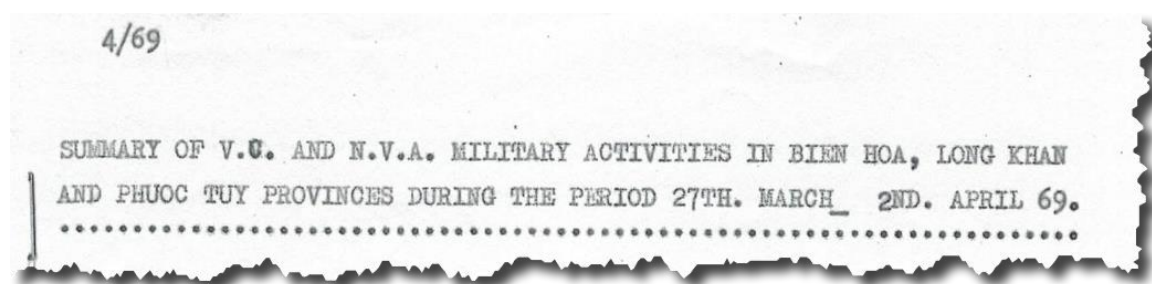


Figure 331: Summary of Activities 27 Mar - 2 Apr 1969

⁶⁷⁸ Email to Barry Hampstead and Bob Hartley.

⁶⁷⁹ AWM 98 R985/2/73

⁶⁸⁰ ASD archives of 547 Sig Tp material.

⁶⁸¹ It is interesting to note that MR7 is not contained in the reports.



GENERAL

ARDF bearings on units referred to in this summary indicate that there has been no significant redeployment during the period covered by this report.

UNIT LOCATIONS

HQ V.C. 5TH. DIV

north of the DONG NAI, approximately 55km HE of BIEN HOA.

HQ V.C. 274TH. REGT,

approximately 35km SE of BIEN HOA, in LONG KHAN province.

HQ 1 BN VC 274TH. REGT.

LONG KHAN/PHUOC TUY/BIEN HOA border area, approximately 35km SE of BIEN HOA.

HQ2 BN VC 274TH. REGT.

LONG KHAN/BIEN HOA border area, approximately 20km SSE OF BIEN HOA.

HQ 3 BN VC 274TH. REGT,

in BIEN HOA PROVINCE, approximately 20km sse of BIEN HOA.

HQ NVA 33RD. REGT.

APPROXIMATELY 55km SE of BIEN HOA, IN LONG KHAN.

HQ NVA 174TH. REGT.

LOCATED IN CLOSE PROXIMITY TO HQ VC 5TH. DIV, N of the DONG NAI.

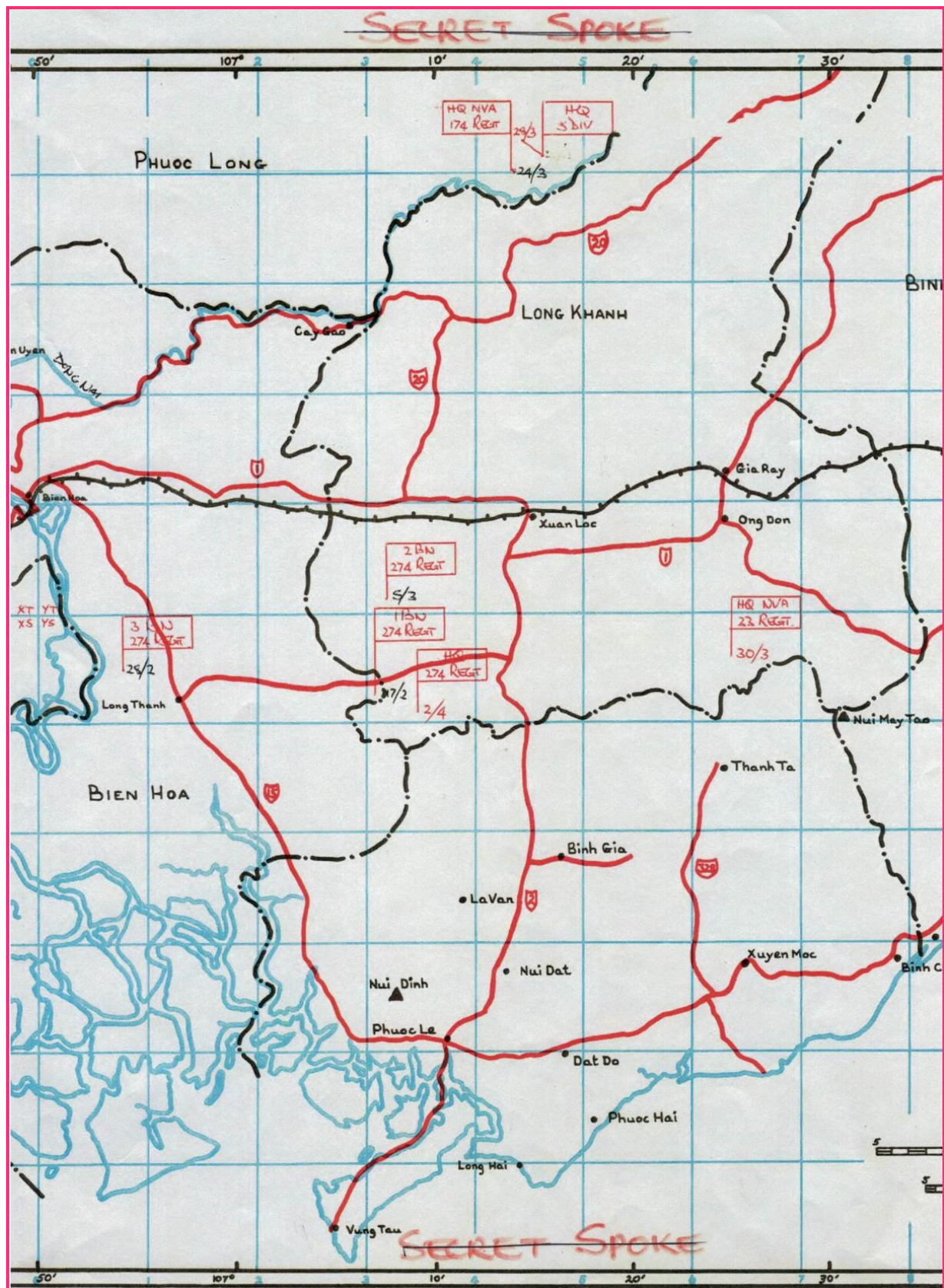


Figure 332: Map Summary 27 Mar - 2 Apr 69



42.3.5.2 2-10 April 69

HQ VC 5th DIV

On 7th April Div HQ had moved 10 km NW of its 28th March location, approximately 50 km NE of BIEN HOA.

HQ U/I REGT VC 5TH DIV

The HQ of this unit is located approximately 10 km SE of HQ VC 5th Div.

HQ NVA 33rd REGT

This unit has moved approximately 8 km W of its 30th March location and on 7th April was 60 km ESE of BIEN HOA.

HQ VC 274th REGT

Approximately 35 km SE of BIEN HOA in LONG KHANH Province – no significant change.

HQ 1 BN VC 274TH REGT

LONG KHANH/PHUOC TUY/BIEN HOA border area, approximately 35 SE of BIEN HOA - last ARDF fix, 17 February.

HQ 2 BN VC 274TH REGT

LONG KHANH/BIEN HOA border area approximately 35 SE of BIEN HOA - last ARDF fix, 5th March.

HQ 3 BN VC 274TH REGT

In BIEN HOA Province approximately 20 km SE of BIEN HOA - 35 SE of BIEN HOA - last ARDF fix, 28th February.

HQ NVA 174TH REGT

Located approximately 10 km SW of HQ VC 5th Div.

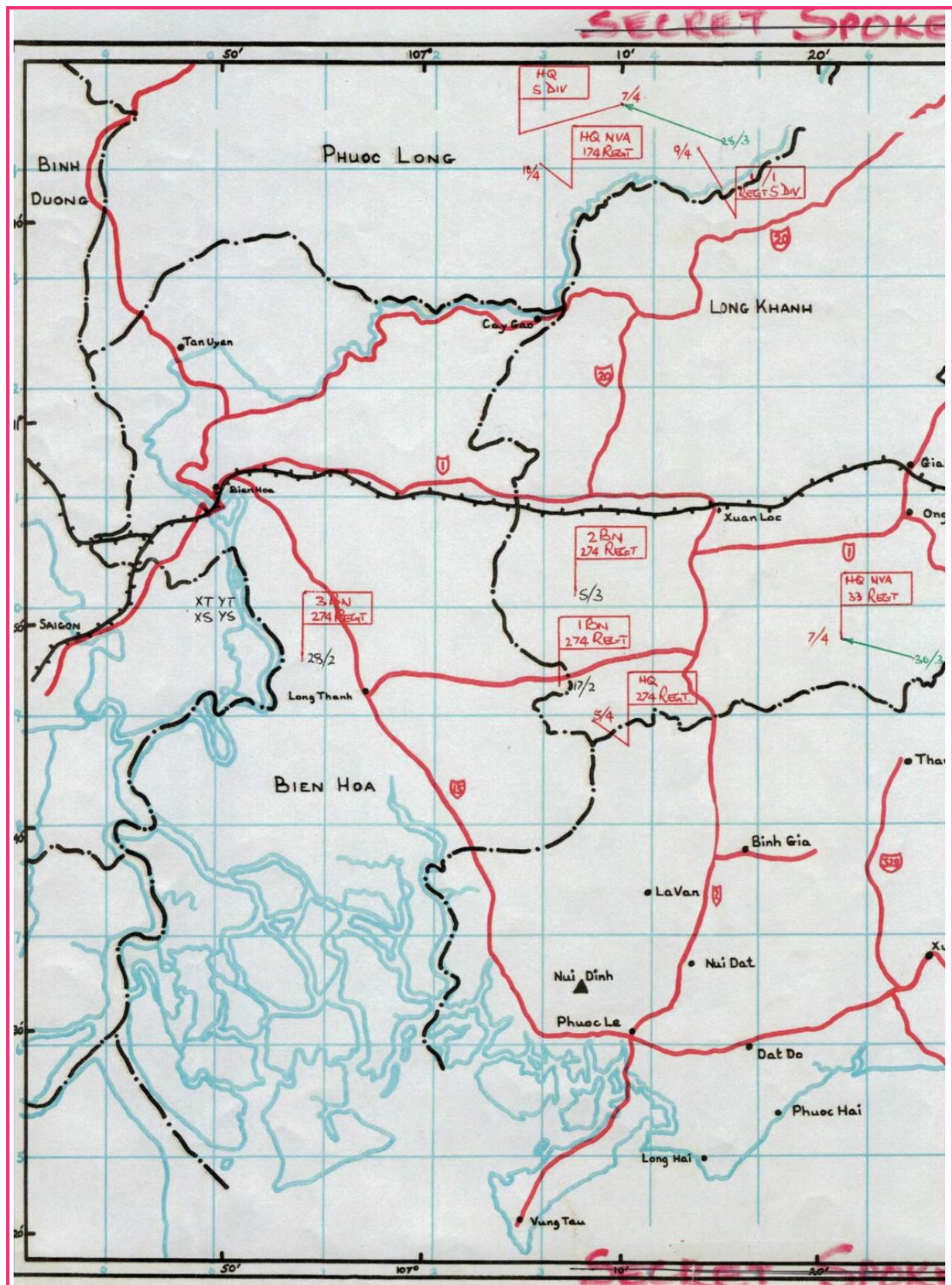


Figure 333: Map Summary 2 - 10 Apr 69



42.3.6 Operation OVERLANDER

42.3.6.1 Overview

Operation OVERLANDER was conducted in the Hat Dich region from 2 to 17 April. The operation was a reconnaissance in force operation primarily targeted against HQ MR7, 274 Regiment, 33 Regiment, D445 Bn and sundry other smaller units.

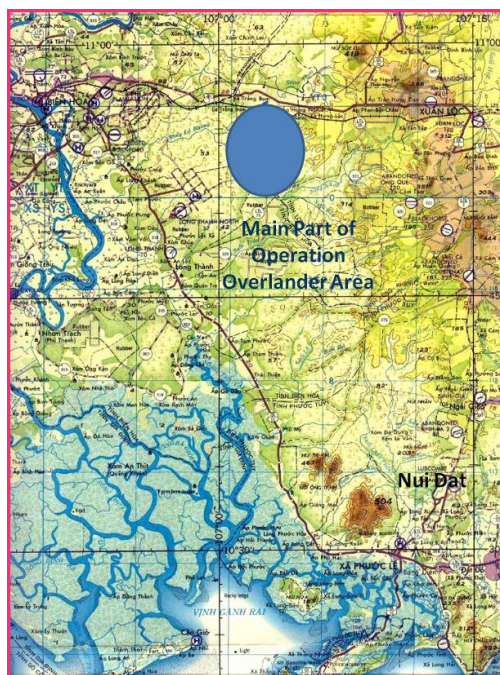


Figure 334: Operation Overlander Map

Extract from *A Duty Done*:⁶⁸²:

There was growing evidence, including from Signals Intelligence that the enemy headquarters which 5RAR was searching for (HQ MR-7) was most probably in the southeast of the AO and on 2 April, A Company was redeployed there by air from FSB Sally and was joined by D Company the following day.

Extracts from the *Australian Army Official History*⁶⁸³:

In 1969, Good Friday fell on 4 April.

Several days earlier, Lieutenant Colonel Khan had moved A Company and D Company, 5RAR, by helicopter closer to the suspected area of Headquarters MR7. The location had been "fixed" by 547 Signal Troop, based on intercepts of enemy radio transmissions.

⁶⁸² *A Duty Done. A History of the Royal Australian Regiment in the Vietnam War 1965-1972* by Lieutenant Colonel (Retd) Fred Fairhead . Published by The Royal Australian Regiment Association SA Inc. Page 111.

⁶⁸³ Extracts from *Fighting to the Finish The Australian Army and the Vietnam War 1968 - 1975* by Ashley Ekins with Ian McNeill> Allen & Unwin in association with the Australian War Memorial, pages 107 – 111.



There were many contacts to follow.

A Viet Cong defector later confirmed that D Company had found the site of Headquarters MR7.

On 5 April the APCs of 2 Troop, A Squadron, 3 Cavalry Regiment, carrying the Defence and Employment (D&E) Platoon of task force headquarters, discovered a complex containing 150 bunkers, just 2500 metres from the site of Headquarters MR7.

Brigadier Pearson said later:

We succeeded in completely disrupting HQ MR7 and HQ 274 Regt as well as many local logistic forces and I hope have denied these forces the use of their base camps for some months to come. [The enemy's] material losses have been most significant.

42.3.6.2 Post Operation

In later months, HQ MR7 was mainly fixed in the vicinity of the May Tao Mountains close to 84 RSG. HQ MR7, 274 Regiment and its subordinate battalions continued to be on the daily target list for the ARDF aircraft.

42.3.7 Summaries Continued

42.3.7.1 10 - 17 April 69

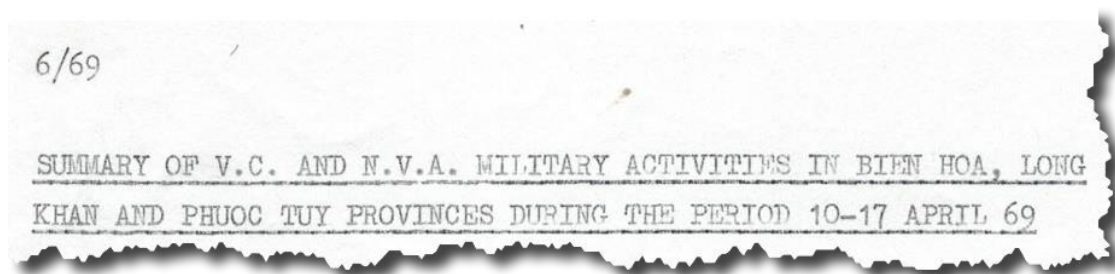


Figure 335: Summary of Activities 10 – 17 April 1969

HQ V.C. 5TH DIV

Since mid-March Div IIQ has moved steadily northwards and on 13th. April was located approximately 55km NE of BIEN HOA- its location no longer can be shown on the attached map.

HQ U/I REGT, V.C. 5TH DIV

located approximately 5km NE of BIEN HOI.

HQ N.V.A. 33RD REGT

On 13th April was located approximately 60km ESE of BIEN HOA.

HQ N.V.A. 174TH REGT

Approximately 45km NE of BIEN HOA.



HQ V.C. 274TH REGT

Approximately 35km SE of BIEN HOA in LONG KHAN Province.

HQ 1 BN V.C. 274TH BEGT

LONG KHAN/PHUOC TUY/BIEN HOA border area, approximately 35km SSE of BIEN HOA - LAST ARDF fix, 17th February.

HQ 2 BN V.C. 274TH BEGT

Bn HQ has moved approximately 10km SW of its 5th March location and on 10th April was located 30km SE of BIEN HOA.

HQ 3BN V.C. 274TH REGT

In BIEN HOA Province, approximately 20km SE of BIEN HOA - last ARDF fix, 28th February.

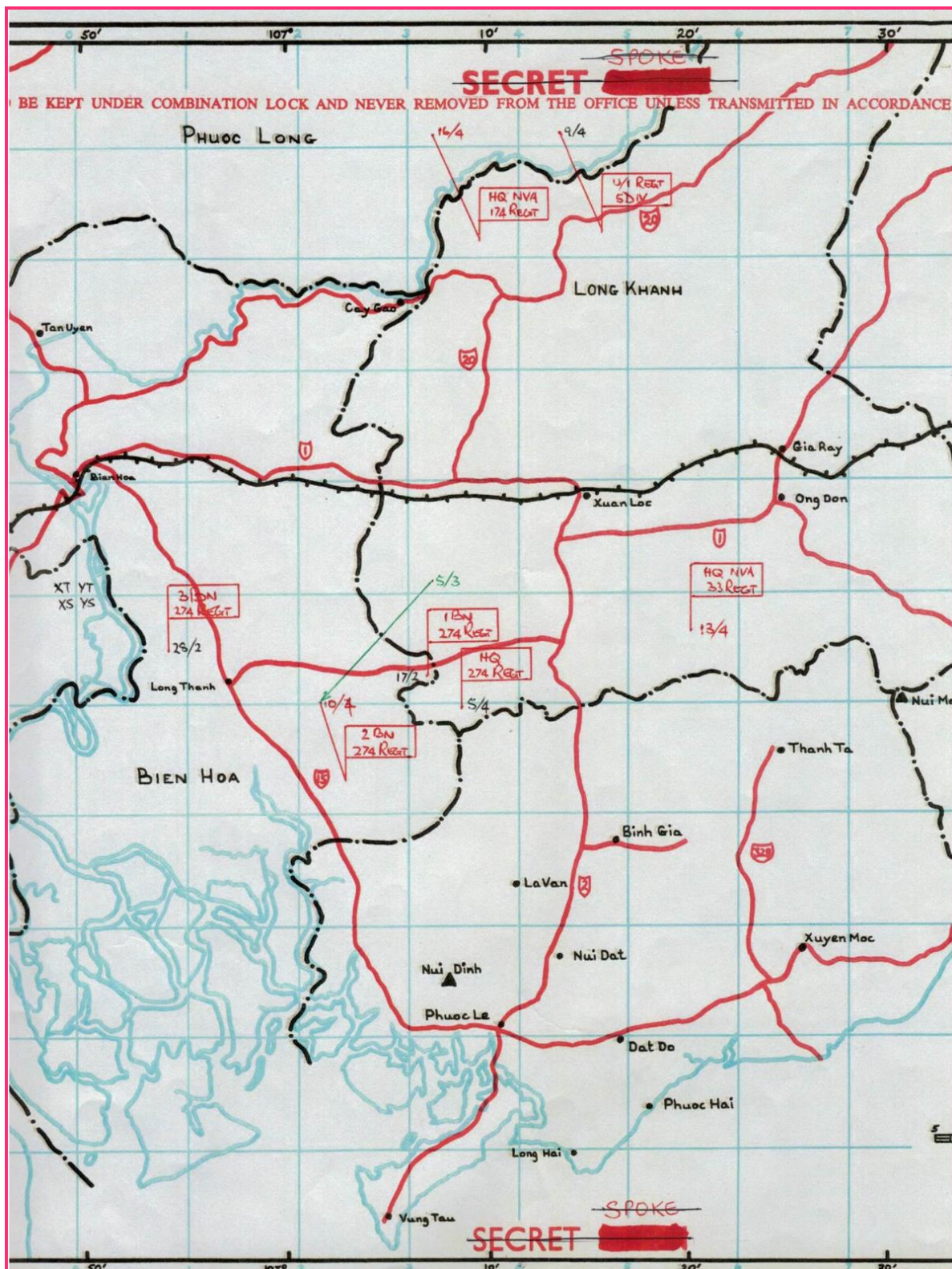


Figure 336: Map Summary 10 - 17 Apr 69



42.3.7.2 17 - 23 April 69

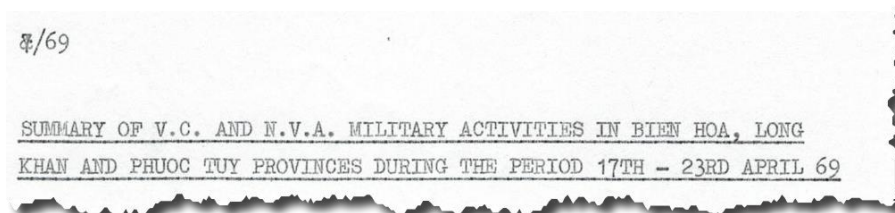


Figure 337: Summary of Activities 17 – 23 April 1969

SUMMARY

Excepting the relocation of HQ 3Bn, V.C. 274th Regt (which could have taken place any time since 28th February), no significant change in unit locations has been noted since the issue of the previous report in this series.

HQ V.C. 5TH DIV

Located approximately 55km NE of BIEN HOA.

HQ U/I REGT, V.C. 5TH DIV

Approximately 50km NE of BIEN HOA.

HQ N.V.A. 33RD REGT

On 20th April was located approximately 60km ESE of BIEN HOA.

HQ N.V.A. 174TH REGT

Approximately 45km NE of BIEN HOA.

HQ V.C. 274TH REGT

Located in SW LONG KHAN Province, approximately 35km SE of BIEN HOA.

HQ 1 BN V.C. 274TH REGT

LONG KHAN/PHUOC TUY/BIEN HOA border area, approximately 35km SSE of BIEN HOA.

HQ 2 BN V.C. 274TH REGT

Approximately 30km SE of BIEN HOA.

HQ 3 BN V.C. 274TH REGT

An ARDF fix on 19th April located this unit approximately



55km E of its 28th position. Bn HQ is now located 65km ESE of BIEN HOA in the LONG KHAN/PHUOC TUY border area.

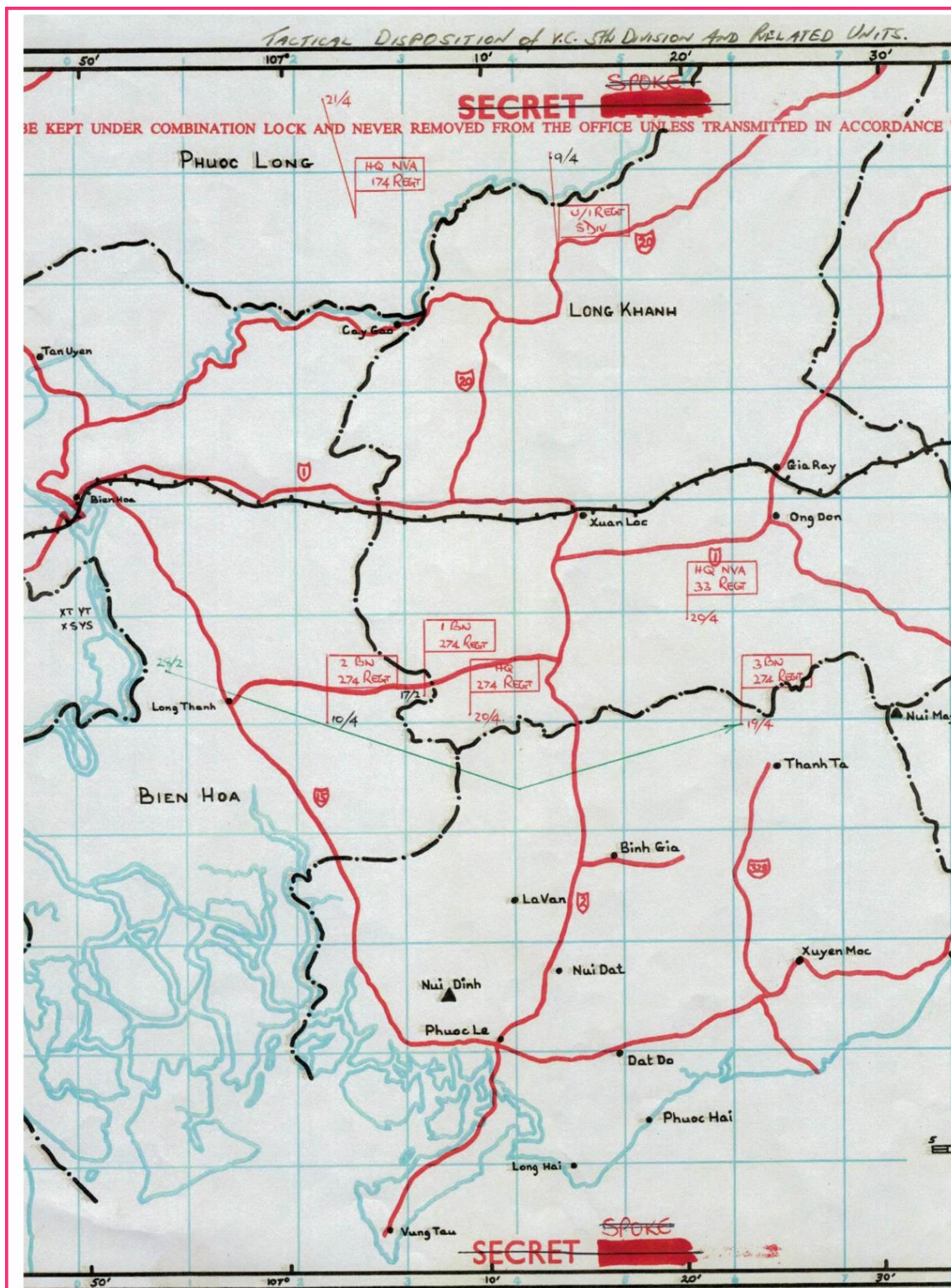


Figure 338: Map Summary 17 - 23 Apr 69



42.3.7.3 23 April 69 – 1 May

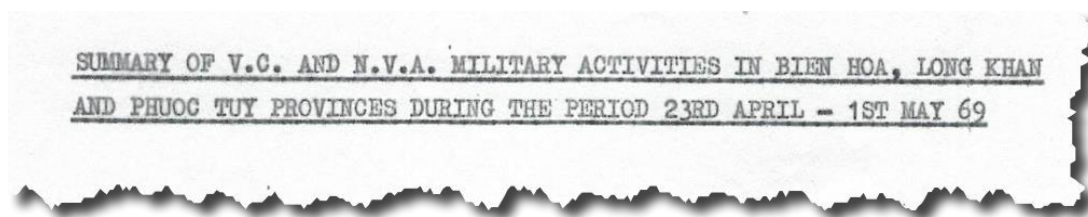


Figure 339: Summary of Activities 23 April – 3 May 1969

H.Q. V.C. 5TH DIV

Approximately 55km NE of BIEN HOA.

HQ N.V.A. 33RD REGT

Since 20th April this unit has moved approximately 15 km in a south-easterly direction and is now located 75km ESE of BIEN HOA.

HQ N.V.A. 174TH REGT

Approximately 45km NE of BIEN HOA.

HQ V.C. 274TH REGT

Located in SW LONG KHAN Province, approximately 35km SE of BIEN HOA.

HQ 1 BN V.C. 274TH REGT

LONG KHAN/PHUOC TUY/BIEN HOA border area, 35km SSE of BIEN HOA.

HQ 2 BN V.C. 274TH REGT

Approximately 30km SE of BIEN HOA.

HQ 3 BN V.C. 274TH REGT

Bn HQ on 30th April had moved approximately 10km W of its 29th April location and is now situated 55km ESE of BIEN HOA.

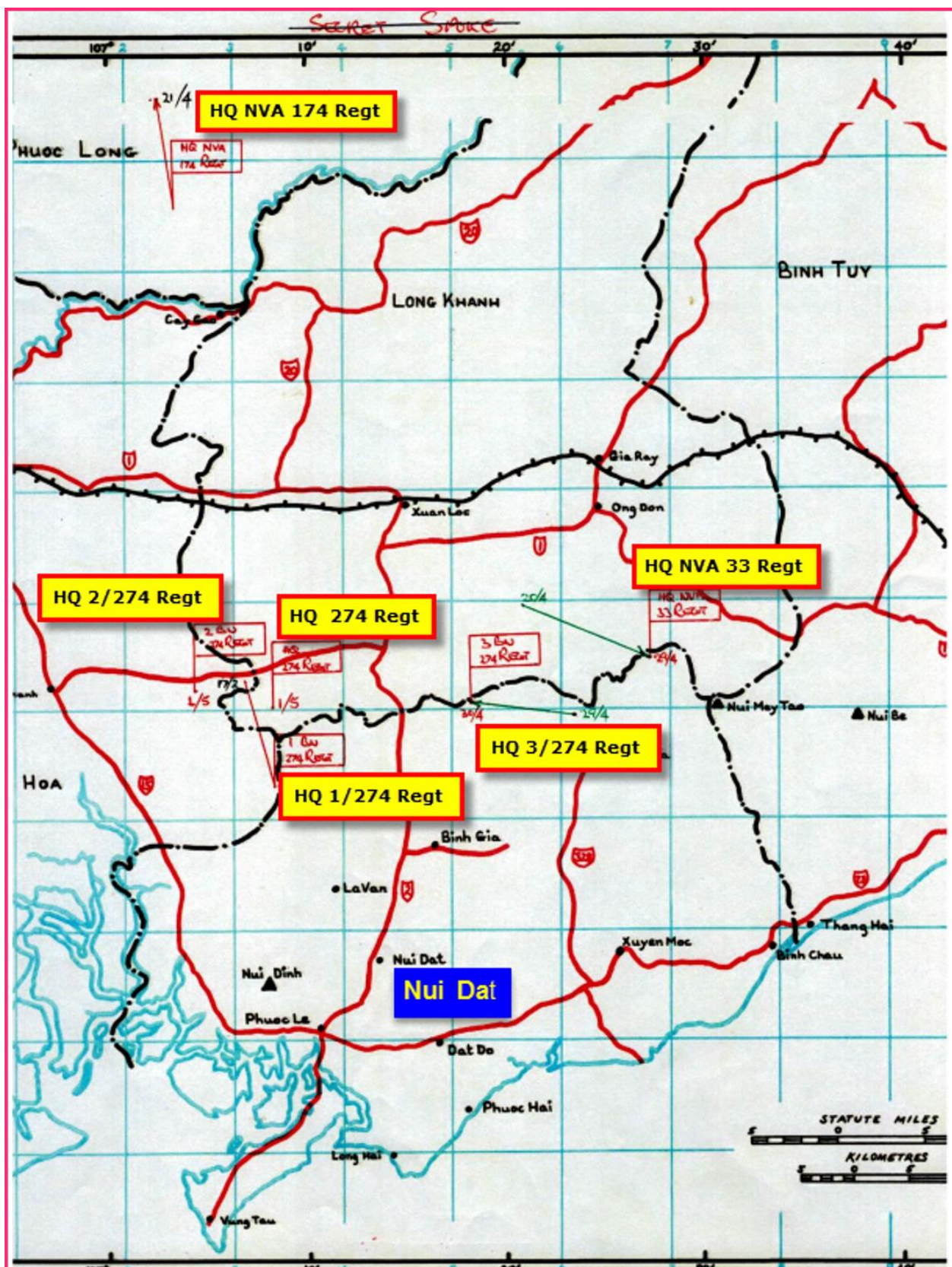


Figure 340: Map Summary 23 Apr - 1 May 69



42.3.7.4 Month Consolidation

A consolidation of the Troop Summaries of VC and NVA Military Activities in Bien Hoa, Long Khanh and Phuoc Tuy Provinces covering 11 - 30 April 69 is as follows⁶⁸⁴:

SUMMARY

23 April. Excepting the relocation of HQ 3 Bn VC 274 Regt (which could have taken place any time since 28 February), no significant change in unit locations has been noted since the issue of the previous report in this series.

HQ VC 5th DIV

17 April. Since mid-March Div HQ has moved steadily northwards and on 13 April was located approximately 55 km NE of BIEN HOA.

23 April. No Change.

30 April. No Change.

HQ U/I REGT VC 5TH DIV

17 April. Located approximately 50 km NE of BIEN HOA.

23 April. No Change.

30 April. Approximately 55 km NE of BIEN HOA.

HQ NVA 33rd REGT

17 April. On 13 April was located approximately 60 km ESE of BIEN HOA.

23 April. On 20 April was located approximately 60 km ESE of BIEN HOA.

30 April. Since 20 April this unit has moved approximately 15 km in a south-easterly direction and is now located 75 km ESE of BIEN HOA.

HQ NVA 174TH REGT

17 April. Located approximately 45 km NE of BIEN HOA.

23 April. No change.

30 April. No change.

HQ VC 274th REGT

17 April. Approximately 35 km SE of BIEN HOA in LONG KHANH Province.

23 April. Located in SW LONG KHANH Province, approximately 35 km SE of BIEN HOA.

30 April. No change.

HQ 1 BN VC 274TH REGT

17 April. LONG KHANH/PHUOC TUY/BIEN HOA border area, approximately 35 SE of BIEN HOA - last ARDF fix, 17 February.

23 April. No Change.

30 April. No Change.

HQ 2 BN VC 274TH REGT

17 April. BN HQ has moved approximately 10 km SW of its 5 March location and on 10 April was located 30 km SE of BIEN HOA.

23 April. Approximately 30 km SE of BIEN HOA.

30 April. No Change.

HQ 3 BN VC 274TH REGT

17 April. In BIEN HOA Province approximately 20 km SE of BIEN - last ARDF fix, 28th February.

23 April. An ARDF fix on 19 April located this unit approximately 55 km E of its 28th position. Bn HQ is now located 65 km ESE of BIEN HOA in the LONG KHANH/PHUOC TUY border area.

⁶⁸⁴ ASD archives of 547 Sig Tp material.



30 April. Bn HQ on 30 April has moved approximately 10 km W of its 29 April location and is now situated 55 km ESE of BIEN HOA.



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CHAPTER 43 – MAY 1969

43.1 Personnel

43.1.1 Arrivals and Departures

In May there were two arrivals and one departure.

Arrivals

14 May

Corporal Bill Woods

28 May

Corporal Adrian Bishop

Departure

28 May

Corporal Dave Priebbenow

43.1.2 Employment Areas

Bill Woods moved into Tech Maint and Adrian Bishop into Processing.

43.1.3 161 Recce Flt Fixed Wing Pilots

In May, 2nd Lieutenant Errol Driver joined 161 Recce Flt as a fixed wing pilot.

43.1.4 Sad News

On 6 May the Troop received news that Warrant Officer Mick Gill (ex 7 Sig Regt Lineman) was killed in action (KIA). Mick was serving with the Australian Army Training Team Vietnam (AATTV) in Kontum Province. Mick received an MID, Posthumous, and was later interred at the Toowoomba Garden Cemetery.

43.1.5 Ray Simpson VC

During this firefight Warrant Officer Ray Simpson was awarded the Victoria Cross, in part, for his actions to save Mick. Ray Simpson was a regular visitor to the 104 Sig Sqn Sergeants Mess and was well known to Troop SNCOs.

43.2 Administration

43.2.1 Promotion Courses

During May, HQ 1ATF conducted promotion course for Subject C for promotion to Corporal and Sergeant. Troop results promulgated in HQ 1ATF Routine Orders⁶⁸⁵ were:

⁶⁸⁵ AWM RCDIG1027953, AWM/95, 1/4/152. HQ 1 ATF Commanders Diary, Annex E-N 1-31 May 1969, F H3.



Corporal:

547 Sig Tp	3789253	Cpl	J.E. Hunter	P
	2412302	Sig	B.J. Wilson	P
	16752	Sig	D.M. McPhee	P
	44098	Sig	M.J. Chamberlain	P
	1411061	Sig	A. Lange	P
	213334	Sig	E.J. Rush	P

Figure 341: Examination results - For Corporal

Sergeant:

547 Sig Tp	213461	Cpl	H.W. Greaves	P
	213520	Cpl	K. Perry	P
	4410331	L/cpl	B.L. Poole	P

Figure 342: Examination results - For Sergeant

43.3 Operations

43.3.1 SSL Trials

On 12 May, MI8 signalled AUM352, 121 Sig Sqn and DSD concerning the Operators detached for SSL trials⁶⁸⁶:

S E C R E T COMINT CHANNELS MI8/1234
FROM MI8. SSL TRIAL. 121 OPS 125 AND AUM 352 SIGS 280.

ONE. DETACHMENT OF STOCK CMM PETERS AND HAMPTON WILL BE
EXTENDED FURTHER MONTH IN ORDER TRIALS MAY BE COMPLETED.
STAFF DUTIES WILL ADVISE AUSTARM 1 AFV

TWO. NO FIXED VIEWS AS YET ON WHAT ACTION WILL TAKE PLACE
IF SSL GOES OPERATIONAL. IT WOULD BE LOGICAL HOWEVER FOR
MEMBERS WHO WERE TRAINED ON EQPT FOR TRIAL TO REMAIN FOR
FULL TOUR IF THERE IS NO BREAK BETWEEN TRIALS AND OPERATIONS
IF THERE IS A BREAK FOR SAY RELOCATION OR ANY OTHER REASON
MEMBERS WOULD BE POSTED FROM AUST AND PRESENT MEMBERS RE-

TURNED TO PARENT UNIT

⁶⁸⁶ DSD Declassified, 547 Sig Tp in Vietnam (tranche2).



43.3.1.1 AUM352 Response

On 16 May, AUM352 responded to MI8 re personnel⁶⁸⁷:

S E C R E T COMINT CHANNELS SIGS287

1. REF MI8/1234MNOT TO WRE. PARA 2. TO CLEAR UP ANY MISAPPREHENSION. STOCK AND HAMPTON ARE WORKING IN MAIN SET ROOM. COMPLETE TRIALS TO DATE HAVE BEEN DONE BY LCPL POOLE AND SIG BRIDGES.

2. FURTHER TO ABOVE REF, AND IN ADDITION MI8/121- OF 020200Z. (NOT TO 121 SIG SON). THE CONCEPT OF RELOCATING SHORT CELL AT VUNG TAU IS A FEARSOME THOUGHT, AND SHOULD BE CAREFULLY JWEIGHED UP BEFORE EVEN CONSIDERING IT AS AN ALTERNATIVE.

3. AS I SEE IT NUMBER OF IMMENSE PROBLEMS ARE IMMEDIATELY RAISED. THESE INCLUDE: -

A. REAL ESTATE. I DONT BELEIVE THERE IS ANY SPARE LAND CURRENTLY INSIDE PROTECTED AREAS AT VUNG TAU, AND LAND OUTSIDE WOULD BE SANDY DUNES, REQUIRING CONSIDERABLE ENGR EFFORT TO FLATTEN.

B. ADIMIN. COULD SEE TREMENDOUS PROBLEMS ARRANGING ACCN, FEEDING AND PARTICULARLY TPT FOR SSL SHIFT PERS.

C. MAINT. A MAMMOTH PROBLEM. WOULD THE TECH. STAY AT VUNG TAU? WHAT SUPPLY OF TEST EQPT WOULD HE REQUIRE OVER AND ABOVE TROOPS PRESENT SUPPLY? WHERE WOULD HE DO HIS REPAIR?. THE CURRENT METHOD OF CENTRALISED TRADESMEN AND TEST EQPT WOULD BE CONSIDERABLY DISRUPTED AND I WOULD LOSE MY MAINT FLEXIBILITY.

D. STEERAGE. HOW WOULD THIS BE ACHIEVED? ALL RADIO RELAY CHANNELS NUI DAT- VUNG TAU ARE UTILISED. CONCEPT OF RADIO STEERAGE IS ALARMING, BOTH FROM

SECURITY AND FURTHER MAINTENANCE ASPECTS. ONE TIME PAD/ COMUS STEERAGE COULD PROVE EXCESSIVELY TIME CONSUMING ON SHORT TRANSMISSIONS TGTS.

4. THESE PROBLEMS JUST BARELY SCRAPE THE SURFACE. I DO NOT WISH TO APPEAR EXCESSIVELY PESSIMISTIC-NOTHING COULD BE NICER THAN A DET IN VUNG TAU WHERE TP MEMBERS COULD BE GIVEN A WELL DESERVED REST FROM NUI DAT. BUT THE PROBLEMS ARE NUMEROUS, AND I WOULD SUGGEST VERY CAREFUL CONSIDERATION

⁶⁸⁷ DSD Declassified, 547 Sig Tp in Vietnam (tranche2).



BEFORE SUCH A DECISION IS TAKEN. REGARDS.

43.3.2 547 Sig Tp Progress Report for 1 – 31 May 69

The 547 Sig Tp Progress Report for 1 – 31 May 69⁶⁸⁸ contained:

*S E C R E T SPOKE SIGS328
PROGRESS REPORT 1-31 may 69.*

ONE. SET ROOM

POSNS. AND WATCH HRS NO CHANGE

TWO. TASKING,

ALPHA. PRIORITY/TASK.

- | | |
|----------------|----------------|
| 1. VCMB 05437 | 2. VCMB 00831 |
| 3. VCMB 05447 | 4. VCMB 05443 |
| 5. VCMB 00335 | 6. VCMB 05423 |
| 7. VCMB J1078 | 8. VCMB J0509 |
| 9. VCMB Y9082 | 10. VCMB J1567 |
| 11. VCMB 00709 | 12. VCMB 00679 |
| 13. VCMB 00667 | 14. VCMB 05448 |
| 15. VCMB J0772 | 16. VCMB 05442 |
| 17. VCMB J0459 | 18. VCMB Y0079 |
| 19. VC4B J1226 | |

BRAVO. DEV GROUPS

VCMB J0820 VCMB J1131

CHARLIE. SEARCH BANDS.

NO CHANGE.

THREE. ARDF.

ALPHA. TOTAL FIXES - 68

BRAVO. GRADINGS - 2 GOOD, 51 FAIR, 2 POOR, 13 CUTS.

CHARLIE. FLYING HRS - 126.50 PLUS 5 HRS TRG.

DELTA. 9 MSNS ABORTED DUE TO ARDF MALFUNCTION

ECHO. IN ALL, A PRETTY MISERABLE MONTH FOR ARDF. IN ADDITION TO THE CONSIDERABLE TECHNICAL PROBLEMS, 9 MAY SAW CHANGE OVER OF PILOTS, SO A RELATIVELY INEXPERIENCED CREW ALL ROUND (INCL NEW OPS).

FOXTROT. I AM CURRENTLY PREPARING A REPORT, WHICH WILL PROVIDE STATEMENTS BY OPRS OF THE SYMPTOMS OF FAULTS EXPERIENCED, AS WELL AS A DIGEST OF MAINT LOG. THIS MAY BE USEFUL IN A POSSIBLE 'TROUBLE SHOOTING* MANUAL IF ONE IS TO BE

⁶⁸⁸ DSD Declassified, 547 Sig Tp in Vietnam (tranche2).



PRODUCED.

GOLF. REITERATE THE IMPORTANCE OF MY SIGS 324 RE CONVERSION OF +A+ MODEL TO +B+ MODEL

HOTEL. HOPE TO COMMENCE AIRBORNE COLLECTION EXPERIMENT 2 JUN. AC NOT AVAIL TODAY.

FOUR. SSL

ALPHA. TRIALS RECOMMENCED 26 MAY AFTER DELAY OF 24 DAYS. INTEND TO CONTINUE TRIALS UNTIL 11 JUN, WHICH WILL COMPLETE EXACTLY ONE MONTH OF ACTUAL TRIALS. AFTER THAT, WILL CEASE WHILE LONG DELAYED BLAST WALL IS CONSTRUCTED AROUND VAN (IF MI8 CONSIDERS THERE IS A FAIR POSSIBILITY THAT SYSTEM WILL REMAIN IN SVN. PSE ADVISE. APPRECIATE DECISION WILL DEPEND ON WRE WRAP-UP REPORT).

BRAVO. REF MI8/121 OF 020202Z MAY. REQUESTING INTERIM REPORT BY 2 JUN. SINCE WRE IS DOING ANALYSIS, WOULD PREFER TO DELAY MY REPORT UNTIL I HAVE RECEIVED A COPY OF WRE REPORT, AS OBVIOUSLY MY REPORT WILL BE WORTHLESS WITHOUT THE SCIENTIFIC EVIDENCE. DO YOU AGREE QUERY.

FIVE. MISCELLANEOUS OPS.

ALPHA. [redacted]

BRAVO. OPS COMMS. THIS CIRCUIT EVENTUALLY ACTIVATED 25MAY,BUT FOLLOWS [redacted]

CHARLIE. ACV INSTLN COMPLETE AND LOOKS GOOD. ONLY SCEPTICAL RE A HOME MADE VIBRATION MOUNT FOR KW-7 WHICH WE FABRICATED IN ABSENCE OF ACTUAL MOUNT WHICH HAD BEEN INDENTED FOR, BUT AS YET UNSATISFIED. PERHAPS MIS MAY BE ABLE TO ASSIST IN OBTAINING D SIGS ASSISTANCE FOR EARLY RELEASE. DETAILS AS FOLLOWS.

2 AOD SERVICE DEMAND ORD BR605. ITEM TWO. UNIT ENDENT NO 715. 5820_00_R32_6687-VIBRATION MOUNT INSTALLATION FOR T SEC KW-7. ITEM IS SHOWN IN KAM—143B/T SEC AMEND 1 PAGE 68. INDENT WAS SUBMITTED THROUGH ORD CHANNELS IN ERROR DURING OCS ABSENCE ON LEAVE. INDENT SHOULD HAVE BEEN SUBMITTED AS FOR SPS ITEMS. ARMY MELBOURNE SIGNAL ORD 60166 STATED THAT D SIGS ADVISE UNIT SHOULD MAKE APPLICATION TO D SIGS THROUGH CSO, WHICH WAS DONE 18 MAY, BUT FEAR CONSIDERABLE DELAY. WOULD APPRECIATE YOUR ASSISTANCE IF POSSIBLE

SIX. VISITORS.

1 MAY. [redacted]

2 MAY. [redacted]

3 MAY. [redacted]

8 MAY. [redacted]

10 MAY. [redacted]

22 MAY. [redacted]

24-25 MAY. [redacted]

31 MAY. [redacted]

[redacted]

WHILST VISITING MRDF SITE.

DAILY. [redacted]



SEVEN. VISITS/DETS

9-10 MAY. MAJ HART TO 146 AVN CP

11—15 MAY. CPL GRACE-OPR EXCH WITH 175RR CO

5-10 MAY. CPL ONN-OPR EXCH WITH 175

27APR—4MAY. SIG RUSH-OPR EXCH WITH 175

16-26 MAY. SIG NISBET-OPR EXCH WITH 175

24-29 MAY. SIG THOMPSON-VISIT 175

30 May-. SIG BISHOP, CPL HUNTER-LIAISON WITH 175

43.3.3 Troop VC/NVA Activities Summaries

Summaries of VC and NVA Military Activities in Bien Hoa, Long Khanh and Phuoc Tuy Provinces⁶⁸⁹:

43.3.3.1 1 - 8 May 1969:

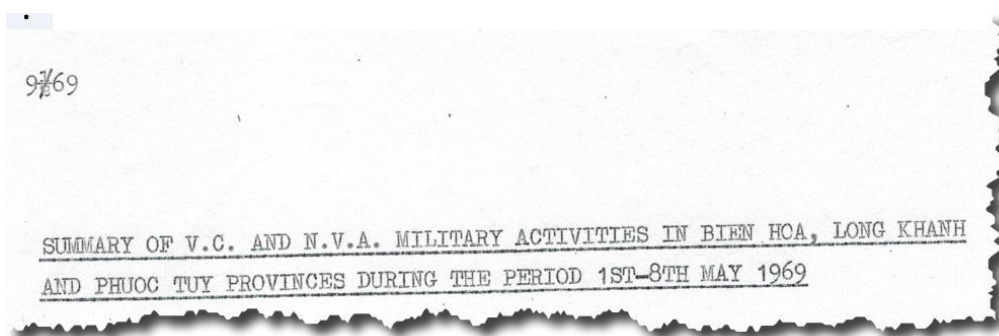


Figure 343: Summary of Activities 1 – 8 May 1969

HQ V.C. 5TH DIV

Approximately 55km NE of BIEN HOA.

HQ N.V.A. 33RD REGT

57km ESE of BIEN HOA, 14km NW of its 29th April location.

HQ N.V.A. 174TH REGT

91km E of its 21st April location approximately 55km NE of BIEN HOA.

HQ V.C. 274TH REGT

LONG KHANH/PHUOC TUY/BIEN HOA border area, 38km SE of BIEN HOA.

HQ IBN V.C. 274TH REGT

⁶⁸⁹ ASD archives of 547 Sig Tp material.



Fixed on 17th February 36km SE of BIEN HOA.

HQ 2BN V.C. 274TH REGT

Approximately 34km SE of BIEN HOA.

HQ 3BN V.C. 274TH REGT

*This unit has moved 38km in a south-westerly direction
since 30th April and is now located approximately 37km SE of BIEN HOA.*

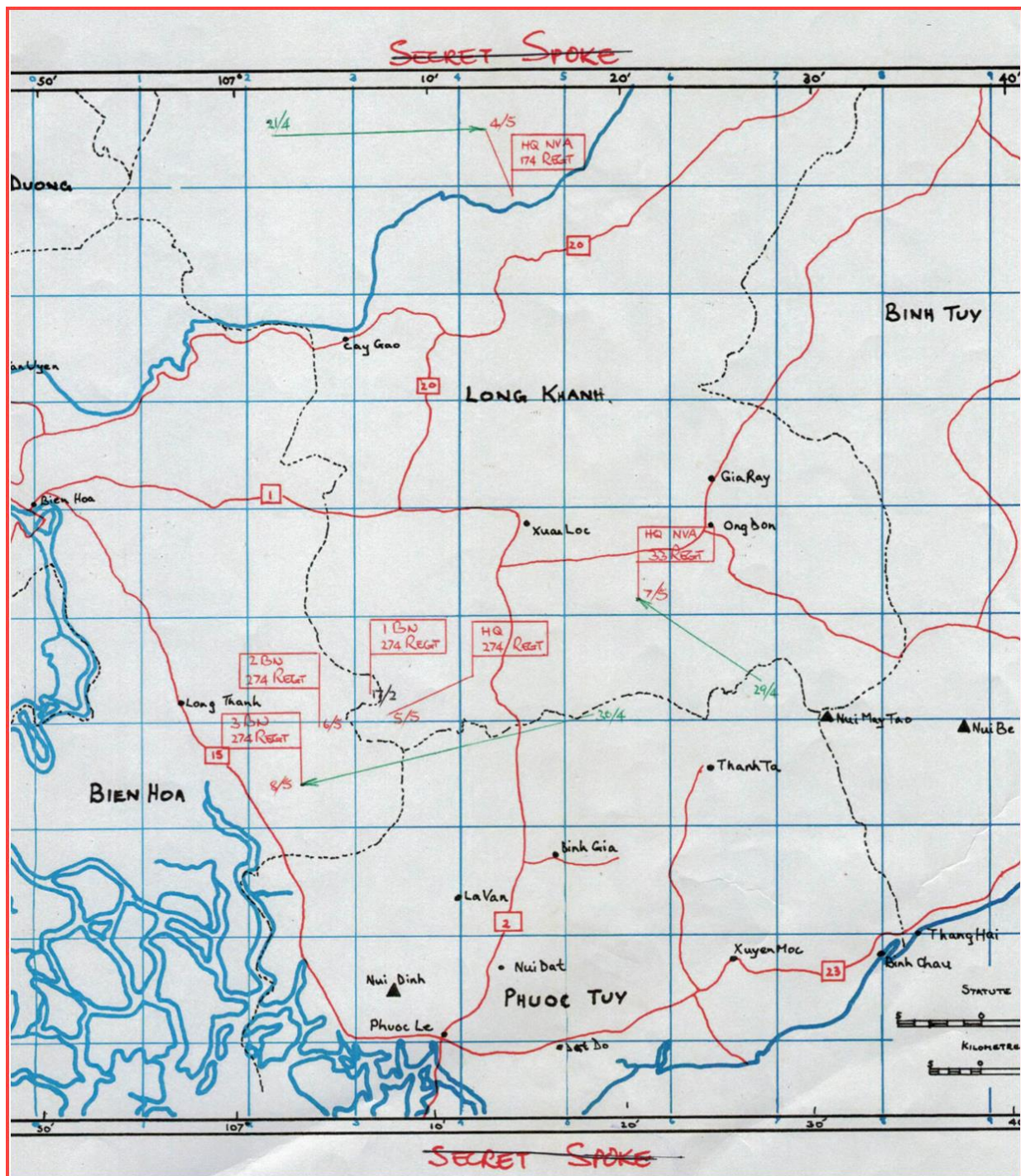


Figure 344: Map Summary 1 - 8 May 1969



43.3.3.2 8 – 14 May 1969

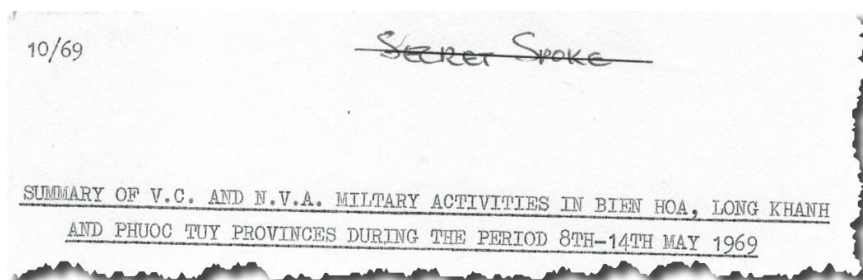


Figure 345: Summary of Activities 8 - 14 May 1969

HQ V.C. 5 TH DIV

On 12th May, approximately 62km EWE of BIEN HOA and 45km SSE of its 25th April location in north-central LONG KHANH.

HQ N.V.A. 33RD REGT

Since 7th May the headquarters of this unit has moved 20km in a west-north-westerly direction and is now located approximately 40km from BIEN HOA in LONG KHANH Province.

HQ V.C. 274TH REGT

LONG KHAN/PHUOC TUY/BIEN HOA Border area, 38km SE of BIEN HOA - no significant change.

HQ 1BN V.C. 274TH REGT

Fixed on 17th February 36km SE of BIEN HOA.

HQ 2BN V.C. 274TH REGT

Approximately 34km SE of BIEN HOA - no significant change.

HQ 3BN V.C. 274TH REGT

Located on 8th May 36km SE of BIEN HOA - no significant change.

HQ N.V.A. 174TH REGT

Approximately 56km NE of BIEN HOA and 16km SE of its 4th May location.

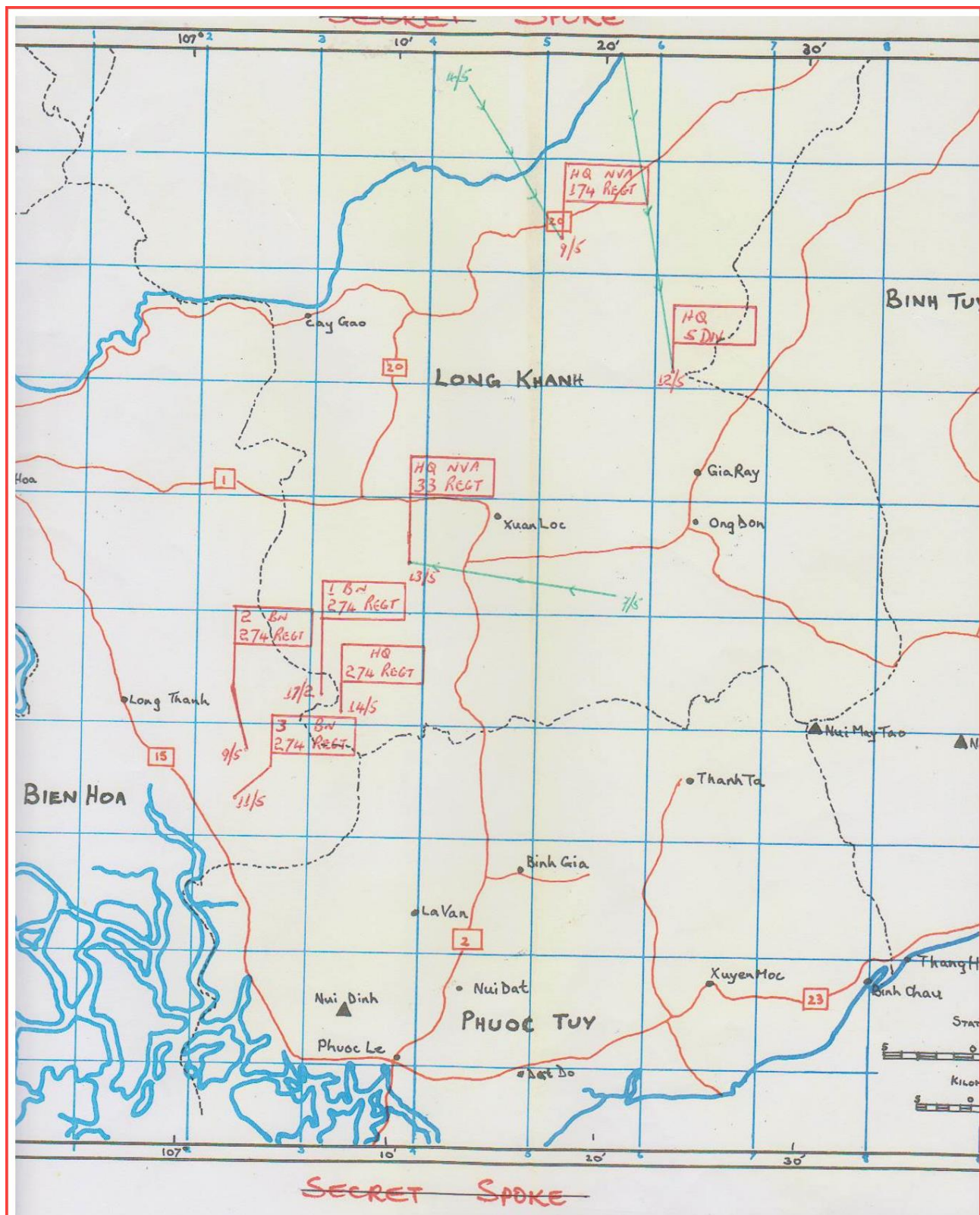


Figure 346: Map Summary 8 - 14 May 1969



43.3.3.3 14 - 21 May 1969:

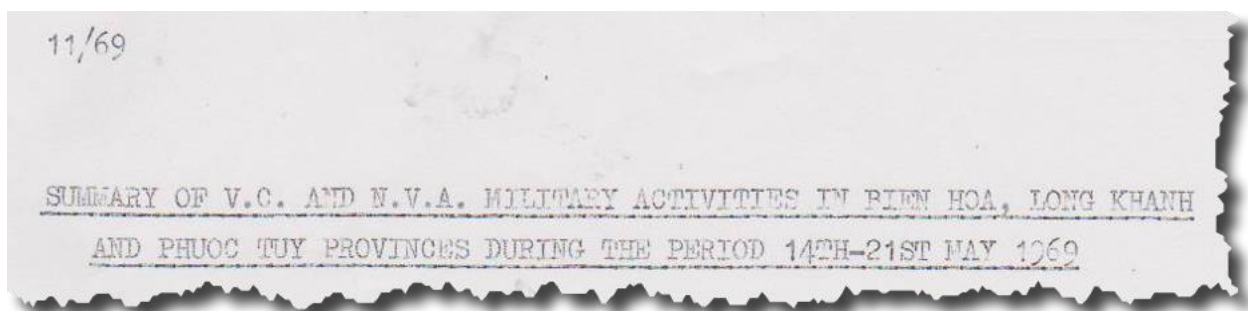


Figure 347: Summary of Activities 14 – 21 May 1969

GENERAL

Excepting a minor relocation of HQ 3rd Bn, V.C. 274th Regt (on 20th May approximately 7km SE of its 11th May location), no significant change in unit dispositions has been noted since the issue of the previous report in this series.

HQ V.C. 5TH DIV

On 12th May, approximately 62km MNE of BIEN HOA/..

HQ N.V.A. 33RD REGT

Located 371cm ESE of BIEN HOA in SE LONG KHANH Province.

HQ N.V.A. 174TH REGT

On 9th May, approximately 56km NE of BIEN HOA.

HQ V.C. 274TH REGT

39km SE of BIEN HOA in the LONG KHANH/PHUOC TUY/ BIEN HOA border area.

HQ 1 BN V.C. 274 REGT

Fixed on 17th February 361cm SE of BIEN HOA.

HQ 2 BN V.C. 274 REGT

30km SE of BIEN HOA.

HQ 3 BN V.C. 274 REGT

Approximately 42km SE of BIEN HOA.

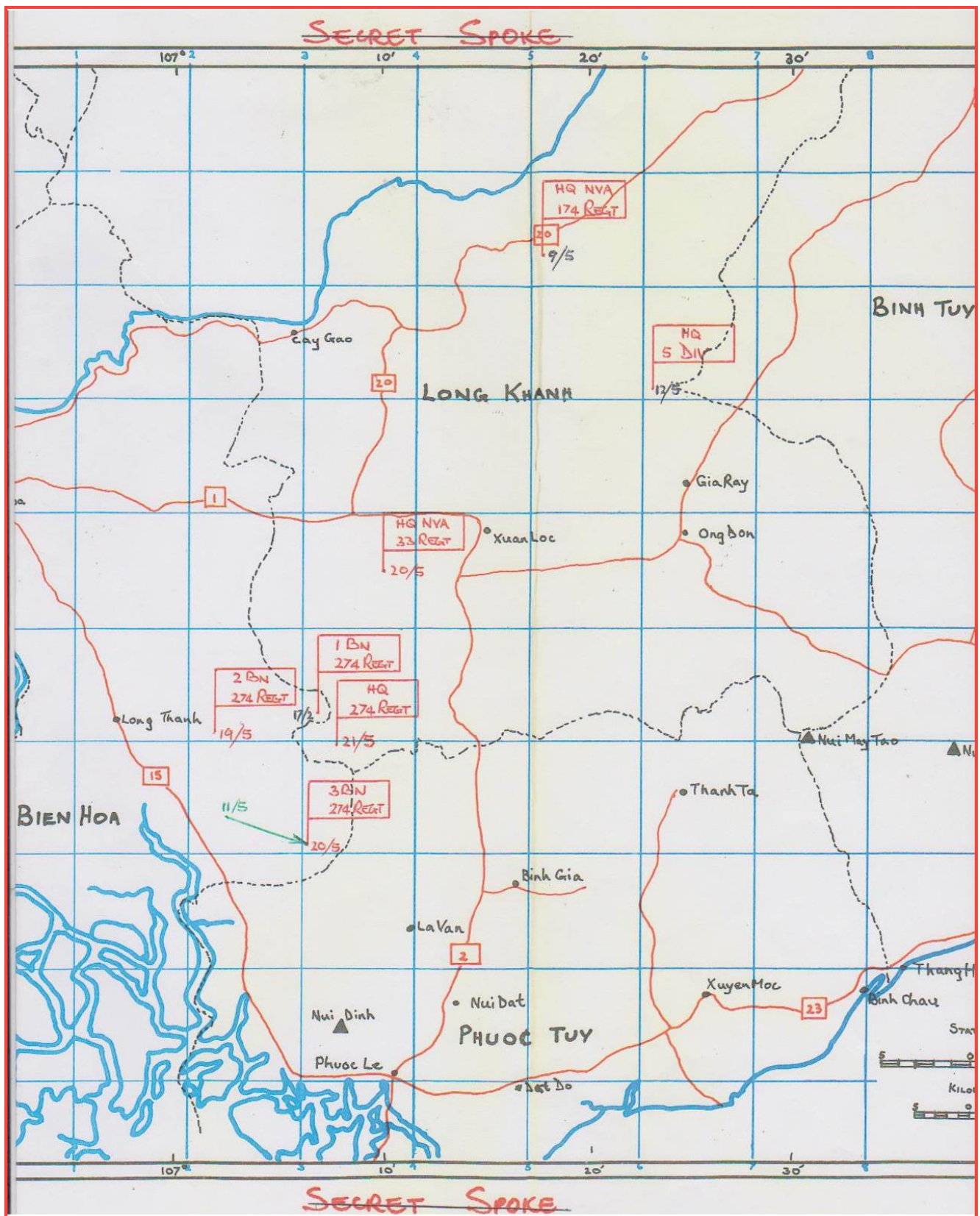


Figure 348: Summary 14 - 21 May 1969



43.3.4 The Horseshoe Excursion

On or about the 15th of May, Steve Hart and two linguists deployed by helicopter to the Horseshoe FSB⁶⁹⁰ in an attempt to intercept Low Level VHF (LLV) voice transmissions⁶⁹¹.

Steve Hart wrote⁶⁹²:

The initiative to try this was entirely Troop based. We heard about the so-called enemy unit allegedly being holed-up in the village and apparently surrounded by a battalion cordon. I can't recall the exact unit but John Sheldrick was the Ops Offr. I suggested to Sandy Pearson that I arrange to get a KY-38 crypto unit to the battalion and we would endeavour to find, and report any tactical info we picked up for immediate response. We established secure radio comms with Sheldrick after arriving at the Horseshoe and set about the task of scanning the band. Of course it was an ambitious scheme (and subsequently proved to be impossible!) because of the extreme usage of the VHF spectrum by allied forces. But I figured it was worth a try and if it had actually come off, an almost unbelievable example of immediate tactical int being acted upon in virtually real time, it would not have done the reputation of the Troop any harm. But the baddies got away without a shot being fired, either through a hole in the net or through underground rat holes. Or maybe they weren't there in the first place!

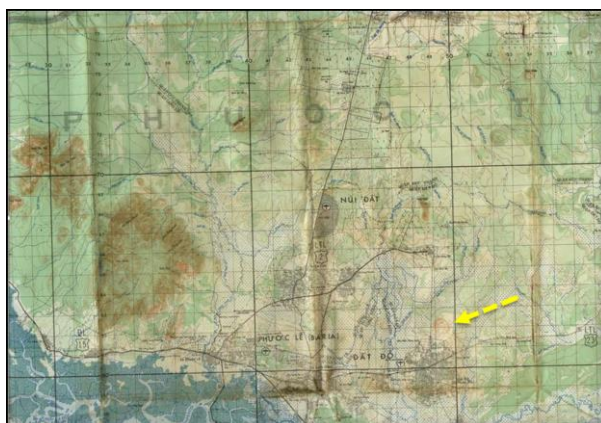


Figure 349: Location of the Horseshoe

⁶⁹⁰ A FSB had been established on 'the Horseshoe', a circular hill about 8 kilometres southeast of Nui Dat and just north of Dat Do. The Horseshoe provided an extensive view of the surrounding countryside as well as a base for a ready reaction force.

⁶⁹¹ Later information indicated that the Vietnamese linguists at 547 Sig Tp would have had great difficulty understanding the Vietnamese language used over a radio (ie not face-to-face), particularly the Southern dialect, jargon, veiled speech etc - or distinguish NVA/VC traffic from that of GVN, RVNAF. US reports indicate that they also had a major problem and had to employ Vietnamese nationals for the job.

The NSA Magazine *Cryptolog* of February 1975 stated, in part, in one of the articles:

Development of Voice Linguists

One of the most frustrating quests in the area of linguist development was the effort to produce voice linguists. The personnel who could transcribe a free-flow, unformatted, and unpredictable Vietnamese conversation accurately and with reasonable speed were few and far between. Try as we might, the system simply did not, or could not, produce this type of linguist. Maybe we were faced with an "impossible dream." The use of indigenous Vietnamese -- The DANCER program-- for the transcription of VC voice communications, as well as for direct support in combat operations (as was the case primarily with the Marine units), was generally successful. I doubt that the nature and the difficulty of the tasks we expected the trainees to perform or the dimensions of the process to produce such linguists were ever adequately spelled out. If they were, then again the quality control was weak or completely lacking...

Native linguists were the only real solution, and were acquired in small numbers, with many restrictions on both their physical and cryptologic security. This program, originally known as the DANCER program, and later as the BEES, helped fill the breach, especially on those signals that could wait for transcription until they reached an area occupied by the DANCERS/BEES. Such lengthy conversations/ signals as those passed [redacted] were ideal for this program. Suffice it to say that U.S. linguists proved able to copy simple transmissions [redacted] and provided combat support on a near real-time basis from these sources. Native linguists were able to perform the more complex transcription tasks, thus contributing immeasurably to the overall understanding and measuring of the enemy's intent and capabilities. We never achieved an on-line capability for plaintext tactical voice.

⁶⁹² Steve Hart email to several recipients on 2 November 2014.



Figure 350: Aerial photograph of the Horseshoe

43.3.4.1 Sitrep 16 May

The following is an extract from the *HQ 1ATF Situation Report from 150001H to 1524000H May 69* dated 16 May 69⁶⁹³.

(f) 9 RAR (-) deployed from the area of AO ALDGATE to DAT DO to assist Sector elements reestablish control at 151030H. 9 RAR (-) and the ready reaction force cordoned off the village at 151600H trapping an estimated VC company. The majority of the VC were confined to an area approx 200 metres by 300 metres at vic YS487597 by a cordon comprised of Sector elements. The Sector elements commenced a sweep of the inner cordon area at 151645H with unknown results. The 1 ATF troops are remaining in cordoning positions throughout the night 15/16 May 69. Locations: Bn HQ FSPB THRUST YS4954; A Coy (-) YS505587; B Coy (-) YS467588; C Coy (-) YS507605; D Coy (-) YS480577.

Figure 351: Sitrep extract 15 May 69

43.3.4.2 Sitrep 17 May

Extract from the *HQ 1ATF Situation Report from 160001H to 1624000H May 69* dated 17 May 69⁶⁹⁴.

(f) 9 RAR together with the ready reaction force remained in cordon positions around DAT DO. B Coy conducted a sweep of the SE corner of the village with negative contact. At YS491597 B Coy located two bunkers plus 20 x one man pits which were destroyed. 1 ATF troops will remain in cordon positions during the night 16 - 17 May. Locations: Bn HQ - FSPB THRUST - YS4954; A Coy (-) - YS505587; B Coy (-) - YS468587; C Coy (-) - YS507605; D Coy - YS480577.

Figure 352: Sitrep extract 16 May 69

⁶⁹³ <http://static.awm.gov.au/images/collection/bundled/RCDIG1027953.pdf>

⁶⁹⁴ Ibid.



43.3.4.3 Additional Information

Ernie Chamberlain provided the following additional information concerning the operation⁶⁹⁵:

*Translator's Note: Several communist histories – including the D440 History (2011), relate an attack on the Phước Hòa Long post and the Đất Đỏ Sub-Sector on 15 May 1969. The D445 History (1991) does not specifically relate a Việt Cộng company-strength attack on Đất Đỏ Town on 15 May 1969. However, a captured report - signed by the 445 Battalion Political Officer (Nguyễn Minh Khanh), related an attack by 445 Battalion on Đất Đỏ on 14-15 May 1969 – by all four companies and with elements of 440 Battalion (as “D2”), resulting in six D445 personnel killed and 31 wounded. The report claimed to have “put out of action 107 enemy, seized five weapons and captured a PW”. - CDEC Log 07-2146-69. On the morning of 15 May, 1ATF ready-reaction elements (9RAR) deployed to assist the Regional Forces at Đất Đỏ. A “consolidated report” on the morning of 16 May by 1ATF on the engagements in Đất Đỏ listed the “friendly losses” as: “ARVN KIA: 7, ARVN WIA: 26, ARVN MIA: 12 – 12 M16 rifles missing”; and the “enemy losses”: as “2 KIA (possible), one M2 rifle and one pistol captured.” – 1 ATF, INTSUM No.136-69, Núi Đất, 16 May 1969. 1 ATF assessed the “company-strength attack” comprised elements of 445 Battalion and the C25 Long Đất District Company. 1 ATF also later reported that 440 Battalion “had combined with D445 to attack Đất Đỏ – results 3 WIA.” – Annex A to de Cure, P.F. Major, D440 LF Battalion, HQ 1 ATF – Núi Đất, 29 September 1969. According to the 2012 volume of the official Australian Army history: “D445 Battalion and part of D440 Battalion occupied part of Đất Đỏ in mid-May” 1969. – p.154; and “at broad daylight, a large group of Viet Cong (estimated at a composite company of D445 Battalion and C25 Company) infiltrated Đất Đỏ and occupied part of the village.”, Ekins, A. with McNeill, I., *Fighting to the Finish*, op.cit., 2012, p.160. The attack is not mentioned in the Long Đất District History (1986), nor in the later Đất Đỏ District History (2006). For 440 Battalion’s involvement in the attack on Đất Đỏ, see Chamberlain, E.P., ... D440: Their Story, op.cit., 2013, footnotes 134, 137, and 194.*

43.3.5 Summaries Continued

43.3.5.1 21 - 29 May 1969⁶⁹⁶:

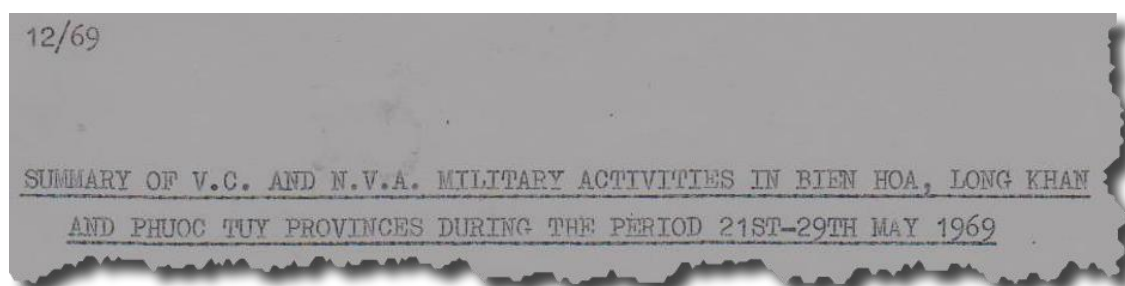


Figure 353: Summary of Activities 21 – 29 May 1969

HQ V.C. 5TH DIV

On 12 May, approximately 62km ENE of BIEN HOA.

HQ N.V.A. 33RD REGT

Between 20th and 25th May HQ has moved approximately

⁶⁹⁵ Email from Ernie Chamberlain to Bob Hartley 4 Nov 2014.

⁶⁹⁶ ASD archives of 547 Sig Tp material.



39km E and is now located 76km E of BIEN HOA.

HQ N.V.A. 174TH REGT

*8km E of its 9 May location and approximately 63km
ENE of BIEN HOA.*

HQ V.C. 274TH REGT

*39km SE of BIEN HOA in the LONG KHANH/PHUOC TUY/BIEN
HOA border area.*

HQ 1BN V.C. 274TH REGT

Fixed on 17th February 36km SE of BIEN HOA.

HQ 2 BN V.C. 274TH REGT

30km SE of BIEN HOA.

HQ 3 BN V.C. 274TH REGT

Approximately 42km SE of BIEN HOA.

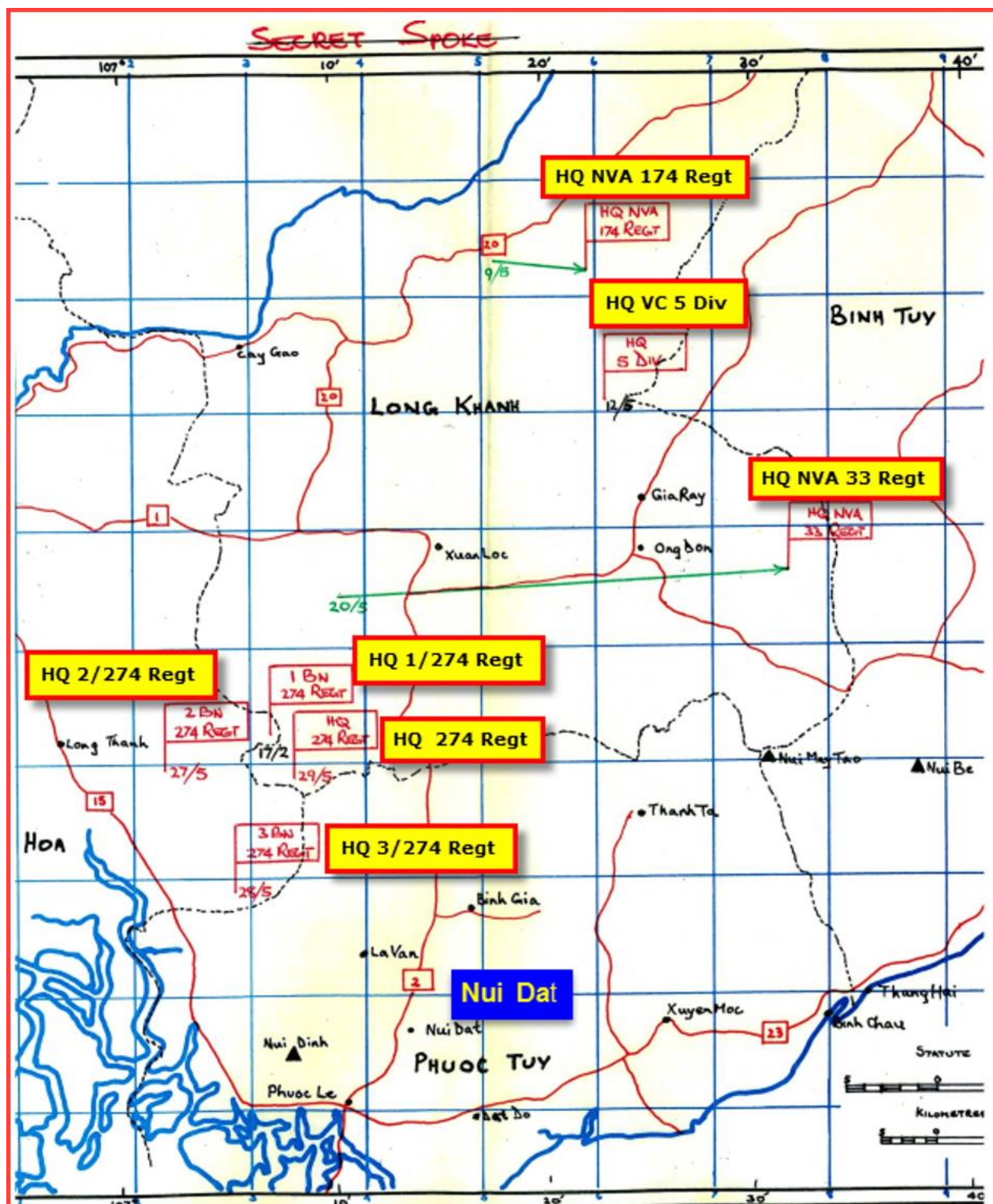


Figure 354: Map Summary 21 - 29 May 69



43.3.5.2 Month Consolidation

A consolidation of the Troop Summaries of VC and NVA Military Activities in Bien Hoa, Long Khanh and Phuoc Tuy Provinces covering 1 – 29 May 69 is as follows⁶⁹⁷:

GENERAL

21 May. *Excepting a minor relocation of HQ 3 Bn, VC 274 Regt (on 20 May approximately 7 km SE of its 11 May location), no significant change in unit dispositions has been noted since the issue of the previous report in this series.*

HQ VC 5th DIV

8 May. *Approximately 55 km NE of BIEN HOA.*

14 May. *On 12 May, approximately 62 km ENE of BIEN HOA and 45 km SSE of its 25 April location in North-Central LONG KHANH.*

21 May. *No Change.*

29 May. *No Change.*

HQ NVA 33rd REGT

8 May. *57 km ESE of BIEN HOA. 14 KM NW of its 29 April location.*

14 May. *Since 7 May the HQ of this unit has moved 20 km west-north-westerly direction and is now located approximately 40 km from BIEN HOA in LONG KHANH Province.*

21 May. *Located 37 km ESE of BIEN HOA in SE LONG KHANH Province.*

29 May. *Between 20 and 25 May HQ has moved approximately 39 km E and is now located 76 km E of BIEN HOA.*

HQ NVA 174TH REGT

8 May. *19 km E of its 21 April location approximately 55 km NE of BIEN HOA.*

14 May. *Approximately 56 km NE of BIEN HOA and 16 km SE of its 4 May position.*

21 May. *On 9 May, approximately 56 km NE of BIEN HOA.*

29 May. *8 km E of its 9 May location and approximately 63 km ENE of BIEN HOA.*

HQ VC 274th REGT

8 May. *LONG KHANH/PHUOC TUY/BIEN HOA border area. 38 km SE of BIEN HOA.*

14 May. *No Change.*

21 May. *39 km SE of BIEN HOA in the LONG KHANH/PHUOC TUY/BIEN HOA border area.*

29 May. *No Change*

HQ 1 BN VC 274TH REGT

8 May. *Last ARDF fix 17 February 36 km SE of BIEN HOA.*

14 May. *No Change.*

21 May. *No Change.*

29 May. *No Change*

HQ 2 BN VC 274TH REGT

8 May. *Approximately 34 km SE of BIEN HOA.*

14 May. *No Change.*

21 May. *30 km SE of BIEN HOA.*

29 May. *No Change*

HQ 3 BN VC 274TH REGT

8 May. *This unit has moved 38 km in a south-westerly direction since 30 April and is now located approximately 37 km SE of BIEN HOA.*

⁶⁹⁷ ASD archives of 547 Sig Tp material.



14 May. Located on 8 May 36 km SE of BIEN HOA. No significant change.

21 May. Approximately 42 km SE of BIEN HOA.

29 May. *No Change*

43.3.6 ARDF Flying Hours

The total ARDF flying hours for the month were⁶⁹⁸:

Year	Month	Flying hours	Total Fixes	Good <1000mts	Fair 1-2000Mts	Poor >2000 Mts	Cut	Missions Lost	Remarks
1969	May	126.5	68	2	51	2	13	9	Plus 5 hrs training

43.3.7 33 NVA Infantry Regiment

1 ATF Operations continued in the Hat Dich Region during May.

Extract from the *Australian Army Official History*⁶⁹⁹:

In mid-May, signals intelligence had detected 33 NVA Regiment in the Hat Dich region moving towards Phuoc Tuy province. In response, American B-52s heavily bombed the suspect area and SAS patrols subsequently sighted enemy carrying away their wounded. Enemy parties were also known to be present in the area of the Courtenay Rubber plantation at the northern boundary of Phuoc Tuy, where Route 2 crossed the province border into Long Khanh province. SAS patrols had encountered main force enemy elements there but had no head-on clashes with them.

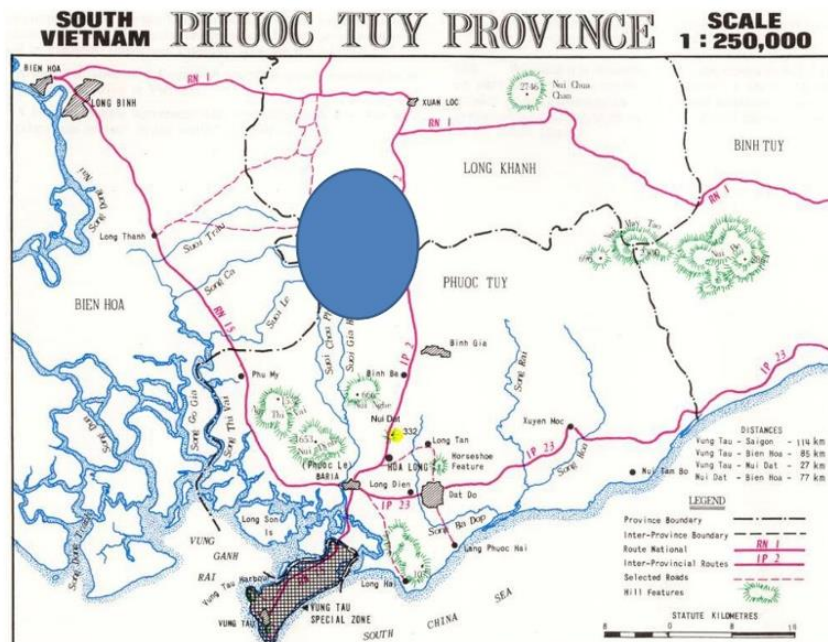


Figure 355: Hat Dich Area

⁶⁹⁸ Compiled from MI8 Records held at ASD archives.

⁶⁹⁹ Extracts from *Fighting to the Finish The Australian Army and the Vietnam War 1968 - 1975* by Ashley Ekins with Ian McNeil > Allen & Unwin in association with the Australian War Memorial, page205.

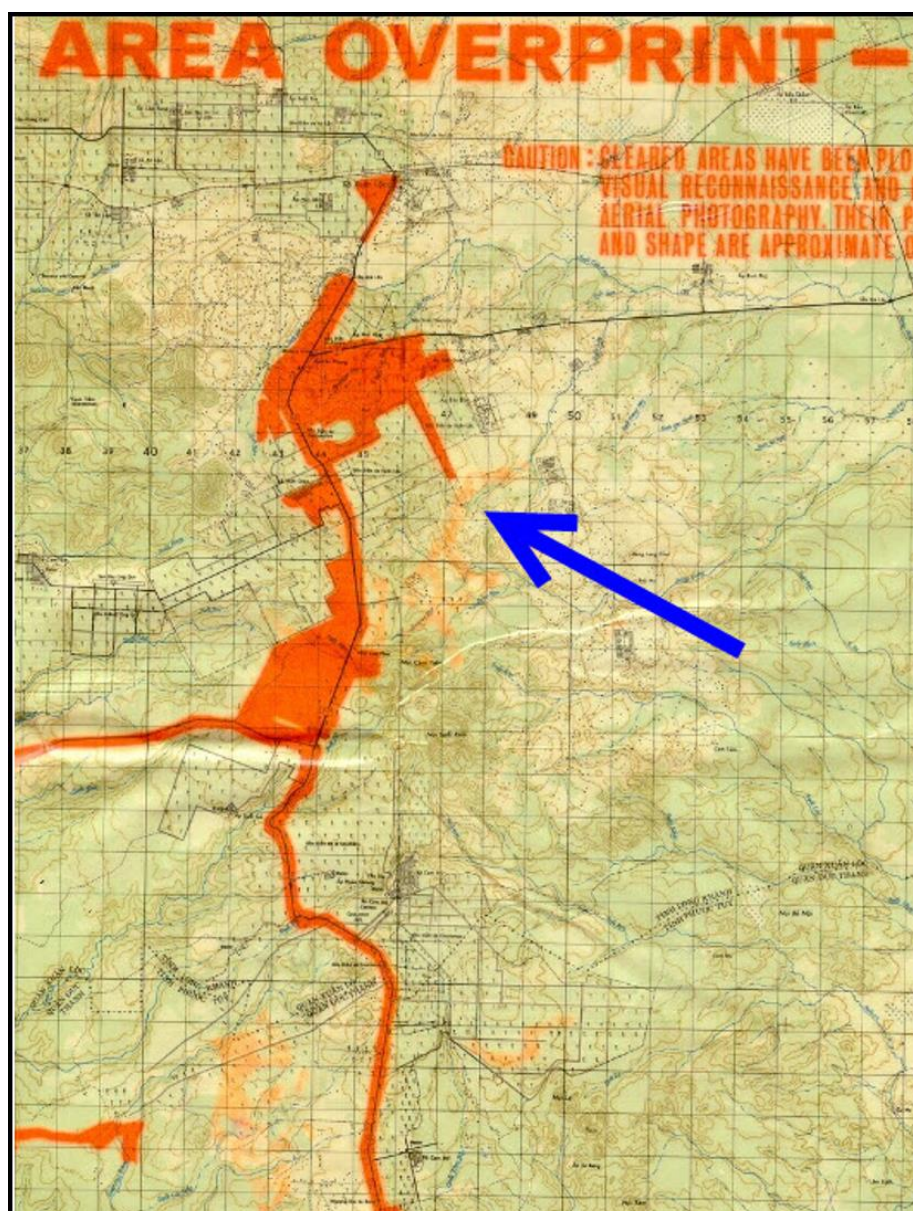


Figure 356: Courtney Rubber Plantation

Note:

Orange areas are where defoliation had occurred



43.3.8 VC/NVA Intercept Organisation

On 26 May, Annex A to the HQ 1ATF INTSUM No 146-69 contained information on the intercept activities of HQ MR7⁷⁰⁰:

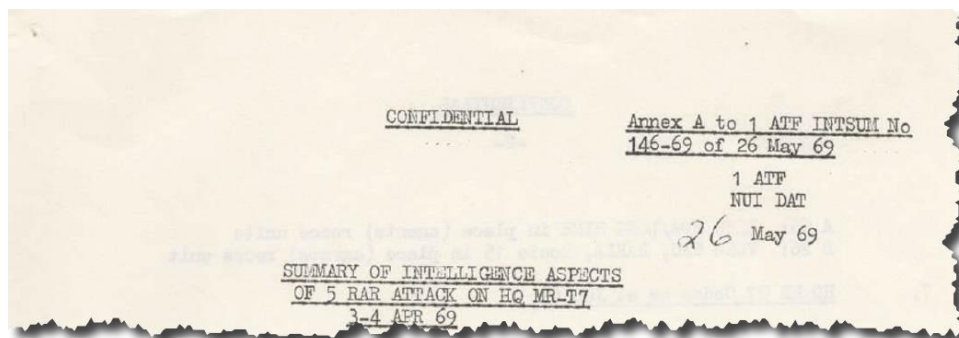


Figure 357: INTSUM Title

3. In the three days of contacts described above, known casualties inflicted on HQ MR T7 were: 14 KIA (BC); 16 WIA; 1 KIA (POSS); 1 HOI CHANH. In addition a large quantity of hand drawn maps showing in detail the layout of ARVN and FIMAT installations were captured. The replacement of these will require considerable effort, both in reacquiring the information and production by hand. The radio intercept section of the HQ suffered an almost total loss of its equipment. Three of four commercial transistor radios used to monitor HF communications and both AN PRC 25 sets used to intercept VHF communications were captured.

Figure 358: Captured radios⁷⁰¹

8. Communications of intelligence - HQ MR T7: Mention was made of the "S2 Signals Service. This comprised a control and five unidentified subordinates: 471; 51; 45; K4 and B10. It is not clear if this is a radio or messenger facility.

Figure 359: MR7 Communications⁷⁰²

⁷⁰⁰ AWM RCDIG1027953, AWM/95, 1/4/152. HQ 1 ATF Commanders Diary, Annex E-N 1-31 May 1969, F G26.

⁷⁰¹ Ibid.

⁷⁰² Ibid.



15. Intercept of ARVN/FWMAF radio Communications : HQ MR T7: The organisation of the S2 Branch given at Annex A, shows an organisational capability to intercept both HF and VHF communications. HOI CHANH LE QUONG HONG, an operator of the VHF section with very limited knowledge of the value of his intercept and none of the success of the HF section, confirmed that HQ MR T7 practices radio interception. Two AN PRC 25 sets were used to monitor VHF communications while four commercial radios were used to monitor HF communications. That the commercial radios could also be used to intercept VHF communications was confirmed when a captured commercial radio was tuned on a mark scratched on the dial which allowed monitoring of 1 ATF Command Net Voice. This radio had not been changed from its factory state. The task of the HOI CHANH was to monitor the 1 ATF Arty Tac net and copy all grid references in connection with fire missions or requests for ground/air clearance. These he passed to his superiors, who in turn passed them to units in the vicinity of the Grid Reference by a means unknown to HONG.

16. It should be noted that in the interests of safety all grids connected with fire missions and ground/air clearance are sent in clear as are those connected with the adjustment of DF tasks.

17. No information was gained on the efficiency of MR 7 radio intercept exploitation from captured documents or from the HOI CHANH. (Past experience has shown that a degree of success is enjoyed with ARVN communications). During Op GOODWOOD an SR-4 document gave clear warning of the AO and composition of the AUST/ARVN force involved. A study at this time concluded that the information was gained from radio intercept of ARVN communications, rather than by other form of compromise or agents.

Figure 360: HQ MR7 Intercept Organisation⁷⁰³

⁷⁰³ Ibid.



CHAPTER 44 – JUNE 1969

44.1 Personnel

44.1.1 Arrivals and Departures

In June there were five arrivals and seven departures.

Arrivals

4 June

Signalman Jeffrey King

Signalman Leslie Wotherspoon

11 June

Signalman Phillip Rutherford

Signalman Tony Luck

18 June

Signalman Darryl Hancock

Departures

4 June

Corporal John Hunter

10 June

Corporal Jack Morgan

11 June

Corporal Alan Paterson

Signalman Bruce Wilson

19 June

Signalman Neville Hampton

Signalman Paul Stock

27 June

Corporal John Grace

44.1.2 Employment Areas

Jeffrey (Col) King, Phil Rutherford and Tony Luck joined the Set Room crew and Darryl Hancock went into the Comcen.

44.1.3 Singapore Returnees

Neville Hampton and Paul Stock returned to Singapore after completing their detachments.

44.1.4 Visitors

Along with the normal liaison officer visits, several operators from 6994th SS and 146 Avn Co visited the Troop.



44.1.5 161 Recce Flt Fixed Wing Pilots

In June, Major Graeme Hill-Smith assumed command of 161 Recce Flt. He was also as a fixed wing pilot. Captain Barry Donald returned for another tour.

44.1.6 Unit Strength

The Troop strength on 30 June 1969 was 38.

44.1.7 Troop Manning.

The following graphic shows the organisation of the Troop in late June.

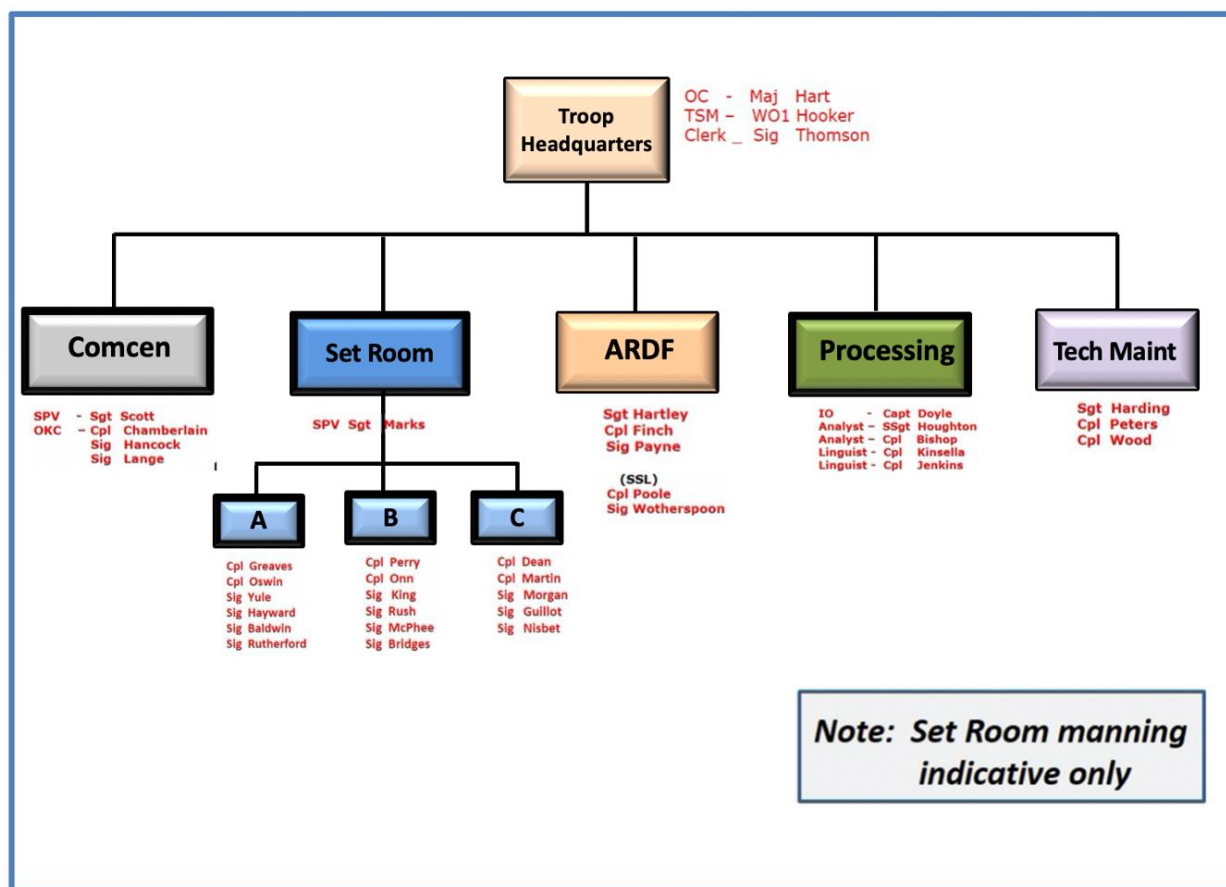


Figure 361: Troop Manning June 1969⁷⁰⁴

44.2 Administration

44.2.1 New Building

Under the skilled guidance of Harry Martin, the fourth and final building was erected in the compound. The new building was to house the unit stores, provide an office for the OC and bed spaces for the OC and 2IC.

⁷⁰⁴ Compiled by Bob Hartley. E&OE.

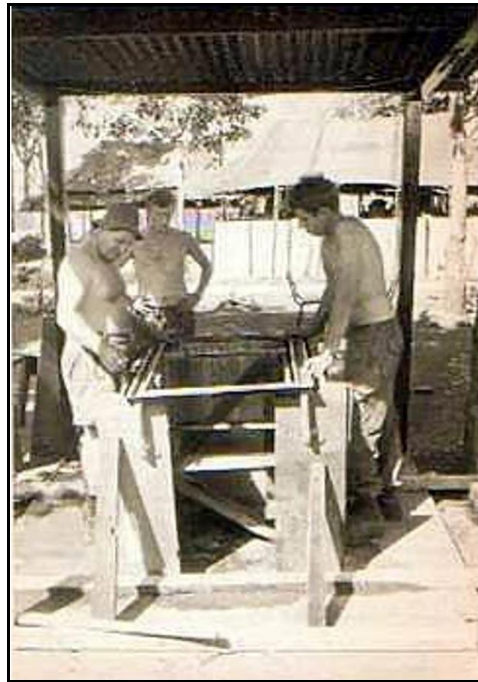


Figure 362: Harry with two helpers

44.2.1.1 Blue Room

Included was a small meeting room containing a refrigerator and some chairs to be used by the officers and senior NCOs as an after work briefing and refreshment area. This Room became known as the 'Blue Room', as it was painted inside with the only colour available in the task force at that time.



Figure 363: Completed New Building



44.2.2 Troop Club

When the new building was completed, stores from the Intelligence/Process/Canteen building were transferred to the rear of the new building and the canteen area in the old building extended.



Col King
hanging
football team
posters
under the
watchful eyes
of
Bob Hartley

Figure 364: Col King and Bob Hartley⁷⁰⁵



Figure 365: Club interior completed

⁷⁰⁵ A copy of the photograph is also held at the AWM COM/69/0513/VN.



44.2.3 Troop BBQ area

A new barbeque was built outside the Club entrance and as the year progressed, the interior of the club was wired for lighting and fans, and repainted.



Figure 366: Club BBQ Area

44.2.4 The Brigadier Pearson Urinal

When the club extensions were completed, a new urinal was also built inside the compound. The urinal was 'officially' opened by Brigadier Pearson on one of his social visits.



Figure 367: The Brigadier Pearson Urinal



44.2.5 Accommodation Tents and Weapon Pits

During the month work continued on refurbishing the other ranks accommodation area. Corrugated iron was placed around most of the tents to provide a more stable footing for the protective sandbags, and cement paths laid.



Figure 368: Refurbished Tent and New Path



Figure 369: Refurbished Tent and Covered Weapon Pit



Figure 370: Refurbished Gun Bunker⁷⁰⁶



Figure 371: Hard at work during the re-construction

44.2.6 Rocket Attacks

On 7 June, AUM352 advised MI8, Weapons Salisbury (WRE IS Group) and DSD of rocket attacks on Nui Dat⁷⁰⁷:

S E C R E T COMINT CHANNELS SIGS 347
FOR MI8 AND CV

⁷⁰⁶ Photograph courtesy of John Harding.

⁷⁰⁷ DSD Declassified, 547 Sig Tp in Vietnam (tranche2).



1. NUI DAT HAS BEEN SUBJECTED TO 3 ROCKET ATTACKS IN THE LAST 24 HRS. NO DAMAGE OR INJURIES TO OUR PEOPLE. WOULD APPRECIATE WIVES BEING INFORMED.

2. SSL. SINCE 22 FEB, WE HAVE RECEIVED 1 MORTAR AND 4 ROCKET ATTACKS. ALL OF THESE HAVE MIRACULOUSLY RINGED SSL. IN TODAY'S ROCKET ATTACK, 4 ROCKETS, JUST CLEARED OUR AERIAL FIELD AND HIT NORTH WESTERN SLOPES OF NUI DAT HILL, ROCKETS COMING FROM THE NORTH NORTH WEST. IN VIEW OF THIS FACT, AND THE RELATIVE UNEASINESS OF THE SSL OPERATORS, I HAVE NO CHOICE BUT TO IMMEDIATELY SUSPEND FURTHER TESTS UNTIL, THE BLAST WALL IS BUILT AROUND THE VAN.

4. ENGRS WILL ACCEPT THIS AS A PRIORITY JOB, SO SHOULD BE BACK UP IN SAY 5 TO 6 DAYS, ALTHOUGH WRE MAY BE SATISFIED WITH RESULTS THEY NOW HAVE, SINCE WE ARE ABOUT 3 DAYS SHORT OF A FULL 4 WEEKS RESULTS. IN ANY EVENT, DURING STAND-TO, NO STEEGAGE CAN BE EFFECTED AS SET ROOM IS NOT USUALLY MANNED.

4. EVEN IF DECISION IS MADE NOT TO PUT SSL OPERATIONAL, BLAST WALL WILL SERVE TO KEEP EQPT RELATIVELY SAFE DURING THIS, SOMEWHAT UNSETTLING, PERIOD. I HAVE BEEN ADVISED BY PROCESSING STAFF THAT HO CHI MINH IS ALIVE AND LIVING IN HOA LONG, AND AM READY TO BELIEVE IT. REGARDS

44.3 Operations

44.3.1 MI8 ARDF Report

On 25 June, MI8 signalled AUM352 and Weapons (IS Group) in response to a previous AUM352 Signal⁷⁰⁸:

S E C R E T COMINT CHANNELS MI8/1344/9

FROM MI8. ARDF. YOUR SIGS 371.

ONE., REFERENCE SIGNAL IS COPY OF AUM 352 SIGS 324 OF 310155Z. MAY WHICH WAS NOT RECEIVED BY MI8.

TWO. HAVE DISCUSSED WITH TREHARNE YOUR REQUEST FOR CONVERSION OF MODEL +A+ TO MODEL +B+ BY FORWARDING PARTS TO YOU FROM WRE.

THREE. IN VIEW OF PROBLEMS YOU HAVE, HAD OVER PAST MONTH AND FACT YOU ARE NOT USING MODEL +A+ CMM WE BELIEVE BEST PLAN WOULD BE FOR YOU TO RETURN MODEL TO WRE WHO WOULD CARRY OUT CON-VERSION TO MODEL +B+. WE BELIEVE IT IS ESSENTIAL THAT THE CON-VERSION IS CARRIED OUT AS WRE WHERE BETTER FACILITIES ARE AVAILABLE. IN ADDITION AS NO DRAWINGS ARE AVAILABLE FOR EITHER EXPERIMENTAL MODEL CMM WRE ARE NOT TO SURE IF THEY COULD MATCH UP CONVERSION IN ISOLATION.

FOUR. MODEL +A+ PARTS THAT WOULD BE REQUIRED TO BE RETURNED TO WRE ARE AS FOLLOWS

ALFA. RACK

⁷⁰⁸ DSD Declassified, 547 Sig Tp in Vietnam (tranche2).



BRAVO. AERIAL PEDESTAL AND DISH.

CHARLIE. CONTROL BOX.

DELTA. DC/DC CONVERTOR.

ECHO. SUB CONTROL PANEL.

NO IN AID ITEMS EG RX CMM TAPE RECORDER OR PEN RECORDER WOULD NEED TO BE RETURNED AS THESE COULD BE OBTAINED FROM STOCKS NOW HELD BY ENGR WING FOR USE IN ENGINEERED MODELS

FIVE. WRE HAVE ALREADY STARTED WORK ON CONVERSION KIT REQUIRED AND ESTIMATE THEY WOULD REQUIRE APPROX TWO WEEK PERIOD FROM RECEIPT OF MODEL +A+ FROM SVN TO COMPLETE THE CONVERSION.

SIX. REQUEST YOU ADVISE ASP IF YOU CAN SEE ANY PROBLEMS IN RETURNING MODEL +A+ TO AUSTRALIA

SEVEN. RUSTRAK PARTS. HAVE YOU REQUESTED PARTS BY OP DEMAND QUERY. PLEASE ADVISE FULL DESCRIPTION OF PARTS REQUIRED AND WILL TRY AND HAVE SAME PURCHASED BY LOCAL PURCHASE

EIGHT. RA1217. SUGGEST YOU BACK LOAD TWO RECEIVERS TO [redacted] FOR OVERHAUL. WILL REPLACE BOTH RECEIVERS ASP AFTER RECEIPT OF RA1217 RECEIVERS DUE IN NEAR FUTURE.

NINE. AIRBORNE COLLECTION. THIS IS SECOND INDICATION WE HAVE HAD OF HF BEING HEARD IN AIRCRAFT THAT HAS NOT BEEN HEARD AT ONE OF MANY GROUND STATIONS IN YOUR AREA. CAN UNDERSTAND THIS IN RESPECT TO VHF OR HF IN DMZ AREA WHERE MOUNTAINS BLOCK RECEPTION FROM INTERCEPT STATIONS SITED ON COAST* BELIEVE YOU SHOULD FURTHER INVESTIGATE REASONS FOR NON RECEPTION AS IT COULD INDICATE A CHANGE OF ANTENNA TYPE BEING REQUIRED.

TEN. OUR FUTURE AIM IS TO HAVE AN INTERCEPT POSITION COLOCATED WITH ARDF WHEN LARGER AC BECOMES AVAILABLE CMM THIS POSITION IS MAINLY FOR DIRECT DF STEERAGE BUT COULD BE USED FOR AIRBORNE COLLECTION FOR LIMITED PERIODS

ELEVEN. STILL TRYING TO SORT OUT ARDF PAY WHICH HAS NOT YET BEEN PAID TO ANY MEMBER CMM WILL ADVISE FURTHER

44.3.2 547 Sig Tp Progress Report for June 1969

The 547 Sig Tp Progress Report for Jun 69⁷⁰⁹ stated:

PROGRESS REPORT FOR JUN69

ONE. SET ROOM.
POSN AND WATCH HRS. NO CHANGE

TWO. TASKING
ALPHA. PRIORITY TASKS

1. VCMB 05437	2. VCMB 00831
3. VCMB 05447	4. VCMB 05443
5. VCMB 00835	6. VCMB 05423
7. VCMB J1078	8. VCMB 05449

⁷⁰⁹ Documents received from ASD December 2015.



9. VCMB Y9082	10. VCMB 00709
11. VCMB 00679	12. VCMB 00667
13. VCMB 05448	14. VCMB J0772
15. VCMB N4807	16. VCMB 05445
17. VCHB 05444	18. VCMB J0459
19. VCMB Y9079	

BRAVO. DEV GROUPS.

NEW SEARCH PROGRAM INSTITUTED AS FOLLOWS:

13-19 JUN. 4000KHZ-5500KHZ ON 4 POSNS OF 125 KHZ EACH

20-26 JUN. 5500KHZ-6000KHZ DITTO

27 JUN – 3 JUL 4500KHZ-5000KHZ AND 6000KHZ-56000KHZ. BOTH BANDS BROKEN UP TO 2 POSNS EACH OF 25 KHZ.

NEW PROGRAMME APPEARS TO BE PRODUCING MANY NEW ITEMS.

THREE. ARDF

ALPHA. TOTAL FIXES – 147

BRAVO. GRADINGS. 5 GOOD 102 FAIR 15 POOR 25 CUTS

CHARLIE. FLYING HOURS 132.5.10

DELTA. 12 MSNS REDUCED DUE TO WEATHER.

1 MSN ABORT DUE HOSTILE EN ACTION⁷¹⁰

1 MSN REDUCED; 1 MSN ABORTED DUE ARDF MALFUNCTION.

ECHO. IN FINAL STAGES OF CRATING MODEL +A+ FOR AIR FREIGHT. POSSIBLY EXISTS IT MAY GO BY US R AND R FLT WHICH LEAVE SAIGON DAILY. WILL CONFIRM LATER OF DESPATCH.

FOUR. SSL

ALPHA. WRAP-UP REPORT COMPLETED AND COMD HAS SIGNED COVERING LETTER

RECOMMENDING RETENTION IN NUI DAT. HE HAS ALSO INDICATED THAT I MAY BE ABLE TO GET MY STOREMAN IF CEILINGS ARE NOT INVOLVED.

BRAVO. NO WORK AS YET ON BLAST WALL. WEATHER AND HEAVY ENGR COMMITMENT ON PACIFICATION PROGRAMME HAS DELAYED START.

CHARLIE. MY BIGGEST PROBLEM WITH IT AT THE MOMENT IS TRYING TO KEEP GRASS DOWN. CANNOT OBTAIN DEFOLIATION TILL ABOUT AUGUST AND GRASS 5 FEET TALL IN SOME PLACES.

FIVE. MISCELLANEOUS OPS.

ALPHA. ACV INSTN. NOW COMPLETE (INCL MOUNT FOR KW-7) AND CHECKED OUT OK.

BRAVO. AM CURRENTLY RECEIVING SPS STORES FOR REWIRING AND RECONFIGURING COMCEN.

CHARLIE. NEGOTIATING WITH NRV (C) AND MACV (J6) RE LOAN OF 2 X AN/PRC-77 AND KY-38 TO HAVE SECURE VOICE TO ARDF AC AND FROM OUR AC TO US AC. NEW VERTICAL WHIP ANTENNA FITTED TO AC HAS IMPROVED COMMS AIR-TO-GROUND AND CUT ANTENNA AND ELEVATION OF PRESENT SYSTEM HAS IMPROVED SECURE VOICE COMMS GROUND-TO-AIR. IN FACT, WE ARE RECEIVING RESULTS (FOR RETRANSMISSION) FROM US AC UP TO 60 MILES AWAY.

DELTA. COMD 1ATF HAS ACCEPTED INVITATION TO VISIT 409 RR GP PROBABLY NEXT WEEK.

SIX. VISITORS

3 AND 6 JUN. MR CHURCHES – SLO

13/14 JUN. CAPT CHRISTY, MSGT BUNT, SGT ASKINS, SGT DUBIEL – 6994 SEC SQN

14-16 JUN. SPT GONYO – 175 RR COY

18 JUN. SFC PUTNAM, SFC ROIG – 146 AVN CO

19 JUN. TSGT SPENCER, MSGT Merva – 6994TH SS

26 JUN. MAJ BOYCE, MAJ STOKES, LT DIMMOCK, CW2 DELANEY, SP5 BURNS – 146 AVN CO

⁷¹⁰ This event happened while flying through/around the Long Hai Mountains - Frank Finch was the operator. This was not the first occasion the aircraft received enemy fire. There were several other occasions but they were not documented.



28 JUN. MR CHURCHES, LT COL BRADLEY (DCO 509 GP), LT COL ROSCHER (EO 303 BN), MAJ REILLY (CO 175 CO) MAJ SNAVELY (AVN O 509 GP) LT DIMMOCK (COMMS OFFR 146 AVN CO), CWI HUNT PILOT 146 AVN CO)

30 JUN. LTC BRADLEY, CSM FIELD (509 GP)
DAILY. MAJ PAYNE. NEW SSO IIFFV IS MAJ CARTER.

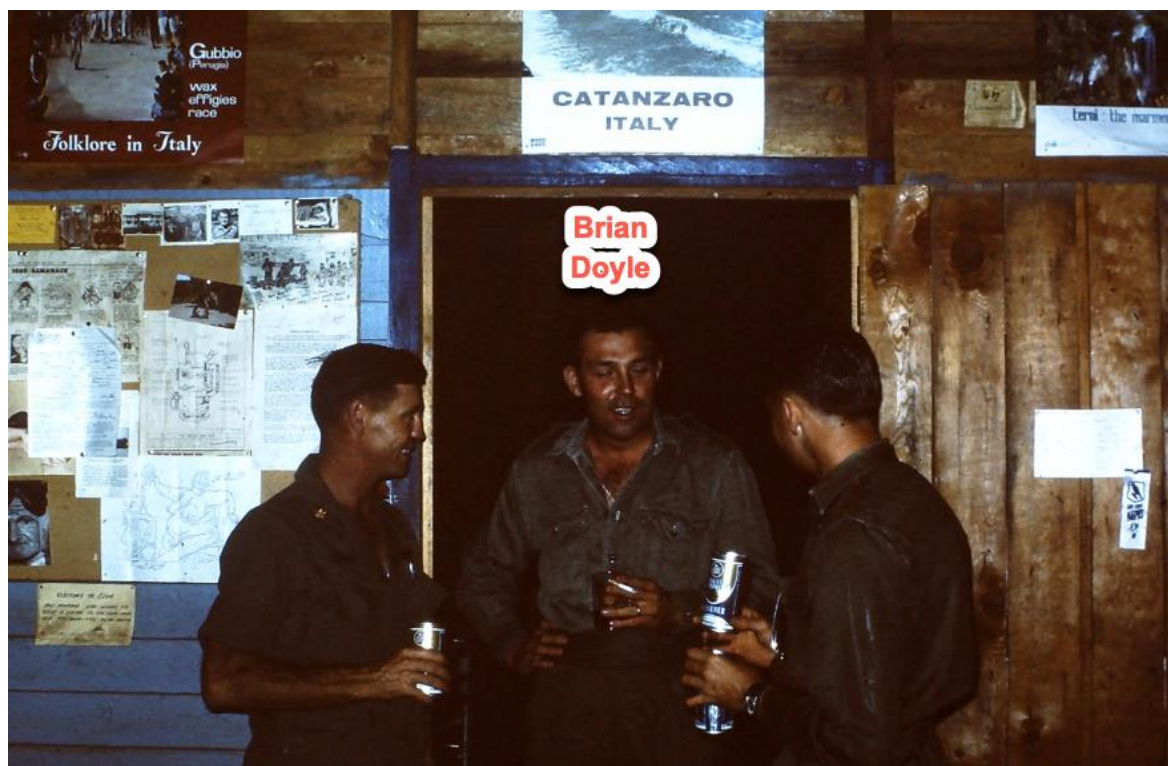


Figure 372: Brian Doyle with US Los

44.3.3 Troop VC/NVA Activities Summaries

The Troop Summary of Activities and sketch map covering the period 30 May to 5 June 1969 contained the following⁷¹¹:

GENERAL

During the reporting period HQ NVA 33rd Regt has moved approximately 42 km SE and is currently located in the same area as elements of the VC 274th Regt (BIEN HOA/LONG THANH/PHUOC TUY border area).

HQ VC 5th DIV

On 12th May, approximately 62 km ENE of BIEN HOA.

HQ NVA 33rd REGT

Located 49 km SE of BIEN HOA.

HQ NVA 174TH REGT

63 km ENE of BIEN HOA on 26 May.

⁷¹¹ ASD archives of 547 Sig Tp material.



HQ VC 274 REGT

39 km SE of BIEN HOA in the LONG KHANH/BIEN HOA/PHUOC TUY border area.

HQ VC 1 BN 274 REGT

Fixed on 17 February 36 km SE of BIEN HOA.

HQ VC 2 BN 274 REGT

Approximately 31 km SE of BIEN HOA.

HQ VC 3 BN 274 REGT

Approximately 42 km SE of BIEN HOA.

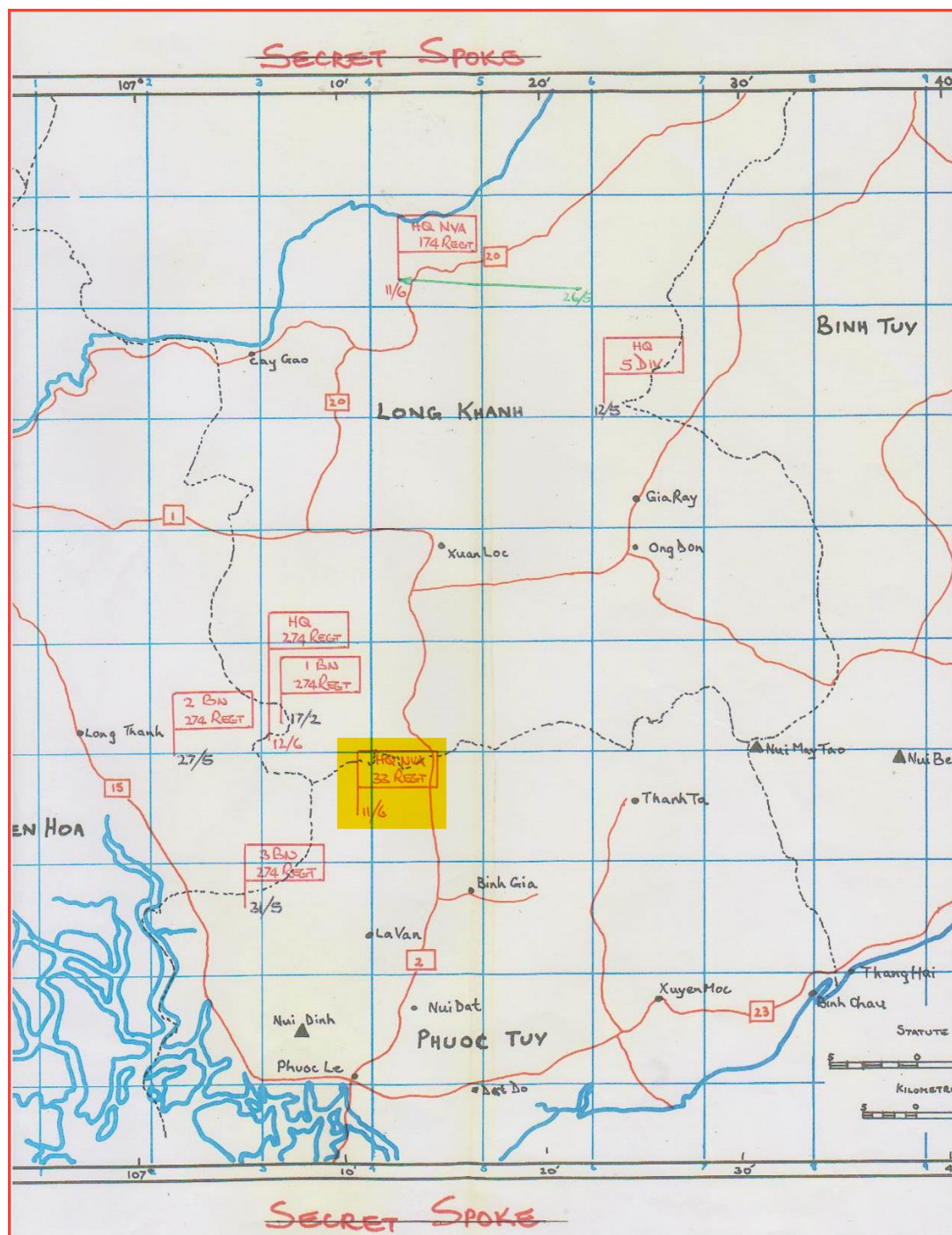


Figure 373: Map Summary 30 May - 5 June 1969

44.4 The Battle of Binh Ba

44.4.1 Operation HAMMER

The Battle of Binh Ba, also known as *Operation HAMMER*, was a hard-fought, but one-sided, battle fought in and around the village of Binh Ba during the period 6 to 9 June.

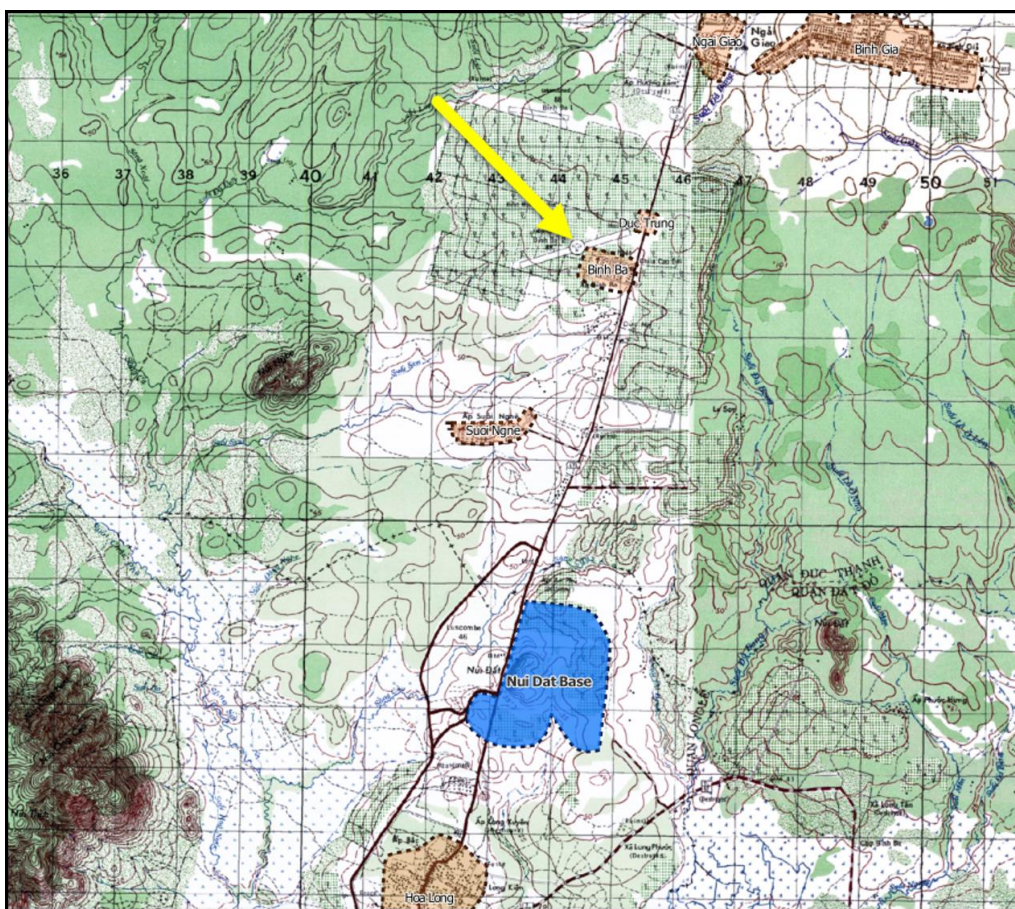


Figure 374: Location of Binh Ba

44.4.2 Comd 1ATF Advised of NVA 33rd Regt Move

More than a week before the operation the Troop had briefed Brigadier Pearson along with Intelligence and operations Staff that ARDF fixes had indicated the movement of 33rd NVA Regt⁷¹² into Phuoc Tuy Province from the north-east towards the general area of Nui Dat^{713 714}.

44.4.3 HQ 1 ATF Int Staff Consideration

HQ 1ATF Int Staff considered the possibility of an attack by the 33rd NVA Regt on Nui Dat supported by 274th VC Regt.

44.4.4 Additional Advice from 547 Sig Tp

On 2 June, the Troop again briefed the Task Force Intelligence Staff with the news that the 33rd NVA Regt had crossed the Song Rai River and was located only a few kilometres from Binh Ba near Binh Gia hamlet. The staff considered that linking up with the 274th VC Regt or D440 Bn was a possible scenario for an

⁷¹² In 1968, The Enemy Order of Battle listed, in part, the 33rd NVA Regt as having a HQ with supporting elements, three battalions and considerable firepower. It had an estimated strength of 1075 men.

⁷¹³ Most of the information about the Troop's involvement in the lead-up to the Battle of Binh Ba was taken from various writings by Adrian Bishop.

⁷¹⁴ For further detailed information the following is recommended: Chamberlain, E.P., *The 33rd Regiment – North Vietnamese Army: Their Story (and the Battle of Binh Ba)*, 2014



attack on Nui Dat. Fortunately, the Troop was able to also advise that 274 VC Regt transmitters remained in their normal locations as traffic did not indicate it was preparing for battle.

44.4.5 Enemy Locations

The following graphic depicts the movement of the 33 Regiment and other enemy locations:

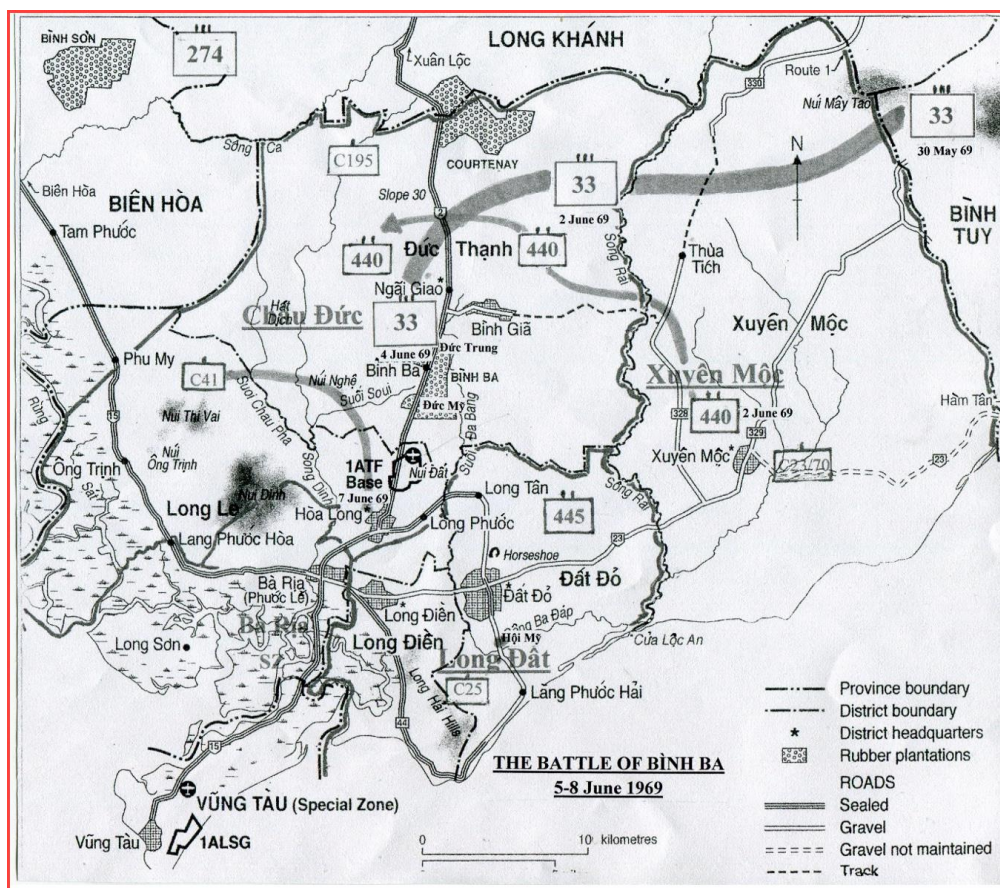


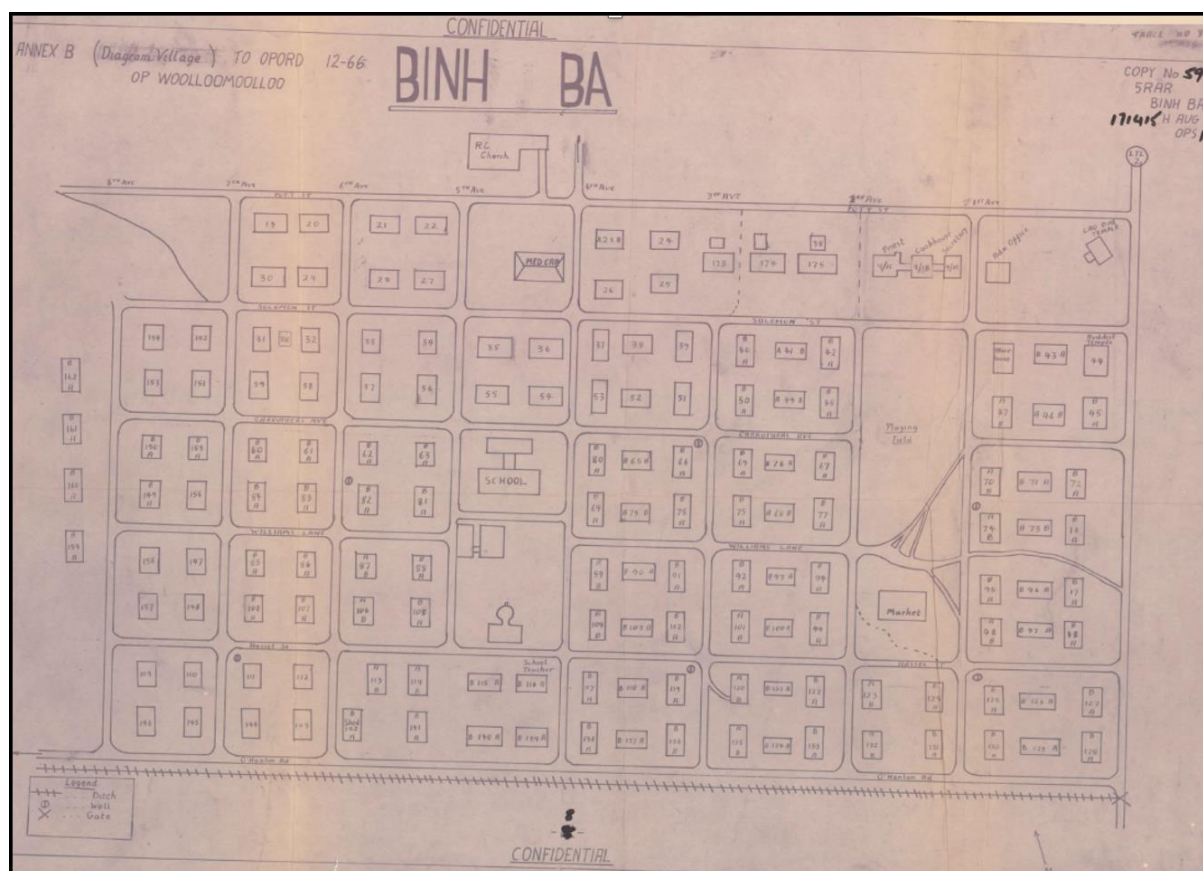
Figure 375: Direction of NVA 33 Regiment and enemy locations⁷¹⁵

44.4.6 Ready Reaction Force

Due to the early warning time provided by the Troop, the Commander 1ATF had several days to prepare and deploy his Ready Reaction Force⁷¹⁶ to any location that the 33rd Regt might attack.

⁷¹⁵ Graphic courtesy of Ernie Chamberlain.

⁷¹⁶ The 1 ATF Ready Reaction Force consisted of an understrength D Company 5 RAR, a troop of Centurion tanks from the 1st Armoured Regiment and a troop of M-113 APCs from the 3rd Cavalry Regiment. In direct support was 105th Battery, Royal Australian Artillery.

Figure 376: Sketch of Binh Ba - August 1966⁷¹⁷

44.4.7 The Battle

The Battle for Binh Ba ensued⁷¹⁸:

The 1 ATF Ready Reaction Force under the command of Major Murray Blake consisted of an understrength D Company 5 RAR (of just 65 men), a troop of Centurion tanks from the 1st Armoured Regiment and a troop of M-113 armoured personnel carriers from the 3rd Cavalry Regiment and subsequently reacted to the incident. In direct support was 105th Battery, Royal Australian Artillery. Meanwhile, elements of the 1st Battalion 33 NVA Regiment took up defensive positions within the village and prepared to fight to the death. By 10:30 the Australians approached Binh Ba from the south, and were engaged by a volley of RPG fire from a row of houses. After clearing and evacuating much of the village's population, D Company assaulted the village from east to west following preparation from helicopter gunships of No. 9 Squadron RAAF. South Vietnamese Regional Force troops were deployed into blocking positions. Four tanks led the assault, with the infantry remaining mounted in the APCs following behind.

44.4.8 Outcome

In this vicious battle, a large enemy force was defeated by early intelligence, rapid reaction, skill, courage and fire power. The 'Battle of Binh Ba' ranks as one of the major military victories of the Australian Force in Vietnam⁷¹⁹:

⁷¹⁷ AWM RCDIG 1030128.pdf AWM 95 7/5/7 Part 1, 5 RAR Ops Log Annexes Part 1, F Annex C-3.

⁷¹⁸ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Battle_of_Binh_Ba. [There are several errors in the Wikipedia account.].

⁷¹⁹ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Battle_of_Binh_Ba



When the 2-day battle was over there were 126 enemy killed in action, 6 confirmed wounded (but probably many more), 8 prisoners of war taken, 1 Hoi Chanh surrendered and 28 detainees held. Own force casualties were 5 KIA (1 Australian and 4 South Vietnamese), and 18 wounded (11 Australian and 7 South Vietnamese).⁷²⁰

The battle was one of the major victories of the Australians in Vietnam and although they would occasionally encounter communist Main Force units in the future, it effectively marked the end of such large scale clashes. Indeed, as a result of such heavy losses suffered at Binh Ba the North Vietnamese were temporarily forced to move out of Phuoc Tuy and into the adjoining province of Long Khanh. The Royal Australian Regiment, the 3rd Cavalry Regiment and 1st Armoured Regiment were subsequently awarded the battle honour 'Binh Ba', one of only five presented to Australian units during the war. It ranks as one of the major Australian victories of the war.

44.4.9 Comd 1 ATF Comments

In mid-2012, Major General C. M. I. Pearson, AO, DSO, OBE, MC. (Retd) wrote⁷²¹:

I had the privilege of commanding the 1st Australian Task Force in Vietnam for almost 12 months in 1968/1969. I was therefore well aware of the importance of and the great results achieved by 547 Signal Troop during that time.

Although there was a strong restriction as to the use of the information given us by 547 Troop, we managed to advise our operational troops of the location, impending moves and so on, of the enemy. This allowed our combat troops to carry out operations successfully, particularly night ambushes.

Following the successful routing of the enemy in the Battle of Binh Ba in 1969, 547 Troop continued to monitor the withdrawal of the enemy which showed them heading directly towards one of our units to the north. Although the information regarding the retreat of this large force was passed to the unit in the usual way, the enemy were able to side step them as they were occupied dealing with a smaller enemy group. This was the only occasion I can recall not using the information provided by 547 Troop properly.

As a general observation, I would say that 547 Troop played an outstanding role in the Vietnam War. Their reports caused many enemy casualties and saved the Australian Forces many lives. It played a large part in accounting for the high degree of success of our operations.

The Australian Army official history⁷²² contends:

(in) the enemy mystery" ... there seemed to be no clear rationale for their ((NVA/VC)) actions. Australian commanders and intelligence officers were baffled. During the initial occupation of Binh Ba, 33 NVA Regiment had apparently maintained strict radio silence, eluding task force signals intelligence.

That account in the official history is incorrect and needs clarification. A copy of an article written by Brigadier E.P. Chamberlain CSC (Retd) is shown at Annex N.

⁷²⁰ <http://www.5rar.asn.au/tours/battle-binh-ba.htm>

⁷²¹ Draft letter to Defence Honours and Awards Tribunal.

⁷²² Extract from *Fighting to the Finish The Australian Army and the Vietnam War 1968 - 1975* by Ashley Ekins with Ian McNeill> Allen & Unwin in association with the Australian War Memorial, page237.



44.5 Troop VC/NVA Activities Summaries Continue

44.5.1 6-12 June 68⁷²³

:

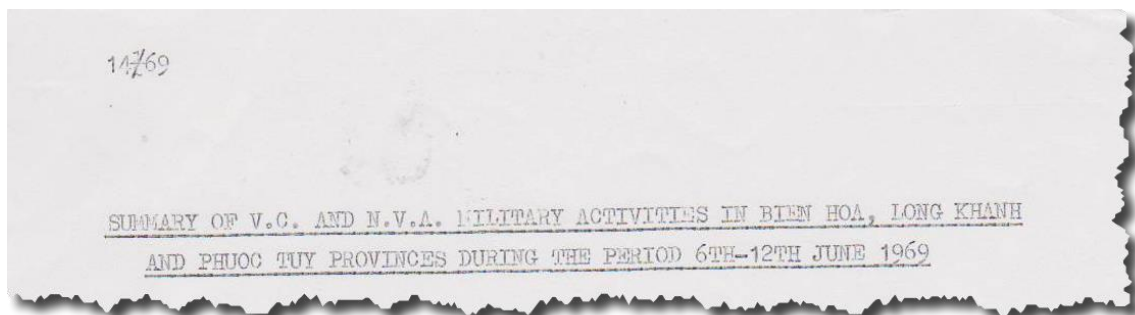


Figure 377: Summary of Activities 6 - 12 June 1969

SIGNIFICANT REPLOYMENTS

On 11th June, HQ N.V.A. 174th Regt was fixed approximately 17km W of its 26th June location.

HQ V.C. 5TH DIV

On 12th May, approximately 62km ENE of BIEN HOA.

HQ N.V.A. 33RD REGT

Located 47km SE of BINH HOA.

HQ N.V.A. 174TH REGT

Approximately 43km NE of BIEN HOA.

HQ V.C. 274TH REGT

37klm SE of BINH HOA in the IONG KHANH/BINH HOA/PHUOC TUY border area.

HQ 1 BN V.C. 274TH REGT

No fix since 17th February when it was located 36SE of BIEN HOA.

HQ. 2 BN V.C. 274TH REGT

Approximately 31km SE of BIEN HOA.

HQ 3 BN V.C. 274TH REGT

Approximately 42km SE of BIEN HOA

⁷²³ Ibid

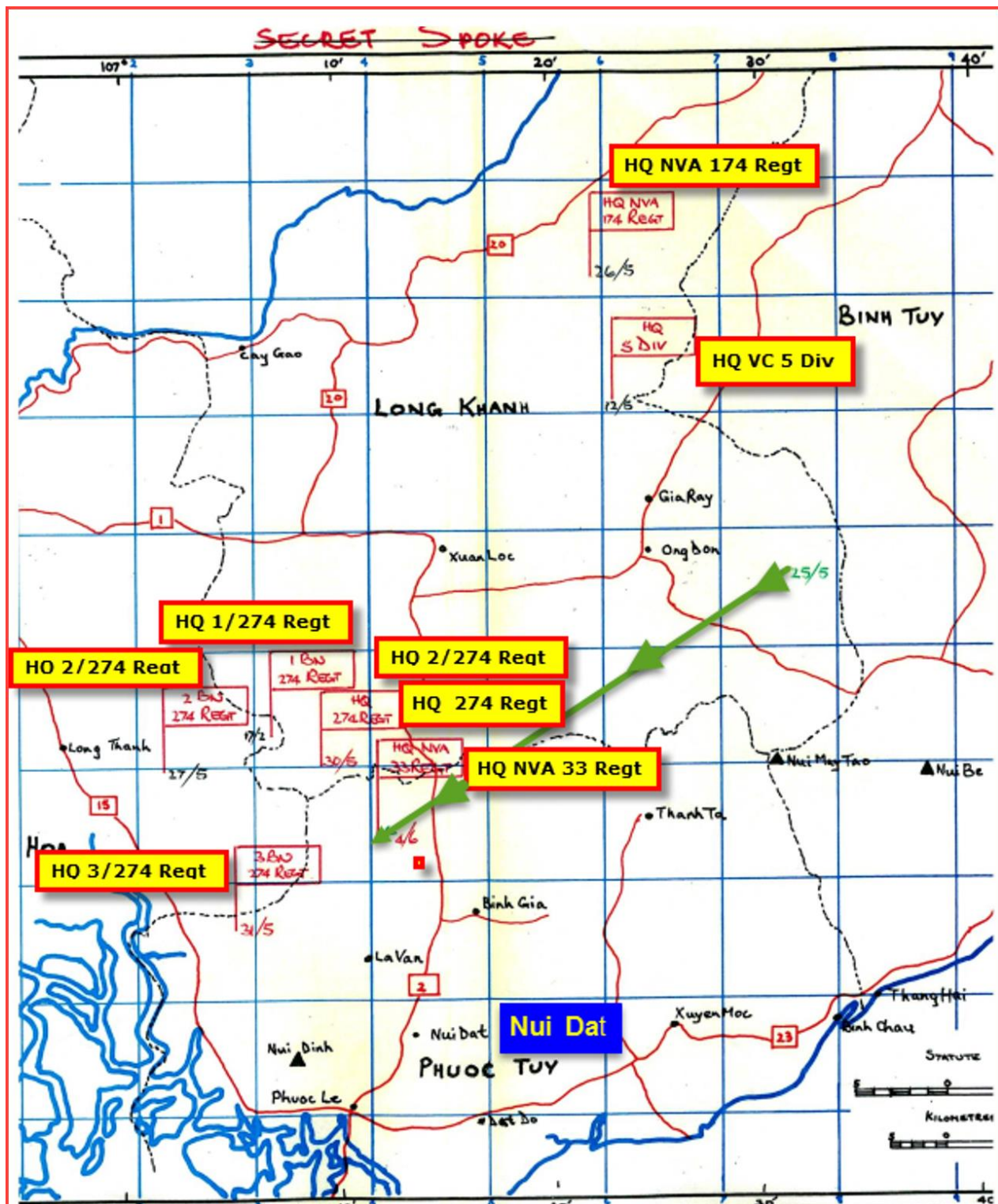


Figure 378: Map Summary 6 – 12 Jun 69



44.5.2 13 - 20 June 1969⁷²⁴:

SIGNIFICANT REDEPLOYMENTS

During the reporting period, HQ VC 274th Regt, 1 Bn VC 274th Regt and HQ NVA 33rd Regt have all redeployed. HQ VC 274th Regt was located on 16th June 10 km SW of its 12th June location, 2 Bn VC 274th Regt has moved approximately 10 km SE and HQ NVA 33rd Regt has moved approximately 25 km N.

HQ VC 5th DIV

On 12th May, approximately 62 km ENE of BIEN HOA.

HQ NVA 33rd REGT

Located 47 km SE of BIEN HOA.

HQ NVA 95th REGT⁷²⁵

Approximately 62 km E of BIEN HOA.

HQ NVA 174TH REGT

On 11 June, approximately 48 km NE of BIEN HOA.

HQ VC 274 REGT

47 km SE of BIEN HOA.

HQ VC 1 BN 274 REGT

No fix since 17 February when it was located 36 km SE of BIEN HOA.

HQ VC 2 BN 274 REGT

Approximately 39 km SE of BIEN HOA.

HQ VC 3 BN 274 REGT

Approximately 44 km SE of BIEN HOA.

⁷²⁴ Ibid.

⁷²⁵ First noted reference.

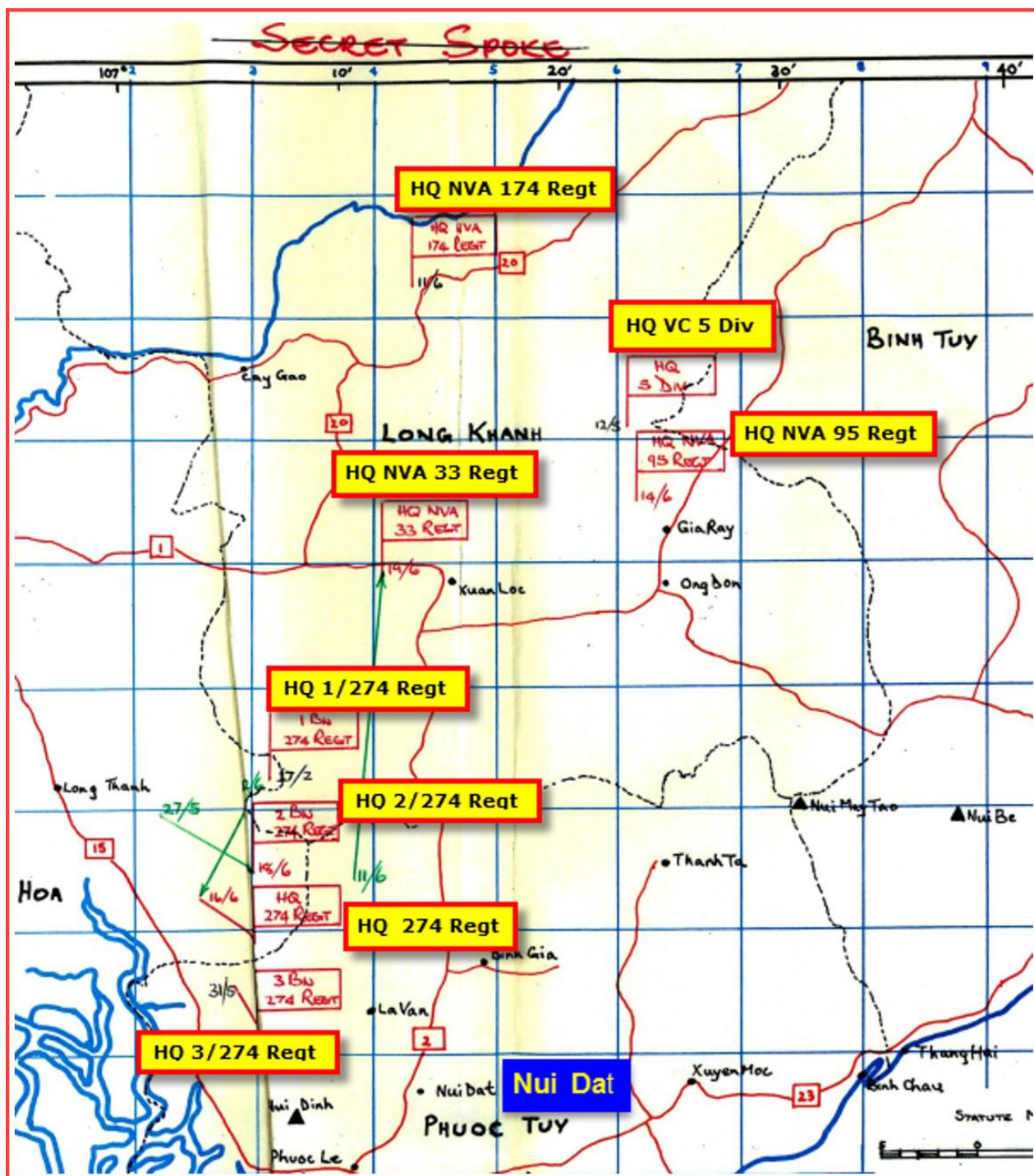


Figure 379: Summary Map 13 – 20 Jun 69



44.6 274 VC Regiment

44.6.1 An Early Warning to a Thai Fire Support Base

The previous map shows ARDF fixes of the locations of enemy units in the area before and post the attack on the Thai base at Loc An⁷²⁶.

44.6.2 Initial Detection

In early June, some elements of 274 VC Regt had been off the air or just observing radio silence for some time.

Jeff Payne⁷²⁷ recalled⁷²⁸:

In early June 1969, I was the operator in the ARDF aircraft piloted by Lieutenant Tony Sedgers circling to the west of Binh Son rubber plantation searching for possible 274 Regt transmissions.

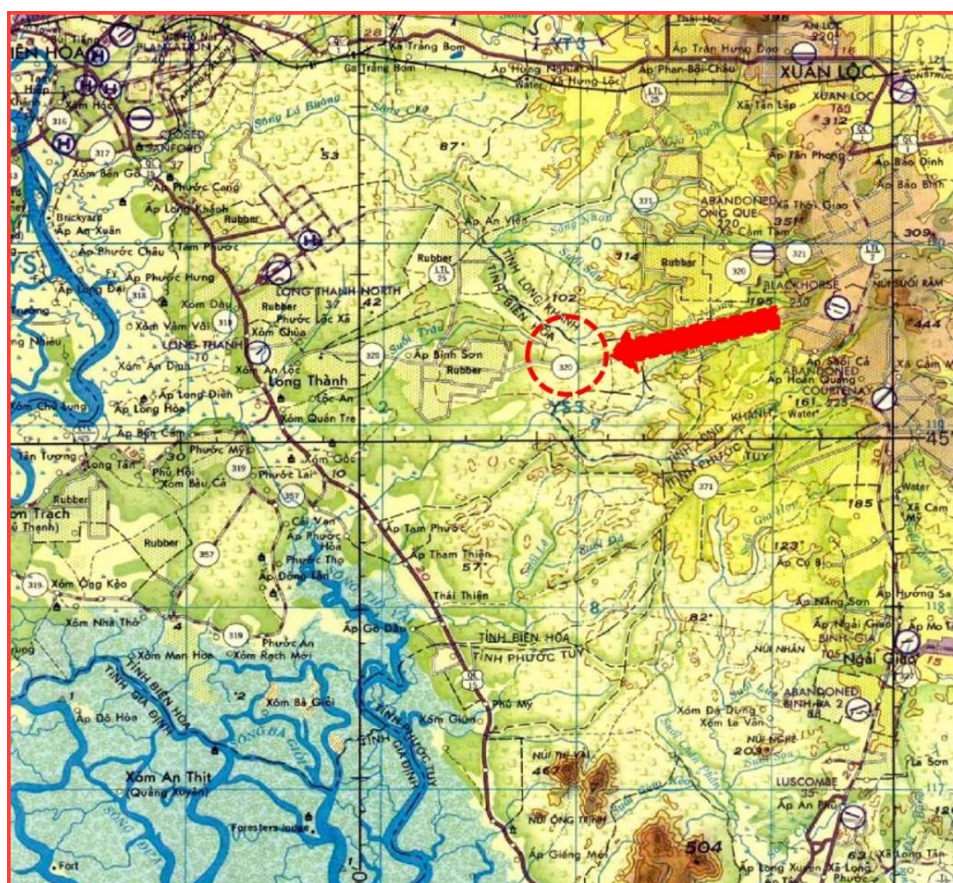


Figure 380: Aircraft Circling Position

⁷²⁶ Ibid.

⁷²⁷ ARDF Operator.

⁷²⁸ Email to Bob Hartley.



Suddenly a very loud signal was heard. From its volume and the signal display on the CRO⁷²⁹ the transmitter appeared to be very close to where the aircraft was circling.

I immediately started the tape recorder in the equipment rack to ensure that no information would be missed and by secure radio informed my colleagues at the Troop the frequency of the transmitter and asked them to let me know when one of our operators was tuned in and copying the transmission.

While communicating with the Troop I commenced a DF run flying a track east to west getting excellent lines of bearing.

44.6.3 Plotting and Analysis

When the DF run was completed, Jeff passed his results back to the Troop by secure radio and the run was plotted by the ARDF Controller (Bob Hartley). The resultant fix was immediately passed on to the Processing Section.

44.6.4 Identification and Low-level Code

Meanwhile, at the Troop, operators were also copying the transmission that was passing the low level four figure code traffic and they recognised the transmitter as belonging to 274 Regt. The intercepted traffic was passed immediately to the Processing Section for decryption.

44.6.5 Decryption and Analysis

After decryption and translation of the messages, analysis indicated that 274 VC Regt was soon to be in combat and that all wounded would be evacuated to the hospital in the May Tao Mountains.

44.6.6 Passed to IIFFV and Target Identified

All of the results were quickly passed up the chain to II FFV. By Flash signal precedence⁷³⁰. After consultation with the US Intelligence staff by the Opscom, it was assessed that the most likely target was the base camp of the Thai Army's 2nd Battalion/1st Brigade at *Loc An*, about five km south-east of *Long Thanh* District Town and occupied by a battalion minus. At that time there was also one USA military advisor present at the base camp.

⁷²⁹ Cathode Ray Oscilloscope fitted into the ARDF equipment rack.

⁷³⁰ FLASH messages are to be handled as fast as humanly possible, ahead of all other messages, with in-station handling time not to exceed 10 minutes. Messages of lower precedence are interrupted on all circuits involved until the handling of the FLASH message is completed.

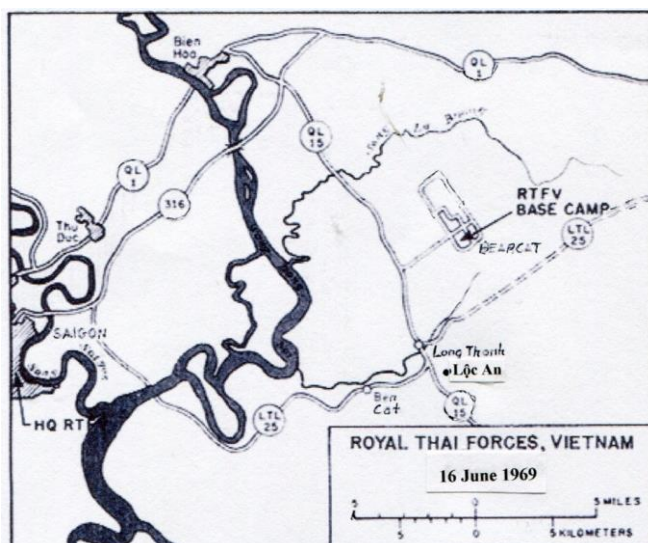


Figure 381: Thai Army locations - June 1969⁷³¹

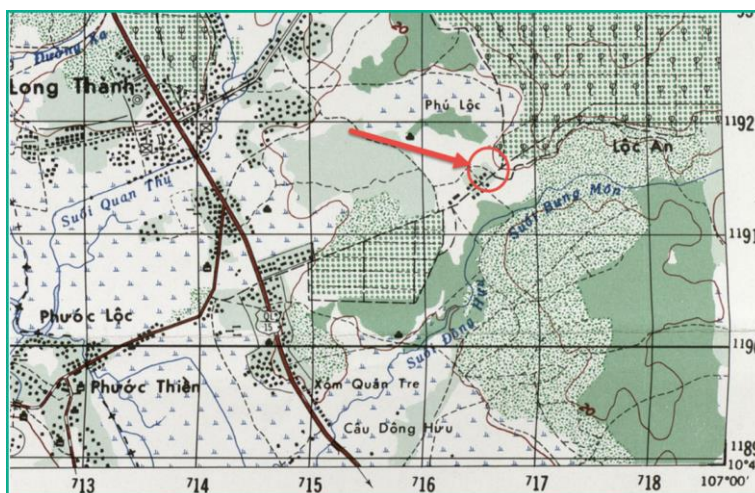


Figure 382: Location of Thai FSB

44.6.7 Defensive Preparations

Arrangements were quickly made to harden the defences of the Thai position and prepare for an attack. Helicopter gunships and AC-47 Spooky aircraft were also placed on immediate standby.

44.6.8 Attack

Just after midnight on 15 June, the VC launched an attack on the Thai base perimeter⁷³². The VC were hit with tremendous firepower and were forced to call off the attack and retreat.

44.6.9 Aftermath

The following morning, 212 enemy bodies were counted.

⁷³¹ Graphic courtesy of Ernie Chamberlain.

⁷³² Much of the above information on the prelude to the attack and subsequent actions was taken from various emails from Adrian Bishop, Barry Nisbet and Ernie Chamberlain.



In a later email to Steve Hart, Bob Payne (SSO II FFV) stated:

I remember the info on the 274th being key to what and where they were going to hit. We didn't have secure commo with them so I borrowed a copter and flew it down to brief our USA Colonel their advisor. I remember it because as we approached the helicopter pad a rocket hit just before we landed. Secondly, I remember later flying over the Thai Base and seeing the VC bodies stacked up in a pile like cord wood. You guys played a major role in tipping off what was planned and when it would happen.

44.6.10 Sketch Map of Attack

The following sketch of the battle was prepared by US military historians a few days after the attack⁷³³:

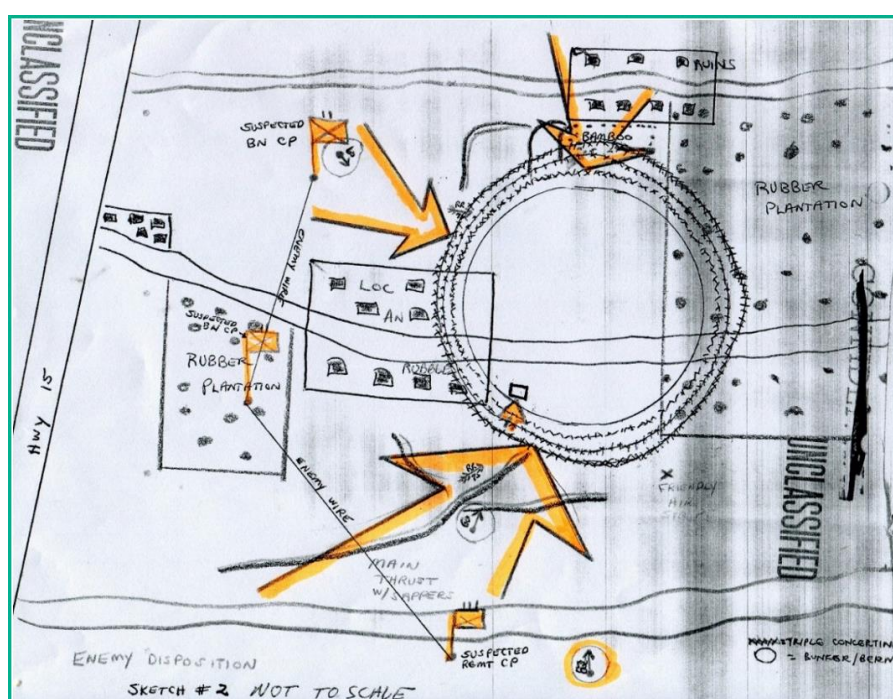


Figure 383: Sketch of attack

⁷³³ Courtesy of Ernie Chamberlain.



Figure 384: Thai Personnel Counting VC Weapons⁷³⁴

44.6.11 Follow-up Action

As a follow up, based on the original 547 Sig Tp information, the Task Force Commander directed 6RAR into ambush action on the expected 274 Regt withdrawal routes eastward to the *May Tao* base area. As a result, in several actions, at least 22 VC were KIA and a large number of weapons, stores and documents captured. A VC POW also confirmed that the group had been engaged in evacuating wounded from 274 Regt following their attack on the Thai Base.

The 1 ATF INTSUM No. 171/89, dated 20 June 1969 reported⁷³⁵:

AO VINCENT

(a) (200645H) at YS498896 10/D/6 RAR contacted an estimated 50 enemy moving from WEST to EAST. Results: 22 enemy KIA (BC). Captured were: Six AK-47, one RPG-2, 26 grenades, a quantity of medical supplies, and a quantity of documents.

Enemy Identifications, Locations and Movements.

(a) (200645H) Documents recovered from bodies in vicinity of YS498896 tentatively identify 2 Coy, 1 Bn, 274 VC Regt.

⁷³⁴ <http://www.vietnam.ttu.edu/virtualarchive/items.php?rec=1681>

⁷³⁵ AWM RCDIG1027957 AWM 95, 1/4/156 HQ 1ATF Commanders Diary Annexes E-N 1-30 June 1969.

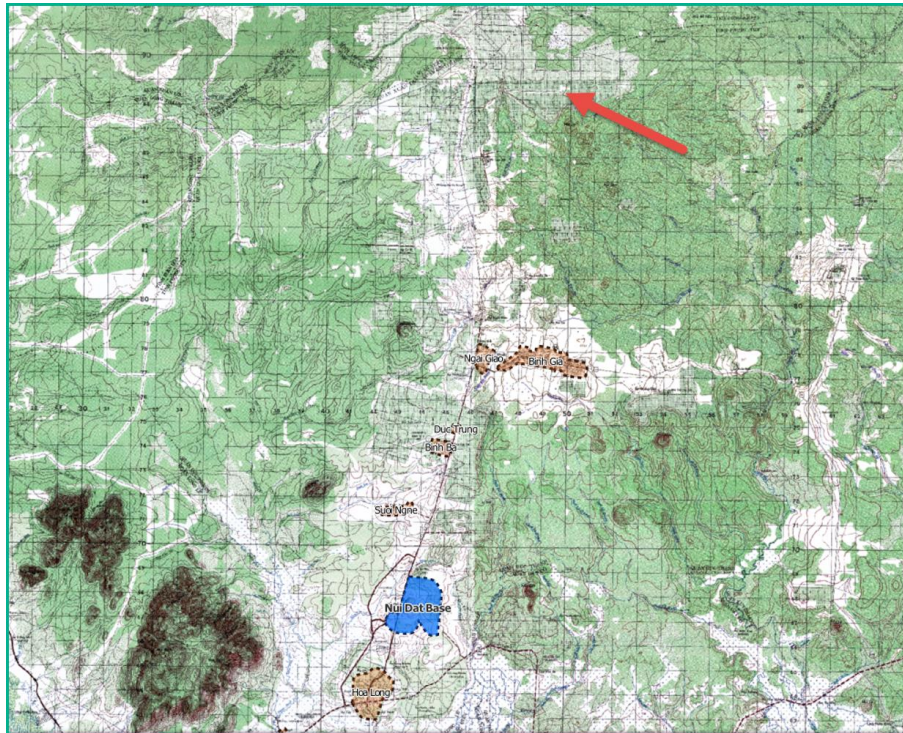


Figure 385: 6RAR Ambush Position #1

1

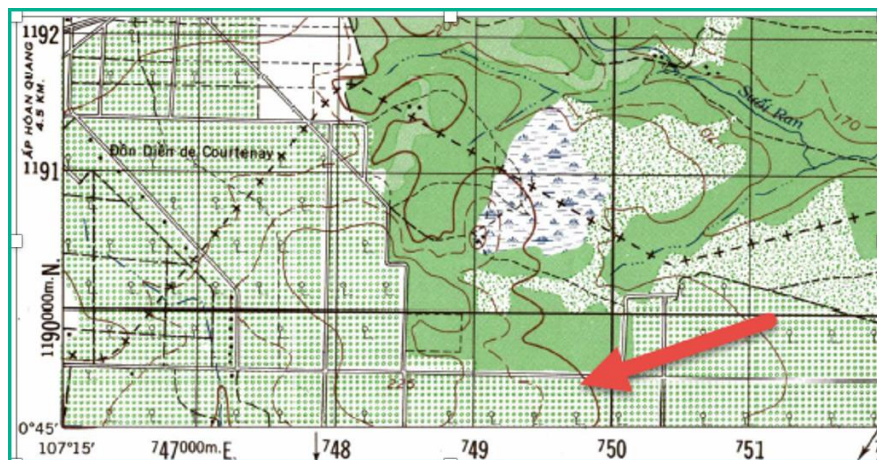


Figure 386: 6RAR Ambush Position #2



44.6.11.1 Contact Report

The following are extracts from the 10 Platoon, D Company, 6RAR Contact Report⁷³⁶:

Y498896: AT LOC STATED, 10/D/6 RAR CON AN ESTIMATED 50 EN MOVING WEST TO EAST/WEST: 22 EN KIA (BC). CAPTURED WERE 6 AK-47, 1 RPG. 26 GRENADES, A QUANTITY OF MEDICAL SUPPLIES AND A QUANTITY OF DOCUMENTS. PI had established an ambush position in thick bamboo with the killing ground the plantation track in the Courtenay Rubber. It had been in place for 2 days and was 15 mins from switching from night to day time ambushing. 60 enemy, consisting of a portage party, a litter party, and a protection party, walked along the track and into the ambush. The claymores were fired when maximum enemy were in the killing ground. They were followed by 3xMG fire and SA fire. Enemy fired a few wild shots and withdrew S and W. A sweep was launched at 0718hrs. Contacted 60 VC resulting in 22 VC KIA (BC), many blood trails, the capture of 6 AK47, 26 Blast grenades, 1 RPG launcher, a qty of assorted small arms, documents and Medical supplies. 5 of the 11 claymores failed to explode because of faulty detonators. They need daily inspection according to PI OC. However, the pl cleaned daily the link rds of the M60 and this paid off because none of the three M60 had a failure and each fired 500rds. Mortars fired in support. Equip Failure: Claymore

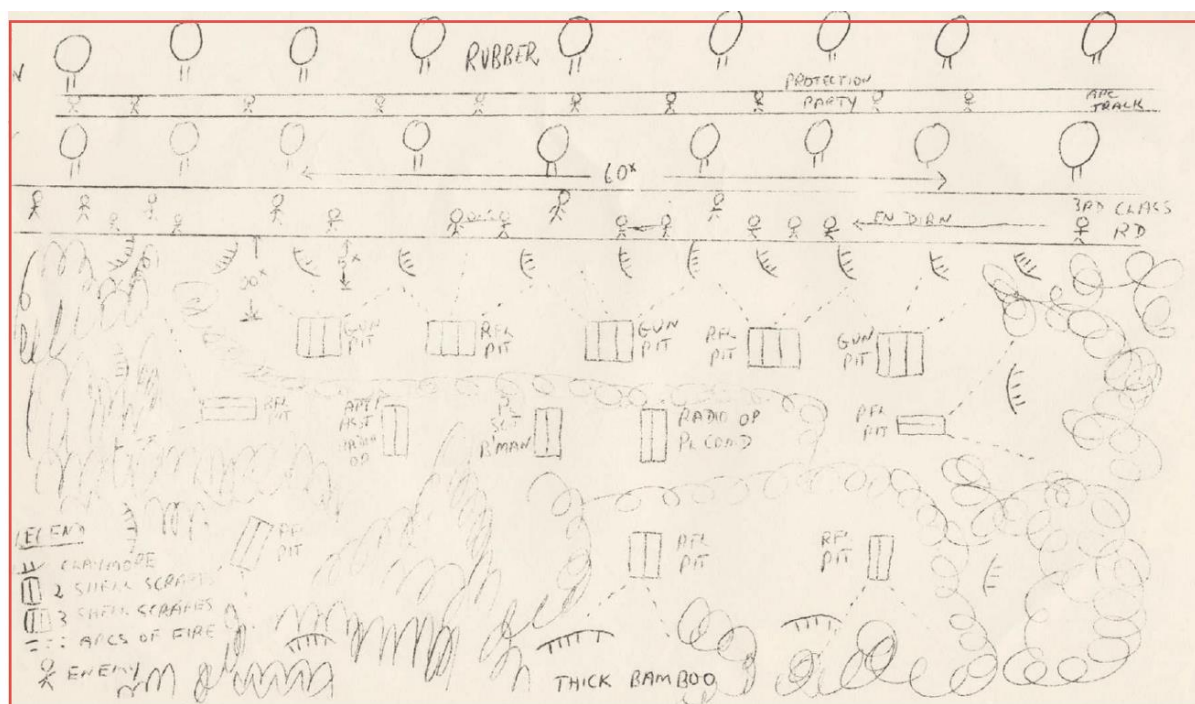


Figure 387: Platoon Commander's diagram of contact

44.6.11.2 POW Report

A VC POW also confirmed that the group had been engaged in evacuating wounded from 274 Regt following their attack on the Thais⁷³⁷.

⁷³⁶ AWM RCDIG 1030146, AWM95, 7/6/22 6 RAR Commanders Diary Annexes 1-31 July 69.

⁷³⁷ Email from Ernie Chamberlain 18 Sept 2015: It is noted that 274 VC Regiment's defeat at Loc An is not included in the History of the 5th VC Division (1991, 2005) nor in the 2006 memoir of the Regiment's commander at Loc An – Nguyen Nam Hung.

This afternoon, I received a copy of the mid-2015 274th Regiment History (ie which they are called by their preferred title: ie the “4th Regiment”). To my surprise, it does include a very brief mention of the attack on the Thais at Loc An on 16 June 1969 as follows:

"On 15 and 16 June 1969, the 1st Battalion – together with District troops, attacked the Helena (Long Thanh) post defended by the Thai troops. We killed and wounded many of the Thai's "Black Panther" troops."



44.6.12 Sequence of Events

The excellent teamwork resulting from the original intercepted transmission, identification, ARDF fix, message decryption, translation and analysis of 547 Sig Tp personnel accounted for 234 enemy KIA in just four days with few friendly casualties.

44.6.13 274 VC Regt Decimated

The 274 Regt was decimated during this action, and for the remainder of the 1ATF time in Phuoc Tuy Province the Regiment did not pose as great a threat to operations by 1ATF personnel.

44.6.14 No Recognition for 547 Sig Tp

While the ambushing elements of 6RAR had been positioned on the basis of the 547 Sig Tp intercepts, this and the warning to the Thais, has never been acknowledged anywhere in any history.

Note:

Steve Hart has also written about the event and has had it published in several magazines titled
The Decimation of 274 VC Regiment
and
A Tactical Sigint Success Story

44.6.15 Associated Events

The following contacts reported in the HQ 1ATF INTSUM⁷³⁸ may also be associated with the above events:

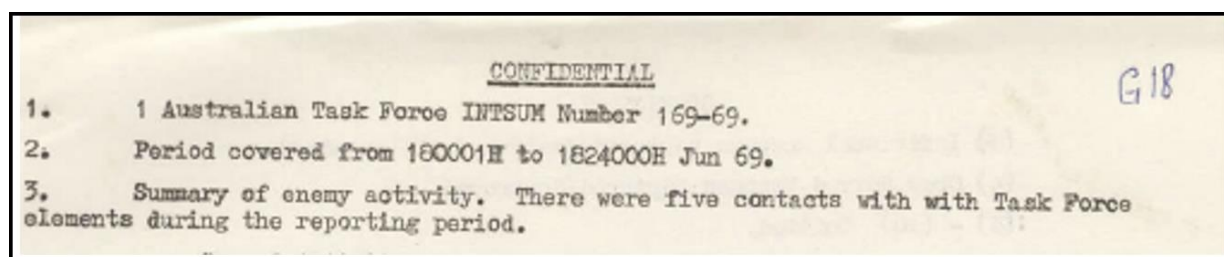


Figure 388: INTSUM extract #1

⁷³⁸ RCDIG1027957, AWM95, 1/4/156 HQ 1ATF Commander's Diary 1-30 Jun 69, Annexes E-N, F G18.



7. Enemy Identifications, Locations and Movement.

a. Documents recovered in a bunker system at YS403824 on 16 Jun 69 by B/6 RAR identifies a Signals platoon of D440 Battalion. Comment: This is in the vicinity of an RV reported by a PW. The RV was to be between C41 and D440 for a move toward Hoa Long on 6 Jun 69. The presence of a D440 signals element in this location could also be connected with recent 1 ATF contacts with members of the battalion in the Hat Dich and Nui Thi areas. It could serve as a report station on a commo liaison route between the battalions base in Long Khanh and food sources in the Hat Dich and Nui Thi areas.

Figure 389: INTSUM extract #2

c. Documents captured by 6 RAR at YS395797, on 24 Jun 69, indentify elements of HQ D440 LF Bn and indicated that elements of the HQ have occupied a base camp in this location since 30 Jan 69 for an unknown period.

Figure 390: INTSUM extract #3

Conclusions

5. Enemy activity in the period has confirmed reports of a new upsurge in his operations between 1 and 10 Jun 69. Sensors have detected a movement SOUTH of 274 VC Regt to the NORTHERN and WESTERN borders of the Province. The forces within the Province appear to be concentrating on attacking military installations, logistic bases, fire support bases and occupying civilian areas. The continued presence in the Province of 33 NVA Regt and the new indications of Southward moves by 274 VC Regt elements indicate that it is likely that another high point in the offensive can be expected to closely follow the current upsurge. The bulk of D 445 LF Bn remains unlocated and it is possible that it may have moved into the LONG HAI Hills and other areas, prior to an assault on LONG DIEN.

Figure 391: INTSUM extract #4

d. Activity. Sensors indicate that the SOUTHWARD movement of elements of 274 VC Regt continued during the period. The contacts of 6 RAR with elements of 33 NVA Regt show that these elements of the Regiment WEST of Route 2 may have broken out to the NORTH EAST.

Figure 392: INTSUM extract #5

44.7 Troop VC/NVA Activities Summaries Continue

44.7.1 (21 – 29) June 1969 ⁷³⁹

SIGNIFICANT REDEPLOYMENTS

Between 14 and 20 June, HQ NVA 95 Regt moved approximately 44 km NNW, across the SONG DONG NAI, and is currently located in north-central LONG KHANH in the vicinity of YT448558. Also relocated to the north of the DONG NAI is the HQ of NVA 174th Regt which moved approximately 15 km between 11 and 25 June.

HQ VC 5th DIV

⁷³⁹ Ibid. Possible typo - these dates should most probably be 21 – 26 June.



On 12 May, approximately 62 km ENE of BIEN HOA.

HQ NVA 33rd REGT

Located 35 km ESE of BIEN HOA.

HQ NVA 95th REGT⁷⁴⁰

Approximately 60 km NE of BIEN HOA.

HQ NVA 174TH REGT

58 km NE of BIEN HOA.

HQ VC 274 REGT

36 km SE of BIEN HOA.

HQ VC 1 BN 274 REGT

No fix since 17 February when it was located 36 km SE of BIEN HOA.

HQ VC 2 BN 274 REGT

Approximately 39 km SE of BIEN HOA.

HQ VC 3 BN 274 REGT

Approximately 44 km SE of BIEN HOA.

⁷⁴⁰ First noted reference.

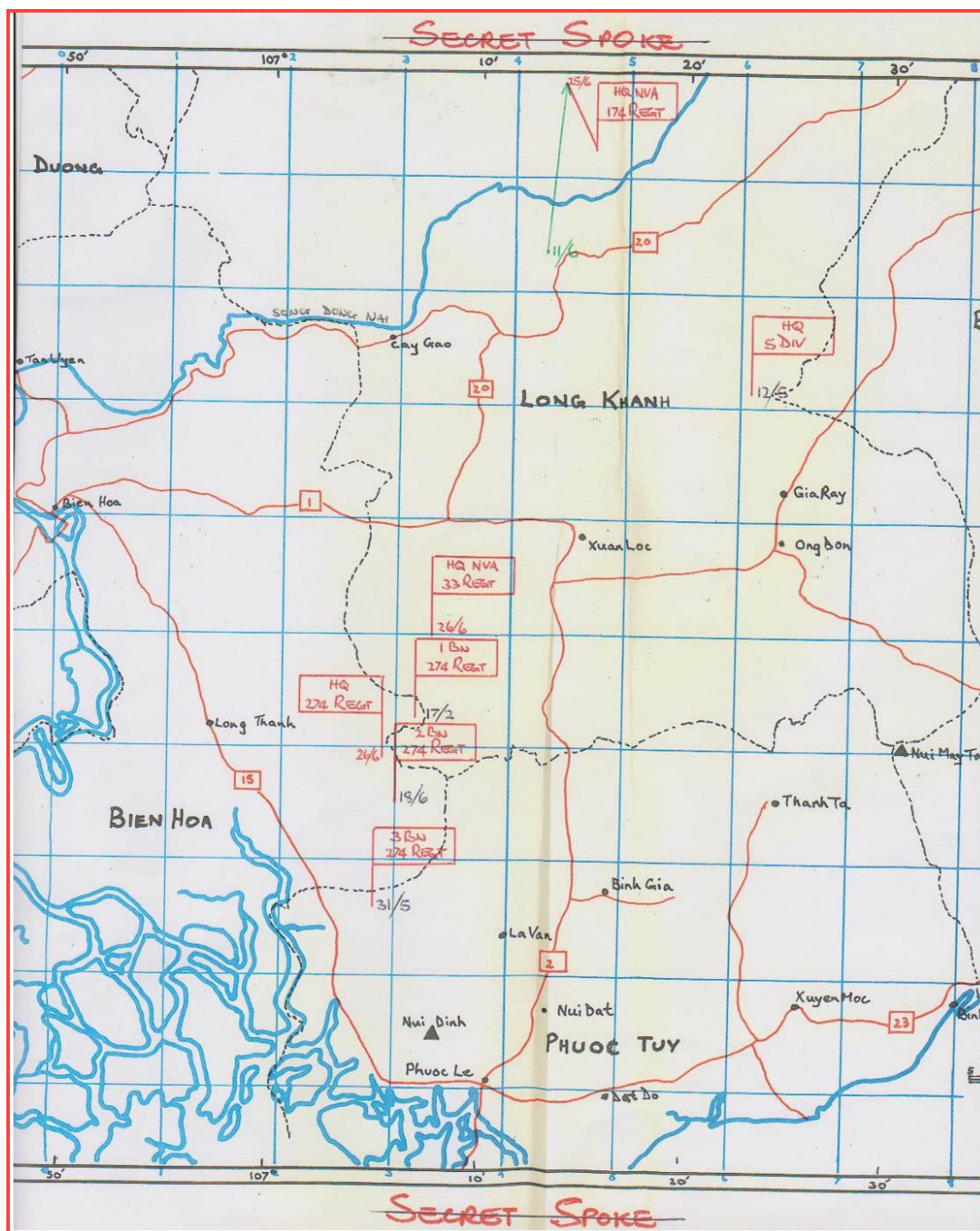


Figure 393: Map Summary 21 – 29) June 1969

44.7.2 VC/NVA Communications Equipment Availability

A CDEC⁷⁴¹ Report on a document captured in mid-June 1969, has a table showing the status of the 5th VC Division's principal communications equipment held in the fourth quarter of 1968.⁷⁴²

⁷⁴¹ The Combined Document Exploitation Center (CDEC) was created by the US Army in 1966 to handle the increase in materials captured from North Vietnamese and Vietcong forces.

⁷⁴² Email from Ernie Chamberlain to Bob Hartley 1 May 2017.



The following table of communications equipment is derived from the CDC Report:

Unit	A102 743	AB67 744	K63 745	GRC9 746	702D 747	PRC25 748	102E 749	Switch Board	Tele- phone	Wire Kms
Div Hq	5	6	7					3	33	64
275 Regt	1		12	1	4				28	31
174 Regt	2		1			4		1	33	38
A24	2		4		6			1	10	20
A57	2		6		9	2		1	10	20
?33 rd Regt										
K20, A57	3		5					1	10	20
Sig Coy										
33 rd Regt										
K21 ⁷⁵⁰					2			5		
J7 (7 th Bn				4					4	6
33 rd Regt										
J8 (8 th Bn				5						6
33 rd Regt										
J9 (9 th Bn			3						4	6
33 rd Regt										
Z24 ⁷⁵¹									7	7
A59 ⁷⁵²	2		4		6			1	15	27

The above table listing large numbers of telephones and wire indicates that the NVA/VC used landline extensively when they were in a fixed location.

⁷⁴³ Chicom 15 watt HF AM Transceiver. Frequency Coverage 2 – 12 MHz

⁷⁴⁴ Unknown. Possibly AB64 - a Chicom AM radio (3.8 – 6.4 MHz).

⁷⁴⁵ Possibly a replacement for the 71Bs Chicom 2 - 3 watt HF AM Transceiver. Frequency Coverage 1.9 – 7.3 MHz.

⁷⁴⁶ US Army AN/GRC-9 a 2-12 MHz, AM/CW, low power transportable radio set.

⁷⁴⁷ The 702B was a Chicom AM radio (26.1 to 37 MHz).

⁷⁴⁸ US Army AN/PRC-25 30 – 76 MHz.

⁷⁴⁹ Chicom 15 watt HF AM Transceiver. Frequency Coverage 2 – 12 MHz.

⁷⁵⁰ Possibly Div Reconnaissance Company.

⁷⁵¹ Possibly Artillery Bn 5 VC Division.

⁷⁵² Possibly Signal Section, 2 Bn 274 VC Regiment.



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CHAPTER 45 – JULY 1969

45.1 Personnel

45.1.1 Arrivals and Departures

In July there was one arrival and one departure.

Arrival

1 July

Corporal Brian Lacy

Departure

9 July

Signalman Jim Yule

45.1.2 Employment Areas

Initially Brian Lacy was employed in the Set Room and then at the SSL site.

45.1.3 161 Recce Flt Fixed Wing Pilots

In July, Captain Trevor Wark joined 161 Recce Flt as a fixed wing pilot.

45.1.4 Saigon Visit

Just before his departure to Australia, Jack Hooker accompanied Bob Hartley on a liaison visit to the US Air Force 6994th Security Squadron at Tan Son Nhut airfield in Saigon. During their visit they were accommodated in the Squadron transit huts that contained two tier bunk beds similar to the following photographs. During the night the airfield came under rocket attack.



Figure 394: 6994th Barracks⁷⁵³

⁷⁵³ <http://6994th.com/>



Figure 395: Example of bunk beds

Bob Hartley recalled:

When we were allocated bunks in the transit lines, Jack Hooker opted for the top bunk. During the night the airport came under rocket and mortar attack and the sound of the explosions and sirens soon woke us up. When the same type of attack happens in Nui Dat, the immediate reaction is to roll out of bed onto the floor to have some protection by the sandbags around the tent. Jack must have been in a deep sleep and forgotten where he was, and just rolled out of bed. There was a loud yell and a screech of pain. Jack had landed on his knees on the floor and was in considerable pain and not wanting to move. We decided to stay where we were and both moved under the bottom bunk for some protection. After the all clear was sounded we checked out Jack's injuries and fortunately he was able to hobble about with little pain. Jack took the lower bunk for the remainder of the night.

The next morning, Jack had improved with only minor swelling to his knees. We both returned to Nui Dat soon after and Jack asked me to keep quiet about how the injury occurred. I do not think the cause of the injury was ever mentioned in his medical records.

45.1.5 HQ AFV Monthly Strength Return

There was no change to the Establishment Strength of the Troop in July.



45.2 Operations

45.2.1 ARDF Maintenance

On 1 July, MI8 signalled AUM352, Weapons IS Group and DSD with further info concerning ARDF maintenance⁷⁵⁴:

S E C R E T COMINT CHANELS

MI8/1360 FROM MI8. ARDF. YOUR SIGS 394,

ONE. RUSTRAK PARTS. ACTION IN HAND TO HAVE 133 SIG SQN FORWARD PARTS REQUIRED BY AIR FREIGHT. MY MI8/818 AND MI8/974 ADVISED PROCEDURE AND AUST SUPPLIER IN ORDER YOU MAY PLACE OP DEMANDS.

TWO. UNREADABLE GROUND SIGNALS. REQUEST ADVISE

ALFA. IF THESE SIGNALS WHICH CAN BE HEARD IN AC BUT ARE UNREADABLE AT AUM 352 ARE ALSO UNREADABLE AT OTHER US GROUND STATIONS

BRAVO. WHAT FREQUENCIES ARE INVOLVED

CHARLIE. ARE THEY TASKS THAT SHOULD BE ON COVER AT AUM 352

THREE. ARDF +A- MODEL. PLEASE ADVISE FLIGHT DETAILS ASP IN ORDER ARRANGEMENTS CAN BE MADE TO ITEMS COLLECTED ON ARRIVAL AT RICHMOND FOR ONFORWARDING TO WRE WITH MINIMUM DELAY

45.2.2 547 Sig Tp Operational Report for July 1969

The 547 Sig Tp Operational Report for Jul 69⁷⁵⁵:stated:

S E C R E T SPOKE SIGS457

OPERATIONAL REPORT FOR JUL 69.

ONE. SET ROOM.

POSN AND WATCH HRS. NO CHANGE.

TASKING1

ALPHA. PRIORITY/TASK.

- | | |
|---------------|---------------|
| 1. VCMB05437 | 2. VCMB00931 |
| 3. VCMBP5447 | 4. VCMB05443 |
| 5. VCMB00335 | 6. VCMB35432 |
| 7. VCMBJ1591 | 8. VCMBJ1079 |
| 9. VCMBY9083 | 10. VCMB05440 |
| 11. VCMBJ0772 | 12. VCMBY9082 |
| 13. VG1B00709 | 14. VCMB00679 |
| 15. VCMB00667 | 16. VCMB05443 |
| 17. VCMON4307 | 18. VCMB05445 |

⁷⁵⁴ DSD Declassified, 547 Sig Tp in Vietnam (tranche2).

⁷⁵⁵ Ibid.



19. VCMB05444 20. VCMB05U2
21. VCMBJ0459 22. VCHBJ5143

BRAVO

DEV GROUPS.
VCMBJ0820, VCMB05442, VCMB J0772,
VCMBJ0162, VCXBJ4695. VCMB05411.
NOTE THAT 2 AND 3 ARE ON DEV BANKS
FOR RECOVERY PURPOSES.

CHARLIE. SEARCH BANDS.

NO CHANGE FROM PREVIOUS REPORT. NEW
SYSTEM HAS IMPROVED OVERALL EFFORT
AND. WE AVERAGE, APPROX 200 ITEMS
PER DAY, MAJORITY OF WHICH ARE
UNIDENTIFIED, VCX OR PARTIALLY
NOTATED.

THREE. ARDF

ALPHA. TOTAL FIXES -31 (ITS BEEN A QUIET WAR
THIS MONTH)
BRAVO. GRADINGS - 3 GOOD, ;20 FAIR, 3 POOR, 5 CUTS.
CHARLIE. FLYING TIME - 122.15
DELTA. 4 MSNS ABORTED, 6 MSNS REDUCED
DUE INCLEMENT WEATHER. 2 MSNS ABORTED
DUE AIRCRAFT MALFUNCTION. 5 MSNS ABORTED.
5 MSNS REDUCED DUE ARDF MALFUNCTION.
IN ALL 77 AND ONE HALF MAN 'HOURS WERE
SPENT ON EQPT MAINT DUR I NG THE
MONTH.

ECHO. TECHNICIANS SUMMARY AS FOLLOWS. QUOTE.
INCREASING NUMBER OF FAULTS APPEAR ING
ON THE WIDE BAND AMP. THIS IS DUE TO
AGE, LABORATORY TYPE CONSTR AND CONSTANT
VIBRATION IN THE AIRCRAFT. MOST OTHER FAULTS
ARE CAUSED BY CONNECTING LEADS
GOING U/S. UNQUOTE.

FOXTROT. I REFER M18 TO MY SIGS 252 OF
290844Z APR 69 CONCERNING ALIGNMENT OF EQPT IN ACC.
WE LOSE A GREATMANY MSN HOURS BY DOING
BEACON RUN, READJUSTING THE LOCATION
OF THE BASE PLATE BY TRIAL AND
ERROR THEN BACK TO BEACON AND
BACK TO READJUSTMENT IF NCESSARY
A SIMPLE BUT ACCURATE ALIGNMENT
PROCEDURE IS ABSOLUTELY NECESSARY
FOR ENGINEERED MODELS.

FOUR. SSL

ALPHA, ENGRS HAVE COMMENCED WORK ON
BLAST WALL. INROADS MADE ON GRASS CUTTING
BUT STILL A GREAT DEAL TO DO.

BRAVO. PLEASE ADVISE EARLIEST YOUR PLANS
TO REPLACE PETERS. I MUST RETURN HIM TO AUST
NO LATER THAN 24 SEP. ITS BEEN A LONG
3 MONTHS DETACHMENT FOR HIM.
REPLACEMENT SHOULD SPEND SAY ONE



MONTH AT WRE BEING EDUCATED AND
BROUGHT UP TO DATE ON MAINT
PROBLEMS OF HIGH DIVINE, SHORT CELL.

FIVE. MISCELLANEOUS OPS.

ALPHA. RECONFIGURATION OF SET ROOM.
MZTS 26/115 OF 23 JUL 69 (NOT TO DSD).
NEW DFC CONSOLE AND EQPT RACK ARRIVED
YESTERDAY. MAY BE ABLE TO COMPLETE
SET ROOM PARTITION ALTERATIONS BY END
OF THE MONTH, BUT HEAVILY COMMITTED
ON Q STORE CONSTRUCTION AT PRESENT.

BRAVO. RECONFIGURATION OF COMCEN.
REF MY OPS 28/55 OF 17 JUN 69 (TO MI8),
SPS STORES STARTING TO ARRIVE, BUT
IT MAY BE 2-3 MONTHS BEFORE INSTLN
CAN BE STARTED.

CHARLIE. SHORT CELL REPORT. HAS AHQ MADE
ANY DECISION ON FUTURE OF SHORT CELL.
I AM HOLDING OFF SUBMITTING REQUEST
FOR VARIATION TO ESTABLISHMENT UNTIL
I HEAR FROM y0U.

SIX. VISITORS
12 JUL – MR CAWSEY (.SA COMAFV)
19 JUL – LT COL ROSCHER (CO 303 BN) MAJ
REILY (CO 175 COY) CAPT OVERCASH (509 GP)
DAILY – MAJ CARTER (SSO II FFV)

SEVEN. VISITS/DETS
2-5 JUL – CAPT DOYLE, SGT HARTLEY TO
509TH GP [redacted], 146 AVN CO
9 JUL - BRI G PEARSON, MAJ DE CURE MAJ HART TO 509 GP
21 JUL - MAJ HART TO 303 BN, 175 COY
22-25 JUL- SGT SCOTT TO 303, 175
22-24 JUL - SGT HOUGHTON, SGT MARKS TO 175 COY
EIGHT. THOUGHT FOR THE DAY.,
[corrupt] AND A WAKEY TO GO REGARDS

45.2.3 ARDF Flying Hours

The total ARDF flying hours for the month were⁷⁵⁶:

Year	Month	Flying hours	Total Fixes	Good <1000mts	Fair 1-2000Mts	Poor >2000 Mts	Cut	Missions Lost	Remarks
1969	Jul	122.75	31	3	20	3	5	11	77.5 hours spent on equip maint

45.2.4 Troop VC/NVA Activities Summary

The Troop Summary of Activities for July were as follows⁷⁵⁷:

⁷⁵⁶ Compiled from MI8 Records held at ASD archives.

⁷⁵⁷ ASD archives of 547 Sig Tp material.



45.2.4.1 27 June – 2 July 1969

SIGNIFICANT REDEPLOYMENTS

HQ VC 5th Div has redeployed N of the SONG DONG NAI. On 30 June the HQ was located in the vicinity of YT465507, approximately 30 km NW of its 12 May location. The 95th and 174th NVA Regts subordinate to this formation redeployed N of the DONG NAI in the latter half of the month.

HQ VC 5th DIV

Approximately 60 km NW of BIEN HOA.

HQ NVA 33rd REGT

28 km ESE of BIEN HOA.

HQ NVA 174TH REGT

On 25 June, 58 NE of BIEN HOA.

HQ VC 274 REGT

36 km SE of BIEN HOA.

HQ VC 1 BN 274 REGT

On 17 February, 36 km SE of BIEN HOA.

HQ VC 2 BN 274 REGT

On 18 June, 39 km SE of BIEN HOA.

HQ VC 3 BN 274 REGT

Approximately 37 km SE of BIEN HOA.

HQ VC 3 275th REGT

44 km NE of BIEN HOA.

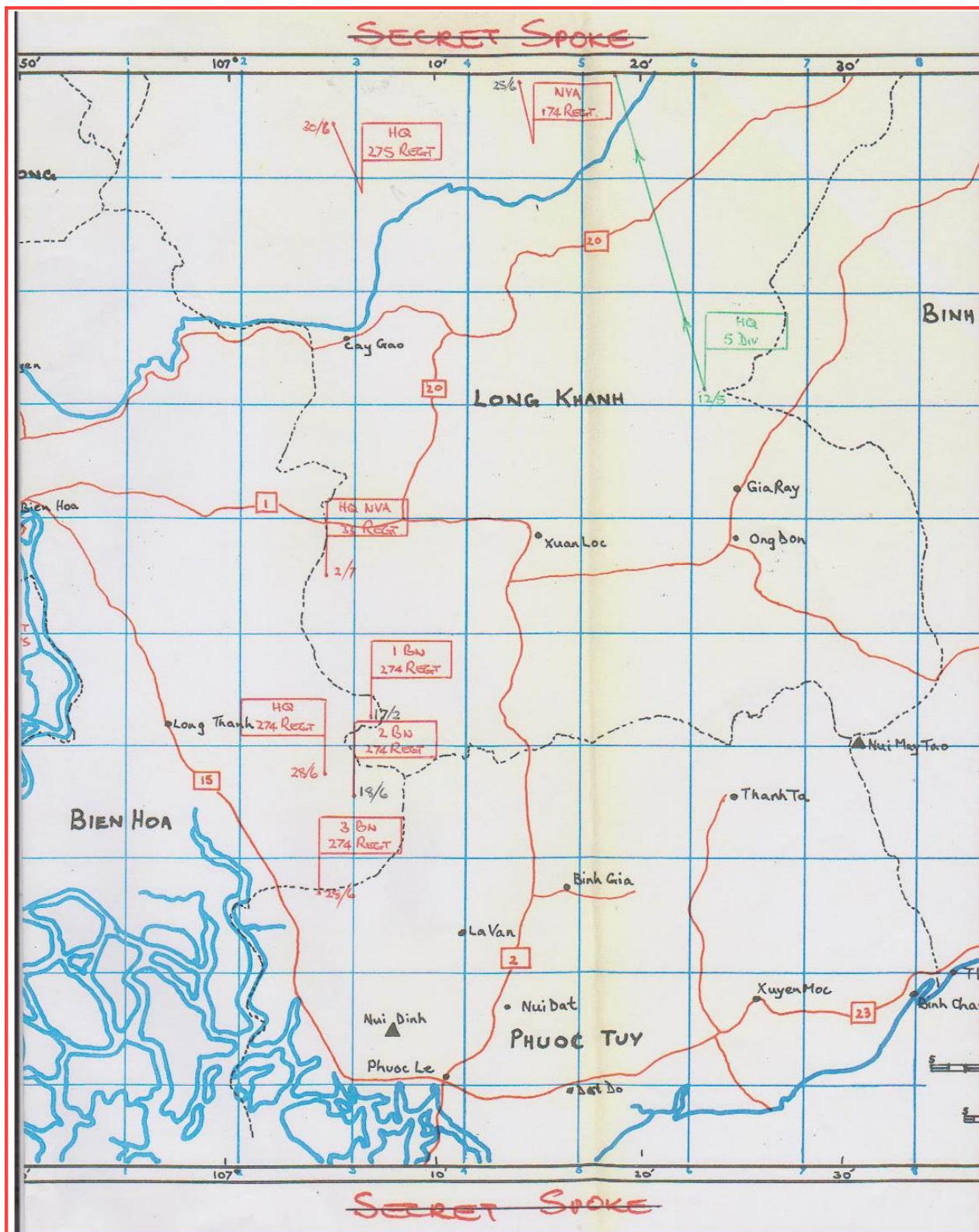


Figure 396: Map Summary 27 June - 2 July 1969



45.2.4.2 3 – 10 July 1969

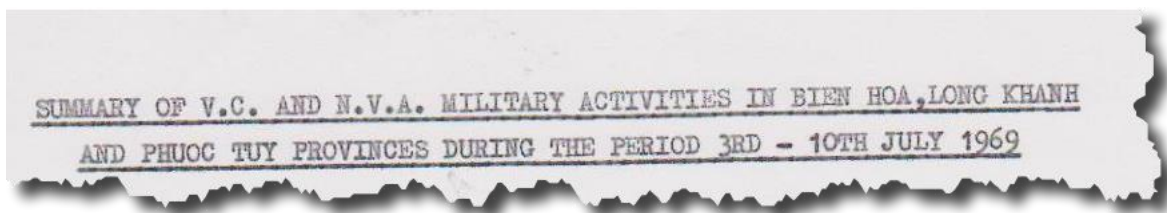


Figure 397: Summary of Activities 3 - 10 July 1969

SIGNIFICANT REDEPLOYMENTS

During the current reporting period the HO's of N.V.A 33rd Regt and V.C. 274th Regt have redeployed. On 7th July HQ N.V.A. 33rd Regt had moved approximately 9km SE of its 2nd July location and HQ V.C. 274th Regt on 10th July had redeployed approximately 10km E of its previous location in the vicinity of IS 278876.

An ARDF fix taken on 4th July places the HQ 1 Bn V.C. 274th Regt 9km W of its 27th February location in the BIEN HOA./ LONG KHANH/PHUOC TUY border area.

HQ V.C. 5TH DIV

On 30th June, approximately 60km NE of BIEN HOA. (This elements location cannot be shown on the attached map).

HQ N.V.A. 33RD REGT

34km SE of BIEN HOA.

HQ N.V.A. 174TH REGT

On 25th June, 58km NE of BIEN HOA.

HQ V.C. 274TH REGT

43km SE of BIEN HOA.

HQ 1 BN V.C. 274TH REGT

37km SE of BIEN HOA.

HQ 2 BN V.C. 274TH REGT

On 18th June, 39km SE of BIEN HOA.

HQ 3 BN V.C. 274TH REGT

On 28th June, approximately 37km SE of BIEN HOA.

HQ V.C. 275TH REGT

On 30th June, 40km NE of BINH HOA.

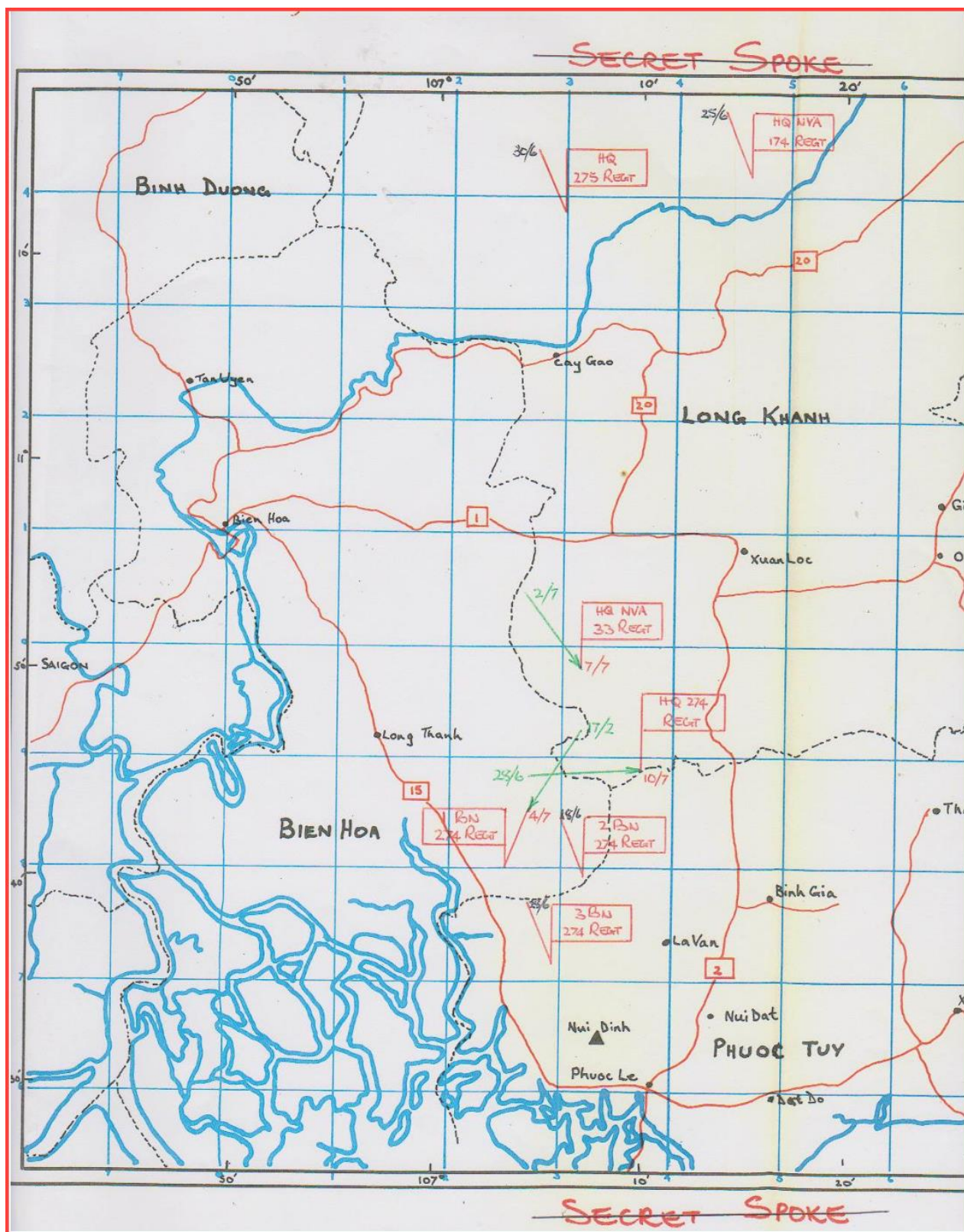


Figure 398: Map Summary 3 - 10 July 1969



45.2.4.3 11- 17 July 1969

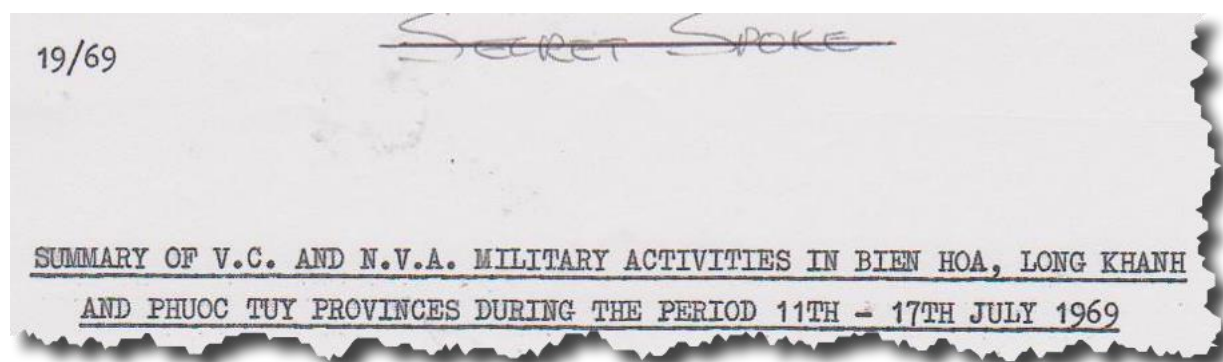


Figure 399: Summary of Activities 11 - 17 July 1969

SIGNIFICANT REDEPLOYMENTS

During the current reporting period the HQ's of N.V.A. 174th and 33rd Regts plus the HQ's of the 2nd and 3rd Bns, V.C. 274th Regt have redeployed. HQ N.V.A. 174th Regt on 13th July was fixed in the vicinity of YT 314737, approximately 28km N of its 25th June location while the HQ of N.V.A. 33rd Regt has moved 28km in a north-easterly direction and is currently located in central LONG KHANH Province. Both the 2nd and 3rd Bns of V.C. 274th Regt have moved approximately 11km but remain in the same general area of LONG KHANH/PHUOCTUY/BIEN HOA province borders.

HQ V.C. 5TH DIV

On 30th June, approximately 60km NE of BIEN HOA.

HQ N.V.A. 33RD REGT

51km E of BIEN HOA.

HQ N.V.A. 174TH REGT

Approximately 63km N of BIEN HOA.

HQ V.C. 274TH REGT

43km SE of BIEN HOA.

HQ 1 BN V.C. 274TH REGT

On 4th July, 37km SE of BIEN HOA.

HQ 2. BN V.C. 274TH REGT

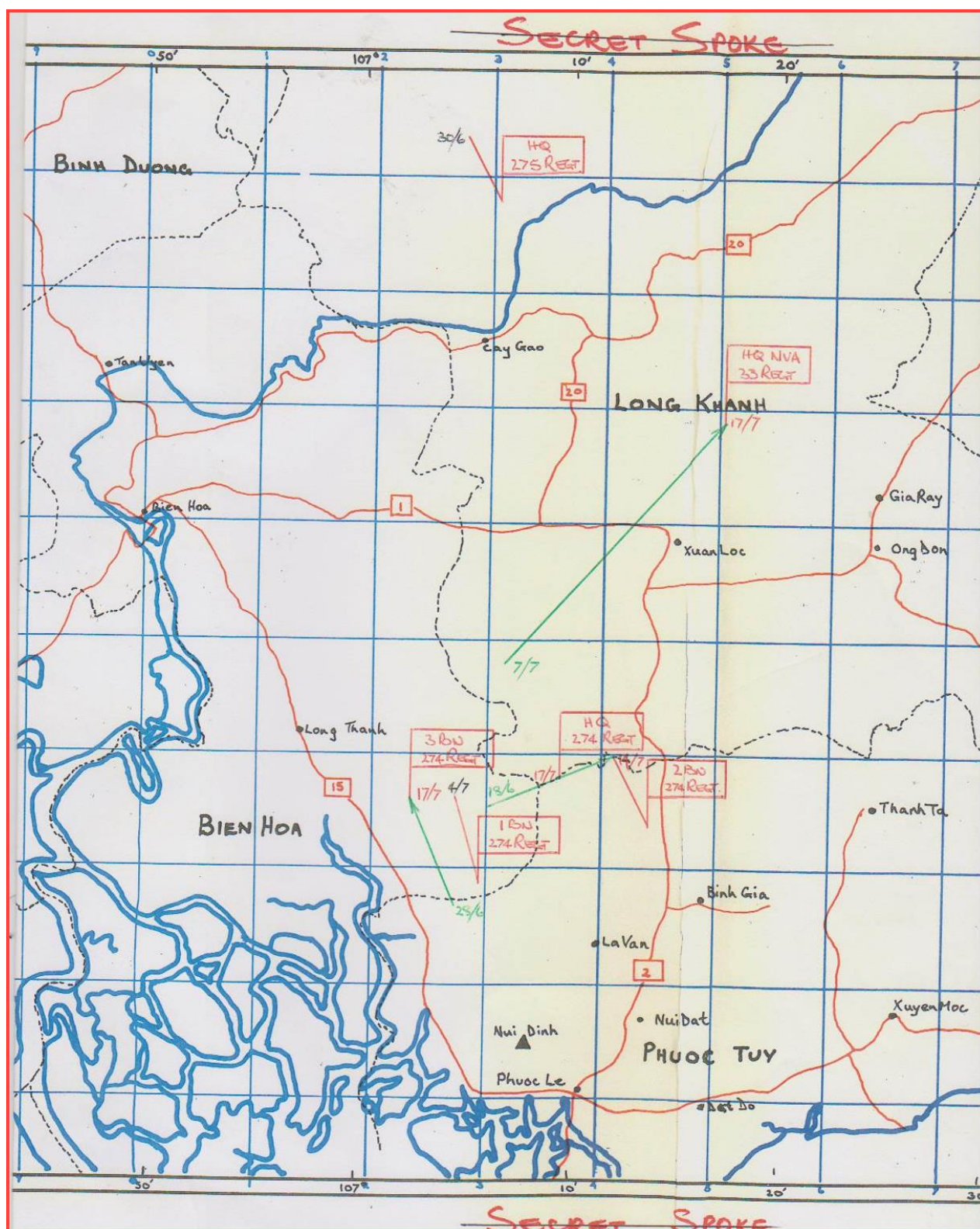
46km SE of BIEN HOA.

HQ 3 BN V.C. 274TH REGT

33km SE of BIEN HOA.

HQ V.C. 275TH REGT

On 30th June, 40km NE of BIEN HOA.



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45.2.4.4 18 – 23 Jul

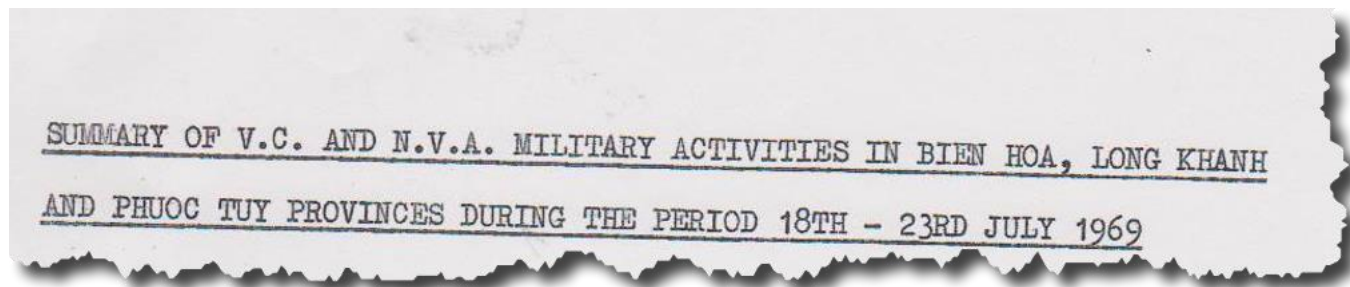


Figure 401: Summary of Activities 18 - 23 July 1969

SIGNIFICANT REDEPLOYMENTS

ARDF fixes indicate that the majority of V.C 5th Div is currently located in PHUOC LONG and therefore is outside the area covered by this summary. The location of these elements, together with the location of any other unit which moves outside this area, will be reported if and when they return.

UNIT LOCATIONS

HQ N.V.A. 33rd Regt

On 17th July, 51km E of BIEN HOA.

HQ V.C. 274th Regt

On 17th July, 43km SE of BIEN HOA.

1 Bn V.C. 274th Regt

On 4th July, 37km SE of BIEN HOA.

HQ 2 Bn V.C. 274th Regt

On 14th July, 46km SE of BIEN HOA.

HQ 3 Bn V.C. 274th Regt

36km SE of BIEN HOA.

HQ V.C. 275th Regt

On 30th June, 40km NE of BIEN HOA





45.2.4.5 23 – 31 July 1969

SUMMARY OF V.C. AND N.V.A. MILITARY ACTIVITIES IN BIEN HOA, LONG KHANH AND PHUOC TUY PROVINCES DURING THE PERIOD 23RD – 31ST JULY 1969

Significant Redeployments

HQ VC 274th Regt together with the HQ of its 1st Bn have redeployed. While remaining in the same general area of operations, HQ VC 274th Regt has moved approximately 13 km NW, and the HQ of its 1st Bn, currently under pressure from an Allied sweep, has moved 8 km NE into LONG KHANH Province.

UNIT LOCATIONS

(Bearings and distances are in relation to BIEN HOA)

HQ NVA 33rd REGT

On 17 July, 51 km E.

HQ VC 274 REGT

31 km SE.

HQ VC 1 BN 274 REGT

39 km SE.

HQ VC 2 BN 274 REGT

On 14 July, 46 km SE.

HQ VC 3 BN 274 REGT

On 22 July, 36 km SE.

HQ VC 275th REGT

On 30 June, 40 km NE.

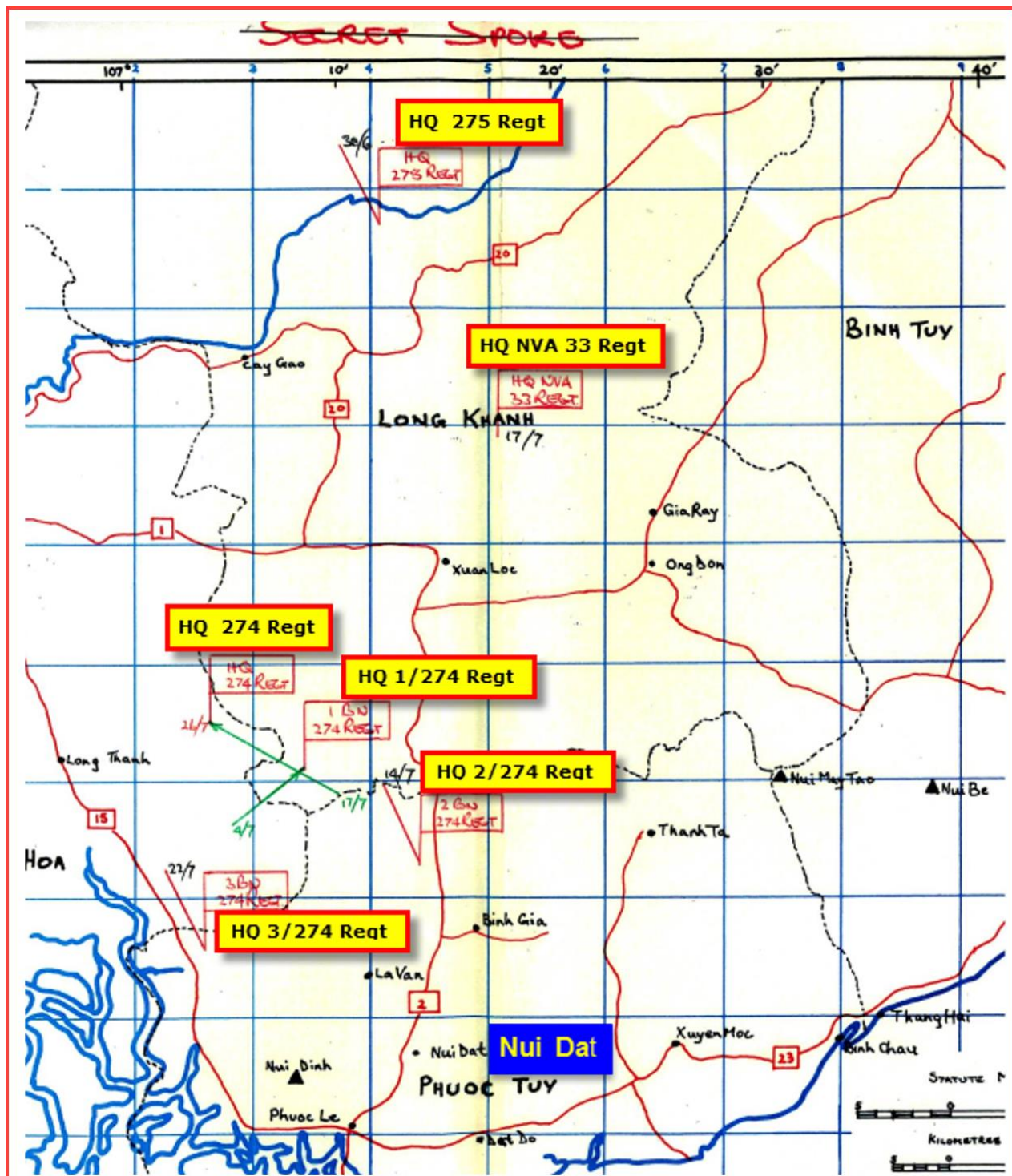


Figure 403: Map Summary 23 – 31 Jul 69



45.2.5 Troop VC/NVA Activities Summaries Consolidation

A consolidation of the Troop Summaries of VC and NVA Military Activities in Bien Hoa, Long Khanh and Phuoc Tuy Provinces covering the period 3 – 31 July is as follows⁷⁵⁸:

3 -10 July

Significant Redeployments

During the current period the HQs of NVA 33rd Regt and VC 274th Regt have redeployed. On 7 July HQ NVA 33rd Regt had moved approximately 9 km SE of its 2 July location and HQ VC 274th Regt on 10 July had redeployed approximately 10 km E of its previous location in the vicinity of YS278876. An ARDF fix taken on 4 July places the HQ 1 Bn VC 274th Regt 9 km SW of its 27 February location in the BIEN HOA/LONG KHANH/PHUOC TUY Border area.

11 - 17 July

Significant Redeployments

During the current reporting period the HQs of NVA 174th and 33rd Regt and VC 274th Regts plus the HQs of the 2nd and 3rd Bns, VC 274th Regt have redeployed. HQ NVA 174th Regt on 13 July was fixed in the vicinity of YT314737, approximately 28 km N of its 25 June location while the HQ of NVA 33rd Regt has moved 28 km in a north-easterly direction and is currently located in central LONG KHANH Province. Both the 2nd and 3rd Bns of VC 274th Regt have moved approximately 11 km but remain in the same general area of LONG KHANH/PHUOC TUY/BIEN HOA Province borders.

17 - 23 July

Significant Redeployments

ARDF fixes indicate that the majority of VC 5th Div is currently located in PHUOC LONG and therefore is outside the area covered by this summary. The location of these elements, together with the location of any other unit which moves outside this area, will be reported if and when they return.

23 - 31 July

Significant Redeployments

HQ VC 274th Regt together with the HQ of its 1st Bn have redeployed. While remaining in the same general area of operations, HQ VC 274th Regt has moved approximately 13 km NW, and the HQ of its 1st Bn, currently under pressure from an Allied sweep, has moved 8 km NE into LONG KHANH Province.

⁷⁵⁸ Ibid



45.3 ARDF Results Can Be Wrong

45.3.1 D445 Location

D445 Bn HQ was normally located on the northern slopes of the Nui Dinh Hill. The usual flight path to obtain the best ARDF Fix was from the north east tracking between Nui Thi Vi and Nui Dinh.

45.3.2 Artillery Fire Missions

On this occasion it was not possible to track through the hills as artillery fire missions were impacting into the area. The only track available to avoid the artillery was to track westerly to the south of Nui Dinh.

45.3.3 New Track and Good Fix

The new track produced an excellent fix with a maximum 500 metre area of probability. The fix indicated that D445 HQ had moved out of the mountains and was possibly heading closer to the 1 ATF base.

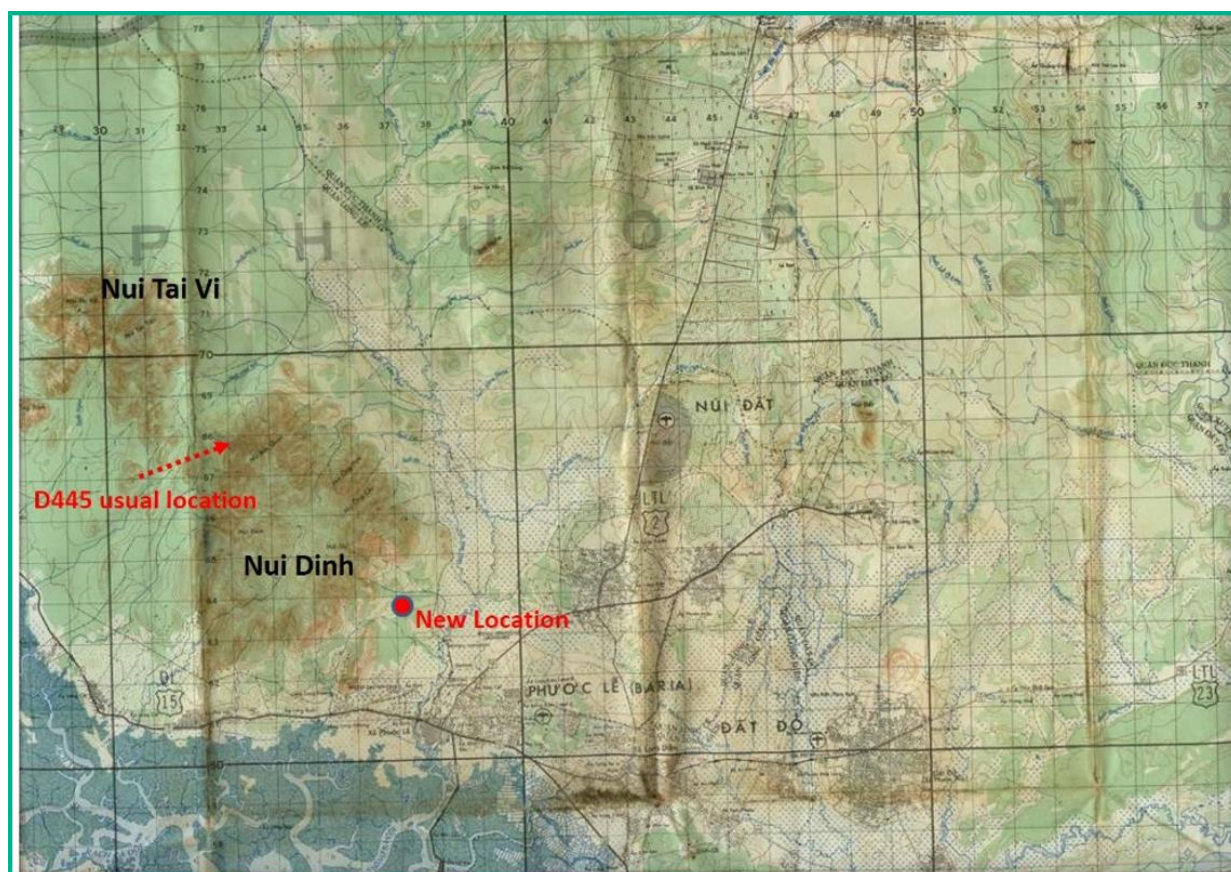


Figure 404: D445 Locations



45.3.4 Nui Dat Stand-to

The 1Comd ATF placed Nui Dat on immediate stand-to and the stand to was to remain until D445's location was confirmed.

45.3.5 Next Day Mission

The following day the morning mission was flown by the same operator,⁷⁵⁹ using the usual flight path, and immediately results in the aircraft indicated that D445 was back in its normal location.

45.3.6 Plot Confirmed No Move

Plotting back at the Troop confirmed that the HQ had not moved.

45.3.7 Possible Explanation of Movement Indiction

The most probable explanation as to why there was a near perfect fix was that due to the change of flight path, flight and weather conditions and frequency, there may have been a signal 'bounce' of the small feature just to the south of Nui Dinh.

45.3.8 Comd Still Happy

The Comd of 1ATF, Brigadier Pearson, had so much faith in ARDF, he kept the Task Force on stand-to for a further 24 hours, just in case.

*Brigadier Pearson later said that he would always
react to 547 intelligence regardless of the outcome*

⁷⁵⁹ Will remain nameless – but author is still red-faced when remembering and writing this story.



CHAPTER 46 – AUGUST 1969

46.1 Personnel

46.1.1 Arrivals and Departures

In August there were five arrivals and three departures.

Arrivals

12 August

Corporal Maxwell Starr

26 August

Captain Errol Poultney

27 August

Warrant Officer Andrew Cockburn

Corporal Garth Brown

Lance Corporal Leslie Whitney

Departures

13 August

Signalman Adrian Lange

18 August

Corporal Thomas Oswin

20 August

Signalman Keith Hayward

46.1.2 Employment Areas

Errol Poultney arrived to take over command of the Troop, Andy Cockburn to take over as TSM. Max Starr and Les Whitney joined the Set Room and Garth Brown returned to Tech Maint for a second tour.

46.1.3 HQ AFV Monthly Strength Return

There was no change to the Establishment Strength of the Troop in August⁷⁶⁰:

SERIAL	FORMATION/UNIT	ESTABLISHMENT			POSTED STRENGTH		
		OFFR	OR	TOTAL	OFFR	OR	TOTAL
(a)	(b)	(c)	(d)	(e)	(f)	(g)	(h)
31	547 Sig Tp (less Det)	2	34	36	3	35	38

Figure 405: HQ AFV Strength Return for August 1969

⁷⁶⁰ <http://www.awm.gov.au/collection/AWM98/R723/1/13/5/>



46.1.4 Len Scott and the Boomerangs

During the Task Force Commander's round of farewells in August, Brigadier Pearson and Len Scott discussed how an ARVN soldier had been wounded by an enemy arrow. Len suggested that our side should be armed with boomerangs for retaliation. Under a barrage of questions from the Brigadier, Len admitted his capabilities as a maker and thrower of boomerangs. As a result of this discussion Len found himself detached to Xuan Loc. It seems that the Brigadier had presented Brigadier General Giai, commander of the 18th ARVN Division with a boomerang. General Giai could not, however, make the boomerang come back to him. When Brigadier Pearson was asked for a tutor, he sent Len.

On arrival at the throwing area, Len found a group of soldiers standing by as boomerang chasers. Len's first demonstration was perfect and the boomerang came straight back into his hands. The Vietnamese acted as though this was magic. After an hour of instruction, the General still looked awkward but was getting them within five feet. The only casualty of the day was a broken windscreen on the jeep of the Senior U.S. Advisor. It had been parked too close to the General's field of fire.



Figure 406: Len Scott ready to throw⁷⁶¹

46.2 Operations

46.2.1 547 Sig Tp Operational Report for August 1969

The 547 Sig Tp Operational Report for Aug 69⁷⁶²: stated:

S E C R E T SPOKE SIGS506

OPERATIONAL REPORT 1-31 AUG.

ONE. SET ROOM.

⁷⁶¹ www.awm.gov.au/collection/MISC/69/0563/VN

⁷⁶² DSD Declassified, 547 Sig Tp in Vietnam (tranche2).



ALPHA. POSN AND WATCH HOURS NO CHANGE.

TWO. TASKING.

ALPHA. PRIORITY/TASK

1. VCMB05437	2. VCMB00831	3. VCMB05447	4. VCMB05443
5. VCMB00835	6. VCMB05423	7. VCMBJ1591	8. VCMB05449
9. VCMBJ0772	10. VCMB00709	11. VCMB00679	12. VCMB00667
13. VCMBN4807	14. VCMB05445	15. VCMB05442	16. VCMBJ0459
17. VCMBJ1758			

BRAVO. DEV GROUPS. VCMBJ1078 VCMB05444 VCMBY9083 VCMB05448 VCMBY9082

CHARLIE. SEARCH BANDS. NO CHANGE.

THREE. ARDF.

ALPHA. TOTAL FIXES 36

BRAVO. GRADINGS. TWO GOOD CMM 24 FAIR CMM SIX POOR CMM 4 CUTS

CHARLIE. FLYING TIME. 123.05 HOURS.

DELTA. ONE MISSION ABORTED CMM ELEVEN MUSSIONS REDUCED DUE INCLEMENT WEATHER. THREE MISSIONS ABORTED CMM FOUR REDUCED DUE ARDF MALFUNCTION/SERVI CE. TWO MISSIONS ABORTED ONE REDUCED DUE AC MALFUNCTION/SERVICE.

ECHO. **REFURBISHED B STAR MODEL ARDF EQPT ARRIVED DURING MONTH.** UNABLE TO COMPLETE ACCEPTANCE TRIALS AT THIS TIME DUE TO SEVERE STATIC INTERFERENCE AND INTER COMM PROBLEMS IN RESERVE AC. 161 FLT ENDEAVOURING TO ISOLATE PROBLEM AND OBTAIN SUPPRESSION

FOUR. SSL

ALPHA. **ENGRS HAVE STOPPED WORK ON BLAST WALL** DUE HIGHER PRI DEF TASKS AND EXCESS WATER. GRASS AND SECONDARY JUNGLE NOW A MAJOR PROBLEM DUE NON AVAILABILITY GRASS CUTTING EQPT. GRASS STERILIZATION PROGRAMME NOT CURRENTLY FEASIBLEi DUE TO HEAVY PACIFICATION COMMITMENTS AND EXCESS WATER WHICH WOULD BOG STERILIZATION TANKER. ONE MOWER HAS BEEN ALLOCATED TO 547 TP BUT THIS HAS NOT ARRIVED' AS YET AND IS NOTORIOUSLY BAD CMM FOR GOING UNSERVICEABLE CMM AND NON AVILABILITY OF PARTS. IT WOULD BE APPRECIATED IF WRE COULD PROVIDE FROM ITS RESOURCES A MOTORISED SCYTHE.

BRAVO. PERSONNEL. IT IS PRESUMED THAT SGT WILLIAMS REPLACEMENT FOR CPL POOLE IN NOV 69 WILL BE NCO IC SSL, ON RECENT VISIT TO AFV IT WAS NOTED THAT COM AFV RECOMMENDED THE INCREASE TO ESTB BY FIVE. ITNCS NOTED THAT ONLY FOUR HAVE BEEN ADDED (MI8 U30/21 REFERS) WE WOULD STILL LIKE THE STOREMAN.

CHARLIE. RECENT VISIT OF OUTGOING OC TO

[much redaction]



FIVE. MISCELLANEOUS OPS. SECURITY CLEARED ELECTRICIAN VISITED RECENTLY TO PLAN, COMPLETE RE-WIRING AND PHASE RE-DISTRIBUTION INCLUDING ADDITIONAL WIRING FOR DFC.

SIX. VISITORS. 21 AUG LT COL CHANDLER (OPS OFFR) CMM MR DON DIETZ (COLLECTION OFFR) CMM AND SSGT WATTS (NCO 1C COLLECTION STAFF). ALL OF NRV(C) TO DISCUSS SSL. DAILY SSO 2 FFV.

SEVEN. VISITS/DETS. CAPT POULTNEY MAJ HART TO (28 AUG) 175 RR COY CMM SSO 2 FFV CMM 303 RR BN. (29 AUG) AFV CMM NRV(C) CMM 6994 SCTY SQN. (30 AUG) 146 AVN COY CMM 224 AVN BN CMM 509 RR GROUP. (23-28 AUG) CPL BISHOP TO 175 RR COY

EIGHT. DANCERS. REF [redacted] FROM DLO (NOT TO [redacted] THIS MATTER HAS BEEN DISCUSSED AT GREAT LENGTH WITH [redacted] AND IT HAS BEEN MUTUALLY AGREED THAT OPERATOR EXCHANGE BETWEEN AUM352 AND [redacted] SHALL CONTINUE UNLESS VETOED OR OTHERWISE REJECTED BY EITHER ARMY CANBERRA OR SINCE THIS IS A POLICY MATTER THE MATTER IS HEREWITH REFERRED TO AHQ (DM I) IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE TERMS OF REFERENCE. THE OPERATOR EXCHANGE PROGRAMME HAS PROVED TO BE MUTUALLY BENEFICIAL IN THE PAST AND IS A BIG FACTOR IN MAINTAINING TP MORALE. IT IS STRONGLY RECOMMENDED THAT IT CONTINUES.

NINE. THOUGHT FOR THE DAY CLN ONE DAY AND A WAKY

46.2.2 SSL Retention

On 11 August, MI8 advised AUM352, DSD and WRE IS Group on the Retention of SSL⁷⁶³:

S E C R E T COMINT CHANNELS MI8/1417/19

FROM MI8. SSL,

ONE. HAVE NOW RECEIVED COMD AFV RECOMMENDATION FOR SSL RETENTION IN YOUR AREA, BRIEF FOR DCCS HAS BEEN DELAYED AWAITING RETURN OF HIS*FROM OVERSEAS AND NOW WILL BE FURTHER DELAYED DUE CGS EXERCISE. FROM PREVIOUS INDICATIONS DO NOT EXPECT ANY APPROVAL PROBLEMS AND ALSO EXPECT YOU WILL BE GRANTED ESTB INCREASE. NO ACTION WILL BE REQUIRED BY YOU TO OBTAIN THE ADDITIONAL MANPOWER.

TWO. DMI BRIEF TO DCGS WILL STRESS THAT THE CONTINUED USE OF SSL IN VIETNAM MUST BE CLASSED MORE AS AN EXTENSION OF THE PRESENT TRIAL THAN THE PROVISION OF A PROVEN TECHNICAL AID.

THREE. WE DO NOT FELL AT THIS ST'GE THAT THE TECHNIQUE HAS BEEN SUFFICIENTLY PROVEN TO ADAPT ANY SPECIAL OPERATING PROCEDURE AND WE WILL SUGGEST THAT AUM 352 CONTINUE TO OPERATE USING THE SAME PROCEDURE AS FOK THE SECOND PHASE OF THE TRIAL. WE WOULD HUOWEVER EXPECT THAT AUM 352 WILL CONTINUE TO INVESTIGATE VARIOUS PROCEDURE METHODS FOR LATER ADAPTION IF AND WHEN THE

⁷⁶³ DSD Declassified, 547 Sig Tp in Vietnam (tranche2).



SSL IS CLASSED AS FULLY OPERATIONAL.

FOUR. DSD WILL SUGGEST TO NSA THAT THEY MAY WISH TO TASK THE SSL WITH DELTA TARGETS BUT THEY WILL ADVISE NSA THAT ANY RESULTS OBTAINED MUST BE CLASSED AS HAVING BEEN OBTAINED FROM AN EXPERIMENTAL EQUIPMENT WHICH HAS YET TO BE PROVEN. WE THEREFORE SEE NO REQUIREMENT TO ESTABLISH ANY POSITIONS WITHIN AUM 352 TASKED ON DELTA TASKS FOR THE STORAGE OF THE SSL.

FIVE. WE EXPECT THAT WRE WILL REQUIRE ALL NEW DATA OBTAINED IN ORDER THAT THEY CAN CONTINUE TO INVESTIGATE WAYS AND MEANS OF IMPROVING THE ACCURACY OF THE SSL. IN ADDITION THEY WILL REQUIRE AUM 352 TO CARRY OUT SPECIFIC TRIALS FROM TIME TO TIME

SIX. CURRENTLY CPL BROWN IS AT WRE FOR SSL TRAINING AND WE WOULD HOPE THAT HE WILL ARRIVE IN SVN BY 26 AUG 69 WITH PETERS TO RTA BY 24 SEP 69. WE WOULD ALSO EXPECT THJAT THE NEW IONOSCOPE WILL BE INSTALLED BY WRE IN THE NEAR FUTURE AND DESPATCHED TO SVN BY LATE SEP 69.

46.2.3 ARDF Flying Hours

The total ARDF flying hours for the month were⁷⁶⁴:

Year	Month	Flying hours	Total Fixes	Good <1000mts	Fair 1-2000Mts	Poor >2000 Mts	Cut	Missions Lost	Remarks
1969	Aug	123.5	36	2	24	6	4	21	

46.2.4 Troop VC/NVA Activities Summary

The Troop Summaries for August contained the following⁷⁶⁵:

46.2.4.1 1 – 8 Aug 69

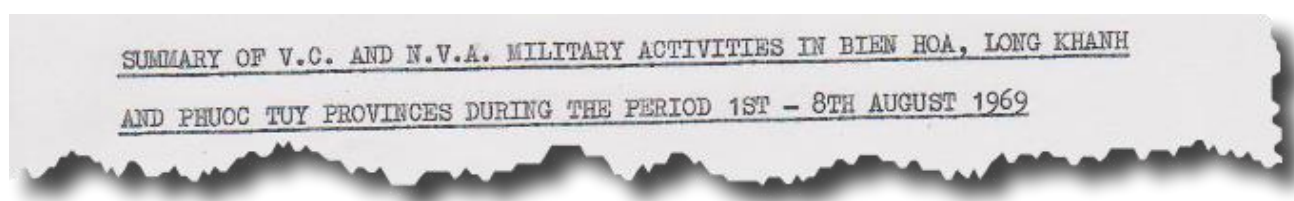


Figure 407: Summary of Activities 1 - 8 Aug 69

SIGNIFICANT REDEPLOYMENTS

On 3rd August HQ 275th Regt, V.C. 5th Div was fixed in PHUOC LONG Province, approximately 52km NNE of its 30th June location.

UNIT LOCATIONS

⁷⁶⁴ Compiled from MI8 Records held at ASD archives.

⁷⁶⁵ ASD archives of 547 Sig Tp material.



(Bearings and distances are in relation to BIEN EOA).

N.V.A. 33rd Regt
On 17th July, 51km E.

HQ V.C. 274th Regt
31km SE.

HQ 1st Bn V.C. 274th Regt
33km SE.

HQ 2nd Bn V.C. 274th Regt
On 14th July, 46km SE.

HQ 3rd Bn V.C. 274th Regt
On 22nd July, 36km SE.

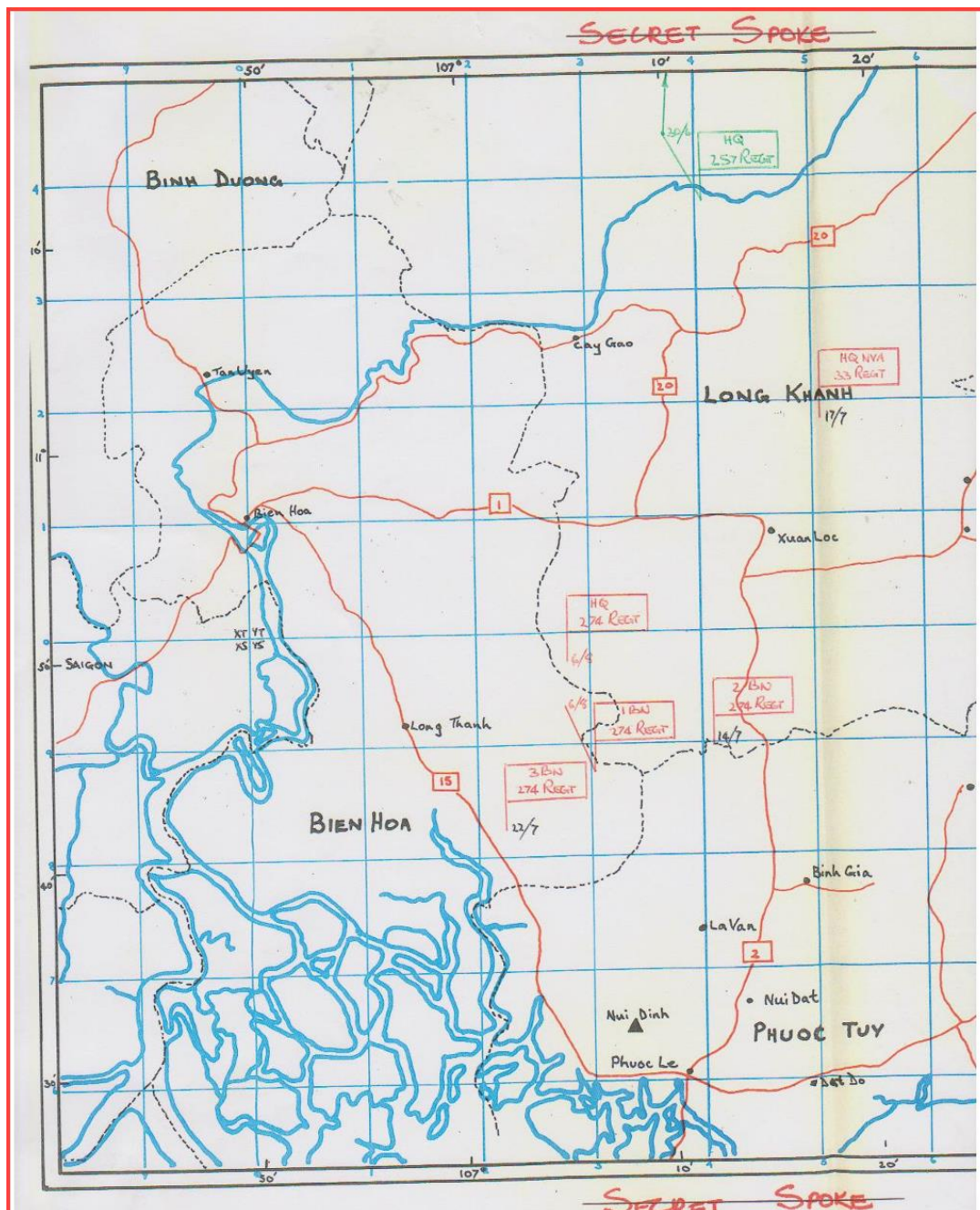


Figure 408: Map Summary 1 - 8 August 1969

46.2.4.2 8 – 14 Aug 69

SUMMARY OF V.C. AND N.V.A. MILITARY ACTIVITIES IN BIEN HOA, LONG KHANH
AND PHUOC TUY PROVINCES DURING THE PERIOD 8TH – 14TH AUGUST 1969

Figure 409: Summary of Activities 8 - 14 Aug 69



UNIT LOCATIONS

(Bearings and distances are in relation to BIEN HOA).

HQ N.V.A. 33rd Regt

65km ENE.

HQ V.C. 274th Regt

32km SE.

HQ 1st Bn V.C. 274th Regt

On 6th August, 33km SE.

HQ 2nd Bn V.C. 274th Regt

On 14th July, 46km SE.

HQ 3rd Bn V.C. 274th Regt

34km SE

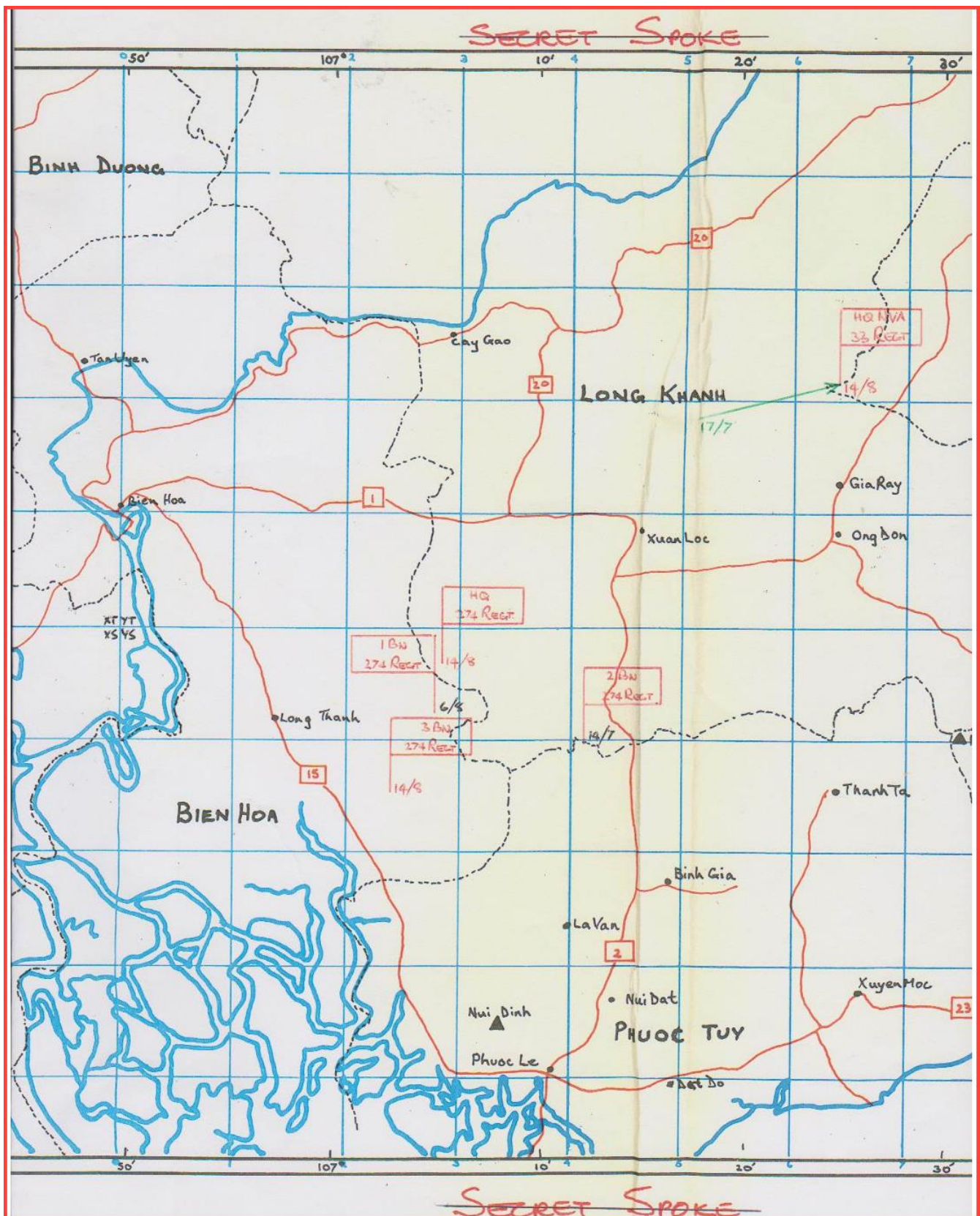


Figure 410: : Map Summary 8 - 14 August 1969



46.2.4.3 15 – 21 Aug 69

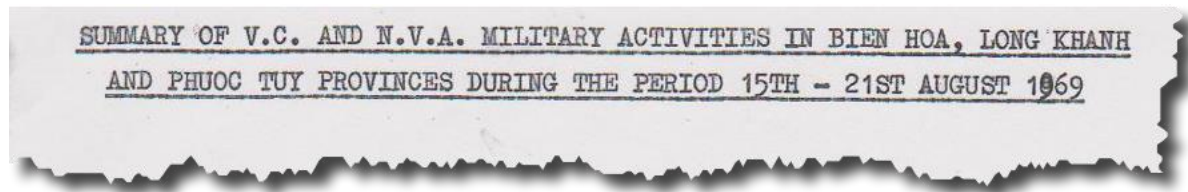


Figure 411: Summary of Activities 15 - 21 Aug 69

SIGNIFICANT REDEPLOYMENTS

On 18th August HQ 1st Bn, V.C. 274th Regt was located in the vicinity of YT 322023, approximately 10km NNE of its 6th August location.

UNIT LOCATIONS

HQ N.V.A. 33rd Regt
65km ENE of BIEN HOA.

HQ V.C. 274th Regt
33km NNW of NUI DAT.

HQ 1st Bn V.C. 274th Regt
37km NNW of NUI DAT.

HQ 2nd Bn V.C. 274th Regt
23km N of NUI DAT.

HQ 3rd Bn V.C. 274th Regt
21km NW of NUI DAT.





46.2.4.4 21 – 28 Aug 69

SUMMARY OF V.C. AND N.V.A. MILITARY ACTIVITIES IN BIEN HOA, LONG KHANH
AND PHUOC TUY PROVINCES DURING THE PERIOD 21ST – 28TH AUGUST 1969

Figure 413: Summary of Activities 21 - 28 Aug 69

SIGNIFICANT REDEPLOYMENTS

During the current reporting period both HQ of N.V.A. 33rd Regt and HQ 3rd Bn V.C. 274th Regt have redeployed. On 28th August HQ N.V.A. 33rd Regt was located 25km N of its 17th August location and HQ 3rd Bn V.C. 274th Regt moved approximately 7km NNE between 20th and 26th August.

UNIT LOCATIONS

HQ N.V.A. 33rd Regt

72km NE of BIEN HOA.

HQ V.C. 274th Regt

35km NNW of NUI DAT.

HQ 1st Bn V.C. 274th Regt

On 18th August, 37km NNW of NUI DAT.

HQ 2nd Bn V.C. 274th Regt

On 14th August, [August crossed out and Jul inserted] 23km N of NUI DAT.

HQ 3rd Bn V.C. 274th Regt

25km NNW of NUI DAT.

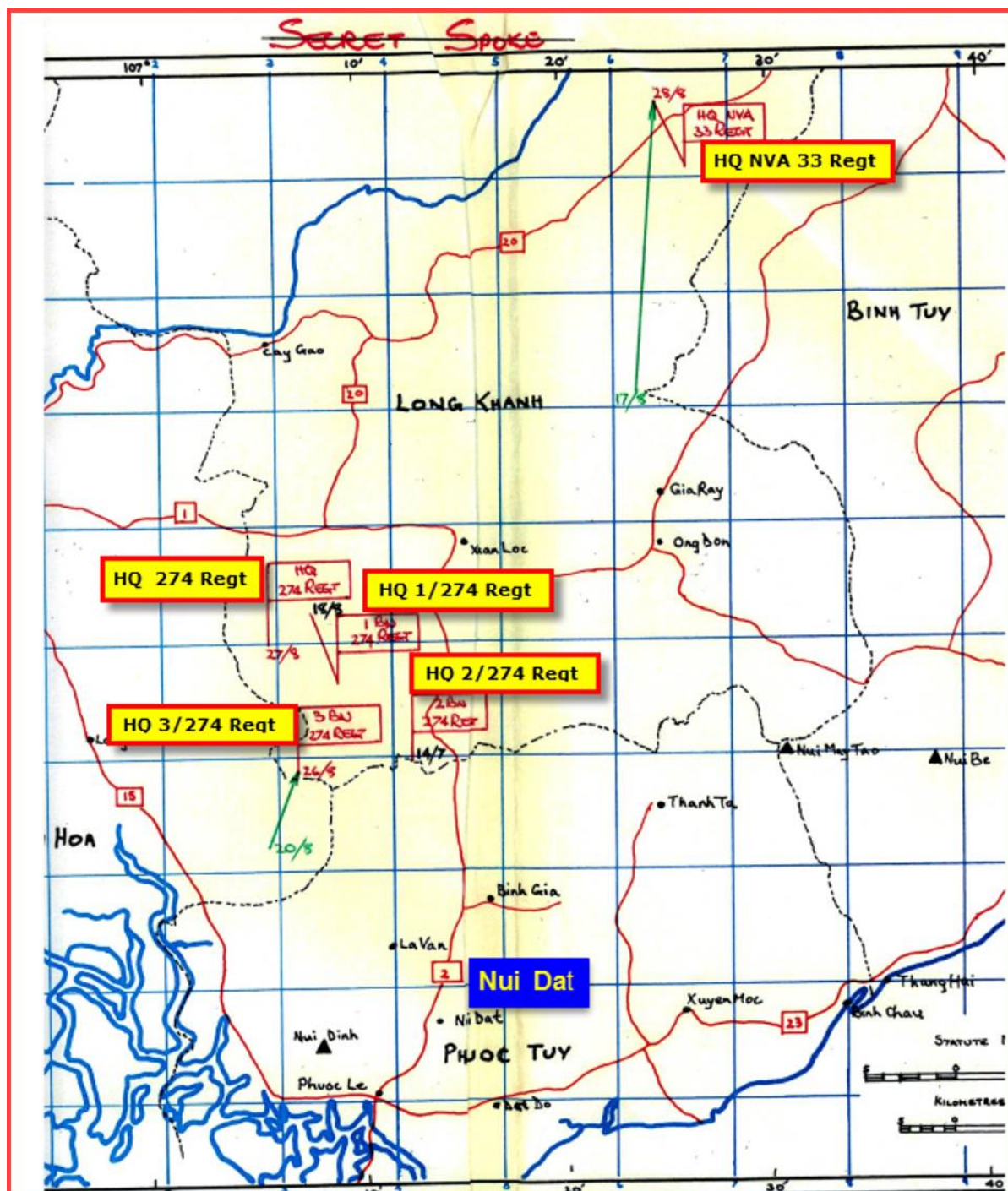


Figure 414: Map Summary 21 – 28 Aug 69



46.2.5 Troop VC/NVA Activities Summaries Consolidation

A consolidation of the Troop Summaries of VC and NVA Military Activities in Bien Hoa, Long Khanh and Phuoc Tuy Provinces covering the period 1 – 28 August is as follows:

1 - 8 August

Significant Redeployments

On 3 August, HQ VC 275th Regt, VC 5th Div was fixed in PHUOC LONG Province, approximately 52 km NNE of its 30 June location.

8 - 14 August

Significant Redeployments

Between 17 July and 14 August HQ NVA 33rd Regt has moved approximately 13 km E and is now located in the LONG KHANH/BINH TUY border area.

15 - 21 August

Significant Redeployments

On 18 August HQ 1st Bn VC 274th Regt was located in the vicinity of YT322023, approximately 10 km NNE of its 6 August location.

21 - 28 August

Significant Redeployments

During the current reporting both HQ of NVA 33rd Regt and HQ 3rd Bn VC 274th Regt have redeployed. On 28 August HQ NVA 33rd Regt was located 25 km N of its 17 August location and HQ 3rd Bn VC 274th Regt moved approximately 7 km NNE between 20 and 26 August.



CHAPTER 47 – SEPTEMBER 1969

47.1 Personnel

47.1.1 Arrivals and Departures

In September there were four arrivals and four departures.

Arrivals

2 September

Corporal Glen Trussell

24 September

Corporal James Danskin

Signalman Robert Harland

Signalman Rodney Spragg

Departures

3 September

Major Steve Hart

10 September

Warrant Officer Jack Hooker

Signalman Roger Thompson

13 September

Corporal John Peters

47.1.2 Employment Areas

Glen Trussell assumed the duty of Troop Clerk, Jim Danskin and Bob Harland joined the Set Room and Rod Spragg into the Comcen.

47.1.3 Changeover of Command

On 2 September Errol Poultney assumed command of the Troop and on the 9th, Andy Cockburn⁷⁶⁶ took over as TSM.

47.1.4 Mention in Despatches

Jack Hooker received a Mention in Despatches (MID) for his untiring work in the Troop.



Figure 415: MID Clasp

⁷⁶⁶ A few weeks later Andy also became a partner in the ATF SP Bookie group. His Saturdays were very busy.



47.1.5 Vung Tau R&C

R&C continued at Vung Tau.



Figure 416: Mick Guillot enjoying a day at the R&C Centre

47.1.6 Establishment Increase

On 23 September, AUSTFORCE VIETNAM signalled HQ 1ATF and 547 Sig that approval was given to increase the Troop Establishment by one Sergeant Op Sig, One Corporal Tech Electronic, one Sig OKC and one Sig Op Sig⁷⁶⁷.

S E C R E T

SD 16097. AMDT TO ESTB 547 SIG TP.

ONE. APPROVAL HAS BEFN GIVEN TO AMEND THF ESTB OF 547 SIG TP IV/44/2 (TW) WHISLT SERVING IN VIETNAM CMM BY ADDING THE FOLLOWING THEATRE INCREMENT . ALFA. SGT OPERATOR (IGNALS) CMM ONE- BRAV0. CPL TECH (ELECTRONIC) CMM ONE. CHARLIE. SIG OPERATOR (KEYBOARD AND CIPHER) CMM ONE. DELTA. SIG OPERATOR. (SIGNALS) ONE.

TWO. AMDT TO ESTB TO BE ISSUED SEPARATELY.

⁷⁶⁷ AWM: AWM 103 R310/1/23



7TH SIGNAL REGIMENT		(iv) (h) (i) (m) (n)
326	6. The composition of Detachment 547th Signal Troop allotted for duty with	
327	Australian Force, VIETNAM is to be as follows -	
328	NOTES - continued	
329	a. <u>Personnel</u>	
330	(1) From the authorized establishment of 120th Signal Squadron	
331	Troop commander (captain)	1
332	Warrant officers, class II -	
333	Operator, signals	1
334	Staff-sergeants -	
335	Operator, signals	1 ¹ (Comm 1)
336	Sergeants - <i>supervisor technical telecom</i>	
337	Operator, keyboard and cipher	1
338	Operator, signals	1 ² (his increment)
339	Technician, cipher	1 ² (as above)
340	Corporals -	
341	Clerk, administrative	1
342	Operator, keyboard and cipher	1
343	Operator, signals	8
344	Technician, electronic	1 ² (his increment)
345	Signalmen -	1 ² (as above)
346	Operator, keyboard and cipher	1 ² (as above)
347	Operator, signals	1 ² (as above)
348	Attached -	
349	Aust Int Corps -	
350	Lieutenant, troop commander	1
351	Warrant officer, class II interpreter(k)	1
352	Staff-sergeant Interpreter (k)	1
353	Sergeant interpreter (k)	2
354	(2) Plus the following unit theatre supplement -	
355	Signalmen, operator, signals	1
356	Total, authorized detachment	
357	547th Signal Troop	3040 ✓
358	b. <u>Transport and Weapons</u>	
359	(Additional to those authorized in table (iv) Transport and Weapons	
360	(existing range) -	
361	<u>Transport</u>	
362	Truck, utility, $\frac{1}{2}$ -ton, GS, fitted for radio	3
363	Trailer, cargo, $\frac{1}{2}$ -ton	3
364	<u>Weapons -</u>	
365	Rifle, automatic, 7.62-mm	2
393	(k) May be filled by operator intelligence (ECN 263) or RA Signals operators,	
394	signals (ECN 273) if interpreters (ECN 186) are not available	

Figure 417: 7 Sig Regt Establishment - 547 Sig Tp extract⁷⁶⁸



47.1.7 HQ AFV Monthly Strength Return

There was no change to the Strength of the Troop in September⁷⁶⁹:

SERIAL	FORMATION/UNIT	ESTABLISHMENT			POSTED STRENGTH		
		OFFR	OR	TOTAL	OFFR	OR	TOTAL
(a)	(b)	(c)	(d)	(e)	(f)	(g)	(h)
31	547 Sig Tp (Less Det)	2	34	36	2	38	40

Figure 418: HQ AFV Strength Return for September 1969

47.2 Operations

47.2.1 547 Sig Tp Operational Report for September 1969

The 547 Sig Tp Operational Report for Sept 69⁷⁷⁰ stated:

S E C R E T SPOKE SIGS580

OPERATIONAL REPORT 1-30 SEP.

ONE. SET ROOM. NO CHANGE

TWO. TASKING

*ALPHA. PRIORITY/TASK 1. VCMB 05437 2. VCMB 00331
3. VCMB 05447 4. VCMB 05443 5. VCMB 00835*

[much redaction]

CHARLIE. SEARCH BANDS. NO CHANGE

THREE ARDF.

ALPHA, TOTAL FIXES 28

*BRAVO. GRADINGS. SIX GOOD CMM FOURTEEN FAIR CMM
FIVE POOR CMM AND THREE CUTS*

*CHARLIE. FLYING TIME. 137.10 HOURS I NCL 10.55
HOURS ON TRIALS*

*DELTA, NINETEEN MISSIONS REDUCED BY WEATHER
CONDITIONS. ONE MISSION ABORTED AND ONE
REDUCED BY ARDF MALFUNCTION. TWO MISSIONS
ABORTED AND TWO REDUCED BY AIRCRAFT
MALFUNCTION/SERVI CE*

*ECHO. B MODEL STILL FUNCTIONING SATISFACTORILY
CMM B STAR MODEL STILL AWAITING SPARE CCT
BOARDS FROM IS GROUP CMM AS SOON AS
THESE ARRIVE MAX EFFORT WILL GO INTO GETTING*

⁷⁶⁹ <http://www.awm.gov.au/collection/AWM98/R723/1/13/5/>

⁷⁷⁰ DSD Declassified, 547 Sig Tp in Vietnam (tranche2).



B STAR OPERATIONAL

FOXTROT. CONSIDERING THE WEATHER CONDITIONS AND LACK OF ACTIVITY THE SECTION HAS DONE WELL FOR THE MONTH CMM SOME OF THEIR FIXES BEING OF EXTREME TACTICAL VALUE TO [redacted]

FOUR. SSL

ALPHA. DEFOLIATION OF SITE COMPLE SUCCESS BUT NO CHANCE TO BURN OFF BECAUSE TRAINING BRAVO. IMPOSSIBLE TO DO ANY WORK ON BLAST WALL AND IT LOOKS AS IF THIS WORK COULD WELL BE DONE AT THE TIME THE NEW I ONO SONDE IS BEING INSTALLED. IF WE CAN DO BEFORE THIS WITHOUT MUCH INTERFERENCE TO OPS WILL DO SÔ

CHARLIE. CPL POOLE PRESENTLY TRG SIG WOTHERSPOON AND SIG KING. EQPT FUNCTIONING SATISFACTORILY,

FIVE. VISITORS. 18 SEP [redacted]
22/23 SEP [redacted]

A 2LT CONCUTING OFFR WOULD COME IN HANDY QUERY.

SIX. VISITS. WO2 HOOKER WO1 COCKBURN TO [redacted]
26 SEP CMM WO1COCKBURN TO [redacted]
27/28 SEP CHM CAPT POULTNEY [redacted] 30 SEP/10CT.

SEVEN. DANCERS. SEPARATE SIGNAL FROM OC 547 AND DLO FOLLOWS.

EIGHT. EQPT GENERAL. TECH MAINT HAVE CAUGHT UP BACK LOG AND ONLY ONE RA217 IN NEED OF ALIGNMENT AT MOMENT. TG EQPT STILL PROBLEM

BUT HAVE SEVERAL IRONS IN FIRE THERE

47.2.2 Whiffing

On 21 September, DSD signalled AUM352 and Army Canberra (for DLO) about Whiffing⁷⁷¹:

S E C R E T SPOKE

MANY THANKS YOUR 200230 (NOT TO [Redacted]). WHIFFING SEEMS TO BE ANOTHER NAME FOR INTUITION. BASIC REQUIREMENT EVIDENTLY A DETAILED KNOWLEDGE OF PAST/PRESENT PRACTICES/SYSTEMS/METHODS IN WHOLE OF [redacted]

2. COULD YOU SUGGEST SPECIFIC THINGS WHICH WHIFFING TRAINING MIGHT COVER.

PLEASE CONFIRM THAT YOU BELIEVE VALUE OF WHIFFING IS SUFFICIENT TO JUSTIFY TRANSMISSION TO DSD OF 'ALL SEATS FROM [Redacted] AND ALL DSU'S AND SUBSEQUENT WORK IN DEPTH (WHICH SEEMS MANDATORY TO ALLOW DEVELOPMENT OF WHIFFING CAPABILITY).

⁷⁷¹ DSD Declassified, 547 Sig Tp in Vietnam (tranche2).



47.2.3 ARDF Flying Hours

The total ARDF flying hours for the month were⁷⁷²:

Year	Month	Flying hours	Total Fixes	Good <1000mts	Fair 1-2000Mts	Poor >2000 Mts	Cut	Missions Lost	Remarks
1969	Sep	137.15	28	6	14	5	3	24	Incl 10 hrs trg

47.2.4 Troop VC/NVA Activities Summaries

The Troop Summaries for September contained the following⁷⁷³:

47.2.4.1 Aug 29 - 4 Sep 69

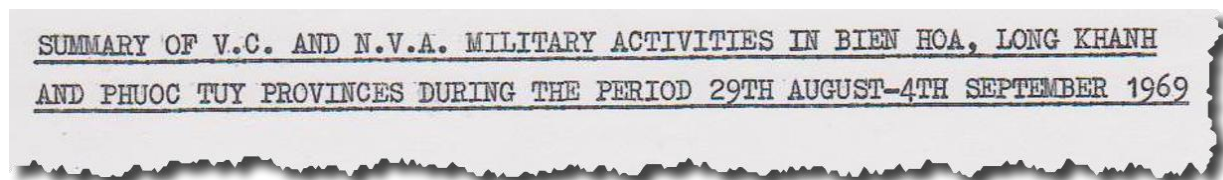


Figure 419: Summary of Activities 28 Aug – 4 Sep 69

SIGNIFICANT REDEPLOYMENTS

On 31st August the HQ of N.V.A. 33rd. Regt was fixed, in the vicinity of YT 573 502, approximately 8km NW of its 28th August location. In addition, HQ, V.C. 274th Regt has moved 13km in a south-easterly direction and on 4th September was located 24km NNW of NUI DAT.

UNIT LOCATIONS

HQ N.V.A. 33rd Regt
69km NE of BIEN HOA.

HQ V.C. 274th Regt
24km NNW of NUI DAT.

HQ 1st Bn V.C. 274th Regt
On 18th August, 37km NNW of NUI DAT.

HQ 2nd Bn V.C. 274th Regt
On 14th August, 23km N of NUI DAT.

HQ 3rd Bn V.C. 274th Regt
On 26th August, 25km NNW of NUI DAT.

⁷⁷² Compiled from MI8 Records held at ASD archives.

⁷⁷³ ASD archives of 547 Sig Tp material.

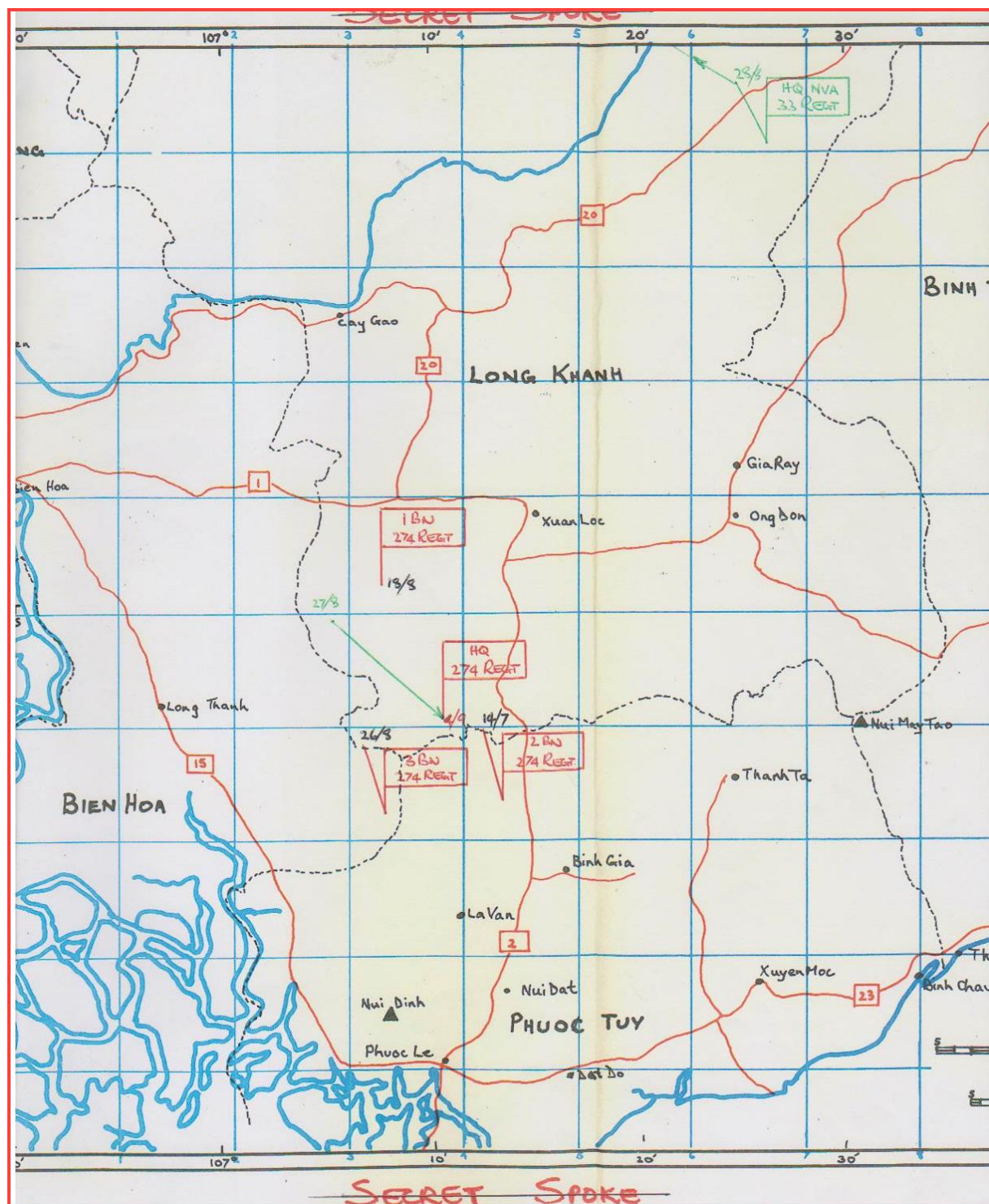


Figure 420: Map Summary 29 Aug - 4 Sep 69



47.2.4.2 5 – 11 Sep 69

SUMMARY OF V.C. AND N.V.A. MILITARY ACTIVITIES IN BIEN HOA, LONG KHANH
AND PHUOC TUY PROVINCES DURING THE PERIOD 5TH – 11TH SEPTEMBER 69

Figure 421: Summary of Activities 15 – 11 Sep 69

SIGNIFICANT REDEPLOYMENTS

*No significant relocation of units has "been noted during
the current reporting periodo*

UNIT LOCATIONS

HQ V.C. 274th Regt
27km N of NUI DAT.

1st Bn V.C. 274th Regt
On 18th August, 37km NNW of NUI DAT.

2nd Bn V.C. 274th Regt
On 14th August, 23km N of NUI DAT.

3rd Bn V.C. 274th Regt
27km NW of NUI DAT.

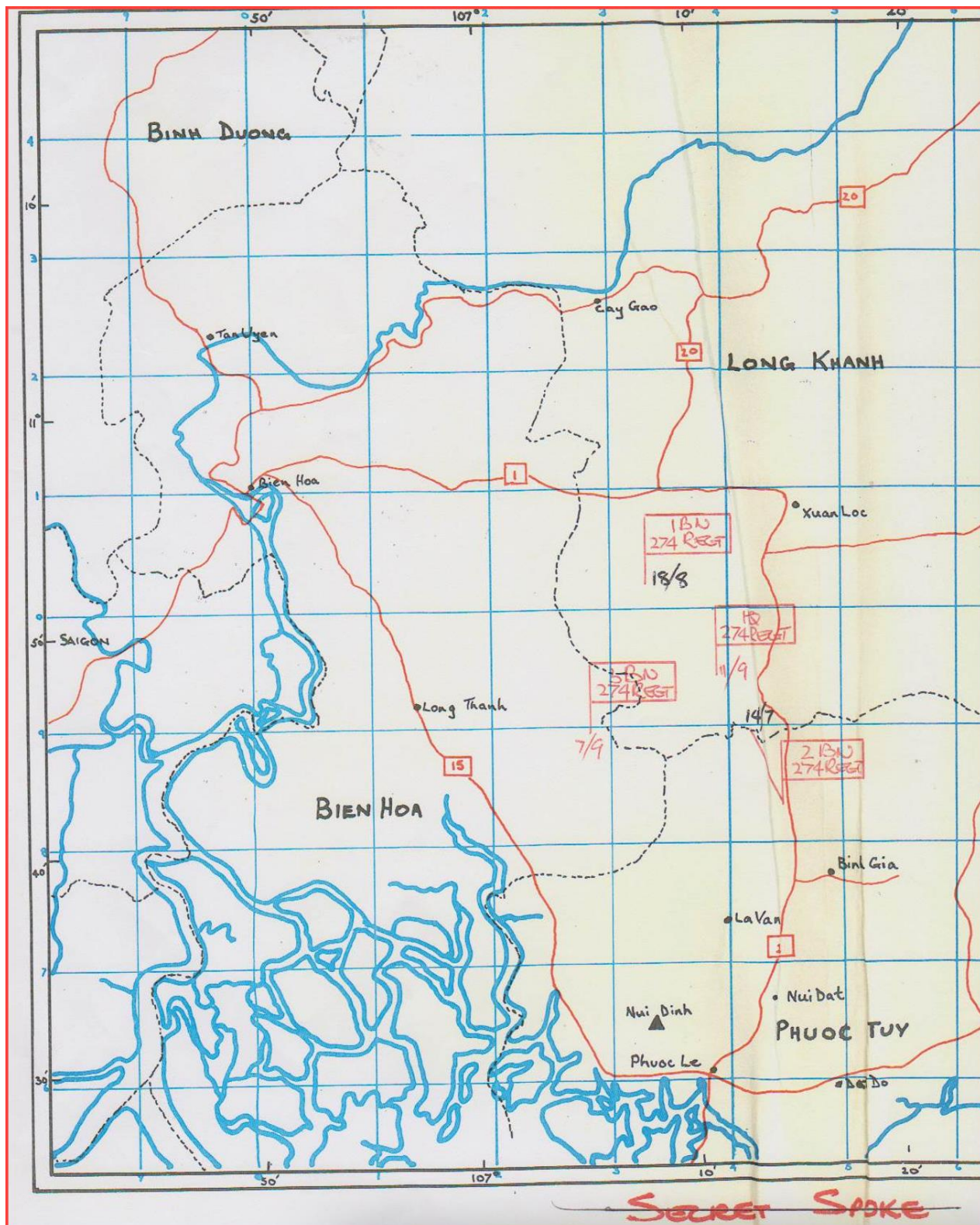


Figure 422: Map Summary 5 - 11 Sep 69



47.2.4.3 12 – 18 Sep 69

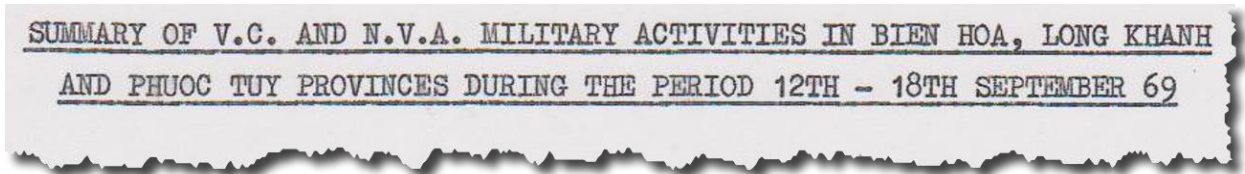


Figure 423: Summary of Activities 12 – 18 Sep 69

SIGNIFICANT REDEPLOYMENTS

No significant relocation of units has been noted, during the current reporting period.

UNIT LOCATIONS

HQ V.C. 274th Regt
25km N of NUI DAT.

1st Bn V.C. 274th Regt
On 18th August, 37km NW of NUI DAT.

2nd Bn V.C. 274th Regt
On 14th July, 23km N of NUI DAT.

3rd Bn V.C. 274th Regt
28km W of NUI DAT.

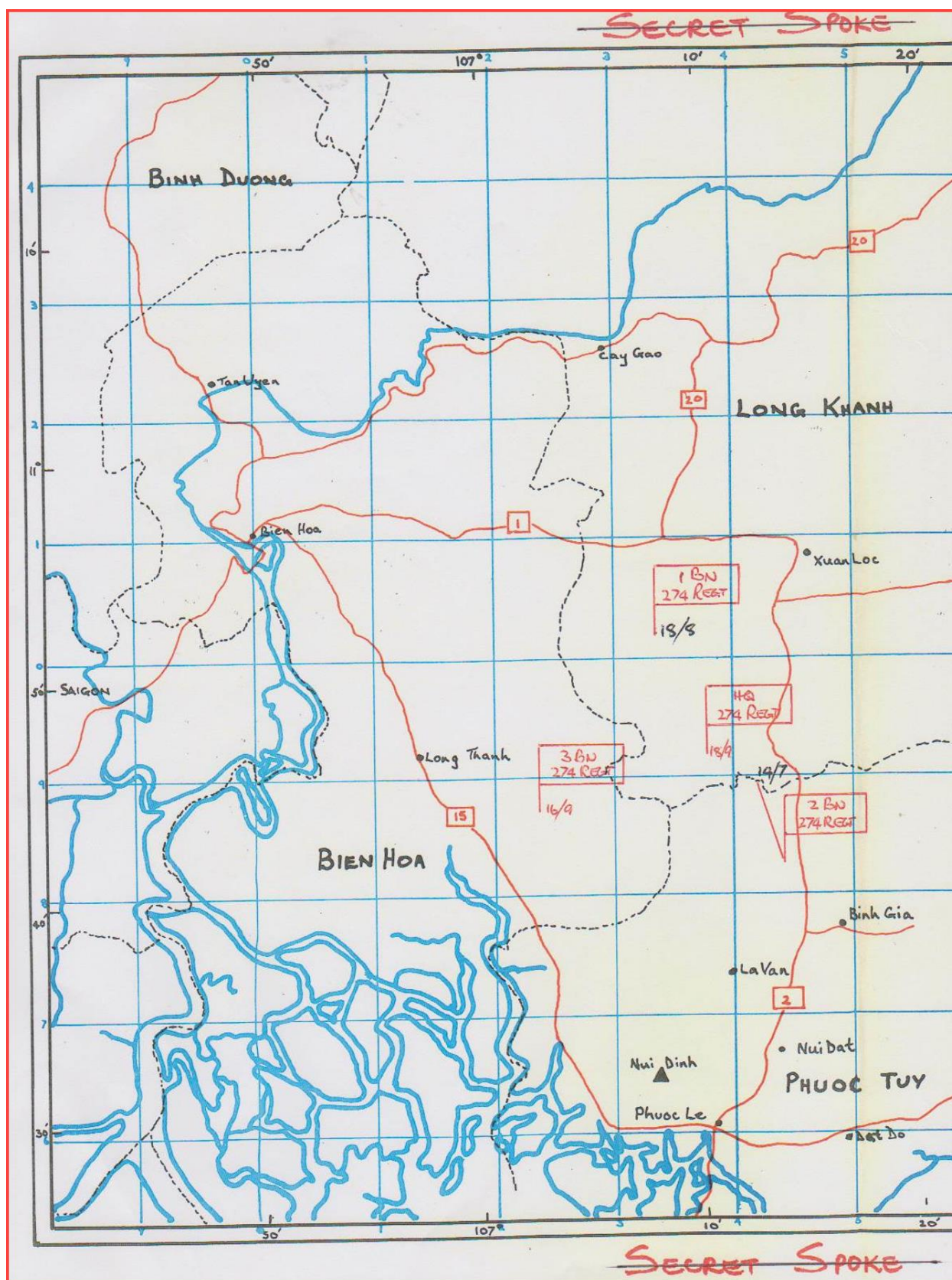


Figure 424: Map Summary 12 - 18 Sep 69



47.2.4.4 18 – 25 Sep 69

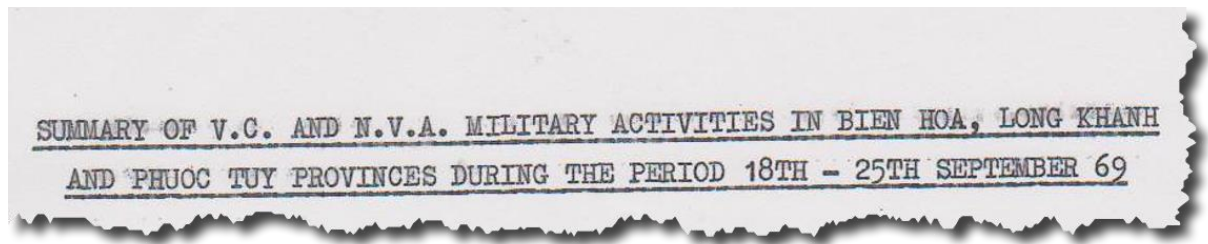


Figure 425: Summary of Activities 18 - 25 Sep 69

SIGNIFICANT REDEPLOYMENTS

No significant relocation of units has been noted during the current reporting period.

UNIT LOCATIONS

HQ V.C. 274th Regt
36km N of NUI DAT.

1st Bn V.C. 274th Regt
On 18th August, 37km NNW of NUI DAT.

2nd Bn V.C. 274th Regt
On 14th July, 23km N of NUI DAT.

3rd Bn V.C. 274th Regt
26km NW of NUI DAT.

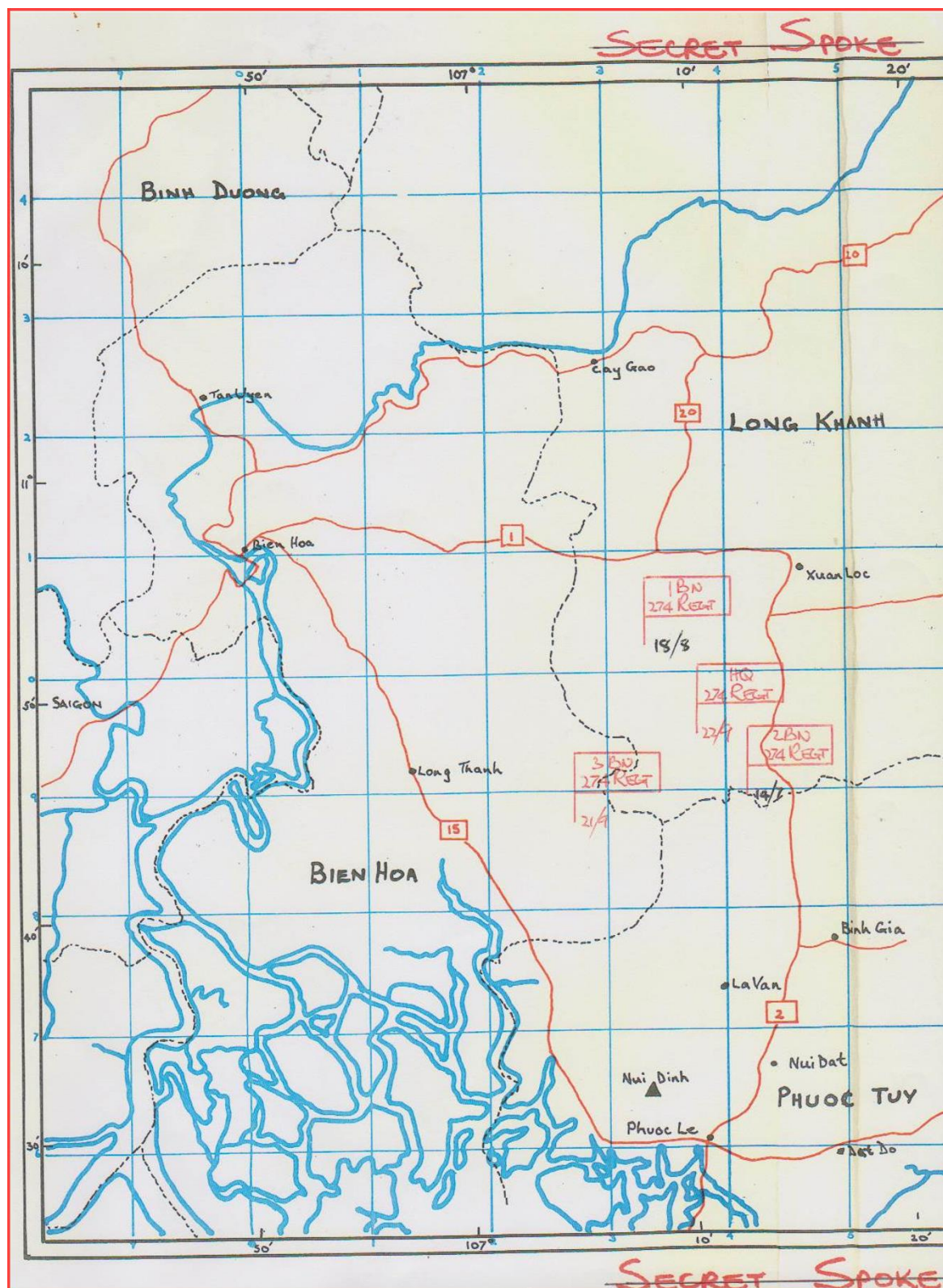


Figure 426: Map Summary 18 - 25 Sep 69



47.2.4.5 26 Sep – 2 Oct 69

SUMMARY OF V.C. AND N.V.A. MILITARY ACTIVITIES IN BIEN HOA, LONG KHANH
AND PHUOC TUY PROVINCES DURING THE PERIOD 26TH SEP - 2ND OCT 1969

Figure 427: Summary of Activities 25 Sep - 2 Oct 69

SIGNIFICANT REDEPLOYMENTS

Between 22nd September and 2nd October HQ V.C. 274th Regt has moved approximately 10km WNW.

UNIT LOCATIONS

HQ V.C. 274th Regt

34km NNW of NUI DAT.

1st Bn V.C. 274th Regt

On 18th August, 37km NNW of NUI DAT.

2nd Bn V.C. 274th Regt

On 14th July, 23km NNW of NUI DAT.

3rd Bn V.C. 274th Regt

29km NW of NUI DAT.

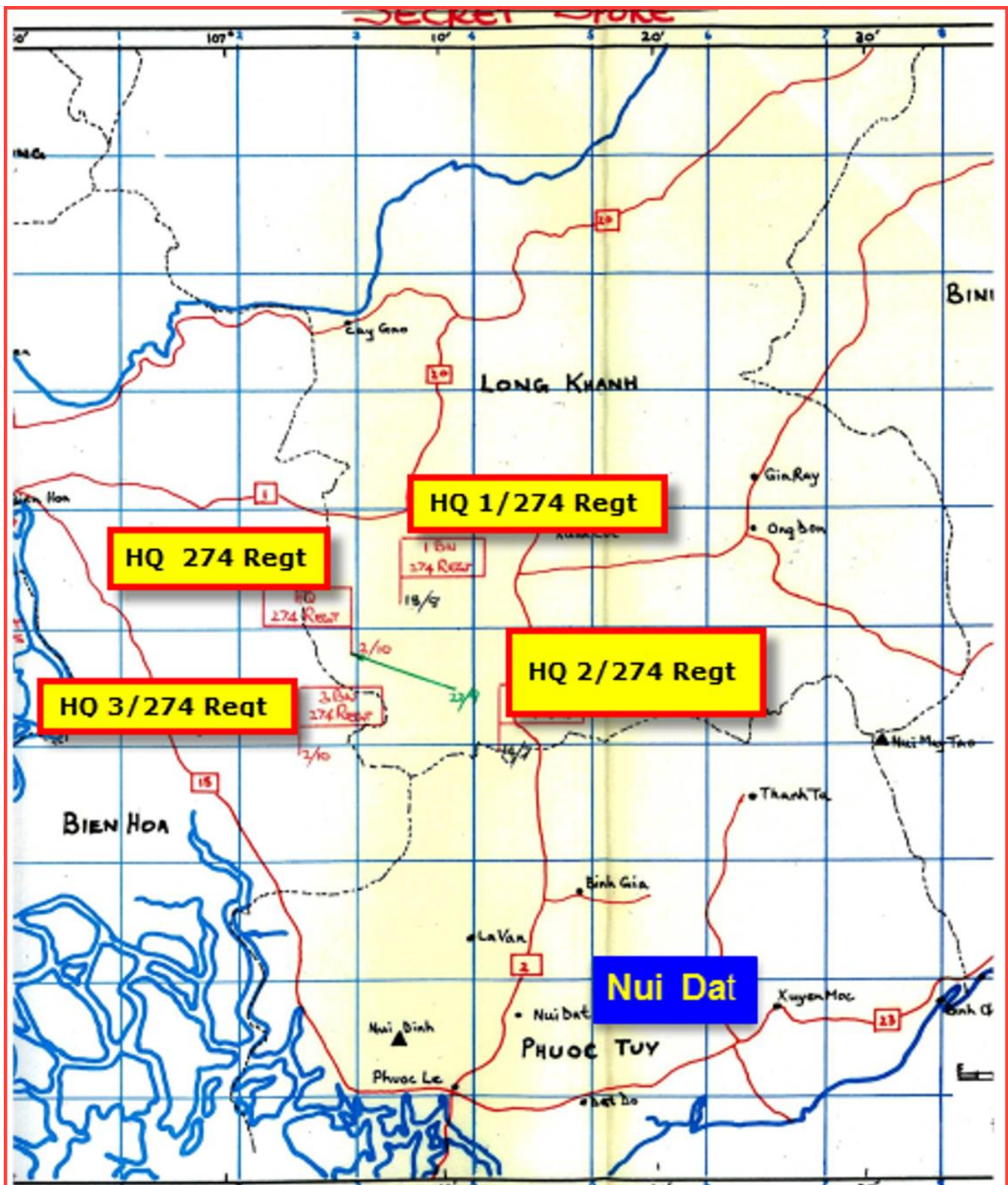


Figure 428: Map Summary 26 Sep – 2 Oct 69



47.2.5 Troop VC/NVA Activities Summaries Consolidation

A consolidation of the Troop Summaries of VC and NVA Military Activities in Bien Hoa, Long Khanh and Phuoc Tuy Provinces covering the period 28 August to 2 October is as follows⁷⁷⁴:

29 August – 4 September

Significant Redeployments

On 31 August, the HQ of NVA 33rd Regt was fixed in the vicinity of YT573502, approximately 8 km NW of its 28 August location. In addition, HQ VC 274th Regt has moved 13 km in a south-easterly direction and on 4 September was located 24 km NNW of NUI DAT.

5 – 11 September

Significant Redeployments

No significant relocation of units has been noted during the current reporting period.

12 -18 September

Significant Redeployments

No significant relocation of units has been noted during the current reporting period.

18 – 25 September

Significant Redeployments

No significant relocation of units has been noted during the current reporting period.

26 September – 2 October

Significant Redeployments

Between 22 September and 2 October HQ VC 274th Regt has moved approximately 10 km WNW.

⁷⁷⁴ Ibid



47.2.6 RAR/NZ Operation Burnham: 29 August -30 September 1969

Extract from *Fire Support Base Vietnam*:

*Operation Burnham was the last major operation conducted by 6 RAR/ NZ in the area of Bien Hoa Province known as the Hat Dich Secret Zone. This was an area of undulating ground covered in thick secondary jungle and bamboo forests, intersected by a myriad of streams. The operation involved protection for the Land Clearing Company and reconnaissance in force operations in AO Stuart*⁷⁷⁵.

*FSB Diggers Rest – YS 271875 set here from 30 August to 30 September in AO Stuart for 101 Field Battery RAA with the Battalion Headquarters Group in support of 6 RAR/ NZ company operations and the Land Clearing Company during Operation Burnham. On 29 August, V4 Company made an air assault into the AO to secure the site of FSB Diggers Rest*⁷⁷⁶.

Extracts from *A Duty Done*:⁷⁷⁷

Just before last light on 21 September enemy were seen crossing open ground just north of the FSB and earlier HQ 1ATF had advised that Signals Intelligence reported a battalion of 274 VC Regiment was located just to the south of the FSB. The area was engaged with mortars, Thai 155mm artillery and USAF air strikes. One of the first strikes dropped napalm and a second strike reported ground fire which was also heard in the FSB and so the airstrikes continued until nearly first light including by Spooky Gunships.

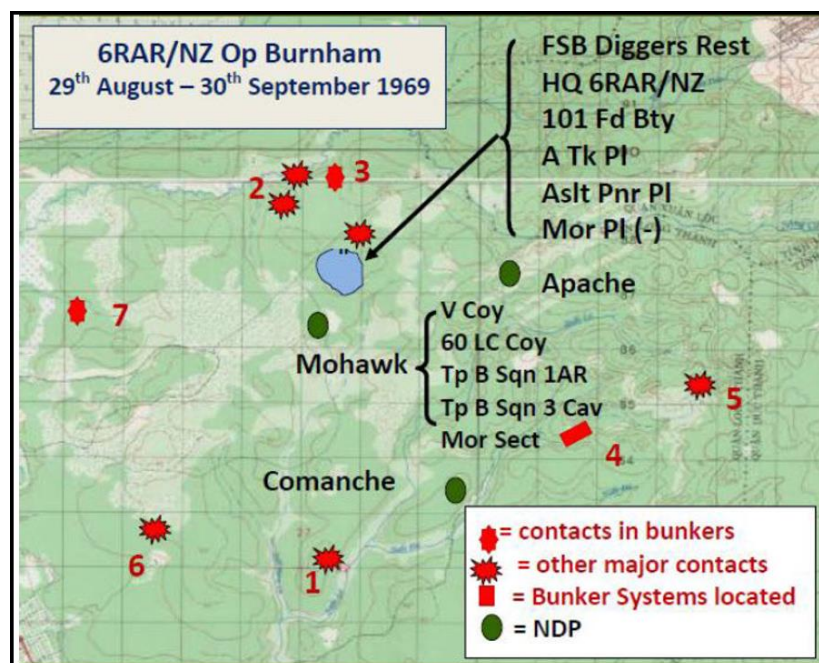


Figure 429: Operation Burnham

⁷⁷⁵ Picken, Bruce (2012-03-25). *Fire Support Base Vietnam* (Kindle Locations 7706-7709). Big Sky Publishing. Kindle Edition

⁷⁷⁶ Ibid. (Kindle Locations 7718-7720).

⁷⁷⁷ *A Duty Done. A History of the Royal Australian Regiment in the Vietnam War 1965-1972* by Lieutenant Colonel (Retd) Fred Fairhead. Published by The Royal Australian Regiment Association SA Inc. Page 94.



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CHAPTER 48 – OCTOBER 1969

48.1 Personnel

48.1.1 Arrivals and Departures

In October there were three arrivals and one departure.

Arrivals

21 October

Sergeant Clarence Whitehorn
Corporal Barry Jonathan
Signalman Jesophat Potter

Departures

29 October

Corporal Tony Bridges

48.1.2 Employment Areas

Clarrie Whitehorn arrived to take over as Comcen Supervisor, and Barry Jonathan and Joe Potter to the Set Room.

48.1.3 Visitors

In early October, Lt John Schmidtchen⁷⁷⁸ (CMF) of 104 Sig Sqn, Cabarlah, visited 104 Sig Sqn and had a social visit to the Troop. As John was not cleared for access to the operations area, he only attended for evening drinks.

On 23 Oct, Colonel Williamson, Director of Signals, visited the Troop.

48.1.4 HQ AFV Monthly Strength Return

As mentioned at Para 47.1.6, the Establishment Strength of the Troop was increased to 40 in October, to cater for the additional manpower required to operate the SSL⁷⁷⁹:

SERIAL	FORMATION/UNIT	ESTABLISHMENT			POSTED STRENGTH		
		OFFR	OR	TOTAL	OFFR	OR	TOTAL
(a)	(b)	(c)	(d)	(e)	(f)	(g)	(h)
31	547 Sig Tp (Less Det)	2	38	40	2	40	42

Figure 430: HQ AFV Strength Return for October 1969

⁷⁷⁸ Later joined the ARA and served as Adjutant, Squadron Commander and Commanding Officer in 7 Sig Regt.

⁷⁷⁹ <http://www.awm.gov.au/collection/AWM98/R723/1/13/5/>



48.1.5 Admin Report

On 2 November, AUM 352 signalled Admin Report 1-31 Oct to MI8 and DSD⁷⁸⁰:

C O N F I D E N T I A L COMINT CHANNELS SIGS 673

ADMIN REPORT 1-31 OCT.

*ONE. STR AS AT 312A00Z OCT. 2 OFFRS CMM 1 WO1 CMM
1 SSGT CMM 5 SGTS CMM 33 ORS.*

TWO. MOVS DURING MONTH CLN

ALPHA. MARCH INS.

*SGT C. A. WHITEHORN (23 OCT 69)
CPL B. F. JONATHAN (23 OCT 69)
SIG J. E. POTTER (23 OCT 69)*

BRAVO. MARCH OUT

LCPL A. E. BRIDGES (29 OCT 69)

THREE. LEAVE/REST.

*ALPHA. R&R. CPL B. KINSELLA 27 SEP-20CT (TAIPEH) CMM
SGT R. W. HARTLEY 90CT-150CT (AUST) CMM
CPL R. M. DEAN 130CT-190CT (AUST) CMM
CAPT B. P. DOYLE 23 OCT-29 OCT (AUST).
BRAVO. R&C. SIG R. B. BALDWIN (30CT-7 OCT) CMM
CPL B. L. POOLE (9 OCT-13 OCT).*

*FOUR. DETS. TO HORSHOE ON SPECIAL DET 16-19 OCT CLN
CPL A. BISHOP CMM LCPL L. E. WHITNEY CMM SIG
P. D. RUTHERFORD*

*FIVE. MEDICAL. REF MY ALST REPORT SIGS581 CMM
[redacted]*

WILL DISCUSS WITH CO DURING HIS VISIT.

*SIX. PROMOTIONS. LCPL A BRIDGES AND LCPL D MCPHEE
RECOMMENDED TO CPL (A26AS SENT TO 7 SIG REGT).
WILL DISCUSS FURTHER RECOMMENDATIONS WITH CO
DURING VISIT.*

SEVEN. CONSTR/DOMESTIC/ETC

*ALPHA. TWO NEW TENTS ELECTED AND
SAND BAG BLAST WALLS ON FIVE TENTS
REPLACED WITH CORRUGATED IRON EARTH FILL
TYPE.*

*BRAVO. ONE HALF OF CEMENT BADMINTON COURT
WORK DONE ON CLUB IMPROVEMENTS*

*EIGHT. AS A RESULT OF DIRECTIVE FROM D COMD TROOP
IS NOW FOSTERED BY [redacted] FOR MEALS
AND PROVIDES ONE DUTY MAN PER DAY.
SYSTEM IS WORKING WELL AND ORS CONFIRM THEY*

⁷⁸⁰ DSD Declassified, 547 Sig Tp in Vietnam (tranche2).



HAVE GAINED OUT OF CHANGE OVER.



Figure 431: Set Room Circa October 69

48.2 OPERATIONS

48.2.1 ARDF Flying Hours

The total ARDF flying hours for the month were⁷⁸¹:

Year	Month	Flying hours	Total Fixes	Good <1000mts	Fair 1-2000Mts	Poor >2000 Mts	Cut	Missions Lost	Remarks
1969	Oct	148.2	61	23	22	10	6	13	

48.2.2 AUM352 SSL Conference

On 2 October, senior Staff of AUM352 and others met at Nui Dat to discuss the operation of the SSL⁷⁸²:

S E C R E T SPOKE AUM352 2 OCT 69.

RESULTS SSL CONF AUM352 2OCT 69.

*ONE. PEOPLE PRESENT AT CONF WERE CLN OC AND OPS OFFR
AUM352 CMM DLO [redacted]*

⁷⁸¹ Compiled from MI8 Records held at ASD archives.

⁷⁸² DSD Declassified, 547 Sig Tp in Vietnam (tranche2).



TWO. BASIC PLAN OF EMPLOYMENT IS TO USE THE SYSTEM BETWEEN NOW UNTIL ARRIVAL OF NEW SONDE ON FOLLOWING

ALPHA. ATF TGTS OF INTEREST AS A DIRECTOR FOR ARDF.
BRAVO. TASK ON A CHECK TARGET PROGRAMME OVER RANGE 50-200 KM

CHARLIE. TASK AGAINST SOME US LOW EMPHASIS TGTS AS WELL AS THREE OR FOUR RELATIVELY STATIC TGTS THAT US MRDF AND ARDF HAVE HAD DIFFICULTY IN ACQUIRING.

THREE. [redacted] IS TO PROVIDE US WITH FULL TECH DETAILS OF ALL OUTSTATIONS ON US AND ARVN MRDF NETS SO THEY MAY BE USED AS CHECK TGTS. MACV IS TO PROVIDE US WITH A LIST OF US TRANSMITTERS AND TECH DETAILS THAT CAN ALSO BE USED AS CHECK TGS.

FOUR. RESISTED IDEA OF TRYING TO TIE SSL IN WITH WHITE BIRCH NET SO THAT COMPARISON OF RESULTS COULD BE MADE [redacted] WILL BE GIVEN DAILY SUMMARY OF RESULTS SO THEY CAN ASSESS THE RESULTS AND ANY COMPARISONS THEY MAKE WITH WHITE BIRCH WILL BE FORWARDED TO AUM352.

FIVE. BASIC RESULT IS TO WORK TGTS AS IN PHASE ONE AND TWO BUT THERE WILL BE MORE TGTS OVER A GREATER VARIETY OF RANGES CLN AS WELL AS THIS SOME LIVE TGTS OF AUST AND US INTEREST WILL BE TARGETED.

SIX. DURING THESE TESTS NO US OPERATORS OR EQPT WILL BE STATIONED AT AUM352 BUT AFTER INSTL OF NEW SONDE CMM EXPECT AT LEAST ONE NEW POSN AND US OPERATOR. I PROPOSED THEY SEND TWO OPS CMM ONE FOR SEARCH AND LOCATION OF US TGTS CMM AND ONE FOR WORKING WITH OUR SSL TEAM

SEVEN. ON READING THROUGH ALL OF OLD SSL FILES I WOULD LIKE CLARIFICATION ON TWO POINTS CLN

ALPHA. THERE WOULD SEEM TO BE A COMPREHENSIVE SYSTEM OF REPORTING DAILY RESULTS TO IS GROUP AND WOULD LIKE THEM TO RE STATE THEIR REQUIREMENT SO I CAN USE THE SAME SYSTEM TO BOTH IS GROUP AND [redacted] DAILY

BRAVO. THERE WERE SEVERAL SIGNALS FROM ORD MELBOURNE STATING SAFE DISTANCES FOR AMMO POINTS FROM SONDE FOR MEAN POWER OF 27 POINT 5 WATTS. NEED SIMILAR STATEMENT OF REQUIREMENT FOR MEAN POWER OF NEW SONDE TO ASSIST IN SITE SELECTION. ALSO NEED PHYSICAL DIMENSIONS OF SONDE SITE.

EIGHT. [Remainder not found]



48.2.3 Troop VC/NVA Activities Summaries

The Troop Summaries of Activities covering for October 1969 contained the following⁷⁸³:

48.2.3.1 2 – 8 Oct 69

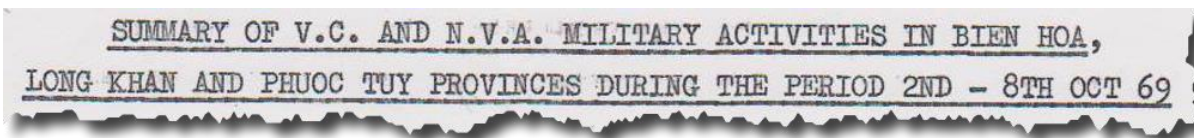


Figure 432: Summary of Activities 2 - 8 Oct 69

SIGNIFICANT REDEPLOYMENTS

On 2nd October HQ 2Bn V.C. 274th Regt was fixed by ARDF approximately 44km N of its 14th July location on the border of LONG KHANH and PHUOC TUY Provinces.

UNIT LOCATIONS

HQ V.C. 274th Regt
30km NNW of NUI DAT.

1st Bn V.C. 274th Regt
On 18th August, 37km NNW of NUI DAT.

2nd Bn V.C. 274th Regt
39km NE of BIEN HOA.

3rd Bn V.C. 274th Regt
27km NV/ of NUI DAT.

⁷⁸³ ASD archives of 547 Sig Tp material.

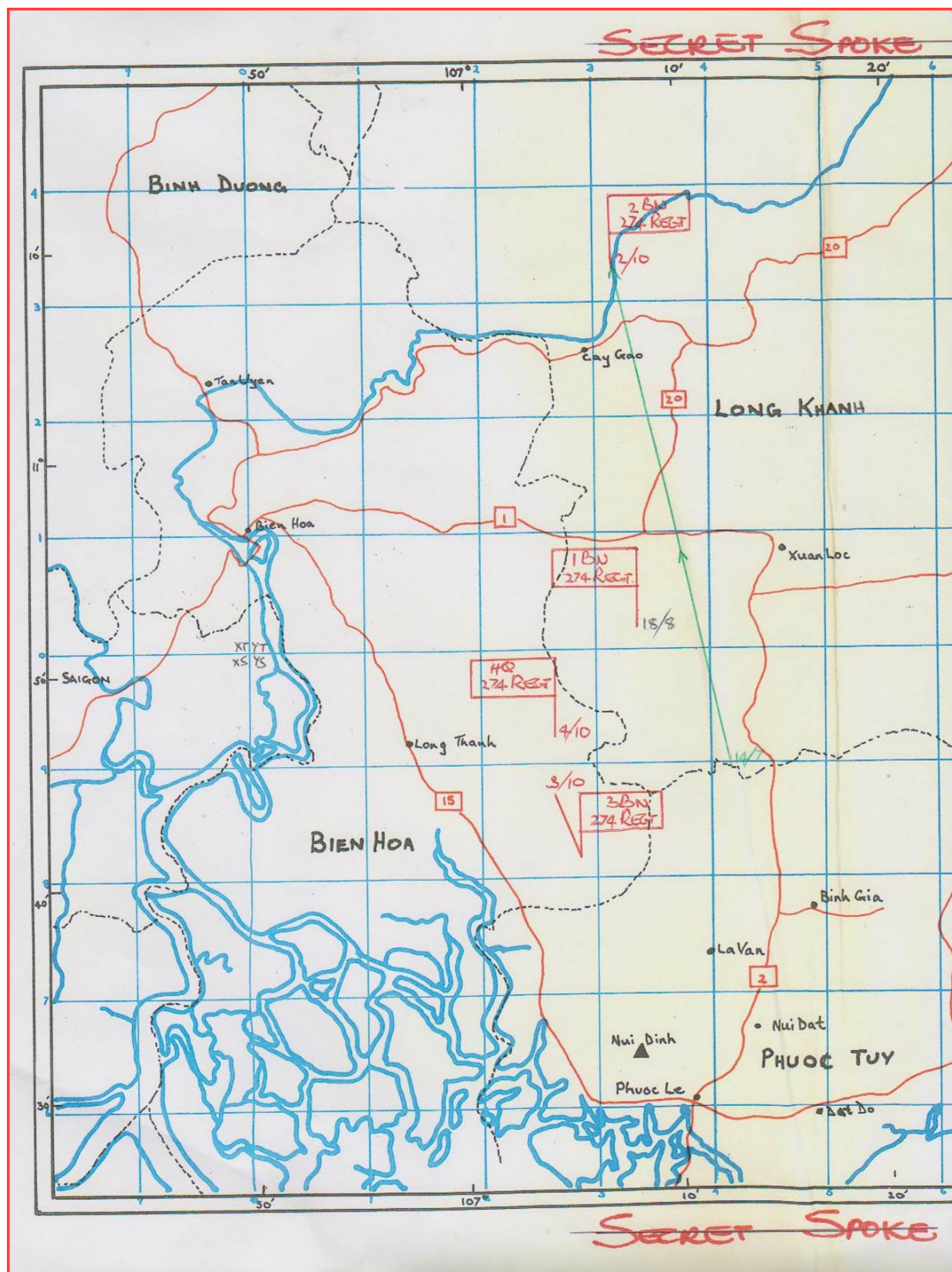


Figure 433: Map Summary 2 - 8 Oct 69



48.2.3.2 9 – 16 Oct 69

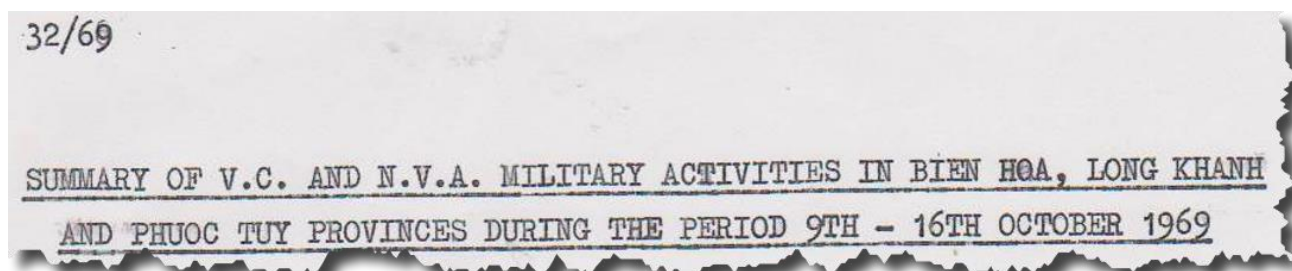


Figure 434: Summary of Activities 9 -16 Oct 69

SIGNIFICANT REDEPLOYMENTS

No significant redeployment of units has been noted during the current reporting period.

UNIT ACTIVITIES

Both the 2nd and 3rd Bns, V.C. 274th Regt have been encountering difficulties. 2nd Bn, located North of the SONG DONG NAI, has for some time been experiencing an acute food shortage in addition to logistics problems. The situation was exacerbated by the Bn being under constant pressure from Allied sweeps. Resisting an Allied sweep on 13th October, 3rd Bn suffered casualties which included 25 wounded, 15 being stretcher cases. Hardships were experienced in obtaining medical supplies and evacuating these personnel.

UNIT LOCATIONS

HQ V.C. 274th Regt

34km NNW of NUI DAT.

1st Bn V.C. 274th Regt

On 18th August, 37km NNW of NUI DAT.

2nd Bn V.C. 274th Regt

On 2nd October, 29km NE of BIEN HOA.

3rd Bn V.C. 274th Regt

26km NW of NUI DAT.

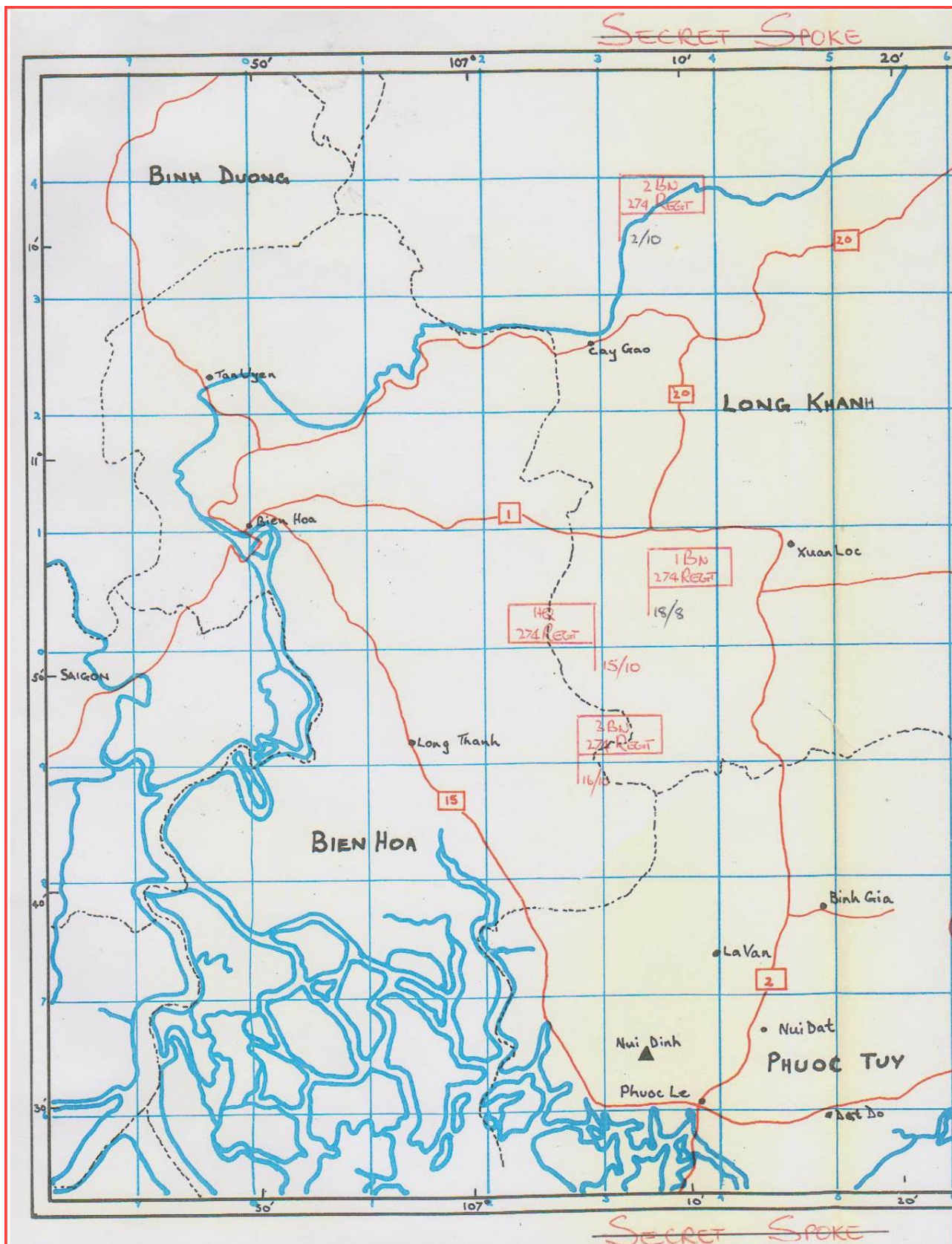


Figure 435: Map Summary 9 - 16 Oct 69



48.2.3.3 17 – 23 OCT 69

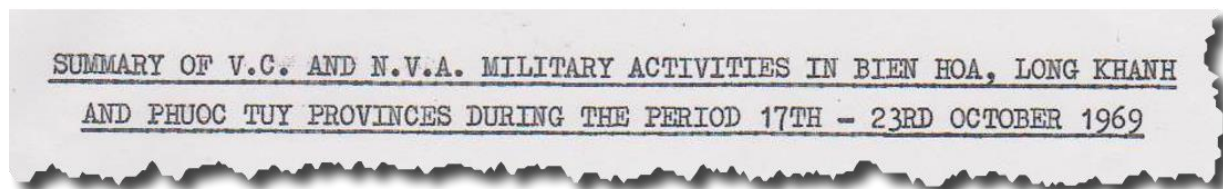


Figure 436: Summary of Activities 17 - 23 Oct 69

SIGNIFICANT REDEPLOYMENTS

On 17th October, HQ 2Bn, V.C. 274th Regt was fixed by ARDF approximately 9km N of its 2nd October location.

UNIT ACTIVITIES

The reported activities of V.C. 274th Regt are centred almost exclusively on the continuing re-supply mission of its 2nd Bn. The bn is utilizing at least three of its companies to transport arms and ammunition across the SONG PONG NAI to a destination south of Route 1 ; Allied operations are impeding these activities.

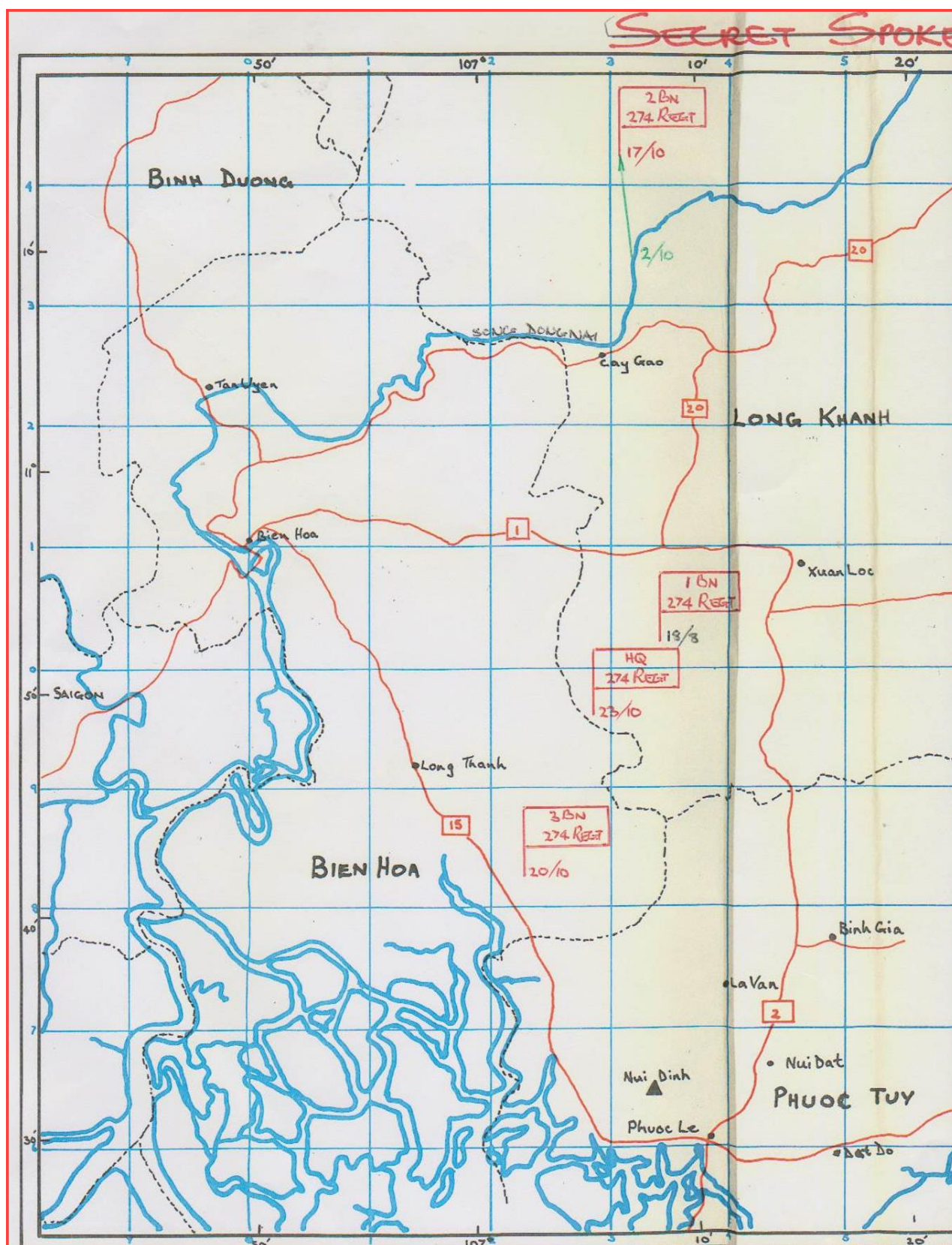
UNIT LOCATIONS

HQ V.C. 274th Regt
32km NNW of NUI PAT.

HQ 1st Bn V.C. 274th Regt
On 18th August, 37km NNW of NUI PAT.

HQ 2nd Bn V.C. 274th Regt
44km NE of BIEN HOA.

HQ 3rd Bn V.C. 274th Regt
26km NW of NUI PAT.



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48.2.3.4 24 - 30 Oct 69

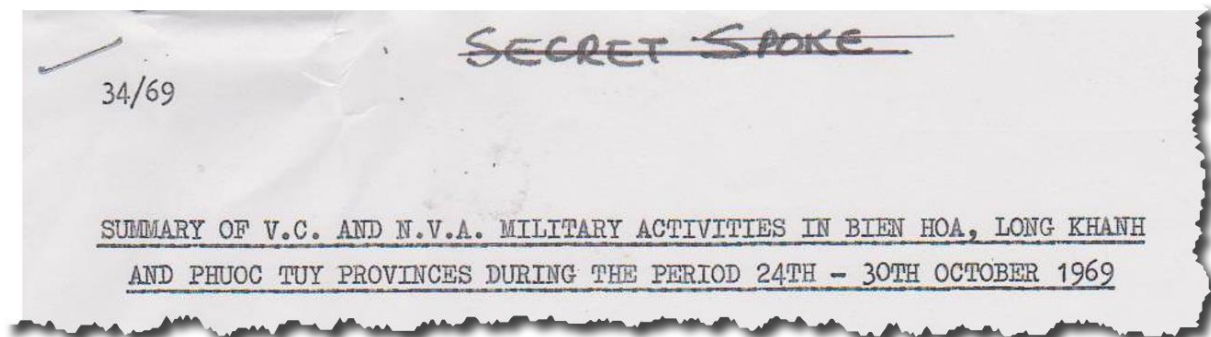


Figure 438: Summary of Activities 24 - 30 Oct 69

SIGNIFICANT REDEPLOYMENTS

HQ 2nd Bn, V.C. 274th Regt during the current reporting period has continued to move in a north-westerly direction. On 29th October it was located in the vicinity of YT 225544 a move of approximately 151cm since 17th October.

UNIT ACTIVITIES

At least two messages have clearly stated that the supply mission of 2nd Bn, V.C. 274th Regt would continue throughout the winter phase. Current emphasis is placed on the transport of arms and ammunition, in particular, 12.7mm heavy machine guns and mortar rounds.

UNIT LOCATIONS

HQ V.C. 274th Regt
34km NNW of HUI BAT.

HQ 1st Bn V.C. 274th Regt
On 18th August, 37km NNW of NUI DAT.

HQ 2nd Bn V.C. 274th Regt
50km NNE of BIEN HOA.

HQ 3rd Bn V.C. 274th Regt
26km NW of NUI DAT.





48.2.4 Troop VC/NVA Activities Summaries Consolidation

A consolidation of the Troop Summaries of VC and NVA Military Activities in Bien Hoa, Long Khanh and Phuoc Tuy Provinces covering the period 2 to 30 October is as follows⁷⁸⁴:

2 – 8 October

Significant Redeployments

On 2 October HQ 2 Bn VC 274th Regiment was fixed by ARDF approximately 44 km N of its 14 July location on the border of LONG KHANH and PHUOC TUY Provinces

9 – 16 October

Significant Redeployments

No Significant redeployment of units has been noted during the current reporting period.

Unit Activities

Both the 2nd and 3rd Bns, VC 274th Regt have been encountering difficulties. 2nd Bn, located north of the SONG DONG NAI, has for some time been experiencing an acute food shortage in addition to logistics problems. The situation was exacerbated by the Bn being under constant pressure from Allied sweeps. Resisting an allied sweep on 13 October, 3rd Bn suffered casualties which included 25 wounded, 15 being stretcher cases. Hardships were experienced in obtaining medical supplies and evacuating these personnel.

17 – 23 October

Significant Redeployments

On 17 October, HQ 2 Bn VC 274th Regt was fixed by ARDF approximately 9 km N of its 2 October location.

Unit Activities

The reported activities of VC 274th Regt are centred almost exclusively on the continuing re-supply mission of its 2nd Bn. The Bn is utilizing at least three of its companies to transport arms and ammunition across the SONG DONG NAI to a destination south of Route 1; Allied operations are impeding these activities.

24 – 30 October

Significant Redeployments

HQ 2nd BN VC 274th Regt during the current reporting period has continued to move in a north-westerly direction. On 29 October it was located in the vicinity of YT225544, a move of approximately 15 km since 17 October.

Unit Activities

At least two messages have clearly stated that the supply mission of 2nd Bn VC 274th Regt would continue throughout the winter phase. Current emphasis is placed on the transport of arms and ammunition, in particular, 12.7mm heavy machine guns and mortar rounds.

⁷⁸⁴ ASD archives of 547 Sig Tp material.



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CHAPTER 49 – NOVEMBER 1969

49.1 Personnel

49.1.1 Arrivals and Departures

In November there were three arrivals and departures.

Arrivals

4 November

Lance Corporal David Schneider

12 November

Staff Sergeant Clive Shepherd

Sergeant Des Williams

Departures

12 November

Sergeant Len Scott

Corporal Gordon Greaves

Corporal Barry Poole

49.1.2 Employment Areas

Clive Shepherd and Dave Schneider went into the Processing Section, and Des Williams to the Set Room.

49.1.3 ARDF Team Changes

In November, Jim Danskin replaced Frank Finch in the ARDF Team.

49.1.4 161 Recce Flt Fixed Wing Pilots

In November, 2nd Lieutenant Damien Aird joined 161 Recce Flt as a fixed wing pilot.

49.1.5 HQ AFV Monthly Strength Return

There was no change to the Establishment Strength of the Troop in November⁷⁸⁵:

SERIAL	FORMATION/UNIT	ESTABLISHMENT			POSTED STRENGTH		
		OFFR	OR	TOTAL	OFFR	OR	TOTAL
(a)	(b)	(c)	(d)	(e)	(f)	(g)	(h)
31	547 Sig Tp (less Det)	2	38	40	2	40	42

Figure 440: : HQ AFV Strength Return for November 1969

⁷⁸⁵ <http://www.awm.gov.au/collection/AWM98/R723/1/13/5/>



49.2 Administration

49.2.1 Vehicle Servicing and Maintenance

On 19 November, the OC, Capt Errol Poultney, wrote to HQ 1 ATF⁷⁸⁶ requesting an increase to the establishment of one driver to maintain the vehicles and take over driving duties from operators. The HQ responded that the Troop should determine if three vehicles were required and if a driver is needed, reduce the Troop strength by one Op Sig to compensate for the inclusion of a driver. The request for an increase was subsequently cancelled by the Troop.

49.2.2 Admin Report 1 – 30 Nov

On 3 December, AUM352 signalled MI8 and DSD an Admin Report covering the period 1 – 30 Nov 69⁷⁸⁷:

C O N F I D E N T I A L COMINT CHANNEL SIGS 768

ADMIN REPORT 1 – 30 NOV.

*ONE. STR AS AT 0240Z NOV. 2 OFFRS CMM 1 WO1 CMM
2 SSGT CMM 5 SGTS CMM 32 ORS.*

TWO, MOVS DURING MONTH CLN

A. MARCH IN.

*SGT R.D. WILLIAMS (14 NOV)
SSGT C. CHEPHERD (14NOV)
CPL D. SCHNEIDER (6 NOV)*

B. MARCH OUT.

*SGT L.W. SCOTT (11 NOV)
CPL H.G. GREAVES (11 NOV)
CPL B. L. POOLE (18 NOV)
THREE. LEAVE/REST.*

*A. R AND R. CPL F. FINCH 24-30 NOV (AUST) CMM
CPL H. MARTIN 29 NOV - 4 DEC (AUST) CMM SIG R. BALDWIN 21-26 NOV (SPR),*

*B. R AND C CPL A. BISHOP (13-17 NOV) CMM
SGT J. HARDING (30 NOV -3 DEC) CMM SIG E. RUSH (30 NOV- 3 DEC).*

C. PROJECTIONIST COURSE. SIG J. DANSKIN 24-27 NOV

*OP EXCHANGE CPL R DEAN (24 NOV-3DEC) CMM
CPL M STARR (17-23NOV).*

*E. DET. TO FIRE SUPPORT BASE PICTON 29 NOV
WO1 COCKBURN CMM CPL B. JONATHAN CMM CPL W. WOOD
CMM SIG R. HARLAND.*

*FOUR. PROMOTIONS. SIG CHAMBERLAIN PROMOTED TEMP CPL
WEF 20 NOV 69.*

FIVE. GENERAL.

⁷⁸⁶ AWM. AWM 103 R310/1/23

⁷⁸⁷ DSD Declassified, 547 Sig Tp in Vietnam (tranche2).



*ALPHA. ALL BUT TWO TENTS HAVE CORRAGATED IRON
BLAST WALLS COMPLETE*

BRAVO. BADMINTON COURT COMPLETED

CHARLIE. CONCRETE POURING IN TENT LINES COMPLETED

*DELTA. AERIAL FIELD AT SSL SITE BURNT OFF
AND CLEARED*

49.2.3 New ARDF Aircraft

On 29 November, the first Pilatus Porter PT-6⁷⁸⁸ aircraft arrived in South Vietnam for operations with 161 Recce Flt. The Porter was to replace the Cessna aircraft.



Figure 441: Porter Aircraft

49.2.3.1 Project Thorough

DMI and WRE were aware of the aircraft replacement program and under sponsorship from DMI, WRE had been building a new system called Project Thorough for use in the Porter aircraft. Flight testing had been conducted at WRE but more testing and trials had to be conducted in-country before being used on ARDF operations⁷⁸⁹.

⁷⁸⁸ The Pilatus Porter PT6 Aircraft was an eight seater, high wing monoplane of all metal construction with a conventional (tail wheel) undercarriage. It was powered by a 550 shaft horse power Pratt and Whitney PT6 turbine engine fitted with a constant speed propeller unit with reverse pitch capability. The aircraft was fitted with a full instrument panel, radio compass and other aids which permit limited operations by night and in bad weather. The rear cabin seats were readily removable for the carriage of cargo.

⁷⁸⁹ See Annex I for full details.



Figure 442: Porter undergoing trials at WRE⁷⁹⁰

49.3 Operations

49.3.1 547 Sig Tp Operational Report for November 1969

The 547 Sig Tp Operational Report for Nov 69⁷⁹¹ stated:

S E C R E T SPOKE SIGS769

OP REPORT 1-30 NOV.

ONE. POSITION AND WATCH HOURS NO CHANGE

TWO. TASKING

ALPHA, 1. VCMB0543710. VCMB 05448	19. VCMB 00835
2. VCMB00831	11. VCMB05449
3. VCMB05447	12. VCMB00709
4. VCMB05443	13. VCMB00667
5. VCMB05423	14. VCMB05445
6. VCMB05451	15. VCMB05450
7. VCMB05442	16. VCMBJ1816
8. VCMB J0772	17. VCMBY9084
9. VCMBJ1917	18. VCMB Y9083
20. VCMB00843	
21. VCMB00679	
22. VCMB00694	

BRAVO. DEV GROUPS

1. VCMB05444	2. VCMBJ6322
3. VCXB J6591	

CHARLIE. SEARCH BANDS. NO CHANGE

*DELTA. 3 OPS AND ONE TECH DEPLOYED
FROM 8 NOV - 14 DEC [redacted] - NEGATIVE RESULT SO FAR*

THREE. ARDF RESULTS. TOTAL FIXES 76

ALPHA. GRADINGS. THIRTEEN GOOD CMM FIFTY THREE

⁷⁹⁰ AWM P03057.003.

⁷⁹¹ DSD Declassified, 547 Sig Tp in Vietnam (tranche2).



FAIR CMM THREE POOR CMM AND SEVEN CUTS

BRAVO. FLYING TIME. TOTAL HOURS 134.10 INCLUDING 4.30 HOURS TRAINING

CHARLIE. SGT HARTLEY 84.40 HRS (TOTAL 446.3) CMM
CPL FINCH 3.50 (TOTAL 244.10) CMM LCPL WHITNEY 28.20
(TOTAL 28.50) CMM SIG PAYNE 17.20 HRS (TOTAL 362.50)

DELTA. THREE MISSIONS REDUCED BY WEATHER CMM
ONE MISSION ABORTED AND THREE REDUCED
BY ARDF MALFUNCTION / SERVICE CMM AND
FIVE MISSIONS ABORTED AND TWO REDUCED BY
AIRCRAFT MALFUNCTION/SERVICE

FOUR. SSL.

ALPHA. PRESENT TRIAL TEMPORARILY SUSPENDED
PENDING PROVISION OF CHECK TARGETS FROM,
[redacted]
THERE ARE EXPECTED APPROX 9 DEC AND
TRIAL WILL CONTINUE ONCE THESE TARGETS ARE TO HAND.

BRAVO. AS AN INTERIM MEASURE CMM WILL BE
TASKING SSL AT SOLE DISPOSAL OF DEV OPS AS
SSL SHOWS POTENTIAL AS AID IN THIS FIELD

CHARLIE. WHEN WORKING DURING RECENT PHASE CMM SSL
WAS RECEIVING APPROX 20 TASKS PER DAY AND
FIXING ON THE AVERAGE 14/15 SUCCESSFULLY.
WITH MORE TARGETS ACTIVE CMM AND CONSTANT STEARAGE
CMM GREATER PRODUCTIVITY COULD BE ACHIEVED.

DELTA. ASSUME NEW IONOSONDE CAN NOT BE
EXPECTED BEFORE MID JAN 70 NOW QUERY

FIVE. VISITORS
[redacted] 24 NOV CMM
17 NOV CMM DLO 20 NOV CMM

25-29 NOV.

SIX. VISITS.
[redacted].
21-23 NOV CMM CAPT B. DOYLE
(175 RR COY 303 RR BN OPS OFFR CONF) 6-8 NOV CMM
SSGT C. SHEPHERD CPL B. KINSELLA
175 RR COY) 21-23 NOV
CMM CPL P. JENKINS PTE SCHNEIDER (175 RR COY) 23-24 NOV

CMM CAPT E. POULTNEY (303 RR BN) 28 NOV.

SEVEN. OP EXCHANGE.

ALPHA. CPL M. STARR/SP4 R. KEITH 16-23 NOV.
BRAVO. CPL R. DEAN/SP4 J. TAYLOR 23NOV-2DEC.

EIGHT.

ALPHA. [redacted].

BRAVO. SEPARATE SIG ON [redacted]. TO FOLLOW



49.3.2 ARDF Flying Hours

The total ARDF flying hours for the month were⁷⁹²:

Year	Month	Flying hours	Total Fixes	Good <1000mts	Fair 1-2000Mts	Poor >2000 Mts	Cut	Missions Lost	Remarks
1969	Nov	134.1	76	13	53	3	7	14	Plus 4.3 hrs trg

49.3.3 SSL Summary

On 30 November, AUM352 provided MI8, Weapons Salisbury (PO/IS Group), DSD, and DLO with a Short Cell Summary⁷⁹³:

S E C R E T SPOKE/SIGS766

ONE. [redacted] HAVE AGREED TO PROVIDE THE WHITE BIRCH MRDF STATIONS AS CHECK TGTS FOR SSL FOR A THIRTY DAY PERIOD WITH THE OPTION OF USING THE NET AGAIN LATER. THIS WILL ALLOW A THOROUGH CHECK TO BE CARRIED OUT ON LONGER RANGE TARGETS.

TWO. AT THIS STAGE CMM PROPOSE TO DELAY CONTINUANCE OF SSL OPS UNTIL SOI FOR CHECK TGT IS PRODUCED BY [redacted] (APPROX 8/9 DEC). WHEN THIS IS PRODUCED A COMPLETELY NEW PROGRAMME WILL COMMENCE INCORPORATING CLN

ALPHA. WHITE BIRCH CHECK TGTS

BRAVO. AUM352 PRIORITY COVER

CHARLIE. OTHER VC STATIONS THAT ARE CLN ACTIVE REGULARLY, FAIRLY STATIC, AND FIXED FREQUENTLY BY US ARDF.

THREE. THIS WILL ALSO ALLOW THE TP A LITTLE FLEXIBILITY IN MANNING AS WE HAVE 3 OPS AND ONE TECH DEPLOYED TO [redacted] [redacted] (1 - 14 DEC). IT WILL ALSO GIVE US THE OPPORTUNITY TO CARRY OUT SOME ADMIN TASKS AT THE SITE BEFORE RECOMMENCEMENT OF OPS.

FOUR. HAVE RECEIVED THE PRESENT SYSTEM OF LOGGING CMM AND HAVE NOW PRODUCED A LOG SHEET THAT COMBINES THE FEATURES OF THE TWO PREVIOUS SHEETS. THIS SHEET WILL CONTAIN ALL READINGS AND RESULTS APPLICABLE TO EACH TASK. PROPOSE THAT DUPLICATE SHEET IS NOT NECESSARY CMM AS WE CAN ANNOTATE COMPUTER RESULTS SLIP

AND RETAIN AS OUR RECORD.

FIVE. HAVE PLOTTED RESULTS OF LAST TWO WEEKS AND THERE SEEMS TO BE ONE SECTOR ((APPROX 320 - 350 DEGREES) WHERE RESULTS EXHIBIT GREAT VARIATION EG. TASK RD M4000. THE PRONOUNCED FEATURE OF NUI DAT HILL IS VERY CLOSE TO THE SOUTH EASTERN CORNER OF SITE AERIAL FIELD AND WONDERED IF THIS COULD AFFECT SIGNALS COMING FROM NORTH WEST QUERY.

⁷⁹² Compiled from MI8 Records held at ASD archives.

⁷⁹³ DSD Declassified, 547 Sig Tp in Vietnam (tranche2).



SIX. SSL RESULTS ARE MOST USEFUL TO US CMM PARTICULARLY AS AN AID TO DEV OPS CMM AND FEEL THAT AFTER WRE HAS HAD A CHANCE TO ASSESS RESULTS OF CHECK TGTS (WHITEBIRCH) WE SHOULD TRY AND FEED SOME OF THE RESULTS INTO THE U.S. SYSTEM AS SOME OF THE RESULTS ARE UNIQUE IE. TGTS THAT ARE NOT FIXED REGULARLY BY [corrupt]

ARDF. DO NOT WISH TO COMMIT THIS STATION TO NEW REPORTING COMMITMENT AT THIS STAGE CMM BUT HAVE PROPOSED TO [redacted] THAT WE SIGNAL OUR DAILY RESULTS (CHECK TGTS AND VC TGTS) TO [redacted] AND LEAVE IT UP TO THEM WHETHER THEY WISH TO USE THE RESULTS ON VC TGTS. WHEN FURTHER PROGRESS IS MADE IN ASSESSMENT OF SSL ACCURACY AND CONSISTENCY CMM A REGULAR REPORT COULD BE INSTITUTED TO TIE IN WITH ARDF REPORTING. DO NOT SEE THIS HAPPENING UNTIL FURTHER TESTS HAVE BEEN CARRIED OUT USING NEW IONOSONDE.

49.3.4 ACV Deployments

In November, the ACV was deployed forward to FSBs Discovery, and Picton under command of Andy Cockburn. The other crew members comprised Bill Wood, Barry Jonathon, Bob Harland and a 3 Cavalry Troop Driver.

49.3.4.1 Operation MARSDEN

HQ 1 ATF Op Instr 97/69 (OP MARSDEN) dated 26 Nov 69⁷⁹⁴ lists the elements in support from 29 November. 547 Sig Tp is not shown, yet in the movement order at Annex B, the Troop ACV is listed.

(3) In sp from 290700H Dec	one tp B Sqn 1 Armd Regt one tp B Sqn 3 Cav Regt two AMC sect B Sqn 3 Cav Regt two ACVs HQ 1 ATF HQ one tp 1 Fd Sqn four mini teams 1 Fd Sqn
----------------------------	---

Figure 443: Extract from Op Instr 97/69

SECOND (.) PRELIMINARY MOVEMENT (.)	
ALFA (.)	MOVEMENT OF STORES OR EQUIPMENTS REQUIRED TO BE IN POSITION AT FSPB DISCOVERY WILL OCCUR ON 29 NOV 69 (.)
	UNITS REQUIRING SPACE ON THIS CONVOY ARE TO HAVE REPS ATTEND MAINT CONF 28 NOV 69 (.)
BRAVO (.)	547 SIG TP ACV IS TO MOVE ON THE CONVOY 29 NOV 69 (.)

Figure 444: Extract from Annex B to Op Instr 97/69

49.3.4.2 Operation Aim

The aim of Operation Marsden was to conduct reconnaissance and ambush operations to destroy the VC and their installations in the AO.

⁷⁹⁴ AWM RCDIG 1028143

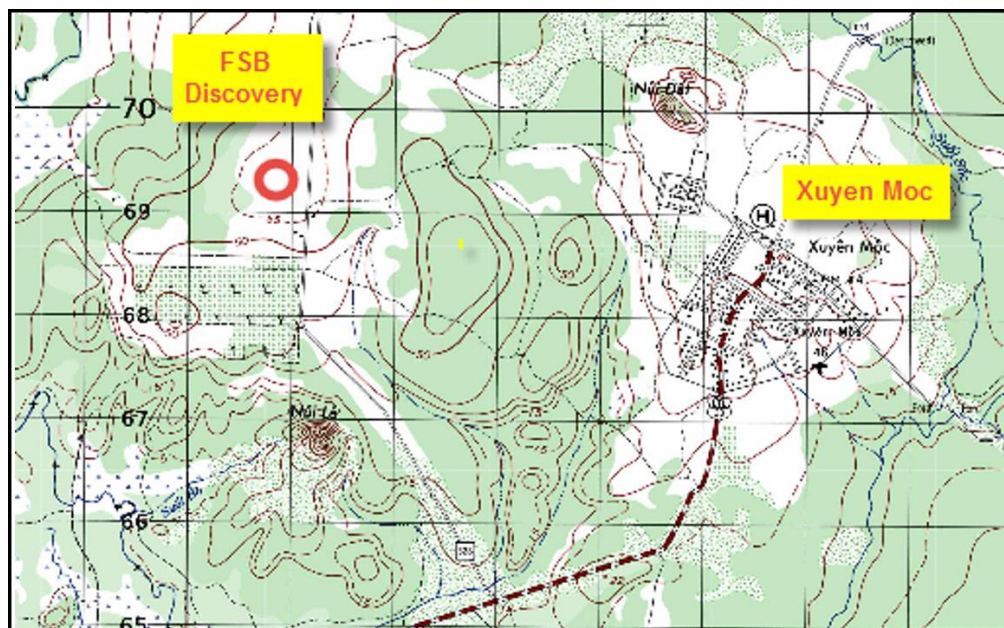


Figure 445: FSB Discovery #1



Figure 446: Andy Cockburn and Bill Wood catching the sun at FSB Discovery

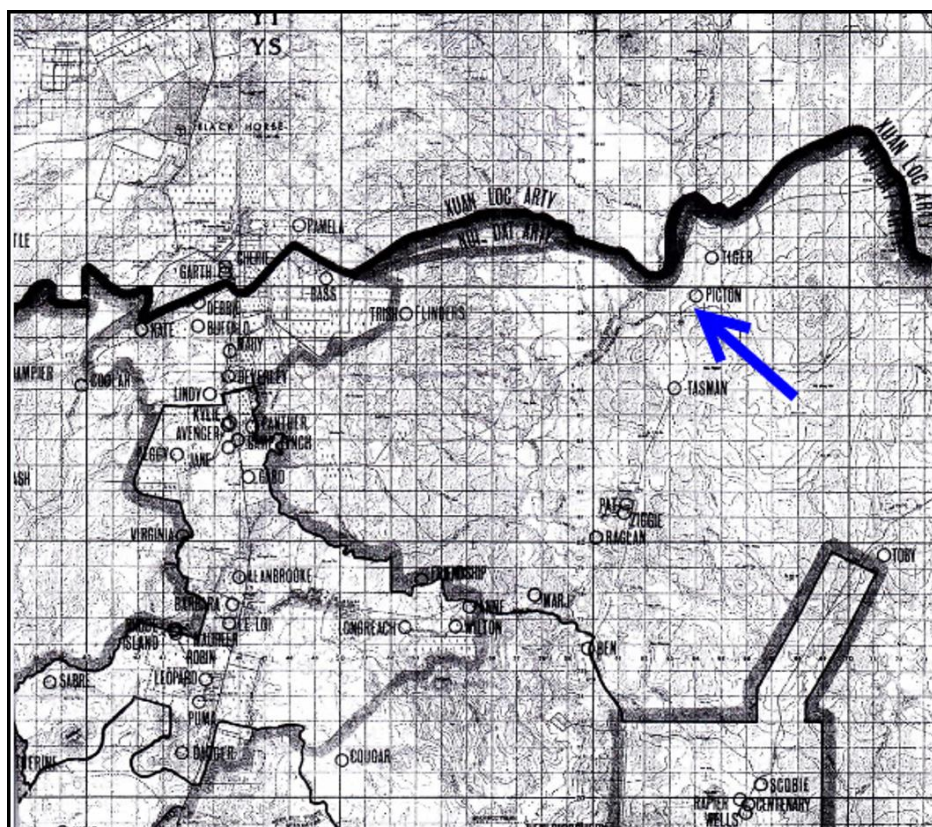


Figure 447: FSB Picton #1

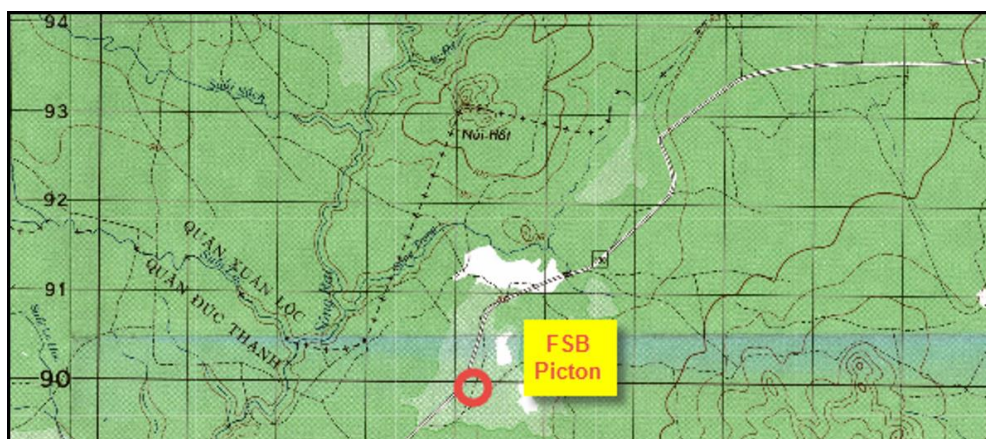


Figure 448: FSB Picton #2



49.3.5 Troop VC/NVA Activities Summaries

The Troop Summary of Activities covering the period 31 October – 6 November 1969 contained the following⁷⁹⁵:

49.3.5.1 31 Oct – 6 Nov 69

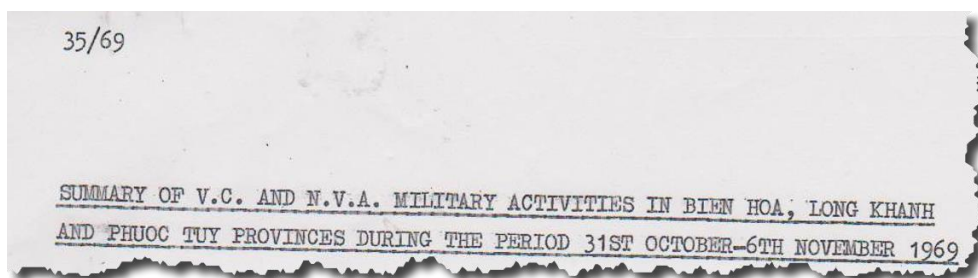


Figure 449: Summary of Activities 31 Oct - -6 Nov 69

SIGNIFICANT REDEPLOYMENTS

No significant redeployment of units has "been noted during the current reporting period.

UNIT ACTIVITIES

In addition to being hindered by Allied sweeps, the resupply :- activities of 2nd Bn, V.C. 274th Regt (located in the vicinity of YT 253538 on 1st November), have been further reduced by a continuing and acute food shortage, with a consequent diversion of effort in order to overcome this situation.

UNIT LOCATIONS

HQ V.C. 274th Regt
38km NNW of NUI DAT.

HQ 1st Bn V.C. 274th Regt
On 18th August, 37km NNW of NUI DAT.

HQ 2nd Bn V.C. 274th Regt
50km NE of BIEN HOA.

HQ 3rd Bn V.C. 274th Regt
29km NW of NUI DAT

⁷⁹⁵ ASD archives of 547 Sig Tp material.

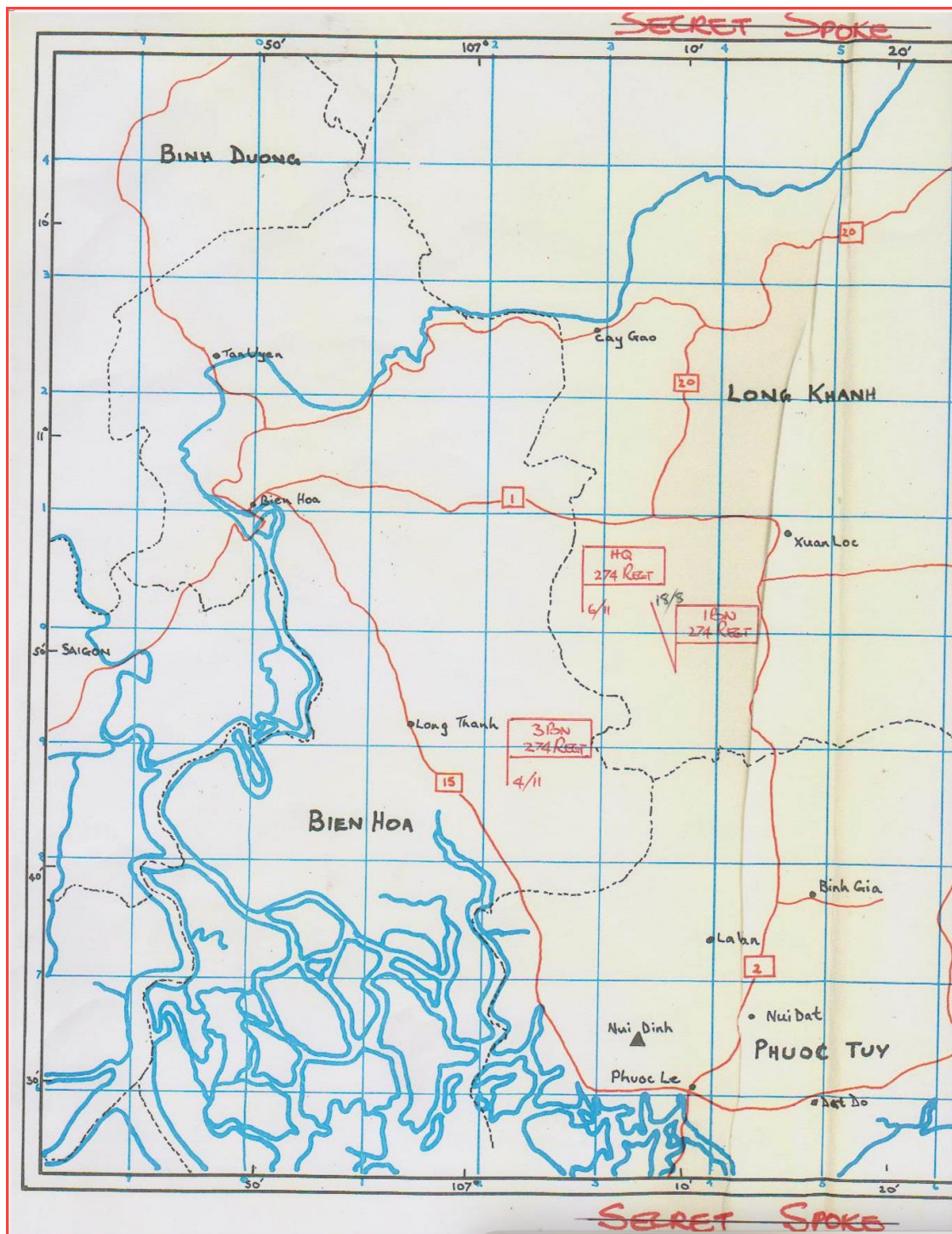


Figure 450: Map Summary 31 Oct - 6 Nov 69



49.3.5.2 7 - 13 Nov 69

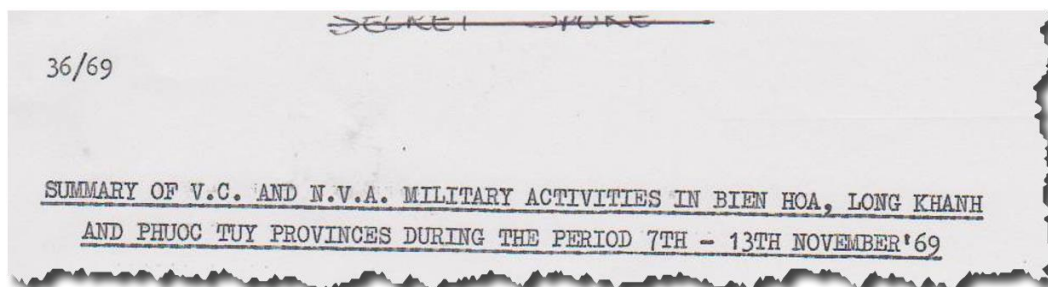


Figure 451: Summary of Activities 7 - 13 Nov 69

SIGNIFICANT REDEPLOYMENTS

Between 2nd and 11th November HQ N.V.A. 33rd Regt moved approximately 33km S.

UNIT ACTIVITIES

Starvation in 2nd Bn, V.C. 274th Regt has brought its resupply mission to a near standstill, However 274th Regt is making a concerted effort to overcome the situation as planned offensives are hamstrung by the lack of arms and ammunition which were to be transported by 2nd Bn.

UNIT LOCATIONS

HQ N.V.A. 33rd Regt
51km E of BIEN HOA.

HQ V.C. 274th Regt
381cm NW of NUI DAT.

HQ 1st Bn V.C. 274th Regt
On 18 th August, 37km NNW of NUI DAT.

HQ 2nd Bn V.C. 274th Regt
On 9th November, 50km NE of BIEN HOA.

HQ 3rd Bn V.C. 274th Regt
30km W of NUI DAT.

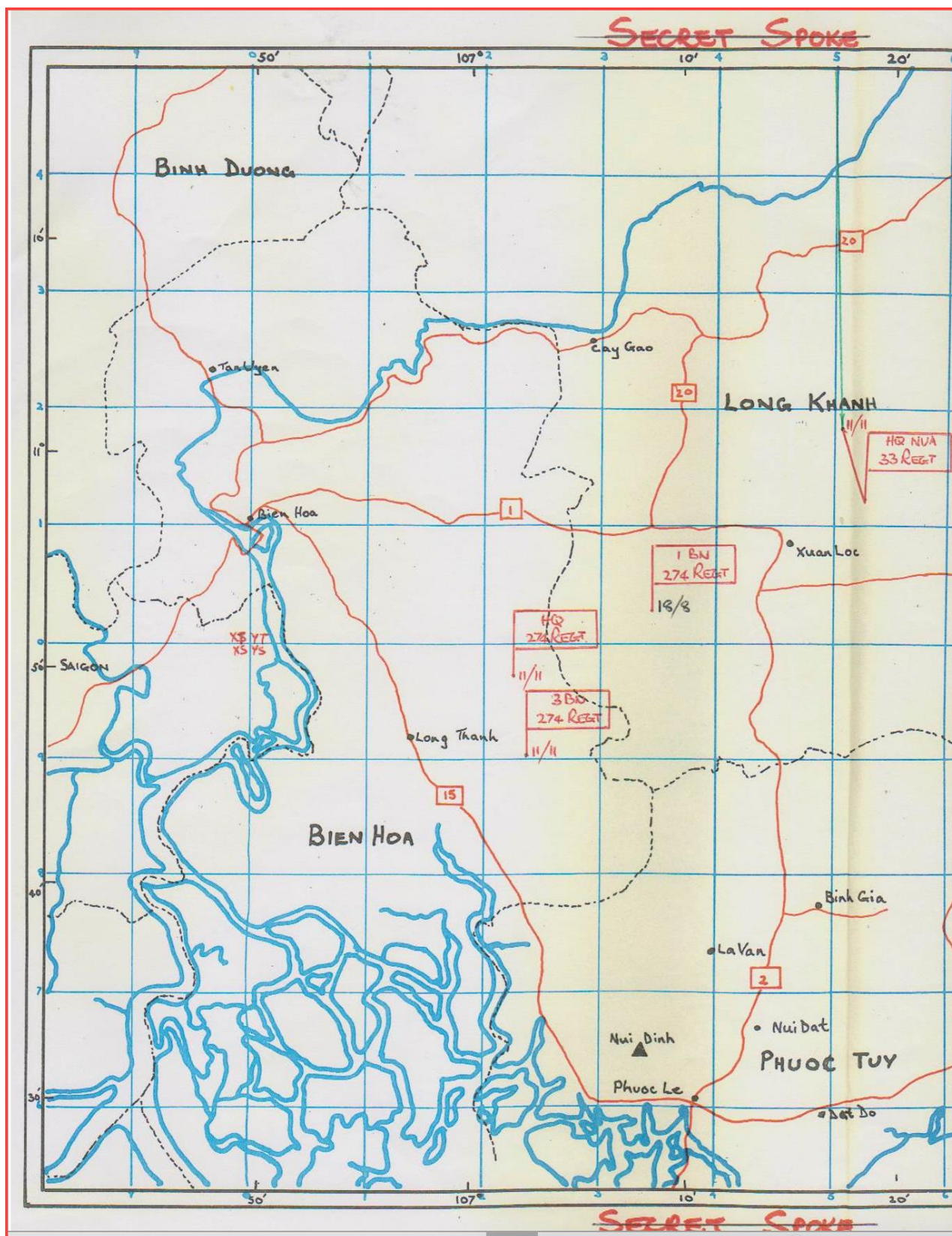


Figure 452: Map Summary 7 - 13 Nov 69



49.3.5.3 14 – 20 Nov 69

SUMMARY OF V.C. AND N.V.A. MILITARY ACTIVITIES IN BIEN HOA, LONG KHANH
AND PHUOC TUY PROVINCES DURING THE PERIOD 14TH – 20TH NOVEMBER 1969

Figure 453: Summary of Activities 14 - 20 Nov 69

SIGNIFICANT REDEPLOYMENTS

No significant redeployment of units has been noted during the current reporting period.

UNIT ACTIVITIES

Elements of 2nd Bn, V.C. 274th Regt have received foodstuffs and have been ordered to continue their mission of ammunition resupply. A message intercepted on 18th November instructed the bn to give priority to the transportation of AK and B40 ammunition urgently needed by Regt HQ. The same message also reported that HQ 274th Regt had opposed an Allied sweep and had been engaged in "two large battles."

UNIT LOCATIONS

HQ N.V.A. 33rd Regt
48km ENE of BIEN HOA.

HQ V.C. 274th Regt
31km WNW of NUI DAT.

HQ 1st Bn V.C. 274th Regt
On 18th August, 27km NNW of NUI BAT.

HQ 2nd Bn V.C. 274th Regt
48km NE of BIEN HOA.

HQ 3rd Bn V.C. 274th Regt
30km NW of NUI DAT.





49.3.5.4 21 – 27 Nov 69

SUMMARY OF V.C. AND N.V.A. MILITARY ACTIVITIES IN BIEN HOA, LONG KHANH
AND PHUOC TUY PROVINCES DURING THE PERIOD 21ST – 27TH NOVEMBER 1969

Figure 455: Summary of Activities 21 - 27 Nov 69

SIGNIFICANT REDEPLOYMENTS

No significant redeployment of units has been noted during the current reporting period.

UNIT ACTIVITIES

Nil noted.

UNIT LOCATIONS

HQ N.V.A. 33rd Regt

On 17th November, 48km ENE of BIEN HOA.

HQ V.C. 274th Regt

35km NW of NUI DAT.

HQ 1st Bn V.C. 274th Regt

On 18th August, 27km NNW of NUI DAT.

HQ 2nd BN V.C. 274th Regt

On 18th November, 48km NE of BIEN HOA.

HQ 3rd Bn V.C. 274th Regt

36km NW of NUI DAT.

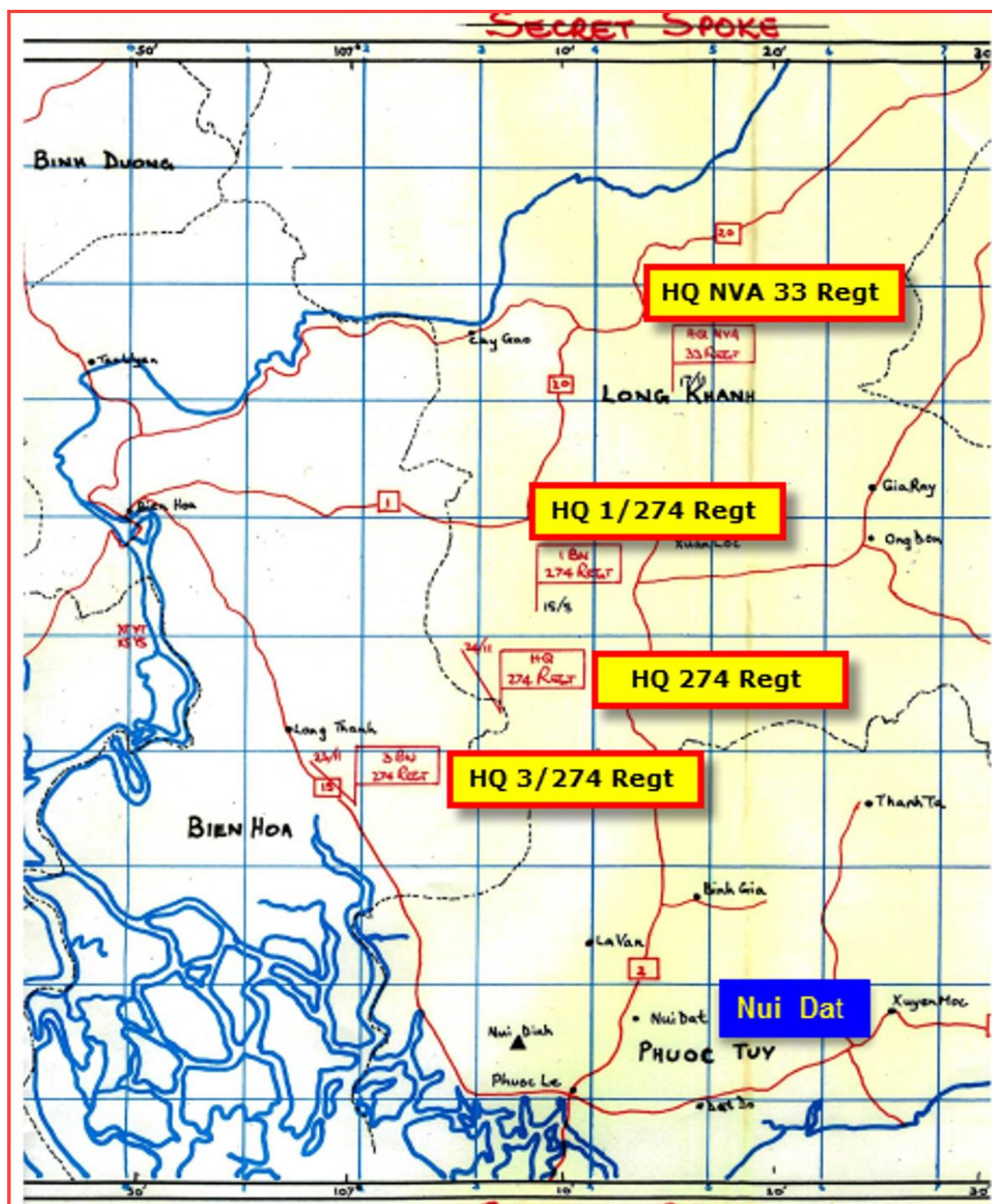


Figure 456: Map Summary 21 – 27 Nov 69



49.3.6 Troop VC/NVA Activities Summaries Consolidation

A consolidation of the Troop Summaries of VC and NVA Military Activities in Bien Hoa, Long Khanh and Phuoc Tuy Provinces covering the period 1 to 27 November is as follows⁷⁹⁶:

SIGNIFICANT REDEPLOYMENTS

1 – 6 November

Significant Redeployments

No significant deployment of units has been noted during the current reporting period.

Unit Activities

In addition to being hindered by Allied sweeps, the resupply activities of 2nd Bn, VC 274th Regt (located in the vicinity of YT253538 on 1 November), have been further reduced by a continuing and acute food shortage, with a consequent diversion of effort in order to overcome this situation.

7 – 13 November

Significant Redeployments

Between 2 and 11 November HQ NVA 33rd Regt moved approximately 33 km S.

Unit Activities

Significant Redeployments

Starvation in 2nd Bn, VC 274th Regt has brought its resupply mission to a near standstill. However, 274th Regt is making a concerted effort to overcome the situation as planned offensives are hamstrung by the lack of arms and ammunition which were to be transported by 2nd Bn.

14 - 20 November

Significant Redeployments

No significant deployment of units has been noted during the current reporting period.

Unit Activities

Elements of 2nd Bn VC 274th Regt have received foodstuffs and have been ordered to continue their mission of ammunition resupply. A message intercepted on 18 November instructed the Bn to give priority to the transportation of AK and B40 ammunition urgently needed by Regt HQ. The same message also reported that HQ 274th Regt had opposed an Allied sweep and had been engaged in "two large battles".

21 – 27 November

Significant Redeployments

No significant deployment of units has been noted during the current reporting period.

⁷⁹⁶ Ibid



CHAPTER 50 – DECEMBER 1969

50.1 Personnel

50.1.1 Arrivals and Departures

In December there was one arrival and three departures.

Arrivals

3 December

Signalman Glen Adamson

Departures

3 December

Signalman Barry Nisbet

18 December

Corporal Peter Jenkins

Corporal Brian Kinsella

50.1.2 Employment Areas

Glen Adamson went into the Set Room.

50.1.3 161 Recce Flt Fixed Wing Pilots

In December, Captain Robert Smith joined 161 Recce Flt as a fixed wing pilot.

50.1.3.1 Very Sad News

On the evening of 3 December, Captain Barry Donald was flying Porter A14-686, on the first night flying familiarisation flight of a Porter in Vietnam, with Alan Jellie (rotary wing pilot) as his passenger.

At approximately 2200 hours they were returning to Nui Dat, overflying the Binh Ba Rubber Plantation, when they received ground fire and crashed at the edge of the plantation. The aircraft was destroyed and both pilots were killed.



Figure 457: Barry Donald



Barry Donald was one of our most respected pilots. He was scheduled to fly the morning sortie in the Cessna with Bob Hartley the next day.

3 Dec 69	2233	Capt Donald and 2Lt Jellie were returning from a night training mission when the aircraft was hit by enemy ground fire. The aircraft Porter A14-686 was destroyed and both pilots were KIA.
----------	------	---

Figure 458: Extract from 161 Recce Sqn Commanders Diary⁷⁹⁷

On 3 June 1998, the Vietnam "End of War List" was announced by the Australian Government. Barry Donald was awarded The DSM posthumously.

50.1.3.2 Smoke Grenades

Barry Donald was an excellent forward observer and director for artillery fire missions and a forward air controller for US fighter aircraft.

As the ARDF aircraft did not carry any rockets for illuminating targets, he devised a way smoke grenades could be used by the ARDF operators to mark enemy bunker positions during quiet times on missions.



Figure 459: Smoke Grenades

The system used to operate the grenades was to partially remove the pin until it was just inside the shoulder of the holding device. When the grenade hit the ground the pin fell out and the smoke grenade illuminated the target for strike aircraft or artillery.

The ARDF operators became very adept in the dropping of smoke grenades

50.1.3.3 Deception

Using the aircraft as a 'spotter' also helped to hide the real mission of the aircraft.

⁷⁹⁷ <http://static.awm.gov.au/images/collection/bundled/RCDIG1029845.pdf>



50.1.4 HQ AFV Monthly Strength Return

The HQ AFV Strength Return showed no change to the Establishment Strength of the Troop in December⁷⁹⁸:

SERIAL	FORMATION/UNIT	ESTABLISHMENT			POSTED STRENGTH		
		OFFR	OR	TOTAL	OFFR	OR	TOTAL
(a)	(b)	(c)	(d)	(e)	(f)	(g)	(h)
31	547 Sig Tp (Less Det)	2	38	40	2	38	40

Figure 460: HQ AFV Strength Return for December 1969

50.1.4.1 Unit Strength

Troop records show the Troop strength at 31 December 1969 as 39.

50.1.5 Troop Manning

The following graphic shows the organisation and manning of the Troop in late December:

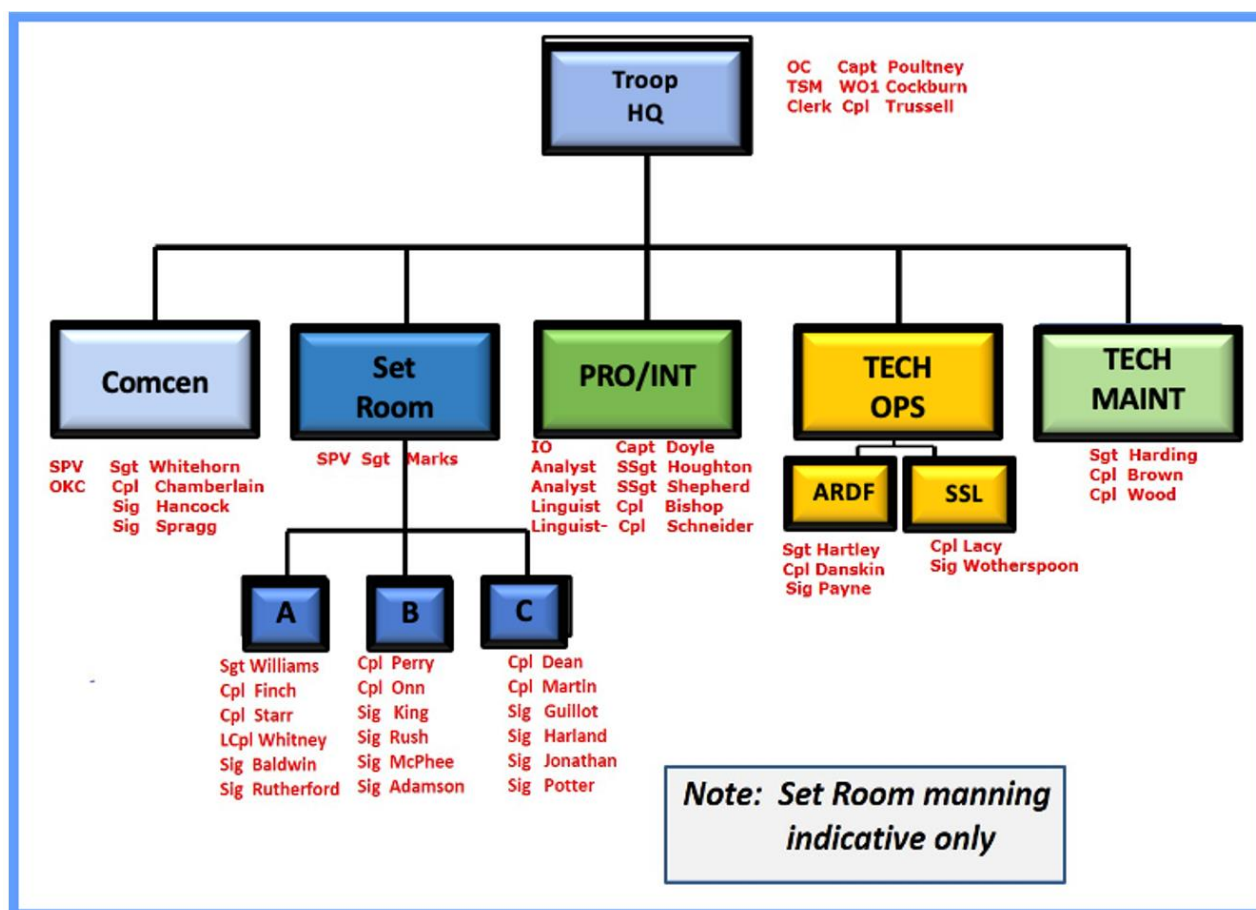


Figure 461: Troop Manning December 1969⁷⁹⁹

⁷⁹⁸ <http://www.awm.gov.au/collection/AWM98/R723/1/13/5/>

⁷⁹⁹ Compiled by Bob Hartley. E&OE.



50.2 Administration

50.2.1 Exchange Postings

Exchange postings continued between the US Army stations and the Troop.

Ken Perry recalled on his exchange⁸⁰⁰:

During my exchange to USM 626 one of the tasks I was allocated had a control and to the best of my knowledge about four outstations of which only one had been heard occasionally. The first time I covered it I picked up one out station and eventually two others. The operations and analyst staff were keen on tying this whole network up as they were at times passing low grade traffic and they thought it was being relayed to smaller units but they had no idea as to who. The outcome was they asked me if I would be prepared to go out with a mobile detachment and try to develop more of the communication links for the net - I agreed to the proposal. I think it was a Major who said he would contact my [547 Sig Tp] OC to get the OK. I assured him he would get a knockback as we were down on numbers etc. I said I would take full responsibility if my unit found out but that would only happen if they told them.

We looked forward to the trips to Long Binh and I did not want to be the one that stuffed it up, my lips would be sealed. I was the only operator who went out as the station was understaffed a lot more than 547. If I recall correctly, the mobile detachment was in an APC with two receivers set up. They were very happy with the results from the two days work.

Without rubbishing the other Yank operators they were in no way up to our standard which was understandable as most of them were only in for twelve months which included their training for the job so they were pleased to have us there for a week or so, but they did have a few who were very good (long time experienced) ops.

Roy Dean Recalled⁸⁰¹:

I did an exchange to the Yanks after I came back from Barbara, actually it was supposed to be for a week but it lasted ten days because every time I went down to the heli pad to get a ride back to the Dat I got gazzumped by some officer or somebody with a higher priority than me.

I didn't mind because I wangled a trip down to a little place in Xuan Moc where the Yanks had an intercept site set up in an old cement block house. Don't think I would fancy working in it though as it was fair game for an RPG attack not sure if it ever got hit but it wouldn't surprise me.

During his exchange posting Barry Nisbet recalled⁸⁰²:

During my operator exchange to the RR unit at Bien Hoa there was an alarm late one evening while I was in the boozier so we all grabbed our beers and headed for a bunker. On the way we saw rockets whizzing across towards the air strip so we sat on a sand-bag wall and watched for a while. A little later sanity prevailed and we went into the bunker. Luckily you can't be hurt when drunk.

⁸⁰⁰ Email to Bob Hartley 26 Sep 2018.

⁸⁰¹ Ibid.

⁸⁰² Email to Bob Hartley.



50.2.2 Christmas Day

On Christmas Day 1969, Bob Hartley flew the morning ARDF sortie and when the mission had finished, and returning to Nui Dat, he and the pilot decided to 'decorate' the Task Force area from the air. A couple of smoke grenades were dropped on safe areas close to Kanga Pad, and as a special tribute to the Troop, one into the Troop compound.

50.2.2.1 Great Shot

It was a great shot and the grenade landed just outside the OCs building and pretty purple smoke inundated the area. Some people were not impressed.

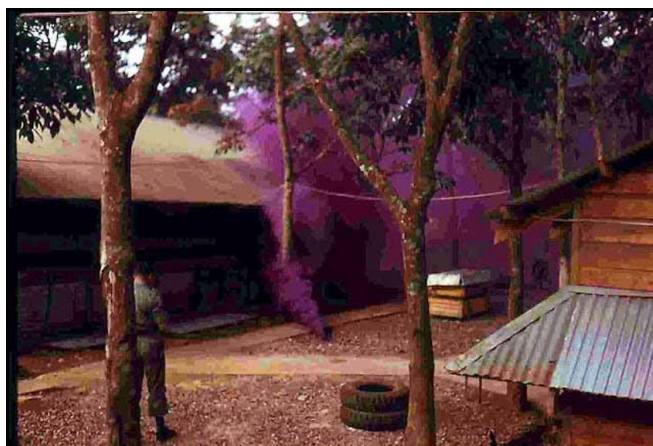


Figure 462: Smoke Bomb in the compound

50.2.2.2 Not All Impressed

Later, the pilot had an 'informal' meeting with the Brigadier, and Bob had a happy time cleaning up the purple smoke stains in the compound.

50.2.3 Christmas Day Lunch

The Troop enjoyed a Christmas Lunch Party. Blue Danskin made a fine and friendly Santa Claus distributing gifts to all members of the Troop.



Figure 463: Roy Dean and Jim Danskin⁸⁰³



Figure 464: Roy Dean and Bob Hartley enjoy a glass of champers after lunch⁸⁰⁴

50.2.3.1 Carols

While the Task Force enjoyed lunch one of the RAAF psychology operations helicopters fitted with loudspeakers flew overhead playing Christmas Carols.

⁸⁰³ This photo even appeared in the Toowoomba Chronicle.

⁸⁰⁴ Bob had just returned from the ARDF flight.



50.3 Operations

50.3.1 Operation Marsden Continued

As mentioned in the previous chapter (Para 49.3) Operation Marsden was conducted from 29 November to 28 December in AO Gulliver, in the north east corner of Phuoc Tuy Province and the south of Long Khanh Province. FSPB Picton was established in the AO and the 547 Sig Tp ACV deployed with Andy Cockburn, Bill Wood, Barry Jonathon, Bob Harland and a 3 Cav driver.

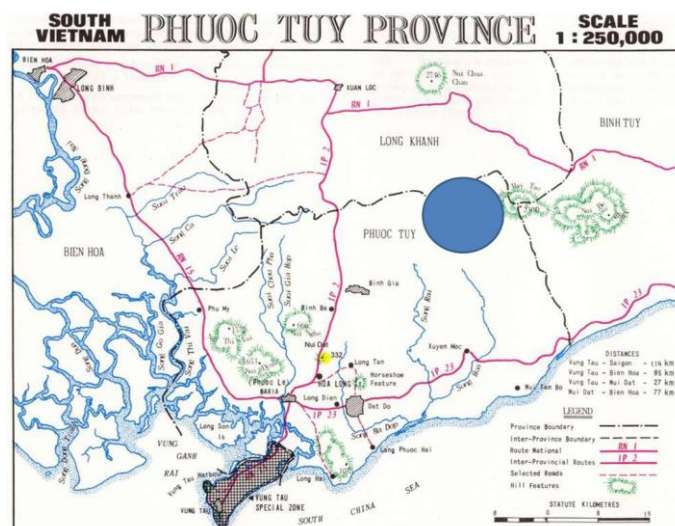


Figure 465: Operation Marsden Area

Extract from the Australian Army official history⁸⁰⁵:

D445 Battalion had been constantly harassed and had broken up into company groups. Based on 547 Signal Troop reports of the locations of enemy headquarters' radio transmissions, as well as other intelligence, the task force suspected that at least part of the battalion had headed for the May Tao base. Out of these suspicions Operation Marsden was borne.

Around 8 December, commanders quickly realised that searching only the suspected locations of installations was insufficient: some enemy installations were not found until searching troops were almost on top of them.

547 Signal Troop was able to intercept and monitor the Viet Cong commander's radio transmissions and provided useful information on the enemy reaction to the Australian incursions.

Soldiers continued to unearth hoards of enemy supplies, equipment and installations. Prize finds were several enemy radios and code books, later presented to 547 Signal Troop.

Bob Harland recalled⁸⁰⁶:

[The ACV] was a bit of an experiment in the beginning, but ended up quite useful ... We actually were in a convoy returning from FSB Picton and ran into a bunch of Chicom mines. We lost a tank, two

⁸⁰⁵ *Fighting to the Finish The Australian Army and the Vietnam War 1968 - 1975* by Ashley Ekins with Ian McNeil> Allen & Unwin in association with the Australian War Memorial, pages 332, 336, 340.

⁸⁰⁶ Email to Bob Hartley.



tracks, and a dust-off chopper that was coming in to carry the dead and wounded out—now that put a buzz up the OC's arse—the call came back, 'I don't care how you do it, but get that track (the ACV) out of there'. The trip home was at best frightening, following the remaining tank through the boondocks, and having to sit on top of it!

The troopers found out many years later that there were high explosives installed under the cypher gear in the ACVs. That is similar to the thermite panels ASA installed on its Explorer systems and the thermite grenades that were available to destroy cryptologic equipment, thus preventing it from falling into enemy hands.

50.3.2 SSL Trials

On 5 December, MI8 signalled AUM352 [redacted] For DLO, DSD and Weapons (IS Group) regarding SSL Trials⁸⁰⁷:

S E C R E T SPOKE MI8/1722/81

FROM MI8. SHORT CELL. AUM-352 SIGS 766 OF 300050Z AND DLO 300845Z XNOTAL).

ONE. AMF/DSD APPRECIATE U.S. INTEREST AND CO-OPERATION IN SHORT CELL TRIALS AND HAVE NO OBJECTIONS TO AUM-352 PASSING DAILY RESULTS OF TRIAL TO U.S. AUTHORITIES SUBJECT TO FOLLOWING

ALFA. NO EXTRA WORK LOAD INVOLVED AT AUM-352

BRAVO. ALL SIGNALS MUST CLEARLY INDICATE THAT RESULTS ARE TRIAL/TEST ONLY

TWO. SUBJECT TO TRIALS BEING SUCCESSFUL AND SYSTEM BEING DECLARED OPERATIONAL CMM AUST INTENTION WILL BE TO FEED ALL RESULTS INTO U.S. SYSTEM BY WHAT EVER FORM AGREED BY NATIONAL AUTHORITIES

50.3.3 FSB Barbara

The ACV deployed again, this time to FSB Barbara. The following Warning Order was issued on 8 Dec⁸⁰⁸.

⁸⁰⁷ DSD Declassified, 547 Sig Tp in Vietnam (tranche2).

⁸⁰⁸ AWM RCDIG1028146



MESSAGE FORM

PRIORITY 081640 Z DEC 69

FROM: 1 ATF CONFIDENTIAL

TO: B SQN 1 ARMED REGT OPS 2319
 B SQN 3 CAV REGT
 1 FD REGT 1 FD SQN
 104 SIG SQN 547 SIG TP
 HQ COY INT AIR PSY OPS A Q

INFO: LIST Z SERIALS 4, 6, 7, 9-21, 23-31,
 38-53, 57, 66-76.

WNG ORDERS . HQ 1 ATF (MAIN) IS TO DEPLOY BY RD TO FWD BASE YS4577 .
 GROUPING . HQ 1 ATF (MAIN) CMM HQ PLUS ONE TP B SQN 1 ARMED REGT CMM
 HQ PLUS ONE TP (-) B SQN 3 CAV REGT CMM HQ PLUS CET PLUS ELMS PLANT 1 FD
 SQN CMM HQ PLUS ELMS 104 SIG SQN CMM **ELMS 547 SIG TP** CMM HQ COY (-) .
 OC B SQN 3 CAV REGT APPOINTED COMD HQ 1 ATF (MAIN) FOR LOCAL DEF AND
 ADMIN . **NO MOVE BEFORE AM 12 DEC 69** . O GP BY ARRANGEMENT OC B SQN
 3 CAV REGT . ACK

Figure 466: HQ 1ATF Warning Order Extract

50.3.3.1 HQ 1 ATF (Main) deployed

HQ 1 ATF (Main) deployed to FSB Barbara on 13 Dec.

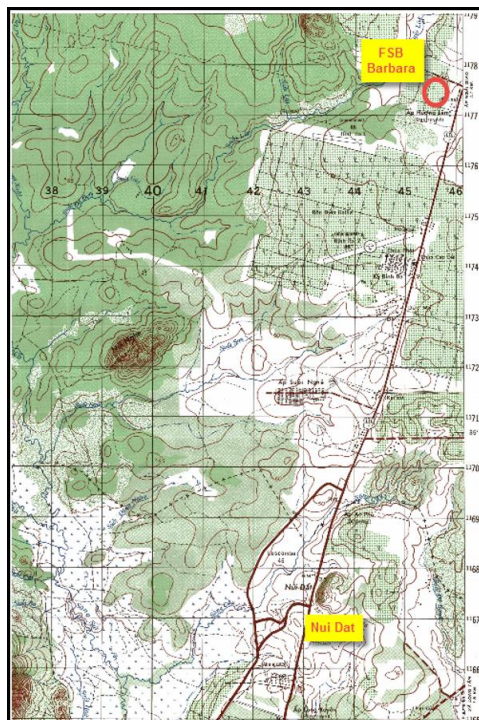


Figure 467: FSB Barbara Location

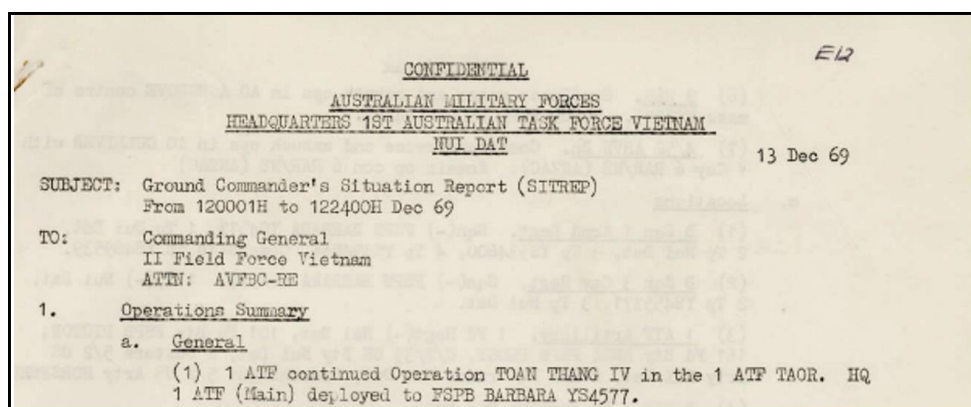


Figure 468: HQ 1ATF SITREP 12 Dec 69 extract

Roy Dean Recalled⁸⁰⁹:

I went on my own in the ACV to FSB Barbara. It was bloody hard yakka because the blokes that went to Picton, Andy Cockburn and crew had three blokes to do the work whereas I had to do it on my own.

Brian Doyle was there but he was in the Int Centre and had nothing to do with my work except when they wanted something sent back to Nui Dat.

I had to work the circuit back to the Dat as well as do search for VC tasks - bloody good job and the time did go rather quickly.

50.3.4 547 Sig Tp Operational Report for December 1969

The 547 Sig Tp Operational Report for Nov 69⁸¹⁰ stated:

S E C R E T SPOKE SIGS 001

OP REPORT 1-31 DEC 69.

ONE. EFFECTIVE 17DEC 69 THE TP HAS OPERATED 4- / 17 HOUR POSITIONS AND 4 X 10 HR POSITIONS

INSTEAD OF 1 X 24 HR CMM 2 X 16 1/2 HR CMM 2 X 9 1/2 HR CMM 3 X 10 HR. THIS GIVES AN INCREASE OF 2 HOURS COVER PER DAY BUT NO POSITIONS ARE OPERATING BETWEEN 2400 HRS AND 0700 HRS.

THIS CHANGE WAS MADE TO FIT IN WITH

OPERATOR MANNING CMM AND THE SPECIAL EMPHASIS BEING PLACED ON DEVELOPING POLITICAL STATIONS IN OUR AO

TWO. COMPLETE COVER LIST EFFECTIVE 312400Z DEC IS AS FOLLOWS CLN A. PRIORITY COVER

- | | | | |
|---------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|
| 1. VCMB 05437 | 7. VCMB 05442 | 13. VCMB 00667 | 19. VCMB 00035 |
| 2. VCMB 00831 | 8. VCMB J0772 | 14. VCMB 05445 | 20. VCMB 00843 |
| 3. VCMB 05447 | 9. VCMB J1917 | 15. VCMB 05450 | 21. VCMB 00679 |
| 4. VCMB 05443 | 10. VCMB 05448 | 16. VCMB J1816 | 22. VCMB 00694 |
| 5. VCMB 05423 | 11. VCMB 05449 | 17. VCMB Y9084 | 23. VCMB N4847 |
| 6. VCMB 05451 | 12. VCMB 00709 | 18. VCMB Y9083 | |

⁸⁰⁹ Email to Bob Hartley.

⁸¹⁰ DSD Declassified, 547 Sig Tp in Vietnam (tranche2).



B. DEVELOPMENT GROUPS

1. VCMB J2062 4. VCXB J6975
2. VCMB J2058 5. VCXB J6261
3. VCMB J0637 6. VCXB J7081

[much redaction]

2230Z VCMB 05437

THREE. ARDF RESULTS. TOTAL FIXES 58.

A. GRADINGS. THIRTEEN GOOD CMM THIRTY THREE
FAIR CMM TWO POOR CMM TEN CUTS.

B. FLYING TIME. TOTAL 141.35 (INCL 1.35HRS TRGGL

(1) SGT HARTLEY 62.15/508.45 TOTAL

(2) LCPL WHITNEY 68.00/96.5

(3) SIG PAYNE 9.45/372.35

(4) SIG POTTER 1.35/1.35

C. TWO MISSIONS ABORTED BY WEATHER CMM FOUR
ABORTED AND TWO REDUCED DUE ARDF MALFUNCTION/
SERVICE CMM THREE ABORTED AND FOUR REDUCED
DUE AIRCRAFT MALFUNCTION/SERVICE

FOUR. ANNUAL ARDF SUMMARY. TOTAL FIXES 1149

A. GRADINGS. 173 GOOD CMM 742 FAIR CMM 70 POOR CMM 164 CUT.

B. FLYUNG TIME. TOTAL TIME 1644 HOURS (INCLUDES
ALL TRAINING TIME)

C. 13 MISSIONS ABORTED 55 REDUCED DUE WEATHER CMM
36 MISSIONS ABORTED 25 REDUCED DUE ARDF FAULT CMM
TOTAL OF 70 MISSIONS ABORTED AND 89 REDUCED.

FIVE. SSL

A. SIX [redacted] TARGETS PROVIDED FOR PERIOD
20DEC-13 JAN CMM BUT ARE NOT PROVING VERY
EFFECTIVE CMM AS THEY NEVER COME UP. THE FEW
PLOTS OBTAINED ON THE LONGER RANGE TARGETS
WITH SONDE PARTIALLY U/S) ARE MOST INTERESTING
CMM PARTICULARLY THE PLOT ON CAM RAHN BAY (267.7KH)
WHERE SIX RESULTS HAVE FALLEN WITHIN 10KM ON
TARGET USING TILT METHOD.

B. IONOSONDE RCEIVER RPAIRED ON 29 DEC AND
SYSTEM BACK TO FULL FFÊCTIVENESS. IN PRODUCTIVITY TEST
YESTERDAY CMM SYSTEM WAS OFFERED G50 TGTS AND FIXED 32.

C. DEFOLIATION TEAM HAS COMPLETED WORK ON CLEARING AREA
FOR NEW SONDE AND ASSOCIATED EQPT CMM EXPECT TO BE
ABLE TO BURN OFF IN ABOUT TWO WEEKS

D. HAVE DISCUSSED NEW SONDE WITH COMD AND HE SUPPORTS ITS
INSTALLATION BUT WOULD LIKE A SIG TO AFV STATING
THE REQUIREMENTS.

E. FOR PLANNING PURPOSES CMM ARE THERE ANY FIRM
MOVEMENTS DETAILS AVAILABLE YET FOR SOND EQPT.



F. WILL BE SUBMITTING REQUEST FOR LOAN OF 10KVA GENE BUT WILL HAVE TO RAISE RVE TO SUPPORT RETENTION OF THIS GENE PLUS ONE ALREADY HELD WHICH HAS BEEN OUTSTANDING LOAN ITEM SINCE 10JUN 69.

SIX

- A. [redacted]
- B. [redacted]
- C. [redacted]
- D. [redacted]

SEVEN. VISITORS. DLO AND CW J.MCCANN 175 RR COY (9DEC69) CMM AFV CAPT JSULC (11 DEC OL CMM MAJ D.R. BOYCE CPT L. R. NIBERTCP J.. WE SFCS. QUICKEL SSG R.E. RAYNER SPS B.C, FINCH ALL OF [redacted] (12 DEC) CMM MR D.NEUKAM NRV(C) CAPT E. HENRY CTRU (20 DEC) CMM CSO AFV (23 DEC) CMM DLO (27 DEC) CMM MR D. DIETZ NRV LT T. MCDERMOT NRV (9 DEC69) WIGHT. VISITS. CAPT B.P. DOYLE [redacted] ARDF CONF (21-24 DEC).

NINE. OP EXCHANGE

- A. SIG A. LUCK/SPS S. FENSLER 3-8 DEC
- B. SIG M. GUILLLOT/SP4 RGM HIXSON 9-16 DEC
- C. EXCHANGE RECOMMENCES 15 JAN

50.3.5 ARDF Flying Hours

The total ARDF flying hours for the month were⁸¹¹:

Year	Month	Flying hours	Total Fixes	Good <1000mts	Fair 1-2000Mts	Poor >2000 Mts	Cut	Missions Lost	Remarks
1969	Dec	141.35	58	13	35	2	10	15	

50.3.6 Search for Low Level VHF Transmissions (LLV)

The search for LLV transmissions continued throughout the deployment, though never successful. In December, Adrian Bishop, Les Whitney and Phil Rutherford spent a few days at the Horseshoe⁸¹² searching for LLV. Again, no success.

50.3.7 Troop VC/NVA Activities Summaries

The Troop Summaries of Activities covering the period 28 November – 19 December 1969 contained the following⁸¹³:

⁸¹¹ Compiled from MI8 Records held at ASD archives.

⁸¹² A FSB had been established on 'the Horseshoe', a circular hill about 8 kilometres southeast of Nui Dat and just north of Dat Do. The Horseshoe provided an extensive view of the surrounding countryside as well as a base for a ready reaction force.

⁸¹³ ASD archives of 547 Sig Tp material.



50.3.7.1 28 Nov – 4 Dec 69

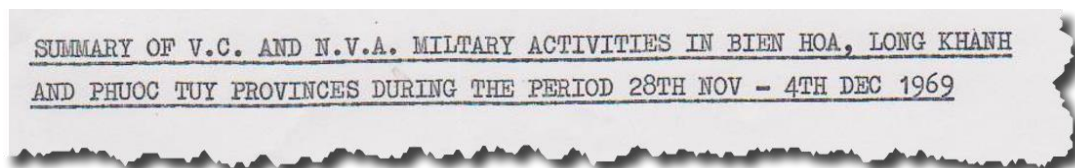


Figure 469: Summary of Activities 28 Nov – 4 Dec 69

SIGNIFICANT REDEPLOYMENTS

No significant redeployment of units has been noted during the current reporting period.

UNIT ACTIVITIES

Attempts by 2nd Bn, V.C. 274th Regt to continue its resupply mission have been greatly impeded by Allied sweeps in the vicinity of the units planned crossing point of the DONG NAI River. Also, elements of the bn north of the river are still experiencing an acute food shortages.

UNIT LOCATIONS

HQ N.V.A. 33rd Regt

On 17th November, 48km ENE of BIEN HOA

HQ V.C. 274th Regt.

29km NW of NUI DAT.

HQ 1st Bn V.C. 274th Regt

On 18th August, 27km NNW of NUI DAT.

HQ 2nd Bn V.C. 274th Regt

50km NE of BIEN HOA.

3rd Bn V.C. 274th Regt

On 23rd November, 36km NW of NUI DAT.

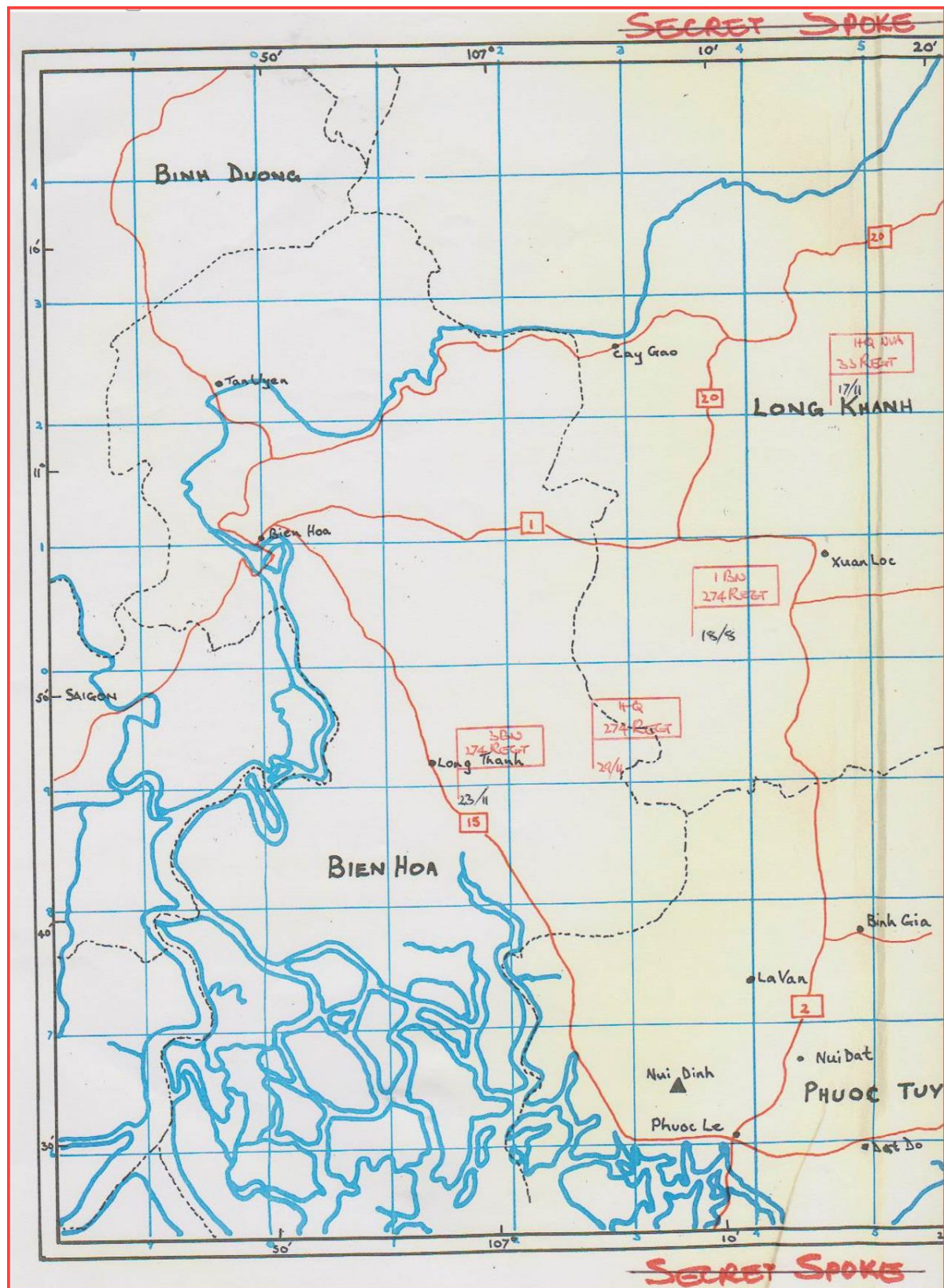


Figure 470: Map Summary 28 Nov - 4 Dec 69



50.3.7.2 5 – 11 Dec 69

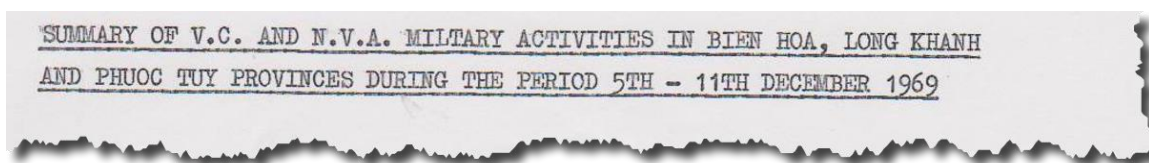


Figure 471: Summary of Activities 5 Dec – 11 Dec 69

SIGNIFICANT REDEPLOYMENTS

On 5th December 1st Bn, V.C. 274th Regt was fixed in the vicinity of YS 328 941, approximately 8km SW of its 18th August location.

UNIT ACTIVITIES

HQ, V.C. 274th Regt has again emphasized the importance of its 2nd Bn's logistics role in relation to planned offensives. However, 2nd Bn has been experiencing increasing difficulties in carrying out its mission. Allied forces were reported in the vicinity of the units previously established ammunition caches and supply routes, in addition to holding its ferry points across the DONG NAI River.

UNIT LOCATIONS

HQ N.V.A. 33rd Regt
52km ENE of BIEN HOA.

HQ V.C. 274th Regt
On 29th November, 29km NW of NUI DAT.

HQ 1st Bn V.C. 274th Regt
29km NNW of NUI DAT.

HQ 2nd Bn V.C. 274th Regt
On 28th November, 5°km NE of BIEN HOA.

HQ 3rd Bn V.C. 274th Regt
On 23rd November, 36km NW of NUI DAT.

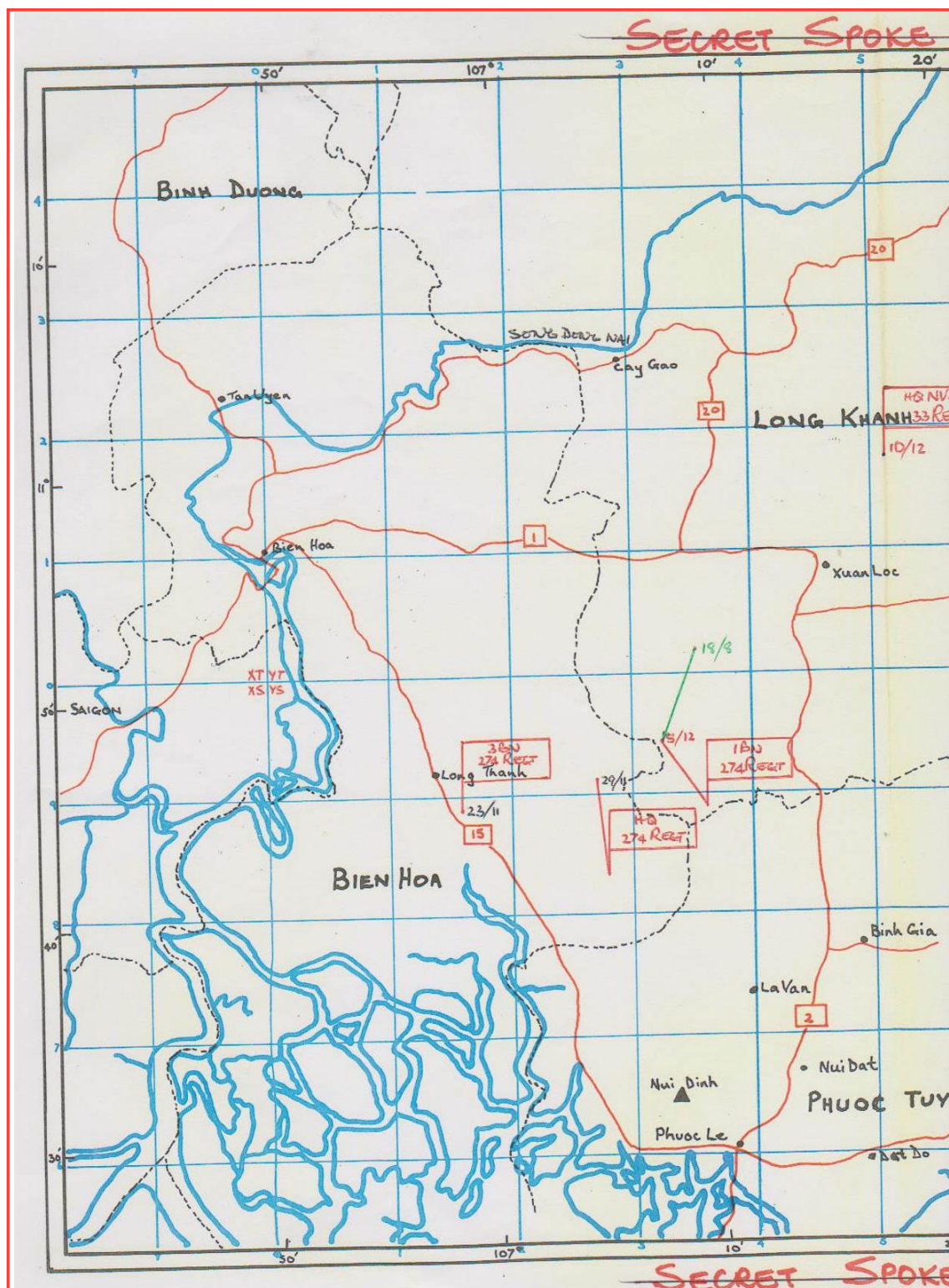


Figure 472: Map Summary 5 - 11 Dec 69



50.3.7.3 12 – 19 Dec 69

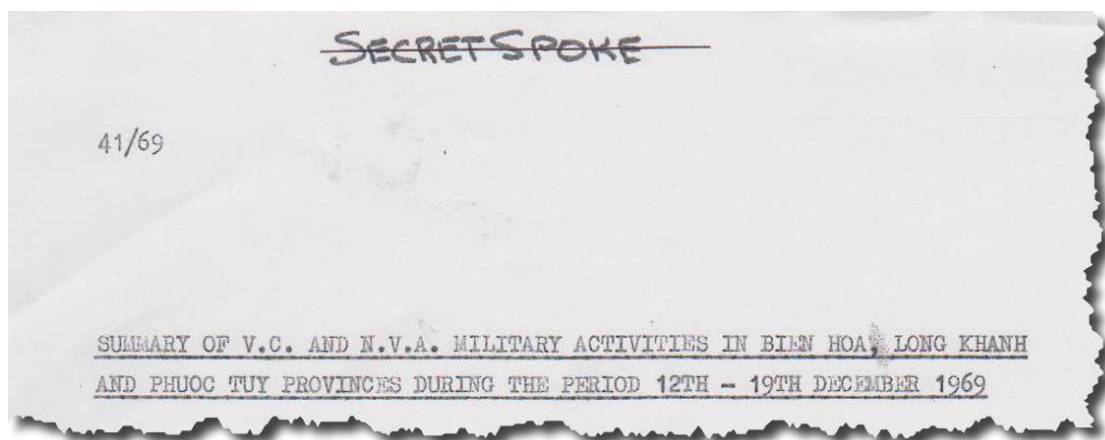


Figure 473: Summary of Activities 5 Dec – 11 Dec 69

SIGNIFICANT REDEPLOYMENTS

On 15th December, 3rd Bn, V.C. 274th Regt was fixed by ARDF in the vicinity of YS 370 895, approximately 21km E of its 23rd November location.

On 16th December, 2nd Bn, V.C. 274th Regt was fixed by ARDF in the vicinity of YT 242 191, approximately 32km S of its 28th November location in NW LONG KHANH Province.

UNIT ACTIVITIES

Food problems continue to plague 2nd Bn, 274 Regt however the relocation of the Bn HQ south of the DONG NAI River and several references to the movement of supplies across Highway 1 indicate that some progress is being made in the 2nd Bn's supply transportation mission.

UNIT LOCATIONS

HQ N.V.A. 33rd Regt
52km ENE of BIEN HOA. - 12th December.

HQ V.C. 274th Regt
29km NW NUI DAT - 15th December.

HQ 1st Bn V.C. 274th Regt
29km NNW of NUI DAT.

HQ 2nd Bn V.C. 274th Regt
26km ENE of BIEN HOA - 16th December.

HQ 3rd Bn V.C. 274th Regt
23km NNW of NUI DAT - 15th December.

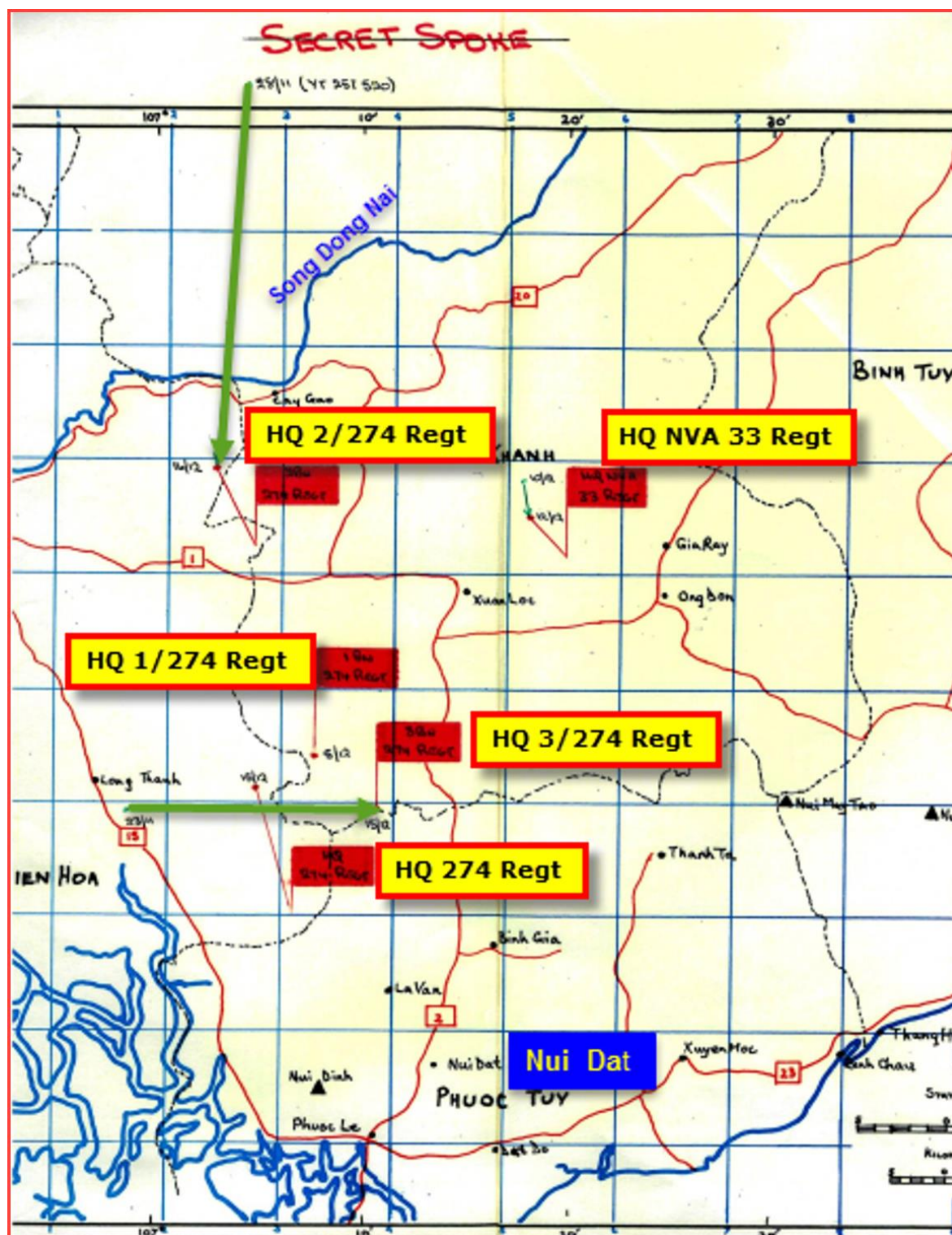


Figure 474: Map Summary 12 – 19 Dec 69



50.3.7.4 Troop VC/NVA Activities Summaries Consolidation

A consolidation of the Troop Summaries of VC and NVA Military Activities in Bien Hoa, Long Khanh and Phuoc Tuy Provinces covering the period 28 November to 19 December is as follows⁸¹⁴:

28 November – 4 December

Significant Redeployments

No significant deployment of units has been noted during the current reporting period.

Unit Activities

Attempts by 2nd Bn, VC 274 Regt to continue its resupply mission have been greatly impeded by Allied sweeps in the vicinity of the units planned crossing point of the DONG NAI River. Also, elements of the Bn north of the river are still experiencing an acute food shortage.

5 – 11 December

Significant Redeployments

On 5 December 1st Bn, VC 274th Regt was fixed in the vicinity of YS328941, approximately 8 km SW of its 18 August location.

Unit Activities

HQ VC 274th Regt has again emphasised the importance of its 2nd Bn's logistics role in relation to planned offensives. However, 2nd Bn has been experiencing increasing difficulties in carrying out its mission. Allied forces were reported in the vicinity of the units previously established ammunition caches and supply routes, in addition to holding its ferry points across the DONG NAI River.

12 – 19 December

Significant Redeployments

On 15 December, 3rd Bn, VC 274th Regt was fixed by ARDF in the vicinity of YS370895, approximately 21 km E of its 23rd November location.

On 16 Dec, 2nd Bn, VC 274th Regt was fixed by ARDF in the vicinity of YT242191, approximately 32 km S of its 28 November location in NW LONG KHANH Province.

Unit Activities

Food problems continue to plague 2nd Bn, 274 Regt, however the relocation of the Bn HQ south of the DONG NAI River and several references to the movement of supplies across Highway 1 indicate that some progress is being made in the 2nd Bn's supply transportation mission.

⁸¹⁴ Ibid.



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PART 6

1970





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CHAPTER 51 – JANUARY 1970

51.1 Personnel

51.1.1 Arrivals and Departures

In January there was a large turnover of personnel. There were five arrivals and seven departures

Arrivals

6 January

Signalman Harry Lock

14 January

Sergeant Keith Zeller

Corporal Bruce Wilson

Signalman John Gehle

28 January

Signalman Charles Bennett

Departures

7 January

Corporal Murray Chamberlain

Signalman Jeffrey Payne

Signalman Earl Rush

21 January

Sergeant John Harding

Corporal Malcolm Onn

Corporal Kenneth Perry

28 January

Corporal Daryl McPhee

51.1.2 Employment Areas

Keith Zeller, John Gehle, Harry Lock and Charlie Bennett were added to the Set Room. After a few weeks John Gehle moved to the SSL Team, and in September Harry Lock joined the ARDF team. Bruce Wilson arrived for a short stay and supplemented the ARDF Team. Joe Potter replaced Jeff Payne in the ARDF Team.

51.1.3 HQ AFV Monthly Strength Return

There was no change to the Establishment Strength of the Troop in January⁸¹⁵:

51.2 Operations

51.2.1 ARDF

In late January, all ARDF operations were transferred to the Porter aircraft.

⁸¹⁵ <http://www.awm.gov.au/collection/AWM98/R723/1/13/6/>

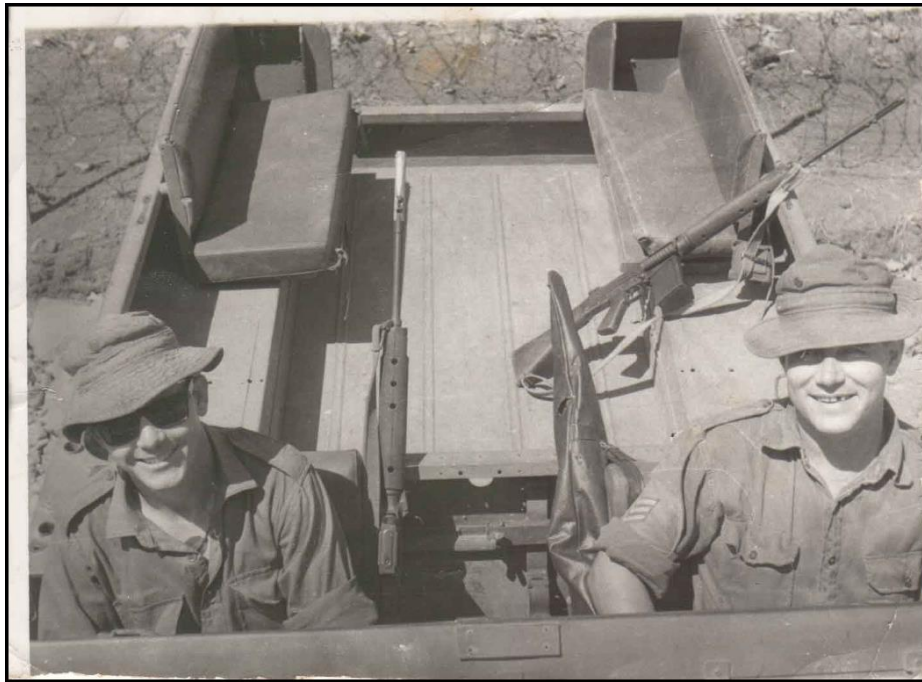


Figure 475: Bruce Wilson & Bob Hartley heading off to the aircraft

51.2.2 547 Sig Tp Operational Report for January 1970

The 547 Sig Tp Operational Report for Jan 70⁸¹⁶ stated:

S E C R E T SPOKE SIGS 117

OP REPORT 1-31 JAN 70

ONE. WATCH HOUR NO CHANGE.

TWO COVER LIST AS AT 312400H JAN.

A. PRIORITY COVER

- | | | |
|---------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| 1. VCMB 05437 | 8. VCMB 05442 | 14. VCMB Y9084 |
| 2. VCMB 05423 | 9. VCMB J1917 | 15. VCMB 008355 |
| 3. VCMB 05443 | 10. VCMB 00709 | 16. VCMB 00343 |
| 4. VCMB 00831 | 11. VCMB 00667 | 17. VCMB N4347 |
| 5. VCMB 35447 | 12. VCMB 05445/ | |
| 6. VCMB 05451 | 13. VCMB 05450 | |

B.

- | | |
|---------------|---------------|
| 1. VCMB J0772 | 4. VCMB 05449 |
| 2. VCMB J0496 | 5. VCMB 00679 |
| 3. VCMB J0637 | |

C. DEV GROUPS

- | | |
|---------------|---------------|
| 1. VCMB 05448 | 5. VCXB J6261 |
| 2. VCMB Y9083 | 6. VCXB J7081 |

⁸¹⁶ DSD Declassified, 547 Sig Tp in Vietnam (tranche2).



- 3. V'CMB J107?
- 4. VCMB J2062

THREE. ARDF RESULTS. TOTAL FIXED 52.

A. GRADINGS. SIX GOOD CMM THIRTY FIVE FAIR CMM
FOUR POOR CMM SEVEN CUTS.

B. FLYING TIME. TOTAL 156.45 HOURS (OPERATIONAL
HOURS CESSNA 109.25 CMM OP HOURS PORTER 28.35 CMM
TRAINING HOURS BOTH AC 4.05 CMM MODEL C TRIALS
CESSNA 5.25 CMM PORTER CALIBRATION 9.15)

(1) SGT HARTLEY 41.55/550.40 (TOTAL)

(2) LCPT WHITNEY 25.2/122/1

(3) SIG POTTER 62.0/63.35

(4) SIG DANSKIN 20.45/20.45

(5) SIG WILSON 6.45/6.45/

[redacted]

ONE MISSIONN ABORTED AND TWO REDUCED BY WEATHER CMM
ONE ABORTED AND ONE REDUCED DUE ARDF
MALFUNCTION AND ONE ABORTED
ABORTED DUE AIRCRAFT MALFUNCTION /
SERVICE

F. EN ACTIVITY LOW AND IS TENDING TO

G. COMMUNICATE AT TIMES WHEN ARDF CANNOT

H. OPERATE IE BEFIORE SUNRISE AND AFTER SUNSET

FOUR. SSL. OPERATIONAL FOR 25 DAYS OF MONTH
AND FROM 694 TASKS OFFERED PRODUCED
370 RESULTS.

A. CHECK TARGETS ARE IN OPERATION UNTIL
26 JAN AND THEY HELPED PROVIDE VALVAUABLE
INFO ON PERFORMANCE OF SYSTEM AT
LONGER RANGS. EXPECT A NEW SERIES
OF CHECK TGT TXS TO BE OPERATING
SSON FOR PERMANENT USE BY MRDF

B. ACCURACY OF SYSTEM OVERALL IS EQUAL
TO OR BETTER THAN THE LAID DOWN
REQUIREMENT. SSL FORTE LIES IN
THE FIELD GF DEV AND IDEALLY

SHOULD BE FED BY LARGER SET ROOM

C. RECOVERY OF EN NETWORKS (IN RECORD TIME)
AFTER RECENT SOI WAS MAINY DUE TO
EFFORT OF SSL TEAM [redacted]

D. RVE SUBMITTED FOR EXTRA GENERATORS TO CATER
FOR NEW SANDE. P26 FOR ENGR WORKS
TO BE SUBMITTED TOMORROW

E. NONE OF SHORT CELL EQPT APPEARS ON
Q LEDGER ANYWHERE. PLEASE ADVISE
ANY ITEMS ARMY EQPT THAT SHOULD
BE ACCOUNTED FOR.

FI VE. [all redacted]



51.2.3 ARDF Flying Hours

The total ARDF flying hours for the month were⁸¹⁷:

Year	Month	Flying hours	Total Fixes	Good <1000mts	Fair 1-2000Mts	Poor >2000 Mts	Cut	Missions Lost	Remarks
1970	Jan	138	52	6	35	4	7	6	Changeover to Porter aircraft plus 18 hrs trg

51.2.4 Troop VC/NVA Activities Summaries

The Troop Summaries of Activities covering the period 20 December 1969 – 8 January 1970 contained the following⁸¹⁸:

51.2.4.1 20 Dec 69 – 8 Jan 70

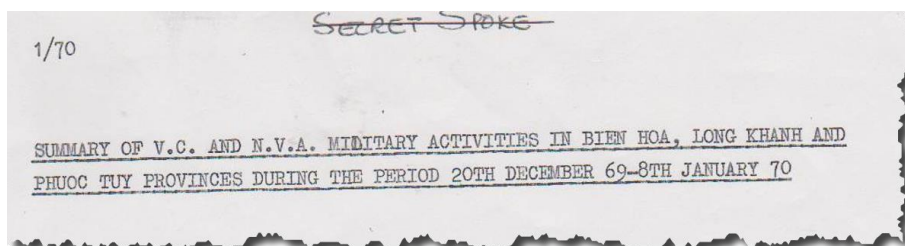


Figure 476: Summary of Activities 20 Dec 69 – 8 Jan 70

SIGNIFICANT REDEPLOYMENTS

During the reporting period the following unit redeployments have been noted:

HQ N.V.A. 33rd Regt- 16km NITE of its 12th December location.

HQ V.C. 274th Regt- 8km NW of its 15th December location.

HQ 1st Bn V.C. 274th Regt- 13km SW of its 5th December location.

HQ 2nd Bn V.C. 274th Regt— 5km SSE of its 16th December location.,

(There has not been an ARDF fix on HQ 3rd Bn V.C. 274th Regt since 15th December'

UNIT ACTIVITIES

Difficulties in transporting ammunition, acute food shortages and Allied sweeps remain the main topics of V.C. 274th Regts communications.

UNIT LOCATIONS

HQ N.V.A. 33rd Regt
60km ENE of BIEN HOA

HQ V.C. 274th Regt

⁸¹⁷ Compiled from MI8 Records held at ASD archives.

⁸¹⁸ ASD archives of 547 Sig Tp material.



37kn NW of NUI DAT.

HQ 1st Bn V.C. 274th Regt
29km NW of NUI DAT.

HQ 2nd Bn V.C. 274th Regt
25km E of BIEN HOA.

HQ 3rd Bn V.C. 274th Regt
On 15th December, 23km NNW of NUI DAT.

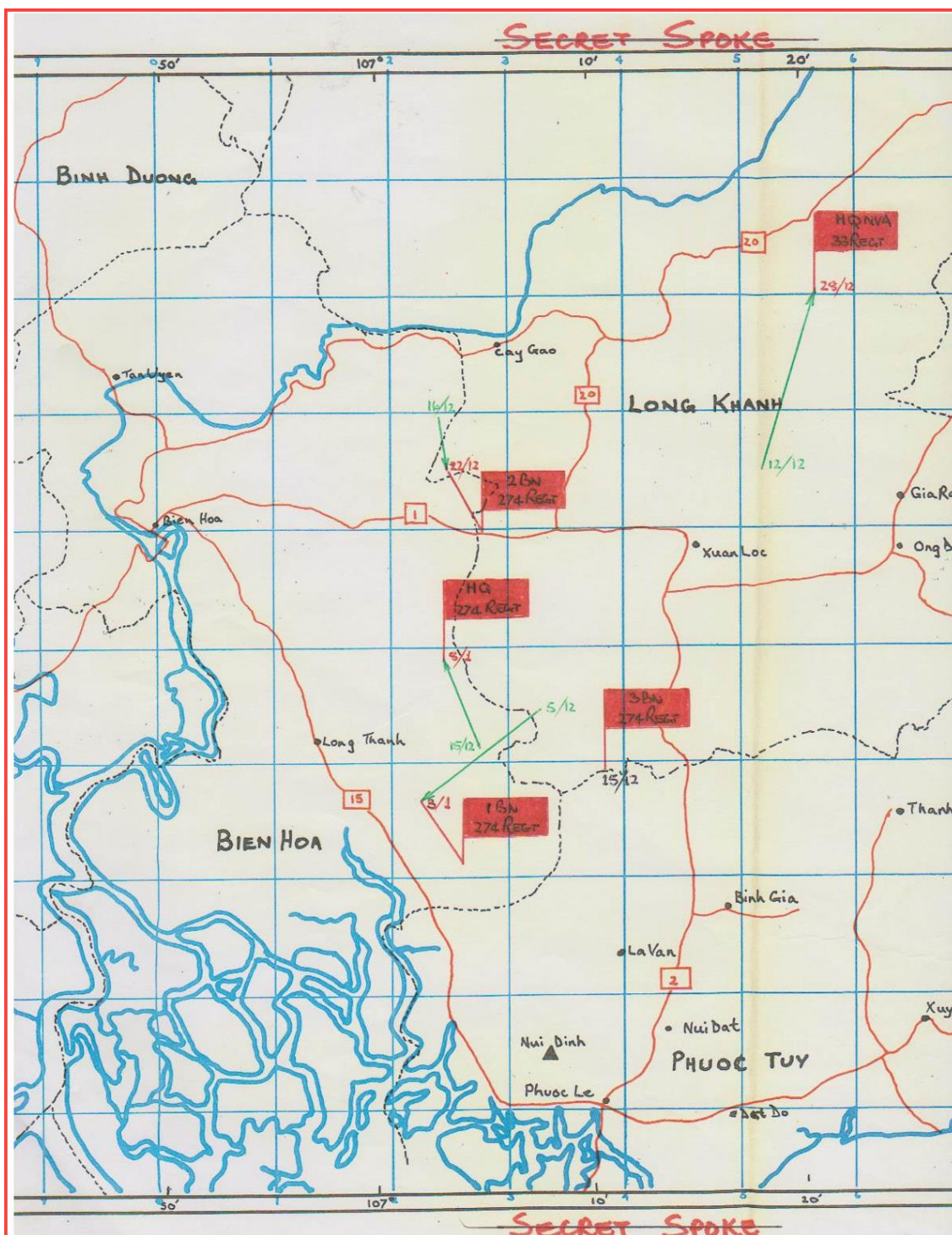


Figure 477: Map Summary 20 Dec 69 - 8 Jan 70



51.2.4.2 9 – 16 Jan 70

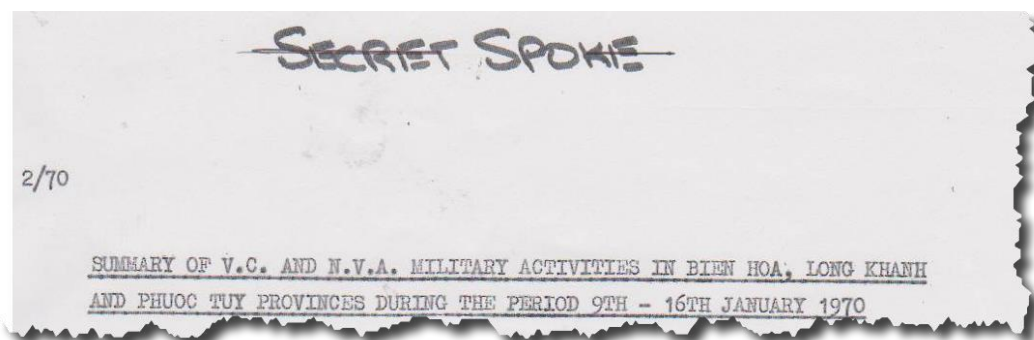


Figure 478: Summary of Activities 9 - 16 Jan 70

SIGNIFICANT REDEPLOYMENTS

On 9th January, HQ NVA 33rd Regiment was fixed, by ARDF in the vicinity of YT 637 288, approximately 6km ESE of its 28th December location. On 11th January, the Regiment was again fixed, at YT 636 328, approximately 3km N of the 9th January location.

The HQ V.C. 274th Regiment was fixed, by ARDF on 11th January in the vicinity of its 8th January location.

UNIT ACTIVITIES

On 13th January, 3 Bn / 274 Regiment passed, an after action report to HQ 274th Regiment regarding an attack by 3 Coy/3 Bn/274 Regiment on the PHUOC HAO graded road (unlocated) which claimed eight (8) Thais KIA and one (1) GMC truck destroyed.

UNIT LOCATIONS

HQ N.V.A. 33rd Regt
66 km NNE of NUI DAT. (11 Jan).

HQ V.C. 274th Regt
30 km NW of NUI DAT. (11 Jan).

HQ 1st Bn V.C. 274th Regt
28 km NW of NUI DAT. (3 Jan).

HQ 2nd Bn V.C. 274th Regt
51 km NNW of NUI DAT. (22 Dec).

3rd Bn V.C. 274th Regt
23 km NNW of NUI DAT. (15 Dec).

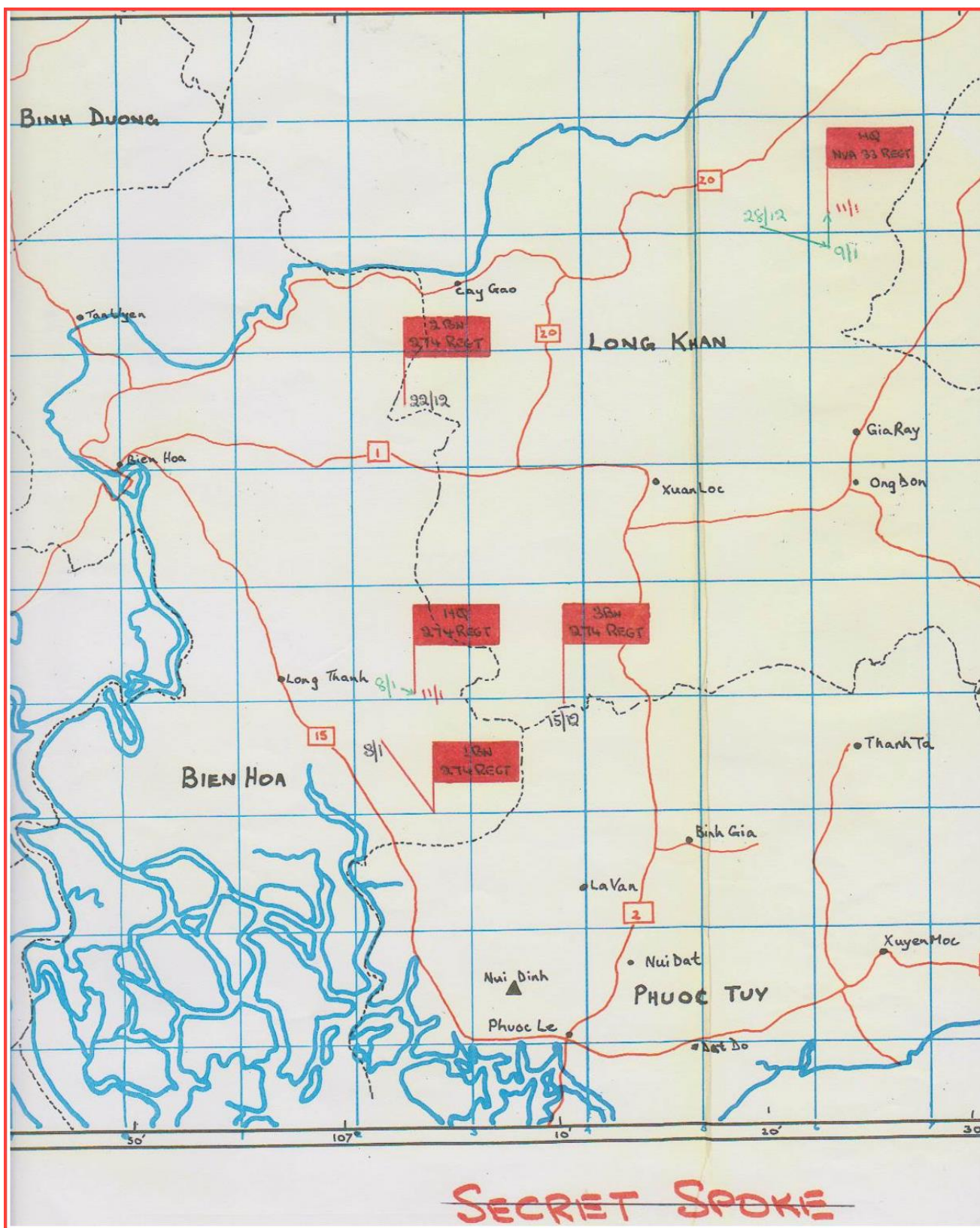


Figure 479: Map Summary 9 - 16 Jan 70



51.2.4.3 17 – 23 Jan 70

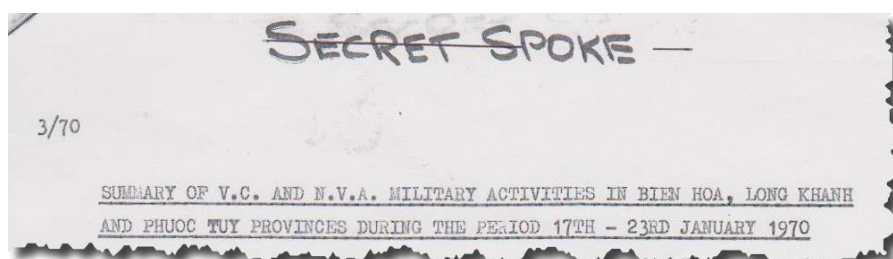


Figure 480: Summary of Activities 17 - 23 Jan 70

SIGNIFICANT REDEPLOYMENTS

On 18th January, HQ NVA 33rd Regiment was fixed by ARDF in the vicinity of YT 800 260, approximately 19km ESE of its 11th January location. This movement places the Regt HQ in the so-called "rice bowl" area of BINH TUY Province. On 19th January, HQ NVA 74th Artillery Regiment was located by ARDF in the vicinity of YT 230 008.

On 20th January, HQ VC 274th Regiment was located by ARDF in the vicinity of YS 251 900, in the same general area of the 11th January fix.

On 20th January, HQ 2nd Bn / 274th Regiment was fixed by ARDF in the vicinity of PT 214 192, approximately 6km NW of its 22nd December location.

UNIT IDENTIFICATIONS

A previously unidentified terminal located in the LONG KHANH - BIEN HOA Province has been identified as serving the HQ, NVA 74th Artillery Regiment. Analysis of 33 Regiment communications has indicated that the regiment has been re-subordinated to the HQ VC 5th Division. 33 Regiment was previously subordinate to the HQ, Military Region 7»

UNIT ACTIVITY

On 17th January, HQ, 274th Regiment advised 2 Bn/274 Regt that 3 million piastres (approx \$US 30,000) had been allocated to the regiment by HQ, Military Region 1 and instructed the Bn to arrange to receive the funds and return them to the regiment HQ.

Other correspondence between these two entities dealt with the transportation of supplies. On 17th January, HQ 274th Regiment requested a detailed report on the amount of supplies which had been transported (i) to the DONG NAI River (ii) to BAO HAM (iii) to the south of Highway 1.

UNIT LOCATIONS

HQ N.V.A. 33rd. Regt
68 km NE of NUI DAT. (18 Jan)

HQ N.V.A. 74th Arty Regt

HQ V.C. 274th Regt

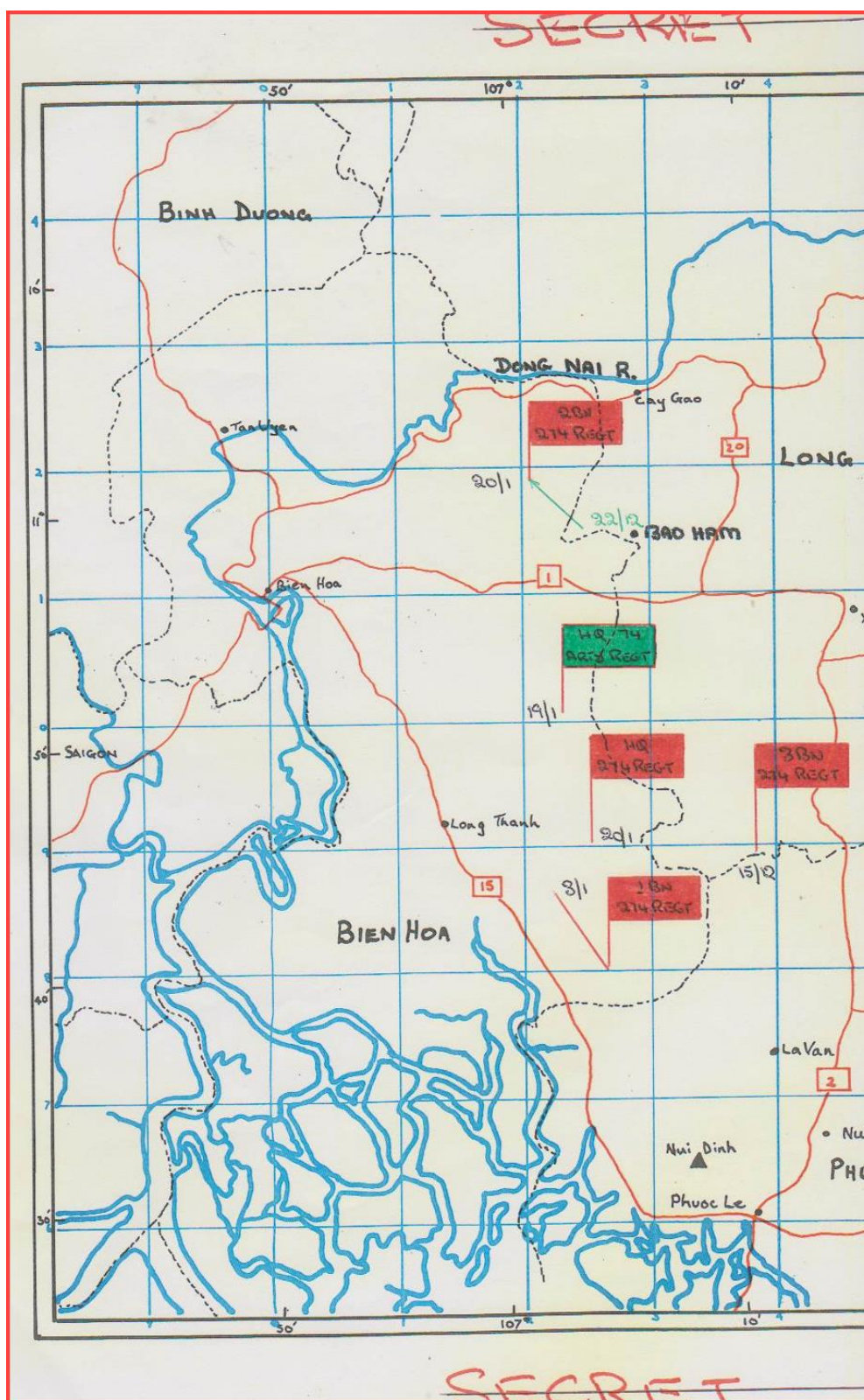


29 km NW of NUI DAT. (20 Jan)

HQ 1st Bn V.C. 274th Regt
28 km NW of NUI DAT. (3 Jan)

HQ, 2nd Bn V.C. 274th Regt
57 km NW of NUI DAT. (20 Jan)

3rd Bn V.C. 274th Regt
23 km NW of NUI DAT. (15 Dec)



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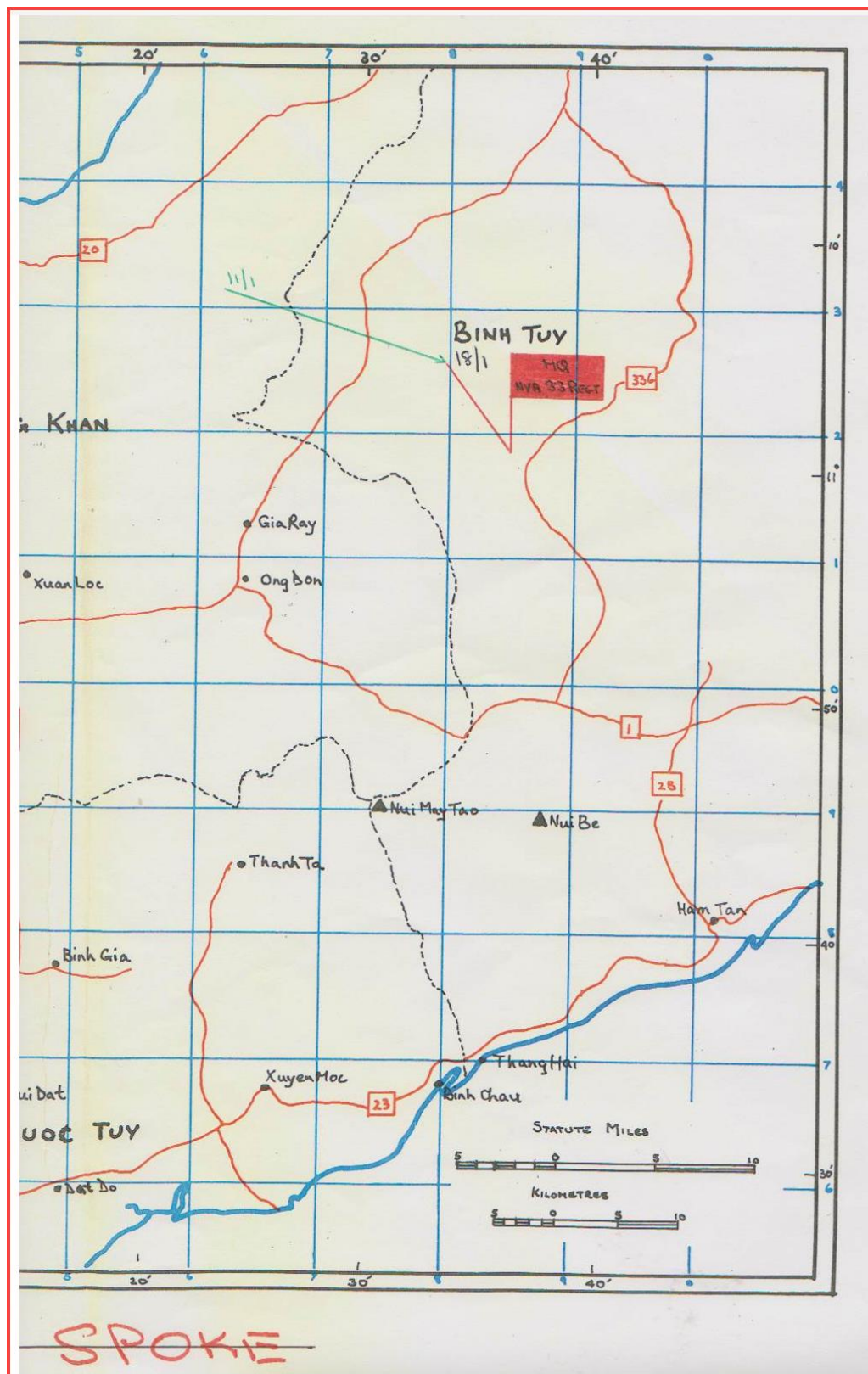


Figure 482: Map Summary 17 - 23 Jan 70 #2



51.2.4.4 24 – 30 Jan 70

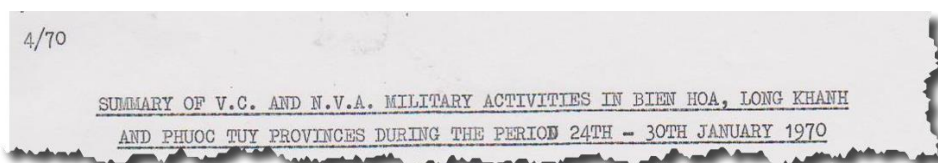


Figure 483: Summary of Activities 24 - 30 Jan 70

SIGNIFICANT REDEPLOYMENTS

On 24th January 1970. HQ NVA 33rd. Regiment was fixed by ARDF in the vicinity of YT 240 169, approximately 7km S of its 18th January location.
On 26th January, HQ. 2Bn VC 274th Regiment was fixed by ARDF in the vicinity of YT 251 1795, approximately 5km SE of its 20th January location.
On 25th January, HQ NVA 74th Arty Regiment was fixed by ARDF in the vicinity of YT 294 022, approximately 7km ENE of its 19th January location.

SIGNIFICANT ACTIVITY

During the reporting period, V.C. 274 Regt communications have dealt primarily with logistics and troop reinforcements.

On 24th January, HQ 274 Regt informed its 2nd Bn that Military Region 7 had assigned two companies of "Assault Youth" to the regt and instructed the battalion to collect the reinforcements at HQ SR U-1 (on 24th January located in the vicinity of YT 221 147) and to pick up rice for the two new companies at BAO HAM (YT 285 160). Later the same day 2 Bn advised Regt of the presence of Allied forces at the SUOI LONG ferry landing (possibly located at YT 32 30).

UNIT LOCATIONS

HQ N.V.A. 33rd Regt
80 km E of BIEN HOA.

HQ N.V.A. 74th Arty Regt
On 3rd January, 36km NW of NUI DAT.

HQ V.C. 274th Regt
29km NE of NUI DAT.

HQ 1 Bn V.C. 274th Regt
29km NE of NUI DAT.

HQ 2 Bn V.C. 274th Regt
26 km ENE of BIEN HOA.

HQ 3 Bn V.C. 274th Regt
On 15th December, 23km NNW of NUI DAT.

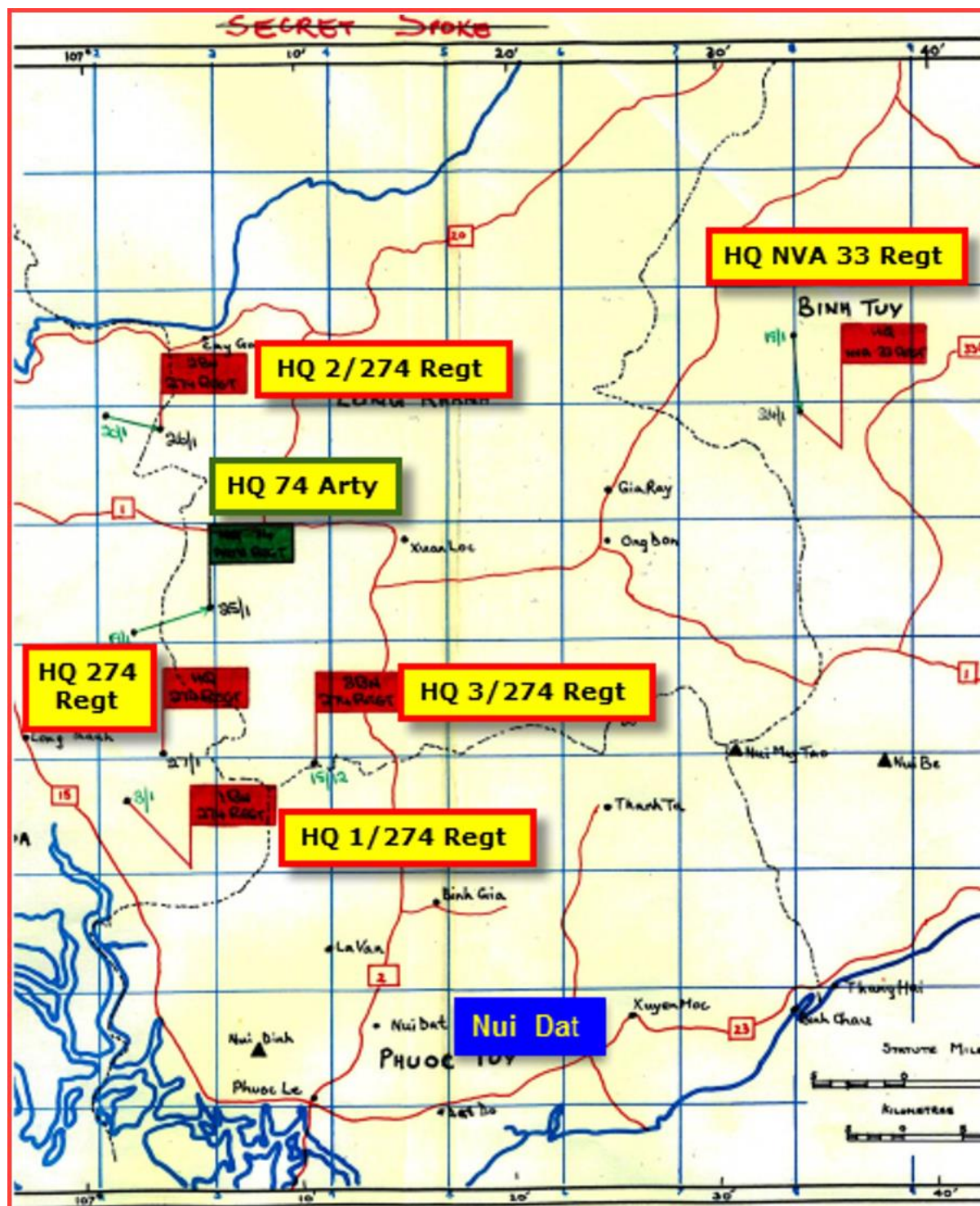


Figure 484: Map Summary 24 – 30 Jan 70



51.2.4.5 Troop VC/NVA Activities Summaries Consolidation

A consolidation of the Troop Summaries of VC and NVA Military Activities in Bien Hoa, Long Khanh and Phuoc Tuy Provinces covering the period 20 December 1969 to 30 January 1970 is as follows⁸¹⁹:

20 December 69 – 8 January 70

Significant Redeployments

During the reporting period the following unit redeployments have been noted:

HQ NVA 33rd Regt – 16 km NNE of its 12 December location.

HQ VC 274th Regt – 8 km NNW of its 15 December location.

HQ 1st Bn VC 274th Regt – 13 km SW of its 5 December location.

HQ 2nd Bn VC 274th Regt – 5 km SSE of its 16 December location.

(There has not been an ARDF fix on HQ 3rd Bn VC 274th Regt since 15 December)

Unit Activities

Difficulties in transporting ammunition, acute food shortages and Allied sweeps remain the main topics of VC 274th Regts communications.

9 – 16 January

Significant Redeployments

On 9 January, HQ NVA 33rd Regt was fixed by ARDF in the vicinity of YT637288, approximately 6 km ESE of its 28 December location. On 11 January, the Regiment was again fixed at YT636328, approximately 3 km N of the 9 January location.

The HQ VC 274th Regt was fixed by ARDF on 11 January in the vicinity of its 8 January location.

Unit Activities

On 13 January, 3 Bn 274 Regiment passed an after action report to HQ 274th Regiment regarding an attack by 3 Coy/3 Bn/274 Regt on the PHUOC HAO graded road (unlocated) which claimed eight (8) Thais KIA and one (1) GMC truck destroyed.

17 – 23 January

Significant Redeployments

On 18 January, HQ NVA 33rd Regt was fixed by ARDF in the vicinity of YT800260, approximately 19 km ESE of its 11 January location. This movement places the Regt HQ in the so-called "rice bowl" area of BINH TUY Province.

On 19 January, HQ NVA 74th Arty Regt was located by ARDF in the vicinity of YT230008.

On 20 January, HQ VC 274th Regt was located by ARDF in the vicinity of YS251900, in the same general area of the 11 January Fix.

On 20 January, HQ 2nd Bn/274th Regiment was fixed by ARDF in the vicinity of YT214192, approximately 6 km NW of its 22 December location.

Unit Identification

A previously unidentified terminal located in the LONG KHANH – BIEN HOA Province area has been identified as serving the HQ NVA 74th Arty Regt.

⁸¹⁹ Ibid



Analysis of 33 Regiment communications has indicated that the Regiment has been re-subordinated to the HQ VC 5th Division. 33 Regiment was previously subordinate to the HQ, Military Region 7.

Unit Activity

On 17 January, HQ 274th Regt advised 2 Bn/274 Regt that 3 million piasters (approx \$US30,000) had been allocated to the Regiment by HQ, Military Region 7 and instructed the Bn to arrange to receive the funds and return them to the Regiment HQ.

Other correspondence between these two entities dealt with the transportation of supplies. On 17 January, HQ 274 Regt requested a detailed report on the amount of supplies which had been transported (i) to the DONG NAI River; (ii) to BAO HAM, (iii) to the south of Highway 1.

24 – 30 January

Significant Redeployments

On 24 January 1970, HQ NVA 33rd Regt was fixed by ARDF in the vicinity of YT240169, approximately 7 km S of its 18 January location.

On 26 January, HQ 2 Bn VC 274th Regt was fixed by ARDF in the vicinity of YT251179, approximately 5 km SE of its 20 January location.

On 25 January, HQ NVA 74 Arty Regt was fixed by ARDF in the vicinity of YT294022, approximately 5 km SE of its 20 January location.

Significant Activity

During the reporting period, VC 274 Regt communications have dealt primarily with logistics and troop reinforcements.

On 24 January, HQ 274 Regt informed its 2nd Bn that Military Region 7 had assigned two companies of "Assault Youth" to the Regiment and instructed the battalion to collect the reinforcements at HQ SR U-1 (on 24 January located in the vicinity of YT221147) and to pick up rice for the two new companies at BAO HAM (YT285160).

Later the same day 2 Bn advised Regiment of the presence of Allied forces at the SUI LONG ferry landing (possibly located at YT3230).



CHAPTER 52 – FEBRUARY 1970

52.1 Personnel

52.1.1 Arrivals and Departures

Arrivals

4 February

Warrant Officer Hugh McCartney
Corporal David Cochrane
Lance Corporal Colin Potter
Lance Corporal Ross Hutton
Signalman Dennis Dean
Signalman Lloyd Giles

17 February

Captain Hugh Nichols

Departures

4 February

Signalman Bob Baldwin
Signalman Mick Guillot

18 February

Sergeant Bob Hartley

21 February

Corporal Bruce Wilson

52.1.2 Employment Areas

Hugh Nichols arrived to take over the Int Officer/2 IC position and Jock McCartney to take over the ARDF and SSL Sections. Bluey Potter, Dennis Dean and Lloyd Giles joined the Set Room. Lloyd moved to the ARDF Section in April/May. Ross Hutton went to Tech Maint and David Cochrane the Comcen. Bluey Potter was also given the added responsibility of looking after the unit vehicles.

52.1.3 HQ AFV Monthly Strength Return

There was no change to the Establishment Strength of the Troop in February⁸²⁰:

⁸²⁰ <http://www.awm.gov.au/collection/AWM98/R723/1/13/5/>



52.2 Operations

52.2.1 547 Sig Tp Operation Report for February 1970

The 547 Sig Tp Op Report for Feb 70⁸²¹ stated:

*S E C R E T SPOKE SIGS208
OP REPORT 1 0 28 FEB 70.*

1. *WATCH HOURS NO CHANGE*
2. *COVER LIST AS AT 282400H FEB.*

A. PRIORITY COVER

- | | |
|----------------|----------------|
| 1. VCMB 05437 | 12. VCMB 00667 |
| 2. VCMB 05423 | 13. VCMB 05445 |
| 3. VCMB 05443 | 14. VCMB 05450 |
| 4. VCMB 00831 | 15. VCMB J1816 |
| 5. VCMB 05447 | 16. VCMB Y9084 |
| 6. VCMB 05451 | 17. VCMB 00835 |
| 7. VCMB 05442 | 18. VCMB 00843 |
| 8. VCMB J1017 | 19. VCMB 00679 |
| 9. VCMB J1217 | 20. VCMB N4847 |
| 10. VCMB 05449 | 21. VCMB J0496 |
| 11. VCMB 00709 | 22. VCMB J0637 |

B. DEV GROUPS

- | | |
|---------------|---------------|
| 1. VCMB 05448 | 5. VCMB J2058 |
| 2. VCMB Y9083 | 6. VCXB J6261 |
| 3. VCMB J2062 | 7. VCXB J7081 |
| 4. VCMB J2062 | 8. VCMB N4897 |

3. *ARDF RESULTS TOTAL FIXES – 42*
 - A. *GRADINGS. SIX GOOD CMM TWENTY FAIR CMM SEVEN POOR CMM FIVE CUTS*
 - B. *FLYING TIME TOTAL 92.40 HRS*
 - (1) *WO2 MCCARTNEY 7.25/7.25 TOTAL*
 - (2) *SGT HARTLEY 12.05/562.45 TOTAL*
 - (3) *SIG DANSKIN 33.45/54.30 TOTAL*
 - (4) *SIG POTTER 39.25/103.00 TOTAL*
 - C. *ONE MISSION ABORTED AND TWO REDUCED BY WEATHER CMM ELEVEN ABORTED AND FIVE REDUCED BY ARDF MALFUNCTION/SERVICE CMM AND ONE MISSION ABORTED DUE TO AIRCRAFT MALFUNCTION SERVICE.*
4. *SSL. OPERATIONAL FOR SEVENTEEN DAYS OF MONTH PRODUCING 303 RESULTS FROM 404 TASKS OFFERED.*
 - A. *THREE 10KVA GENERATORS NOW INSTALLED AWAITING ARRIVAL OF NEW SONDE.*
 - B. *INSTALLATION WORKS ASSOCIATED WITH INSTALLATION OF SONDE WILL BE COMPLETED BY 9 MAR.*
 - C. *PORTION OF SONDE INSTALLATION HAS ARRIVED IE. 100 FT MAST AND THREE BOXES.*
5. *LLVI. POSITION ON NUI DAT HILL WAS MANNED FOR TEN NIGHTS OVER TET PERIOD SEARCHING THE VHF BAND BUT THERE WAS NOT ONE HINT OF VC VOICE. A RECENT HOI CHANH REPORTED THAT BA LONG USE PRC25 SETS – HAVE HAD ONE SESSION WITH HIM BUT WILL WAIT UNTIL HE IS IN BETTER HEALTH AND CAN BE REMOVED FROM THE HOSPITAL WARD FOR QUESTIONING. THIS IS THE FIRST POSITIVE INDICATION OF VOICE BEING USED IN THE PROVINCE.*

⁸²¹ Documents received from ASD December 2015 and DSD Declassified, 547 Sig Tp in Vietnam (tranche2)..



52.2.2 Operation Hammersley

Operation Hammersley was a reconnaissance in force operation conducted by 8 RAR with APCs in support, in the Long Hai Hills during the period 10 February to 3 March.

Extract from the *Australian Official History*⁸²²:

On 23 January, using radio direction finding (RDF), 547 Signal Troop "fixed" the location of D445 Battalion radio in the northern central region of the Long Hais, just two kilometres east of FSB Isa. The identification of the radio was a strong indication of the presence of the enemy battalion. Unaccountably, this information was not reported in the unit's [i.e. 8RAR] weekly summary until 19 February and was apparently not passed on to 8RAR before Operation Hammersley began. The reason remains unclear: the officers responsible may not have distributed the intelligence properly or failed to recognise its significance. The result was that 8RAR mounted a company protection task in an area where an enemy battalion was located - a situation that clearly demanded no less than a full-strength task force offensive operation

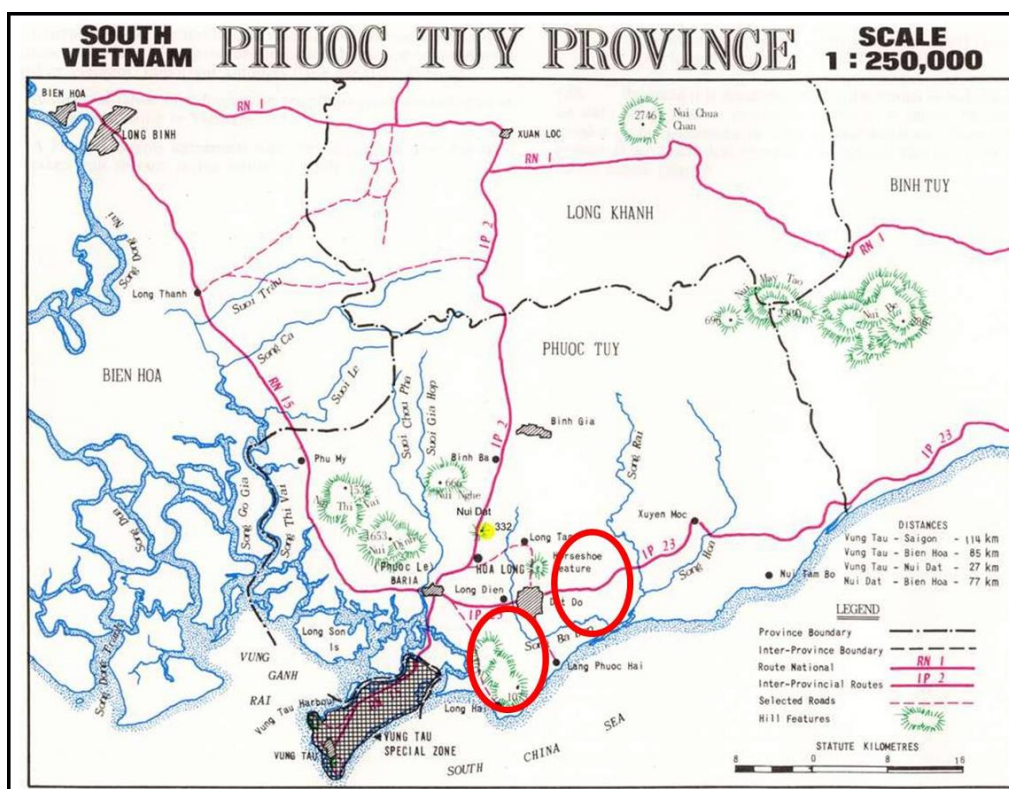


Figure 485: Operation Hammersley AO

⁸²² Extracts from *Fighting to the Finish The Australian Army and the Vietnam War 1968 - 1975* by Ashley Ekins with Ian McNeil > Allen & Unwin in association with the Australian War Memorial, page 371.



Extract from *Fire Support Bases Vietnam*⁸²³:

Operation Hammersley began on 10 February when C Company with tanks, APCs and mortar support deployed to the western side of the Long Hai Hills to protect quarry operations being undertaken by 17 Construction Squadron RAE. C Company established FSB Isa in AO Bendigo near the quarry site and ambushed likely enemy routes leading from the hills. This operation was supported by two Australian bases, FSB Isa and FSB Pat.

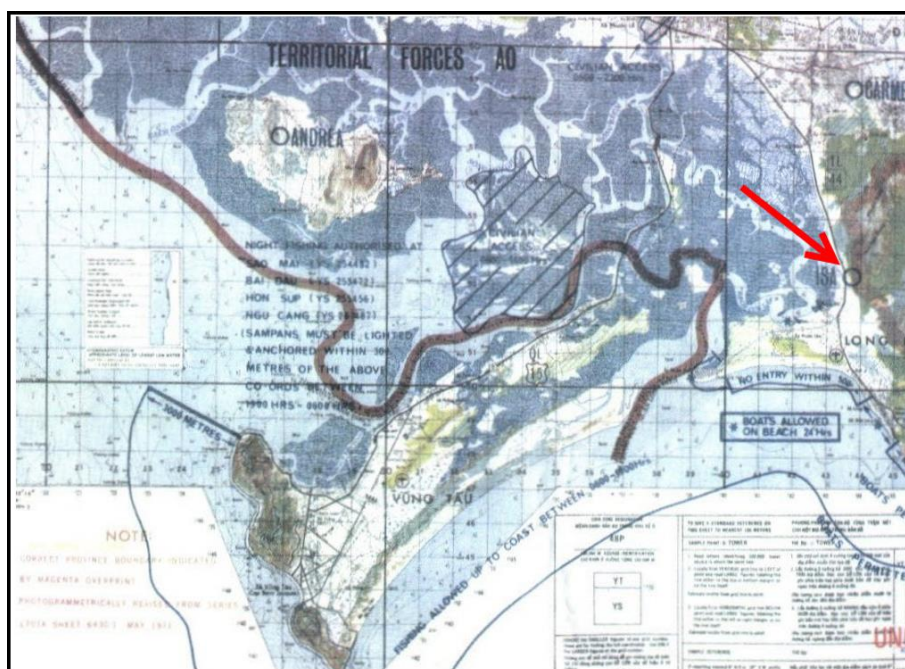


Figure 486: FSB Isa

52.2.2.1 Operation Hammersley Overview

Operation Hammersley developed into a reconnaissance in force by C and D Companies of 8RAR with tanks and APCs in support, while B Company ambushed the main fire trail. Heavy contact was made with the whole of D445 in a valley in the south east of the Long Hai's known by the VC as Minh Dam Secret Zone. Three days later a B-52 airstrike was targeted onto the valley that had been used as a VC battalion sanctuary for many years.

The South Vietnamese government awarded the battalion the Meritorious Unit Commendation, including Cross of Gallantry with Palm Unit Citation, for its involvement in Operation Hammersley.

52.2.2.2 BA Long HQ⁸²⁴ Communications

Interrogation Reports of Rallier Bo Van Trung and returnee Huynh Van Lien included as an Annex to 1 ATF INTSUM No 56-70 dated 25 Feb 70,⁸²⁵ mentioned the following:

⁸²³ Picken, Bruce (2012-03-25). *Fire Support Base Vietnam* (Kindle Locations 8447-8449). Big Sky Publishing. Kindle Edition.

⁸²⁴ Email from Ernie Chamberlain 14 Nov 2014: Ba Long was our abbreviation for "Ba Ria-Long Khanh Province Unit" – although the VC rarely used "Ba Long" themselves from what I've read. It was subordinate to Military Region 7 in early 1970.

⁸²⁵ AWM RCDIG1028154



8. Communications. BA LONG HQ has 3 x AN/PRC 25 sets; frequency 37/20 ; call signs A1 (1 P1) A2 (2 P1) B4 (3 P1) changing every 3 days. Codes are changed daily. At HQ is a 15 Watt radio. At fwd HQ is one PRC 25.

Figure 487: Interrogation Report (Trung) extract

Equipment: Each coy has one PRC 25 and Sect HQ have PRC 10 sets.

Figure 488: Interrogation Report (Lien) extract

This confirms that LLV was in use in the Province

52.2.3 ACV Deployed

In February, the Troop ACV was deployed to FSB Colorado.

52.2.3.1 FSB Colorado

FSB Colorado was originally established at YS315804 on 3 January as a US FSB for the Command Post of the 2nd Brigade 1st Infantry Division to support AO Dagger. It was also used to support 8RAR Operations in the area.

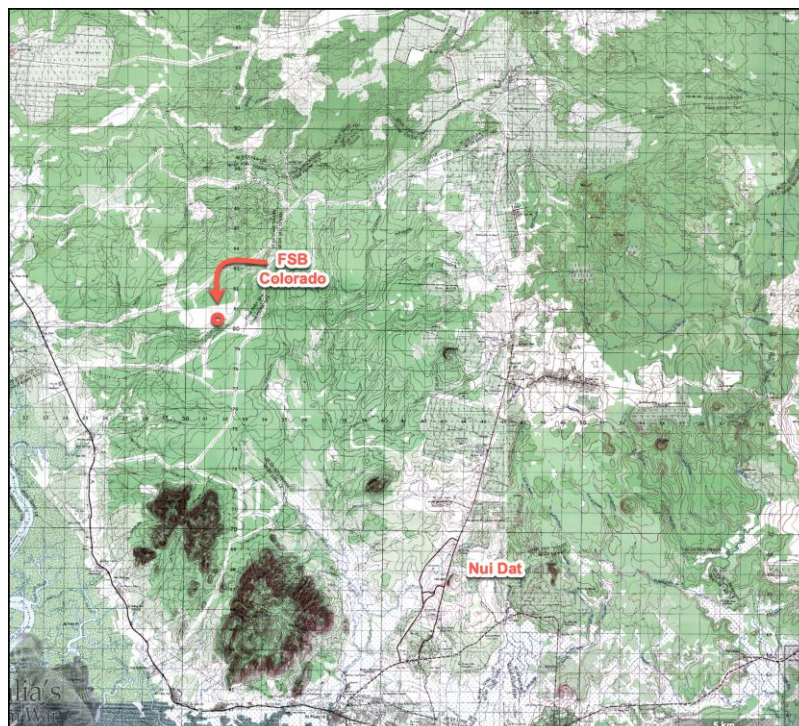


Figure 489: FSB Colorado Location



Bob Harland recalled⁸²⁶:

I got to go out in the track every time it went out. [The] 3 Cav didn't trust us with their toy, so we had to take drivers along—buggered if I know what they did all day—they weren't allowed in.

It was like being in an oven inside the ACV, the US guys at Colorado did us proud—they dug a bloody great hole for us to back the ACV into, then put a nice tin roof on it, then sandbagged it—it was like the Hilton in the end.



Figure 490: FSB Colorado ACV Crew



Figure 491: ACV dug in at FSB Colorado #1

⁸²⁶ Email to Bob Hartley.

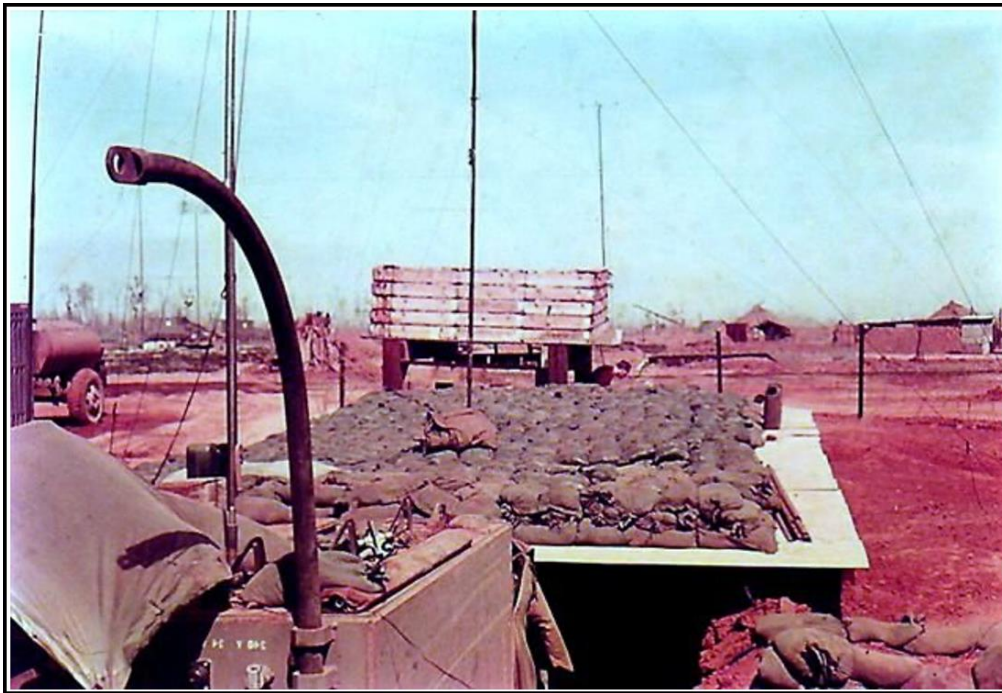


Figure 492: ACV dug in at FSB Colorado #2

52.2.3.2 Letter of Appreciation

After the group returned to Nui Dat a Letter of Appreciation was sent to the Officer Commanding [Commander] 1ATF from the Commanding Officer of the 2nd Brigade, 1st Infantry Division. A copy of the letter is shown at Annex O.

52.2.4 Troop VC/NVA Activities Summaries

The Troop Summaries of Activities covering February 1970 contained the following⁸²⁷:

⁸²⁷ ASD archives of 547 Sig Tp material.



52.2.4.1 31 Jan – 13 Feb 70

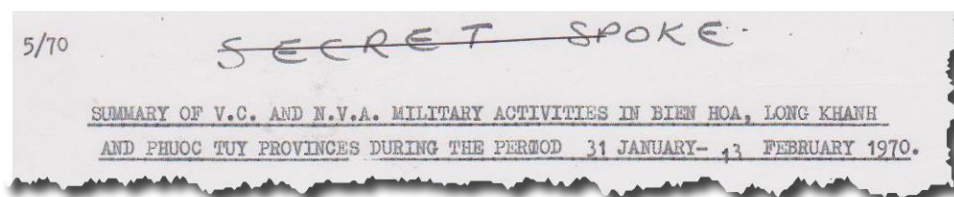


Figure 493: Summary of Activities 31 Jan - 13 Feb 70

SIGNIFICANT REDEPLOYMENTS

On 6th February 1970, HQ VC 274 Regiment was fixed by ARDF in the vicinity of YS339943 approximately 7 kms ENE of its 27th January location. An ARDF fix of YS218879 suggests that HQ VC 274th Regiment had redeployed in a north-easterly direction.

On 11th February 1970, HQ NVA 74th Artillery Regiment was located by ARDF in the vicinity of YT251016 in approximately the same position as this unit had deployed to by 1st February. However, on 5th February an ARDF fix suggested that HQ NVA 74th Artillery Regiment had re-located to YT284054.

SIGNIFICANT ACTIVITY

Further references to troop reinforcements and to support operations of VC 274th Regiment were made during this reporting period.

On 31st January, the 2nd Bn of VC 274th Regiment reported that an element had been organized to + (build) the base and dig the secret tunnels on both sides of the river+. A request on the same day for assistance in transporting two 12.8 mm machine guns was dealt with on 2nd February.

UNIT LOCATIONS

HQ N.V.A. 33rd Regt
Approx 82 kms E of Bien Hoa.

HQ N.V.A 74th Arty Regt
On 11th February, approx 40 kms NW of NUI DAT

HQ V.C. 274th Regt
On 6th February, approx 28 kms NNW of NUI DAT

HQ 1 Bn V.C. 274th Regt
On 30th January, approx 28 kms NW of NUI DAT

HQ 2 Bn V.C. 274th Regt
On 27th January, approx 26 kms ENE of BIEN HOA

HQ 3 Bn V.C. 274th Regt
On 15th December, approx 23 kms NNW of NUI DAT.

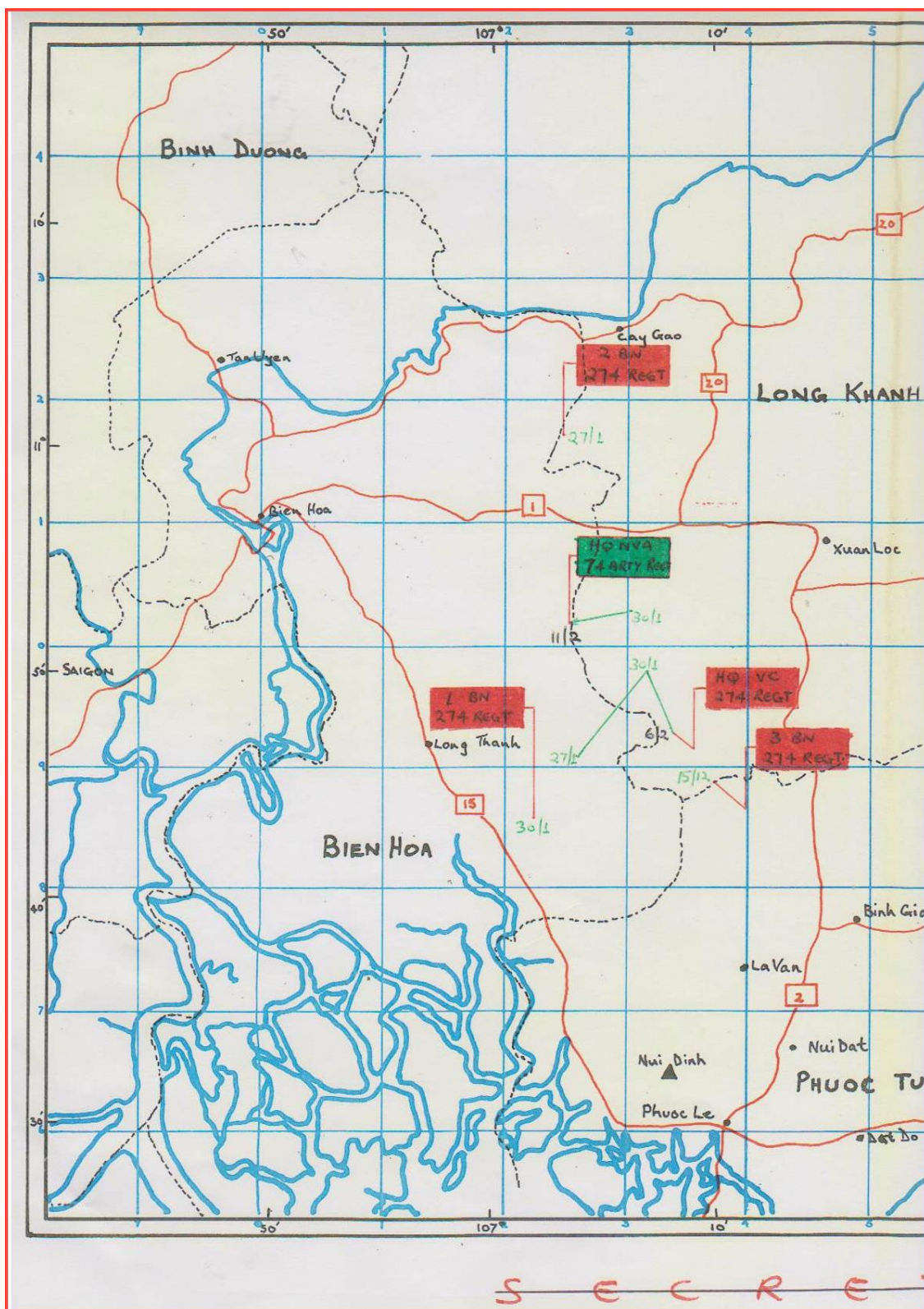
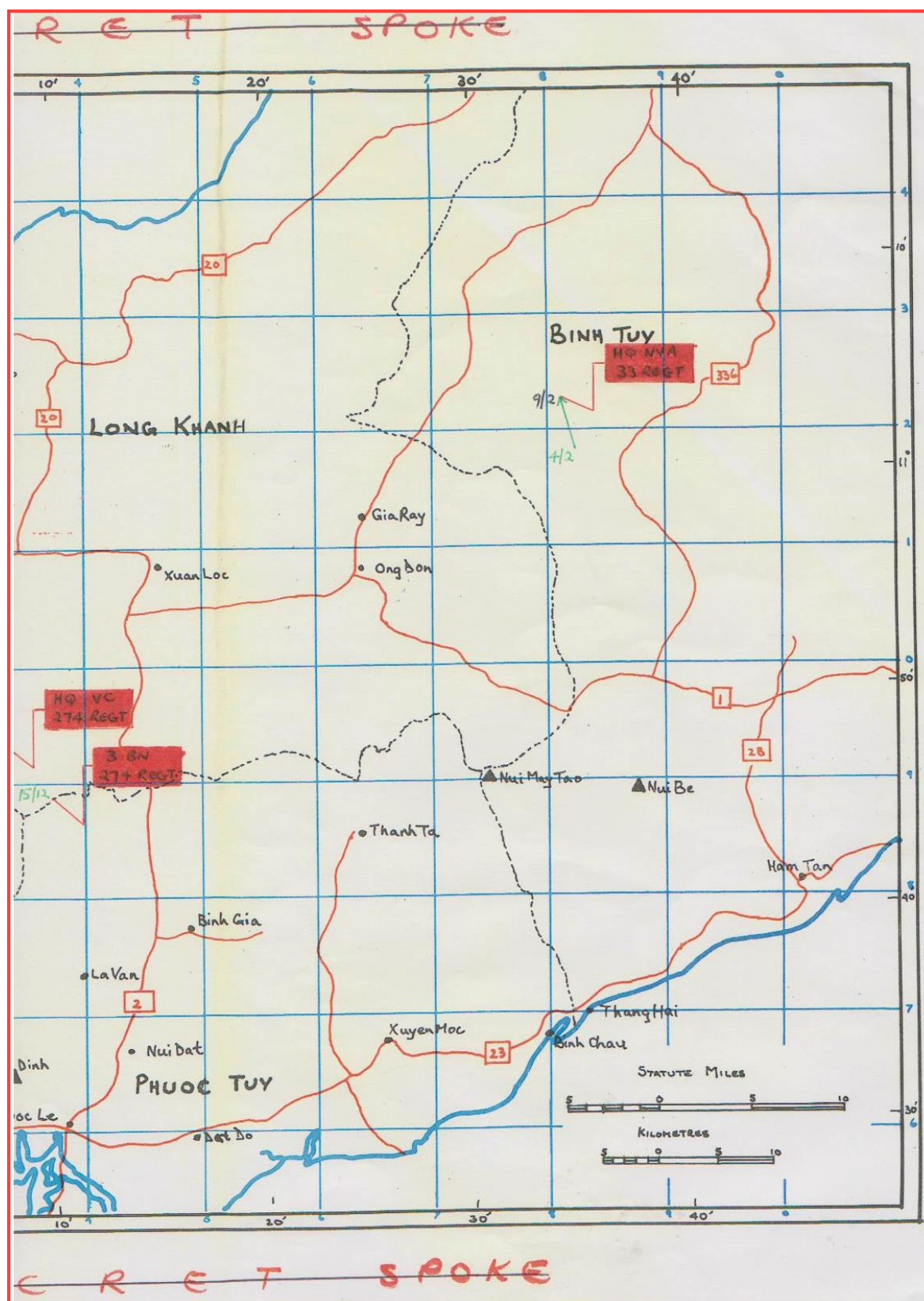


Figure 494: Map Summary 31 Jan - 13 Feb 70 #1



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52.2.4.2 13 – 19 Feb 70

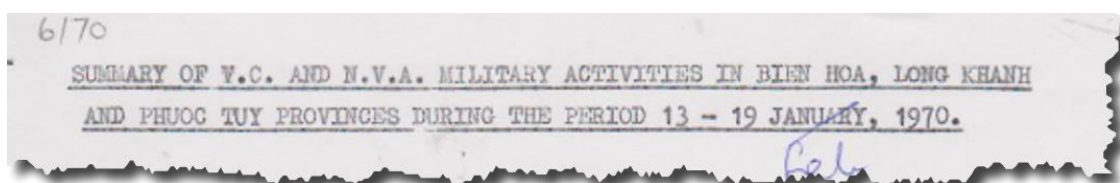


Figure 496: Summary of Activities 13 - 19 Feb 70

SIGNIFICANT DEVELOPMENTS

On 19th February 1970, HQ NVA 33rd Regiment was fixed by ARDF in the vicinity of YT673210 - approximately 7 kilometres ESE of its 9th February location. On 13th February, ARDF had located this unit 4 kms on the eastern side of Route 336.

SIGNIFICANT ACTIVITY

Plans for forthcoming attacks on allied positions at DUC MY (YS432724) were discussed in intercepted messages passed between the suspected HQ BA BIEN Province and the suspected 440th Local Force Battalion. (currently located some 7 kms north of DUC MY). In a message passed on 18th February, which may be associated with these plans, 440th Local Force Battalion was instructed that +Highpoint X+ was to commence on 26th February and continue until 7th March and that +D-Day+ during this Highpoint was to be the night of 26/27 February.

UNIT LOCATIONS

HQ N.V.A. 33rd Regt

On 19th February, approx 88 kms E of BIEN HOA.

HQ N.V.A. 74th Arty Regt

n 11th February, approx 40 kms NW of NUI DAT.

HQ V.C. 274th Regt

On 15th February, approx 29 kms NNW of NUI DAT.

HQ 1 Bn V.C. 274th Regt

On 15th February, approx 30 kms NN of NUI DAT.

HQ 2 Bn V.C. 274th Regt

On 27th January, approx. 26 kms NNE of Bien Hoa.

HQ 3 Bn V.C. 274th Regt

On 15th Dec. approx. 23 kms NNW of NUI DAT.

HQ V.C. D440 Local Force Bn. ⁸²⁸

On 14th February, approx. 11.5 kms NNW of NUI DAT.

⁸²⁸ D440 and D445 locations now being shown.



HQ V.C. D445 Local Force Bn

On 23rd January, approx. 14 kms S of NUI DAT

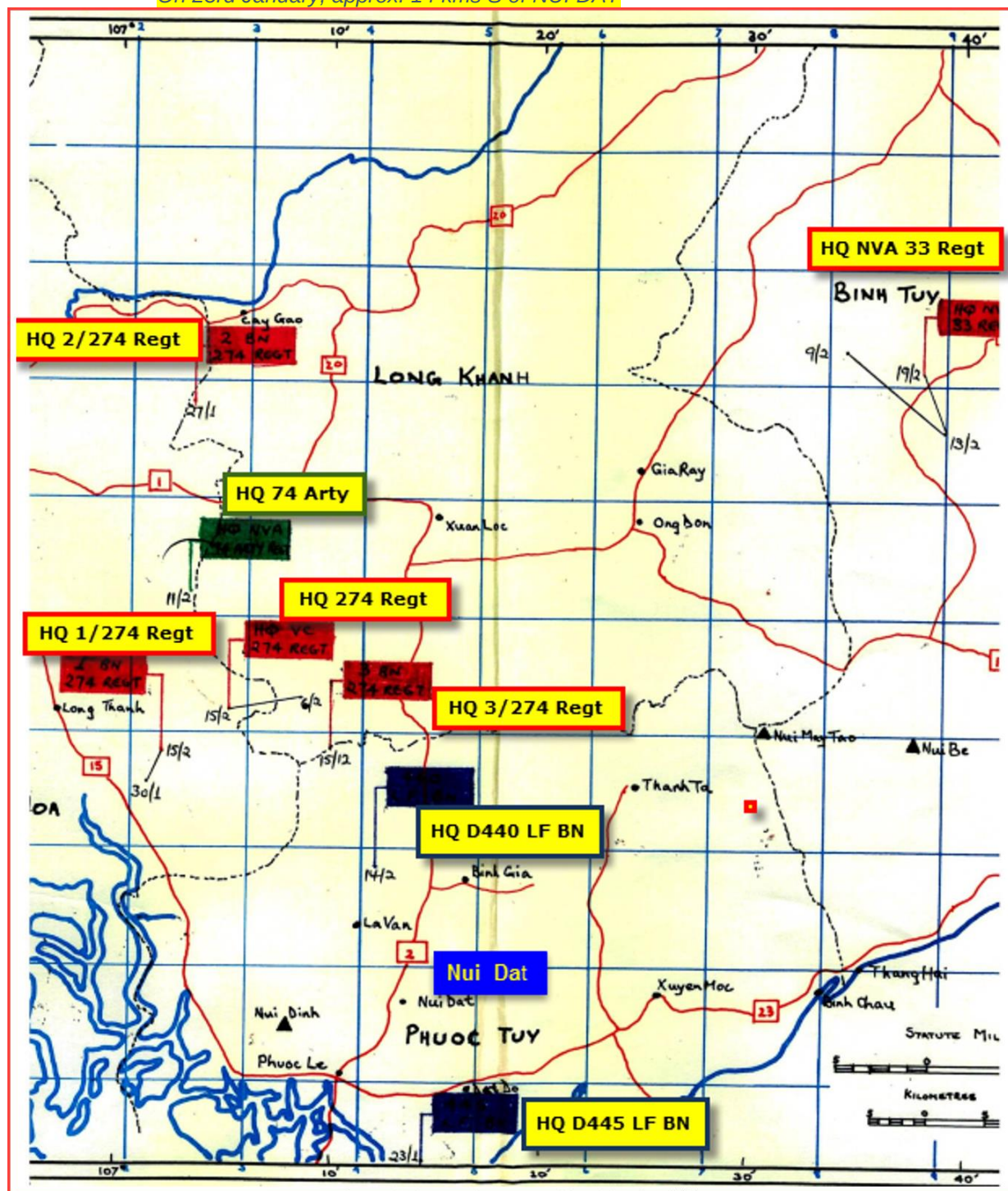


Figure 497: Map Summary 13 - 19 Feb 70



52.2.5 Troop VC/NVA Activities Summaries Consolidation

A consolidation of the Troop Summaries of VC and NVA Military Activities in Bien Hoa, Long Khanh and Phuoc Tuy Provinces covering the period 31 January to 20 February is as follows⁸²⁹:

31 January – 13 February

Significant Redeployments

On 6 February, HQ VC 274 Regt was fixed by ARDF in the vicinity of YS339943 approximately 7 kms ENE of its 27 January location. An ARDF fix of YS218879 suggests that HQ VC 274th Regt had redeployed in a north-easterly direction. [No date given].

On 11 February, HQ NVA 74th Arty Regt was located by ARDF in the vicinity of YT251016 in approximately the same position as this unit had deployed to by 1 February. However, on 5 February an ARDF fix suggested that HQ NVA 74th Arty Regt had relocated to YT284054.

Significant Activity

Further references to troop reinforcements and to support operations of VC 274th Regt were made during this reporting period.

On 31 January, the 2nd Bn of VC 274th Regt reported that an element had been organized to +(build) the base and dig the secret tunnels on both sides of the river+. A request on the same day for assistance in transporting two 12.8 mm machine guns was dealt with on 2 February.

13 – 19 February

Significant Redeployments

On 19 February, HQ NVA 33rd Regt was fixed by ARDF in the vicinity of YT873210 – approximately 7 kms ESE of its 9 February location. On 13 February, ARDF had located this unit 4 kms on the eastern side of Route 336.

Significant Activity

Plans for forthcoming attacks on Allied positions at DUC MY (YS432724) were discussed in intercepted messages passed between the suspected HQ BA BIEN Province and the suspected 440th Local Force Battalion. (Currently located some 7 kms north of DUC MY). In a message passed on 18 February, which may be associated with these plans, 440th Local Force Battalion was instructed that +highpoint X+ was to commence on 26 February and continue until 7 March and that +D-Day+ during this highpoint was to be the night of 27/27 February.

⁸²⁹ ASD archives of 547 Sig Tp material.



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CHAPTER 53 – MARCH 1970

53.1 Personnel

53.1.1 Arrivals and Departures

There were four arrivals and five departures in March,

Arrivals

9 March

Signalman Leon Douglas

24 March

Staff Sergeant Robert Ward

25 March

Lance Corporal James McLean

Signalman Ron Williams

Departures

4 March

Captain Brian Doyle

16 March

Sergeant Stan Marks

25 March

Corporal Roy Dean

Corporal Frank Finch

Corporal Harry Martin

53.1.2 Employment Areas

Bob Ward went into the Processing area. Leon Douglas, Jim McLean and Ron Williams joined the Set Room.

53.1.3 DSD LO

On 16 March, Kevin Condon arrived to replace David Churchus as the DSD LO at Long Binh.

53.1.4 HQ AFV Monthly Strength Return

There was no change to the Establishment Strength of the Troop in March⁸³⁰:

⁸³⁰ <http://www.awm.gov.au/collection/AWM98/R723/1/13/5/>



SERIAL	FORMATION/UNIT	ESTABLISHMENT			POSTED STRENGTH		
		OFFR	OR	TOTAL	OFFR	OR	TOTAL
(a)	(b)	(c)	(d)	(e)	(f)	(g)	(h)
32	547 Sig Tp (Less Det)	2	38	40	2	38	40

Figure 498: HQ AFV Strength Return for March 1970

53.2 Operations

53.2.1 547 Sig Tp Operation Report for March 1970

The 547 Sig Tp Op Report for March 70⁸³¹ stated:

S E C R E T SPOKE SIGS 279

FOR M18, OP REPORT 1-31 MAR70.

1. WATCH HOURS NO CHANGE.

2. COVER RETURN AS AT 312400 H MAR

A. PRIORITY COVER

- | | | |
|----------------|----------------|----------------|
| 1. VCMB 05437. | 9. VCMB J1917. | 17. VCMB 00835 |
| 2. VCMB 05423 | 10 VCMB 05448 | 18. VCMB 00943 |
| 3. VCMB 05443 | 11. VCMB J0253 | 19. VCMB J0459 |
| 4. VCMB 00831 | 12. VCMB 05449 | 20. VCMB J0496 |
| 5. VCMB 05447 | 13. VCMB 00667 | 21. VCMB N4847 |
| 6. VCMB 05451 | 14. VCMB 05445 | 22. VCMB 00679 |
| 7. VCMB 05442 | 15. VCMB J1816 | 23. VCMB N4897 |
| 8. VCMB J0772 | 16. VCMB Y9084 | |

3. DEV GPOUPS

- | | | | |
|---------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|
| 1. VCNM J2062 | 2. VCXB J7565 | 9. VCMB J0938 | 13. VCXB J7556 |
| 2. VCMB J6261 | 6. VCMB Y9083 | 10. VCMB J23C3 | 14. VCXB J3472 |
| 3. VCMB J7394 | 7. VCMB J1078 | 11. VCMB J2307 | |
| 4. VCXB J7439 | 8. VCM B 00897 | 12. VCXB J7774 | |

3. ARDF. TOTAL FIXES

A. GRADINGS. TWENTY SIX GOOD CMM SEVENTEEN FAIR CMMS
TWO POOR CMM NINE CUTS

B. FLYING TIME. TOTAL 133.25 HOURS (INCL
12HRS 55MIN. TRG TIME)

- (1) W02 H. MC CARTNEY 33. 35/41. 00
(2) SIG J. DANSKIN 45.00/99.30
(3) SIG J. POTTER 51.55/144.55
(4) SIG L. WOTHERSPOON 12.55/12.55

⁸³¹ DSD Declassified, 547 Sig Tp in Vietnam (tranche2)..



C. ONE MISSION ABORTED
DUE TO WEATHER CMM ONE MISSION ABORTED AND
TWO REDUCED 3Y ARDF MALFUNCTION/SERVICE CMM TWO
MISSION ABORTED BY AIRCRAFT SERVICE CMM AND
ONE MISSION ABORTED BY AIRCRAFT MALFUNCTION.

4. SHORT CELL.

A. NEW SONDE INSTALLATION COMPLETED
THIS MORNING BUT POWER AMPLIFIER NEEDS
REPLACEMENT TRANSFORMER. AFTER ERECTION
OF 100FT. MAST ONE LOAD RESISTOR AT
TOP BROKE SO HAD TO DISMANTLE AND
RE-ERECT MAST

B. OPERATIONS ARE TO RE-COMMENCE THIS
AFTERNOON USING NEW SONDE ON
REDUCED POWER (3KW).

C. GENERAL AIMS OF NEXT OPERATIONAL
PERIOD ARE CLN

(1) ALLOW NEW SLL OPS (GILBERT GEHLE KAARSBERG)
TO GAIN PROFICIENCY UNDER GUIDANCE
OF SIG WOTHERSPOON BEFORE HIS RTA 4JUN.
FURTHER REFINE THE TECHNIQUE OF
EMPLOYING SSL BOTH IN OUR OWN
AO 1 AND IN [redacted] AREA.

(3). IMPROVE THE PRODUCTIVITY OF THE SYSTEM

(4) CO-ORD THE ACTIVITIES OF THE SONDE TO
ENSURE THAT SET ROOM OPERATIONS
ARE NOT AFFECTED AT +SENSITIVE+ TIMES.

(5) TO PROVIDE DAILY RESULTS TO

[redacted]

D. FROM EXPERIENCE IN THE LAST PHASE CMM THE
INCREASE IN TROOP STRENGTH OF THREE OPS FOR
SSL OPERATIONS IS NOT ADEQUATE MAINLY

BECAUSE WE HAVE PROVEN THE PRODUCTIVITY OF THE
SYSTEM TO BE EIGHT TIMES WHAT WAS
EXPECTED. ON THE OPERATOR SIDE THERE
IS NO LEE WAY FOR REST DAYS CMM SICKNESS
CMM R AND R CMM R IN C CMM AS ALL THREE
ARE EMPLOYED DAILY- ONE AS DF
CONCENTRATOR AND TWO AT THE SITE. THIS
MEANS WE CAN'T PROVIDE CONTINUOUS OPS BUT HOPE
TO TRY AND OVERCOME THIS BY LATE MAY. WITH THE
HIGH PRODUCTIVITY OF THE SYSTEM CMM AS WELL AS THE
OPERATORS CMM ONE MAN COULD BE EMPLOYED
PRACTICALLY FULL TIME RECORDING CMM PLOTTING CMM
SIGNALLING CMM ASSESSING CMM DESPATCH OF
RESULTS. IT IS REALISED THAT THE POSSIBILITY OF
INCREASED MAN POWER RESOURCES IS MORE THAN
REMOTE CMM BUT SHOULD THERE BE A SUGGESTION
OF OUR EFFORT BEING REDUCED UP HERE CMM
PERHAPS A REDUCTION COULD BE REPLACED
BY A SHIFT IN EMPHASIS FROM SET ROOM



TO SSL OPERATED CONTINUOUSLY SY A FIVE
MÂN TEAM WOULD REALLY PROVE THE WORTH OF
THE SYSTEM.

5.[redacted] NO EFFORT MOUNTED OVER THE LAST MONTH
BECAUSE OF LACK OF MAN POWER AND [redacted]
[redacted] WITHIN TAO1 AT
MOMENT WE HAVE ONE LF BN. (D4A5)
AND ONE LF COY. AND WE ALSO PROVIDE
SUPPORT TO THE U.S. BRIGADE 2/25 AGAINST A LF BN.
(D440) AND ANOTHER LF COY. THESE UNITS
ARE WORKING AT VERY MUCH REDUCED STRENGTH
AND HAVE LITTLE ENOUGH TIME TO SEND MORSE
[redacted]
AND WITHIN UNITS THE MEMBERS
ARE SCATTERED IN SMALL GROUPS. FOR
ABOVE REASONS AND GENERAL STATE OF
[redacted]

53.2.2 ARDF Flying Hours

The total ARDF flying hours for the month were⁸³²:

Year	Month	Flying hours	Total Fixes	Good <1000mts	Fair 1-2000Mts	Poor >2000 Mts	Cut	Missions Lost	Remarks
1970	Mar	133.25	54	26	12	2	9	6	

53.2.3 Troop VC/NVA Activities Summaries

The Troop Summaries of Activities covering the March 1970 contained the following⁸³³:

53.2.3.1 20 Feb – 5 Mar 70

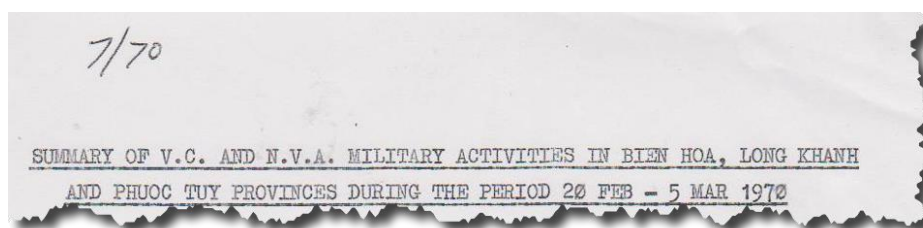


Figure 499: Summary of Activities 20 Feb - 5 Mar 70

SIGNIFICANT DEVELOPMENTS

On 3rd March 70 445 Local Force Battalion was fixed by ARDF in the Vicinity of YS546692 - approximately 18 kilometres NNE of its 21st February location#

On 3rd March 70 440 Local Force Battalion was fixed by ARDF in the vicinity of YS 460775 approximately four kilometres east of its 14th February location. On 5th March it was fixed by ARDF in the vicinity of YS3728G0,

⁸³² Compiled from MI8 Records held at ASD archives.

⁸³³ ASD archives of 547 Sig Tp material.



approximately nine kilometres west of its 3rd March location.

SIGNIFICANT ACTIVITY

Information received during the last period indicates that the units of D445 and 440 Local Force Battalion are decreasing their activities in order to build up their supplies and reorganize for a forthcoming attack. The Chiefs of Staff have been instructing their Regimental Commanders to cut down on fire power and aim toward building up ammunition and supplies and continue stepping up recruiting and training of new comrades.

UNIT LOCATIONS

HQ NVA 74th ARTY REGT

On 27th February approx 42 kms NW of NUI DAT.

HQ, NVA 33 REGT

On 24th February approx 90 kms east of BIEN HOA.

HQ VC 274 REGT

On 25th February approx 29 kms NNW of NUI DAT.

HQ 1 BN VC 274 REGT

No significant move since 18th February when it was approx 30 kms NW of NUI DAT.

HQ 2 BN VC 274 REGT

On 3rd March 70 approx 27 kms east of BIEN HOA.

HQ 3 BN VC 274 REGT

Not heard from since 15th December 69 when it was approx 26 kms ENE of NUI DAT.

HQ VC D440 LOCAL FORCE BN

On 5th March approx 15 kms NNW of NUI DAT.

HQ VC D445 LOCAL FORCE BN

On 3rd March approx 11 kms east of NUI DAT.

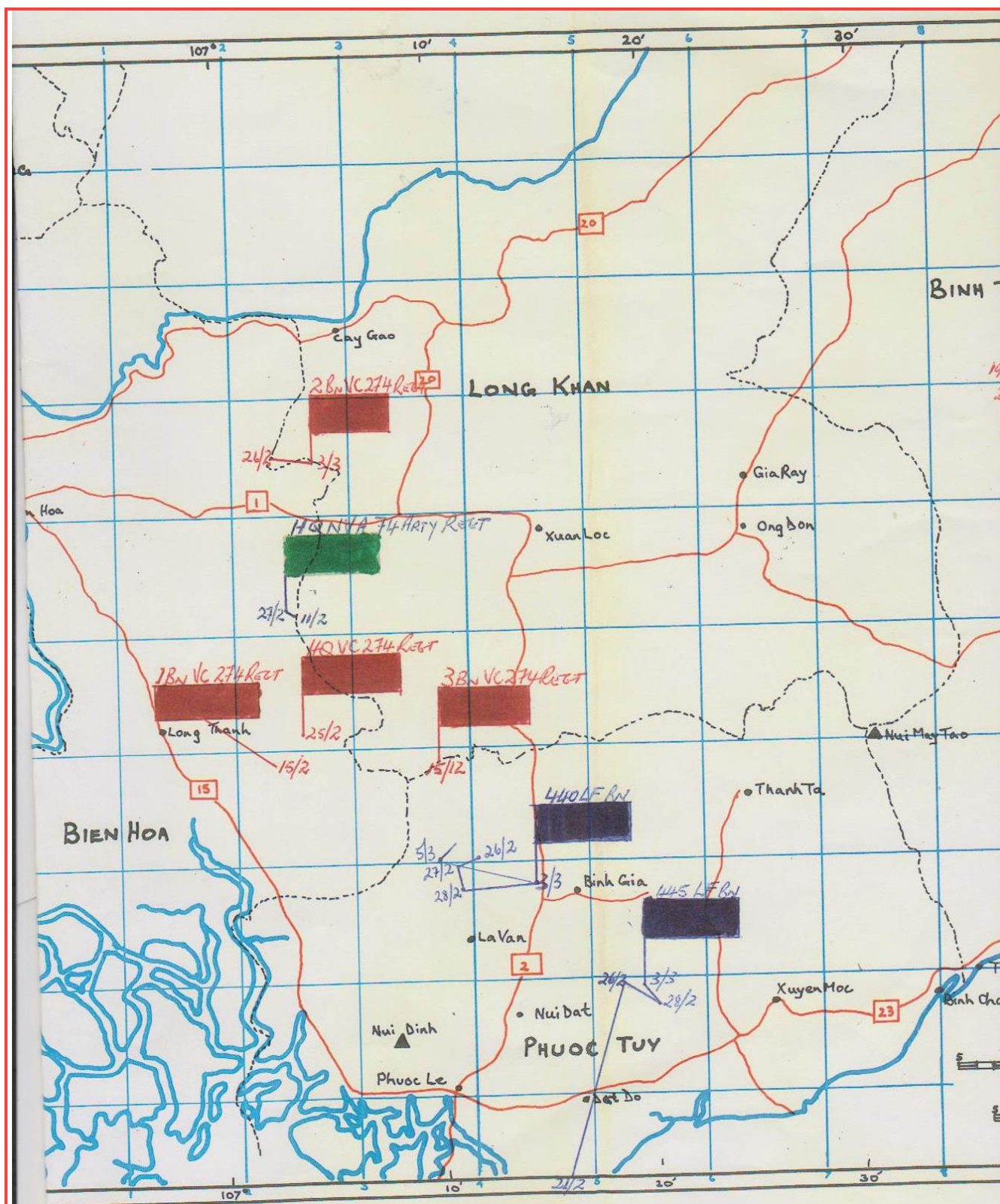


Figure 500: Map Summary 20 Feb - 5 Mar 70 #1

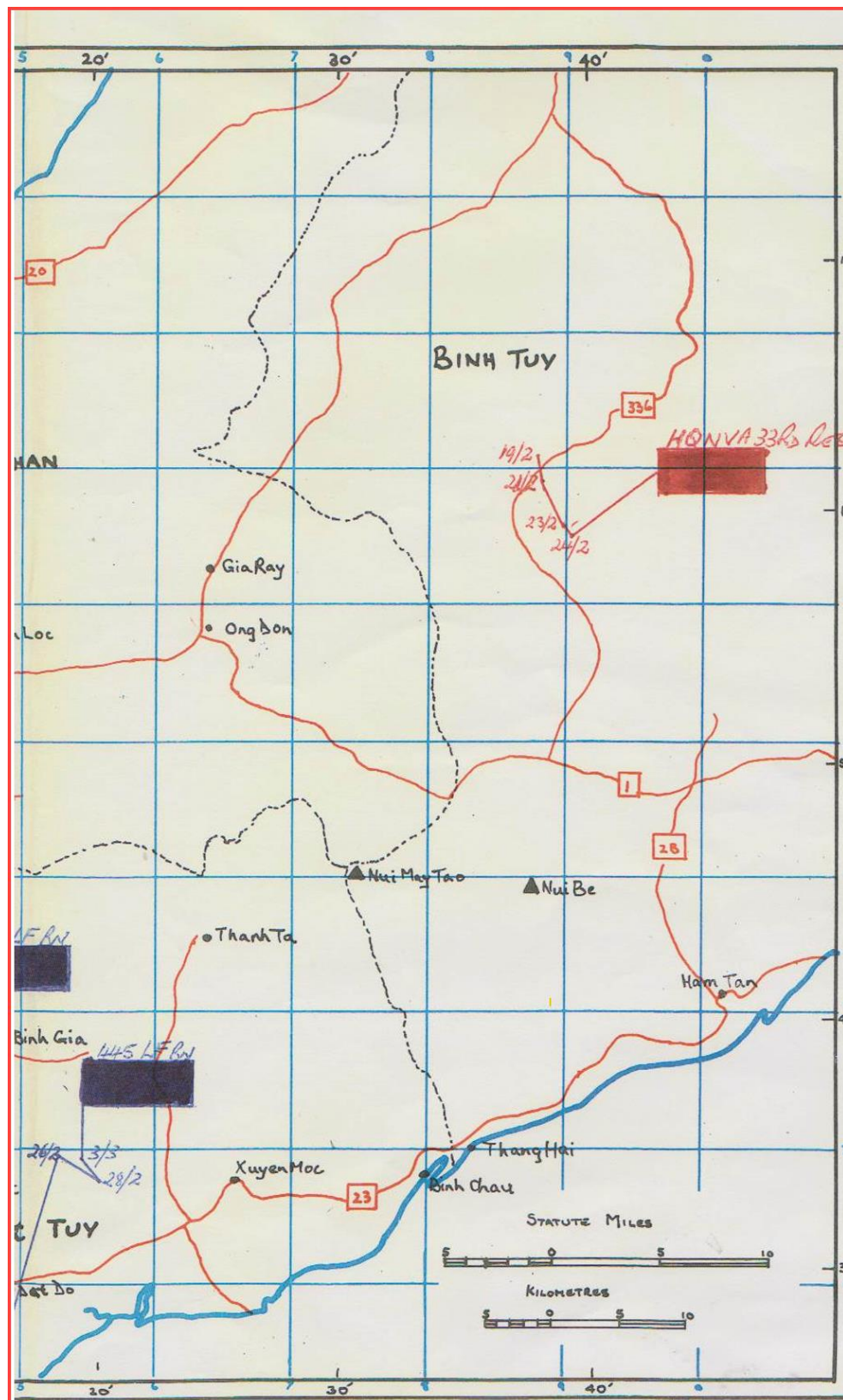


Figure 501: Map Summary 20 Feb - 5 Mar 70 #2



53.2.3.2 6 – 13 Mar 70

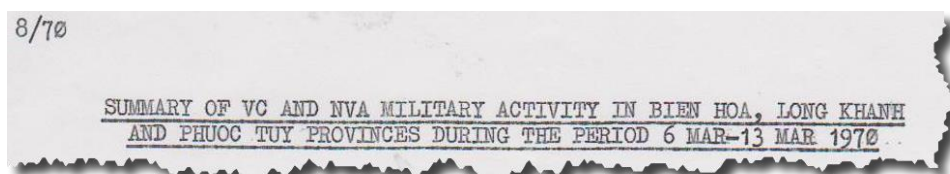


Figure 502: Summary of Activities 6 - 13 Mar 70

SIGNIFICANT BEVELOPMENTS

On 9th March D440 Local Force Battalion was located at co-ordinate YS 423807. This battalion has been very mobile, and at present is approximately 5 kms east of its 3rd March location.

D445 Battalion was situated in the vicinity of co-ordinate YS693614 on 12th March 70° This unit is now 15 kms SE of its 3rd March location and has moved 35 kms since last noted in the LONG HAI area on 25th February.

Other units concerned in this summary have been generally stationary.

SIGNIFICANT ACTIVITY

Unit activities in the area have been mainly concerned with resupply and recruiting.

UNIT LOCATIONS

HQ NVA 74th ARTY REGT

On 27th February approximately 42 kms NW of NUI DAT. No further change since that time.

HQ NVA 33 REGT

On 12th March 70 situated central BINH TUY province.

HQ VC 274 REGT

On 11th March approximately 30 tans NNW of NUI DAT.

HQ 1 BN VC 274 REGT

Last noted location on 18th February when 30kms NW of NUI DAT.

HQ 2 BN VC 274 REGT

Last noted location on 3rd March when 27 tans east of BIEN HOA.

HQ 3 BN VC 274 REGT

Nothing heard since 15th December 69 when located approximately 26 kms ENE of NUI DAT.

HQ VC D440 ILOCAL FORCE BN

On 9th March located 15 kms north of NUI DAT.

HQ VC D445 LOCAL FORCE BN

On 12 March approximately 27 kms ESE of NUI DAT and 1 km distant from the shore line.

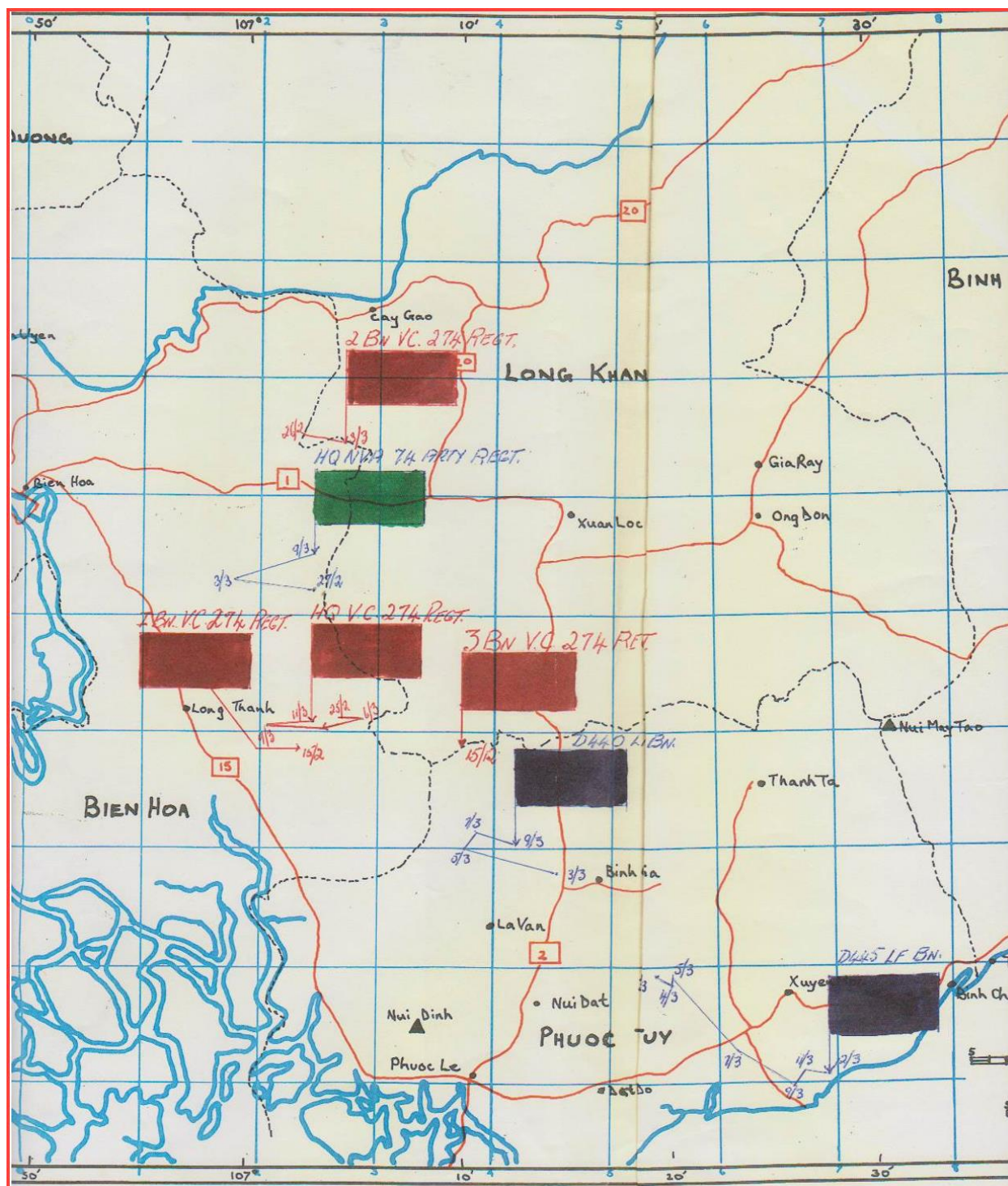


Figure 503: Map Summary 6 - 13 Mar 70 #1

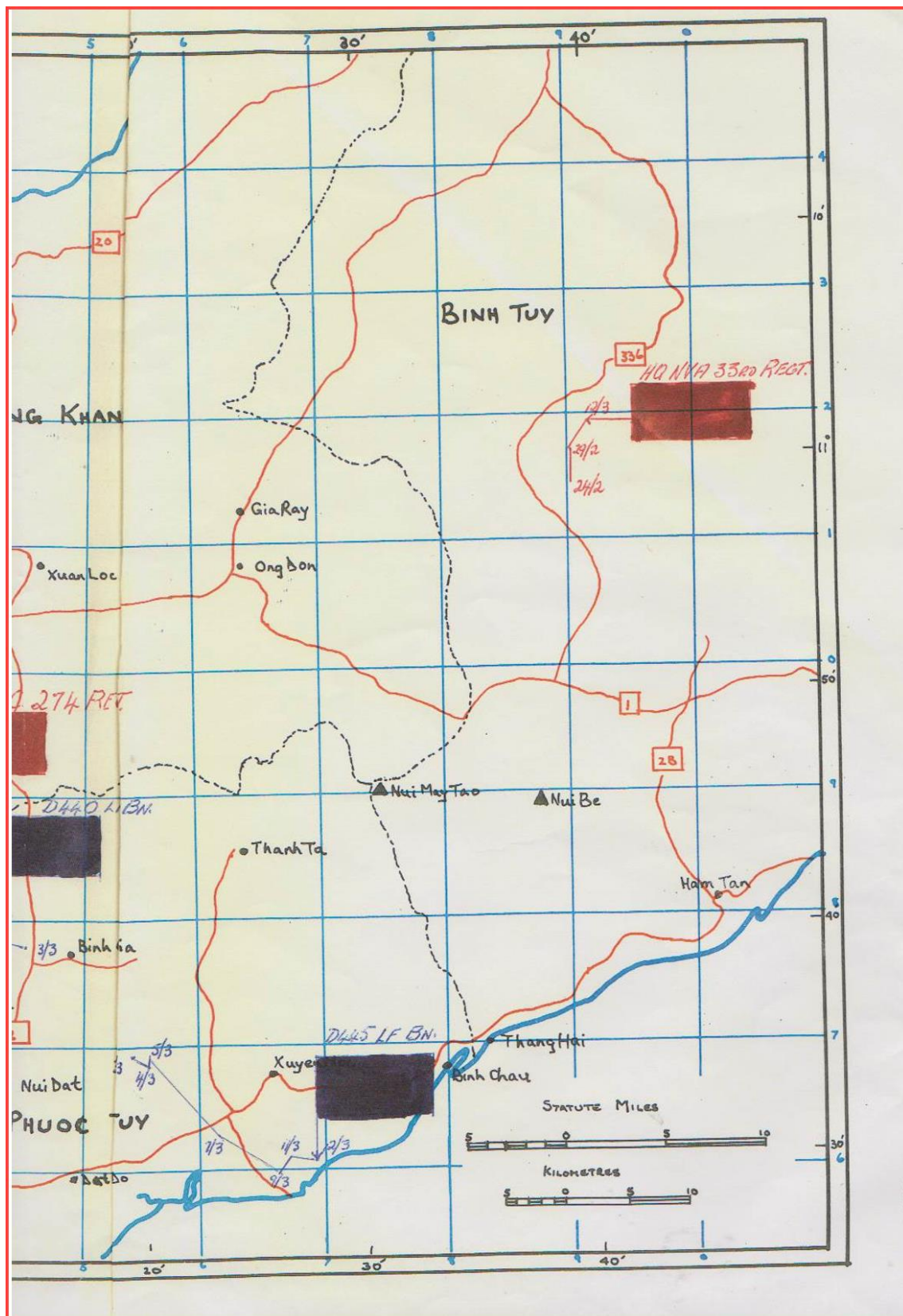


Figure 504: Map Summary 6 - 13 Mar 70 #2



53.2.3.3 13 – 20 Mar 70



Figure 505: Summary of Activities 13 – 20 Mar 70

SIGNIFICANT DEVELOPMENTS

On 17th March D445 Battalion was positioned, at co-ordinate YS542729 after covering 36 kms from its 12 March location.

On 18th March D440 Battalion was located at YS 402829. This unit has been very active in the NW region of PHUOC TUY province. It is 3 kms from its 9th March location.

UNIT ACTIVITY

The main activity has been concerned with the NVA 33rd Regiment. Daily reports indicate that this unit is at present concerned with enemy activity and the protection of their supply dumps.

UNIT LOCATIONS

HQ NVA 74th ARTY Regt

On 10 th March approx 45 kms NW of NUI DAT.

HQ NVA 33 REGT

On 18th March situated central BINH TUY province.

HQ VC 274 REGT

On 11th March approx 30 kms NNW of NUI DAT.

HQ 1 BN VC 274 REGT

Last noted location on 18th February when 30 kms NW of NUI DAT.

HQ 2 BN VC 274 REGT

On 18th March located 24 kms ENE of BIEN HOA.

HQ 3 BN VC 274 REGT

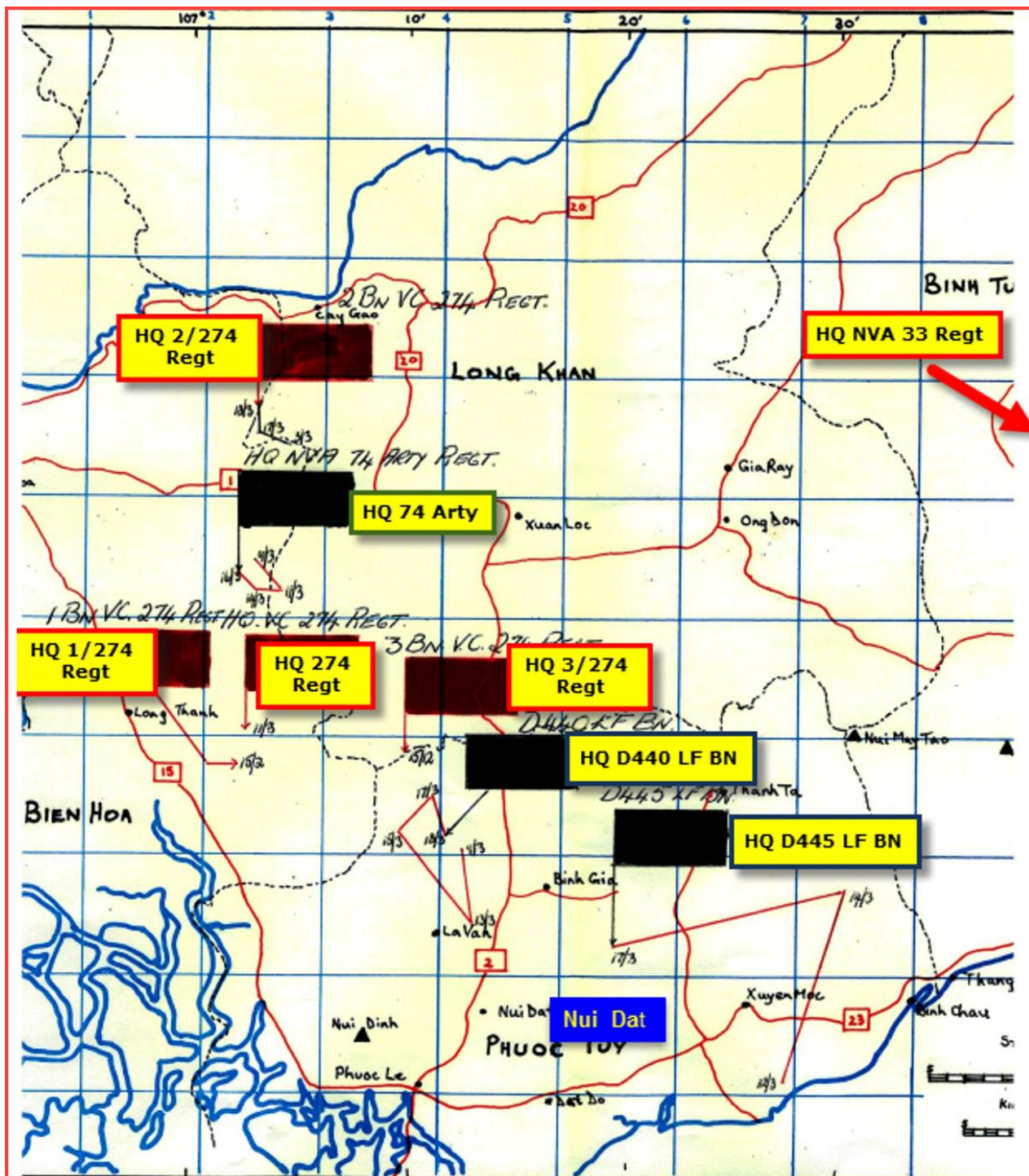
Nothing heard since 15th December when located approx 26 kms ENE of NUI DAT.

HQ VC D440 LOCAL FORCE BN

On 18th March located 18 kms NNW of NUI DAT.

HQ VC D445 LOCAL FORCE BN

On 17th March approx 11 kms NE of NUI DAT.



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53.2.4 Troop VC/NVA Activities Summaries Consolidation

A consolidation of the Troop Summaries of VC and NVA Military Activities in Bien Hoa, Long Khanh and Phuoc Tuy Provinces covering the period 20 February to 20 March is as follows⁸³⁴:

20 February – 5 March

Significant Redeployments

On 3 March, D445 Local Force Battalion was fixed by ARDF in the vicinity of YS546692 – approximately 18 kms NNE of its 21 February location.

On 3 March, D440 Local Force Battalion was fixed by ARDF in the vicinity of YS460775, approximately four kms east of its 14 February location. On 5 March it was fixed by ARDF in the vicinity of YS370800, approximately nine kms west of its 3 March location.

Significant Activity

Information received during the last period indicates that the units of D445 and 440 Local Force Battalion are decreasing their activities in order to build up their supplies and reorganise for a forthcoming attack.

The Chiefs of Staff have been instructing their Regimental Commanders to cut down on fire power and aim toward building up ammunition and supplies and continue stepping up recruiting and training of new comrades.

6 – 13 March

Significant Redeployments

On 9 March, D440 Local Force Battalion was located at co-ordinate YS423807. This battalion has been very mobile, and at present is approximately 5 kms east of its 3 March location.

D445 Local Force Battalion was situated in the vicinity of co-ordinate YS693614 on 12 March. This unit is now 15 kms SE of its 3 March location and has moved 35 kms since last noted in the LONG HAI area on 25 February.

Other units concerned in this summary have been generally stationary.

Significant Activity

Unit activities in the area have been mainly concerned with resupply and recruiting.

13 - 20 March

Significant Redeployments

On 17 March, D445 Battalion was positioned at co-ordinate YS542729 after covering 36 kms from its 12 March location.

On 18 March D440 Battalion was located at YS402829. This unit has been very active in the NW region of PHUOC TUY Province. It is 3 kms from its 9 March location.

Unit Activity

The main activity has been concerned with the NVA 33rd Regt. Daily reports indicated that his unit is at present concerned with enemy activity and the protection of their supply dumps.

⁸³⁴ Ibid.

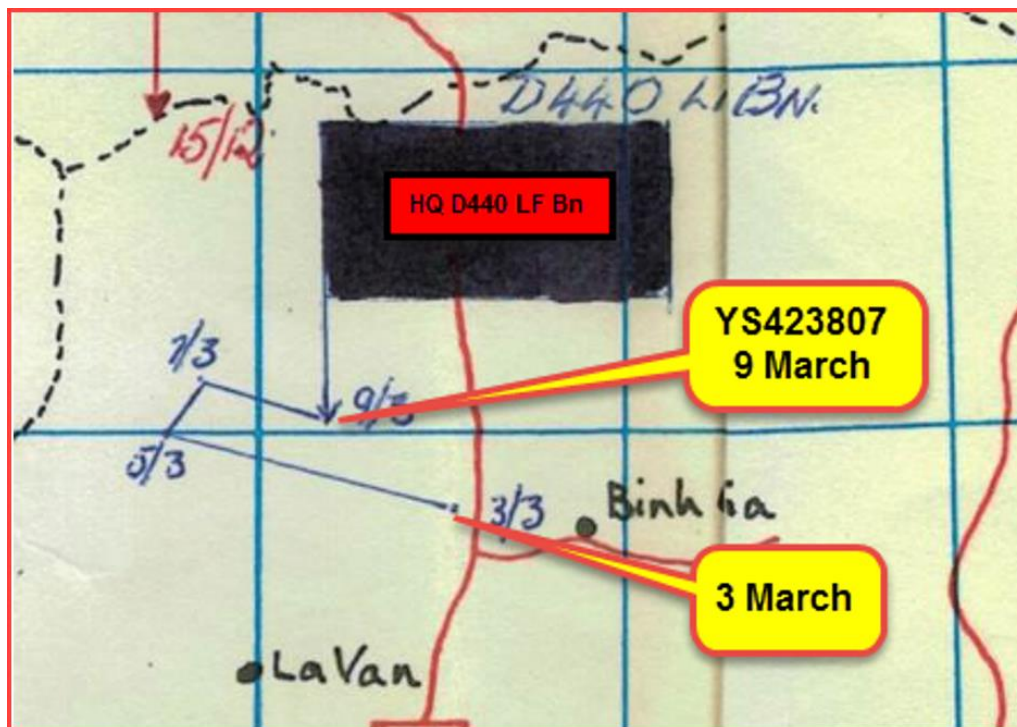
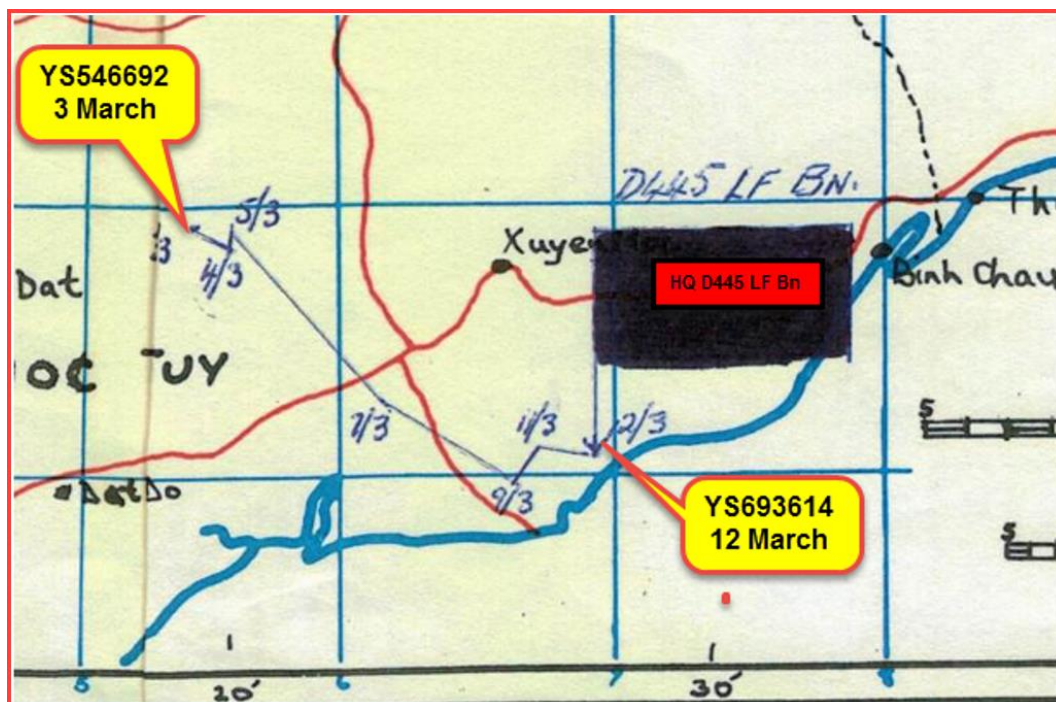
Figure 507: D440 Fixes⁸³⁵

Figure 508: D445 Fixes

⁸³⁵ Ibid. Map enlarged.

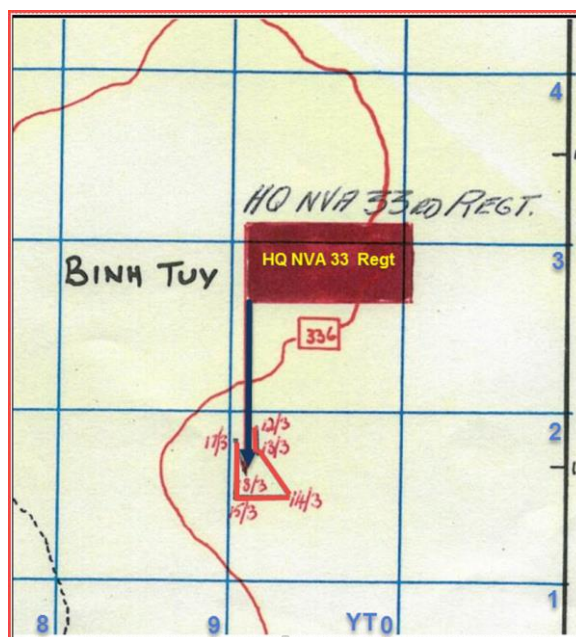


Figure 509: Map Enlargement - HQ NVA 33 Regt

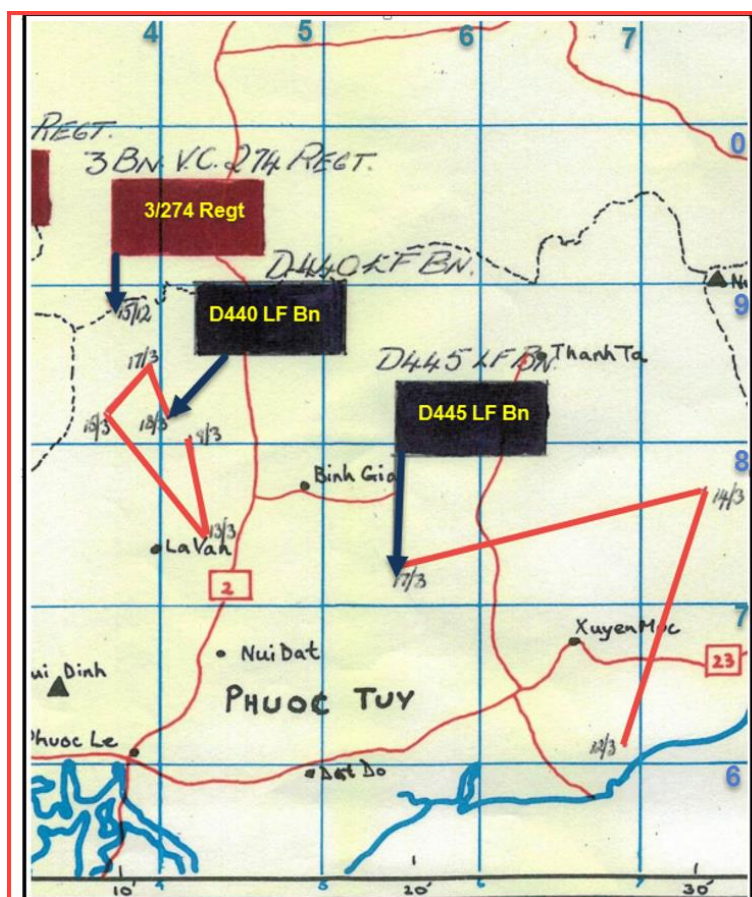


Figure 510: Map enlargement - 3/274 Regt, D440 and D445 LF Bn



53.2.5 Operation TOWNSVILLE

Operation TOWNSVILLE was a reconnaissance-in-force mission conducted in AO Auckland by 6RAR/NZ in the north-east of Phuoc Tuy province during the period 24 March to 23 April. There are several different accounts of this operation.

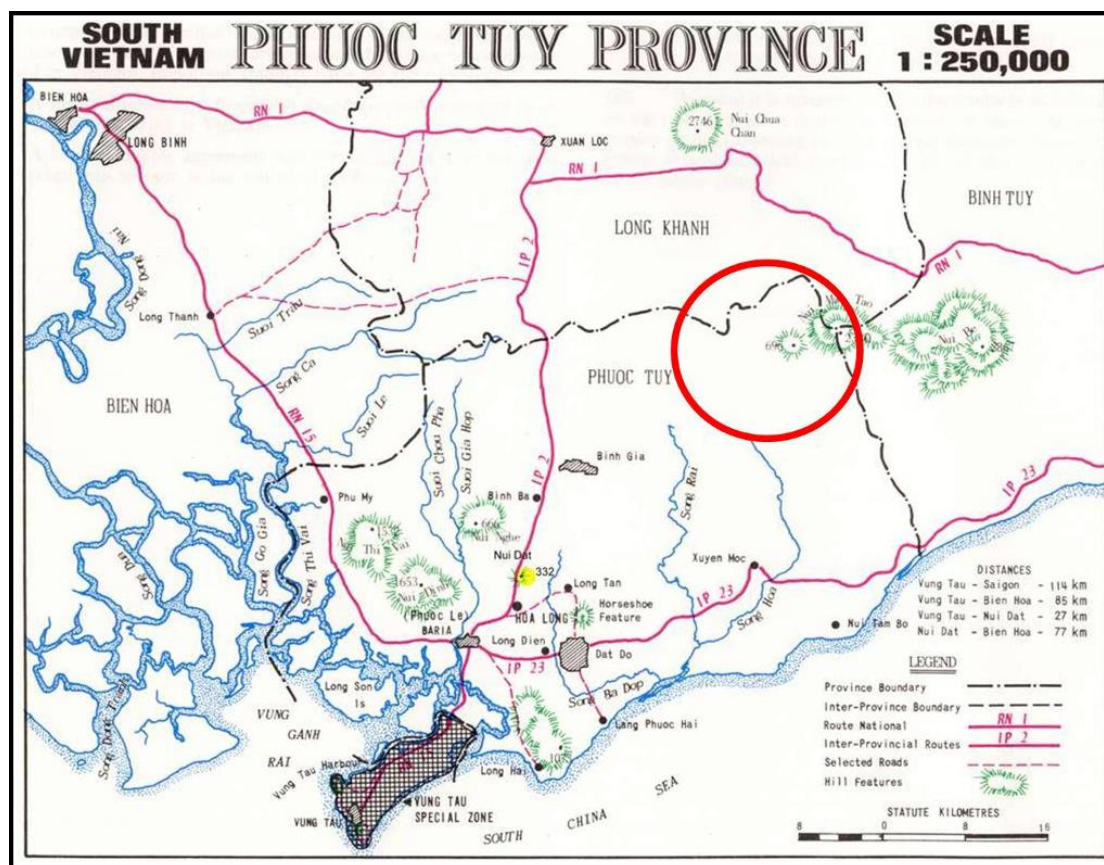


Figure 511: Operation TOWNSVILLE AO

Extract from the Australian Army Official History⁸³⁶:

For two weeks the Task Force Signals Intelligence monitored the enemy headquarters radio transmissions and fixed the location accurately in dense jungle. The enemy radio continued to transmit as the battalion closed in on the position. On 8 April, two rifle companies had fleeting contacts with the enemy, who escaped in great haste, leaving behind valuable documents. The NZ soldiers of V Company found radio aerial leads 'still swinging' after the operators fled, carrying their radio sets: A Morse key was seized together with several enemy 'one-time' cipher pads. The cipher pads were considered 'the most valuable documents ever captured by the task force, providing a key to Viet Cong ciphers.'

Brigadier Weir recognised the value of this find and had the cipher pads delivered directly to the intelligence section of MACV headquarters in Saigon. Several days later, General Abrams, COMUSMACV, told him personally that their capture was a 'real intelligence coup' that was providing invaluable information about the enemy. Unfortunately the matter had to remain highly classified, so

⁸³⁶ Extracts from *Fighting to the Finish The Australian Army and the Vietnam War 1968 - 1975* by Ashley Ekins with Ian McNeil > Allen & Unwin in association with the Australian War Memorial, page 402.



Weir was unable to share the success with the soldiers of 6RAR. The enemy was unaware of the capture of the pads and continued to use the compromised codes for some time.

Some later suggested that the information gained may even have influenced the decision to launch the large-scale 'incursion' by ARVN and US forces into communist sanctuary areas in Cambodia in late April.

Extracts from the book *A Duty Done*⁸³⁷:

The Ambush that helped to change the direction of the War

On 23 March, 6RAR/NZ deployed on its last operation back to the north east of the Province, this time in search of D445 VC Battalion. In early April however, 1ATF Signals Intelligence advised that the main enemy headquarters in the Province, HQ Ba Long, was in the parish and was continuing to transmit radio traffic despite the presence of 6RAR/NZ companies. By 8 April, A Company (Maj PL Belt) and D Company (Maj RM Gill) had been deployed by helicopter to blocking positions in the east and B Company (Maj MJ Harris) to the north. V Company (Maj LJ Lynch) was to patrol from the west to flush out this important enemy HQ.

At 12 noon on 8 April, 3 Platoon V Company (Lt HK Pope) had approached a suspected enemy camp and a patrol was sent forward to investigate. There was no enemy sentry and the patrol made contact with a Platoon size group which immediately fled northwest. The enemy was in fact the command group of HQ Ba Long and in their haste to avoid capture had left HF Radio aerials dangling from a tree and a Morse Key, though the radio itself had been carried away.

Meanwhile B Company was in the middle of a resupply when it heard the contact to its south east and two Platoons were sent to ambush likely withdrawal routes. 6 Platoon (Lt L MacLean) dropped their packs and ran to a position previously sited in savannah country covering a track emerging from the jungle. After a few minutes a group of enemy appeared at the jungle's edge and cautiously moved forward into the ambush which was initiated when it was thought the command group had entered the killing ground. The contact report simply says: "10-15 VC contacted. Result: 3 VC KIA, 2 VC WIA; 1 AK 47, 1 SMG, 1 K54 pistol, quantity of documents, 2 US compasses and 1 transistor radio captured".

The captured documents were quickly retrieved by an APC and delivered to the Intelligence Officer (Capt MF Fairhead) at FSPB Tiger who immediately recognised that they were radio code books, ie 'One Time Pads'⁸³⁸. He quickly contacted the HQ 1ATF Intelligence Officer (Capt RJ Wickham) on the secure (scrambled) radio who in turn came to the FSPB in an Iroquois Helicopter and flew the codes direct to the US Military Assistance Command's (USMACV) Document Exploitation Centre in Saigon.

A minute sent a few weeks later from the USMACV's Intelligence Branch to the Commander Australian Forces Vietnam (Maj Gen CAE Fraser) included: "Of special note were documents of a cryptologic (sic) nature which were most valuable and have caused a decided impact on the enemy". In fact senior US commanders, including the Commander USMACV (General CW Abrams) were known to refer to it as "the biggest intelligence coup of the war".

⁸³⁷ *A Duty Done. A History of the Royal Australian Regiment in the Vietnam War 1965-1972* by Lieutenant Colonel (Retd) Fred Fairhead . Published by The Royal Australian Regiment Association SA Inc. Page 119.

⁸³⁸ The One Time Pad was a type of encryption which if used correctly, was proven to be impossible to decipher. Each character from the 'plain text' (original clear text) was encrypted by the addition of character from a secret random pad (key) of the same length as the plain text, ie a 'Substitution Cipher', resulting in a 'cipher text'. If the key is random, is never reused in whole or part, and kept secret, the cipher text will be impossible to decrypt or break without knowing the key. One Time Pads were also used by the Australian Army with HF Radios and in Vietnam, by the SAS Squadrons. Being a manual system and time consuming, use of One Time Pads was discontinued when portable mechanical ciphers, eg laptop computers, were introduced.



Extract from 6RAR Association Web Page⁸³⁹:

THE SIXTH BATTALION

*(An address given by MajGen David Butler AO, DSO
on the occasion of the Battalion's 41st birthday, 6th June 2006,
during the Dedication of a Commemorative Plaque to 6 RAR,
at the Australian War Memorial, Canberra)*

...The joint effort of one NZ company with one of our Australian companies, in the skilful capture of the One Time Pad, the wireless code, of HQ Ba Long Province, was held by General Abrams to be one of the intelligence coups of the war...

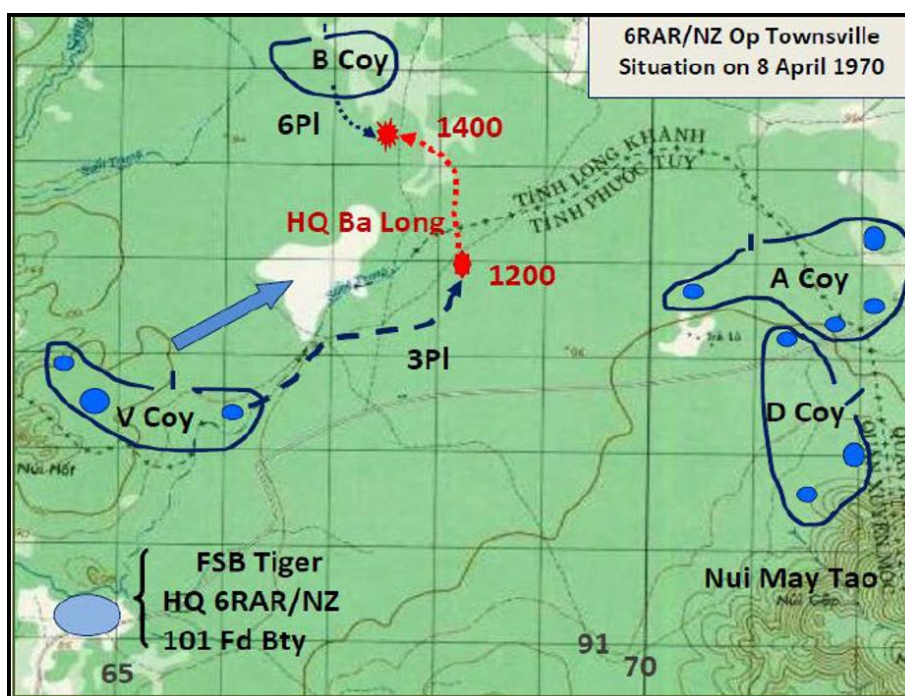


Figure 512: Operation Townsville – 6RAR/NZ

53.2.6 547 Sig Tp Recollections

53.2.6.1 Adrian Bishop

Adrian Bishop has a slightly different recollection of the capture and forwarding of the documents.⁸⁴⁰

I have no recollection of significant documents being captured during Operation Marsden in 1969 (that may well have happened). [See Part 5 – Op Marsden]

Could I just set the record straight on this issue of the capture of Keymat and other documents by 6RAR?

⁸³⁹ <http://www.6rarassociation.com/commemplaque.htm>

⁸⁴⁰ Extracted from various emails from Adrian to the group preparing the Meritorious Unit Citation Tribunal responses.



The real treasure trove was captured by 6RAR on 8 April 1970 in the May Tao Mountains.

The situation leading up to this was as follows:

In February – and especially March 1970 - the Task Force had been putting the VC Main Force units in Phuoc Tuy under real pressure. An unusual situation had developed whereby both D445 and 274 Regiment were not able to communicate in high grade cypher and were forced to use their code matrixes. The reason for that was unclear -- the responsibility to provide an on-going supply of OTP Keymat from COSVN in Cambodia fell to 84 Rear Services Group --- either they were having problems maintaining supply due to US operations or there were health issues with the high grade cypher clerks in Phuoc Tuy – or whatever.

So, on a daily basis, HQ 1ATF was getting a continuous stream of high quality ARDF fixes and translations of VC radio traffic from 547 Sig Troop.

Such was the military pressure being applied by 1ATF and US bombing based on ARDF fixes that at one stage, a 274 battalion commander communicated to his HQ that his troops were forced “to eat leaves” to survive.

In addition, 1ATF operations in the Minh Dam Secret Zone (Long Hais) had put D445 under such pressure that they could no longer rely on that area being secure.

So, by the beginning of April 1970, we had both 274 Regiment and D445 seeking refuge in the May Tao Mountains in order to regroup... but still without high grade ciphers.

This led to the unusual situation whereby - for the first time during the war - Phuoc Tuy province was effectively “pacified”. In fact, people COULD drive around urban and rural areas in Phuoc Tuy without the danger of being attacked.

So the 1ATF HQ stepped up 6RAR operations in the May Taos and, on 8 April, they hit a VC unit who abandoned all their cipher/code/keymat material in order to be able to flee with their radios.

The one time pads etc soon arrived in the operations room at 547 Sig Tp and we started sorting through the documents. What was impressive about this capture was that not only did we have the OTP keys but we also had the actual codebook which converts Vietnamese into numbers before being enciphered with OTP.

The next morning, the US Liaison officer arrived from SSO FFV and we briefed him on the data and showed it all to him. For the remainder of that day Hugh Nichols and I had a few conversations via Opscomm with the DSD Liaison Officer Kevin Condon.

It was very quickly made clear to us that we must hand over the documents to the US side so that they could send them to NSA. (They may have been given to CDEC⁸⁴¹ but that would have been for a fleeting moment). The documents went to NSA for exploitation.

And that was the correct course of action. Even if you have the OTP and the codebook you still need to match that up with the high grade cipher YOU HAVE ALREADY INTERCEPTED - and then a very complex task of key-stripping needs to occur --- that could only have been done at NSA

The other vital aspect of this issue is that NSA for the first time had reams of pure key in their possession, that is key without the additive - which means that they could at least do computer analysis to possibly determine how the key was generated.

⁸⁴¹ The Combined Documentation Exploitation Center (CDEC) was created in October 1966 under the MACV Assistant Chief of Staff for Intelligence (J-2), with the mission of receiving and exploiting captured enemy documents as a source of military intelligence for assessments and planning.



We were never told exactly what successes NSA had with their research but the period from February to May 1970 was an excellent period of work for 547 as was all the work during our deployment in SVN

One issue that puzzled us at the time was that the sheer volume of material that 6RAR captured was well over and above what a single regiment or battalion would have needed for their next several months of operations so it is possible that 6RAR actually hit a small 84 Rear Services Team on their way to resupply VC units in the May Taos ... but we were never able to confirm any of that.

As a footnote to all of this, the CO 6RAR was so impressed with the work of 547 Sig Troop that he gave the Troop a VC Morse key as a souvenir. In addition, he gave the Troop a captured AK-47.

53.2.6.2 Errol Poultney

Errol Poultney, the Troop OC at the time, also reported⁸⁴²:

The capture of OTPs in the May Tao by 6RAR was part of the initial contact in Op Townsville which went on to be probably one of the most successful ops conducted by 1ATF which led 6RAR into a major underground complex of VC logistics, medical and storage facilities. This led on to many other follow up OPS.

Lt Col David Butler CO 6RAR was to my mind the most thoughtful and practical of the commanders who had access to 547 product – he asked all the right questions and used the information cleverly. He was a strong fan of 547 and its product. In recognition of this point he arranged for the VC morse key captured with the OTP's to be inscribed with a brass plaque in appreciation and presented to 547 Sig Tp – I believe this (hopefully) sits in the history display at Cabarlah!!

With regard to OTP's. They arrived to me from the Div Int Unit (or SO2 Int ?) in a rubberised canvas bag with draw string top about the size of a sleeping bag roll. After speaking to Brig Weir we attempted to make sense of the 'bag of gold' that we had in our hands – the naive plot was to try and use the information that we had to join the VC Comms and attempt a deception scheme. The primary difficulty was to find a start point within the mass of OTP's – we just did not have the resources to find even a start point and our enthusiasm was overridden when, within hours, there was an edict from US sigint sources to do nothing and the whole lot was collected by a US special courier within 24 hours. I do not believe that Comd 1 ATF had a hand in that decision as he was most upset that the captured documents were whisked away. I believe that DODSPECREP in MACV instigated the swoop!

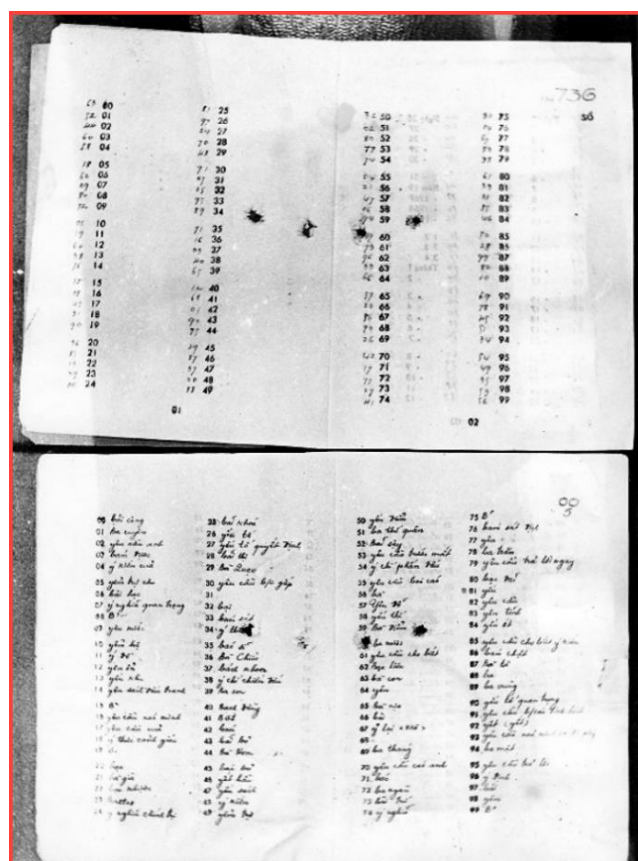
Anyhow they were whisked off to NSA and I do believe that probably 12 months later there was some feedback to 547 but of course it was all history then.

With regard to the 'eating leaves' messages there was another aspect to that period. Some messages also indicated that they had only one or two rounds of ammo per person. This was an indication of the success of the US cross border operations in early 1970 that were directed at the Parrots Beak (HQ COSVN) area and the Ho Chi Minh trail. There was a major impact on the VC/NVA supply lines of communications affecting all the essentials including personnel. We were fortunate to have a very detailed briefing on these ops by Capt Al Rosseau the US Army LO from Long Binh who called each day to get daily reports.

⁸⁴² Email to Bob Hartley.



Figure 513: Example Code Book #1

Figure 514: Example Code Book #2⁸⁴³

⁸⁴³ Note bullet holes in book. Books held at 7 Sig Regt.



53.2.7 6 RAR/NZ Appreciation

As mentioned above, a lot of useful equipment and documents were captured by 6RAR/NZ. In appreciation of the Troop's assistance in the operation, the Battalion Commander presented the Troop with a Morse key that they had captured suitably inscribed.



Figure 515: Morse key plaque and inscription⁸⁴⁴

⁸⁴⁴ The Morse key is held at 7 Sig Regt.



CHAPTER 54 – APRIL 1970

54.1 Personnel

54.1.1 Arrivals and Departures

In April there were two arrivals and two departures.

Arrivals

8 April

Warrant Officer Frank Watkins

9 April

Sergeant Norman Gilbert

Departures

2 April

Sergeant Daryl Houghton

23 April

Signalman Les Wotherspoon

54.1.2 Employment Areas

Frank Watkins went into the Tech Main Section and Norm Gilbert into SSL.

54.1.3 Q AFV Monthly Strength Return

There was no change to the Establishment Strength of the Troop in April⁸⁴⁵:

54.2 Operations

54.2.1 547 Sig Tp Operation Report for April 1970

The 547 Sig Tp Op Report for Apr 70⁸⁴⁶ stated:

S E C R E T SPOKE SIGS407

FOR M18. OP REPORT 1-30 APR 70

1. WATCH HOURS NO CHANGE.

2. COVER RETURN AS AT 302400H APR

A. PRIORITY COVER. (ALL VCMB)

<i>1. 05437</i>	<i>9.J2303</i>	<i>17.J0459</i>
<i>2. 05423</i>	<i>10.05448</i>	<i>18.J0496</i>
<i>3. 05443</i>	<i>11.05449</i>	<i>19.N4847</i>

⁸⁴⁵ <http://www.awm.gov.au/collection/AWM98/R723/1/13/5/>

⁸⁴⁶ DSD Declassified, 547 Sig Tp in Vietnam (tranche2)..



4. 00831	12.00667	20.00679
5. 05447	13.05445	21.07805
6. 05451	14.J1816	
7. 05442	15.00835	
8. J0772	16.00843	

B. DEV GROUPS

1. VCMB 00897	4. VCMB J1963	7. VCMB J2307	11. VCMB J2322
2. VCMB J0938	5. VCMB J2062	8. VCMB J2339	12. VCMB J239
3. VCMB J1078	6. VCMB J2291	9. VCMB J2320	13. VCXB J80

3. ARDF. TOTAL FIXES SIXTY SIX (66)

A. GRADINGS. 25 GOOD CMM 32 FAIR CMM
ONE POOR CMM 8 CUTS

B. FLYING TIME. TOTAL FLYING TIME 131 HRS. 15 MNS.
(INCL 2HRS. 50 MIN TRG FLT)

W02 MC CARTNEY 32/73 HRS TOTAL
SGT. WILLIAMS 2:50/2:50 TOTAL
LCPL. DANSKIN 55HRS 30 MIN/155HRS TOTAL
SIG. POTTER 40HRS. 55 MIN/185 HRS.50 MIN TOTAL

C. MSN REDUCTION.

NIL MISSIONS ABORTED/REDUCED DUE WEATHER
THREE MISSIONS REDUCED BY ARDF MALFUCTION /SERVICE
TWO MISSIONS ABORTED DUE AIRCRAFT SERVICE/MALFUNCTION

D, GENERAL

[redacted]

SGT. D. WILLIAMS UNDERGOING TRAINING AT
THE MOMENT.

4. SHORT CELL. SYSTEM RECOMMENCED OPERATIONS

6. APR AFTER INSTALLATION OF NEW SONDE.
FOLLOWING RESULTS APPLY FOR APRIL CLN

A. FROM 6-30 APR SYSTEM OPERATED FOR
22 DAYS CMM THREE BEING ALLOWED FOR
SERVICE/MAINT AND OPERATOR REST.

B. TOTAL HOURS OF OPERATION 134HRS.

C. 636 TARGETS OFFERED FOR 418 RESULTS
ACHIEVED.

D. BEST DAY OF OPERATION 44 OFFERS FOR 36 RESULTS.

E. NEW OPERATOR (GILBERT AND GEHLE) NOW
SETTLED IN TO SYSTEM/LOCAL CONDITIONS.

5. FWD DET. FWD DET INITIATED 20-26APR
FOR DEPLOYMENT OF TF HQ TO FSB BOND⁸⁴⁷

⁸⁴⁷ Picken, Bruce. Fire Support Base Vietnam. Big Sky Publishing. Kindle Edition.



6. NO EFFORT MOUNTED AGAINST [redacted]
THIS MONTH.

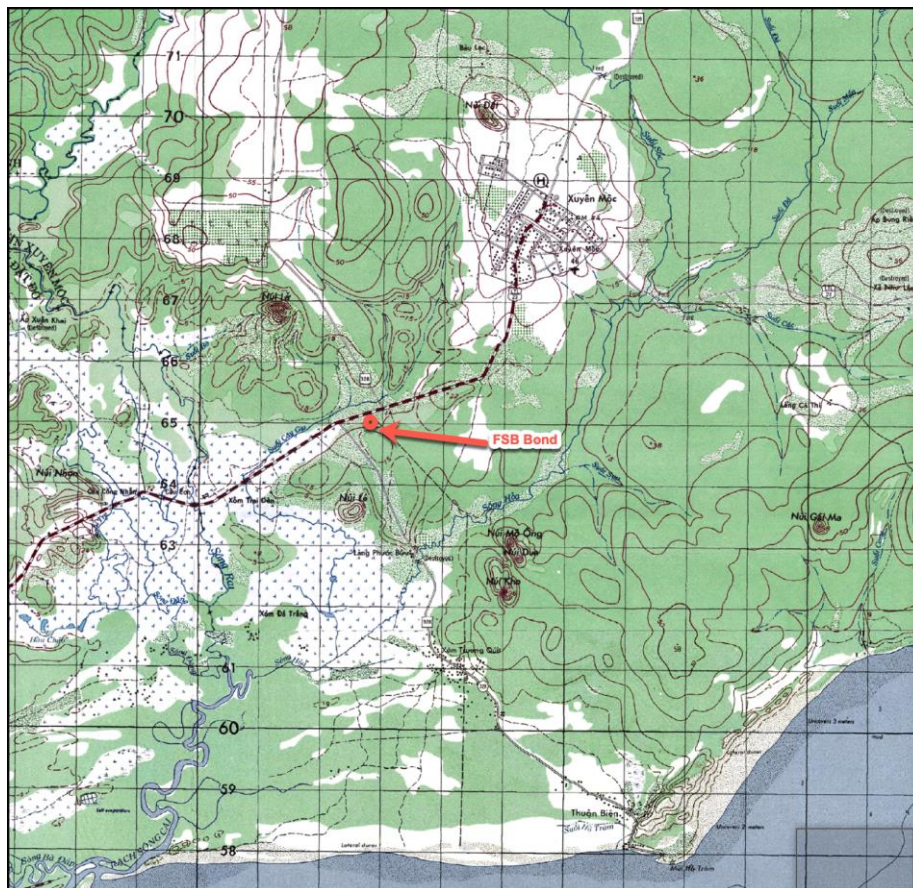


Figure 516: FSB Bond Location

54.2.2 ARDF Flying Hours

The total ARDF flying hours for the month were⁸⁴⁸:

Year	Month	Flying hours	Total Fixes	Good <1000mts	Fair 1-2000Mts	Poor >2000 Mts	Cut	Missions Lost	Remarks
1970	Apr	131.15	66	25	32	1	8	4	Incl 2.5 hrs trg

FSB Bond – YS 628650 set here from 20 to 26 April in AO Rainworth for 161 Field Battery RNZA and Artillery Tactical Forward Element in support of 8 RAR and 1 ATF with Task Force Commander and Tactical Headquarters; secured by A Company in APCs on 20 April, then B Company taking over their APCs. The base area was located 150 metres south of Route 23, 19 kilometres east south-east of Nui Dat, 4,400 metres south-west of Xuyen Moc and 300 metres from the intersection of Routes 23 and 328.

⁸⁴⁸ Compiled from MI8 Records held at ASD archives.



54.2.3 Troop VC/NVA Activities Summaries

The Troop Summary of Activities covering the period 21 March – 28 April 1970 contained the following⁸⁴⁹:

54.2.3.1 2. 1 Mar – 3 Apr 70

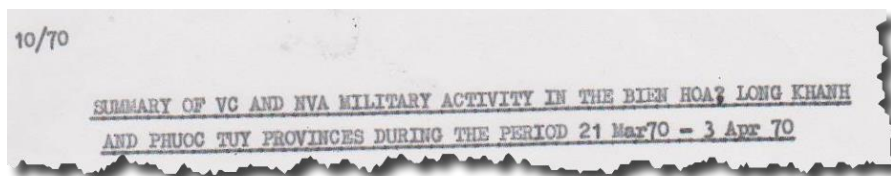


Figure 517: Summary of Activities 21 Mar - 3 Apr 70

SIGNIFICANT DEVELOPMENTS

By the 30 Mar 70, D445 LF Bn had travelled 27 Kms since 17 Mar 70, Location. This unit is at present situated at co-ordinate YS 524693 and reflects little activity.

On the 1 Apr 70, D440 LF Bn was located at co-ordinate YS 401821. Reports indicate increased activity from this unit was expected.

UNIT ACTIVITY

Intercepted messages are still mainly concerned with 33 NVA Regt. Their current role is reconnoitring, securing food storage points and transporting supplies.

UNIT LOCATIONS

HQ NVA 74th ARTY REGT

On 25 Mar located approx 44 Kms NW of NUI DAT along the LONG KHANH/BINH TUY Border Area.

HQ VC 274 REGT

On 27 Mar Located approx 25 Kms NW of NUI DAT.

HQ 1 Bn 274 REGT

Last noted location on 18 Feb 70, when 30 Kms NW of NUI DAT.

HQ 2 Bn 274 REGT

On 27 Mar located in the Northern area of the BIEN HOA/LONG KHANH Border Region.

HQ 3 Bn 274 REGT

Nothing heard since 15 Dec 69, when located approx 26 Kms ENE of NUI DAT.

HQ VC D440 LF Bn

On 1 Apr located 17 Kms NNW of NUI DAT.

⁸⁴⁹ ASD archives of 547 Sig Tp material.

[illegible]

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54.2.3.2 4 – 9 APR 70



Figure 519: Summary of Activities 4 -9 Apr 70

SIGNIFICANT DEVELOPMENTS

By the 9 Apr 70, D445 LF Bn has been operating in the vicinity of its previous location in Central PHUOC TUY Province, and still reflects little activity.

During the last week there were no reports of activity from D440 LF Bn. This unit is at present situated at co-ordinate YS 399788

UNIT ACTIVITY

Intercepted messages are mainly concerned with the NVA 33 Regt which is still maintaining its role of reconnaissance and defence of supply dumps.

UNIT LOCATIONS

1. HQ 274 ARTY REGT
On 25 Mar located approx 44 Kms NW of NUI DAT.
2. HQ NVA 33 REGT
On 17 April deployed in the Northern BINH TUY Province Area.
3. HQ VC 274 REGT
On 27 Mar Located approx 25 Kms NW of NUI DAT.
4. HQ 1 Bn 274 REGT
Last noted location 18 Feb 70, when 30 Km IN of NUI DAT.
5. HQ 2 Bn 274 REGT
On 27 Mar located in the Northern area of the BIEN HOA/LONG KHANH Border Region.
6. HQ 3 Bn 274 REGT
Nothing heard since 15 Dec 69» when located approx 26 Kms ENE of NUI DAT.
7. HQ VC 440 IF BN
On 8 Apr located 13 Kms NW of NUI DAT.
8. HQ VC 445 LF BN
On 8 Apr located 16 Kms E of NUI DAT.

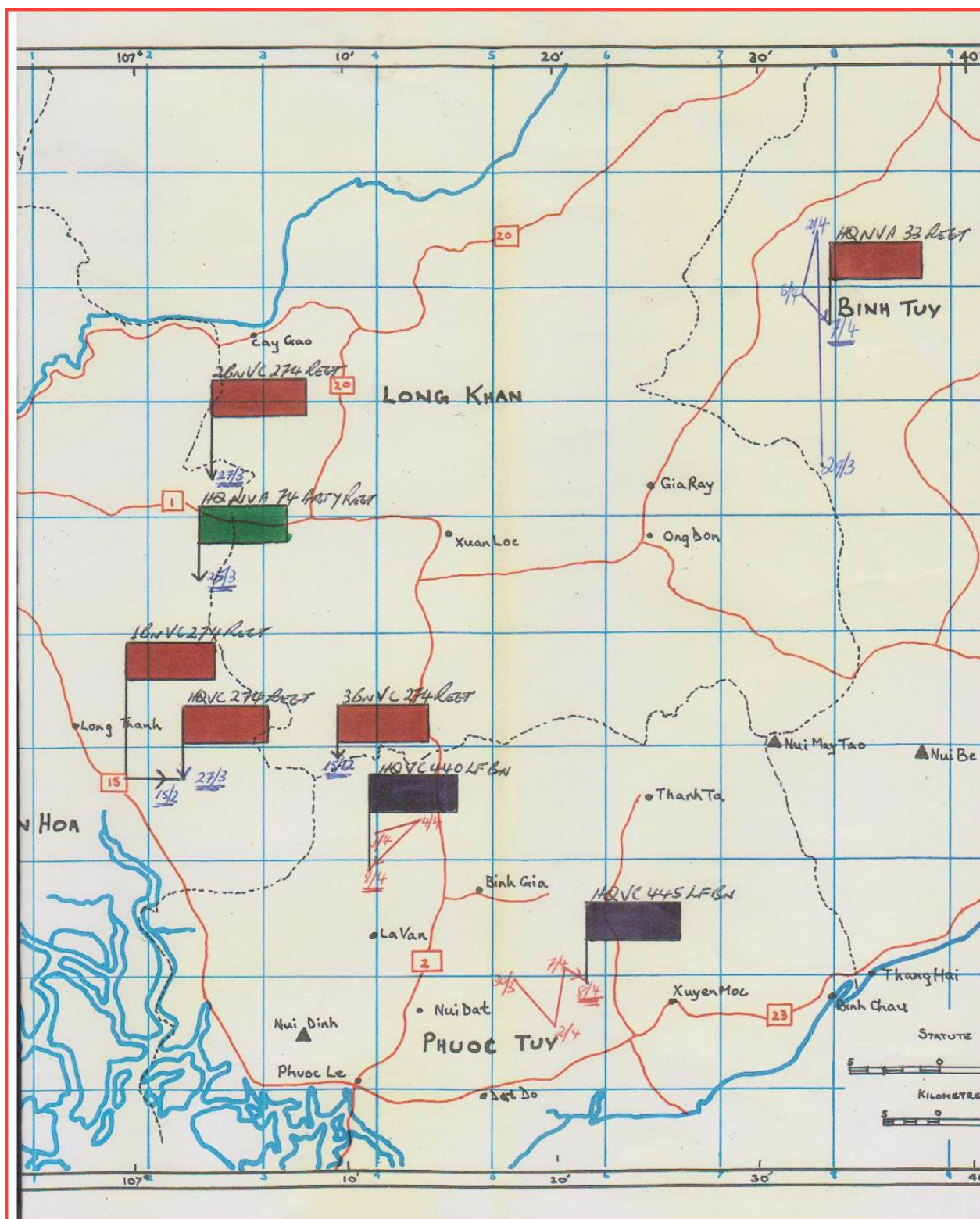


Figure 520: Map Summary 4 - 9 Apr 70



54.2.3.3 10 - 15 Apr 70

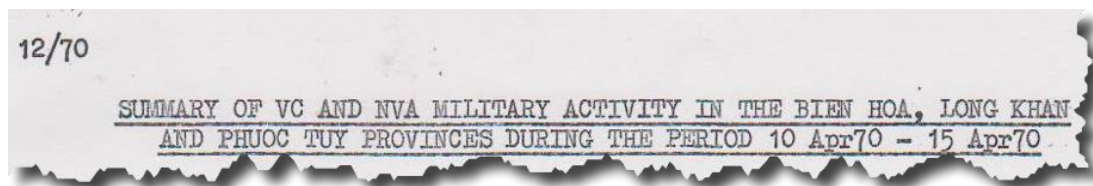


Figure 521: Summary of Activities 10 - 15 Apr 70

SIGNIFICANT DEVELOPMENTS

By 15 Apr 70, D445 LF Bn was operating in Northern PHUOC TUY Province, some 9 Kms NORTH of its 8 Apr 70 location.

During the last week the only activity reported, by D440 LF Bn has been a few contacts with ARVN forces.

SIGNIFICANT ACTIVITY

The NVA 33 Regt is still maintaining its role of reconnaissance and. defence of storage points.

UNIT LOCATIONS

1. HQ NVA 74 ARTY REGT

Last noted. 25 Mar 70, when approx 44 Km NW of NUI DAT»

2. HQ NVA 33 REGT

On 15 Apr 70, deployed, in Northern BINH TUY Province area, some 6 Kms NORTH of its 7 Apr 70 location.

3. HQ VC 274 REGT

Last noted on 27 Mar 70, when approx 25 Kms NW of NUI DAT.

4. HQ 1 Bn VC 274 REGT

Last noted on 18 Feb 70, when 30 Kms NW of NUI DAT.

5. HQ 2 Bn VC 274 REGT

Last noted on 27 Mar 70, when located in Northern area of BIEN HOA/LONG KHAN Border Region.

6. HQ 3 Bn VC 274 REGT

Nothing heard since 15 Dec 69, when approx 26 Kms ENE of NUI DAT.

7. HQ VC D440 LF Bn

On 15 Apr 70, located approx 11 Kms NW of NUI DAT.

8. HQ VC D445 LF Bn

On 15 Apr 70, located approx 18 Kms NE of NUI DAT, in Northern PHUOC TUY Province.

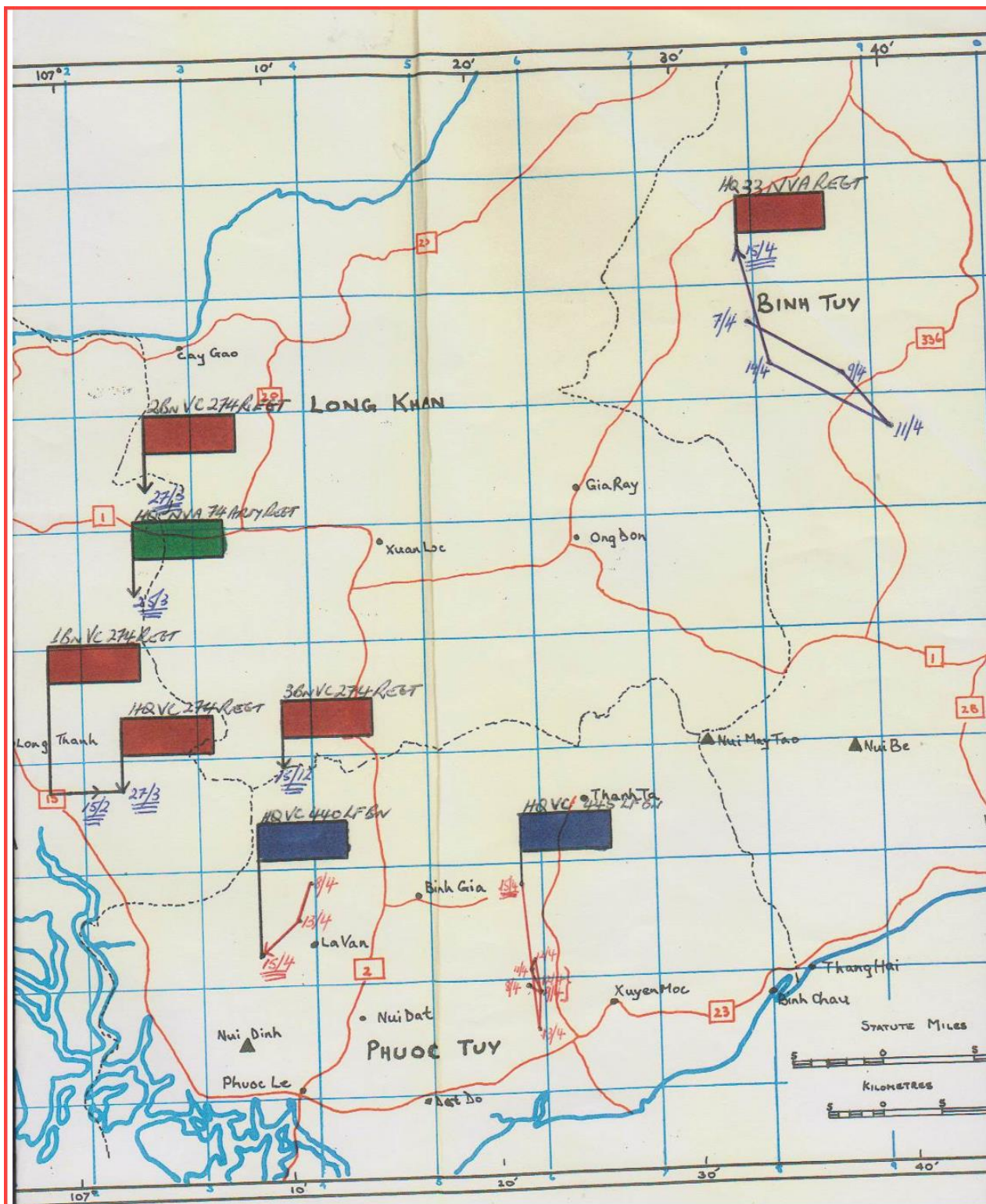


Figure 522: Map Summary 10 - 15 Apr 70



54.2.3.4 16 – 21 Apr 70

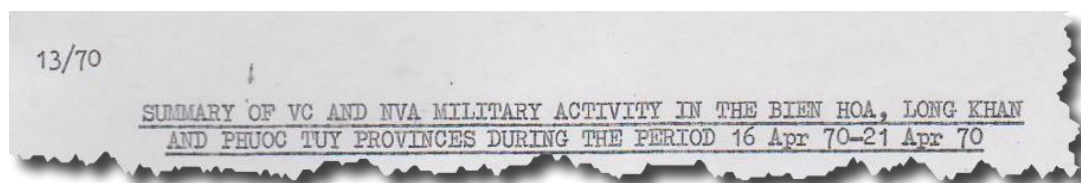


Figure 523: Summary of Activities 16 - 21 Apr 70

SIGNIFICANT DEVELOPMENTS

By 21 Apr 70, D440 LF Bn was operating in Northern Central PHUOC TUY Province, approx 10 Kms NNE of its 15/Apr 70 location. It has been harassed, by air strikes and contacts with ARVN units.

By 20 Apr 70, D445 LF Bn was in North Eastern PHUOC TUY Province, approx 9 Kms SOUTH of its 15 Apr 70 location. It has had contacts with Aust units and in one incident valuable documents relating to C/A were captured

SIGNIFICANT ACTIVITY

The NVA 33 Regt whilst still on reconnaissance and defence duties, appears to be preparing for increased activity.

UNIT LOCATIONS

1. HQ NVA 74 ARTY REGT
Last noted 25 Mar 70, when approx 44 Kms NW of NUI DAT.
2. HQ NVA 33 REGT
On 16 Apr 70, deployed in Northern BINH TUY Province, approx 5 Kms SOUTH of its 15 Apr 70 location.
3. HQ VC 274 REGT
On 22 Apr 70, located 32 Kms NW of NUI DAT, approx 4 Kms NORTH of its 27 Mar 70 location.
4. HQ 1 BN VC 274 REGT
Last noted on 18 Feb 70, when 30 Kms NW of NUI DAT.
5. HQ 2 BN VC 274 REGT
Last noted on 27 Mar 70, when located in Northern area of BIEN HOA/ LONG KHAN Border Region.
6. HQ 3 BN VC 274 REGT
Nothing heard since 15 Dec 69, when approx 26 Kms ENE of NUI DAT.
7. HQ VC D440 LF BN
On 21 Apr 70, located approx 15 Kms NNW of NUI DAT.
8. HQ VC D 45 LF BN
On 20 Apr 10, located approx 14 Kms ENE of NUI DAT.

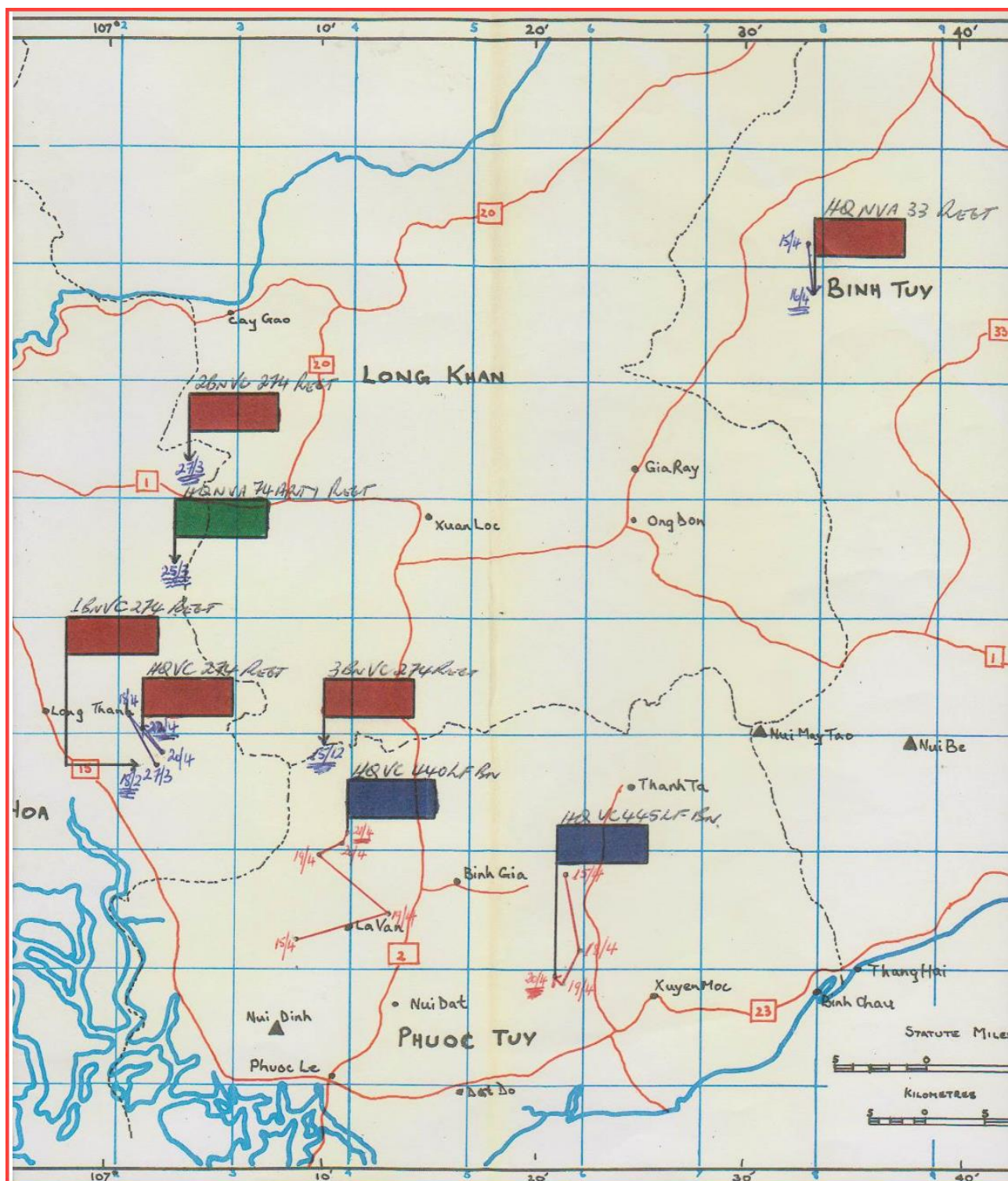


Figure 524: Map Summary 16 - 21 Apr 70



54.2.3.5 22 – 28 Apr 70

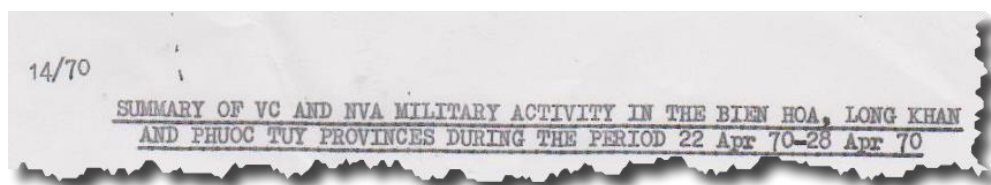


Figure 525: Summary of Activities 22 - 28 Apr 70

SIGNIFICANT DEVELOPMENTS

By 27 Apr 70, D440 LF Bn was operating in Northern Central PHUOC TUY Province, approx 1 Km SOUTH of its 21 Apr 70 location. Very little activity was noted from this unit.

By 28 Apr 70, D 45 LF Bn was operating in Southern PHUOC TUY Province approx 17 Kms SSW of its 20 Apr 70 location.

SIGNIFICANT ACTIVITY

The NVA 33 Regt was still engaged in moving stores and equipment and carrying out reconnaissance missions. The 3 and 4 Coys of the 3rd Bn of this Regt suffered heavy casualties from B-52 strikes, necessitating the move of approx 250 men from the Regt HQ.

UNIT LOCATIONS

1. HQ NVA 74 ARTY REGT

On 24 Apr 70, located approx 38 Kms NNW of NUI DAT, some 6 Kms SSE of its 25 Mar 70 location.

2. HQ NVA 33 REGT

On 26 Apr 70, deployed in Northern BINH TUY Province Area, approx 18 Kms SE of its 16 Apr 70 location.

3. HQ VC 274 REGT

No change from 22 Apr 70, when 32 Kms NW of NUI DAT.

4. HQ 1 BN VC 274 REGT

Last noted on 18 Feb 70, when 30 Kms NW of NUI DAT.

5. HQ 2 BN VC 274 REGT

Last noted on 27 Mar 70, when located in Northern area of BIEN HOA LONG KHAN Border Region.

6. HQ 3 BN VC 274 REGT

Nothing heard since 15 Dec 69, when approx 26 Kms ENE of NUI DAT.

7. HQ VC D440 LF BN

On 27 Apr 70, located approx 14 Kms NNW of NUI DAT.

8. HQ VC D445 LF BN

On 28 Apr 70, located approx 13 Kms SSE of NUI DAT.

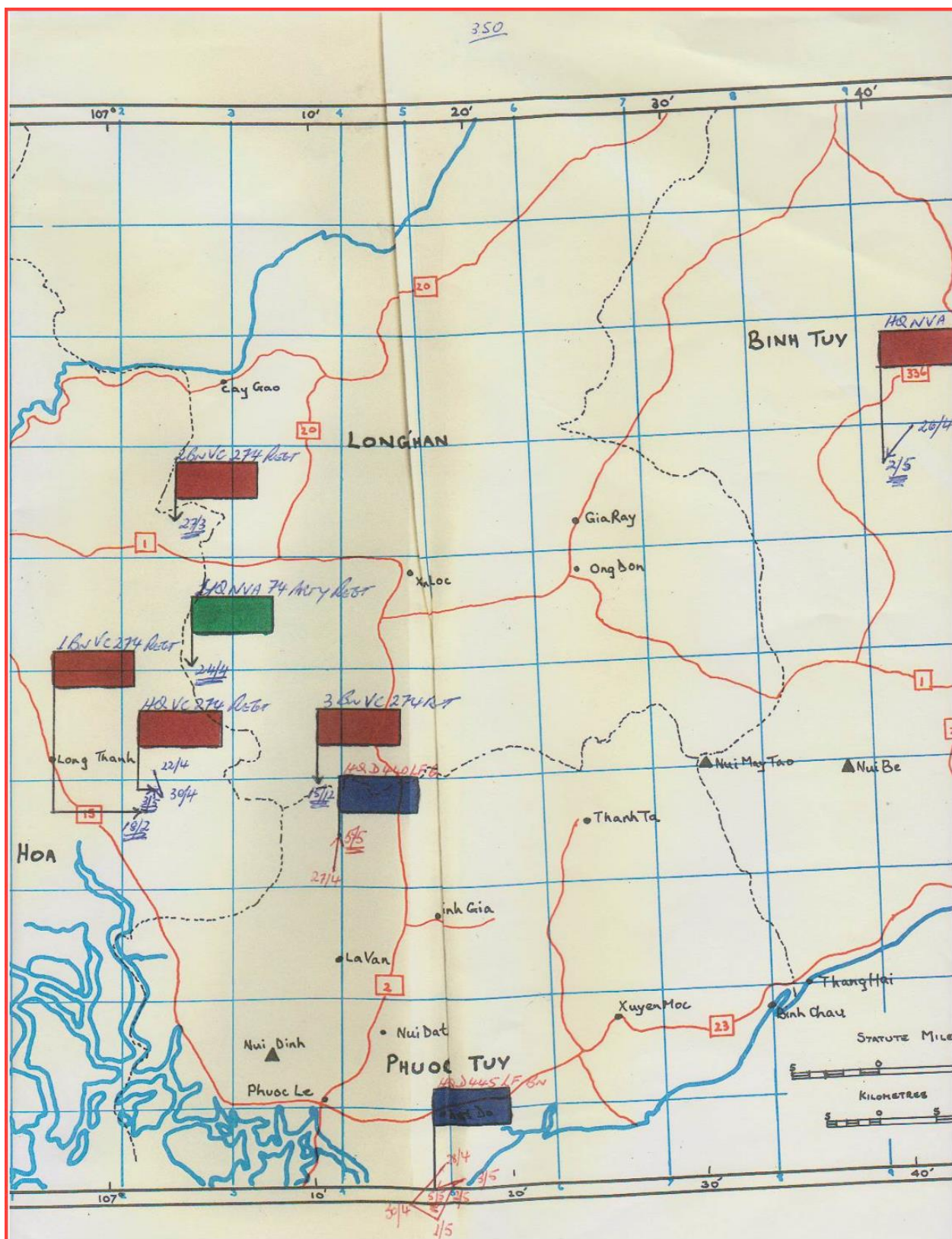


Figure 526: Map Summary 22 - 28 Apr 70



54.2.4 Troop VC/NVA Activities Summaries Consolidation

A consolidation of the Troop Summaries of VC and NVA Military Activities in Bien Hoa, Long Khanh and Phuoc Tuy Provinces covering the period 21 March to 28 April is as follows⁸⁵⁰:

21 March – 3 April

Significant Redeployments

By the 30 Mar 70, D445 LF Bn had travelled 27 kms since 17 Mar 70 location. This unit is at present situated at co-ordinate YS524693 and reflects little activity.

On the 1 Apr 70, D440 LF Bn was located at co-ordinate YS401821. Reports indicate increased activity from this unit expected.

Unit Activity

Intercepted messages are still mainly concerned with 33 NVA Regt. Their Current role is reconnoitring, securing food storage points and transporting supplies.

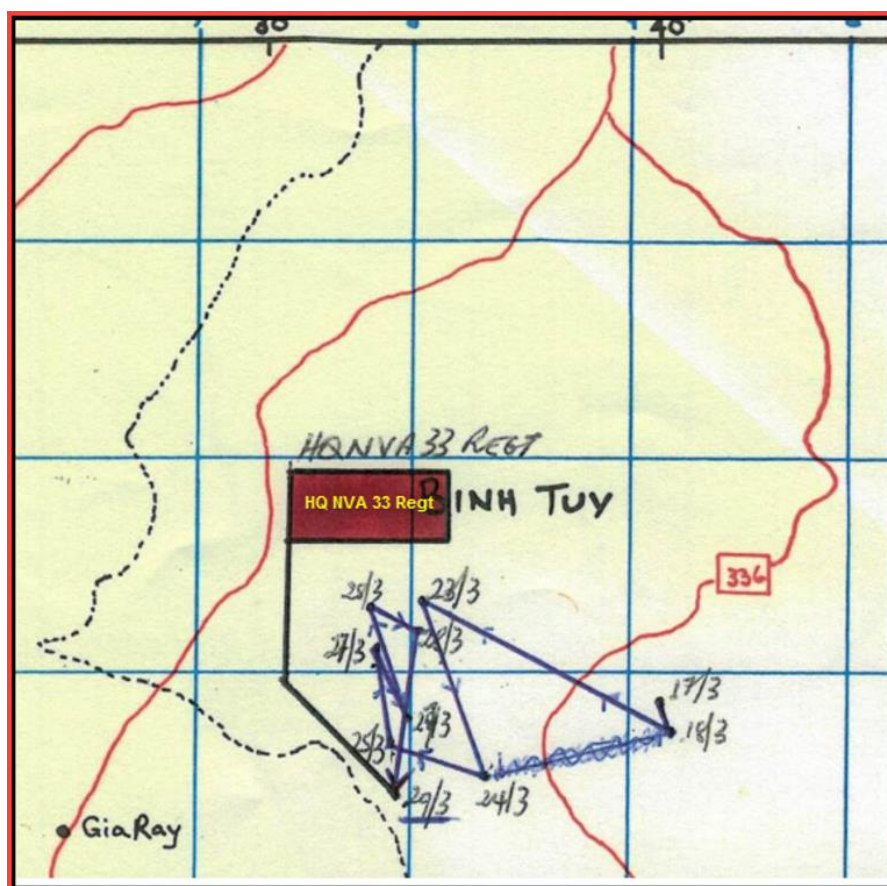


Figure 527: HQ 33 NVA Regt 17 Mar – 3 Apr 70

3 – 9 April

Significant Redeployments

By the 9 Apr 70, D445 LF Bn has been operating in the vicinity of its previous location in Central PHUOC TUY Province, and still reflects little activity.

⁸⁵⁰ Ibid.



During the last week there were no reports of activity from D440 LF Bn. This unit is at present situated at co-ordinate YS399788.

Unit Activity

Intercepted messages are mainly concerned with the NVA 33 Regt which is still maintaining its role of reconnaissance and defence of supply dumps.

10 – 15 April

Significant Developments

By 15 Apr 70, D445 LF Bn was operating in Northern PHUOC TUY Province, some 9 kms NORTH of its 8 Apr 70 Location.

During the last week the only activity reported by D440 LF Bn has been a few contacts with ARVN forces.

Significant Activity

The NVA 33 Regt is still maintaining its role of reconnaissance and defence of storage points.

16-21 Apr

Significant Developments

By 21 Apr 70, D440 LF Bn was operating in Northern PHUOC TUY Province, approx 10 kms NNE of its 15 Apr 70 location. It has been harassed by air strikes and contacts with ARVN units.

*By 20 Apr 70, D445 LF Bn was in North Eastern PHUOC TUY Province, approx 9 kms SOUTH of its 15 April 70 location. It has had contacts with Aust Units and in one incident valuable **documents relating to C/A were captured**.⁸⁵¹*

Significant Activity

The NVA 33 Regt whilst still on reconnaissance and defence duties, appears to be preparing for increased activity.

22 – 28 April

Significant Developments

By 27 Apr 70, D440 LF Bn was operating in Northern Central PHUOC TUY Province, approx 1 km SOUTH of its 21 Apr location. Very little activity was noted from this unit.

By 28 Apr 70, D445 LF Bn was operating in Southern PHUOC TUY Province approx 17 km SSW of its 20 Apr 70 location.

Significant Activity

The NVA 33 Regt was still engaged in moving stores and equipment and carrying out reconnaissance missions. The 3 and 4 Coys of the 3rd Bn of this Regt suffered heavy casualties from B-52 strikes, necessitating the move of approx 250 men from the Regt HQ.

⁸⁵¹ Author highlighting. C/A = cryptanalysis



54.2.5 Old Foes Move West to Cambodia

From Ernie Chamberlain⁸⁵²:

Following the overthrow of Prince Sihanouk by Lon Nol in mid-March 1970, the 5th VC Division began operations against Khmer Republic forces in Cambodia. In late April 1970, the 275th Regiment withdrew westwards into Cambodian territory to defend NVA/VC base areas against the US and ARVN ground incursions. Following a “cross-country march of more than 100 kilometres”, on 5-6 May 1970 the 275th Regiment attacked and seized the Cambodian provincial town of Kratie on the Mekong River, capturing the province chief. Moving 98 kilometres to the north, the 275th Regiment next seized the town of Stung Treng on 16 May 1970. In June 1970, the 275th Regiment was broken up to create the 205th Regiment and a new regiment for the 5th VC Division, the 1st Regiment. Neither the 275th Regiment – nor its “successors”, returned to the provinces of Phuoc Tuy, Long Khanh, or Bien Hoa during the remainder of the War.

⁸⁵² Email to Bob Hartley from Ernie Chamberlain 17 Dec 2015. For detail see: Chamberlain, E.P., The Viet Cong D445 Battalion: Their Story, 2016, Annex O – The 275th Regiment, pp.35-36.



CHAPTER 55 – MAY 1970

55.1 Personnel

55.1.1 Arrivals and Departures

In May there were six arrivals and two departures.

Arrivals

14 May

Corporal Ronald Biddle

Corporal John Kaarsberg

28 May

Signalman Kevin Petersen

Signalman William Sampson

Signalman Raymond Seiler

Signalman Paul Stock

Departures

14 May

Corporal Bill Wood

28 May

Corporal Adrian Bishop

55.1.2 Employment Areas

John Kaarsberg, Kev Petersen, Bill Sampson and Ray Seiler went to the Set Room. Paul Stock arrived for his second tour and joined the ARDF Section. Ron Biddle joined Processing and due to his previous military experience, he was placed in charge of all Troop health and hygiene.

55.1.3 161 Recce Flt Fixed Wing Pilots

In May, 2nd Lieutenant Dennis Coffey joined 161 Recce Flt as a fixed wing pilot.

55.1.4 WRE Visitor and ARDF Equipment

On 14 May 1970, Canberra advised HQ AFV, HQ 1ATF and 547 Sig Tp that Captain K R Sanders of WRE would be visiting the troop from 27 May to 28 June for the installation of new ARDF equipment.⁸⁵³

On 25 May, Captain Sanders visit was cancelled, and on 28 May, Major Best⁸⁵⁴ from WRE was nominated and approved to visit from 17 June to 16 July 1970.⁸⁵⁵

⁸⁵³ AWM 98 R5821/1/8 Project Thorough.

⁸⁵⁴ Gordon Best was the Engineer working on the ARDF Project at WRE. He was commissioned into the Army with the Rank of Major for the time of his deployment.

⁸⁵⁵ Ibid.



55.2 Operations

55.2.1 547 Sig Tp Operation Report for May 1970

The 547 Sig Tp Op Report for May 70⁸⁵⁶ stated:

S E C R E T SPOKE SIGS508

FOR MI8. OP REPORT 1-31 May 70

1. WATCH HOURS NO CHANGE.

2. COVER RETURN AS AT 312400H MAY

A. PRIORITY COVER. (ALL VCMB)

<i>1. 05437</i>	<i>10. 05448</i>	<i>18. 06218</i>
<i>2. [garbled]</i>		
<i>3. 05443</i>	<i>11. 05449</i>	<i>19. J4096</i>
<i>3. 00831</i>	<i>12. 00667</i>	<i>20. N4847</i>
<i>4. 05447</i>	<i>13. 05445</i>	<i>21. 00679</i>
<i>5. 05451</i>	<i>14. J1816</i>	<i>22. 07805</i>
<i>6. 05442</i>	<i>15. 05444</i>	<i>23. N4943</i>
<i>7. J0772</i>	<i>16. 00835</i>	<i>24</i>

B. DEV GROUPS

<i>1 VCMB 00897</i>	<i>5. VCMB 06220</i>	<i>9. VCMB 06224</i>	<i>13. VCMB J2309</i>
<i>2. VCMB J0253</i>	<i>6. VCMB 06221</i>	<i>10. VCMB J1963</i>	<i>14. VCMB J2397</i>
<i>3. VCMB P5452</i>	<i>7. VCMB 06222</i>	<i>11. VCMB J2062</i>	<i>15. VCMB J2446</i>
<i>4. VCMB 06219</i>	<i>8. VCMB 06223</i>	<i>12. VCMB J2291</i>	<i>16. VCMB N4962</i>
<i>17. VCXB J7816</i>	<i>18. VCXB J7851</i>	<i>19. VCXB J8067</i>	
<i>20. VCXB JB275</i>			

C. ACTIVITY GENERAL. THERE HAS BEEN A GENERAL REDUCTION IN COMMUNICATIONS ACTIVITY AS A RESULT OF ALLIED GROUND ACTIONS AND CONTINUOUS AIR AND ARTILLERY ACTIONS. THE FOLLOWING DETAILS ARE PERTINENT TO VCMB 05423 CLN

(1) BA LONG PROV HQ M0094- HAS BEEN VERY PATCHY OVER LAST WEEK AND HAVE DIFFICULTY IN ESTABLISHING COMMS AND HAS ONLY CONTACTED B4024 OF ALL SUBS IN LAST WEEK

(2) D440 B M6073- HAS NOT BEEN HEARD SINCE 6 MAY ALTHOUGH M0094 STILL TRIES TO RAISE HIM.

((3)) D445 BN MI523- HAS NOT BEEN HEARD SINCE 21 MAY AFTER HEAVY CONTACT WITH 7 RAR YS 516.654

((4)) LONG DAT COY B4024. ONLY CONSISTENTLY

⁸⁵⁶ DSD Declassified, 547 Sig Tp in Vietnam (tranche2)..



ACTIVE OUTSTATION PROBABLY ACTING
AS A RELAY FOR D445 BN. INFO
FROM M0094

(5) CHAU DUC COY M5908. LAST HEARD
14MAY IN COMMUNICATIONS
WITH M0094 AND HAS TRIED
TO ESTABLISH COMMS UNSUCCESSFULLY ONCE SINCE
THE 30 MAY.

D. SINCE THE SIGNIFICANT CAPTURE OF CIPHER
DOCUMENTS FROM BA LONG PROV. HQ 8APR70.
BY 6 RAR THERE HAS BEEN A SLOW BUT
CONSISTENT BREAK DOWN OF COMMS SECURITY AND
DISCIPLINE. A SIGNIFICANT AMOUNT
OF MATERIAL HAS NOW BEEN FED BACK
FROM THE ASSESSMENT OF THE CAPTURED
DOCUMENTS.

THREE. ARDF. TOTAL FIXES SIXTY TWO (62)

A. GRADINGS. 27 GOOD CMM 30 FAIR CMM
NIL POOR CMM 5 CUTS. NOTE THAT
GRADINGS FOR ASSESSING RESULTS ARE
NOW:

GOOD 500-1000 METRES
FAIR 1000-3000 METRES
POOR 3000- ABOVE METRES

B. FLYING TIME. TOTAL FLYING TIME 141 HRS 25 MNS
W02 MC CARTNEY 7:30/ 80:30 HRS TOTAL
SGT. WILLIAMS 37:10/40/00 HRS TOTAL
CPL DANSKIN 42/45/197/45 HRS TOTAL
SIG POTTER 54/00/239/50 HRS TOTAL

C. MISSION REDUCTION. TWO MISSIONS REDUCED
DUE WEATHER CMM THREE MISSIONS ABORTED
DUE TO AIRCRAFT MALFUNCTION/ SERVICE.

D. GENERAL. SIG. GILES COMMENCES
ARDF TRG 5 JUN AND WILL RELIEVE
SIG POTTER. WHEN FULLY TRAINED.

FOUR. SHORT CELL.

A. OPERATIONAL 29 DAYS OUT OF 31 CMM
TWO DAYS BEING USED FOR MAINT
AND OPERATOR REST.

B. SYSTEM OPERATED FOR TOTAL OF
181 HOURS WITH 657 TARGETS
BEING OFFERED AND 495 RESULTS
BEING ACHIEVED

C. NEW OPS (GILBERT AND GEHLE) NOW
FULLY QUALIFIED AND KAARSBERG
SHOULD BE QUALIFIED BY END
OF THIS WEEK.

D. THE SYSTEM HAS HAD SOME
UNIQUE RESULTS ON TARGETS OF HIGH



[redacted] HNTREST IN THE [redacted] AREA OF OPS. AFTER THE INITIAL DEPLOYMENT OF ALLIED TROOPS. SHORT CELL GAVE THE FIRST INDICATION OF THE RELOCATION OF THREE REGTS. 161 ST. CMM 272 ND. CMM 275TH. CMM THUS ALLOWING U.S. ARDF TO PINPOINT THESE LOCATIONS (THIS ALSO REPRESENTED SOME UNIQUE INTERCEPT ON THE PART OF THE TP). CELL ALSO RESPONSIBLE FOR FIRST LOCATION OF SUSPECTED NEW REGT. IN V.V. 5 DIV (UNIQUE INTERCEPT ON BEHALF OF TROOP AGAIN).

E. CURRENTLY TASKING CELL WITH WEEKLY LIST OF [redacted] SPECIAL EMPHASIS TARGETS AS WELL AS OUR OWN PRIORITIES.

55.2.2 Reconstruction of VCMB 05423

Without the full technical details being available, the following graphics are w VCMB would look like based on the information supplied in AUM352 Op Report for May 1970⁸⁵⁷

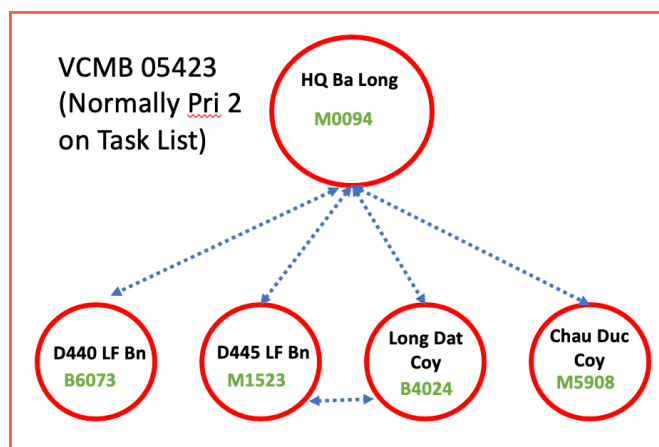


Figure 528: VCMB 05423 Communications Structure

⁸⁵⁷ Constructed by Bob Hartley. E&OE.

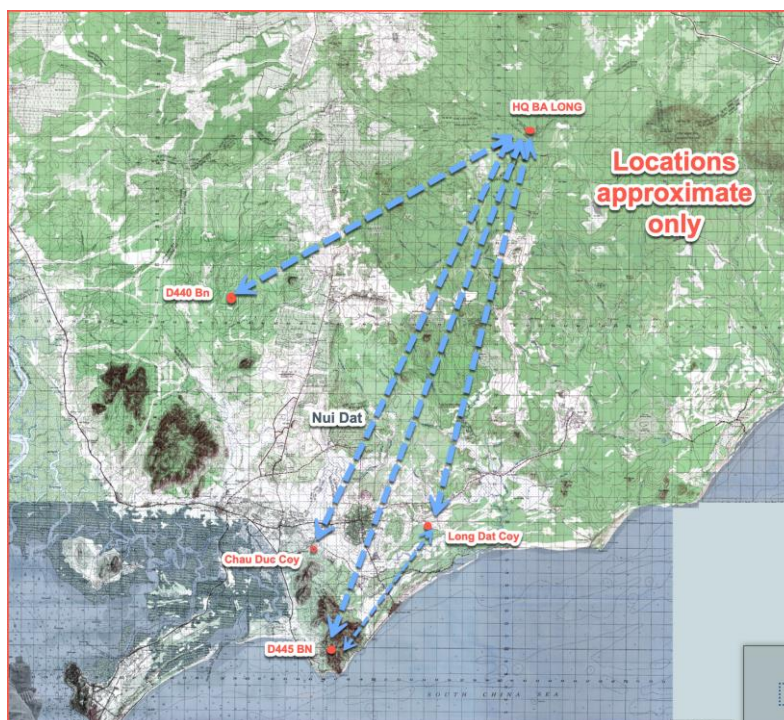


Figure 529: VCMB 05423 Communication Area

55.2.3 ARDF Flying Hours

The total ARDF flying hours for the month were⁸⁵⁸:

Year	Month	Flying hours	Total Fixes	Good <1000mts	Fair 1-2000Mts	Poor >2000 Mts	Cut	Missions Lost	Remarks
1970	May	141.25	62	27	30		5	3	

55.2.4 Summary of Main ARDF Fixes

The following table is a summary of the main ARDF fixes for May 1970⁸⁵⁹:

Date	Loc	Unit
1-May-70	YS2389	HQ VC 274 Regt
1-May-70	YS5048	D445 LF Bn
2-May-70	YT9217	HQ NVA 33 Regt
3-May-70	YS5151	D445 LF Bn
3-May-70	YS2390	HQ VC 274 Regt
5-May-70	YS4950	D445 LF Bn
5-May-70	YS4085	D440 LF Bn
6-May-70	YS5158	D445 LF Bn
7-May-70	YS4950	D445 LF Bn
10-May-70	YS4849	D445 LF Bn

⁸⁵⁸ Compiled from MI8 Records held at ASD archives.

⁸⁵⁹ Compiled by Bob Hartley from 547 Sig Tp Activity Reports supplied by ASD. No Monthly ARDF Reports available.



Date	Loc	Unit
11-May-70	YS5048	D445 LF Bn
12-May-70	YS5048	D445 LF Bn
12-May-70	YT2514	HQ NVA 74 Arty
14-May-70		D440 LF Bn
14-May-70		HQ NVA 33 Regt
16-May-70	YS4850	D445 LF Bn
18-May-70	YS5566	D445 LF Bn
18-May-70	ZT0823	HQ NVA 33 Regt
20-May-70	ZT0719	HQ NVA 33 Regt
21-May-70	YS5166	D445 LF Bn
21-May-70	YT2600	HQ 1 Bn VC 274 Regt
22-May-70	ZT0621	HQ NVA 33 Regt
22-May-70	YT2610	HQ 2 Bn VC 274 Regt
23-May-70	YT2516	HQ 2 Bn VC 274 Regt
23-May-70	YS2298	HQ 1 Bn VC 274 Regt
24-May-70	ZT0717	HQ NVA 33 Regt
24-May-70	YS2299	HQ 1 Bn VC 274 Regt
27-May-70	YS224908	HQ 274 Regt
29-May-70	YS236899	HQ 274 Regt
29-May-70	YS236899	HQ VC 274 Regt
29-May-70	YS472514	LONG DAT Dist Unit
29-May-70	YS568928	HQ BA LONG PROV
29-May-70	YT746081	ELMS HQ MR7
31-May-70	YS489540	LONG DAT Dist Unit
31-May-70	YS193999	274 Regt
31-May-70	YS238884	HQ 274 Regt

55.2.5 Urgent Warning to a US Infantry Company

On 11 May, the ARDF Aircraft was flying a mission to the north of the 1ATF AO and fixing any transmitter active in the area. All fix information was passed back to the Troop.

After looking at the ARDF Fixes and analysis of the intercepted traffic, Hugh Nichols and Ron Biddle ascertained that a VC ambush had been set in the vicinity of Gia Ray on the Long Khanh/Binh Tuy border, and that a US infantry company was moving towards it. Hugh and Ron worked frantically to ascertain the identity of the company in danger. It was soon discovered that the company was part of the 199th Light Infantry Brigade (199 LIB).

As there was no normal communication channel to the Brigade, the information was passed to the ARDF aircraft who was able to relay a message to the Brigade HQ who promptly ordered the Company to redeploy and attack the ambush site. In the ensuing battle 30 VC were killed with only one US casualty.



The US Company Commander sent a short note of thanks, endorsed by the Brigade Commander, with the comment:

Instead of a US body count we were able to do a VC body count.



55.2.6 2nd Brigade 25th Infantry Division LO

The US 2nd Brigade, 25th Division deployed to Firebase Lynch 29 km north of Nui Dat.

The following extract was found on the 25th Division Web Page⁸⁶⁰.

FSB Lynch was used by the brigade as a means of interrupting the movements of the enemy D445 Battalion through the Long Kahn area and down further into Phuoc Tuy.

The FSB was only about two acres in size, and was stuck out in the middle of nowhere. It actually, straddled the main road, which meant that between dawn and dusk the gates at each end had to be left open for the ever present traffic. This made for some “excellent” security, and you were never far from your weapon.

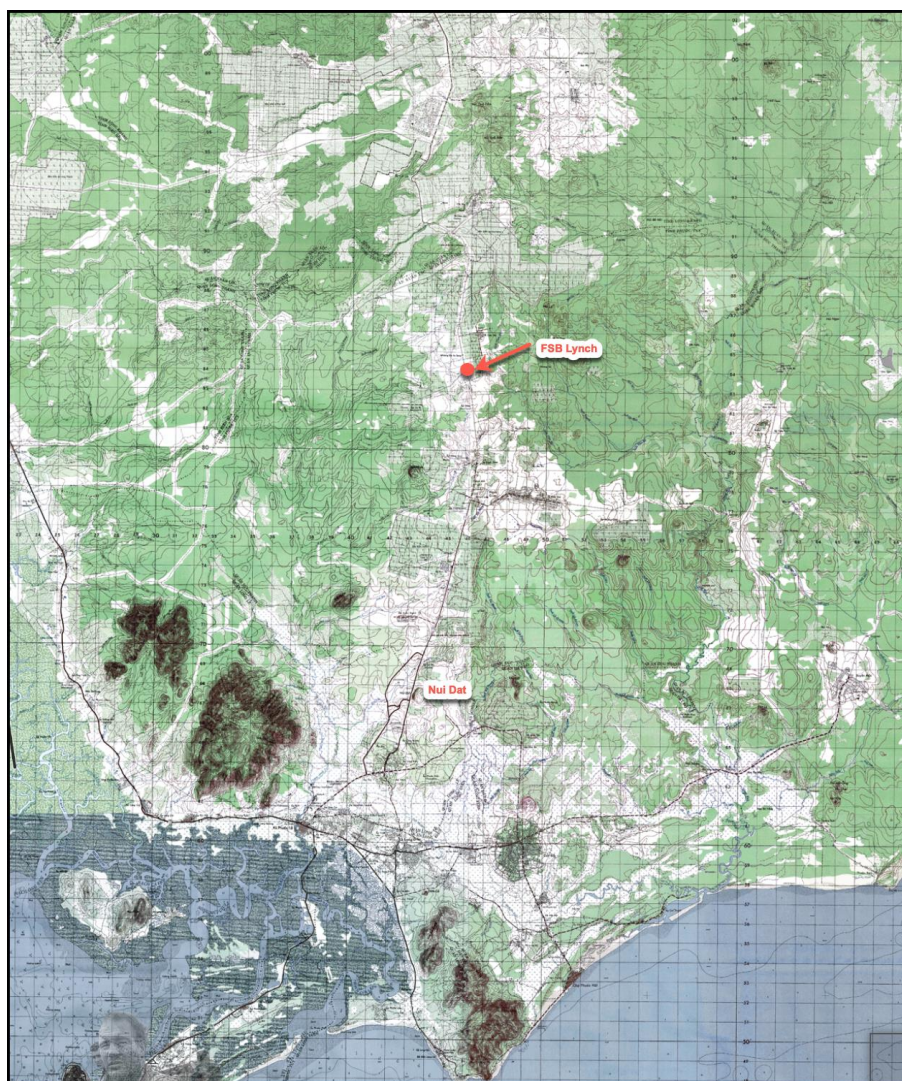


Figure 530: Location FSB Lynch

⁸⁶⁰ <http://www.25thida.org/TLN/tln5-40.htm>

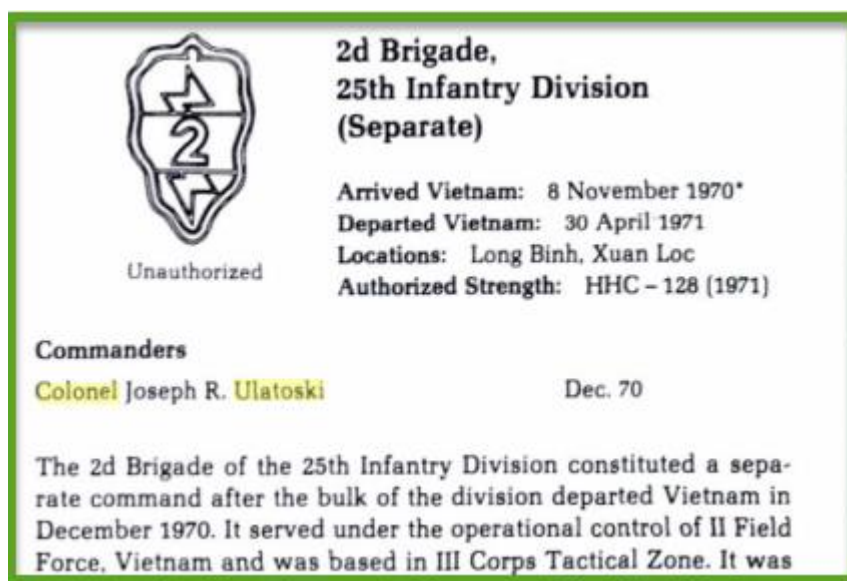


Figure 531: 2nd Brigade 25 Infantry Division⁸⁶¹

55.2.6.1 Liaison Officers

The Commander of the Brigade, Colonel Joe Ulatoski, and his LO became regular visitors to the Troop. The LO, Lieutenant Stewart Malone, was at first a little apprehensive of the Australians but turned into a real battler and a good friend. His off-siders, Harry (Horatio) Nelson, Dave Audette, (Pineapple, the lad from Hawaii) and Snapper, their mascot dog, were almost part of the roll book.



Figure 532: Colonel Joe Ulatoski in the 547 Club

⁸⁶¹ Vietnam Order of Battle By Shelby L. Stanton.



55.2.6.2 Move to Xuan Loc

The connections remained with the unit even after the Brigade had moved out of the FSB to set up at Xuan Loc.

55.2.6.3 Rigger Assistance

Later in June, to help them meet their communication schedules 547 Sig Tp volunteered assistance. Ross Hutton struggled with a Yagi antenna atop a 215 foot high tower while Jack Fenton and Frank Watkins clamped up poles in climbing irons to rig high frequency antenna.

55.2.6.4 Jock McCartney's Boots

Stu Malone stated that the thing "that really blew my mind" was seeing Jock McCartney cleaning and polishing his boots before going straight out into the mud again.

Colonel Ulatoski later wrote⁸⁶²:

During my third tour in Vietnam, I was commander of the 2nd Brigade, 25th Infantry Division, both as an interior unit and, on departure of the Division from Vietnam, as a separate reinforced brigade, or what might be called a 'mini-division'.

During this tour, I had the good fortune to have an area of operations (AO) adjacent to the Australian Task Force. As time went on, over almost an entire year, my Brigade and the Australian Task Force developed an unusually close working relationship which included joint operations against an enemy who operated almost invisibly in very dense jungle—mostly striking at friendly forces and locations at their initiative and then withdrawing back into their jungle sanctuaries. No matter how good friendly troops were and how hard they tried, finding and destroying the enemy forces without good intelligence was close to an exercise in futility.

As our friendship with the Australian Task Force developed, we discovered what sort of intelligence information the 547 Signal Troop could produce and how it was able to help us do our job of finding and attacking the enemy more effectively. While the passage of time has erased the details of the intelligence information provided, strong recollections of its significant value remain. On realizing their capabilities, I insisted that my Brigade intelligence section collect and analyze everything the 547 Signal Troop produced.

As a result, not only was my Brigade able to operate more effectively in its AO, it also enabled my Brigade and the Australian Task Force jointly to bring more effective pressure on the enemy. Further, it facilitated closer cooperation and enhanced results in operations with our other major neighbor, the Thai Division as well as local South Vietnamese units.

⁸⁶² Draft letter to the Defence Honours and Awards Tribunal.



55.2.7 Troop VC/NVA Activities Summaries

The Troop Summary of Activities covering the period 30 April to 28 May 1970 contained the following⁸⁶³:

55.2.7.1 30 Apr – 5 May

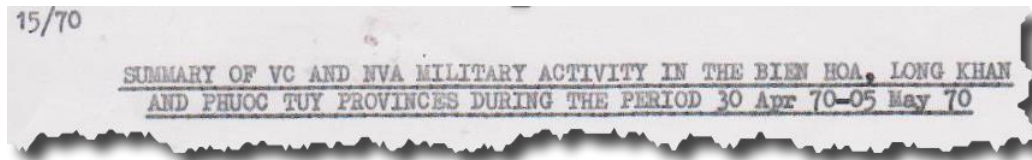


Figure 533: Summary of Activities 30 Apr - 5 May 70

SIGNIFICANT DEVELOPMENTS

By 5 May 70, D440 LF Bn was operating in the Northern Central PHUOC TUY Province Area, approx 3 Kms NORTH of its 27 Apr 70 location. The only reference during the week to this unit indicated it was employed in transporting ammunition, food and other material.

By 5 May 70, D445 LF Bn was located in Southern Central PHUOC TUY Province, approx 2 Kms SSW of its 28 Apr 70 location. The Bn is again located in the area from which it was evicted by 1 ATF during February.

SIGNIFICANT ACTIVITY

Apart from a location report, no other activity concerning NVA 33 Regt was observed this week.

UNIT LOCATIONS

1. HQ NVA 74 ARTY REGT
No change from 24 Apr 70 location, when 38 Kms NNW of NUI DAT.
2. HQ NVA 33 REGT
On 2 May 70, deployed in Northern BINH TUY Province Area approx 5 Kms SSW of its 26 Apr 70 location.
3. HQ VC 274 REGT
On 3 May 70, approx 30 Kms NW of NUI DAT.
4. HQ 1 BN VC 274 REGT
Last noted on 18 Feb 70, when 30 Kms NW of NUI DAT.
5. HQ 2 BN VC 274 REGT
Last noted on 27 Mar 70, when located in Northern Area of BIEN HOA LONG KHAN Border Region.
6. HQ 3 BN VC 274 REGT
Nothing heard since 15 Dec 69, when approx 26 Kms ENE of NUI DAT.

⁸⁶³ ASD archives of 547 Sig Tp material.



7. HQ VC D440 LF BN

On 5 May 70, located approx 18 Kms NNW of NUI DAT.

8. HQ VC D 45 LF BN

On 5 May 70, located approx 15 Kms SSE of NUI DAT.

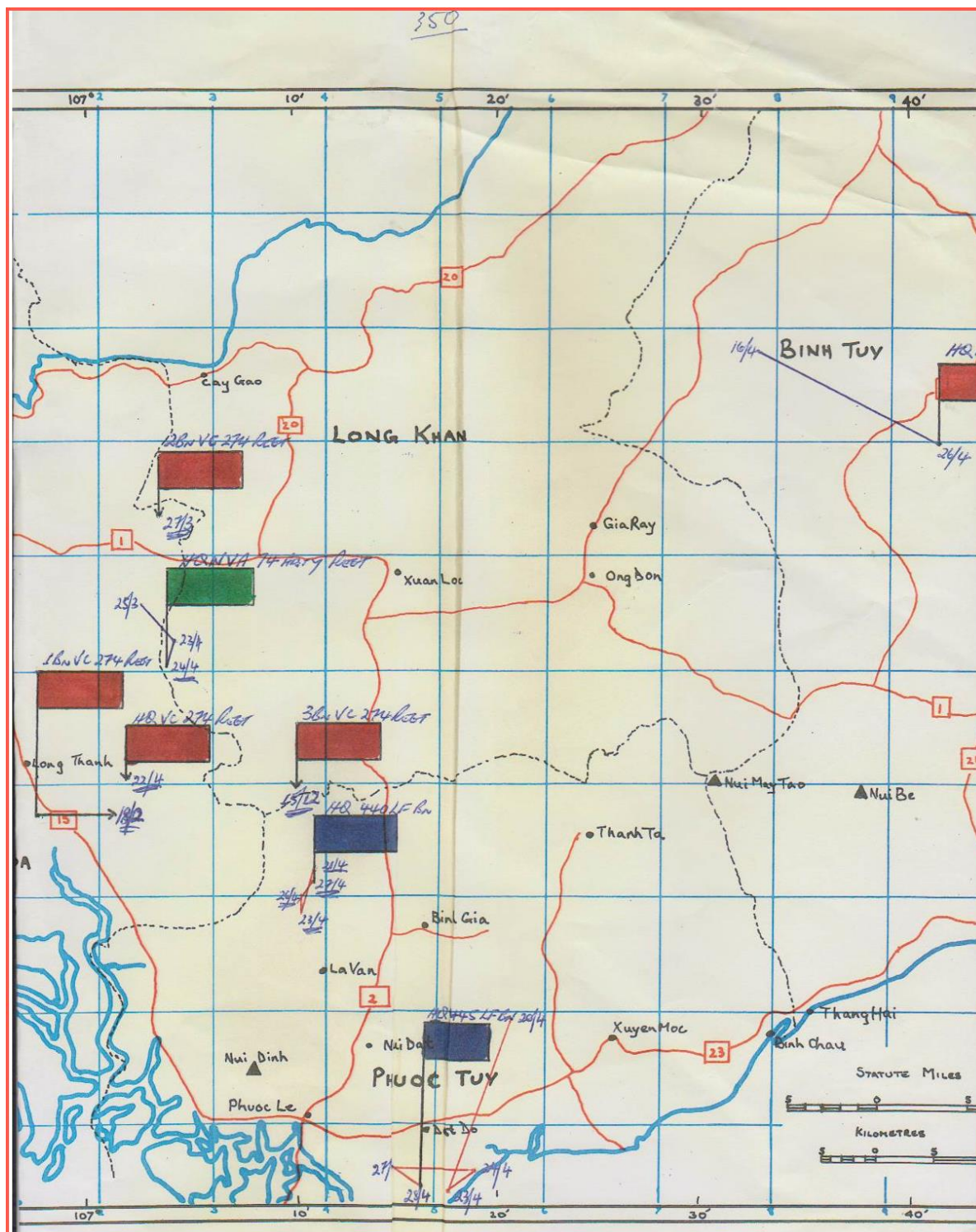


Figure 534: Map Summary 30 Apr - 5 May 70



55.2.7.2 6 – 14 May 70

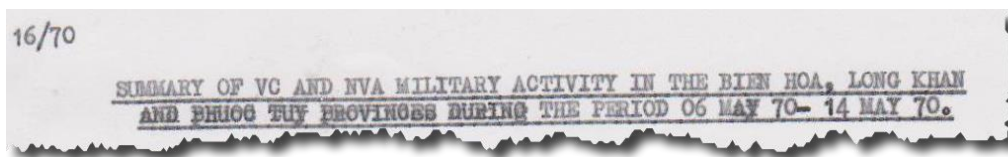


Figure 535: Summary of Activities 6 - 14 May 70

SIGNIFICANT DEVELOPMENTS

Nothing has been heard from VC D440 LF Bn since May 7, when it was operating in Northern Central PHUOC TUY Province at which time it was employed in transporting ammunition, food and other equipment.

By 12 May 70, VC D445 LF Bn was operating in the LONG HAI area of Southern PHUOC TUY Province. There were no reports of contacts or other actions during the week.

SIGNIFICANT ACTIVITY

No reports concerning the NVA 33 Regt were seen during the week. The last report on this unit placed it in the Northern Central BINH TUY Province Area.

UNIT LOCATIONS

HQ NVA 74 ARTY REGT

On 12 May 70, located 41 Kms NNW of NUI DAT, some 3 Kms NORTH of its 24 Apr 70 location.

HQ NVA 33 REGT

Nothing heard since 2 May 70, when deployed in Northern BINH TUY Province Area.

HQ VC 274 REGT

On 3 May 70, approx 30 Kms NW of NUI DAT. Nothing heard since then.

HQ 1 BN VC 274 REGT

Last noted on 18 Feb 70, when 30 Kms NW of NUI DAT.

HQ 2 BN VC 274 REGT

Last noted on 27 Mar 70, when located in Northern Area of BIEN HOA/ LONG KHANH Border Region.

HQ 3 BN VC 274 REGT

Nothing heard since 15 Dec 69, when approx 26 Kms ENE of NUI DAT.

HQ VC D 440 LF BN

Not heard from since 5 May 70, when located approx 18 Kms NNW of NUI DAT.

HQ VC D 445 LF BN

On 12 May 70, located 17 Kms SSE of NUI DAT.

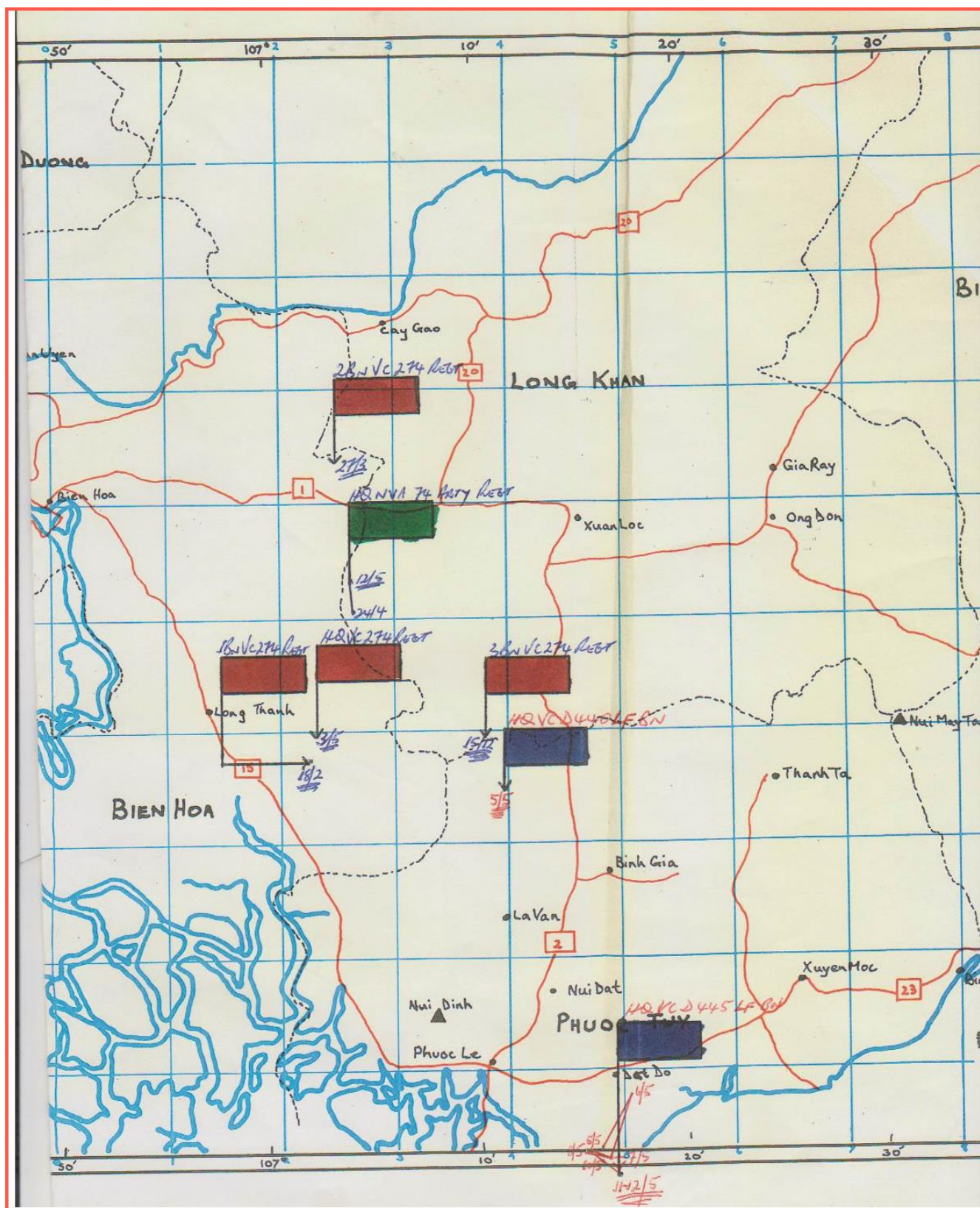


Figure 536: Map Summary 6 - 14 May 70 #1





55.2.8 15- 28 May 70

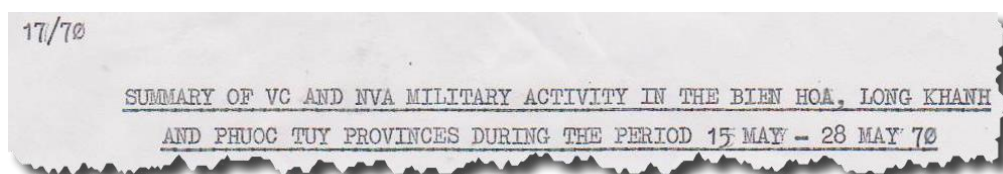


Figure 538: Summary of Activities 15 - 28 May 70

SIGNIFICANT DEVELOPMENTS

A low communications level has prevailed during the reporting period. 2 Bn VC 274th Regt was twice noted in direct communications with HQ VC Baria-Long Khanh Province.

On 21st May 1970 1 Bn VC 274th Regt was noted in communications for the first time since 18th February 1970. On 24th May 1970 it was located within 2501M of YS 222991.»

On 21st May. 70 HQ VC D445 LF Bn was located 12km NNE of its 14th May position.

SIGNIFICANT ACTIVITIES

There has been a low level of activity throughout the reporting area. Such activity as has been noted reflects the enemy's pre-occupation with his increasing supply shortages.

UNIT LOCATIONS

HQ NVA 74 ARTY REGT

On 22 May 70, 39km NNW of NUI DAT, 3km SE of 12 May location.

HQ NVA 33 REGT

On 24 May 70, 80km NE of NUI DAT, 15km east of 2 May 70 location.

HQ VC 274 REGT

On 24 May 70, 30km NW of NUI DAT, 2km north of 3 May 70 location.

HQ 1 BN VC 274 REGT

On 24 May 70 located 42km NW of NUI DAT.

HQ 2 BN VC 274 REGT

On 23 May 70 located 52km NNW of NUI DAT, 2km NW of 27 Mar 70 location.

HQ 3 BN VC 274 REGT

Nothing heard since 15 Dec 69, when approx 23km NNW of NUI DAT.

HQ VC D440 LF BN

Nothing heard since 5 May 70 when located approx 18km NNW of NUI DAT.

HQ VC D445 LF BN

On 21 May 70, 8km east of NUI DAT, 16km NNE of 12 May 70 location.

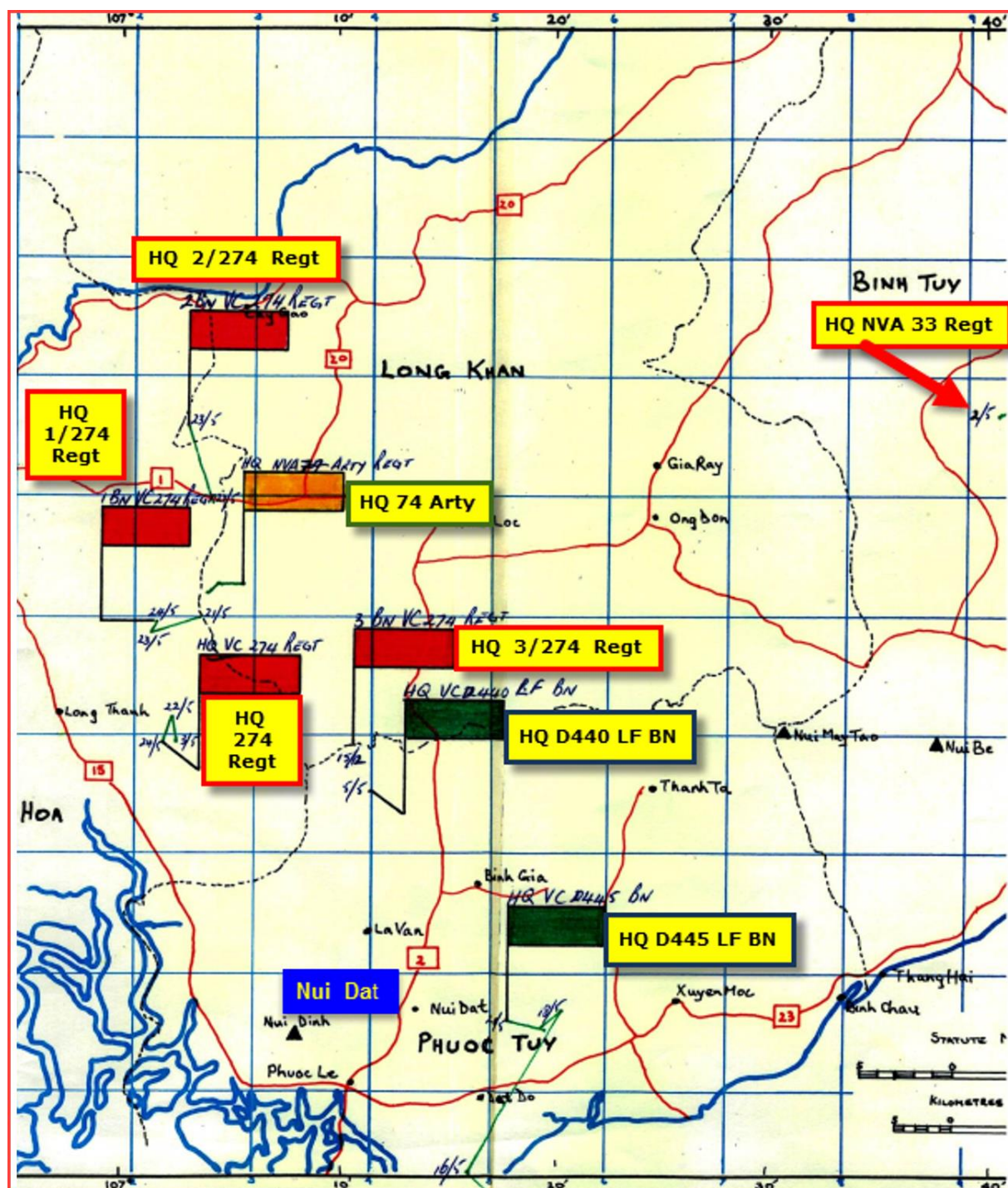


Figure 539: Map Summary 15 – 28 May 70



55.2.9 Troop VC/NVA Activities Summaries Consolidation

A consolidation of the Troop Summaries of VC and NVA Military Activities in Bien Hoa, Long Khanh and Phuoc Tuy Provinces covering the period 30 April to 28 May is as follows⁸⁶⁴:

30 April – 5 May

Significant Developments

By 5 May 70, D440 LF Bn was operating in the Northern Central PHUOC TUY Province area, approx 3 kms NORTH of its 27 Apr 70 location. The only reference during the week to this unit indicated it was employed in transporting ammunition, food and other material.

By 5 May 70, D445 LF BN was located in Southern Central PHUOC TUY Province, approx 2 km SSW of its 28 Apr 70 location. The Bn is again located in the area from which it was evicted by 1 ATF during February.

Significant Activity

Apart from a location report, no other activity concerning NVA 33 Regt was observed this week.

6 – 14 May

Significant Developments

Nothing has been heard from VC D440 LF Bn since 5 May 70, when it was operating in Northern Central PHUOC TUY Province, at which time it was employed in transporting ammunition, food and other equipment.

By 12 May 70, VC D445 LF Bn was operating in the LONG HAI area of Southern PHUOC TUY Province. There were no reports of contacts or other actions during the week.

Significant Activity

No reports concerning the NVA 33 Regt were seen during the week. The last report of this unit placed it in the Northern Central BINH TUY Province area.

15 -28 May

Significant Developments

A low communications level has prevailed during the reporting period. 2 Bn VC 274th Regt was twice noted in direct communications with HQ VC Baria-Long Khanh Province.

On 21 May 1970, 1 Bn VC 274th Regt was noted in communications for the first time since 18 February 1970. On 24 May 1970 it was located within 250M of YS222991.

On 21 May 70, HQ VC D445 LF Bn was located 12 km NNE of its 14 May position.

Significant Activity

There has been a low level of activity throughout the reporting area. Such activity as has been noted reflects the enemy's pre-occupation with his increasing supply shortages.

⁸⁶⁴ Ibid.



CHAPTER 56 – JUNE 1970

56.1 Personnel

56.1.1 Arrivals and Departures

In June, there were two arrivals and five departures.

Arrivals

11 June

Signalman William Pollock

24 June

Captain Jack Fenton

Departures

4 June

Signalman Colin King

11 June

Signalman Tony Luck

Signalman Phillip Rutherford

18 June

Signalman Darryl Hancock

25 June

Corporal Brian Lacy

56.1.2 Employment Areas

Jack Fenton arrived to take over from Errol Poultney and Bill Pollock joined the Comcen.

56.1.3 Visitors

There were several visitors during June. Major Gordon Best⁸⁶⁵ and Ross Treharne from WRE visited from 17 June until 9 July for the arrival and installation of new ARDF equipment. Major Cattnach paid another visit to the troop from 25 June to 29 June.

56.1.4 Welcome Function

A welcome party for Captain Fenton was held and guests were Major Cattnach and Kevin Condon. The guests did not, however, adhere to the standards of protocol when asked to draw the club's raffle. Kev Condon drew out Jack Fenton's name as first prize winner, Jack drew Col Cattnach's name for second prize and the good Major drew out Kev Condon's name for third prize. Little wonder that Blue Danskin refused to draw the "33 Club" Lottery that night.

56.1.5 Unit Strength

The Troop strength on 30 June was 41 (including Jack Fenton who was conducting a handover). Gordon Best and Ross Treharne were not included in the total.

⁸⁶⁵ Gordon Best was a WRE engineer on Project Thorough. He was commissioned into the Army with the rank of Major for the duration of his deployment.



56.1.6 Meritorious Service Medal

In June 1970, Andy Cockburn received the Meritorious Service Medal⁸⁶⁶ from the Commander Australian Forces Vietnam.

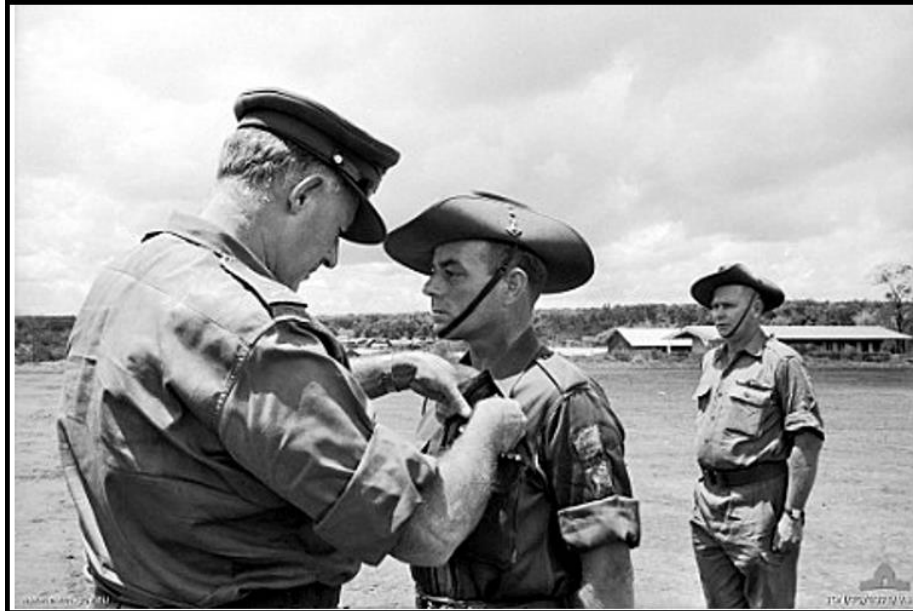


Figure 540: Andy Cockburn Receiving the MSM

56.1.7 Troop Manning

The following graphic shows the organisation of the Troop on 30 June⁸⁶⁷.

Note:

The organisational chart only shows personnel who were thought to be employed in ARDF or SSL on the end date. It is realised that other members had been employed in these areas during the preceding six months

⁸⁶⁶ The Meritorious Service Medal was awarded to military members who are of irreproachable character with at least 20 years of service and already hold the Long Service and Good Conduct Medal of their service. These medals were replaced by the Australian National Medal.

⁸⁶⁷ Drawn by Bob Hartley from Unit Records. E&OE.

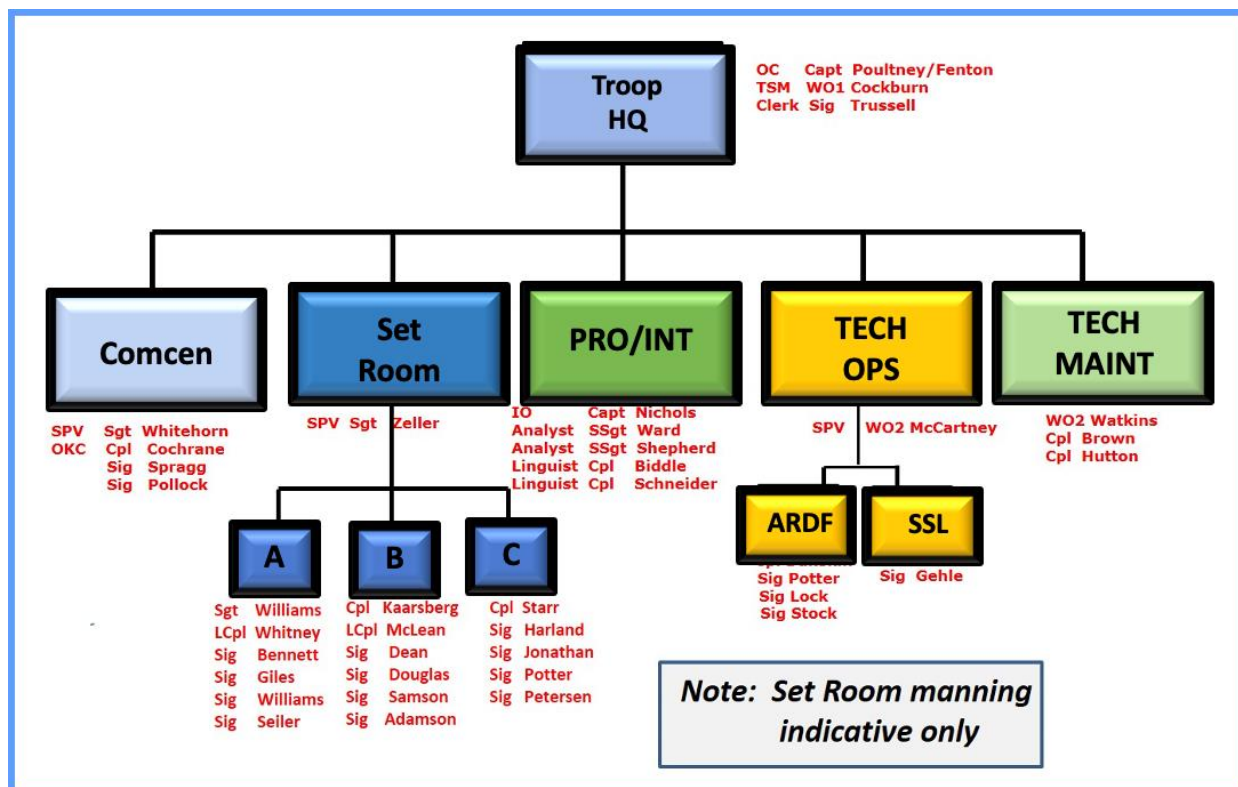


Figure 541: 547 Sig Tp Organisation 30 June 1970

56.2 Operations

56.2.1 Change to US ARDF Tasking Priorities

On 1 June, the US Airborne Radio Direction Finding Coordination Centre issued new priority designators pertaining to ARDF Missions.⁸⁶⁸

⁸⁶⁸ <https://www.angelo.edu/content/files/22905-a>



Change in ARDF Tasking Priorities

On 1 June 1969 ACC Working Aid 02-69 was received. In Section III, Paragraph 5 were listed new priority designators pertaining to ARDF Missions. The new designations were necessary because the number of enemy radio stations targeted increased from 787 in May 1967 to 3126¹ in June 1969. This increase was coupled with a more diversified disposition of Free World Military Forces, resulting in commanders at all echelons requesting increasingly higher ARDF priorities on those enemy elements within close proximity of their areas of operation (AO). This trend reduced the significance of the then existing priority system.

The following system was implemented:

PRIORITY DESIGNATOR	CLASSIFYING CRITERIA	FREQUENCY OF UPDATING LOCATIONS
Priority 1	a. Combat elements in contact, geographically situated to pose a threat to friendly forces, or moving b. During allied sweep or specified attack operations elements known to be in the area may be elevated to priority 1 prior to initiation of combat operations.	Fix twice daily (one morning, one later afternoon or evening)
Priority 2	Combat elements comprising DIV/REGT/BN, MI and MA elements, fwd CP's of DIV/REGT/BN, local force BN's and selected front Hqs operating in established areas of operations of that specific unit when not in contact with friendly forces. Unidentified elements which are determined as serving maneuver units of DIV/REGT/BN echelon to determine OB identification.	Fix once daily maintain location
Priority 3	Targets which move infrequently, COSVN, VNC, HQ SVN, MR HQS, transportation and infiltration elements, combat support and party HQS and elements. Unidentified elements for which continuity has been established for determining OB identification.	Fix once every third day to maintain location

Figure 542: US ARDF Priority Designators



56.2.2 547 Sig Tp ARDF Operations

The above change of priorities did not affect the Troop's ARDF operations, however, whenever there was a conflict on tasking assignments they were used as a basis for mission priorities.

56.2.3 ARDF Equipment Testing

The new ARDF equipment was installed in a spare aircraft and flight tested during the period 27 to 30 June.

56.2.4 547 Sig Tp Operation Report for June 1970

The 547 Sig Tp Op Report for Jun 70⁸⁶⁹ stated:

S E C R E T SPOKE SIGS617

FOR MI8. OP REPORT 1-30 JUN 70

ONE. WATCH HOURS NO CHANGE.

TWO. COVER RETURN AS AT 302400H JUN CLN

A. PRIORITY COVER. ALL VCMB.

1. 05437	10. 05449
2. 05423	11. 00667
3. 05443	12. 05445
4. 00831	13. J1816
5. 05447	14. 05444
6. 05451	15. 00835
7. 05442	16. 00843
8. J0772	17. J0496
9. 05448	18. 00679

B. DEV GROUPS

1. VCXB 00897	12. VCMB J2291
2. VCXB V0414	13. VCMB J2309
3. VCMB 05452	14. VCMB J2397
4. VCMB 06219	15. VCMB J2446
5. VCMB 06220	16. VCMB J2543
6. VCMB 06221	17. VCMB N4962
7. VCMB 06222	18. VCXB J6067
8. VCMB 06223	19. VCXB J8275
9. VCMB 06224	20. VCMB Y9083
10. VCMB J1963	21. VCMB Y9036
11. VCMB J2062	

C. SPECIAL EMPHASIS TARGETS FOR

ONE BANK TASKED TO COVER THESE.

1. VCMB 07716	6. VCMB N4966
2. VCMB J2304	7. VCMB 87704
3. VCMB 00858	8. VCMB 00854
4. VCMB J2462	9. VCMB 00851
5. VCMB N4875	

⁸⁶⁹ DSD Declassified, 547 Sig Tp in Vietnam (tranche2)..



THREE. ARDF. TOTAL FIXES 63

- A. GRADINGS. 21 GOOD CMM 36 FAIR CMM NIL POOR CMM 6 CUTS
B. FLYING TIME. TOTAL FLYING TIME 147.55 HRS

W02 MCCARTNEY NIL/080.30
SGT R WILLIAMS 33.45/078.45
LCPL J. DANSKIN 36.15/234.00
SIG J. POTTER 44.45/284.35
SIG L.GILES 17.45/017.45

C. MISSION REDUCTION.

FOUR MISSIONS ABORTED. NINE REDUCED BY WEATHER. ONE MISSION ABORTED AND TWO REDUCED BY ARDF MALFUNCTION. ONE MISSION ABORTED AND TWO REDUCED BY AIRCRAFT MALFUNCTION/SERVICE.

FOUR. SHORT CELL.

A. OPERATIONAL 26 DAYS OUT OF 30 CMM AND THERE WERE 720 TARGETS OFFERED FOR 513 RESULTS. TWO OF FOUR DAYS LOST WERE CAUSED BY COMPUTER FAILURE.

B. SYSTEM STILL CONTINUES TO PROVIDE UNIQUE RESULTS OF EXTREME TACTICAL SIGNIFICANCE.

FIVE. COMMAND. CAPT J.E. FENTON WILL ASSUME COMMAND OF 547 SIG TP 1630 HRS 5 JUL

56.2.5 ARDF Flying Hours

The total ARDF flying hours for the month were⁸⁷⁰:

Year	Month	Flying hours	Total Fixes	Good <1000mts	Fair 1-2000Mts	Poor >2000 Mts	Cut	Missions Lost	Remarks
1970	Jun	147.55	63	21	36		6	19	Incl reduced missions due to weather

Figure 543: D440 Fixes and movement - June 70⁸⁷¹

56.2.6 Summary of Main ARDF Fixes

The following table is a summary of the main ARDF fixes for June 1970⁸⁷²:

Date	Loc	Unit
01-Jun-70	YS601964	HQ BA LONG PROV
01-Jun-70	YS495514	HQ LONG DAT Dist Unit

⁸⁷⁰ Compiled from MI8 Records held at ASD archives.

⁸⁷¹ Plot compiled by Bob Hartley from Bennington, S. (Curator - Official History), Vietnam Battle Intelligence Computer data tapes – Part 2, Australian War Memorial – Canberra, 19 November 2014, and MI8 Records held at ASD archives. A history of D440 Battalion can be found free-to-read on the Internet ie: Chamberlain, E.P., The Viet Cong D440 Battalion: Their Story (and the Battle of Binh Ba), 2013.

⁸⁷² Compiled by Bob Hartley from 547 Sig Tp Activity Reports supplied by ASD and Bennington, S. (Curator - Official History), Vietnam Battle Intelligence Computer data tapes – Part 2, Australian War Memorial – Canberra, 19 November 2014./ No Monthly ARDF Reports available possible. the data tapes may only include fxes from SPAR reports signalled to HQ1ATF.



Date	Loc	Unit
01-Jun-70	YS253983	HQ 274 Regt
04-Jun-70	YS277994	HQ SR4
04-Jun-70	YT294022	HQ 74 Arty Regt
04-Jun-70	YT760107	HQ MR7
04-Jun-70	YS488533	LONG DAT Dist Unit
05-Jun-70	YT817024	Regional Committee, MR7
05-Jun-70	YT749091	HQ MR7
06-Jun-70	YS614978	HQ BA LONG PROV
06-Jun-70	YS362849	HQ D440
06-Jun-70	YS347641	VUNG TAU City Unit & CHAU DUC Dist
06-Jun-70	YS492497	LONG DAT Dist Unit
08-Jun-70	YT748059	HQ MR7
08-Jun-70	YS467519	LONG DAT Dist Unit
09-Jun-70	YS304899	HQ 274 Regt
09-Jun-70	YS624900	HQ BA LONG PROV
09-Jun-70	YS345755	HQ D440
09-Jun-70	YT962092	HQ NVA 33 Regt
09-Jun-70	YS275968	HQ SR4
10-Jun-70	YT347037	HQ 1/274 Regt
10-Jun-70	YS407759	HQ D440
10-Jun-70	YS610897	HQ BA LONG PROV
10-Jun-70	YS289930	HQ 274 Regt
11-Jun-70	YS615904	HQ BA LONG PROV
11-Jun-70	YT767061	HQ MR7
11-Jun-70	YS492500	LONG DAT Dist Unit
12-Jun-70	YS626906	HQ BA LONG PROV
12-Jun-70	YT276033	HQ 74 Arty Regt
12-Jun-70	YT759066	HQ MR7
12-Jun-70	YT277000	HQ SR4
15-Jun-70	YS321873	HQ 274 Regt
15-Jun-70	YS499518	LONG DAT Dist Unit
15-Jun-70	YS559926	HQ BA LONG PROV
15-Jun-70	YT748081	HQ MR7
16-Jun-70	YS412925	HQ D440
16-Jun-70	YS558952	HQ BA LONG PROV
17-Jun-70	YS591983	HQ BA LONG PROV
18-Jun-70	YS569965	HQ BA LONG PROV
18-Jun-70	YS282666	OF POSS FWD ELMS MR7
18-Jun-70	YS294907	HQ 274 Regt
18-Jun-70	YT741109	HQ MR7



Date	Loc	Unit
19-Jun-70	YS581932	HQ BA LONG PROV
20-Jun-70	YS404894	HQ D440
20-Jun-70	YS567955	HQ BA LONG PROV
20-Jun-70	YT749087	HQ MR7
21-Jun-70	YS571967	HQ BA LONG PROV
21-Jun-70	YS394840	HQ D440
22-Jun-70	YS411846	HQ D440
22-Jun-70	YT296018	HQ 74 Arty Regt
22-Jun-70	YS558956	HQ BA LONG PROV
23-Jun-70	YS506526	LONG DAT Dist Unit
23-Jun-70	YS573943	HQ BA LONG PROV
24-Jun-70	YT252027	HQ 74 Arty Regt
24-Jun-70	YS411838	HQ D440
26-Jun-70	YS493502	LONG DAT Dist Unit
26-Jun-70	YS491508	LONG DAT Dist Unit
27-Jun-70	YS405855	HQ D440
27-Jun-70	YS580978	HQ BA LONG PROV
27-Jun-70	YT760090	HQ MR7
27-Jun-70	YT265000	HQ SR4
28-Jun-70	YS280981	HQ SR4
28-Jun-70	YS494506	LONG DAT Dist Unit
28-Jun-70	YS303916	HQ 274 Regt
28-Jun-70	YT717092	HQ MR7
28-Jun-70	YT276002	2 Bn 274 Regt (Poss Bn CP)
29-Jun-70	YS610955	HQ BA LONG PROV
29-Jun-70	YS412863	HQ D440
29-Jun-70	YS492514	LONG DAT Dist Unit
29-Jun-70	YS279987	HQ SR4
30-Jun-70	YS194907	U/I UNIT, Pos Subordinate to SIB COSVN
30-Jun-70	YS719989	HQ MR7



56.2.7 Operation Concrete II DF Detachment

In early June, a four-man detachment was deployed to FSB Brigid⁸⁷³ ⁸⁷⁴in support of Operation Concrete II⁸⁷⁵ to attempt to provide a location for D440 Bn and supporting elements

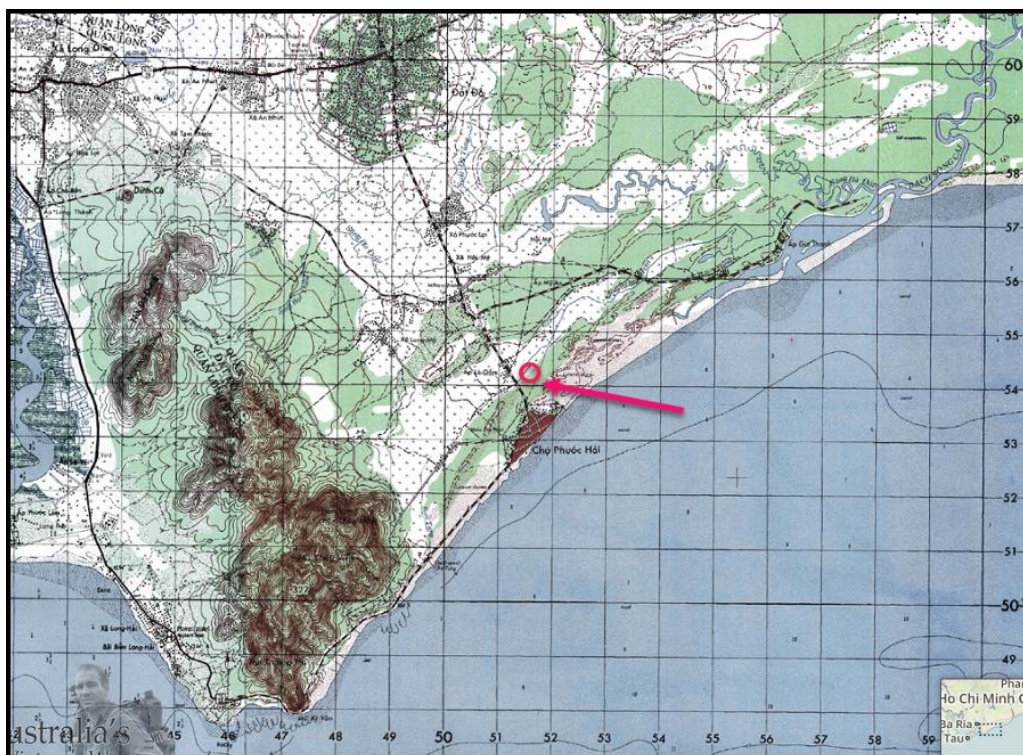


Figure 544: Location NDP/FSB Brigid⁸⁷⁶

56.2.7.1 Detachment Personnel

The detachment comprised WO2 Jock McCartney, (one unidentified), Sigs Phil Rutherford, Kev Petersen and equipped with the Telefunken⁸⁷⁷ Portable DF System.

Phil Rutherford recalled⁸⁷⁸:

⁸⁷³ Picken, Bruce. *Fire Support Base Vietnam (Kindle Locations 8881-8892)*. Big Sky Publishing. Kindle Edition. NDP Brigid first commenced operations on 8 May when an L5 Pack Howitzer was moved from Nui Dat and redeployed at Brigid. The gun was first manned by a detachment from 107 Field Battery, RAA, and, on 20 May, by 106 Field Battery, RAA. The photograph shows the early stages of construction with mesh matting laid over the sand to provide a road surface for wheeled vehicles.

⁸⁷⁴ Also noted as being called Brigit.

⁸⁷⁵ Picken, Bruce. *Fire Support Base Vietnam (Kindle Locations 8867-8871)*. Big Sky Publishing. Kindle Edition. Operation Concrete II followed on from Concrete I and continued its concept with 7 RAR Battalion Headquarters relocated to the Horseshoe in AO Cathy. It was to remain at this location for the remainder of this tour. The plan was to ambush the built-up areas astride Routes 23 and 44 using three companies operating from firm bases at FSB Horseshoe and NDP Brigid near the village of Lang Phuoc Hai. A, C and D Companies were assigned the ambushing tasks while B Company operated in depth until 20 May. A fourth company was to continue operating in the Tan Ru area to deny freedom of movement to the enemy from the north into the southern populated areas

⁸⁷⁶ In March 1971 a two man detachment was deployed to FSB Brigid to search for VC VHF transmissions.

⁸⁷⁷ The Troop had in its stores a Telefunken PE-484 body-wearable miniature direction finder that could be used as a manpack DF system on patrols. (See Annex C). It is not known when the Telefunken Set was delivered to the Troop. It is not shown in the Troop Stocktake in 1970 but listed as a loan store in the Handover/Takeover Stocktake for OCs in 1 July 1970.

⁸⁷⁸ Email to Bob Hartley 18 September 2018.



The four of us (myself and the three gents in the attached photo) drove down to FSB Brigit (when it was called an FOB – the first time I had ever heard that description) where we were to DF our friends in the Long Hais. The plan was that we would pin their location using the Telefunks and the following day at around 0800 there would be an air strike, barrage from a navy ship sitting off shore, and from the artillery at Nui Dat. 7 RAR on tanks and APCs would then assault through the area at the base of the Long Hais and up into the hills.



Figure 545: Kev Petersen, Jock McCartney, Unidentified⁸⁷⁹

The other photo is of one of the tanks that had thrown a track. Coincidentally it was driven by a guy I had been to school with, Herbie Green. He had been called up and was doing his time with the tanks.



Figure 546: FSB Brigit

⁸⁷⁹ Photos courtesy of Phil Rutherford.



Anyway, the plan was for myself and Jock McCartney to go along the coast on APCs with an infantry escort, wander off into the bush and take a number of cuts from the south. The other two would take the Land Rover, go back along the way we came in, turn left and head along a track towards the Long Hais. They would take more cuts from the east or north east. We would all then return to the FOB, make the calculations and inform 547 and/or ATF HQ.

That we duly did. The last sked for the day was, I believe, 1700hrs. Jock and I headed out along the coast seated on top an APC with a platoon of infantry in the other two APCs for escort. I know we had the Telefunkens because the infantry guys thought it a great laugh that he was carrying this brown 'attache case' type bag and wouldn't let go of it. Anyway, we got to our loc and the APCs pulled up into a hull down position in the sand dunes, facing the Long Hais. He and I then took off into the scrub where he selected a fairly open bit of ground (very dumb idea in retrospect), pulled the DF kit out and set it up. I believe it sat on a tripod with a loop antenna (not the body antenna but another one – much like a coat hanger), and turned the receiver in.



Figure 547: PE-484 Tripod Antenna⁸⁸⁰

After a bit the VC began their transmission and he twisted the antenna around a few times, taking notes. After about ten minutes we packed up and headed back to the APCs. I don't know how Jock felt but I wasn't impressed when we got back and there was only one tankie sitting in the turret behind a .50cal machine gun, the rest of the crews were in the back having a coffee and goffers, while the infantry guys were having a swim.

We got back to the FOB where the others told us that they had had a similar experience. They headed out in the Land Rover and got as far along the track as the infantry would go. They refused to go further into the scrub as they reckoned the road was mined. This didn't seem to be important to the other two guys as they were evidently not close enough so they headed further up the track themselves.

We evidently got good fixes because we were able to report to the infantry commander the position of the VC XMTR. With that we had a meal and settled down inside a couple of curved corrugated tin shelters. About two in the morning we were shaken out of our sleep with the mortars clanging away right beside us. One of the patrols had been hit and the FOB was on stand to. We didn't have a particular job so we stayed inside our little tin shelter. (You can see the shelters in the rear of the photo with the threesome in it.)

⁸⁸⁰ <http://www.cryptomuseum.com/df/telefunken/pe484/>



The next morning we offered to take another series of cuts to make sure the VC were still there. The infantry said that they wouldn't give us any assistance as they were all preparing for the assault, so we just wandered off and did the best we could. I can't remember if the other two took the Land Rover out or not, but Jock and I wandered down the road a ways and took some cuts on the 0700hrs sked. When the other guys came back we compared notes and found that Charlie had moved another two or so kilometres up unto the Long Hais. We informed the company commander but he said it was too late. All the plans had been made so we shook our heads and wandered up into the sand dunes to watch the action.

The planned time for the first barrage (0800hrs) came and went, so we just sat there and waited. It wasn't until after 1000hrs that the first rounds hit the ground and the show began. We couldn't see all that much except dust and tracer, so after a while we packed up and headed back to Nui Dat.

56.2.8 Very Reliable Source Reports

During the month, 199 LIB sent several Very Reliable Source⁸⁸¹ messages⁸⁸² to HQ 1ATF Operations Duty Officer⁸⁸³.

56.2.8.1 Extract 2 June 70

77	1703H	F/ 199 LIB	Usually reliable source reports BA LONG Province HQ at YS582917 today.	Arty info
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Figure 548: Extract 1703 local time message from 199 LIB.
(Usually reliable source reports BA LONG HQ Province HQ at YS582917)

56.2.8.2 Extract 3 June 70

132	1639H	F/199LIB	From LO. A usually reliable source today indicated location of BA LONG Province HQ. GR YS583940.	
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Figure 549: Extract 1639 local time message from 199 LIB.
(From LO. A usually reliable source today indicated location of BA LONG Province HQ. GR YS583940)

56.2.8.3 Extract 9 June 70

1728H	F/ 199 LIB	YS362849- from a usually reliable source: D67 Engr Battalion is in above loc.	
-------	------------	---	--

Figure 550: Extract 1728 local time message from 199 LIB
(YS3632849-from a usually reliable source D67 Engr Battalion is at above loc.)

475	1112H	F/ 199 LIB	Usually reliable source indicate Bah Long Province HQ at YS624900 Source very good time cate this morn.	Arty info
-----	-------	------------	---	-----------

Figure 551: Extract 1112 local time message from 199 LIB
(Usually reliable source indicate Bah Long Province HQ at YS624900 Source very good time cate [sic – prob date] this morn)

⁸⁸¹ A 'Very Reliable Source Report' was a sanitised Sigint report i.e. ARDF Fix or Spot Report. Later changed to A 'Usually Reliable Source Report' and Special Agent Report (SPAR).

⁸⁸² It is believed these messages were extracts from 547 Sig Tp ARDF eports passed to HQ IIFV and subordinate units.

⁸⁸³ AWM95, 1/4/190, HQ 1 ATF Narrative, Duty Officer's Log, 1-30 June 1970.



56.2.8.4 Extract 12 June 70

667	1140H	F/ 199 LIB LO	LO (From). Usually reliable source indicates BA LONG HQ at YS626906. Source excellent. Dated 12 Jun 70.
-----	-------	---------------	---

Figure 552: Extract 1140 local time message from 199 LIB.

(LO (From). Usually reliable source indicated BA LONG HQ at YS6262906. Source excellent. Dated 12 Jun 70.)

56.2.8.5 Extract 17 June 70

1047	1140H	F/ 199 LIB	Pse advise your reaction to rep from usually reliable sources (but info graded poor) that D440 is at YS412925. Info received by higher yesterday pm but only rec this loc this morn. If its true there are lots of baddies around our loc.	G2 Int "Unlikely poss small HQ grp in N part Phuoc Tuy 199 LIB advised."
------	-------	------------	--	--

Figure 553: Extract 1110 local time⁸⁸⁴ message from 199 LIB.

(Please advise your reaction to rep from usually reliable sources (but info graded G2 Int "Unlikely poss poor") that D440 is at YS412925. Info received by higher yesterday pm but only rec small HQ grp in N part this loc this morn. If its true there are lots of baddies around our loc. Phuoc Tuy 199 LIB advised.)

56.2.8.6 Extract 24 June 70

Sheet No 134		LOG SHEETS		Date 24 Jun 70
		G (OPS) - HQ 1 ATF (MAIN)		
Serial	Time	To or From	Events	Action
2075	2030H	F/ 199 LIB	2nd of the 47th Mechanized bn have moved into NHON TRAC area, all forces of 199 have moved out. Locations from usually reliable sources 440 YS392845 BAH LONG Province HQ YS584926.	Arty info Arty info

Figure 554: Extract 2030 local time message from 199 LIB

(2nd of the 47th Mechanised bn have moved into NHON TRAC area, all of 199 have moved out. Locations from usually reliable sources 440 YS392845 BAH LONG Province HQ YS584926)

⁸⁸⁴ The times received are approximately 20 minutes after 547 Sig Tp usually sent reports after completion of ARDF missions.

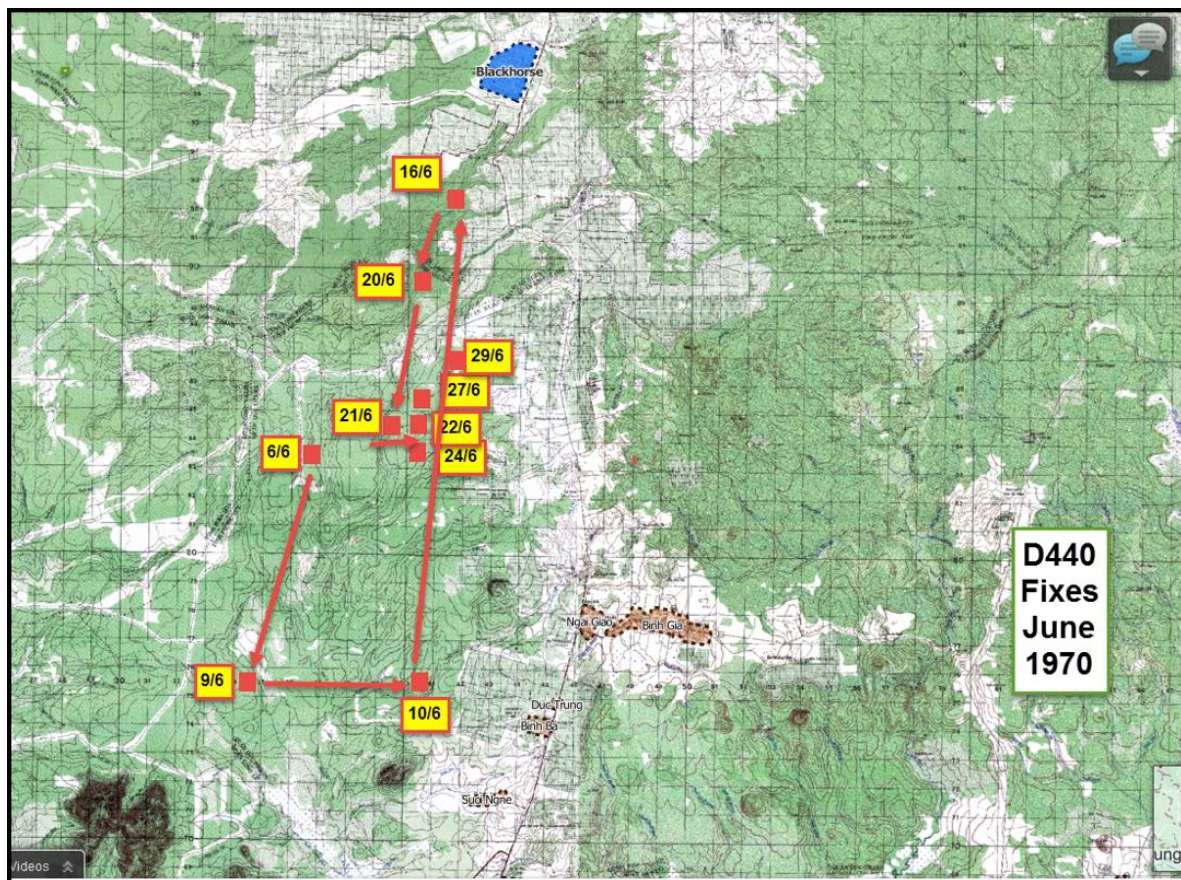


Figure 555: D440 Fixes and movement - June 70⁸⁸⁵

⁸⁸⁵ Plot compiled by Bob Hartley from Bennington, S. (Curator - Official History), Vietnam Battle Intelligence Computer data tapes – Part 2, Australian War Memorial – Canberra, 19 November 2014, and M18 Records held at ASD archives. A history of D440 Battalion can be found free-to-read on the Internet ie: Chamberlain, E.P., The Viet Cong D440 Battalion: Their Story (and the Battle of Binh Ba), 2013.



CHAPTER 57 – JULY 1970

57.1 Personnel

57.1.1 Arrivals and Departures

There were no new arrivals in July and only one departure.

Departure

9 July

Captain Errol Poultney

57.1.2 Change of Command

Captain Jack Fenton assumed command of the Troop on 8 July.

57.1.3 Visitors

Malcolm Raymond (WRE) arrived on 13 August with a new computer for the SSL and remained until 30 September.

John Murdoch (DSD), Gerry Gorman (DSD), Reg Swartz, MHR (the liberal Member for the seat of Darling Downs), LTCOL Deacon (Director of Army Aviation) and Colonel John Williamson (Director of Signals) also visited.

57.2 Operations

57.2.1 ARDF Tests

On 5 July, Major Best (WRE) sent the following signal to various agencies reference testing of the new ARDF equipment⁸⁸⁶.

⁸⁸⁶ AWM 98 R5821/1/8 Project Thorough.



NNNNOSB 326 HH
 RAMARL
 PP RAMABC 002 1870100
 ZNY SSSSS
 P R 050030Z JUL 70
 FM 547 SIG TP
 TO RAYXWT/ WEAPONS SALSIBURY
 INFO RAMARL/ AUSTFORCE VIETNAM
 RAYWAA/ ARMY CANBERRA
 RAYAFA/ ARMY MELBOURNE
 BT
 S E C R E T . SIGW 627.
 FOR TECHAREA ATTN PATERSON TSE. INFO CSO AFV CMM MAJ CATTANACH
 M18 CMM D EGPT MELBOURNE FROM BEST. PROJECT THOROUGH. YOUR X868
 E5669/3/23 NOTAL.
 ONE. EGPT FLIGHT TESTED SATISFACTORILY BETWEEN 27 AND 30 JUNE. NOW IN
 OPERATIONAL USE SINCE 1 JULY . FULL DETAILS BEING ADVISED SEPARATELY
 TWO. WILL MODIFY C/PSU FOR METER DISPLAY AS INDICATED.
 THREE. USERS HAPPY CMM PROPOSE LEAVE COUNTRY CHARTER FLIGHT 9 JULY
 BT

Figure 556: Maj Best Signal

57.2.1.1 Advise to DSD

In a follow-up signal M18 advised DSD:

S E C R E T COMINT CHANNELS M18/2228

FROM M18 FOR DP. ARDF.

ONE. THE FIRST ENGINEERED ARDF MODEL WAS INTRODUCED INTO OPERATIONAL SERVICE 1 JUL 70. RESULTS TO DATE ARE OF THE SAME ORDER OF ACCURACY AS THOSE ACHIEVED BY THE EXPERIMENTAL MODELS

TWO. WRE EXPECT TO COMPLETE NO2 AND NO3 MODELS BY EARLY 70 BUT THESE MODELS WILL BE EXPOSED TO 2 TO 3 MONTHS OF ENVIRONMENTAL TESTING PRIOR TO BEING AVAILABLE FOR OPERATIONAL USE.



THREE. MI8 HAS REQUESTED THAT DURING THIS PERIOD OF TESTING WRE DESIGN NEW BASE PLATE TO ENABLE TWO POSITIONS TO BE FITTED INTO PORTER AIRCRAFT EG ONE ARDF AND ONE SEARCH POSITION. IN ADDITION A TRAILING WIRE ANTENNA IS TO BE FITTED TO ALLOW THE PASSIVE DF SYSTEM TO BE MORE EFFECTIVE.

FOUR. THE ORIGINAL PRODUCTION PROGRAMME CALLED FOR FIVE SINGLE MODELS PLUS TWO COMPLETE RESERVE POSITIONS TO BE CONSTRUCTED. ARMY HAVE NOW REVISED THIS PROGRAMME AS FOLLOWS.

ALFA. PHASE 1 THREE SINGLE MODELS.

BRAVO. PHASE 2 - (1) ONE SINGLE MODEL.

(2) FITMENT OF TRAILING WIRE ANTENNA.

(3) CONSTRUCTION OF NEW BASE PLATES TO ALLOW FITMENT OF DOUBLE POSITIONS AS REQUIRED.

FIVE. EXPECT ALLOCATION OF EQUIPMENTS TO BE AS FOLLOWS.

ALFA. THREE EQUIPMENTS IN VIETNAM EG ONE DOUBLE POSITION WITH ONE SINGLE AS RESERVE

BRAVO. ONE EQUIPMENT IN AUSTRALIA FOR TRAINING.

SIX. COST ESTIMATE OF PHASE ONE BY WRE IS AS FOLLOWS.

ALFA. WRE DESIGN COSTS 98,000 DOLLARS

BRAVO, ARMY COSTS 55,000 DOLLARS

NO COST ESTIMATES FOR PHASE TWO HAVE AS YET BEEN PREPARED.

SEVEN. PHASE THREE OF THIS PROGRAMME WILL BE A DESIGN STUDY REQUEST ON WRE CALLING FOR THE AUTOMATION OF PRESENT SYSTEM, EXPECT THIS TO BE LONG TERM STUDY WITH VIEW TO USE OF SYSTEM IN NEW PROJECT +N+ AIRCRAFT

57.2.2 547 Sig Tp Operation Report for July 1970

The 547 Sig Tp Op Report for Jul 70⁸⁸⁷ stated:

S E C R E T SPOKE SIGS617

FOR MI8. OP REPORT TO 31 JUL 70

ONE. WATCH HOURS NO CHANGE.

TWO. COVER RETURN AS AT 312400H JUL CLN

ALPHA. PRIORITY COVER – ALL VCMB.

(1) 05437	(10) 05449
(2) 05423	(11) 00667
(3) 05443	(12) 05445
(4) 00831	(13) J1816
(5) 05447	(14) 05444
(6) 05451	(15) 00835
(7) 05442	(16) 00843
(8) J0772	(17) J0496

⁸⁸⁷ DSD Declassified, 547 Sig Tp in Vietnam (tranche2)..



(9) 05448 (18) 00679

BRAVO. DEV GROUPS

(1) 05452 (10) J2291
 (2) 06217 (11) J2303
 (3) 06218 (12) J2446
 (4) 06219 (13) J2543
 (5) 06220 (14) J2654
 (6) 06222 (15) J2650
 (7) 06224 (16) N4962
 (8) J1917 (17) Y9083
 (9) J2062 (18) Y9086

*CHARLIE. ONE BANK TASKED TO COVER SSL
 SPECIAL EMPHASIS TARGETS.*

*THREE. ARDF.
 ALPHA. TOTAL FIXES 48
 BRAVO. GRADINGS, GOOD - 18. FAIR - 27. POOR - NIL. CUT - THREE.*

*CHARLIE. TOTAL FLYING TIME 100 HOURS.
 (1) WO MCCARTNEY NIL/80;30
 (2) SGT WILLIAMS 23.30/102.15
 (3) LCPL DANSKIN 29.00/263.00
 (4) SIG POTTER 26.10/310.45
 (5) SIG GILES 21.20/39.05*

DELTA. THIRTEEN MSNS ABORTED DUE WX.

ECHO. ELEVEN MSNS REDUCED DUE WX.

FOXTROT. TWO MSNS REDUCED ARDF MALFUNCTION.

GOLF. ONE MSN REDUCED A/C MALFUNCTION/SVC.

FOUR. SSL.

ALPHA. OP 29 DAYS OF 31.

BRAVO. 710 TARGETS OFFERED FOR 548 RESULTS.

*CHARLIE. SONDE FACILITY NOT EXPLOITABLE FOR
 PERIODS OVER THREE DAYS DUE TWO
 GENERATORS UN SVC. GENERATORS REPAIRED HOWEVER TWO NEW ONE
 NOW INSTALLED.*

57.2.3 ARDF Flying Hours

The total ARDF flying hours for the month were⁸⁸⁸:

Year	Month	Flying hours	Total Fixes	Good <1000mts	Fair 1-2000Mts	Poor >2000 Mts	Cut	Missions Lost	Remarks
1970	Jul	100	48	18	27		3	30	Incl reduced

⁸⁸⁸ Compiled from MI8 Records held at ASD archives.



Year	Month	Flying hours	Total Fixes	Good <1000mts	Fair 1-2000Mts	Poor >2000 Mts	Cut	Missions Lost	Remarks
									missions due to weather

57.2.4 Summary of Main ARDF Fixes

The following table is a summary of the main ARDF fixes for July 1970⁸⁸⁹:

Date	Loc	Unit
01-Jul-70	YS588927	HQ BA LONG PROV
01-Jul-70	YS499520	LONG DAT Dist Unit
02-Jul-70	YS370790	D440
02-Jul-70	YS549974	HQ BA LONG PROV
03-Jul-70	YS396812	D440
03-Jul-70	YS595990	HQ BA LONG PROV
03-Jul-70	YS298906	HQ 274 Regt
04-Jul-70	YS281896	HQ 274 Regt
04-Jul-70	YT758080	HQ MR7
04-Jul-70	YS253981	HQ SR4
05-Jul-70	YS569924	HQ BA LONG PROV
05-Jul-70	YS270754	Elms MR7
06-Jul-70	YT763082	HQ MR7
06-Jul-70	YS192817	SIB COSVN
06-Jul-70	YS482517	LONG DAT Dist Unit
06-Jul-70	YS332799	Elms MR7
06-Jul-70	YS330912	HQ 274 Regt
09-Jul-70	YS464524	LONG DAT Dist Unit
09-Jul-70	YS359655	CHAU DUC Dist Unit
13-Jul-70	YT292090	HQ SR4
14-Jul-70	YS493512	LONG DAT Dist Unit
14-Jul-70	YS315950	HQ 274 Regt
15-Jul-70	YS320957	HQ 274 Regt
15-Jul-70	YS219890	3BN 274 Regt
15-Jul-70	YS287970	HQ SR4
18-Jul-70	YS295905	HQ 274 Regt
19-Jul-70	YS30092	Elms HQ 274 Regt

⁸⁸⁹ Compiled by Bob Hartley from 547 Sig Tp Activity Reports supplied by ASD and Bennington, S. (Curator - Official History), Vietnam Battle Intelligence Computer data tapes – Part 2, Australian War Memorial – Canberra, 19 November 2014./ No Monthly ARDF Reports available possible. the data tapes may only include fixes from SPAR reports signalled to HQ1ATF.



Date	Loc	Unit
19-Jul-70	YS23690	2 3/274 Regt
23-Jul-70	YT272015	HQ SR4
23-Jul-70	YS493503	LONG DAT Dist Unit
23-Jul-70	YS374816	HQ D440
23-Jul-70	YS279888	3/274 Regt
24-Jul-70	YT364087	1/274 Regt
24-Jul-70	YT844098	HQ MR7
24-Jul-70	YT272014	HQ SR4
24-Jul-70	YS500515	LONG DAT Dist Unit
24-Jul-70	YS675933	HQ BA LONG PROV
24-Jul-70	YS375818	HQ D440
26-Jul-70	YT760098	HQ MR7 YT279024
26-Jul-70	YT279024	HQ 74 Arty Regt
26-Jul-70	YS718972	HQ BA LONG PROV
27-Jul-70	YT335009	HQ 74 Arty Regt
27-Jul-70	YT737071	HQ MR7
27-Jul-70	YS603934	HQ BA LONG PROV
27-Jul-70	YS397841	U/I
27-Jul-70	YS489500	LONG DAT Dist Unit
28-Jul-70	YT768068	HQ MR7
28-Jul-70	YT705918	HQ BA LONG PROV
29-Jul-70	YS726923	HQ BA LONG PROV
29-Jul-70	YS497511	LONG DAT Dist Unit
29-Jul-70	YS305935	HQ 274 Regt

57.2.5 J m Danskin's ARDF Story

Around this time Jim (Blue) Danskin was flying ARDF Missions in the May Tao area. At Annex P, Jim has written a story about one of his missions.



57.2.6 CO SSG II FFV Award

From July 1969 to July 1970, Major R Catlett was the CO of the US Army Special Security Group (SSG) at II FFV and in regular contact with the Troop. On his departure from Vietnam he received the following recommendation which resulted in the award of the US Joint Service Commendation Medal.

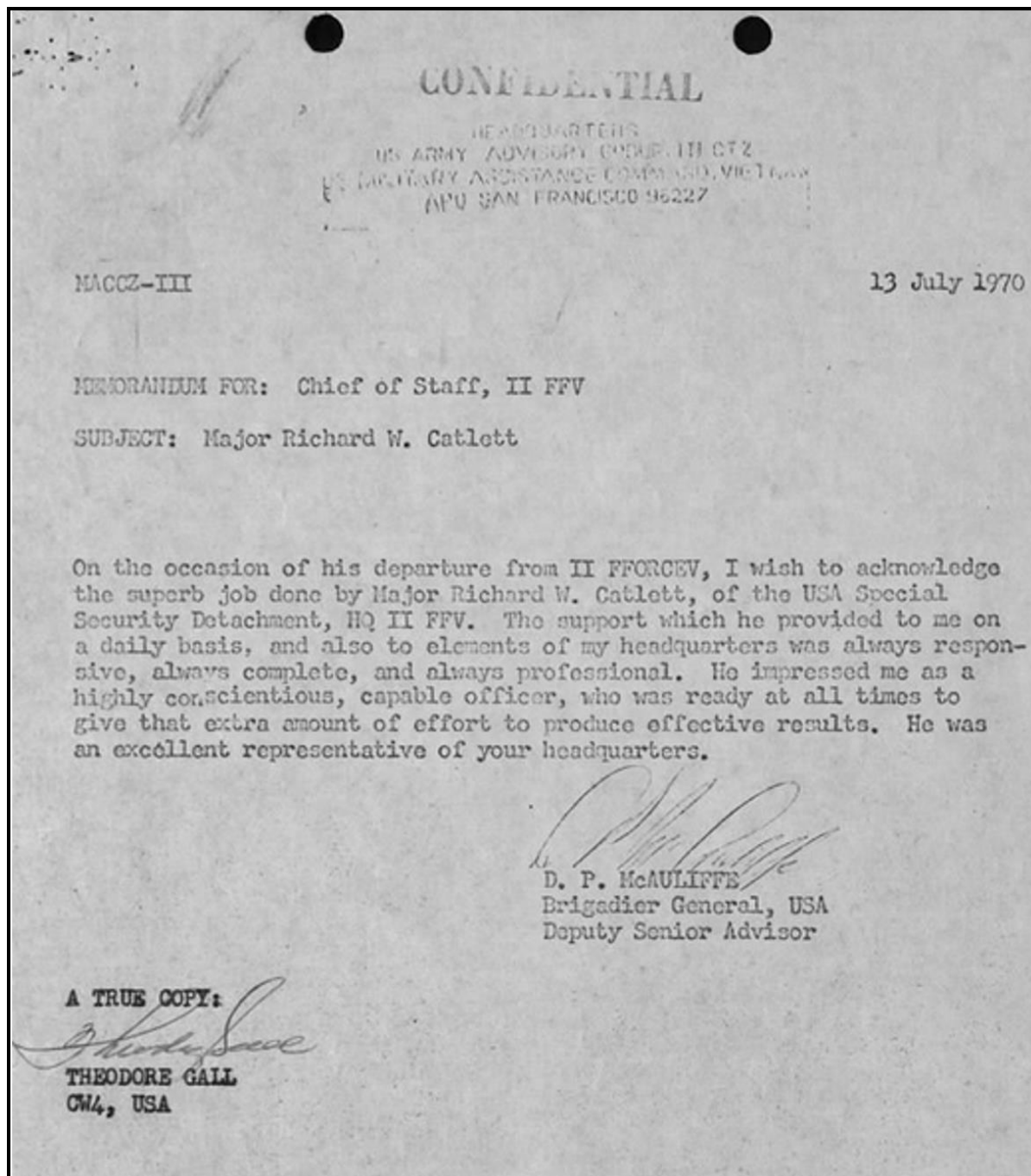


Figure 557: Maj Catlett Letter



57.2.6.1 Letter to DHAAT

In May 2012, Lt Col Catlett (Retd) sent the following letter to the DHAAT⁸⁹⁰

LTCOL Richard W Catlett (Retd)
Former Commander, SSG IIFFV
1 May 2012

I take great pleasure in recognizing the meritorious achievement of the officers and men of the 547th Signal Troop during the period July 1969 through July 1970.

As the Commanding Officer, II Field Force, Special Security Detachment, United On 29 July Department of the Army, attached to the United States Military Assistance Command, Vietnam, I was in daily communications contact with the Troop via the special communications network. Due to the identical nature of our sensitive and highly classified missions it was necessary to conduct numerous intelligence liaison and coordination meetings.

During this period, Major [⁸⁹¹] Brian Doyle and Captain Errol Poultney and their men demonstrated the highest degree of professional competence, initiative and devotion to duty in execution of all assigned II Field Forces tasks while achieving exceptional results in accomplishing greatly expanded operations missions during this period.

The unit's collection and dissemination of critical intelligence was vital to information needed by ground commanders on a day to day basis for conducting operations. The outstanding performance of duty by the officers and men for extremely long periods each day under particularly trying conditions significantly contributed to the curtailment of enemy aggression in the Nui Dat area and elsewhere in the Republic of Vietnam. The distinguished performance of duty by all members of the 547th Signal Troop represents great and outstanding achievement and selfless dedication which brings great credit to all the officers and men of the unit, the Australian Armed Forces and the people of Australia.

It was a distinct honor and pleasure to have worked with the 547th Signal Troop. I heartily recommend for the award of honors to the 547th Signal Troop.

⁸⁹⁰ <https://defence-honours-tribunal.gov.au/wp-content/uploads/2015/06/Report-of-the-Inquiry-into-547-Signal-Troop.pdf>

⁸⁹¹ Brian Doyle was a Captain.



57.2.7 199 LIB to depart Area

On 29 June, the 199 LIB was notified of its inactivation⁸⁹². At this time, and in early July the Brigade was active against some of the usual HQ 1ATF targets. The Troop ACV was also deployed to support the operations⁸⁹³.

1. GENERAL.

a. On 29 June 1970, the 199th Infantry Brigade was officially notified of its inactivation. At that time the brigade tactical area of responsibility (TAOR) included all of Binh Tuy Province and Long Khanh Province. The Brigade was conducting operations against the 33d NVA Regiment, Headquarters Military Region 6 and 7, elements of the 84th Rear Service Group, Ba Long Province Headquarters, the 274th VC Regiment, and local forces in the area. The Brigade was participating actively in the "Dong Tien" (Progress Together) operations, conducting daily operations, and training the Territorial Forces. The Brigade's operations were modified when II Field Force published the "Wet Season Strategy Plan" which was implemented on 15 July. This plan called for the Brigade to release all of Long Khanh Province except the southeastern portion to other US and ARVN units. With this realignment it was necessary for the Brigade to relocate its Command Post and those of the maneuver battalions. All CP's were relocated into the new tactical area of operations by 15 July. Located to the north of the Brigade was the 1st Cavalry Division(AM), to the west the 18th ARVN Division, and the 25th Infantry Division, and to the east I Field Force. Australian forces were conducting operations to the southwest. The 199th Infantry Brigade held one permanent base at Camp Frenzell-Jones (LBN) and eleven fire support bases. During inactivation three fire support bases were transferred to the relieving units, one was transferred to District HQ's, and seven were closed.

Figure 558: 199 LIB Inactivation⁸⁹⁴

⁸⁹² <https://apps.dtic.mil/dtic/tr/fulltext/u2/878026.pdf>

⁸⁹³ Actual location not determined.

⁸⁹⁴ <https://apps.dtic.mil/dtic/tr/fulltext/u2/878026.pdf>



Figure 559: ACV returning from deployment⁸⁹⁵



Figure 560: Denis Dean inside ACV

⁸⁹⁵ Photo courtesy Denis Dean.



CHAPTER 58 – AUGUST 1970

58.1 Personnel

58.1.1 Arrivals and Departures

In August, there were five arrivals and seven departures.

Arrivals

5 August

Corporal Malcolm Simpson¹

3 August

Warrant Officer Bryan Russell

Corporal Andrew Coyle

Corporal Allan Thomson

Signalman Vincent McQuillan

Departures

10 August

Signalman Jesophat Potter

13 August

Warrant Officer Andrew Cockburn

Corporal Maxwell Starr

20 August

Corporal Garth Brown

22 August

Corporal Glen Trussell

27 August

Corporal Ronald Williams

Lance Corporal Les Whitney

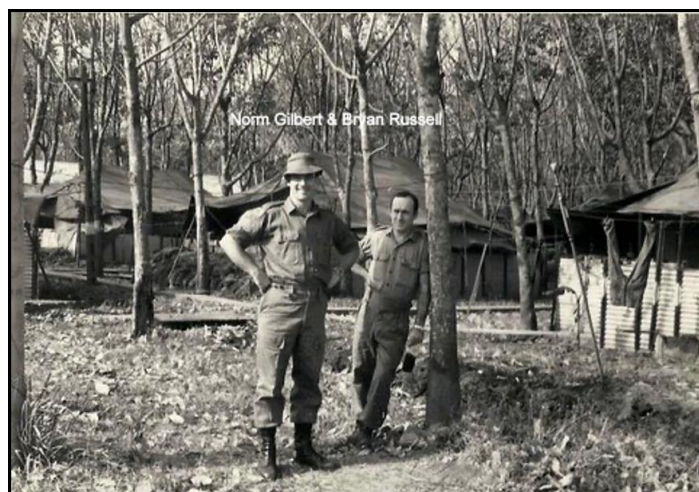


Figure 561: Norm Gilbert and Bryan Russell⁸⁹⁶

⁸⁹⁶ Photo courtesy Norm Gilbert.



58.1.2 Employment Areas

Bryan Russell took over the duties of TSM from Andy Cockburn. Mal Simpson and Vince McQuillan joined the Set Room crew, Allan Thomson joined Tech Maint and Andy Coyle took over as the Troop Clerk. After a while in the Set Room, Mal Simpson joined the ARDF team. Bryan Russell also flew several missions with ARDF.

58.1.3 161 Recce Flt Fixed Wing Pilots

In August, 2nd Lieutenant Ian Sinnott joined 161 Recce Flt as a fixed wing pilot.

58.1.4 HQ AFV Monthly Strength Return

There was no change to the Establishment Strength of the Troop in August⁸⁹⁷:

SERIAL	FORMATION/UNIT	ESTABLISHMENT			POSTED STRENGTH		
		OFFR	OR	TOTAL	OFFR	OR	TOTAL
(a)	(b)	(c)	(d)	(e)	(f)	(g)	(h)
31	Det 547 Sig Tp	2	38	40	2	38	40

Figure 562: HQ AFV Strength Return for August 1970

58.2 Administration

58.2.1 Area Improvements

Area improvement continued. The twin garage for the Troop's two vehicles went up with little problem. However, some difficulties were experienced in the construction of the new toilet block. When it was finally completed it was quite an impressive structure, for which Colin Potter deserves a lot of the credit. The old site was concreted over, covered with a cross and helmet and inscribed, "Here lies the remains of 205 members of 547 Sig Tp."

58.3 Operations

58.3.1 547 Sig Tp ACV to Deploy

On 10 August, 547 Sig Tp received a Warning Order to deploy the ACV⁸⁹⁸:

⁸⁹⁷ <http://www.awm.gov.au/collection/AWM98/R723/1/13/5/>

⁸⁹⁸ AWM95 1/4/197 HQ 1ATF 1 – 31 Aug 1970 Annexes.



C49

MESSAGE FORM

PRIORITY 100330 Z AUG 70 R 569/1/52

FROM 1 ATF

TO A SQN 1 ARMD REGT B SQN 3 CAV REGT
4 FD REGT 1 FD SQN 104 SIG SQN
547 SIG TP HQ COY 1 ATF
INT AIR PSY OPS G A Q

INFO A SECT 1 TOFO SVY TP

DEPLOYMENT HQ 1 ATF (MAIN) (.)

HQ 1 ATF (MAIN) IS TO DEPLOY BY RD TO FSB LE LOI CMM YS 4576 CMM

ON 17 AUG 70 (.) GROUPING CLIN HQ 1 ATF (MAIN) CMM HQ A SQN 1 ARMD REGT CMM
HQ B SQN 3 CAV REGT CMM HQ PLUS ELMS PLANT TP 1 FD SQN CMM ELMS 104 SIG
SQN CMM ELMS 547 SIG TP CMM HQ COY (MINUS) 1 ATF (.) OC B SQN 3 CAV REGT
APPOINTED COMD HQ 1 ATF (MAIN) FOR LOCAL DEF AND ADMIN (.) NO MOVE
BEFORE 170600H AUG 70 (.) O GP AS ORDERED BY OC B SQN 3 CAV REGT (.)

ACK

Figure 563: Notification to Deploy

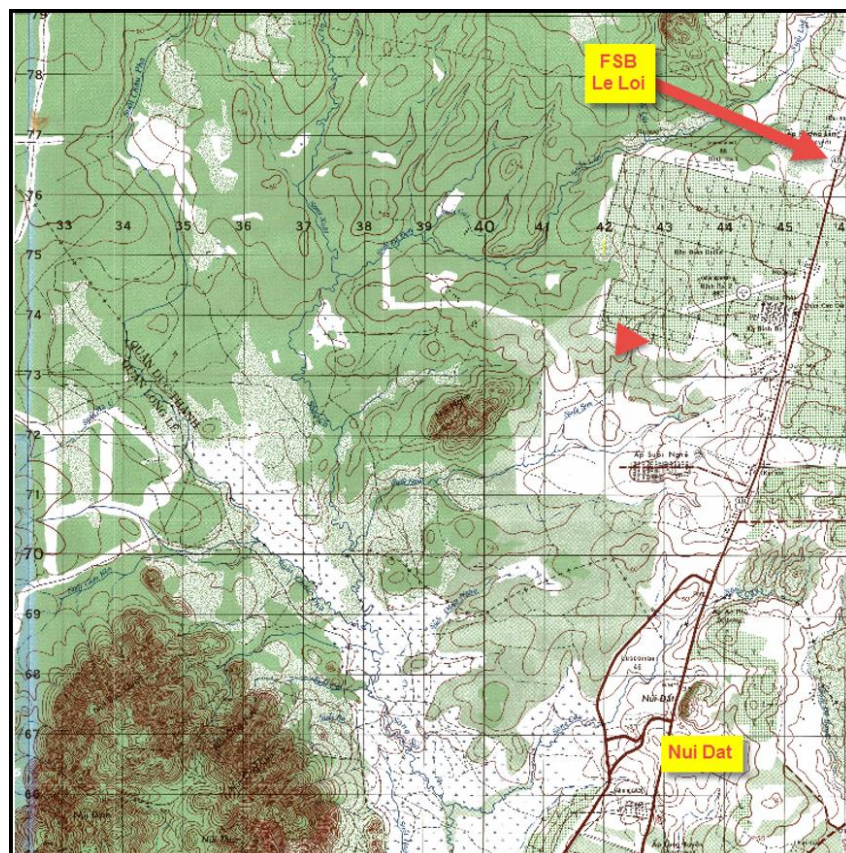


Figure 564: FSB Le Loi Location



MESSAGE FORM C56

PRIORITY 10 0630 Z AUG 70 R569/1/52

FROM 1 ATF CONFIDENTIAL

TO A SQN 1 ARMD REGT B SQN 3 ARV REGT OPS 0959
 4 FD REGT 1 FD SQN 104 SIG SQN
 547 SIG TP HQ COY 1 ATF TEMA
 INT AIR PSY OPS G A Q

DEPLOYMENT HQ 1 ATF (MAIN) (.)
 REFERENCE ALPHA (.) 1 ATF OPS 0958 OF 100330Z (.)
 PLANNING CONFERENCE IS TO BE HELD IN 1 ATF BRIEFING HUT AT 111400H (.)
 ALL ADDRESSEES ARE TO BE REPRESENTED (.) ACK

PAGE 1 OF 1 PAGES BLYTH OPS EBCRY 10
MaJ

Figure 565: Planning Conference

58.3.2 D65 Radio

HQ 1ATF INTSUM No 225/70 of 13 August contained details of D65 Radio and operating times⁸⁹⁹:

APPENDIX 2 TO ANNEX A
 to 1 ATF INTSUM No. 225/70
 dated 13 Aug 70

INTERROGATION REPORT
RALLIER NGUYEN TRUNG TON

Biographical Data.

1. Name: NGUYEN TRUNG TON
 D/POB: 1940 VAN TO, TU KY, HAI DUONG
 Rank/Appt: Lt (NVN)
 Unit: D65 Bn Hq
 Capturing Unit: 2 RAR
 Date: 100900 Aug 70
 Loc: YS301758

Figure 566: INTSUM Report

18. Communication.

D65 has its own radio set which is a very large and heavy set and which must be hand cranked when in use. The set can only send and receive in morse code and is used by D65 and Fwd HQ MR7 to liaise with MR7, through the commo-liaison station at SUOI THE (?). Transmissions are restricted so that they only operate between 2000 hrs and 0500 hrs. Liaison between the coys is effected by using runners.

Figure 567: Extract from INTSUM⁹⁰⁰

⁸⁹⁹ Ibid.

⁹⁰⁰ Email from Ernie Chamberlain 9 May 22: D65 was a VC engineer battalion – most action was in mines and route interdiction – including on Route 15. In 1970 its strength was reportedly “70” – down from an estimated 140 in mid-1969.



58.3.3 A Perfect Ambush.

On 11 August, 8 Platoon of C Company, 8RAR, established a night ambush at the village of Hoa Long just south of Nui Dat.

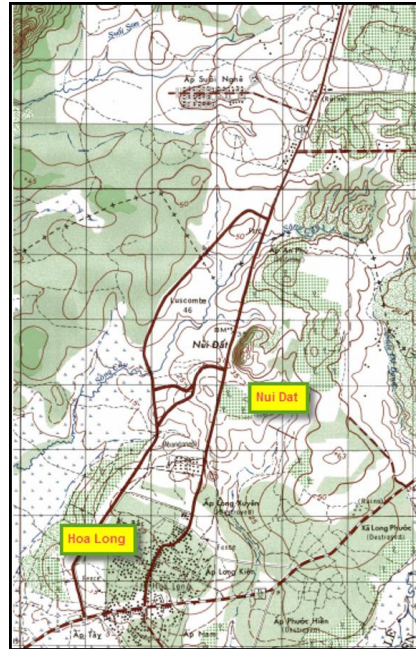


Figure 568: Hoa Long Location



Figure 569: Hoa Long

58.3.3.1 Ambush Activated

The ambush was activated at 0315 Hrs the 12th and resulted in 17 VC killed. The VC were well armed and loaded with rice, fish, and other supplies.



58.3.3.2 Duty Officer's Log

The following are extracts from HQ 1 ATF Duty Officers Log for 11 and 12 August⁹⁰¹:

862	2020H	F/ 8 RAR	Ptl M4 - YS429573. 10 P1 - YS434585. 8 P1 - YS402632. 9 P1 - YS419661. Ptl 42A - YS445583. 1 ARU 53 - YS445647. Ptl 41A - YS412592. 11 P1 - YS428580. Ptl 43A - YS440598. Ptl 44 - YS426527. 12 P1 - YS437601.
-----	-------	----------	---

867	2058H	F/ HOA LONG/ 8 RAR	C/s 32 of 8 RAR at YS402632 sighted estimated 50 en who approached from NW. Approx 75 - 100m from 32 they turned NE towards HOA LONG, probably trying to enter HL. 32 have moved onto route that en took in, hoping to get them on way out.
-----	-------	-----------------------	---

878	0015H	T/ BARIA LO HOA LONG	As a result of tonights activities W of HOA LONG, APC will cordon along R 2 from YS408635 - YS419662. Cordon will move in a couple of hrs, and has been directed to stop everyone with a pack. Cordon will remain until at least 121000H. 24 hr ptling will be conducted by APC and foot to W of R 2 UFW. Propose to take up with Province Chief FM aug 12 further measures to control HOA LONG. Pse advise Maj McPHERESON ASP by secure means.
-----	-------	-------------------------	---

879	0320H	F/ HOA LONG	C/s 32 in contact YS403633 (8 P1 8 RAR).
-----	-------	-------------	---

Figure 570: HQ 1ATF Duty Officer's Log Extracts

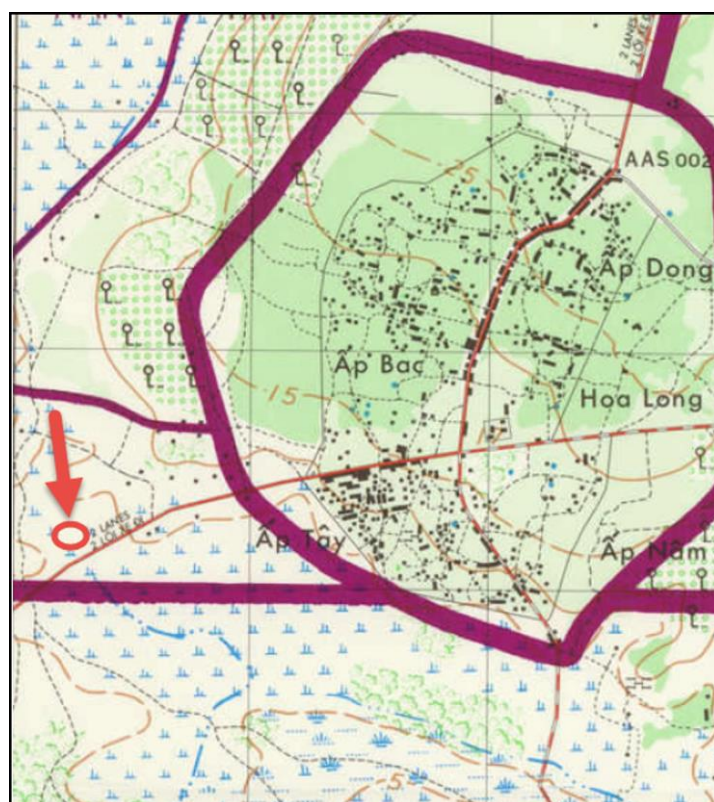


Figure 571: Location of Ambush

⁹⁰¹ AWM RCDIG1028058



58.3.3.3 Follow-up

A cordon of tanks, APCs and infantry was immediately thrown around the village to prevent the escape of other enemy believed to be hiding. A total of 19 National Liberation Front (NLF) soldiers were killed and ten captured.

58.3.3.4 Sitrep and INTSUM Extract

Extract from HQ 1ATF SITREP and INTSUM for the period 120001H to 122400H August 1970⁹⁰²:

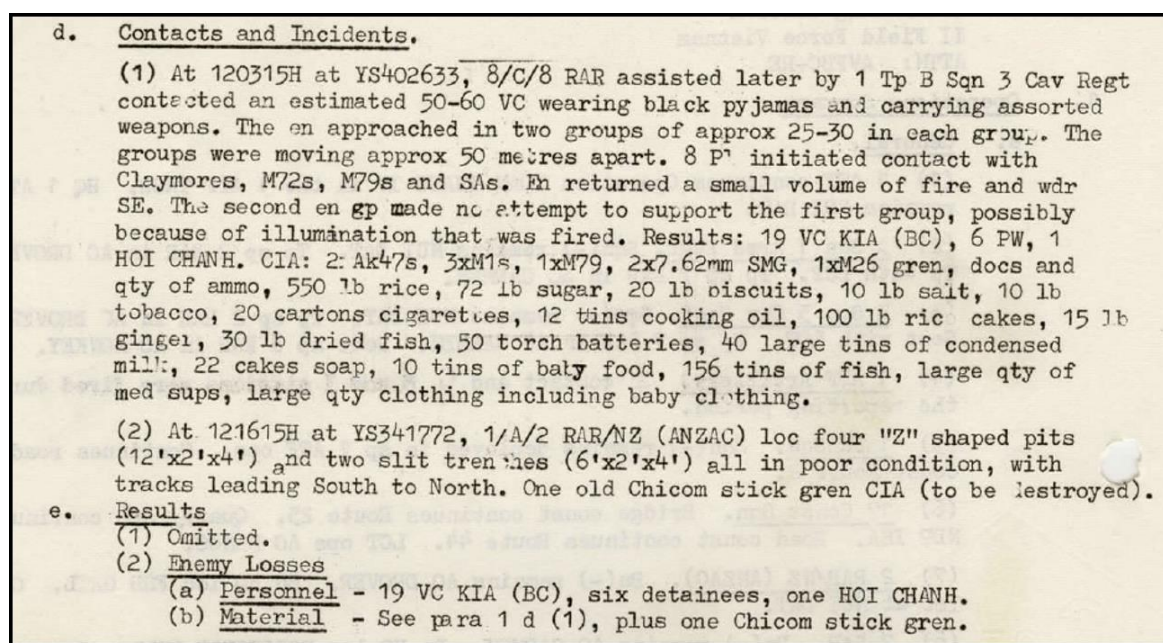


Figure 572: HQ 1ATF SITREP extract

⁹⁰² AWM RCDIG1028059



1st Australian Task Force INTSUM No. 224/70. G12
 Period covered from 120001H to 122400H Aug 70.
Summary of Enemy Activity. There was one contact with Task Force Elements.
 a. Ground Activity
 (1) AO MONKEY
 (a) (120315H) at YS402633, 8/C/8 RAR and 1/B/3 Cav Regt ambushed 50-60 VC who were leaving HOA LONG in two gps, each 50m apart, after having previously infiltrated at 112050 hrs on that night for a resup msn. (See INTSUM 223/70, para 3 a. (3) (c) for report on sighting). First gp engaged, second gp wdr possibly SE. Res: 19 VC KIA (BC), 6 VC PW, 1 HOI CHANH. CIA were: 2xAK47, 3xM1 carbines, 1xM79, 2x7.62mm SMG, 1xM26 grenade; ammo for all wpns; qty of docus, large qty of sups, see paras 4 e (2) (a) and 4 e (3).
 (b) (121955H) on info from HOI CHANH, LONG LE sub-sector detained 2 women both suspected of supplying the VC gp mentioned above. Intg continues.
Comment: See 1 ATF SUPINTREP 31/70 para 8. Capture of sups from CHAU DUC party 11 Aug by D & E Pl (INTSUM 223/70) forced return msn by larger gp. Further loss of all sups will leave this force in serious difficulties. It is likely that remnants of the gp, some of whom were wounded, remain hidden in HOA LONG and attempt would be made to wdr shortly. Intg of deta'nees continues to be reported separately. All idents CHAU DUC DISTRICT and C41.
 (2) AO DEWEE

Figure 573: HQ 1ATF INTSUM extract

Extract from the Australian Army Official History⁹⁰³:

The site was chosen on the basis of signals intelligence...

After a radio transmission from the headquarters of Chau Duc District Company was intercepted by 547 Signal Troop, the area was reconnoitred to identify the most likely enemy routes into the village.

Extract from the book *Vietnam: The Australian War*⁹⁰⁴:

On 12 August 1970 members of the Australian 8th Battalion inflicted the deadliest and most controversial ambush of the Australian war, in the rice paddies 5 kilometres east of Nui Dat. At 3.15 a.m., on a clear, moonlit night, a platoon of Charlie Company, led by Sergeant Chad Sherrin, caught a line of fifty Viet Cong guerrillas leaving Hoa Long laden with food supplies. Nineteen people, including six women, died in the claymore shrapnel storm...

... Task Force headquarters deemed Sherrin's ambush a great success. 'We have waited for this for a long time,' Henderson said. Congratulations flowed from American and South Vietnamese commanders, a sign of the rarity of an ambush on this scale at this stage of the war. 'Dear Brigadier Henderson,' wrote the US Lieutenant General Michael Davison, '[the] dedication and true professionalism demonstrated by your forces have significantly enhanced the eventuality of forcing the enemy out of Phuoc Tuy Province...

⁹⁰³ Extracts from *Fighting to the Finish. The Australian Army and the Vietnam War 1968 - 1975* by Ashley Ekins with Ian McNeill Allen & Unwin in association with the Australian War Memorial, page 456.

⁹⁰⁴ Ham, Paul (2010-03-17). *Vietnam: The Australian War* (Kindle Locations 10130-10144). HarperCollins Publishers. Kindle Edition.



58.3.3.5 547 Sig Tp Input

On 11 August, actions taken by the Troop were the precursor to the ambush. Jack Fenton recalled⁹⁰⁵:

There were several events of note on 11 August and all are briefly mentioned in a diary of the day.

While I was dealing with a vehicle problem at the HQ, operators Jim Danskin and Dennis Dean who were covering a Chau Duc HQ transmission copied readable low level traffic. The traffic was passed to Bob Ward (intelligence analysts) and David Schneider (linguist) and after decryption the Chau Duc message simply stated that they were out of food and would have to fetch some.

Hugh Nichols immediately went to TF HQ with the news. After Major Graham (SO2 Int) was briefed on the contents of the traffic, we had another briefing with Capt Stan Bryant, OC Det 1 Div Int, (Stan Bryant was not cleared for Sigint but he asked no curly questions - he probably knew enough about us) we got together to organise men (Int and Sigs), weapons and vehicles to conduct our own recce. Stan also accepted Stan Harding⁹⁰⁶ as a member of the recce/protection party and we drove to an area to park, outside Hoa Long, close to a low barbed-wire boundary. Stan Bryant said that there was no need for a vehicle picquet, we wouldn't be long; then he and I led the party along the wire, examining all the tracks crossing it. My role was to tell him which track seemed more likely to be used given I had a map and knew Chau Duc's last known location. We came to one track I reckoned fitted the-shortest-distance criterion for Chau Duc to travel to the village, went on further to try others and came back to near the preferred track to another close by with dried grains of rice visible under the wire. We agreed on the probable route... Stan wandered alone outside for 10 minutes or so (we supposed to describe the physiography to the selected ambush party). Returned, crawled over and under the vehicles for five minutes, all clear, back home to bases in about ninety

It is extremely rare for the Troop to be involved in the original intercept, operational planning, reconnaissance and reporting on the most probable route to be taken by the enemy party.

minutes.

58.3.3.6 A Day in Jack Fenton's Diary

Contained at Annex Q is the complete version of the day's events written by Jack Fenton. Note at the last few paragraphs Jack refers to the Hoa Long ambush.

58.3.4 HQ 1 ATF Active at FSB Le Loi

⁹⁰⁵ Emails to Bob Hartley 9 November 2014.

⁹⁰⁶ Flight Lieutenant Stan Harding (RAAF Intelligence) was on a visit from Vung Tau. Stan had previously served with members of 7 Sig Regt.



MESSAGE FORM

IMMEDIATE 170827 AUG 70

FROM: 1 ATF CONFIDENTIAL

TO: LIST B (LESS SERIALS 24 - 29) OPS 0999

INFO: 18 ARVN DIV RTAVF BEARCAT

199 LIB LO BARIA LO HOA LONG

LO LONG DIEN LO DAT DO

LO DUC THANH LO XUYEN MOC

2/25 (US) BDE LO USAF

67 GL SECT RAAF OPS VUNG TAU

1 ALSG II FF V HQ AFV

1 ATF (MAIN) OPENED FSB LE LOI II YS457767 AT 171500H (.) 1 ATF (REAR)

REMAINS IN PRESENT LOC (.) CALL SIGNS AS PER 1 ATF SOI'S 10-1

Figure 574: HQ 1 ATF (Main) opened FSB Le Loi

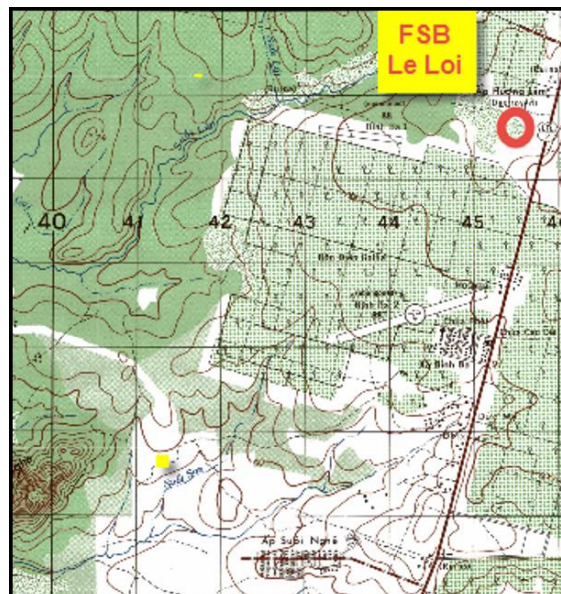


Figure 575: FSB Le Loi Location Expanded

58.3.5 547 Sig Tp Operation Report for August 1970

The 547 Sig Tp Op Report for Aug 70⁹⁰⁷ stated:

SECRET SPOKE SIGS617

FOR MIB. OP REPORT TO 31 JUL 70

ONE. WATCH HOURS NO CHANGE.

TWO. COVER RETURN AS AT 312400H JUL CLN
ALPHA. PRIORITY COVER - ALL VCMB.

⁹⁰⁷ DSD Declassified, 547 Sig Tp in Vietnam (tranche2)..



(1) 05437	(16) 06220
(2) 05423	(17) J2303
(3) 05443	(18) J2543
(4) 05447	(19) 06218
(5) 05451	(20) 06219
(6) 09442	(21) 00835
(7) J0772	(22) J0496.
(8) 05448	(23). 00679
(9) 05449.	(24 (corrupt))
(10) J2650	(25) N4967
(11) 00667	(26) J2391
(12) J1816	(27) J2505
(13) 05452	(28) 00088
(14) 06224	(29) J2562
(15) 06222	

BRAVO. DEV GROUPS All VCMB,

1. 00831 9. J2446
2. 00843 10. J2604
3. 85445 11. N4962
4. 05444 12. Y 9083
5. 06217 13. Y 9086
6. J2062 14. Y 9088
7. J2291 15. J2754
8. Y9084

THREE. ARDF

ALFA . TOTAL FIXES 63

*BRAVO. GRADINGS. GOOD 24. FAIR34.
POOR NIL. CUT 5.*

CHARLIE. TOTAL FLYING TIME 120 HRS FIVE MINUTES

1. MCCARTNEY ,[corrupt]/80.30
2. R.D. WILLIAMS 36.25/138.40
3. DANSKIN 36.00/299.00
4. GILES 47.40/86.45
5. STOCK UNDER TRAINING

DELTA. SIX MSNS ABORTED DUE WX

ECHO . EIGHT MSNS REDUCED DUE WX

FOXTROT. ONE MSN ABORTED DUE A/C SERVICE

GOLF. GWO MSNS ABORTED DUE A/C MALFUNCTION.

FOUR. SSL

*ALFA. OPS 26 DAYS OF 31 (3 STANDOWN/EQPT
REPAIR/SERVICE AND TWO COMPUTOR FAMILIARIZATION)*

BRAVO. 666 TARGETS OFFERED FOR 554 RESULTS

*CHARLIE. ONE TECHNICIAN AND THREE OPERATORS
CONSIDERED COMPETENT IN USE OF NEW
COMPUTOR PDP8.*



DELTA . SSL EVALUATION TRIAL COMMENCED ON
1. SEP

(Note: No mention of the Hoa Long Ambush or the ACV Deployment)

58.3.6 ARDF Flying Hours

The total ARDF flying hours for the month were⁹⁰⁸:

Year	Month	Flying hours	Total Fixes	Good <1000mts	Fair 1-2000Mts	Poor >2000 Mts	Cut	Missions Lost	Remarks
1970	Aug	120.5	63	24	34		5	18	Incl reduced missions due to weather

58.3.7 D440 Fixes and Movements for July/August

The following graphic is of D440 fixes and moves for July/August 1970:

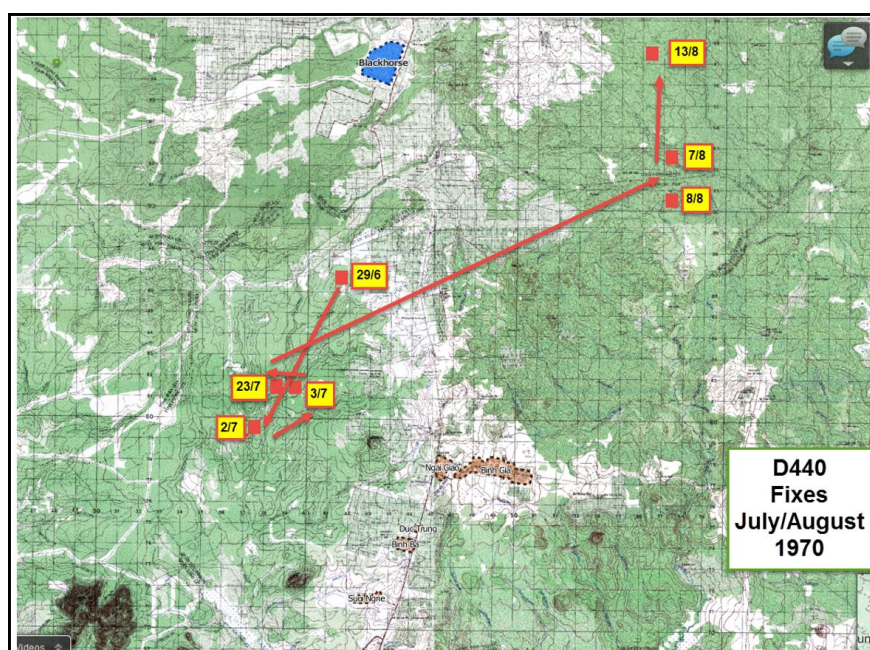


Figure 576: D440 Fixes and movement – July/August 1970⁹⁰⁹

⁹⁰⁸ Compiled from MI8 Records held at ASD archives.

⁹⁰⁹ Plot compiled by Bob Hartley from Bennington, S. (Curator - Official History), Vietnam Battle Intelligence Computer data tapes – Part 2, Australian War Memorial – Canberra, 19 November 2014, and MI8 Records held at ASD archives.



58.3.8 Summary of Main ARDF Fixes

The following table is a summary of the main ARDF fixes for August 1970⁹¹⁰:

Date	Loc	Unit
01-Aug-70	YS228889	U/I
04-Aug-70	YT757079	U/I
04-Aug-70	YT203042	HQ 74 Arty Regt (Regt CP)
04-Aug-70	YS319927	U/I
05-Aug-70	YS240918	Elem HQ 274 Regt
05-Aug-70	YS2391	HQ SR4
05-Aug-70	YS315832	U/I
06-Aug-70	YS596021	U/I
06-Aug-70	YS293917	HQ 274 Regt (Regt CP)
06-Aug-70	YS240920	HQ SR4
07-Aug-70	YS570920	D440 (BN CP)
07-Aug-70	YS693985	HQ BA LONG PROV
07-Aug-70	YS745858	D445 (BN CP)
08-Aug-70	YS794865	D445 (BN CP)
08-Aug-70	YS577908	D440 (BN CP)
08-Aug-70	YS493505	LONG DAT Dist Unit
08-Aug-70	YS233890	HQ SR4
08-Aug-70	YT331064	U/I
08-Aug-70	YT216085	U/I
08-Aug-70	YS236882	U/I
08-Aug-70	YS229885	U/I
09-Aug-70	YT2703	HQ 74 Arty Regt
09-Aug-70	YS6696	HQ BA LONG PROV
09-Aug-70	YS2189	HQ SR4
09-Aug-70	YS4950	LONG DAT Dist Unit
09-Aug-70	YS329916	HQ 274 Regt(Regt CP)
09-Aug-70	YT787087	HQ MR7
10-Aug-70	YT614028	HQ BA LONG PROV Committee
10-Aug-70	YT602028	U/I
10-Aug-70	YT627032	U/I
10-Aug-70	YT720028	EN
10-Aug-70	YS647982	HQ BA LONG PROV
10-Aug-70	YS770855	D445

⁹¹⁰ Compiled by Bob Hartley from 547 Sig Tp Activity Reports supplied by ASD and Bennington, S. (Curator - Official History), Vietnam Battle Intelligence Computer data tapes – Part 2, Australian War Memorial – Canberra, 19 November 2014 / No Monthly ARDF Reports available possible. the data tapes may only include fixes from SPAR reports signalled to HQ1ATF.



Date	Loc	Unit
10-Aug-70	YS486508	LONG DAT Dist Unit
10-Aug-70	YS179780	U/I
10-Aug-70	YS234863	U/I
11-Aug-70	YT172138	U/I
11-Aug-70	YT825066	MR7,
11-Aug-70	YT647037	HQ BA LONG PROV
11-Aug-70	YT640043	U/I
11-Aug-70	YT770102	HQ MR7
11-Aug-70	YT780815	D445 (BN CP)
11-Aug-70	YS489517	LONG DAT Dist Unit
11-Aug-70	YS238901	HQ SR4
11-Aug-70	Hoa Long	CHAU DUC Dist Unit
12-Aug-70	YT653009	HQ BA LONG PROV
12-Aug-70	YT784036	HQ MR7
12-Aug-70	YT795074	MR7,
12-Aug-70	YS497508	LONG DAT Dist Unit
12-Aug-70	YS774822	D445 (BN CP)
13-Aug-70	YT841076	U/I
13-Aug-70	YT824050	MR7, Poss Mil Int Sect
13-Aug-70	YT749068	HQ MR7
13-Aug-70	YS560977	D440 (BN CP)
13-Aug-70	YS228876	HQ SR4
14-Aug-70	YS239914	HQ SR4
14-Aug-70	YT121040	U/I
14-Aug-70	YS324957	HQ 274 Regt, Regt CP
15-Aug-70	YT828071	U/I
17-Aug-70	YT244072	HQ 74 Arty Regt, Regt CP
17-Aug-70	YS735945	HQ BA LONG PROV
18-Aug-70	YT764078	HQ MR7
18-Aug-70	YS763860	HQ D445 (BN CP)
18-Aug-70	YS749950	HQ BA LONG PROV
18-Aug-70	YS300901	HQ 274 Regt (Regt CP)
18-Aug-70	YS225812	HQ SR4
19-Aug-70	YT747095	HQ MR7
19-Aug-70	YT226172	HQ U1 Prov
19-Aug-70	YS503518	LONG DAT Dist Unit
19-Aug-70	YS667935	HQ BA LONG PROV
20-Aug-70	YS2703	HQ 74 Arty Regt (Regt CP)
20-Aug-70	YS2389	HQ SR4
21-Aug-70	YS7494	HQ BA LONG PROV



Date	Loc	Unit
21-Aug-70	YS2791	HQ 274 Regt (Regt CP)
22-Aug-70	YS7090	HQ BA LONG PROV
22-Aug-70	YS2390	HQ SR4
22-Aug-70	YS2891	HQ 274 Regt (Regt CP)
22-Aug-70	YS303906	HQ 274 Regt
22-Aug-70	YT314004	HQ 74 Arty Regt
23-Aug-70	YT7804	U/IT
23-Aug-70	YS6790	HQ BA LONG PROV
24-Aug-70	YT7108	HQ MR7
24-Aug-70	YT8105	84 RSG
24-Aug-70	YS2382	274 Regt (Regt CP)
24-Aug-70	YS2889	HQ SR4
25-Aug-70	YS281902	HQ SR4
25-Aug-70	YT798042	MR7,
25-Aug-70	YT805068	HQ MR7
25-Aug-70	YT364046	HQ 274 Regt
25-Aug-70	YS690886	HQ BA LONG PROV
26-Aug-70	YT393091	HQ 274 Regt
26-Aug-70	YT748118	HQ MR7
26-Aug-70	YS234880	U/I
27-Aug-70	YT261031	HQ 74 Arty Regt (Regt CP)
27-Aug-70	YS707921	HQ BA LONG PROV
27-Aug-70	YS563593	D445 (BN CP)
27-Aug-70	YS498510	LONG DAT Dist Unit
27-Aug-70	YS290922	Elems of HQ SR4
27-Aug-70	YS290932	Elems of HQ SR4
27-Aug-70	YT302005	HQ 74 Arty Regt
29-Aug-70	YS494516	LONG DAT Dist Unit
29-Aug-70	YS511608	D445 (BN CP)
29-Aug-70	YS290908	HQ SR4
30-Aug-70	YS535650	D445 (BN CP)
30-Aug-70	YS689900	HQ BA LONG PROV
30-Aug-70	YS488509	LONG DAT Dist Unit Forces
31-Aug-70	YS688887	HQ BA LONG PROV
31-Aug-70	YS513678	D445 (BN CP)
31-Aug-70	YT340063	HQ 274 Regt (Regt CP)



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CHAPTER 59 – SEPTEMBER 1970

59.1 Personnel

59.1.1 Arrivals and Departures

In September there were four arrivals and three departures.

Arrivals

10 September

Signalman Ian Hunter

17 September

Signalman Patrick McGrath

23 September

Signalman Anthony Arday

24 September

Sergeant Brian Abrahamson

Departures

17 September

Corporal James Danskin

24 September

Signalman Robert Harland

Signalman Rodney Spragg

59.1.2 Employment Areas

Brian Abrahamson, Ian Hunter and Tony Arday went to the Set Room and Pat McGrath to the Comcen. In later months Brian Abrahamson, Tony Arday and Ian Hunter joined the ARDF team

59.1.3 Visitors

In September, Lieutenant Ron Estes of the US Army visited the Troop. His story of the visit is shown at Annex R.

59.1.4 HQ AFV Monthly Strength Return

There was no change to the Establishment Strength of the Troop in September⁹¹¹:

59.2 Operations

59.2.1 547 Sig Tp Operation Report for September 1970

The 547 Sig Tp Op Report for Sep 70⁹¹² stated: (Pertinent extracts only)

ONE. WATCH HOURS DURING SEP – NO CHANGE.

⁹¹¹ <http://www.awm.gov.au/collection/AWM98/R723/1/13/5/>

⁹¹² Documents received from ASD December 2015.



REDUCTION IN COVER OF 9 AND ONE HALF HOURS DAILY ON AND FROM 2 OCT.

TWO. COVER RETURN

ALPHA. PRIORITY COVER

1. VCMB 05437	12. VCMB J1816
2. VCMB 05423	13. VCMB 05425
3. VCMB 05443	14. VCMB 06224
4. VCMB 00831	15. VCMB 06222
5. VCMB 05447	16. VCMB 06220
6. VCMB 05451	17. VCMB K2303
7. VCMB 05442	18. VCMB K2543
8. VCMB 05448	19. VCMB 06218
9. VCMB 05449	20. VCMB 06219
10. VCMB J2650	21. VCMB 00835
11. VCMB 00667	22. VCMB 00679

B. DEV GROUPS

1. VCMB J2754	7. VCMB Q9086
2. VCMB 06217	8. VCMB C4999
3. VCMB J2062	9. VCXB V0854
4. VCMB J2064	10. VCXB V1281
5. VCMB Y9083	11. VCMB C4999
6. VCMB Y9084	12. VCMB J0496

THREE. ARDF

ALPHA. TOTAL FIXES – 85

BRAVO. GRADINGS

GOOD 6 FAIR 46 POOR NIL CUTS 3

CHARLIE TOTAL FLYING TIME 114 HRS FIVE MINUTES

(1) MCCARTNEY NIL/80.30
(2) WILLIAMS 36.15/174.55L
(3) DANSKIN 22/32/ [corrupt]
(4) GILES 37.40/124.25
(5) LOCK 18.10/18.10

DELTA.

DANSKIN RTA 17 SEP

LOCK COMMENCED TRG 23 SEP

ECHO.

(1) 5 MSNS ABORTED DUE WX
(2) 9 MSNS REDUCED DUE WX
(3) 2 MSNS ABORTED DUE A/C/ SERVICE

FOUR. SSL.

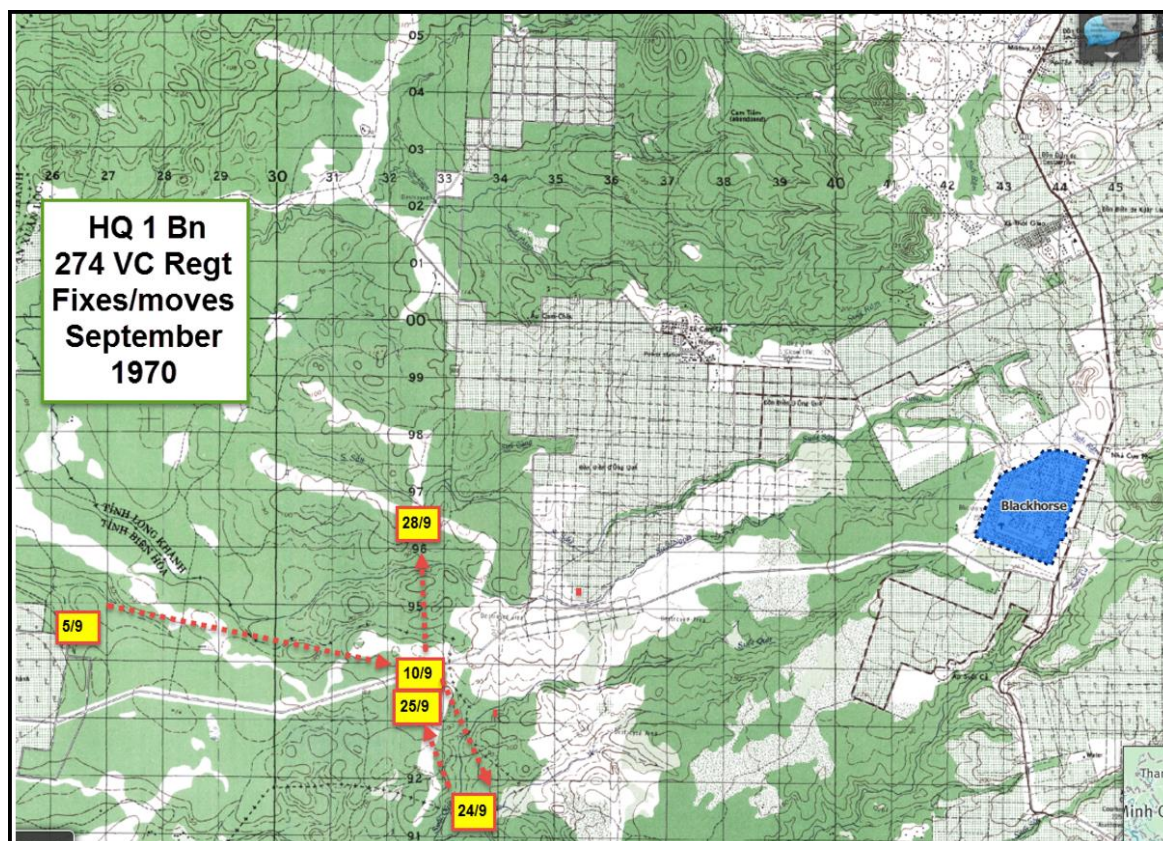
ALPHA.

OP 23 DAYS OF 30 (2 STANDOWN AND 5 EQUIPT REPAIR).

BRAVO 506 TARGETS OFFERED AND 430 RESULTS.

59.2.2 HQ 1 Bn 274 VC Regiment Moves in September

The following graphic of HQ 1 Bn 274 Regiment locations and moves for September 1971, was compiled from various Fix Reports:

Figure 577: HQ 1/274 Regt September Fixes/Moves⁹¹³

59.2.2.1 Summary of Main ARDF Fixes

The following table is a summary of the main ARDF fixes for September 1970⁹¹⁴:

Date	Loc	Unit
01-Sep-70	YS286896	HQ SR4
01-Sep-70	YS224896	U/I Poss Bn CP
02-Sep-70	YS542649	D445
02-Sep-70	YS698906	HQ BA LONG PROV
03-Sep-70	YT845080	Elms MR7 Poss Regional Committee
03-Sep-70	YS189795	U/I Poss subordinate to SIB COSVN
03-Sep-70	YS438547	LONG DAT Dist Unit
03-Sep-70	YS232879	U/I Poss Bn CP

⁹¹³ Plotted by Bob Hartley.

⁹¹⁴ Compiled by Bob Hartley from 547 Sig Tp Activity Reports supplied by ASD and Bennington, S. (Curator - Official History), Vietnam Battle Intelligence Computer data tapes – Part 2, Australian War Memorial – Canberra, 19 November 2014./ No Monthly ARDF Reports available possible. the data tapes may only include fixes from SPAR reports signalled to HQ1ATF.



Date	Loc	Unit
04-Sep-70	YT828085	U/I UNIT, Poss Regional Committee
04-Sep-70	YS186809	U/I POSS SUB TO SIB COSVN
04-Sep-70	YS526675	D445 (BN CP)
04-Sep-70	YS495507	LONG DAT Dist Unit
04-Sep-70	YS682888	HQ BA LONG PROV
04-Sep-70	YS314919	1 Bn 274 Regt
04-Sep-70	YS232089	274 Regt (Regt CP)
05-Sep-70	YT315067	HQ 274 Regt (Regt CP)
05-Sep-70	YS519671	D445 (BN CP)
05-Sep-70	YS693899	HQ BA LONG PROV
05-Sep-70	YS263946	1 Bn 274 Regt (BN CP)
06-Sep-70	YT337067	HQ 274 Regt (Regt CP)
06-Sep-70	YS451567	LONG DAT Dist Unit
07-Sep-70	YS704915	HQ BA LONG PROV
07-Sep-70	YS490501	LONG DAT Dist Unit FORCES
07-Sep-70	YT308014	HQ 74 Arty Regt (Regt CP)
07-Sep-70	YS291885	1 Bn 274 Regt (BN CP)
07-Sep-70	YT352051	HQ 274 Regt
08-Sep-70	YT259043	Elems HQ 74 Arty Regt (Regt CP)
08-Sep-70	YT274035	Elems HQ SR4
08-Sep-70	YS497520	LONG DAT Dist Unit FORCES
08-Sep-70	YS061910	U/I
08-Sep-70	YS674951	Poss elems HQ BA LONG PROV
08-Sep-70	YS670942	Poss elems HQ BA LONG PROV
09-Sep-70	YT751081	HQ MR7
09-Sep-70	YS524659	D445 (BN CP)
09-Sep-70	YS735935	HQ BA LONG PROV. Poss Prov Committee
09-Sep-70	YS213861	U/I UNIT (POSS BN CP)
10-Sep-70	YS326936	1/274 Regt (BN CP)
10-Sep-70	YT763077	HQ MR7
10-Sep-70	YS718935	HQ BA LONG PROV
10-Sep-70	YS553623	D445 (BN CP)
11-Sep-70	YS488505	LONG DAT Dist Unit
11-Sep-70	YS678877	HQ BA LONG PROV
12-Sep-70	YT761070	HQ MR7
12-Sep-70	YS705910	HQ BA LONG PROV
12-Sep-70	YS614576	D445 (BN CP)
13-Sep-70	YT767067	Poss Elems HQ MR7
13-Sep-70	YS712927	Poss Elems HQ MR7



Date	Loc	Unit
13-Sep-70	YS348950	HQ SR4
14-Sep-70	YT763093	HQ MR7
14-Sep-70	YS697905	HQ BA LONG PROV D445 (BN CP)
14-Sep-70	YS621600	D445 (BN CP)
15-Sep-70	YT769082	HQ MR7
15-Sep-70	YT281038:	HQ 74 Arty Regt (Regt CP)
15-Sep-70	YS328940	1/274 Regt
15-Sep-70	YT312060	HQ 274 Regt
15-Sep-70	YS218869	U/I
15-Sep-70	YS346801	HQ SR4
17-Sep-70	YS567634	D445 (BN CP)
17-Sep-70	YT767082	HQ MR7
17-Sep-70	YT325065	2/274 Regt (BN CP)
17-Sep-70	YS693904	HQ BA LONG PROV
17-Sep-70	YS288896	HQ SR4
18-Sep-70	YT730169	MR7 Poss Regional Comm
18-Sep-70	YS689895	HQ BA LONG PROV
21-Sep-70	YT895059	HQ MR7
21-Sep-70	YS691904	HQ BA LONG PROV
21-Sep-70	YT363107	HQ 274 Regt (Regt CP)
21-Sep-70	YS195788	U/I Poss subordinate to SIB COSVN
22-Sep-70	YT895066	HQ MR7
22-Sep-70	YS695906	HQ BA LONG PROV
22-Sep-70	YT312056	2/274 Regt (BN CP)
22-Sep-70	YT389032	274 Regt (Regt CP)
22-Sep-70	YS486495	LONG DAT Dist Unit
22-Sep-70	YS278912	HQ SR4
23-Sep-70	YS298908	U/I UNIT
23-Sep-70	YS297936	HQ SR4
23-Sep-70	YS499505	LONG DAT Dist Unit
23-Sep-70	YS689880	HQ BA LONG PROV
23-Sep-70	YT367054	HQ 274 Regt
24-Sep-70	YT866095	MR7
24-Sep-70	YS337918	1/274 Regt (BN CP)
24-Sep-70	YS487505	LONG DAT Dist Unit
24-Sep-70	YT337081	HQ 274 Regt(Regt CP)
24-Sep-70	YT844063,	HQ MR7
24-Sep-70	YS695895	HQ BA LONG PROV
25-Sep-70	YT874095	MR7 Poss Regional Comm
25-Sep-70	YT896077	MR7 Poss MIS



Date	Loc	Unit
25-Sep-70	YS684906	HQ BA LONG PROV
25-Sep-70	YS325930	1/274 Regt (BN CP)
25-Sep-70	YS344907	U/I Poss Bn CP
25-Sep-70	YS492500	LONG DAT Dist Unit
27-Sep-70	YS709985	HQ BA LONG PROV
28-Sep-70	YS328963	1/274 Regt (BN CP)
28-Sep-70	YS492505	LONG DAT Dist Unit
30-Sep-70	YT315029	2/274 Regt(BN CP)
30-Sep-70	YS694887	HQ BA LONG PROV



59.3 SAS Excursion

59.3.1 Background

In late August, HQ 1ATF was planning an operation into the Mây Tào Mountains area. The Mây Tào Mountains are a set of tortoise-shaped mountains 45 kilometres north east of Nui Dat, primarily located in Binh Tuy Province and partly in the Phuoc Tuy and Long Khanh provinces.

59.3.2 May Tao Secret Zone

The mountain area known as the May Tao Secret Zone or Base Area 300 and was a well-developed, heavily dug-in, tunnelled and fortified area used at times as a HQ location for HQ Ba Long Province, VC 5th LID, 275 VC Regt, and 84 RSG. The general location was also used by several other formations as a logistics base, training area, and hospital zone. Many 1ATF operations were conducted in the area.

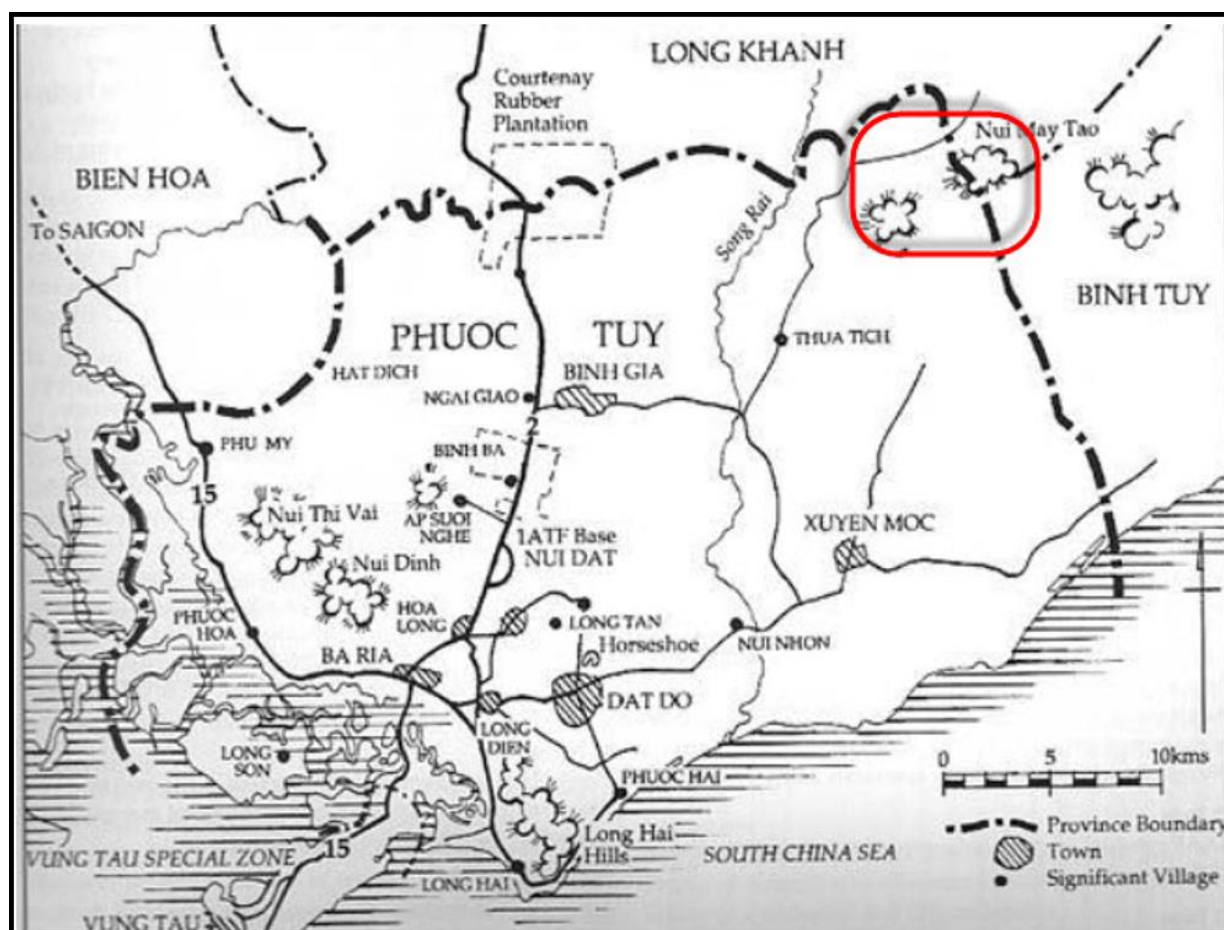


Figure 578: Location of May Tao Mountains

59.3.3 Enemy Units and Transmitters

There were several enemy transmitters in the area which were regular targets for ARDF missions.



59.3.4 ARDF Fix Reports

Detailed ARDF fix reports for the period are not available; however, HQ Ba Long Province, 84 RSG and HQ D445 VC Local Force Bn were known to be operating in the area. In late August, ARDF fixed the location of HQ Ba Long Province virtually on a daily basis in the area as shown in the following graphic:

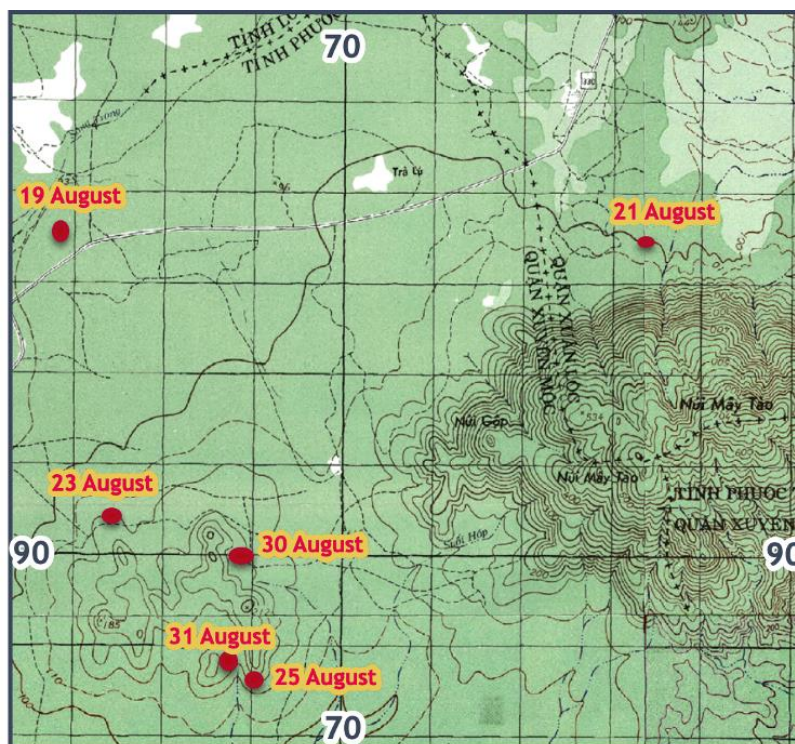


Figure 579 ARDF Fixes - August⁹¹⁵

59.3.5 Troop Planning

Jack Fenton Recalled⁹¹⁶:

1ATF HQ never ceased to value our efforts and let us know it. For an upcoming operation, there was an exceptional need in this case to refine the ballpark circles of a certain enemy unit in the May Tao area that had been located and fixed by ARDF.

I could only offer to allocate one of the more experienced flying Operators whenever HQ indicated to us the target enemy unit. Reference was made to us to the early days of 547 working with the US with vehicles and land DF equipment. It was not difficult to put our formidable Case-Against, even if we could acquire a PRD - 1]. Nevertheless, we were told to go try to nut out something, and do so quickly as the matter was urgent depending on the target enemy unit's movement, with the condition that the loss of set room cover/recovery of our targets would not be prejudiced. I glumly accepted to myself that I would return to HQ and say sorry, but there is nothing more we can offer than an experienced Duffa⁹¹⁷ man.

I have tried to recall the pressure to serve best our Brigadier and the atmosphere at the time, but the following probably has as much imagination as accuracy in it: With that caveat here goes:

⁹¹⁵ Compiled by Bob Hartley.

⁹¹⁶ Email from Jack Fenton to Barry Hampstead and Bob Hartley 26 September 2014.

⁹¹⁷ ARDF Operator.



Hugh Nichols became enthusiastically active. The TSM, technicians and I less so, but each hid his doubts. The requirement was kicked around with SNCOs then into an awkward project shape in the Blue Room. In a brief time, we conceived the idea of the mobile DF⁹¹⁸.



Figure 580: Captains Hugh Nichols (left) and Jack Fenton

We tested the set for reception and I feel sure that we tested it with the wearer accurately locating the test transmission some distance away.

At least, we could offer HQ one operator on foot patrol with a minimum of a company of infantry to protect him due to his security. When HQ would throw it out we could say we tried. Either way, it was not in the spirit of our security policy⁹¹⁹ and I did not inform the DSD LO so there could be repercussions. I saw our duty to our Brigadier foremost so come what may.

⁹¹⁸ The Troop had received for its stores a Telefunken PE-484 body-wearable miniature direction finder that could be used as a manpack DF system on patrols. It is not known when the Telefunken Set was delivered to the Troop. It is not shown in the Troop Stocktake in 1970 but listed in the Handover/Takeover Stocktake for OCs in 1 July 1970. PE-484 was a miniature body-wearable radio direction finder (RDF) — in German: *Kleinstpeilempfänger* — introduced in 1958 by Telefunken in Ulm (Germany). The device was intended for locating clandestine transmissions and spy radio stations, during the early part of the Cold War. The set consists of a body wearable miniature receiver that is housed in an ergonomic bakelite enclosure, a loop antenna that can be carried at the back under the clothing, and a field strength indicator disguised as a regular wristwatch. It was designed for unobtrusive — undercover — use. All controls and connections are located at the front panel, as shown in the diagram below. At the centre are four small 2-pin sockets — typical for electronic hearing aids of the era — to which the antenna(s), the headphones and the field-strength indicator (i.e. the watch meter) are connected. The receiver covered all frequencies between 0.057 and 20.6 MHz, with the exception of the 0.443 to 0.498 MHz section, divided over 10 frequency ranges. Each frequency range had its own tuning could that also acted as the frequency scale. It was inserted from the side of the receiver. When strapped to the body, the tuning scale could be observed by the user.



⁹¹⁹ As per original 547 Sig Sqn deployment instruction: *No person with a detailed comint knowledge will be used on hazardous operations where his capture or interrogation could be a substantial risk to the security of comint.*



Hugh made the suggestion after 547's 1700 hrs Daily Brief. Reply - Maybe. I was to talk to Major Chipman⁹²⁰ at once. Up to SAS Hill. The major had had a 'limited briefing'.

My problem given some thought then came the personal characteristics of the man we chose whom his blokes would take a few days to train to ensure there be no stuff-up. Told him my worries about a SAS stuff-up as my man had to be fully protected because of danger of security loss if captured. Reassurance - a serious OC but I felt we clicked. Brig gave the go-ahead. A call for a volunteer Operator. Everyone!! I chaired committee of Hugh and all Seniors with list of characteristics and Lloyd Giles duly selected. Off to SAS.



Figure 581: Lloyd Giles⁹²¹

59.3.6 SAS Task Table

On 28 August, 1 Sqn SAS Operations issued a Task Table for the period 300700H Aug to 071700H⁹²² Sep 70⁹²³. Included was a task for Patrol No 13:

⁹²⁰ Courtesy Ernie Chamberlain: Major Geoff Chipman first served with 3 Sqn SASR in Vietnam from June 1966 to March of 1967 – and was wounded during the 17 August (ie pre-Long Tan) shelling of 1ATF. He returned for a visit in the period 27 August to 3 September 1970 – ie preparatory to him returning on 26 November 1970 to command 1 Sqn. I'm guessing that when Jack went up to SAS Hill to speak with the "Phantoms", he spoke with the visiting Major Geoff Chipman, rather than the OC of 1 Sqn – i.e. commanded by Major Ian Teague for all of 1970 except for the last month or so when Geoff Chipman took over.

⁹²¹ Photo courtesy Lloyd Giles 2021.

⁹²² H equates to SVN time.

⁹²³ AWM95, 7/10/21, 1 SAS Commanders Diary, Narrative, Duty Officer's Log, Annexes, 1-31 Aug 1970. The many extracts that follow are not sub-titled.



1 SAS SQN OPS 482		1 SAS SQN TASK TABLE FROM 300700H AUG TO 071700H SEP 70			Copy N
A.	Ptl Ser No	236/70	237/70	238/70	1 SAS
B.	Sub Unit	Ptl 35	Ptl 41	Ptl 13	NUI DA
C.	c/S and Freq	HF	HF	HF	28 Aug
D.	Controlled by	1 SAS SQN	1 SAS SQN	1 SAS SQN	
E.	Task	Reece in Zone 1828	Reece in Zone 808	Reece in Zone 1107	
F.	Strength	5	5	5	
G.	Date Time Insertion	300700H	310700H	310700H	
H.	Date Time Extraction	051700H	071700H	071700H	
I.	Route	Insert by hel	Insert by hel	Insert by hel	
J.	LZ				
K.	PZ				
L.	Remarks	Area 75 - 78 EASTINGS and 75 - 77 NORTHINGS	Area 355-405 EASTINGS and 835 - 895 NORTHINGS No boarder clearance req	Area 655 - 715 EASTINGS and 875 - 925 NORTHINGS No boarder clearance req	

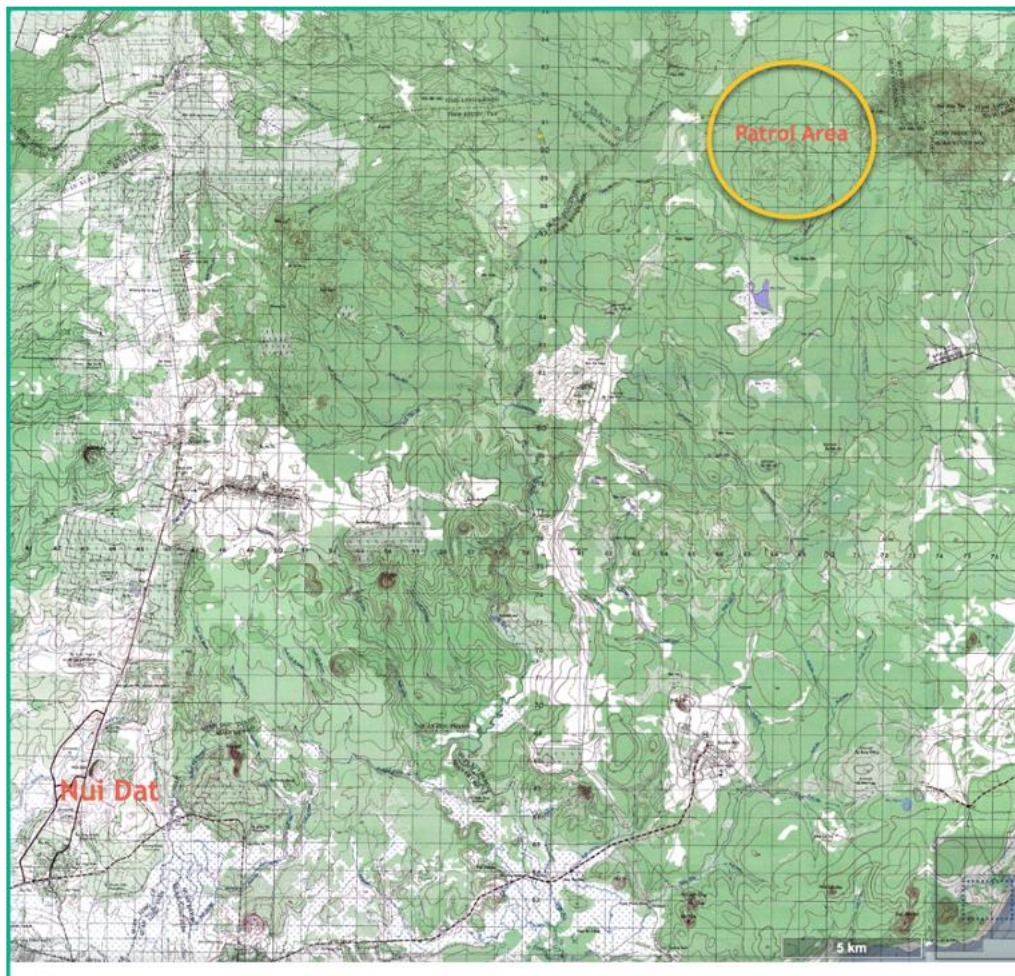


Figure 582: Patrol Area



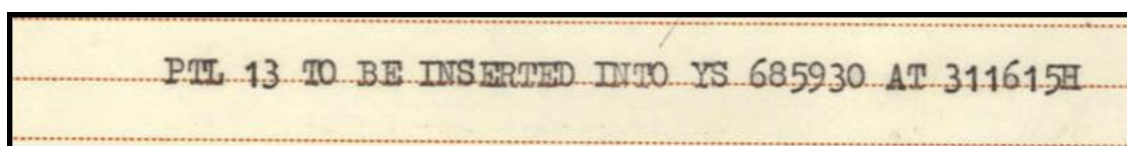
59.3.7 Patrol No 13 Timings

SAS Sqn Sitrep No 194 for Period 291600H to 301600H Aug 70 stated that Patrol 13 was planned to be inserted at 1500H on 31 August⁹²⁴:



PTL 13 TO BE INSERTED AT 311500H .

Insertion timing was amended on 31 August to read⁹²⁵:



PTL 13 TO BE INSERTED INTO YS 685930 AT 311615H

59.3.8 Preparation

Lloyd Giles Recalled⁹²⁶:

Having been selected²³ to go out on the patrol I was introduced to the DF equipment that was to be used and instructed on its operation. The DF set reminded me of a DF set that the PMG24 used to detect unlicensed radio transmitters in the suburbs in the cities during the 50s and 60s. The DF equipment consisted of a receiver connected to a circular antenna joined by a wire both of which were worn under the shirt. I don't know what the range of the set was but as it happened it didn't seem to be very far.

The target of this operation was HQ Ba Long Province known to us as M009425. This provincial unit seemed to operate in the vicinity of the border area between Phuoc Tuy Province and Long Khanh, Province in the Nui May Tao and foothills. This HQ was or seemed to be the main provincial command unit within Phuoc Tuy.

At SAS Hill I met the members of the patrol that was to be led by a sergeant. I was informed of the basic do's and don'ts when on patrol. No smoking, no deodorant, no shiny bits showing etc.

Jack Fenton:

In the op briefing hut on Kanga Pad, Lloyd Giles, Soldier, Op Sig, looked terrific in his SAS riggings and neatly cammed up. We got a few words in after the briefing then the patrol boarded the Hueys. The gunner gave me an "another-bloody-tourist" look. But I was an OC sending one of my Op Sigs off on a dangerous job I'd never done myself and he had to see evidence of my respect for him. If that was a normal insertion then a hot insertion must really be something.

⁹²⁴ Ibid.

⁹²⁵ Ibid.

⁹²⁶ Email to Bob Hartley 4 October 2014.



Figure 583: Typical SAS Patrol boarding a Huey Helicopter⁹²⁷

59.3.9 Patrol Insertion, Timings and Events

On 31 August at 1655H the Operations Log reported⁹²⁸:

Serial	Date/Time	From	To	Event
12	311655H	Aircell	Sqn HQ	Ptl 13 inserted at 1626H, Ptl 24 extracted at 1626H .

Lloyd Giles:

It was an extraction/insertion job -1 assume because it was to appear as an extraction only. Once down the patrol quickly moved to a layup point - about 100 to 150 metres from the insertion drop off. No fancy open areas to pitch a tent for the night - just settle down among the fairly dense shrubby trees and bushes, Ujpppp& [2S] can't remember what we used for heating the water. Hexamine or maybe C4? [29] I loved the Chilli Con Carne.

Each patrol member had a plastic covered map of the area of interest and a compass. Each evening we plotted the course and distance covered on our own map. I do remember the first evening layup position while plotting the insertion point and distance covered, I snapped my compass shut. What a noise - the glares and stares given to me by the SAS team nearly turned me into salt. That was the last unwarranted and unwanted noise I made for six days.

⁹²⁷ AWM PO3923.006.

⁹²⁸ AWM95, 7/10/21, 1 SAS Commanders Diary, Narrative, Duty Officer's Log, Annexes, 1-31 Aug 1970.



At YS 678928 at 311730H Ptl estb ni LUP.

M0094 had been located by ARDF about 2 kilometres from the insertion point the day before the operation commenced which was OK but on the flight in we learned that the new position for the HQ is now 4 K's from the jump-off position.

NOT OK. Four kilometres moving quietly through secondary growth, bomb craters etc. at 1000-1200 metres per day (n/j tracks or trails were followed until the last day) with a target that seemed to move about at will was not to be an easy feat. No bursting through the scrub - each branch and limb had to be moved aside by each patrol member then quietly replaced as each patrol member passed through. The patrol, from forward scout to Tailencj Charlie covered about 40-50 metres from memory. Each evening we would go into a layup position - 5.30 to 6pm - plot the course travelled that day and our new overnight position, have a meal then go to sleep - never in the open - among secondary growth was the norm.

Communications between Nui Dat and the patrol via the radio operator was established each day from memory. The radio operator would throw a long wire antenna up a tree or over tall shrubs when time to contact Nui Dat. The target's scheduled transmission time was another time when we were in contact so the frequency of the target transmission could be relayed to us. This info probably came from 547 at Nui Dat or directly from the ARDF flight.

59.3.9.1 Fix Reports

Extracts from SAS Operations Log and Post Patrol Report (Blue Border). It appears that the Patrol was receiving up-to-date reports of ARDF Fixes during the patrol.

At 010725H Ptl heard 2 single shots 700m SW.

Serial	Date/Time	From	To	Event	R
01	010730H	Ptl 13	Sqn HQ	Loc YS 678928 . Mov South .	

At YS 678927 at 010825H Ptl crossed a well defined EW foot track not used for 2 weeks or more.

At YS 678926 at 010845H Ptl crossed EW log track 6 - 10ft wide. Last used approx 2 weeks.

010930H 50m South Ptl crossed EW log track at termination point.

At YS 678925 at 010945H Ptl crossed a well defined EW foot track not used 1 month plus.

06	011215H	Sqn HQ	Ptl 13	Object now at YS 702917 . Do you still req ac .	
07	011235H	Ptl 13	Sqn HQ	Negative .	



11	011535H	Ptl 13	Sqn HQ	Loc YS 681923 . Mov East . In future send time of ac fix .
----	---------	--------	--------	--

13	011600H	Ptl 13	Sqn HQ	SAW poss can I close down .
15	011630H	Sqn HQ	Ptl 13	Head SE . Poss new fix . Target has mov .

At YS 681922 at 011745H Ptl estb ni LUP.

02	020736H	Ptl 13	Sqn HQ	Loc YS 681922 . Mov SE .
03	020745H	Sqn HQ	Ptl 13	Your objective now YS 695880 .

At YS 682922 at 020835H Ptl crossed NE/SW foot track not used for 2 months plus.
 At YS 683921 at 020900H Ptl crossed EW log track approx 2 months old. Throughout the morning 02 Sep Ptl heard a chain saw operating approx 1000m NW.
 At YS 683920 at 021000H Ptl crossed NE/SW log track. Numerous NE/SW tracks in GS 6891 not used approx 2 months. Small parties may have used same log tracks during past 2 weeks.

10	021156H	Ptl 13	Sqn HQ	Loc YS 685919 . Mov SE .
20	021550H	Sqn HQ	Ptl 13	En YS 698906 within 500m .

The above location is reported in a 547 Sig Tp ARDF Fix Report.

At YS689915 at 021730H Ptl estb ni LUP.

03	030735H	Ptl 13	Sqn HQ	Loc YS 689915 . Mov SE .
----	---------	--------	--------	--------------------------

I would tune into the frequency and then rotate my body attempting to pin point the strongest signal. If successful a compass bearing was taken which indicated which direction to head. Unfortunately, the operator (me) and/or the equipment was not up to the task. Signals were too weak for any type of accurate or inaccurate fixes. The main problem with the Telefunken was that it was not moisture proofed having, in my opinion, been designed for a use in situations which did not include the steaming, wet jungle conditions of Vietnam. It rained every afternoon



soaking the jungle which continued dripping for hours after the rain.

09	031136H	Ptl 13	Sqn HQ	Sitrep A. YS 690912 . C. SW . D. Our fix eqpt 00 .
10	031145H	Sqn HQ	Ptl 31	Sitrep B. Same loc C. Fix at 031500H . D. Resupply eqpt if nec .
11	031230H	Ptl 13	Sqn HQ	Negative to D. At 031230H. .
13	031519H	Ptl 13	Sqn HQ	Loc YS 690910 . Mov South 031519H .
14	031530H	Sqn HQ	Ptl 13	En gone . YS 710000 . Check for tracks and camps .

At YS 690908 at 031730H Ptl estb ni LUP.

The Telefunken set failed due to the moisture and a replacement set was requested - to arrive on the chopper which had been arranged to extract the patrol's Tail-end Charlie who had developed what looked like a tropical ulcer on one knee. I attempted to keep the new set as dry as was possible by wrapping it in my singlet and placing it in a rubber toilet bag I carried - don't know why I had it with me.

02	040730H	Ptl 13	Sqn HQ	Loc YS 690908 . Mov East . Happy birthday SAS .
----	---------	--------	--------	---

For the rest of the patrol, I had no success in DFin^M0094. The obstacles of distance from the target, wrong equipment for the job and operator all contributed to the lack of success.

02	041138H	Ptl 13	Sqn HQ	Loc YS 698908 . Mov East . Req medevac number four .
08	041152H	Ptl 13	Sqn HQ	Understand forget (serial 09) .

12	041530H	Ptl 13	Sqn HQ	Loc YS 698908 . Mov East . Req medevac number four .
13	041540H	Sqn HQ	Ptl 13	Send details .
14	041552H	Ptl 13	Sqn HQ	Bad skin winch 50' .
15	041555H	Ptl 13	Sqn HQ	Understand forget (serial 09) .

08	041125H	Ptl 13	Sqn HQ	Loc YS 695907 . Mov East .
09	041138H	Sqn HQ	Ptl 13	En now YS 6889 at 041100H . No 3 offered M/Q . Advise .

12	041530H	Ptl 13	Sqn HQ	Loc YS 698908 . Mov East . Req medevac number four .
13	041540H	Sqn HQ	Ptl 13	Send details .
14	041552H	Ptl 13	Sqn HQ	Bad skin winch 50' .
15	041555H	Ptl 13	Sqn HQ	Understand forget (serial 09) .

17	041640H	Sqn HQ	Ptl 13	Medevac 1715H . Receive resup .
----	---------	--------	--------	---------------------------------

At YS 698908 at 041800H Ptl estb ni LUP.



01	050700H	Sqn HQ	Ptl 13	Locstat confirmed . 3 will BALGA do .
03	050730H	Ptl 13	Sqn HQ	Loc YS 698908 . Mov East .

At YS 702910 at 051430H Ptl loc well defined oxcart track NS not used for est 2 months. Ptl checked track for 1000m North and 300m South and found no sign of use for est 2 months.

At YS 702910 at 051730H Ptl estb ni LUP.

01	060740H	Ptl 13	Sqn HQ	At exfil LZ YS 682908 . NTR .
----	---------	--------	--------	-------------------------------

Extraction

At YS 702909 at 061150H Ptl extracted to 1 ATF Base.

08	061150H	Aircell	Sqn HQ	Ptl 13 extracted at 061145H .
----	---------	---------	--------	-------------------------------

After 6 days in the scrub we were extracted and returned to Nui Dat where I was asked to brief the members of 547 Sig Troop.

Anecdotal info: Any aircraft operating near our patrol location had to be contacted via the radio operator to let them know we were friendly forces. The Forward Scout/Medic had been fired on once before while on patrol by a US aircraft so he was very wary of any aircraft in our vicinity.

Each morning at wakeup we checked our packs and webbing for unwanted guests - twice I had a scorpion under my ammo pouches. Often during the night I woke to feel large land snails crawling on me - 3-4 inches of shell.

59.3.10 POST PATROL

Jack Fenton:

We knew that messages are kept to a minimum on SAS patrols but we all somehow held hopes. SAS Hill had no news.

The operational side of the drama comes quickly to an end when Lloyd returned to report that a sweat-soaked chest antenna rendered interception useless.

What has lingered is the fact that the lads of 547 were all keen to get Lloyd's job and that troop soldiers of all trades were cooperative and willing to be flexible enough to respond to their best ability to a request for unusual assistance from the leader of our Task Force.



59.3.10.1 SAS Patrol 13 Post Patrol Report

The following graphics are extracts of the SAS Post Patrol Report⁹²⁹:

1 SAS SQN OPS 238/70		SECRET		PATROL REPORT		Copy No. 5																									
						1 SAS SQN																									
						HUI DAT																									
						7 Sep 70																									
Reece Ptl/Ptl 13 Ref maps VIETNAM XA CAMMY 1:50,000 sheet 6430I and pictomap supplement 1:25,000 sheet 6430I S.																															
A. <u>Size and Composition of Patrol</u> <table border="0"> <tr> <td>Sgt</td> <td>JT</td> <td>MULBY</td> <td>Ptl Comd</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Cpl</td> <td>BJ</td> <td>DEMGADO</td> <td>2IC</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Tpr</td> <td>PJ</td> <td>WINES</td> <td>Sig</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Tpr</td> <td>F</td> <td>Lennon</td> <td>Scout/Medic</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Sig</td> <td></td> <td>GILES</td> <td>Rtn</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Tpr</td> <td>DC</td> <td>ORR</td> <td>Rtn</td> </tr> </table>								Sgt	JT	MULBY	Ptl Comd	Cpl	BJ	DEMGADO	2IC	Tpr	PJ	WINES	Sig	Tpr	F	Lennon	Scout/Medic	Sig		GILES	Rtn	Tpr	DC	ORR	Rtn
Sgt	JT	MULBY	Ptl Comd																												
Cpl	BJ	DEMGADO	2IC																												
Tpr	PJ	WINES	Sig																												
Tpr	F	Lennon	Scout/Medic																												
Sig		GILES	Rtn																												
Tpr	DC	ORR	Rtn																												
B. <u>Task</u> Reece in Zone 1107																															
C. <u>Date Time Insertion</u> 311635H AUG 70																															
D. <u>Date Time Extraction</u> 061150H Sep 70																															
E. <u>Route</u> Inserted by hel into LZ YS 678929 Extracted by hel from LZ YS 702909 For Ptl route see Annex P.																															

⁹²⁹ AWM95 7/10/22 - 1-31 September 1970, Narrative, Duty Officer's log, Annexes.

I. Misc Info

1. At YS 698908 at 041735H member of the Ptl was medevaced with severe dermatitis.
2. Sightings Nil.
3. Total time Ptl out 5 - 19/20 days .

J. Results of Encounters with En

Nil.

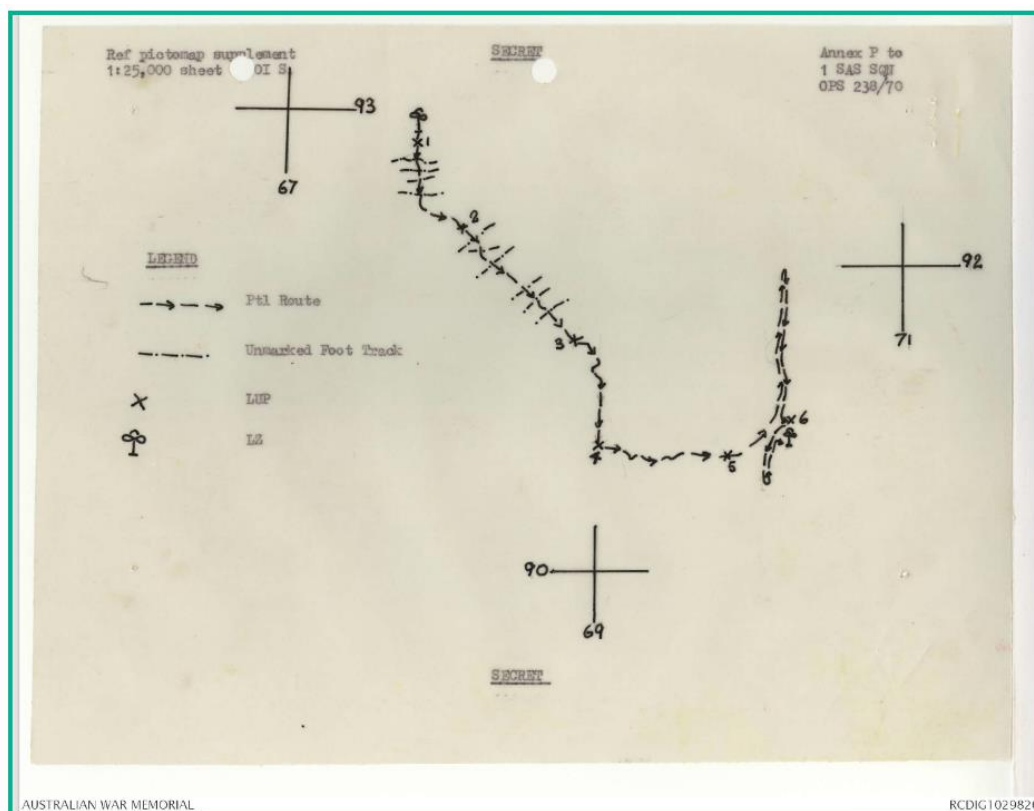
K. Conditions of Ptl

1 member medevaced, 1 member badly infected knee.
Morale good.

L. Conclusions and Recommendations

1. Suspected en in area if moy are not using NS tracks within the AO.
2. Recommend further reece tasks in the vicinity of the 212 feature, to be approached from the South.

JT Mulby
JT MULBY
Sgt
Ptl Comd



AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL

RCDIG1029820

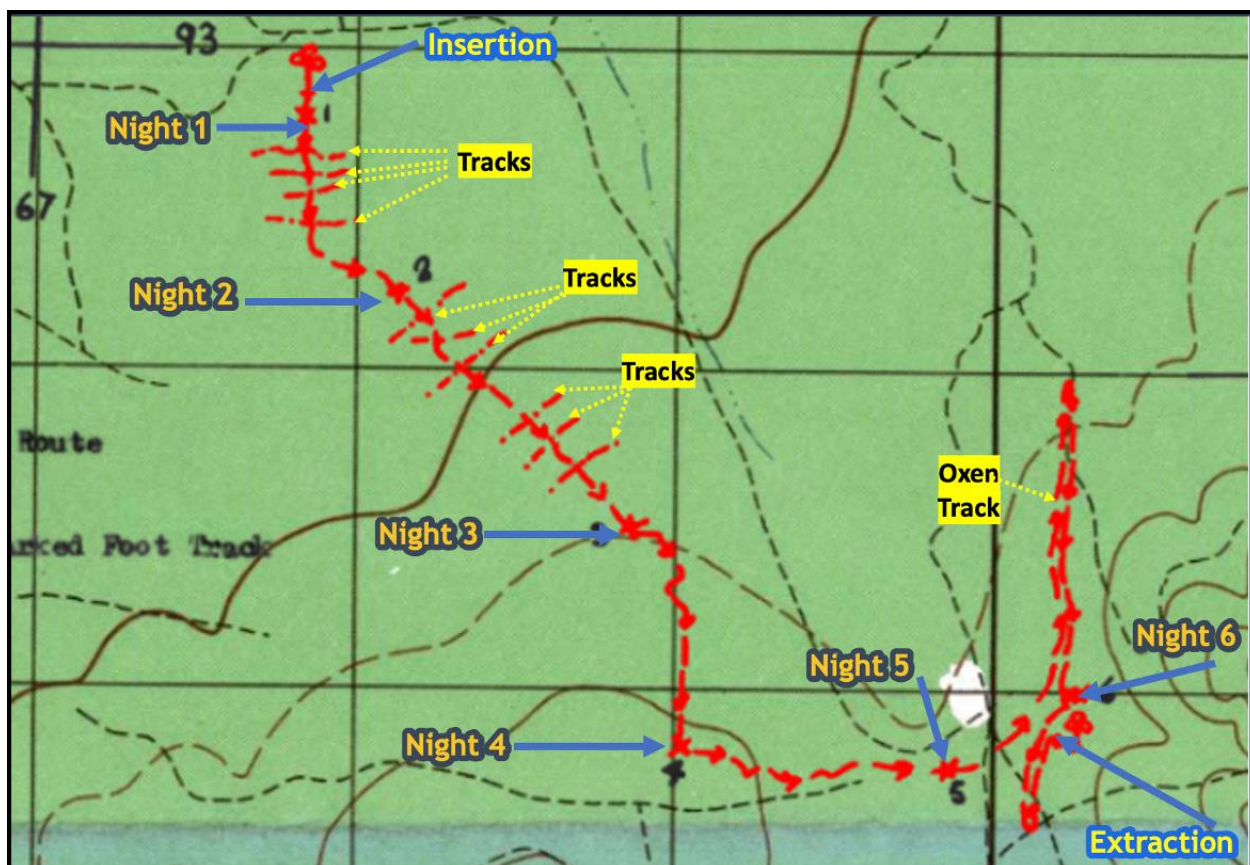


Figure 584: Track replicated onto a topographical map⁹³⁰

59.3.10.2 547 Sig Tp After Action

Jack Fenton:

In the Monthly Report was included a simple line, "Sigmn Lloyd Giles was deployed forward with a security patrol of SAS giving the body DF equipment a test trying to meet an urgent operation need of the Task Force Commander. Lack of success was due to sweat-soaking onto the chest antenna" or words to that effect.

Colin Cattanach reprimanded me soundly and sent up a huge classified file of what OCs can and cannot do. However, much later a loophole was found whereby we could obtain PRD-1s and use in support of ARDF in reasonably secure areas, e.g., on or close to roads near allied units.

Jack also wrote in a follow up Email:

Any recriminations my written stuff-ups attract can never compare with the signalled tongue-lashing from MI8 which, I should add, was justified and had to go on record in the interests of security, as Col Cattanach more mildly explained on his subsequent visit to 547, ignoring my challenge, "Don't tell you

⁹³⁰ Compiled by Bob Hartley.



wouldn't have tried something similar, Sir!" He would have, I'm sure, and more likely, have organised things ending in success.

The Book *Warrior Elite*⁹³¹ reported on SAS and 547 Sig Tp:

An equally important supporting unit was the 547 Signal Troop, whose role was to provide signals intelligence to the Task Force and the SAS in particular. They were based at Nui Dat in their own secure compound with the highest top-secret classification. At first they were regarded as a 'post office', receiving and passing on signalling from the big American operation, but through their own ingenuity they were soon producing localised intelligence of enormous potential value to the Task Force. Their principal resources were stationary intercepts of enemy radio signals through their Nui Dat receiver, which they greatly enhanced with a towering aerial made from star pickets; and high-frequency airborne radio direction-finding (ARDF) equipment that flew over the Australian area of responsibility in Cessna 180s of the 161 Reconnaissance Squadron. The radio chatter, collected by operators in a steamy galvanised-iron 'set room', was decrypted and translated by the troop's experts on site. The ARDF operation – where up to 100 sorties were flown each month from nearby Luscombe field – was able to track down enemy radio operators in the field and direct SAS patrols to the source. The troop had worked with the SAS in Borneo⁹³² and were constantly refining their operation. In Vietnam, individual members frequently joined patrols⁹³³ and took responsibility for a continually increasing range of communications. 'They were tremendously helpful,' an SAS Vietnam veteran said, 'but on patrol we had to make sure the Sig guy wasn't captured by the enemy. He knew too much.'

⁹³¹ Macklin, Robert (2015-08-25). *Warrior Elite: Australia's special forces – from Z Force and the SAS to the wars of the future* (Kindle Locations 1825-1837). Hachette Australia. Kindle Edition.

⁹³² Incorrect. The Troop in Borneo did NOT work directly with SAS. All formal reports came from Singapore to the Troop, by hand to the Director of Borneo Operations Sigint LO, then probably in a sanitised version to the SAS. However, the Troop enjoyed the company of Signals personnel attached to SAS at the Troop canteen.

⁹³³ This is a gross overstatement. The above is the only time that a member of 547 Sig Tp went on patrol with the SAS.



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CHAPTER 60 – OCTOBER 1970

60.1 Personnel

60.1.1 Arrivals and Departures

In October there were five arrivals and two departures.

Arrivals

1 October

Sergeant John McKenzie

15 October

Signalman James Kanowski

Signalman Frederick Robinson

29 October

Staff Sergeant Daniel Matthews

Corporal Ralph Schwer

Departures

22 October

Corporal Barry Jonathon

29 October

Sergeant Clarence Whitehorn

60.1.2 Employment Areas

John McKenzie replaced Clarrie Whitehorn as the Comcen Supervisor. Fred Robinson joined the Set Room and Danny Matthews and Ralph Schwer went to the Processing Section.

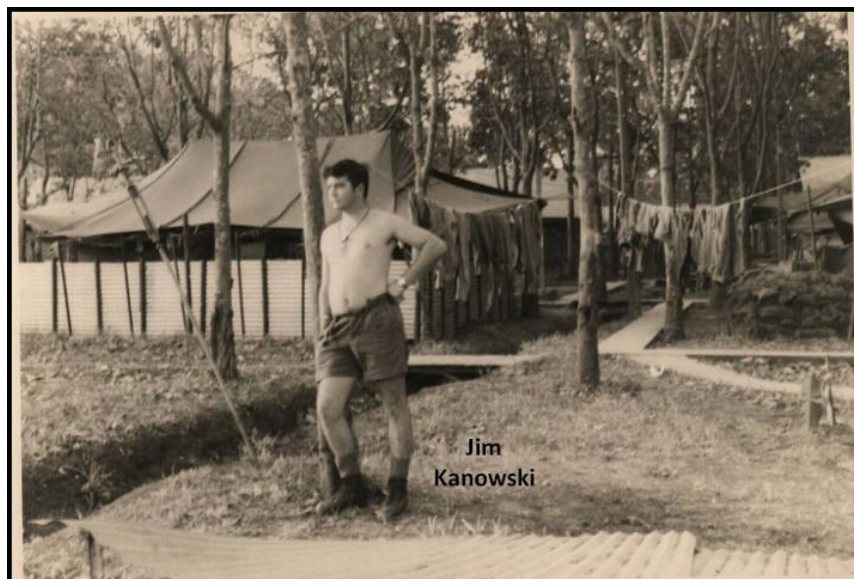


Figure 585: Jim Kanowski



60.1.3 HQ AFV Monthly Strength Return

There was no change to the Establishment Strength of the Troop in October⁹³⁴:

60.2 Operations

60.2.1 Expanded SSL Results for September

On 14 October, AUM352 signalled MI8, DSD (DP and Weapons Salisbury (PO IS GP) with expanded SSL results for September⁹³⁵:

*S E C R E T SPOKE SIGS 969
FOR MI8. SSL YOUR 2377/28 OF 7 OCT.*

ONE. MONTHLY AVERAGE DECREASE DUE AT LEAST IN PART TO CLN

*ALFA. 12 SEP WEF 1200 (LOCAL) - INSTALLATION OF CX READER WHICH HAD• "...
JUST ARRIVED. COMPUTOR GIVEN MAINT AT SAME TIME.*

*BRAVO. 13 SEP - CLOSED ALL DAY FOR MAINT OF REMAINDER OF EQLH.
UNUSUALLY HEAVY PROLONGED STORM THIS DAY AFFECTED THE SPIRAL FOUR
CABLE BETWEEN 104 SQN MAIN FRAME AND CELL BESIDES MANY OTHER
CABLES OF TASK FORCE UNITS. 104 LINIES GAVE US AS MUCH PRIORITY
AS POSSIBLE BUT HAD TO KEEP INTEREST IN OTHER OPERATIONAL UNITS
TROUBLES AS WELL. CABLE ULTIMATELY REPLACED AND CONNECTED TO PUT
CELL ON AIR AGAIN 1000 ON 19 SEP.*

*CHARLIE. 23 SEP - DRIFT NOTICED IN TWIN CHANNEL RACAL. SEEMED TO PICK
UP FOR A TIME BUT RETURNED AND BECAME WILDER. TWO CHOKES
FOUND FAULTY. REST OF CIRCUITRY CHECKED AND BPFS BOTH CHANNELS
WERE OUT OF ALIGNMENT. FRIENDS CONTACTED TO TRY LOCATE POLYSKOP
WITHOUT SUCCESS. REPLACEMENT RACAL RECEIVER FROM WRE ARRIVED
•MORNING OF 8 OCT.*

*TWO. THIS NOT END OF SAGA BUT INDICATES THE FALL FOR SEP.
THREE. NRV HAS RECOMMENDED QUOTE TEST UNQUOTE BE EXTENDED THROUGH 15
NOV AND BE TERMINATED THAT DATE.*

60.2.2 547 Sig Tp Operation Report for October1970

The 547 Sig Tp Op Report for Oct 70⁹³⁶ stated:

*S E C R E T SPOKE SIGS1051
FOR MI8. OP REPORT TO 31 OCT 70*

ONE. WATCH HOURS NO CHANGE.

*TWO. COVER RETURN AS AT 312400H OCT CLN
ALPHA. PRIORITY COVER – ALL VCMB.*

*(1) 05437 (8) 05449 (15) 06224
(2) 05423 (9) J2650 (16) 06222
(3) 05443 (10) 00667 (17) 06220
(4) 05447 (11) J1816 (18) J2303
(5) 054421. (12) 05452 (19) J2543*

⁹³⁴ <http://www.awm.gov.au/collection/AWM98/R723/1/13/5/>

⁹³⁵ DSD Declassified, 547 Sig Tp in Vietnam (tranche2)..

⁹³⁶ DSD Declassified, 547 Sig Tp in Vietnam (tranche2)..



(6) 05453 (13) N4999 (20) 06218
(7) 05448 (14) J2754 (21) 06219
[redacted] (23). 00679

BRAVO. DEV GROUPS-EXCEPT FOR 7 VCX CMM ALL VCMB.

(1) Y9083 (4) J 1501 (7) V1494
(2) J2824 (5) 05444 (8) 06217
(3) J2830 (6) J2062 (9) 05451

THREE. ARDF

ALFA. TOTAL FIXES 76.

BRAVO. GRADINGS. GOOD 28. FAIR 46. CUT 2.

CHARLIE. FLYING TIME TOTAL 121 HRS 10 MINS

(1) WILLIAMS 36.55/211TP
(2) GILES 35.40/160/05
(3) STOCK 34.15/52.25
(4) LOCK 14.20/14.20

DELTA. MSNS ABORTED DUE W- 5 AND DUE EQPT MALFUNCTI ON-2. REDUCED
MSNS DUE W-8 AND DUE EQPT MALKUNCTION-ONE.

FOUR. SSL

ALFA. OFF AIR 1-12 EQPT MALFUNCTION. RECOMMENCED OPS 13 OCT.
BRAVO. 384 JOBS FOR 285 RESULTS. FOLLOWING REASONS FOR 99 NIL
RESULTS CLN

1. NIL TRACE-36
2. TASK TOO BRIEF-25(OSB)
3. SIG HEARD BUT QRM-16(N0I)
4. TASK INACTIVE AFTER OFFER-5(0SI)
5. HEARD BUT TOO WEAK-6(N0W)
6. TRACE STRAIGHT BUT WANDERING-1(NOR)
7. NOT HEARD DF SITE
8. RESULT UNABLE BE COMPUTED FROM MEASUREMENTS OBTAINED-5(NOU)

CHARLIE. EQPT SVCS TANDDOWN 25 OCT.

DELTA. OTA PM 16TH FOR SONDE REMOTE UNIT INSTALLATION

ECHO. FADEOUT PM 24 OCT (D SIGS VISIT TIME)

FOXTROT. PDP8 FAULTY FROM 19 OCT. TO WRE 26 OCT.

GOLF. WHITEBIRCH BANK NOT MANNED 28 AND 30 (PM) AND ALL DAY 31ST.

HOTEL. US EVALUATION EXTENDED TO 15 NOV.

INDIA. NO SUCCESS OBTAINING ARMOURED CABLE CELL TO SONDE BUT S02 SIGS
AFV TRYING ASSIST.



60.2.3 ARDF Flying Hours

The total ARDF flying hours for the month were⁹³⁷:

Year	Month	Flying hours	Total Fixes	Good <1000mts	Fair 1-2000Mts	Poor >2000 Mts	Cut	Missions Lost	Remarks
1970	Oct	121.1	76	28	46		2	16	Incl reduced missions due to weather

60.2.4 Summary of Main ARDF Fixes

The following table is a summary of the main ARDF fixes for October 1970⁹³⁸:

Date	Loc	Unit
02-Oct-70	YT286041	HQ 74 Arty Regt (Regt CP)
02-Oct-70	YT795162	HQ MR7
02-Oct-70	YS692905	HQ BA LONG PROV
02-Oct-70	YS702740	D445 (BN CP)
03-Oct-70	YT304049	2/274 Regt (BN CP)
03-Oct-70	YT814083	HQ MR7
03-Oct-70	YS735931	HQ BA LONG PROV
03-Oct-70	YS330945	HQ 274 Regt (Regt CP)
04-Oct-70	YT779164	HQ MR7
04-Oct-70	YT392019	1/274 Regt (BN CP)
04-Oct-70	YS724887	HQ BA LONG PROV
05-Oct-70	YT874001	HQ BA LONG PROV Comm
05-Oct-70	YT414025	1/274 Regt
05-Oct-70	YS214889	U/1 UNIT (POSS BN CP)
05-Oct-70	YS706736	D445 (BN CP)
06-Oct-70	YS291024	HQ 74 Arty Regt
06-Oct-70	YS330957	OC HQ 274 Regt(Regt CP)
06-Oct-70	YT364080	1/274 Regt (BN CP)
07-Oct-70	YS302966	Elms of HQ 274 Regt (Regt CP)
07-Oct-70	YS311999	Elms of HQ 74 Arty Regt (Regt CP)
07-Oct-70	YT849057	Elms of MR7
07-Oct-70	YT783089	U/I

⁹³⁷ Compiled from MI8 Records held at ASD archives.

⁹³⁸ Compiled by Bob Hartley from 547 Sig Tp Activity Reports supplied by ASD and Bennington, S. (Curator - Official History), Vietnam Battle Intelligence Computer data tapes – Part 2, Australian War Memorial – Canberra, 19 November 2014./ No Monthly ARDF Reports available possible. the data tapes may only include fixes from SPAR reports signalled to HQ1ATF.



Date	Loc	Unit
07-Oct-70	YS236885	U/I (BN CP)
08-Oct-70	YT790104	MR7,
08-Oct-70	YT939150	HQ NVA 33 Regt, (Regt CP)
08-Oct-70	YT913022	HQ MR7
08-Oct-70	YS492500	LONG DAT Dist Unit
09-Oct-70	YT805144	HQ MR7
09-Oct-70	YS239843	U/1 UNIT (POSS BN CP)
09-Oct-70	YT825049	MR7
09-Oct-70	YT394033	1/274 Regt (BN CP)
09-Oct-70	YT233173	HQ U1 Prov
09-Oct-70	YS717741	D445 (BN CP)
10-Oct-70	YT806130	MR7
10-Oct-70	YT721157	HQ MR7
10-Oct-70	YS247895	U/I (POSS BN CP)
11-Oct-70	YT285002	HQ 74 Arty Regt (Regt CP)
11-Oct-70	YS312994	Elms of HQ 274 Regt (Regt CP)
11-Oct-70	YS356944	HQ SR4
12-Oct-70	YT308049	U/I (BN CP)
13-Oct-70	YT795162	OF ELMS OF HQ MR7
13-Oct-70	YT807065	MR7
13-Oct-70	YT812057	U/I
13-Oct-70	YS711898	OF HQ BA LONG PROV
14-Oct-70	YT271044	HQ 74 Arty Regt (Regt CP)
14-Oct-70	YT790155	MR7
14-Oct-70	YS714929	HQ BA LONG PROV
14-Oct-70	YS485495	LONG DAT Dist Unit
15-Oct-70	YT880151	MR7
15-Oct-70	YT779037	U/I
15-Oct-70	YT784107	HQ MR7
15-Oct-70	YS308956	HQ 274 Regt (Regt CP)
15-Oct-70	YS350648	VUNG TAU City Unit
15-Oct-70	YS680923	HQ BA LONG PROV
15-Oct-70	YS501535	LONG DAT Dist Unit Forces
16-Oct-70	YT282034	HQ 74 Arty Regt (Regt CP)
16-Oct-70	YS327616	VUNG TAU City Unit
16-Oct-70	YS495515	LONG DAT Dist Unit Forces
16-Oct-70	YS290919	HQ SR4
16-Oct-70	YS319978	HQ 274 Regt (Regt CP)
16-Oct-70	YS693920	HQ BA LONG PROV HQ
17-Oct-70	YT789110	HQ MR7



Date	Loc	Unit
17-Oct-70	YS333658	VUNG TAU City Unit
17-Oct-70	YS688920	HQ BA LONG PROV
17-Oct-70	ZT041158	HQ NVA 33 Regt (Regt CP)
18-Oct-70	YS332922	HQ 274 Regt (Regt CP)
18-Oct-70	YS500520	LONG DAT Dist Unit Forces
18-Oct-70	YS330625	VUNG TAU City Unit
18-Oct-70	YT841018	HQ BA LONG PROV
18-Oct-70	YT315022	2/274 Regt (BN CP)
18-Oct-70	YT218019	HQ 74 Arty Regt (Regt CP)
18-Oct-70	ZT059159	HQ NVA 33 Regt (Regt CP)
18-Oct-70	ZT011159	BINH TUY Prov
19-Oct-70	YS810987	U/I
19-Oct-70	YS490517	Elms of LONG DAT Dist Unit Forces
19-Oct-70	YS694915	HQ BA LONG PROV
19-Oct-70	YT789091	84 RSG
19-Oct-70	YS387650	VUNG TAU City Unit
19-Oct-70	YS242912	U/I
19-Oct-70	YT631034	MR7
19-Oct-70	YT325183	U/I
20-Oct-70	YS735930	HQ BA LONG PROV
20-Oct-70	YS315964	HQ 274 Regt (Regt CP)
20-Oct-70	YT817051	84 RSG
20-Oct-70	YT230105	HQ U1 Prov
20-Oct-70	YT320036	2/274 Regt (BN CP)
21-Oct-70	YS492515	LONG DAT Dist Unit Forces
21-Oct-70	YS684928	HQ BA LONG PROV
21-Oct-70	YS321964	HQ 274 Regt (Regt CP)
21-Oct-70	YS696987	HQ BA LONG PROV
21-Oct-70	YT379059	1/274 Regt (BN CP)
22-Oct-70	YT340025	2/274 Regt (BN CP)
22-Oct-70	YT379065	3/274 Regt (BN CP)
24-Oct-70	YT775031	MR7
24-Oct-70	YS342649	VUNG TAU City Unit
24-Oct-70	YS705933	HQ BA LONG PROV
24-Oct-70	YS489511	ONG DAT Dist Forces
24-Oct-70	YT721081	HQ MR7
24-Oct-70	YS420925	274 Regt (Regt CP)
25-Oct-70	YS382655	Elms of VUNG TAU City Unit
25-Oct-70	YS320943	HQ 274 Regt (Regt CP)
25-Oct-70	YS497509	ONG DAT Dist Forces



Date	Loc	Unit
26-Oct-70	YT780013	LOF ELMS MR7
26-Oct-70	YT762092	Elms HQ MR7
26-Oct-70	YT267054	HQ 74 Arty Regt (Regt CP)
26-Oct-70	YT349087	1/274 Regt (BN CP)
26-Oct-70	YS367634	VUNG TAU City Guer Unit
26-Oct-70	YS745940	Elms of HQ BA LONG PROV HQ
28-Oct-70	YT389023	1/274 Regt
28-Oct-70	YT607136	MR7
28-Oct-70	YS688930	HQ BA LONG PROV
28-Oct-70	YS503530	LONG DAT Dist Unit Forces
31-Oct-70	YT716073	HQ MR7
31-Oct-70	YT276042	HQ 74 Arty Regt (Regt CP)
31-Oct-70	YS702966	HQ BA LONG PROV
31-Oct-70	YS683935	HQ BA LONG PROV
31-Oct-70	YS500525	LONG DAT Dist Unit Forces
31-Oct-70	YS350644	Vung Tau City Unit

60.2.5 HQ 1 BN 274 VC Regt Moves in October

The following graphic of HQ 1 Bn 274 Regiment location and movements was compiled from various Fix Reports:

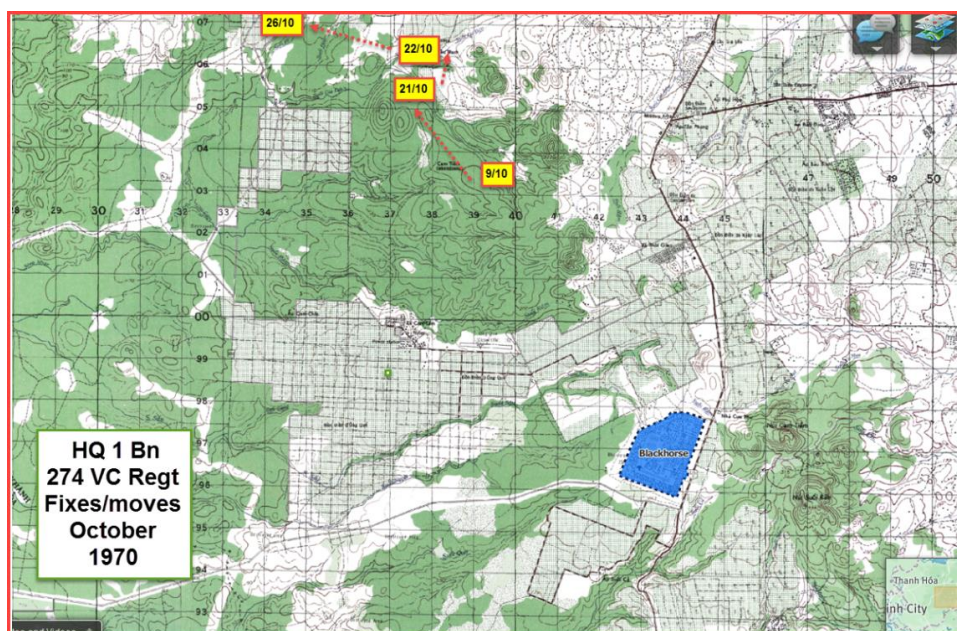


Figure 586: HQ 1/274 Regt October Fixes/Moves⁹³⁹

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⁹³⁹ Plotted by Bob Hartley.





CHAPTER 61 – NOVEMBER 1970

61.1 Personnel

61.1.1 Arrivals and Departures

In November there were two arrivals and three departures.

Arrivals

5 November

Sergeant Robert Howell (RJ)

26 November

Signalman Peter Monro

Departures

5 November

Lance Corporal David Schneider

10 November

S/Sergeant Clive Shepherd

26 November

Sergeant Desmond Williams

61.1.2 Employment Areas

Bob Howell took over from Des Williams as the ARDF Sergeant and Darby Monro joined the Set Room.

61.2 Administration

61.2.1 Club Committee

The system of Troop club management was changed to that of an elected committee. Ron Biddle, the president, and his committee organised a Melbourne Cup Party to be held on Melbourne Cup Day. This was the start of the Vatican Guineas.

61.2.2 Vatican Guineas

The inaugural Vatican Guineas was held on Melbourne Cup Day, 3 November, 1970. A dozen of the lighter members of the Troop, heavily gowned in Vietnamese silks and jockey caps, 'mounted' the heavier members for a 300 metre dash along Kanga Pad. The winner was '*Backwards*' Mal Simpson ridden by Lloyd Giles.

The full story of the day is contained in Annex T.



61.2.3 Promotion Courses

In November, the Troop conducted promotion courses for Subject C for Sergeant and Corporal. The results were published in HQ 1ATF Routine Orders⁹⁴⁰:

<u>RESTRICTED</u>				
ANNEX A TO 1 ATF ROUTINE ORDER PART 1 NO 131/70				
<u>547 SIG TP SUBJECT C COURSE FOR FIRST PROMOTION AND SERGEANT 8 - 16 NOV 70</u>				
Sergeant Candidates				
Number	Rank	Name	Unit	Results
2785526	Cpl	C.W. Saunders	8 Fd Amb	Pass
1200612	L cpl	R.A. Hutton	547 Sig Tp	Pass
13727	L cpl	J.G. Kaarsberg	547 Sig Tp	Pass
Corporal Candidates				
Number	Rank	Name	Unit	Results
45274	L cpl	A.J. Coyle	547 Sig Tp	Pass
39022	L cpl	D.A. Cochrane	547 Sig Tp	Pass
1201552	Sig	D.J. Dean	547 Sig Tp	Pass
1201592	Sig	P.J. McGrath	547 Sig Tp	Pass
55177	Sig	K.J. Petersen	547 Sig Tp	Pass

Figure 587: Promotion Course Results

61.2.4 Phuoc Le Cao Dai Orphanage

In mid-1970, the Task Force Intelligence Unit became aware of the need for assistance of the Phuoc Le Cao Dai Orphanage in Baria. They, along with 547 Sig Troop personnel, instituted a programme of support.

61.2.4.1 Club Function

The Div Int Unit and 547 Sig Tp organised a party for the children at the Troop Club where the children watched helicopter stunt flying, had a ride in an APC, and enjoyed eating their favourite Vietnamese party dishes. This was probably the first time that large numbers of local people had visited the Task Force socially. The men also arranged for the children to have monthly a trip to the sea.

⁹⁴⁰ RCDIG 1028099 AWM95, 1/4/206 HQ 1ATF Comd Diary.



61.2.4.2 Saigon Trip

In November something more ambitious was attempted: a trip to Saigon. Twenty-seven children were crammed into the unit's two vehicles one Sunday morning. The task of controlling twenty-seven excited children was a tremendous challenge, for they spoke no English. If a Father of the Year had been elected that day, John Kaarsberg would have won hands down. He produced ice cream, watermelon and soft drinks, and delighted the children with many games and tricks. Of course, the sight of all the good things to eat attracted a few of the city children but the orphans noticed this and quickly closed ranks to exclude the interlopers.

The children were eventually delivered back to the orphanage on time, far less exhausted than the soldiers who had been looking after them.

It was interesting to note that this was the first outing at which there were no Vietnamese adults participating. The eldest child was only eleven years old.



Figure 588: Ready to go

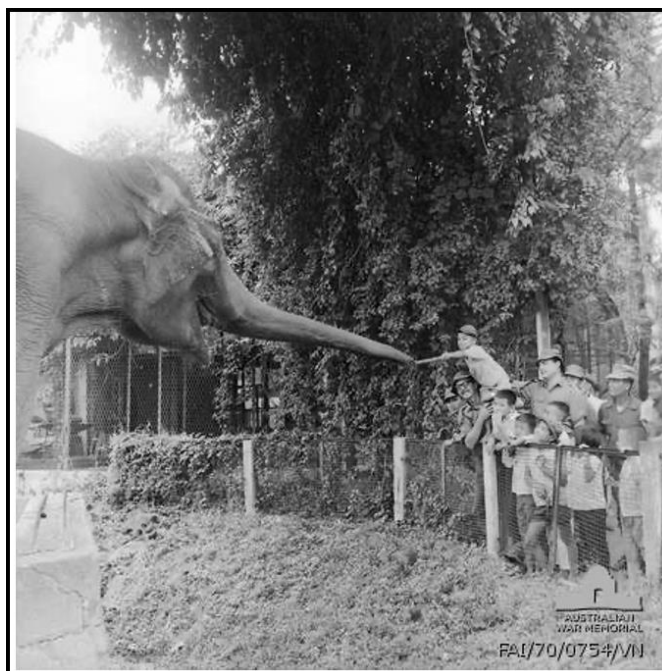


Figure 589: Orphanage visit to the Zoo⁹⁴¹

The following caption appears with the photograph:

AWM FAI/70/0754/VN Twenty seven soldiers from the 1st Australian Task Force (1ATF), at Nui Dat took twenty seven orphans, by road convoy, for a day at the Saigon Zoo. During the outing, for children from the Cao Dai orphanage in Baria, the capital of Phuoc Tuy Province, a young Vietnamese boy gives an elephant a stick of sugar cane. Giving support to the young boy is 13727 Lance Corporal John G. Kaarsberg, 38, of Toowoomba, Qld (left). Pictured on the right is Sergeant Clarrie Whitehorn, 35, of Lyneham, ACT. Both soldiers are members of the 547 Signal Troop.



Figure 590: Baria Orphanage early 2000s⁹⁴²

⁹⁴¹ www.awm.gov.au/collection/FAI/70/0754/VN

⁹⁴² Photo from: <http://vietnam-war.commemoration.gov.au/aftermath/vietnam-reconstruction-group.php>.



61.3 Operations

61.3.1 547 Sig Tp Operation Report for November 1970

The 547 Sig Tp Op Report for Nov 70⁹⁴³ stated:

S E C R E T SPOKE SIGS1153

FOR M18. OP REPORT TO 31 Nov 70

ONE. WATCH HOURS NO CHANGE.

TWO. COVER AS AT 312400H NOV.

ALPHA. PRIORITY COVER – ALL VCMB.

(1) 05437	(6) 05453	(11) J1816	(16) 06224	(21) 06218
(2) 05423	(7) 05448	(12) 05452	(17) 06222	(22) 06219
(3) 05443	(8) 05449	(13) N4999	(18) 06220	(23) 00835
(4) 05447	(9) J2650	(14) J2754	(19) J2303	(24) J0496
(5) 05442	(10) 00667	(15) 05445	(20) J2543	(25) 00679

BRAVO. DEV – ALL VC

1. MB05444	4. MBJ2824	7. MBJ2896	10. XBV1739
2. XBV1922	5. MBJ2830	8. XBV1544	11. XBV1281
3. MBY9083	6. MBJ2866	9. XBJ7062	

CHARLIE. LONG DAT UNIT TERMINAL KEEPS ACTIVE IN LONG HAIS.

CHAU DUC/VT CITY UNIT MOVED FROM NUI DINHS TO RUNG SAT.

D445 LAST FIXED 9 OCT BY ARDF YS7174 AND TERMINAL SCARCELY ACTIVE SINCE THIS DATE. COY OF 445 BELIEVED TO HAVE BEEN RESPONSIBLE FOR ATTACK ON XU EN MOC 29 NOV.

OTHERWISE ATF BEREFT OF SIGNIFICANT ACTIVITY. 440 BN BELIEVED DISBANDED WITH ELMS REATTLOCATED. CONSIDERABLE ACTIVITY AROUND MR7 AND BA-LONG AREAS WITH INCREASING NUMBERS UNIDENTS WHICH ARE BEING GIVEN ATTENTION. LONG ESTABLISHED PROCESS OF INSTANT SEARCH/SSL/DEV-ARDF/ •TASKING PROVING GREAT VALUE AND CONSUMERS 2 BDE/25 DIV, 1 CAV DIV, 11 ARMD CAV REGT BENEFITING MUCH MORE THAN COMD 1 ATF. IN SOME CASES, CONSUMERS GIVE FEED BACK ON RESULTS OF REACTION TO OUR INFO AND FI XES.

THREE. ARDF

ALFA. TOTAL FIXES 101.

BRAVO. GRADINGS. GOOD 22. FAIR 74. CUTS FIVE

CHARLIE. FLYING TIME TOTAL 146 HPS 35 MINS

1. WILLIAMS 15.05/226.55
2. ABRAHAMSON 17.40/17.40
3. STOCK A5.20/97.45
4. GILES 40.05/210.10
5. LOCK 28.25/42.45.

⁹⁴³ DSD Declassified, 547 Sig Tp in Vietnam (tranche2).



DELTA. MSNS ABORTED DUE WX - THREE.

FOUR. GENERAL. STEADY INCREASE OF PRESSURE APPLIED FROM BEGINNING OF MONTH ON SENIOR NCOS WHO ARE PASSING IT ON. RESULTS REVEALED IN INSTANT SEARCH AND ARDF WHICH HAS ADDED TO INTEREST IN T/A AND TAC DEVELOPMENTS. CHANGES IN DUTY DUE TRG REASONS HAVING BENEFICIAL EFFECTS - IN MAIN, JOB INTEREST AND ADEQUATE RESERVES FOR SPECIAL SKILLS. NEW LINGUIST SETTLING IN QUICKLY. FURTHER PRESSURES TO BE APPLIED ON ADMIN/MAINT SIDE THIS MONTH.

FIVE. SSL FOLLOWS IN PART TWO OF THIS REPORT

PART TWO OF TWO PARTS. OP REPORT. MY SIGS 1153 REFERS.

SSL

ONE. 540 TASKS OFFERED WITH 290 RESULTS.

RESULTS NOT OBTAINED DUE FOLLOWING REASONS CLN

34 NO I
17 OSU
5 NOH
5 NOP
122 NIL TRACE
51 OSB
2 NOW
13 OSI
1 NOU

TWO. 8 AND 22 NOV - EQPT MAINT AND STANDDOWN.

THREE./WHITEBIRCH POSN NOT MANNED

AM 15TH

PM - 4TH ALL DAY - 19TH

AM - 21ST

PM - 14TH ALL DAY - 29TH

FOUR. FADEOUTS

16TH 0046-0300Z

17TH 0145-0300Z AND 0500-0730Z

18TH 0205-0645Z.

FIVE. EQPT MALFUNCTION

OFF AIR ON 23 24 AND 30 NOV FOR REPAIRS TO TWIN CHANNEL RECEIVER

61.3.2 ARDF Flying Hours

The total ARDF flying hours for the month were⁹⁴⁴:

Year	Month	Flying hours	Total Fixes	Good <1000mts	Fair 1-2000Mts	Poor >2000 Mts	Cut	Missions Lost	Remarks
1970	Nov	146.35	101	22	74		5	3	

⁹⁴⁴ Compiled from MI8 Records held at ASD archives.



61.3.3 Summary of Main ARDF Fixes

The following table is a summary of the main ARDF fixes for November 1970⁹⁴⁵:

Date	Loc	Unit
01-Nov-70	YS306967	2/274 Regt (BN CP)
01-Nov-70	YS292863	HQ 274 Regt (Regt CP)
01-Nov-70	YS498510	LONG DAT Dist Unit Forces
01-Nov-70	YS703945	HQ BA LONG PROV
02-Nov-70	YT802010	Elms MR7
02-Nov-70	YS358653	VUNG TAU City Unit
02-Nov-70	YT687044	MR7
02-Nov-70	YS719949	HQ BA LONG PROV HQ
02-Nov-70	YS491510	LONG DAT Dist Unit Forces
03-Nov-70	YT809010	MR7
03-Nov-70	YS367658	VUNG TAU City Unit
03-Nov-70	YS698950	HQ BA LONG PROV
04-Nov-70	YT312190	UI Prov Unit
04-Nov-70	YT152057	U/I
04-Nov-70	YS470555	LONG DAT Dist Unit Forces
04-Nov-70	YS686945	HQ BA LONG PROV
04-Nov-70	YT697072	U/I
04-Nov-70	YS737948	HQ BA LONG PROV
05-Nov-70	YT677030	U/I
05-Nov-70	YS785918	HQ MR7
05-Nov-70	YS713910	HQ BA LONG PROV
06-Nov-70	YT704048	HQ MR7
06-Nov-70	YT386029	274 Regt (BN CP)
06-Nov-70	YT279071	HQ 74 Arty Regt (Regt CP)
06-Nov-70	YS145718	U/I
07-Nov-70	YT724073	HQ MR7
07-Nov-70	YS358968	274 Regt (BN CP)
07-Nov-70	YT292044	HQ 274 Regt (Regt CP)
08-Nov-70	YT308063	HQ 74 Arty Regt (Regt CP)
08-Nov-70	YT724067	HQ MR7
08-Nov-70	YS319959	HQ 274 Regt (Regt CP)
08-Nov-70	YS700897	HQ BA LONG PROV
09-Nov-70	YS688940	HQ BA LONG PROV

⁹⁴⁵ Compiled by Bob Hartley from 547 Sig Tp Activity Reports supplied by ASD and Bennington, S. (Curator - Official History), Vietnam Battle Intelligence Computer data tapes – Part 2, Australian War Memorial – Canberra, 19 November 2014./ No Monthly ARDF Reports available possible. the data tapes may only include fixes from SPAR reports signalled to HQ1ATF.



Date	Loc	Unit
09-Nov-70	YS455530	HQ LONG DAT Dist Unit
09-Nov-70	YS224882	U/I, Poss BN CP
09-Nov-70	YS335951	HQ 274 Regt (Regt CP)
09-Nov-70	YS2359	HQ VUNG TAU City Unit
09-Nov-70	YT745071	HQ MR7
10-Nov-70	YS476517	LONG DAT Dist Unit Forces
10-Nov-70	YS658937	U/I UNIT
10-Nov-70	YT684078	MR7
10-Nov-70	YT755095	HQ MR7
11-Nov-70	YT277039	2/274 Regt (BN CP)
11-Nov-70	YT769088	HQ MR7
11-Nov-70	YT696095	U/I UNIT
11-Nov-70	YT328060	U/I UNIT
11-Nov-70	YS197790	U/I UNIT
11-Nov-70	YS637956	HQ BA LONG PROV
11-Nov-70	YS678947	HQ BA LONG PROV
12-Nov-70	YT267063	HQ 74 Arty Regt (Regt CP)
12-Nov-70	YS498520	LONG DAT Dist Unit Forces
13-Nov-70	YS667902	HQ BA LONG PROV
13-Nov-70	YT502081	U/I
13-Nov-70	YS190814	U/I
13-Nov-70	YS488508	LONG DAT Dist Unit Forces
13-Nov-70	YT748100	HQ MR7
14-Nov-70	YS626931	HQ BA LONG PROV
14-Nov-70	YS622940	U/I UNIT
14-Nov-70	YS659946	HQ BA LONG PROV
14-Nov-70	YS493519	LONG DAT Dist Unit Forces
14-Nov-70	YT144051	U/I
14-Nov-70	YS288909	HQ SR4
15-Nov-70	YT678059	HQ MR7
15-Nov-70	YT781011	84 RSG
15-Nov-70	YS186807	HQ 10 Sapper Bn
15-Nov-70	YS274919	HQ SR4
15-Nov-70	YS502527	LONG DAT Dist Unit Forces
15-Nov-70	YT269051	HQ 74 Arty Regt (Regt CP)
16-Nov-70	YT781123	HQ MR7
16-Nov-70	YT697050	U/I
16-Nov-70	YT120033	U/I
16-Nov-70	YS183805	10 Sapper Bn
16-Nov-70	YS707957	HQ BA LONG PROV



Date	Loc	Unit
16-Nov-70	YS655945	U/I
16-Nov-70	YS494514	LONG DAT Dist Unit
16-Nov-70	YS223875	U/I
17-Nov-70	YT81010	HQ MR7
17-Nov-70	YS31393	HQ SR4
18-Nov-70	YT622076	84 RSG
18-Nov-70	YT742042	MR7
19-Nov-70	YT384050	1/274 Regt (BN CP)
19-Nov-70	YS499520	LONG DAT Dist Unit
20-Nov-70	YT273052	HQ 74 Arty Regt (Regt CP)
21-Nov-70	YT269058	Elms HQ 74 Arty Regt (Regt CP)
21-Nov-70	YT747070	HQ MR7
22-Nov-70	YS661938	HQ BA LONG PROV
22-Nov-70	YS267627	VUNG TAU City Unit
23-Nov-70	YT802139	Elms HQ MR7 ELMS
23-Nov-70	YT348059	1/274 Regt
23-Nov-70	YS491505	Elms LONG DAT Dist Unit Forces
23-Nov-70	YS306983	HQ 274 Regt (Regt CP)
23-Nov-70	YS295597	Elms VUNG TAU City Unit
23-Nov-70	YS655915	Elms HQ BA LONG PROV
24-Nov-70	YT744017	Elms HQ BA LONG PROV
24-Nov-70	YT348034	Elms 1/274 Regt
24-Nov-70	YT783134	HQ MR7
24-Nov-70	YT799142	U/I
24-Nov-70	YS488511	LONG DAT Dist Unit U/I UNIT
24-Nov-70	YS638966	U/I
25-Nov-70	YT705095	HQ MR7
25-Nov-70	YT704085	HQ MR7
25-Nov-70	YT344118	Elms 1/274 Regt (BN CP)
25-Nov-70	YT691075	Elms HQ MR 7
25-Nov-70	YS554980	U/I
25-Nov-70	YS203868	U/I
25-Nov-70	YS570977	U/I
25-Nov-70	YS297590	VUNG TAU City Unit
26-Nov-70	YT329070	1/274 Regt (BN CP)
26-Nov-70	YT670080	U/I
26-Nov-70	YT754036	MR7
26-Nov-70	YS6501	
27-Nov-70	YT336077	1/274 Regt (BN CP)
27-Nov-70	YS285575	VUNG TAU City Unit



Date	Loc	Unit
28-Nov-70	YS315600	VUNG TAU City Unit
28-Nov-70	YT656019	HQ BA LONG PROV
29-Nov-70	YT782028	84 RSG
29-Nov-70	YT550010	U/I
29-Nov-70	YT666945	HQ BA LONG PROV
29-Nov-70	YS282610	Elms VUNG TAU City Unit
30-Nov-70	YT806142	HQ MR7
30-Nov-70	YT770041	MR7,
30-Nov-70	YT846124	U/I
30-Nov-70	YS541983	Elms HQ BA LONG PROV
30-Nov-70	YS492521	LONG DAT Dist Unit
30-Nov-70	YS664947	HQ BA LONG PROV

61.3.4 HQ 1 Bn 274 Regiment Moves in November

The following graphic of HQ 1 Bn 274 Regiment locations for November was compiled from various Fix Reports:

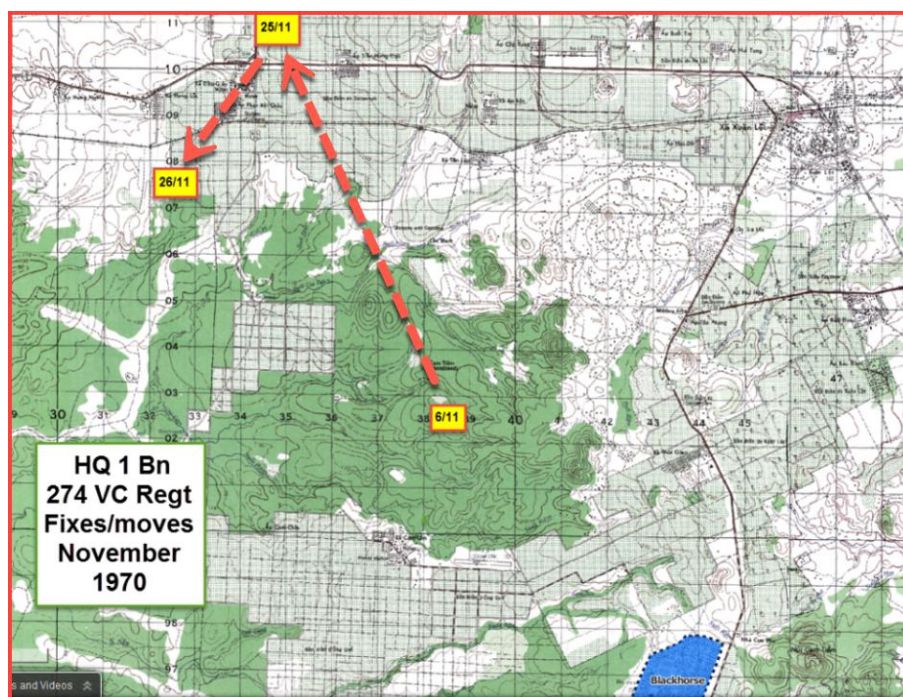


Figure 591: HQ 1/274 Regt November Fixes/Moves⁹⁴⁶

61.3.5 Another ARDF Story

During an ARDF mission on 9 November, Paul Stock was flying in the Rung Sat area where 2RAR was operating.

⁹⁴⁶ Plotted by Bob Hartley.



Figure 592: Rung Sat and example of a cut

61.3.5.1 Target Activity and Cuts

Paul was waiting to get a fix on a transmitter that had been quiet for a few days. He was lucky and heard the station receiving traffic. When the station was asking for repetitions, he was able to get single 'cuts' on the transmitter from several runs. After plotting all the cuts, the result indicated that the target was indeed in the 2RAR operating area⁹⁴⁷.

61.3.5.2 Result Reported to HQ 1ATF

The result was reported to the Task Force intelligence staff and, in turn, to the CO of 2 RAR.

61.3.5.3 CO 2 RAR Sceptical

The battalion CO, however, was sceptical as his battalion had found no evidence of enemy activity in the area.

61.3.5.4 CO in Sioux Helicopter Receive Ground Fire

On the afternoon of 9 November, the CO decided to do a low level helicopter reconnaissance in the area of the fix. While flying over the general location of the fix the Sioux helicopter was subject to ground fire. The CO received a gunshot wound in the buttocks and the helicopter was shot down and subsequently destroyed.

61.3.5.5 GSO2 (Int) Recollection and Diary Extracts

Major Mike Peters was the GSO2 (Int) for 1 ATF at this time. He later related⁹⁴⁸:

⁹⁴⁷ The full story of the initial intercept and follow up actions as reported by Paul Stock is detailed in Annex S.

⁹⁴⁸ Extracts from oral submission of Colonel (Rtd) Mike Peters at the DHAAT Hearing at Canberra on 26 Oct 13 and subsequent emails to Bob Hartley.



On one occasion in November 1970 when we received a 547 Sig Tp report of the approximate location of Chau Duc in the Rung Sat (we got many 547 reports of Chau Duc's locations in the Rung Sat). I rang 2RAR/NZ on the secure phone, expecting to speak to the Intelligence Officer, but the CO, LtCol Church, picked up the phone. I gave him the report, and he used his command helicopter to fly to the spot. The pilot, I was told, said "Oh no, they don't get under this bush, they get under that palm over there". The CO apparently said let's go over there and have a look. And they were shot down. LtCol Church was wounded, but not the pilot. The pilot managed to get his May Day out and got the aircraft down. The follow up which arrived some time afterwards found that Chau Duc had left the area as fast as they could go, probably fearing an airstrike, leaving most of their gear behind. The CO and the pilot were able to be rescued. In fact the incident was just one of many which "proved" the accuracy of 547 Sig Tp's reporting.

The HQ ATF Commanders Diary for 9 Nov⁹⁴⁹ had the following entries of the event:

50		G (OPS) HQ 1 ATF (MAIN)	Date
Time	To or From	Events	
1615H	F/ Air	YS268600, a sioux AC tail No. A1-637 C/S A21 crashed and burned. 2 pax were evac by Alb O2. 1 GS Wound to leg, 1 mild shock.	
1620H	F/ Air	Request clearance to brass area of E/B (where Possum downed with CO 2 RAR aboard) This was a priority clearance granted by Arty.	

Figure 593: Extract from HQ 1ATF Diary 1615 hrs

1700H	F/ 2 RAR	Ref query on what action 2 RAR intend taking in the deployment of troops in the area of the crashed Possum. Only means of getting troops into area is by winch from 15-20 ft. No intention to send troops in, especially as aircraft received heavy burst of fire prior to crash. Perhaps Arty may be prepared to fire in area if they have capability. For GSO3.
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Figure 594: Extract from HQ 1ATF Diary 1700 hrs

(6) At 091615 at YS 268600 a sioux helicopter of 161 Recce Flt was shot down by groundfire. Result AC completely destroyed by fire. Two pers aboard evacuated to 1 Aust Fd Hosp one with GSW and pilot for check for shock.

Figure 595: Extract from SITREP for 9 Nov 69

⁹⁴⁹ AWM RCDIG1028097



CHAU DUC. No confirmed contact has been made with CHAU DUC. However on 9 Nov a Special Agent report was received which indicated that an important element of CHAU DUC had moved from the NUI DINHs into the RUNG SAT north of LONG SON Island. Reacting in response to this report the Commanding Officer of 2 RAR/NZ was shot down in a reconnaissance helicopter, presumably by CHAU DUC. Recent discovery of extensive and well-constructed bunker systems in this area lend further credence to earlier assessments that a number of enemy groups, besides CHAU DUC, have re-located from the general Route 15 area into the RUNG SAT. Probable indications of movement of elements of CHAU DUC in the area just north of the NUI DINHs can be deduced from track patterns and Sniffer reports. A group of CHAU DUC are still believed to be near NGAI GIAO.

Figure 596: Extract from 1 ATF SUPINTREP

Note the use of Special Agent report for 547 Sig Tp information

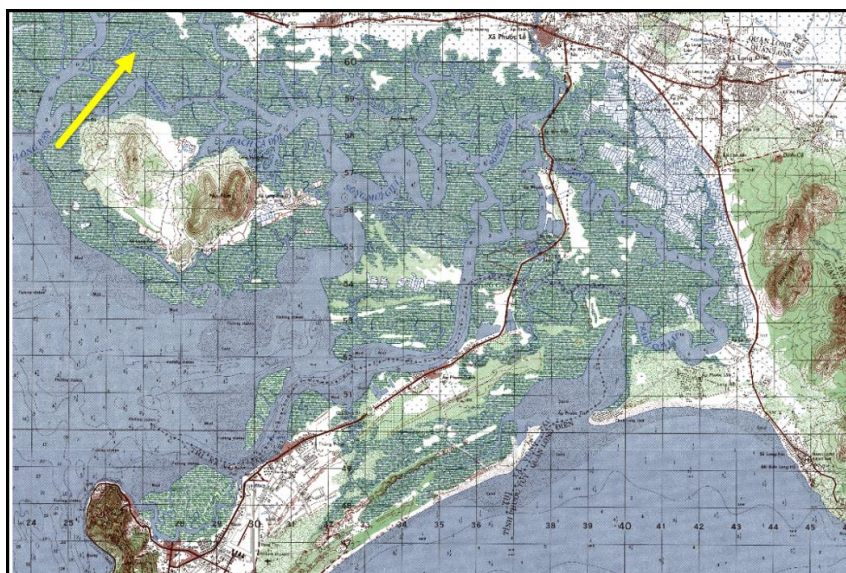


Figure 597: Location of crash site #1

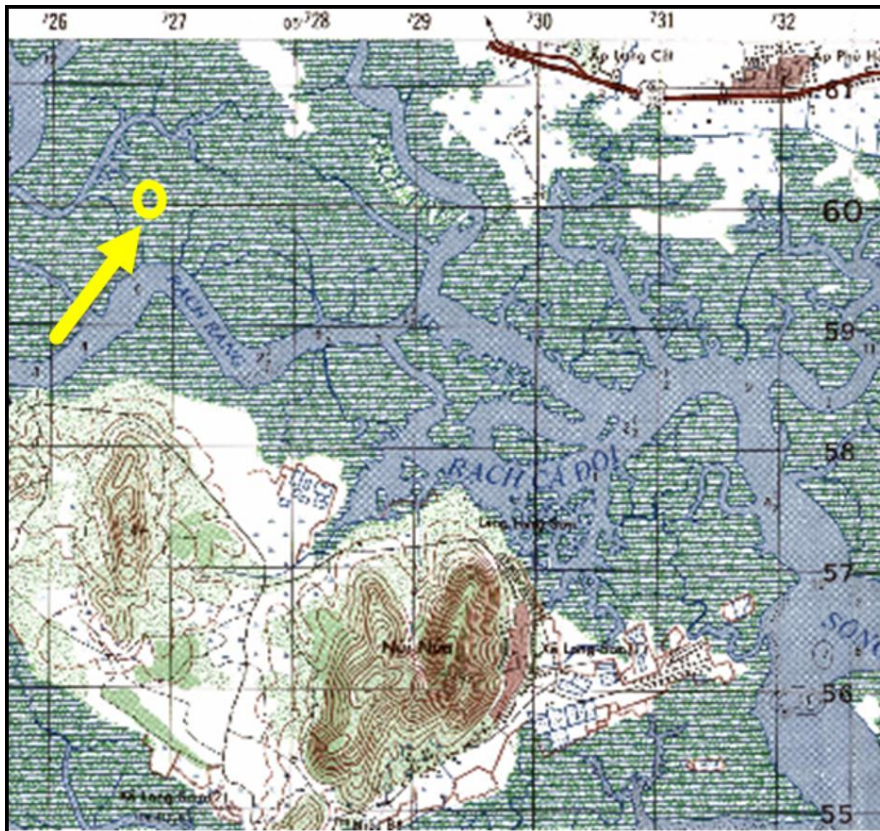


Figure 598: Location of crash site #2

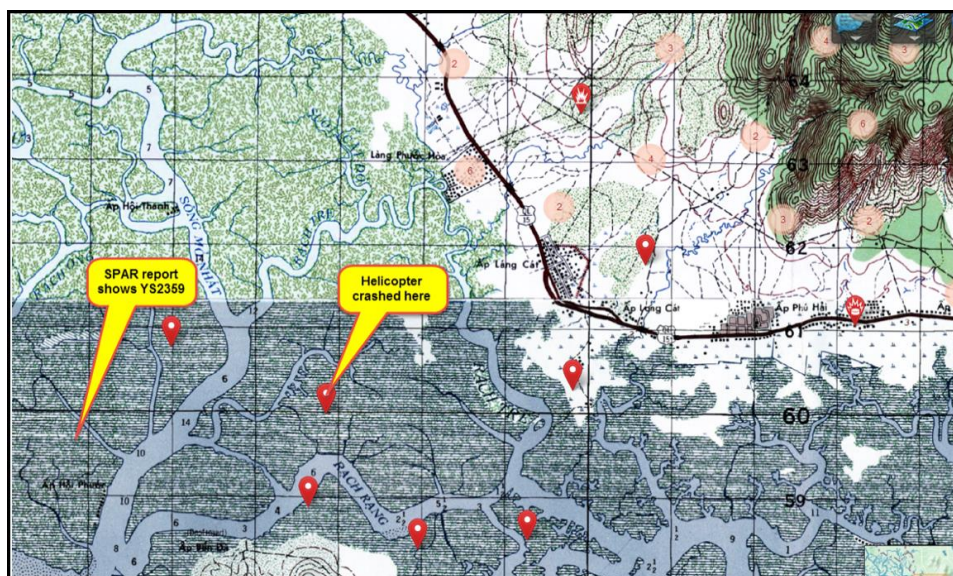


Figure 599: Fix location and eventual crash site of helicopter



Note:

There was an interesting side-line to this event. Jack Fenton had been able to acquire (at a cost of a carton of Bitter Lemon) two AN/PRD-1 Manpack DF Sets from the DODSPECREP in Saigon. Jack and Jock McCartney travelled to Saigon by Land Rover to pick up the items. On the return journey when passing the Rung Sat they had a ringside seat of US aircraft bombing the remains of the downed helicopter.

Extract from *Possums and Bird Dogs*⁹⁵⁰:

In another notable incident on 9 November, Second Lieutenant Terry Hayes was assigned as DS pilot for 2RAR on Operation Cung Chung III. He was flying the CO, Lieutenant Colonel John Church, on a reconnaissance in the south western area of Phuoc Tuy when he located a fresh track. He was following it at slow speed about 20 feet above the ground when the aircraft took heavy ground fire. Colonel Church was hit and a moment later the engine failed. Hayes crash-landed the aircraft without further injury to his passenger, meanwhile transmitting on the distress frequency. A RAAF Iroquois flying some distance away heard the 'Mayday' call and radioed for another winch-fitted RAAF machine situated at Nui Dat. Colonel Church was being treated at the Field Hospital in Vung Tau within 20 minutes of the crash. Terry Hayes was uninjured. He was recognised as an effective and determined pilot throughout his tour of duty with 161 Recce Flight and received a DFC for his outstanding airmanship.

⁹⁵⁰ Nolan, Peter (2012-03-15). *Possums and Bird Dogs: Australian Army Aviation's 161 Reconnaissance Flight in South Vietnam* (Kindle Locations 3343-3351). Allen and Unwin. Kindle Edition.



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CHAPTER 62 – DECEMBER 1970

62.1 Personnel

62.1.1 Arrivals and Departures

In December there were no arrivals and only one departure to end the year.

Departure

3 December

Signalman Glen Adamson

62.1.2 Unit Strength

The Troop strength at the end of 1970 was 40.

62.1.3 Troop Manning

The following graphic shows the organisation and manning of the Troop in late-December:

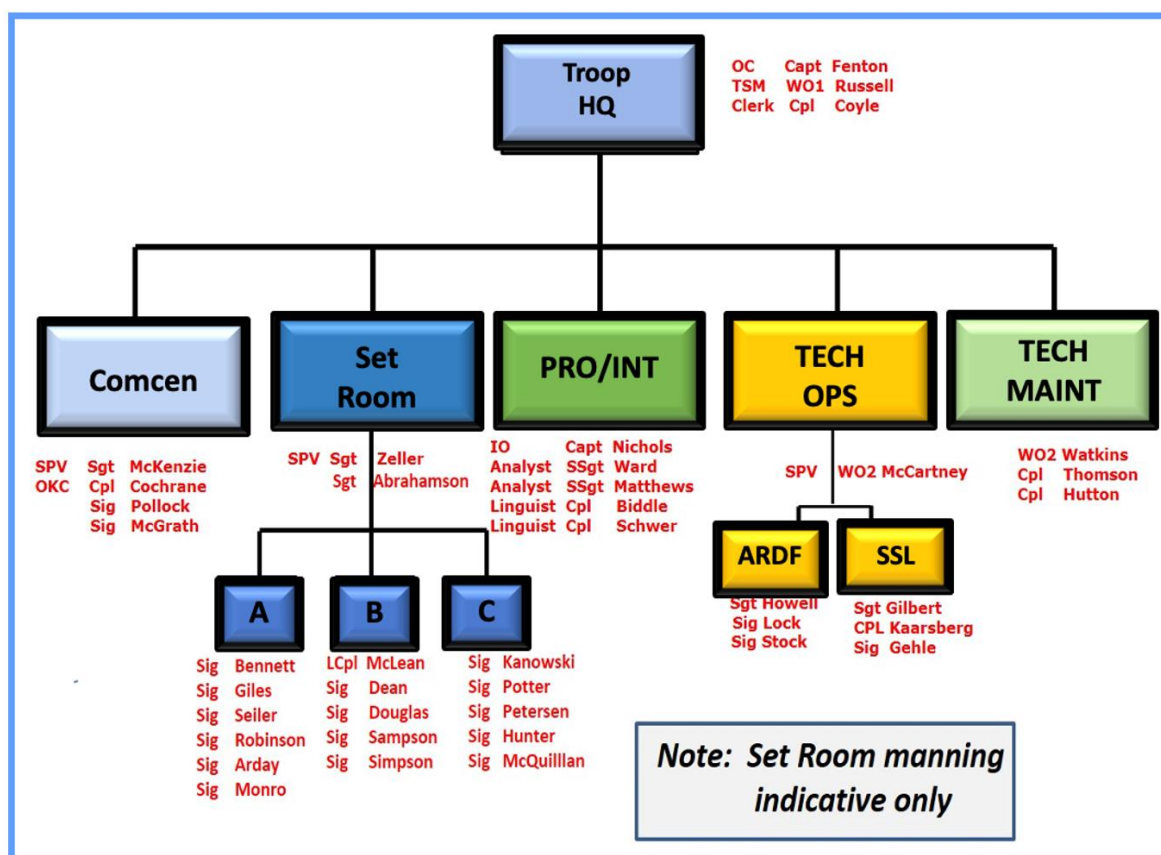


Figure 600: Manning December 1970⁹⁵¹

⁹⁵¹ Graphic compiled by Bob Hartley from unit records. E&OE.



Note:

The organisational chart shows only personnel who were thought to be employed in ARDF or SSL on the end date. It is realised that other members had been employed in these areas during the preceding six months

62.1.4 Christmas Dinner

Christmas Dinner 1970 was served by the officers and senior ranks to the junior ranks at the 104 Sig Sqn mess and then Troop members enjoyed a 'cuppa' in the Troop club.



Figure 601: Christmas Day #1



Figure 602: Christmas Day #2⁹⁵²

⁹⁵² Photo courtesy of Jim Kanowski.



62.2 Operations

62.2.1 ARDF Flying Hours

The total ARDF flying hours for the month were⁹⁵³:

Year	Month	Flying hours	Total Fixes	Good <1000mts	Fair 1-2000Mts	Poor >2000 Mts	Cut	Missions Lost	Remarks
1970	Dec	140.05	128	36	80	1	11	5	

Personnel Flying Hours

Sgt Abrahamson

Cpl Stock

Sig Giles

Sig Lock

December

53:25

49:10

22:30

15:00

Progressive Total

71:05

146:55

232:40

57:45

62.2.2 Summary of Main ARDF Fixes

The following table is a summary of the main ARDF fixes for December 1970⁹⁵⁴:

Date	Time (Z)	Loc	Ident	Unit
1-Dec-70		YS669936		Elms HQ BA LONG PROV
2-Dec-70	0115Z	YS651947	P0201	Elms HQ BA LONG PROV
2-Dec-70	0140Z	YT710031		U/I
2-Dec-70	0210Z	YT340058	M0093	HQ 1 Bn VC 274 Regt
2-Dec-70	0220Z	YS343984	M0084	HQ VC 274 Regt
2-Dec-70	0235Z	YS270615	M5908	VUNG TAU City Unit
2-Dec-70	0245Z	YS281594	M5908	VUNG TAU City Unit
2-Dec-70	0310Z	YS712691	U/I	
2-Dec-70	0735Z	YS714721	U/I	
2-Dec-70	0820Z	YS275634	M5908	VUNG TAU City Unit
2-Dec-70	0845Z	YT347101	M0093	HQ 1 Bn VC 274 Regt
2-Dec-70		YT559009		U/I
2-Dec-70		YS343904	M0093	HQ 1 Bn VC 274 Regt
2-Dec-70		ZS093960		HQ NVA 33 Regt
03-Dec-70	0010Z	YS200881	B4223	LONG DAT Dist Unit Also seen as 3 Bn 274 VC Regt
03-Dec-70	0304Z	YS748729	M1523	D445 Bn
03-Dec-70	0335Z	YS493522	B4024	LONG DAT Dist Unit
03-Dec-70	0940Z	YT540015	B4165	3 Bn 33 Regt

⁹⁵³ Compiled from MI8 Records held at ASD archives.

⁹⁵⁴ Compiled by Bob Hartley from 547 Sig Tp Activity Reports supplied by ASD and Bennington, S. (Curator - Official History), Vietnam Battle Intelligence Computer data tapes – Part 2, Australian War Memorial – Canberra, 19 November 2014./ No Monthly ARDF Reports available possible. The data tapes may only include fxes from SPAR reports signalled to HQ1ATF and 547 Sig Tp ARDF Monthly Summaries contained in ASD files.



Date	Time (Z)	Loc	Ident	Unit
03-Dec-70	1010Z	YS177870	B4223	LONG DAT Dist Unit Also seen as 3 Bn 274 VC Regt
03-Dec-70	1020Z	YS338964	M0084	HQ VC 274 Regt (Regt CP)
03-Dec-70		YS275645		VUNG TAU City Unit
4-Dec-70	0205Z	YT323031	M0093	1 Bn VC 274 Regt
4-Dec-70	0310Z	YS171852	B4223	LONG DAT Dist Unit Also seen as 3 Bn 274 VC Regt
4-Dec-70	0723Z	YT684067	M1265	HQ MR7
4-Dec-70		YT323031		1/274 Regt (BN CP)
4-Dec-70		YS672984		HQ BA LONG PROV Comm
4-Dec-70		YS326979		HQ 274 Regt (CP)
4-Dec-70		ZS105957		Elms HQ NVA 33 Regt (Regt CP)
4-Dec-70		YS171852		U/I
5-Dec-70	0010Z	YS198882	B4223	LONG DAT Dist Unit Also seen as 3 Bn 274 VC Regt
5-Dec-70	0240Z	YT720073		U/I
5-Dec-70	0250Z	YT621122		U/I
5-Dec-70	0305Z	YT636111	I0019	MR7
5-Dec-70	0807Z	YT716217	B5105	U/I
5-Dec-70	0812Z	YT739052		U/I
5-Dec-70	0820Z	YT329959	M0084	HQ VC 274 Regt (Regt CP)
5-Dec-70	0840Z	YT337029	M0093	1 Bn VC 274 Regt
5-Dec-70	0902Z	YT267087	E0653	U/I
5-Dec-70	0933Z	YS560975	B4165	3 Bn NVA 33 Regt
6-Dec-70	0340Z	YS701728	U/I	
6-Dec-70	0715Z	YT678058	U/I	
6-Dec-70		YS634951		HQ BA LONG Prov
6-Dec-70		YS678058		HQ BA LONG PROV Comm
7-Dec-70	0140Z	YS698955	U/I	U/I
7-Dec-70	0225Z	YS315858	M0084	HQ VC 274 Regt (Regt CP)
7-Dec-70	0336Z	YS488520	B4024	LONG DAT Dist Unit
7-Dec-70	0640Z	YT286042	M4000	HQ 74 Arty
7-Dec-70		YT591931		HQ BA LONG PROV Comm
7-Dec-70		YT764023		MR7 Regional Committee
7-Dec-70		YT730063		HQ MR7
7-Dec-70		YS348999		HQ VC 274 Regt
7-Dec-70		ZS096962		HQ NVA 33 Regt
8-Dec-70	0205Z	YT307043	M0093	1 Bn VC 274 Regt
8-Dec-70	0235Z	YS257623	M5908	VUNG TAU City Unit



Date	Time (Z)	Loc	Ident	Unit
8-Dec-70	0310Z	YS699665	M1523	D445 Bn
8-Dec-70	0405Z	YS464493	B4024	LONG DAT Dist Unit Forces
8-Dec-70	0805Z	YS260629	M5908	VUNG TAU City Unit
8-Dec-70	0835Z	YS699664	M1523	D445 Bn
9-Dec-70		YS616934		HQ BA LONG Prov
9-Dec-70	0215Z	YS596956	M0094	HQ BA LONG PROV
9-Dec-70	0235Z	YS262653	M5908	VUNG TAU City Unit
9-Dec-70	0310Z	YS657666	M1523	D445 Bn
9-Dec-70	0305Z	YS496522	B4024	LONG DAT Dist Unit Forces
9-Dec-70	0805Z	YS297606	M5908	VUNG TAU City Unit
9-Dec-70	0840Z	YS642650	M1523	D445 Bn
9-Dec-70	0935Z	YS511983	B4165	3 Bn NVA 33 Regt
9-Dec-70		ZS097923		HQ NVA 33 Regt
10-Dec-70	0205Z	YT370048	M0093	1 Bn VC 274 Regt
10-Dec-70	0210Z	YS293982	M0084	HQ VC 274 Regt (Regt CP)
10-Dec-70	0235Z	YS300610	M5908	VUNG TAU City Unit
10-Dec-70	0335Z	YS505515	B4024	LONG DAT Dist Unit Forces
10-Dec-70	0810Z	YS298598	M5908	VUNG TAU City Unit
10-Dec-70	0940Z	YS494981	B4165	3 Bn NVA 33 Regt
11-Dec-70		YT372028		1 Bn VC 274 Regt
11-Dec-70		YT804135		HQ MR7
11-Dec-70		YT785035		U/I
11-Dec-70		ZS095954		HQ NVA 33 Regt
12-Dec-70	0205Z	YT405037	M0093	1 Bn VC 274 Regt
12-Dec-70	0235Z	YS303613	M5908	VUNG TAU City Unit
12-Dec-70	0308Z	YS621651	M1523	D445 Bn
12-Dec-70	0338Z	YS487513	B4024	LONG DAT Dist Unit Forces
12-Dec-70	0650Z	YS670764	M1523	D445 Bn
12-Dec-70	0705Z	YS327997	W1816	U/I
12-Dec-70	0750Z	YS344993	U/I	
12-Dec-70	0810Z	YS274615	M5908	VUNG TAU City Unit
12-Dec-70		YT785126		HQ MR7
12-Dec-70		YT792044		HQ 84 RSG
12-Dec-70		YS665968		HQ BA LONG Prov
13-Dec-70	0210Z	YT401046	M0093	1 Bn VC 274 Regt
13-Dec-70	0240Z	YS298610	M5908	VUNG TAU City Unit
13-Dec-70		YT805157		HQ MR7
13-Dec-70		YT502035		MR7 Regional Committee
13-Dec-70		YT789042		HQ 84 RSG
13-Dec-70		YS670960		HQ BA LONG Prov



Date	Time (Z)	Loc	Ident	Unit
14-Dec-70	0205Z	YT292004	W1816	U/I
14-Dec-70	0240Z	YS307590	M5908	VUNG TAU City Unit
14-Dec-70	0310Z	YS680735	M1523	D445 Bn
14-Dec-70	0635Z	YT255045	M4000	HQ 74 Arty Regt
14-Dec-70	0703Z	YT292008	W1816	U/I
14-Dec-70		YT811149		Elems HQ MR7
14-Dec-70		YT783033		Elems OF 84 RSG
14-Dec-70		YT779049		Elems MR7 Regional Comm
14-Dec-70		YS665941		Elems HQ BA LONG PROV
15-Dec-70	0210Z	YT384048	M0093	1 Bn VC 274 Regt
15-Dec-70	0220Z	YT307023	M0084	HQ VC 274 Regt (Regt CP)
15-Dec-70	0310Z	ZS095900	M0135	HQ NVA 33 Regt
15-Dec-70	0935Z	YT553038	B4165	Elems 3/33 NVA Regt
15-Dec-70		YT288056		Elems HQ 74 Arty Regt (Regt CP)
15-Dec-70		YT319013		U/I UNIT
15-Dec-70		YS323972		HQ 274 Regt (Regt CP)
16-Dec-70		YT287061		74 Arty Regt HQ (Regt CP)
16-Dec-70		YT329009		U/I UNIT, Poss associated with HQ MR7
16-Dec-70		YS677955		HQ BA LONG PROV
17-Dec-70	0645Z	YS676670	M1523	D445 Bn
17-Dec-70	0740Z	YT366045	W1816	U/I Poss associated with HQ MR7
17-Dec-70	0810Z	YT280026	M4000	HQ 74 Arty Regt
17-Dec-70		YT280020		Elems HQ 74 Arty Regt (Regt CP)
17-Dec-70		YS661931		HQ BA LONG PROV
18-Dec-70	0210Z	YT414020	M0093	
18-Dec-70	0334Z	YS643968	E0905	U/I
18-Dec-70	0405Z	YT324002	E0902	U/I
18-Dec-70	0410Z	YT279135	E0904	U/I
18-Dec-70	0810Z	YT274056	M4000	HQ 74 Arty Regt
18-Dec-70		YS673948		Elems HQ BA LONG PROV
19-Dec-70	0335Z	YS487514	B4024	LONG DAT Dist Unit
19-Dec-70	0635Z	YS654620	M1523	D445 Bn
19-Dec-70	0835Z	YS645608	M1523	D445 Bn
19-Dec-70	1005Z	YS675963	E0905	U/I
19-Dec-70	1010Z	YS613957	U/I	U/I
19-Dec-70		YS669946		Elems HQ BA LONG PROV
19-Dec-70		YT776128		HQ MR7
19-Dec-70		YS222885		U/I (POSS BN CP)



Date	Time (Z)	Loc	Ident	Unit
20-Dec-70	0204Z	YS657967	M0094	HQ BA LONG PROV
21-Dec-70	0205Z	YT412054	M0093	1 Bn VC 274 Regt
21-Dec-70	0240Z	YT290018	E0902	U/I Poss associated with HQ MR7
21-Dec-70	0340Z	YS481548	B4024	LONG DAT Dist Unit
21-Dec-70		YS889959		Elems 84 RSG
21-Dec-70		YS679898		HQ BA LONG PROV
22-Dec-70		YT804116		HQ MR7
22-Dec-70		YT280065		HQ 74 Arty Regt (Regt CP)
23-Dec-70	0202Z	YT390020	M0093	1 Bn VC 274 Regt
23-Dec-70	0310Z	YS245910	B4223	LONG DAT Dist Unit Also seen as 3 Bn 274 VC Regt
23-Dec-70	0335Z	YS486505	B4024	LONG DAT Dist Unit
23-Dec-70	0635Z	YS645618	M1523	D445 Bn
23-Dec-70	0810Z	YT390035	M0093	1 Bn VC 274 Regt
23-Dec-70	0815Z	YS323996	M0084	HQ VC 274 Regt (Regt CP)
24-Dec-70	0210Z	YT313011	M0084	HQ VC 274 Regt (Regt CP)
24-Dec-70	0215Z	YS397997	M0093	1 Bn VC 274 Regt
24-Dec-70	0315Z	YS217909	B4223	LONG DAT Dist Unit Also seen as 3 Bn 274 VC Regt
23-Dec-70		YS245910		OC U/I UNIT (BN CP)
24-Dec-70		YT786126		HQ MR7
24-Dec-70		YS320976		HQ 274 Regt (Regt CP)
25-Dec-70	0200Z	YS564938	M0094	HQ BA LONG PROV
25-Dec-70	0637Z	YS622610	M1523	D445 Bn
26-Dec-70	0210Z	YT363010	M0093	1 Bn VC 274 Regt
26-Dec-70	0305Z	YS242918	B4223	LONG DAT Dist Unit Also seen as 3 Bn 274 VC Regt
26-Dec-70	0340Z	YS500526	B4024	LONG DAT Dist Unit
26-Dec-70	0640Z	YS686616	M1523	D445 Bn
27-Dec-70	0205Z	YT345055	M0093	1 Bn VC 274 Regt
27-Dec-70	0840Z	YS645623	M1523	D445 Bn
27-Dec-70	1010Z	YS245903	B4223	LONG DAT Dist Unit Also seen as 3 Bn 274 VC Regt
28-Dec-70	0240Z	YT315200	P0195	U/I
28-Dec-70	0310Z	YS200885	B4223	LONG DAT Dist Unit Also seen as 3 Bn 274 VC Regt
28-Dec-70	0735Z	YS858930	M0278	U/I
28-Dec-70	0835Z	YS667607	M1523	D445 Bn
28-Dec-70	0907Z	YS483513	B4024	LONG DAT Dist Unit



Date	Time (Z)	Loc	Ident	Unit
29-Dec-70	0204Z	YT360075	M0093	1 Bn VC 274 Regt
29-Dec-70	0307Z	YS210886	B4223	LONG DAT Dist Unit Also seen as 3 Bn 274 VC Regt
29-Dec-70	0635Z	YS649629	M1523	D445 Bn
30-Dec-70	0210Z	YS637649	M1523	D445 Bn
30-Dec-70	0310Z	YS201888	B4223	LONG DAT Dist Unit Also seen as 3 Bn 274 VC Regt
30-Dec-70	0835Z	YT777137	I0019	MR7
30-Dec-70	0935Z	YS566916	B4165	3 Bn NVA 33 Regt
31-Dec-70	0335Z	YS481496	B4024	LONG DAT Dist Unit
31-Dec-70	0715Z	YT871096	Q9972	U/I
31-Dec-70	0735Z	YS857972	M0278	U/I
31-Dec-70	0835Z	YS746137	I0019	MR7

62.2.3 HQ 1 BN 274 Regiment Moves in December

The following graphic of HQ 1 Bn 274 Regiment location and movements was compiled from various Fix Reports:

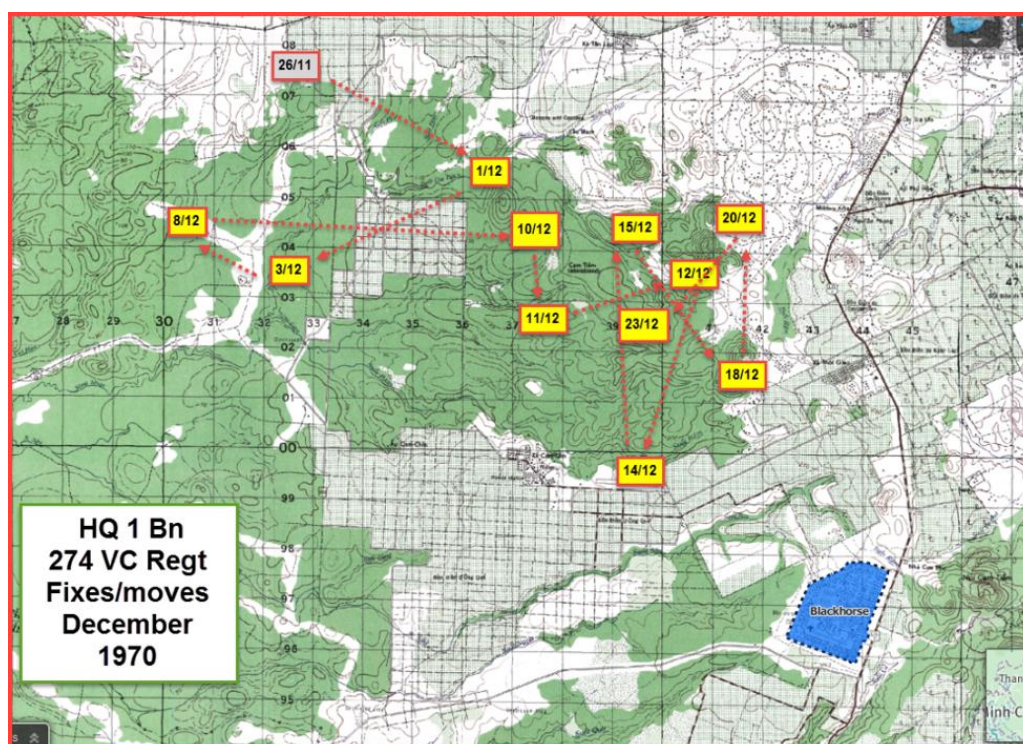


Figure 603: HQ 1/274 Regt December Fixes/Moves⁹⁵⁵

⁹⁵⁵ Plotted by Bob Hartley.



62.2.4 856th RR Det

The following item on the history of the 856th RR Det was located in 2018⁹⁵⁶:

Annex G(856th Radio Research Detachment) to 303d Radio Research Battalion History, Fiscal Year 1970.

The 856th RR Detachment provided direct support to the 199th Light Infantry Brigade during Fiscal Year 1970. The detachment performed the following duties: Manual Morse intercept, low level voice intercept, ARDF results reporting, traffic analysis, and presented briefings to the 199th Light Infantry Brigade as required. The unit also provided for the collection and forwarding of all captured enemy signal equipment and related material to the TRU coordinator at the 175th RR Company for analysis. The detachment maintained FM voice communications with the 547th Signal Troop for the purpose of coordination.

During the first quarter of the fiscal year the 856th was tasked with covering ten cased entities, an increase of five over the previous quarter. It was during the first quarter that the detachment was relocated to Camp Frenzell-Jones from FSB Blackhorse in August. One LLVI position was operated at Xuan Loc with daily coverage of nine hours. Emphasis was placed on VC search and development.

Once at Frenzell-Jones, the three Morse positions(MRPV-3) were dismounted and placed inside the operations building. The Traffic Analysis section operated at a reduced personnel level due to shortages of 98C's. Although authorized twelve 98C's, the TA section operated with only five men during most of the period. The TA section augmented its identification facilities by initiating a card catalog of callsign identifications. A catalog of developmental entities was also established.

During the first quarter ARDF results passed to the 199th Light Infantry Brigade proved to be the main source of tactically exploitable intelligence provided by the 856th RR Det. The detachment was assigned primary responsibility for targets emanating from the provinces: Bien Hoa, Long Khanh, Binh Tuy, and Phuoc Tuy.

The second quarter of Fiscal Year 1970 showed a significant increase in Manual Morse activity for the 856th RR Det. At the end of the quarter there were 32 cased entities assigned to the Manual Morse effort. The overall intercept level was relatively low due to infrequent target activity. In order to achieve maximum utilization of the detachment's resources, the CMA assigned one of the Liberation News Agency's transmitters as a target.

The LLVI effort was unsuccessful during the second quarter. The VC/NVA units in the 199th Brigade's area of operation did not maintain an extensive voice communications net. During the

Figure 604: 856 RR Det Report #1⁹⁵⁷

⁹⁵⁶ Source details unknown.

⁹⁵⁷ The 199th established its first and only Brigade Main Base, or BMB, several clicks northeast of Saigon and Bien Hoa called Camp Frenzell-Jones. BMB was named after two of the Brigade's early combat casualties from Alpha 4-12, PFC Herb Frenzell and SP4 Billy C. Jones. The camp was also across the road from Ho Nai Village, which was a main enemy infiltration corridor into Saigon.



second quarter the 856th moved its LLVI team to several locations attempting to intercept any voice activity. The LLVI team was deployed to the following sites: Fire Support Base (FSB) Libby, FSB Crystal, and Xuan Loc.

ARDF continued to provide excellent day-to-day intelligence for the supported command. Operation Toan Thang III continued during the second quarter with primary emphasis being placed on targets in Long Khanh Province. The 199th Light Infantry Brigade also remained interested in enemy concentrations in War Zone D and the Rice Bowl area of Binh Tuy Province.

During the third quarter the Manual Morse mission was re-aligned to provide coverage against the 33d NVA Regiment, the 274th VC Regiment, and the 74th Artillery. Political nets associated with MR VII were also covered. Additional emphasis was placed on intercept of rear services groups known to be supporting enemy military and political entities in the 199th Brigade's area of operation.

LLVI failed to produce any significant intelligence due to the continuing absence of enemy voice communications. In an attempt to intercept voice transmissions during the third quarter the LLVI position was deployed to the following sites: FSB Nancy, FSB Gladys, FSB Melinda, Camp Frenzell-Jones, Long Thanh North, Signal Mountain, FSB Bau Ca, and Xuan Loc. At the end of the third quarter reporting period the voice mission remained unproductive.

The TA section had a successful third quarter. The 856th Detachment's Traffic Analysis section recovered two SOI changes implemented by the 33d NVA Regiment. These recoveries were used to identify a link existing between the 33d Regiment and the 5th NVA Division. The identification of five new cases from previously uncaged entities was made possible by the recovery of [REDACTED] by the 33d Regiment.

ARDF results passed to the supported commander by the detachment's liaison section provided valuable daily intelligence. Intelligence gleaned from 33d Regiment signal communications provided the basis for all tactical operations of the 199th Light Infantry Brigade during March 1970. This was a reflection of the value placed on the SIGINT product by the supported commander.

During the fourth quarter the 856th Radio Research Detachment realigned its Manual Morse position in order to provide emphasis on enemy units operating in the Long Khanh-Binh Tuy province areas including the NVA 33d Regiment, the VC 274th Main Force Regiment, the NVA 74th Artillery Regiment, and the Headquarters of Military Region VII. Other important entities

~~SECRET SPOKE~~

Figure 605: 856 RR Det Report #2



~~SECRET~~ ~~SECRET~~

included Sub Region IV, and the local force units in the area, such as the 440th and 445th Local Force Battalions.

The Detachment employed block tasking during the fourth quarter on an average of 19 assigned cases. Special emphasis was placed on all transmissions passed between the 33d Regiment and its subordinates and associates. The 33d Regiment made five SOI changes during the quarter with the TA section recovering each change.

The TA section also placed emphasis on the communication passed to the 81st and 84th Rear Services Group by the Vietnamese Communist South Vietnam Rear Service Authority.

The Manual Morse intercept effort copied 89,907 minutes of traffic during the fourth quarter. The LLVI position was deployed to the following locations during this period: FSB Den, FSB Bau Ca, Xuan Loc, Long Binh, Long Thanh North, FSB Dat, and FSB Libby. One of the two LLVI operators was sent TDY to the 8th Field Station at Phu Bai on the 6th of June. There was no significant voice intercept during the quarter.

The 856th Detachment continued to monitor the APDF communications net. A total of 889 fixes were passed to the 199th Light Infantry Brigade during the final three months of the fiscal year.

(b)(3)
for 15

Figure 606: 856 RR Det Report #3

The above report is similar to the activities of 547 Sig Tp.

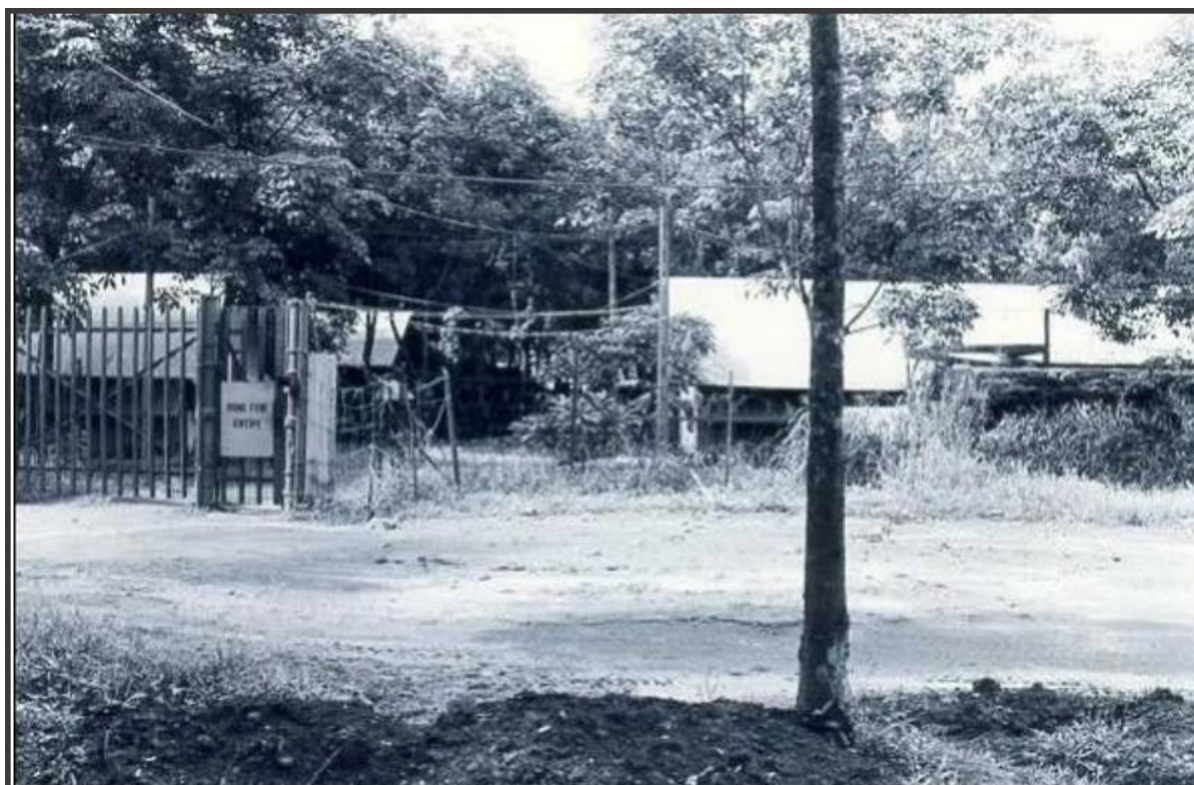


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PART 7

1971





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CHAPTER 63 – JANUARY 1971

63.1 Personnel

63.1.1 Arrivals and Departures

In January, there was a large turnover of troops. There were ten arrivals and three departures.

Arrivals

7 January

Signalman Duncan Finlay

14 January

Sergeant Robert Watson

21 January

Lieutenant Ian Bowen

Signalman Colin Clee

29 January

Sergeant Stan Myatt

Corporal Barry Wilson

Lance Corporal Peter Cook

Signalman Neville Hampton

Signalman Rod Maywald

Signalman Brian Phelan

Departures

7 January

Signalman Harry Lock

14 January

Sergeant Keith Zeller

Signalman John Gehle

63.1.2 Employment Areas

During the month Ian Bowen assumed the Intelligence Officer/2IC position, Bob Watson took over as SSL boss, and Barry Wilson went into Tech Maint. The Set Room received Peter Cooke, Rod Maywald, Brian Phelan and Duncan Finlay. Col Clee moved to the SSL and Nev Hampton, on his second tour, joined the ARDF team. After a stint in the Set Room Stan Myatt had a short spell with the ARDF team, became boss of the Q system and other sundry areas. Ian Hunter also joined the ARDF Team.

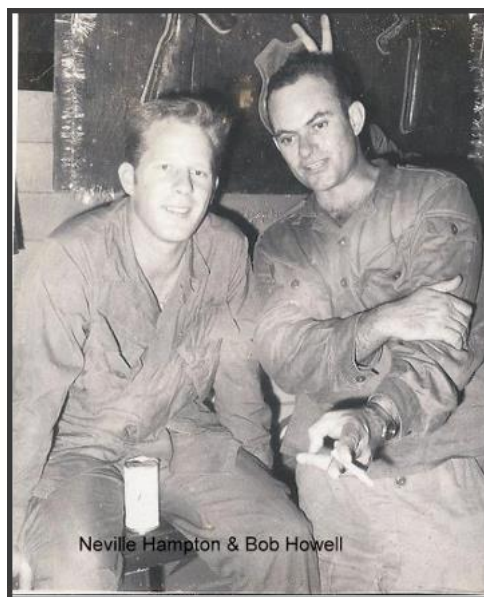


Figure 607: Nev Hampton and Bob Howell

63.1.3 Old Friend Arrives at 104 Sig Sqn

On 21 January, Lance Corporal Brian (Kyber) Quarrel⁹⁵⁸ from Cabarlah was posted in to 104 Sig Sqn and became a regular visitor to the Troop.

63.2 Operations

63.2.1 547 Sig Tp Operation Report for January 1971

The 547 Sig Tp Op Report for Jan 71⁹⁵⁹ stated:

S E C R E T COMINT CHANNELS

SIGS082

FOR MI8. OP REPORT 1 - 31 JAN 71

ONE. WATCH HOURS – 1 POSN X 24 HRS. 2 X 17HRS. 1 X 9.5 HRS
DEV 1 X 9 HRS. 1 X 16 HRS

TWO. COVER AS AT JAN
ALPHA. PRIORITY COVER – ALL VC

(1) MB05437	(5) MB05442	(9) MB08101	(13) MB05221	(17) MBJ1917
(2) MB05423	(6) MB054543	(10) MBY9083	(14) MB05445.	(18) MB00835
(3) MB 05443	(7) MB05449	(11) MB05442	(15) MBJ2981	(19) MB05409
(4) MB05447	(8) MBJ2650	(12) MB00667	(16) MBJ2824	(20) MB00679

BRAVO. DEV – ALL VCM

1. 05448. 3. 06224. 5. J2948. 7. J2157.
2. 06222. 4. [corrupt] 6. J2062 8. N5020

⁹⁵⁸ Brian had been at Cabarlah for 20+ years as one of the General Dutymen.

⁹⁵⁹ DSD Declassified, 547 Sig Tp in Vietnam (tranche2)..



CHARLIE. 1ATF RESUMES RESPONSIBILITY FOR PHUOC TUY ONCE MORE WITH TERRITORIAL FORCES LOOKING AFTER SW PORTION (REPRESENTING ABOUT ONE QUARTER) OF THE PROVINCE. [redacted] CEASED OPERATIONS AT DI AN LEAVING PHUOC VINH AND NUI DAT THE ONLY. DSUS SUBORDINATE TO [redacted] VC COMS ACTIVITY HAS EASED SOMEWHAT: AND WITH [redacted] SSL OPERATORS SPARE PROBLEMS OF ACCEPTING 7 REPLACEMENTS ON ONE DAY WILL NOT REALISE.
NUI BE CLUTTERED WITH NUMEROUS MR7 TERMINALS (INCL 445 BN) SINCE JUST PRIOR TO TET AND UNDER PRESSURE FROM 2 BDE/25 DIV AND 1 CAV DIV (AM). BALONG PROVINCE UNIT SIMILARLY WITH SMALLER CLUSTER OF TERMINALS WEST OF NUI MAY TAO STATIC AND NOT VERY ACTIVE. ATF BEREFT OF TERMINALS EXCEPT LONG DAT AND ONE INTERESTING U/I (E0809).

THREE. ARDF

ALFA. TOTAL FIXES 126.

BRAVO. GRADINGS, GOOD 42. FAIR 76, POOR NIL, CUTS 8.

CHARLIE. FLYING TIME TOTAL 667 HRS 10MINS.

1. ABRAHAMSON 38.15/109.20
2. STOCK 32/178.55
3. GILES 34.15/267.55
4. SAMPSON 28/28
5. HUNTER 2.30/2.30

DELTA. MSNS ABORTED DUE AC SERVICE - ONE. DUE AC MALFUNCTIONS (FUEL - PUMP AND LEAKING TANKS) - SEVEN

FOUR. SSL
NIL TO REPORT

63.2.2 ARDF Flying Hours

The total ARDF flying hours for the month were⁹⁶⁰:

Year	Month	Flying hours	Total Fixes	Good <1000mts	Fair 1-2000Mts	Poor >2000 Mts	Cut	Missions Lost	Remarks
1971	Jan	135	126	42	76		8	8	

<u>Personnel Flying Hours</u>	<u>January</u>	<u>Progressive Total</u>
WO2 McCartney	NIL	80:30
Sgt Abrahamson	38:15	109:20
Cpl Stock	32:00	178:55
Sig Giles	34:15	267:55
Sig Sampson	28:00	28:00
Sig Hunter	2.30	2:30

⁹⁶⁰ Compiled from MI8 Records held at ASD archives.



63.2.3 Summary of Main ARDF Fixes

The following table is a summary of the main ARDF fixes for January 1971⁹⁶¹:

Date		Loc	Ident	Unit
1-Jan-71	0935Z	YS554954	B4165	3 Bn NVA 33 Regt
2-Jan-71	0210Z	YT362028	M0093	1 Bn VC 274 Regt
2-Jan-71	0237Z	YS331976	M0084	HQ VC 274 Regt (Regt CP)
2-Jan-71	0308Z	YS185892	B4223	LONG DAT Dist Unit Also seen as 3 Bn 274 VC Regt
3-Jan-71	0215Z	YS305988	M0084	HQ VC 274 Regt (Regt CP)
3-Jan-71	0705Z	YT257076	M4000	HQ 74 Arty
3-Jan-71	0745Z	YS693950	P0201	Elms HQ BA LONG PROV
3-Jan-71	0810Z	ZT082243	M0135	HQ NVA 33 Regt
3-Jan-71	0905Z	YS186683	B4223	LONG DAT Dist Unit Also seen as 3 Bn 274 VC Regt
4-Jan-71	0307Z	YS188881	B4223	LONG DAT Dist Unit Also seen as 3 Bn 274 VC Regt
4-Jan-71	0640Z	YS351959	U/I	U/I
4-Jan-71	0725Z	YT310118	U/I	U/I
4-Jan-71	0801Z	YT783269	B4888	2 Bn 33 Regt
4-Jan-71	0845Z	YS673742	M1523	D445 Bn
5-Jan-71	0111Z	YS640968	U/I	U/I
5-Jan-71	0135Z	YS549828	E0809	Elms Chau Duc
5-Jan-71	0140Z	YS645940	P0201	Elms HQ BA LONG PROV
5-Jan-71	0240Z	YS540948	M0094	HQ BA LONG PROV
5-Jan-71	0800Z	YS487510	B4024	LONG DAT Dist Unit
5-Jan-71	0835Z	YS626718	M1523	D445 Bn
6-Jan-71	0137Z	YS562877	E0809	Elms Chau Duc
6-Jan-71	0207Z	YT387022	M0093	1 Bn VC 274 Regt
6-Jan-71	0240Z	YS587971	M0094	HQ BA LONG PROV
6-Jan-71	0740Z	YS535814	E0809	Elms Chau Duc
6-Jan-71	0810Z	YS485505	B4024	LONG DAT Dist Unit
6-Jan-71	0835Z	YS643821	M1523	D445 Bn
6-Jan-71	0850Z	YT500005	U/I	U/I
6-Jan-71	0905Z	YT779102	M9859	U/I
6-Jan-71	0910Z	YT785045	M1265	HQ MR7
7-Jan-71	0205Z	YT374045	M0093	1 Bn VC 274 Regt
7-Jan-71	0307Z	YS186896	B4223	LONG DAT Dist Unit Also seen as 3 Bn 274 VC Regt
7-Jan-71	0750Z	YS582955	M0094	HQ BA LONG PROV

⁹⁶¹ Compiled by Bob Hartley from 547 Sig Tp ARDF Monthly Summaries contained in ASD files.



Date		Loc	Ident	Unit
7-Jan-71	0940Z	YT612031	B4165	3 Bn NVA 33 Regt
8-Jan-71	0307Z	YS189894	B4223	LONG DAT Dist Unit Also seen as 3 Bn 274 VC Regt
8-Jan-71	0640Z	YS650721	M1523	D445 Bn
8-Jan-71	0810Z	YT285042	M4000	HQ 74 Arty
9-Jan-71	0040Z	ZT073238	M0135	HQ NVA 33 Regt
9-Jan-71	0110Z	YS865965	U/I	
9-Jan-71	0210Z	YS634705	M1523	D445 Bn
9-Jan-71	0734Z	YS863978	M0278	U/I
10-Jan-71	0707Z	YS482492	B4204	LONG DAT Dist Unit Forces
10-Jan-71	0735Z	YS856972	M0278	U/I
10-Jan-71	0805Z	YT804282	B4888	2 Bn NVA 33 Regt
10-Jan-71	0905Z	YS850987	U/I	U/I
11-Jan-71	0040Z	YT670012	B4165	3 Bn NVA 33 Regt
12-Jan-71	0804Z	YT760249	B4888	2 Bn NVA 33 Regt
12-Jan-71	0910Z	YS613935	M9860	U/I
12-Jan-71	0940Z	YS623989	B4165	3 Bn NVA 33 Regt
13-Jan-71	0135z	YS834920	M1265	HQ MR7
14-Jan-71	0336Z	YT770015	M0278	U/I
14-Jan-71	0735Z	YS840870	M1523	D445 Bn
14-Jan-71	0720Z	YS573940	M0094	HQ BA LONG PROV
15-Jan-71	0215Z	YS848898	M1523	D445 Bn
15-Jan-71	0250Z	YS565930	M0094	HQ BA LONG PROV
15-Jan-71	0320Z	ZT035227	U/I	
15-Jan-71	0335Z	Z5065227	M0135	HQ NVA 33 Regt
15-Jan-71	0717Z	YS534948	M0094	HQ BA LONG PROV
15-Jan-71	0803Z	YT763260	B4888	2 Bn 33 Regt
16-Jan-71	0150Z	YS821926	U/I	U/I
16-Jan-71	0240Z	YS774904	B5168	u/i
16-Jan-71	0320Z	YT754027	E0902	U/I Poss associated with HQ MR7
16-Jan-71	0809Z	YT291042	M4000	HQ 74 Arty
16-Jan-71	0834Z	YS812888	M1523	D445 Bn
16-Jan-71	0836Z	YS872913	U/I	U/I
16-Jan-71	0840Z	YS807863	I0019	MR7
16-Jan-71	0850Z	YS861938	P0569	MR7
16-Jan-71	0915Z	YS836920	U/I	U/I
17-Jan-71	0005Z	YS472498	B4024	LONG DAT Dist
17-Jan-71	0805Z	YS796893	M1265	HQ MR7
17-Jan-71	0835Z	YS794848	M1523	D445 Bn
18-Jan-71	0220Z	YS530982	M0094	HQ BA LONG PROV
18-Jan-71	0235Z	YT792103	E0902	U/I Poss associated with HQ MR7



Date		Loc	Ident	Unit
18-Jan-71	0735Z	YS511859	E0809	Eloms Chau Duc
19-Jan-71	0215Z	YS557935	M0094	HQ BA LONG PROV
19-Jan-71	0320Z	ZT004156	E0183	U/I
19-Jan-71	0840Z	YS804857	I0019	MR7
20-Jan-71	0215Z	YS896825	P0569	MR7
20-Jan-71	0337Z	YS805978	M0278	U/I
20-Jan-71	0810Z	YS485510	B4024	LONG DAT Dist
20-Jan-71	0840Z	YS839923	M1265	HQ MR7
21-Jan-71	0305Z	ZT043141	M0135	HQ NVA 33 Regt
21-Jan-71	0705Z	YS537914	M0094	HQ BA LONG PROV
21-Jan-71	0755Z	YS835875	M1523	D445 Bn
21-Jan-71	0834Z	YS821926	E0458	U/I
21-Jan-71	0836Z	YS848888	I0019	MR7
22-Jan-71	0701Z	YS544951	M0094	HQ BA LONG PROV
22-Jan-71	0830Z	YS542925	E0459	U/I
22-Jan-71	0840Z	YS831946	M1265	HQ MR7
23-Jan-71	0742Z	YS845898	M1265	HQ MR7
25-Jan-71	0155Z	YS844952	M1265	HQ MR7
25-Jan-71	0203Z	YS825882	M1523	D445 Bn
25-Jan-71	0208Z	YS805918	U/I	U/I
25-Jan-71	0220Z	YS565907	M0094	HQ BA LONG PROV
25-Jan-71	0225Z	YS837958	P0569	MR7
25-Jan-71	0235Z	YT789045	E0902	U/I
25-Jan-71	0305Z	ZT073179	M0135	HQ NVA 33 Regt
25-Jan-71	0315Z	ZT058152	U/I	U/I
26-Jan-71	0215Z	YS820917	M1523	D445 Bn
26-Jan-71	0220Z	YS866888	P0569	MR7
26-Jan-71	0235Z	YS869906	M8523	U/I
26-Jan-71	0300Z	ZT077174	M0135	HQ NVA 33 Regt
26-Jan-71	0312Z	YS849913	U/I	U/I
26-Jan-71	0820Z	YS557833	U/I	U/I
26-Jan-71	0845Z	YS649931	U/I	U/I
26-Jan-71	0905Z	YS823902	P0569	MR7
26-Jan-71	0907Z	YS847903	M9859	U/I
26-Jan-71	0909Z	YS850903	M1265	HQ MR7
26-Jan-71	0925Z	YS718883	U/I	U/I
26-Jan-71	0935Z	YS640946	B4165	3 Bn 33 Regt
27-Jan-71	0139Z	YS863883	M1265	HQ MR7
27-Jan-71	0240Z	YT785090	E0902	U/I
27-Jan-71	0738Z	YS859917	U/I	U/I



Date		Loc	Ident	Unit
27-Jan-71	0745Z	YS840910	M1265	HQ MR7
27-Jan-71	0835Z	YS652930	E0459	U/I
27-Jan-71	0935Z	YS620950	B4165	3 Bn 33 Regt
28-Jan-71	0225Z	YS858959	U/I	U/I
28-Jan-71	0405Z	YS483509	B4024	LONG DAT Dist
28-Jan-71	0650Z	YT285065	M4000	HQ 74 Arty
29-Jan-71	0310Z	ZT067170	M0135	HQ NVA 33 Regt
29-Jan-71	0803Z	YS888910	B4888	2 Bn 33 Regt
29-Jan-71	0850Z	YS847913	E0458	U/I
29-Jan-71	0905Z	YS847913	M1265	HQ MR7
29-Jan-71	0936Z	YT573006	B4165	3 Bn 33 Regt
30-Jan-71	0750Z	YS675970	M0094	HQ BA LONG PROV
30-Jan-71	0820Z	YS829909	M1265	HQ MR7
31-Jan-71	0205Z	YS690940	M0094	HQ BA LONG PROV
31-Jan-71	0240Z	YS885910	B5168	U/I



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CHAPTER 64 – FEBRUARY 1971

64.1 Personnel

64.1.1 Arrivals and Departures

In February there were eight departures and no arrivals.

Departures

4 February

Warrant Officer Hugh McCartney
Lance Corporal Colin Potter
Lance Corporal Ross Hutton
Signalman Charles Bennett
Signalman Lloyd Giles
Signalman Denis Dean

18 February

Captain Hugh Nichols

25 February

Corporal David Cochrane

64.1.2 161 Recce Flt Fixed Wing Pilots

In February, Major Hardin assumed command of 161 Recce Flt and was also a fixed wing pilot.

64.1.3 Unwelcome Night Visitor

It has been said that the way to attract attention is to construct a high fence. The Troop's 10 foot security fence was a challenge to one of the members of another unit. He appeared in the Set Room at 0300hrs one morning and surprised the already astonished men on duty as he was naked save for a piece of strategically placed newspaper and a pair of sandshoes. The lads quickly removed the intruder and justice took its course. The fence was soon heightened and no more nocturnal prowlers appeared.

64.2 Operations

64.2.1 547 Sig Tp Operation Report for February 1971

The 547 Sig Tp Op Report for February 71⁹⁶² stated:

ONE. WATCH HOURS - 1 POSN X 24 HOURS 1 X 17 HOURS
2 X 9.5 HRS. DEV 1 POSN X 9 HRS. 1 X 16.5.HRS

TWO. COVER AS AT 28 FEB

ALPHA. PRIORITY COVER ALL VCMB EX 21 WHICH IS VCOB

⁹⁶² Documents received from ASD December 2015.



1. VCMB 05423 12. VCMB 00667
2. VCMB 05443 13. VCMB 05221
3. VCMB 05447 14. VCMB 05445
4. VCMB 05442 15. VCMB J2157
5. VCMB 05453 16. VCMB J2981
6. VCMB 05448 17. VCMB J2824
7. VCMB 05449 18. VCMB J1917
8. VCMB J2650 19. VCMB 00721
9. VCMB 08101 20. VCMB 00835
10. VCMB Y9083 21. VCOB 05409
11. VCMB 05452 22. VCMB 00679

BRAVO. DEV

1. VCMB 05437 5. VCMB J2062
2. VCMB J1846 6. VCMB J2898
3. VCXB V2173 7. VCMB N5020
4. VCMB J2948 8. VCOB J0094

CHARLIE. LITTLE CHANGE FROM COMMENTS IN PARA TWO CHARLIE OF LAST OP REPORT [⁹⁶³]. CHAU DUC TERMINAL AGAIN ACTIVE IN RUNG SAT.

THREE. ARDF

ALPHA. TOTAL FIXES 78

BRAVO. GRADINGS GOOD 30 FAIR 43 CUTS 5

CHARLIE FLYING TIME TOTAL 119HRS 35 MINUTES

(1) WO1 RUSSELL 2.30/2.30
(3) SGT ABRAHAMSON 30.30/140.50
(4) LCPL STOCK 33.05/212.00
(5) SIG SAMPSON 34.05/62.30
(6) SIG HUNTER 18.00/20.30

DELTA.

(1) MSNS ABORTED DUE ARDF EQPT SERVICE – TWO.
DUE COMMS EQPT MALFUNCTION/SERVICE-SEVEN

ECHO. CONNECTIONS ARC-54/KY-28 [corrupt] SO 10 WATT COMMS TEMPORARILY NOT AVAILABLE. SECURE VOICE EQPT ON PRC-77 ALSO FAULTY BUT HAVE ALL BEEN MODIFIED BY 3CLSU

FOUR. SSL. NIL RESULTS TO REPORT. EQPTS APPEARED TO BE WORKING ON 26/27 FEB FOR SHORT PERIOD BUT AGAIN UNDERGOING READJUSTMENT/REALIGNMENT

⁹⁶³ Not on file.



64.2.1.1 Summary of Main ARDF Fixes

The following table is a summary of the main ARDF fixes for February 1971⁹⁶⁴:

Date	Time (Z)	Loc	Ident	Unit
1-Feb-71	0405Z	YS491516	B4024	LONG DAT Dist
3-Feb-71	0215Z	YS588930	M0094	HQ BA LONG PROV
3-Feb-71	0245Z	YS316592	M5908	VUNG TAU City Unit
4-Feb-71	0220Z	YS623953	M0094	HQ BA LONG PROV
4-Feb-71	0246Z	YT762090	E0902	U/I
4-Feb-71	0720Z	YS623945	M0094	HQ BA LONG PROV
4-Feb-71	0842Z	YS814894	M1523	D445 Bn
5-Feb-71	815Z	YS302604	M5908	VUNG TAU City Unit
6-Feb-71	0240Z	YS645965	M0094	HQ BA LONG PROV
6-Feb-71	0320Z	YS717951	U/I	U/I
6-Feb-71	0720Z	YS627962	M0094	HQ BA LONG PROV
6-Feb-71	0738Z	YS862897	U/I	U/I
6-Feb-71	0820Z	YT292060	M4000	HQ 74 Arty
7-Feb-71	0236Z	YS296607	M5908	VUNG TAU City Unit
7-Feb-71	0637Z	YT289050	M4000	HQ 74 Arty
7-Feb-71	0715Z	YS14890	U/I	U/I
7-Feb-71	0740Z	YS912937	U/I	U/I
8-Feb-71	0230Z	YS275601	M5908	VUNG TAU City Unit
8-Feb-71	0255Z	YS776831	U/I	U/I
8-Feb-71	0321Z	YT765008	U/I	U/I
8-Feb-71	0405Z	YS494514	B4024	LONG DAT Dist
9-Feb-71	0045Z	YT330019	M0084	HQ VC 274 Regt
9-Feb-71	0205Z	YS851935	U/I	U/I
9-Feb-71	0820Z	YT824142	B4888	2 Bn 33 Regt
9-Feb-71	0840Z	YS845888	P0569	MR7
9-Feb-71	0902Z	YT290041	M4000	HQ 74 Arty
10-Feb-71	0210Z	YS640966	M0094	HQ BA LONG PROV
10-Feb-71	0220Z	YS615910	P0201	Elms HQ BA LONG PROV
10-Feb-71	0250Z	YS869890	B5168	U/I
10-Feb-71	0812Z	ZT066136	M0135	HQ NVA 33 Regt
10-Feb-71	0850Z	YS773878	M1523	D445 Bn
11-Feb-71	0120Z	YS619927	U/I	U/I
11-Feb-71	0740Z	YS879917	M0278	U/I
11-Feb-71	0830Z	YS840894	U/I	U/I

⁹⁶⁴ Compiled by Bob Hartley from 547 Sig Tp ARDF Monthly Summaries contained in ASD files.



Date	Time (Z)	Loc	Ident	Unit
11-Feb-71	0912Z	YS887892	I0019	MR7
12-Feb-71	0825Z	YS840912	M1265	HQ MR7
12-Feb-71	0925Z	ZT015152	M0135	HQ NVA 33 Regt
12-Feb-71	1003Z	YT237178	M2635	U/I
13-Feb-71	0236Z	YS836931	M8523	U/I
13-Feb-71	0650Z	YS770861	M1523	D445 Bn
14-Feb-71	025Z	YT354057	M0084	HQ VC 274 Regt
14-Feb-71	0205Z	YS773898	M1523	D445 Bn
14-Feb-71	0812Z	Y817150	B4888	2 Bn 33 Regt
14-Feb-71	0845Z	Y767874	M5123	D445 Bn
15-Feb-71	0202Z	Y643940	M0094	HQ BA LONG PROV
15-Feb-71	0240Z	YT770030	E0902	U/I
15-Feb-71	0259Z	YS839931	B5168	U/I
15-Feb-71	0810Z	YT867133	B4888	2 Bn 33 Regt
18-Feb-71	0735Z	YS759906	M1523	D445 Bn
18-Feb-71	0805Z	YT274082	M4000	HQ 74 Arty
19-Feb-71	0230Z	YT779022	E0902	U/I
19-Feb-71	0330Z	YT663030	M0094	HQ BA LONG PROV
19-Feb-71	0808Z	YT305065	M4000	HQ 74 Arty
19-Feb-71	0835Z	YT627035	M0094	HQ BA LONG PROV
20-Feb-71	0204Z	YT657043	M0094	HQ BA LONG PROV
20-Feb-71	0240Z	YS455503	B4024	LONG DAT Dist
20-Feb-71	0738Z	YS824895	M1265	HQ MR7
20-Feb-71	0810Z	YT325073	M4000	HQ 74 Arty
21-Feb-71	0110Z	YS869955	U/I	U/I
21-Feb-71	0245Z	YS264594	M5908	VUNG TAU City Unit
21-Feb-71	0710Z	YT668045	M0094	HQ BA LONG PROV
21-Feb-71	0735Z	YS825922	M1265	HQ MR7
21-Feb-71	0900Z	Y4S54507	B4024	LONG DAT Dist
22-Feb-71	0807Z	YT285081	M4000	HQ 74 Arty
23-Feb-71	0235Z	YS745995	E0902	U/I
24-Feb-71	0655Z	YS770897	M1523	D445 Bn
24-Feb-71	0810Z	YS826922	M1265	HQ MR7
25-Feb-71	0210Z	YS664001	M0094	HQ BA LONG PROV
25-Feb-71	0240Z	YS894937	U/I	U/I
25-Feb-71	0411Z	YS483494	B4024	LONG DAT Dist
25-Feb-71	0633Z	YS795879	M1523	D445 Bn
25-Feb-71	0733Z	YS844885	M1265	HQ MR7
25-Feb-71	0836Z	YS518166	B4165	3 Bn NVA 33 Regt



Date	Time (Z)	Loc	Ident	Unit
26-Feb-71	0735Z	YS300602	M5908	VUNG TAU City Unit
27-Feb-71	0210Z	Y5659001	M0094	HQ BA LONG PROV
27-Feb-71	0405Z	YS465485	B4024	LONG DAT Dist
27-Feb-71	0836Z	Y5498154	B4165	3 Bn NVA 33 Regt
28-Feb-71	0836Z	YT485157	B4165	3 Bn NVA 33 Regt
28-Feb-71				Chau Duc terminal again active in Rung Sat

64.2.2 Assistance to 2nd Brigade 25th Infantry Division

64.2.2.1 TET 1971

It was clear that TET 1971 would be quiet. Most of the enemy around Phuoc Tuy moved into the Nui Be Hills east of the May Taos. Subsequent events showed that they regrouped for fresh onslaughts during the Winter-Spring 1971 campaign. After the TET Truce, American forces poised around the Nui Be Hills to flush out enemy units hiding there.

64.2.2.2 Assistance Discussions

Jack Fenton had discussed with Colonel Ulatoski about providing more assistance in refining the location of the enemy forces, in particular HQ 33 Regt. Normally ARDF fixes would be sufficient and provide a higher level of accuracy than ground based systems. However, to enhance 'diplomatic relations' it was decided that two detachments would be deployed with AN/PRD-1 DF sets into the area.

64.2.2.3 547 Sig Tp Dets

To ensure that there would be no significant loss of tasking/coverage at the Troop the AFV Detachment of 1st Division Intelligence Unit were asked to assist. The OC, Captain Alan Cunningham, and Warrant Officer Keith Delaney⁹⁶⁵ responded to fill the shortages.

Two vehicles were assigned to the task and manpower was allocated as follows:

Detachment 1: Jack Fenton, Danny Matthews, Stan Myatt, Rod Maywald, Andy Coyle.

Detachment 2: Alan Cunningham, Keith Delaney, Bob Watson, Tony Arday, Pat McGrath.

64.2.2.4 Selection of DF Sites and Operations

The Troop's two vehicles travelled north up Route 15 then east along Route 1 and stopped near Fire Base Carol. Each vehicle then went to grid references that Lt Stu Malone of 2 Bde RR Cell had provided which he deemed cleared enough for DF sites. They set up communications and commenced work.

⁹⁶⁵ Keith Delaney had previously served in 7 Sig Regt.



64.2.2.5 Closure of DF Operations

Bob Watson's detachment finished their task without any hitches and several bearings were obtained. Later, when plotting the results, Bob stated that he wasn't "all that confident" of his DF accuracy. When Stan Myatt was winding up his DF operations a passing US Infantry patrol spotted them and wanted to know what they were doing. As the detachment had no clearance papers, it took some time to convince the platoon sergeant that it was an authentic operation and not a cunningly disguised group of VC.

Jack Fenton recalled:

Their Sgt was cool and firm, we had no right to be there as he had received no advice of our presence. Equally cool (how otherwise?), I gave him my name and rank ("Aaahzees!?") and referred him to 2nd Brigade Commander.

64.2.2.6 Consolidation

The Detachments joined up and travelled to the 2nd Brigade RR Cell at Xuan Loc and presented their findings. After suitable refreshments they returned to Nui Dat.

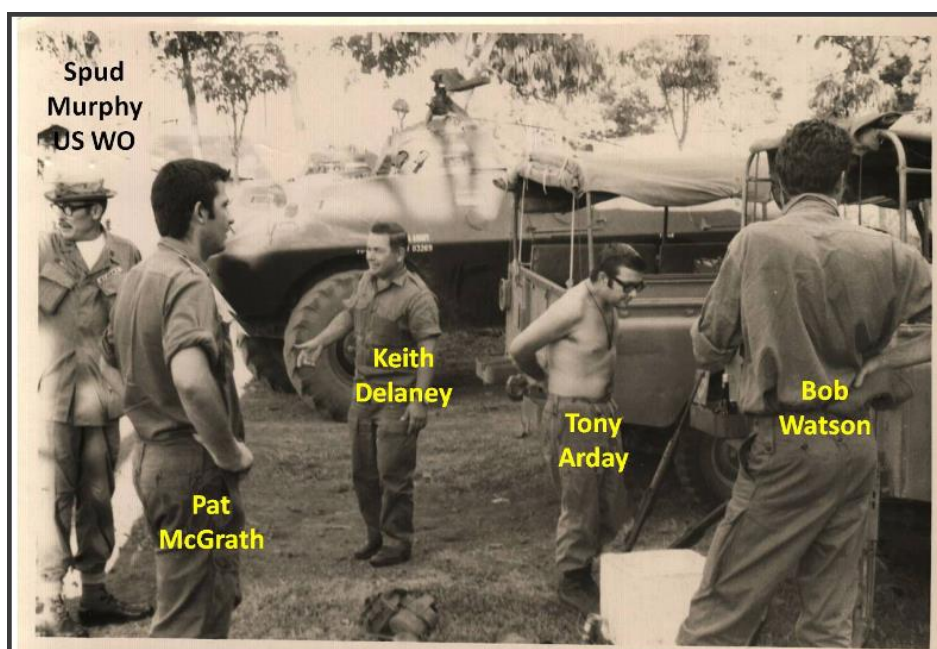


Figure 608: Detachment Members #1

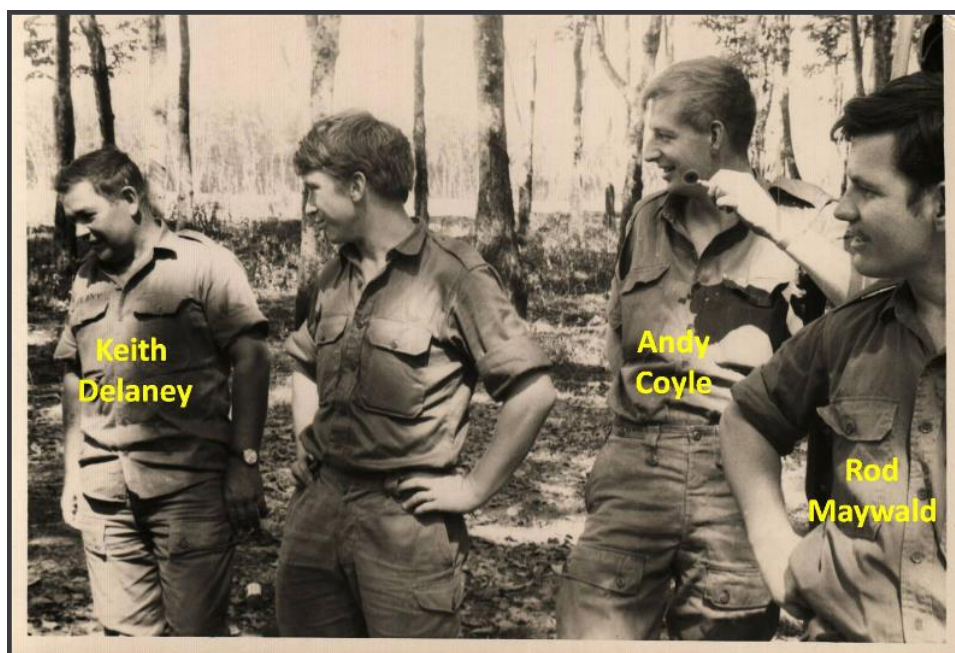


Figure 609: Detachment Members #2



Figure 610: Detachment Members #3



Figure 611: Some of the US Patrol members

It is also rumoured that this trip was primarily to attend a farewell party at the
2nd Brigade RR Cell



CHAPTER 65 – MARCH 1971

65.1 Personnel

65.1.1 Arrivals and Departures

In March there were three arrivals and two departures.

Arrivals

4 Marc

Corporal John Clancy

11 March

Warrant Officer Ronald Burns

25 March

Sergeant Brian Flynn

Departures

25 March

Staff Sergeant Robert Ward

31 March

Lance Corporal James McLean

65.1.2 Employment Areas

Robbie Burns went to the Processing area, Joe Flynn to the Set Room (in later months Joe Flynn also had a short stint in ARDF) and John Clancy joined the Comcen. Mal Simpson and Tony Arday joined the ARDF Team.



Figure 612: Troop SNCOs and a 'ring-in'

L-R: John McKenzie, Brian Abrahamson, Norm Gilbert (rear)
Bryan Russell, Danny Matthews, Ray Seiler



65.2 Operations

65.2.1 FSB Brigid

In early March, Jim McLean and Jim Kanowski ⁹⁶⁶travelled to FSB Brigid⁹⁶⁷ [also seen as *Bridgid/Briged/Bridgit*] to conduct search and intercept tasking for NVA/VC VHF transmissions. After four days they were replaced by Vince McQuillan and Leon Douglas who also stayed for a few days. No VC VHF transmissions were found.

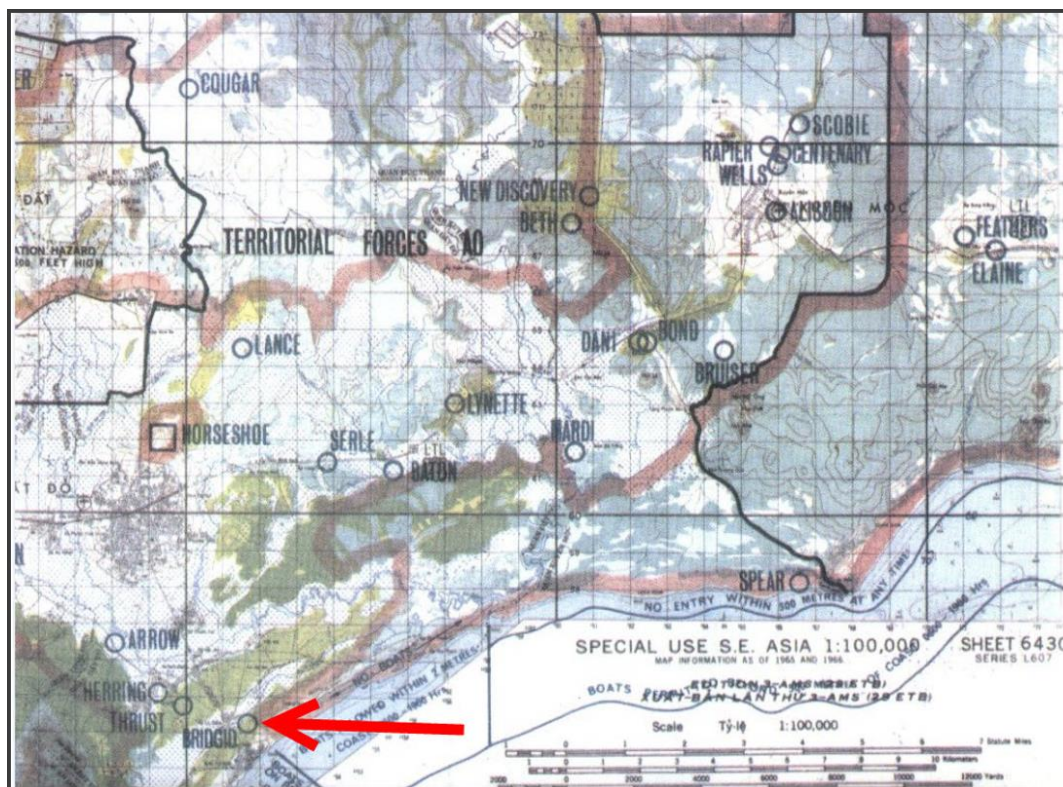


Figure 613: FSB Brigid Location

⁹⁶⁶ At Annex U is a story compiled by Jim Kanowski on his FSB Brigid experience.

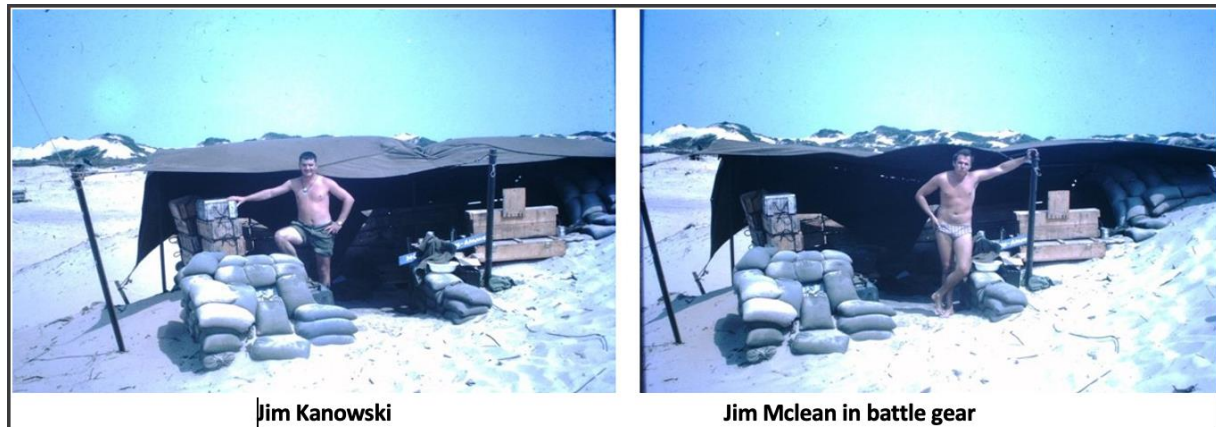
⁹⁶⁷ Picken, Bruce. *Fire Support Base Vietnam*. Big Sky Publishing. Kindle Edition. NDP Brigid – YS 515541 set here between 3 October and 1 February 1971 in AO Naomi



Figure 614: Part of FSB Brigid



Figure 615: Operations Area and Home

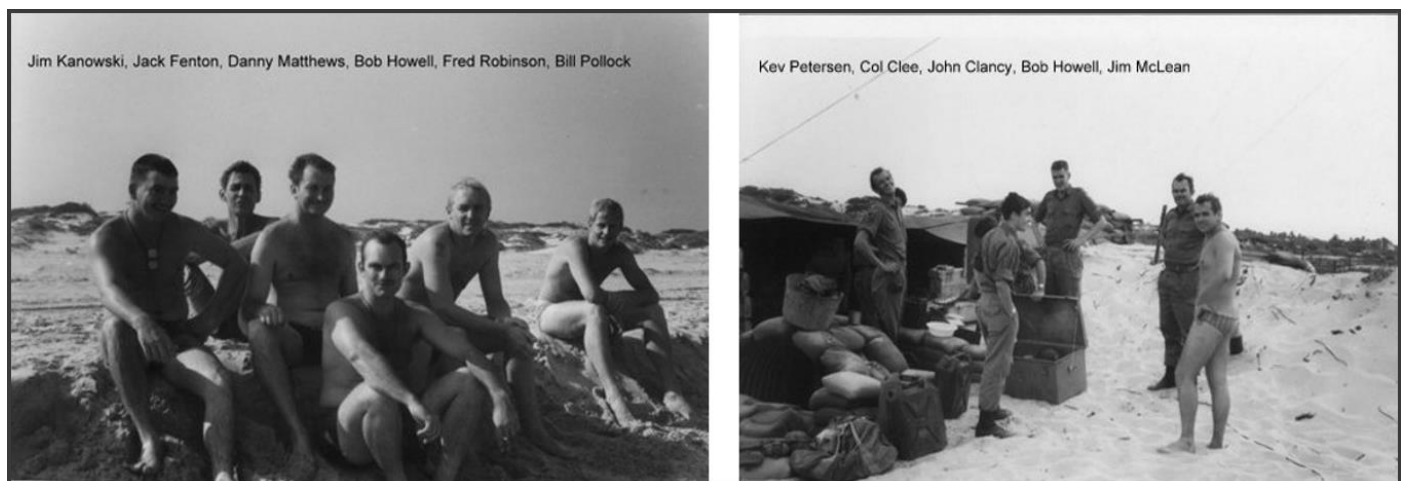


Jim Kanowski

Jim Mclean in battle gear

Figure 616: 1st Detachment

Often there were several tourists from Nui Dat.



Jim Kanowski, Jack Fenton, Danny Matthews, Bob Howell, Fred Robinson, Bill Pollock

Kev Petersen, Col Clee, John Clancy, Bob Howell, Jim McLean

Figure 617: 547 Sig Tp Tourists

65.2.2 547 Sig Tp Operation Report for March 1971

The 547 Sig Tp Op Report for March 71⁹⁶⁸ stated:

S E C R E T COMINT CHANNELS

SIGS 248

AHQ FOR M18. OP REPORT 1 – 31 MAR 71

ONE. WATCH HOURS - NO CHANGE FROM FEB REPORT

TWO. COVER AS AT 31 MAR

ALPHA. PRIORITY COVER ALL VCMB EX 21 WHICH IS VCOB

⁹⁶⁸ Documents received from ASD December 2015.



1 05437 6 05453 11 08102 16 J2981 21 05409
 2 05423 7 05448 12 05452 17 05454 22 00679
 3 05443 8 05449 13 00667 18 J1917
 4 05447 9 J2650 14 05221 19 00721
 5 05442 10 08101 15 05445 20 00835

BRAVO. DEV-ALL VCM.

1 J2062 3 J1846. 5 J2898. 7 06224
 2 J1816. 4 J2948. 6 06222. 8 J3145

CHARLIE. 274 VC REGT AND THREE BNS RECOVERED AFTER SO ICHANGE
 INCL FREQ THROUGH EFFORTS TRAFFIC ANALYST AND DEV OPS RECOGNITION
 XMTRS PLUS INSTANT SEARCH RECORDS. 445 VC LF BN RETURNED TO PHUOC
 TUY FROM NUL BE AREA. ACTING ON ARDF FIX 28 MAR THREE RAR WITH ONE COY
 2 RAR OP CON DEPLOYED AGAINST 445. ACTION CONTINUING AFTER CONTACT
 BUT HIS TERMINAL INACTIVE SINCE 28TH.

3. ARDF

ALFA.: TOTAL FIXES 108.

BRAVO. GRADINGS. GOOD 39. FAIR 64. CUTS 5.
 CHARLIE, FLYING TIME TOTAL 155 HRS 25 MINS.

1. W01 RUSSELL 15.15/17.45
- 2 SGT ABRAHAMSON 20.40/170.30
- 3 LCPL STOCK 37/249.00
- 4 SIG SAMPSON 26/88.30
- 5 SIG HUNTER 40.30/61.00
- 6 SIG SIMPSON 7/7.00

DELTA. MSNS ABORTED DUE ARDF EQPT MALFUNCTION- 3. DUE AIRCRAFT FAULT 3. REDUCED DUE
 WX- 3.

FOUR. SSL. WAS RETURNED TO SERVICE DURING MONTH BUT RESULTS NOT SUB-
 MITTED. INSTEAD THEY ARE BEING KEPT TO FACILITATE TECHNICIAN ADJUSTMENT

FIVE. VOICE.

CHECK MADE OF 30-75 KHZ 21-28 MAR.
 OFF DUTY OPERATORS USED TO RECORD VIET VOICE FOR 5 MINUTES PER XMSN AND

TAPES CHECKED OUT BY LINGUISTS IN SPARE TIME. TRIALS TOOK PLACE IN
 BRIDGET WITHOUT ANY SUSPECT VC/NVA VOICE XMSNS BEING COPIED

65.2.3 ARDF Flying Hours

The total ARDF flying hours for the month were⁹⁶⁹:

Year	Month	Flying hours	Total Fixes	Good <1000mts	Fair 1-2000Mts	Poor >2000 Mts	Cut	Missions Lost	Remarks
1971	Mar	155.25	108	39	64		5	9	

⁹⁶⁹ Compiled from MI8 Records held at ASD archives.



65.2.4 ARDF Report

The ARDF Report for March stated⁹⁷⁰:

<u>Personnel Flying Hours</u>	<u>January</u>	<u>Progressive Total</u>
Sgt Abrahamson	29:40	170:30
LCpl Stock	37:00	249:00
Sig Sampson	26:00	88:30
Sig Hunter	40:30	61:00
WO1 Russell	15:15	17:45
Sig Simpson	7:00	7:00

Movement of Personnel

Sig Simpson commended ARDF training 04Mar71

Sig Arday commenced ARDF Training 27Mar71

Sig Simpson ceased ARDF WEF 29Mar71 (at own request)

WO1 Russell qualified ARDF 15Mar71.

65.2.5 Summary of Main ARDF Fixes

The following table is a summary of the main ARDF fixes for March 1971⁹⁷¹:

Date	Time (Z)	Loc	Ident	Unit
1-Mar-71	0225Z	YS817897	U/I	U/I
1-Mar-71	0240Z	YS837915	B5168	U/I
1-Mar-71	0305Z	ZT214102	M0135	HQ NVA 33 Regt
1-Mar-71	0335Z	YS872934	P0569	MR7
1-Mar-71	0645Z	YS888890	M1265	HQ MR7
2-Mar-71	0210Z	YS832929	M1265	HQ MR7
2-Mar-71	0235Z	YT661024	U/I	U/I
2-Mar-71	0240Z	YS800992	U/I	U/I
2-Mar-71	0702Z	YS624999	M0094	HQ BA LONG PROV
2-Mar-71	0745Z	YS299609	M5908	VUNG TAU City Unit
3-Mar-71	0240Z	YS823877	M1523	D445 Bn
3-Mar-71	0750Z	YS625991	M0094	HQ BA LONG PROV
3-Mar-71	0836Z	YS835901	M1265	HQ MR7
4-Mar-71	0240Z	YT645004	M0094	HQ BA LONG PROV
4-Mar-71	0404Z	YS476519	B4024	LONG DAT Dist
4-Mar-71	0640Z	YS847887	M1523	D445 Bn
5-Mar-71	0235Z	YT311005	U/I	U/I
5-Mar-71	0315Z	YS845873	M1523	D445 Bn
5-Mar-71	0338Z	YS897911	M1265	HQ MR7
6-Mar-71	0220Z	YS654990	M0094	HQ BA LONG PROV

⁹⁷⁰ Ibid.

⁹⁷¹ Compiled by Bob Hartley from 547 Sig Tp ARDF Monthly Summaries contained in ASD files.



Date	Time (Z)	Loc	Ident	Unit
6-Mar-71	0235Z	YS82893	M1523	D445 Bn
6-Mar-71	0305Z	YS465483	B4024	LONG DAT Dist
6-Mar-71	0835Z	YS827870	M1523	D445 Bn
8-Mar-71	0405Z	YS462491	B4024	LONG DAT Dist
8-Mar-71	0450Z	YS606964	M0094	HQ BA LONG PROV
8-Mar-71	0730Z	YT600001	M0094	HQ BA LONG PROV
8-Mar-71	0815Z	YS255616	M5908	VUNG TAU City Unit
9-Mar-71	0220Z	YS656995	M0094	HQ BA LONG PROV
9-Mar-71	0645Z	YS836947	M1265	HQ MR7
9-Mar-71	0815Z	YT320022	U/I	U/I
9-Mar-71	0835Z	YS818888	M1523	D445 Bn
10-Mar-71	0729Z	YS842928	U/I	U/I
10-Mar-71	0850Z	YS804890	M1523	D445 Bn
11-Mar-71	0005Z	YS330995	U/I	U/I
11-Mar-71	0150Z	YS787902	P0569	MR7
11-Mar-71	0640Z	YS624984	M0094	HQ BA LONG PROV
12-Mar-71	0205Z	YS630972	M0094	HQ BA LONG PROV
12-Mar-71	0358Z	YS269596	M5908	VUNG TAU City Unit
12-Mar-71	0635Z	YS841891	U/I	U/I
12-Mar-71	0835Z	YS805869	M1523	D445 Bn
13-Mar-71	0225Z	YS911926	I0019	MR7
13-Mar-71	0338Z	YS301976	M0084	HQ VC 274 Regt
13-Mar-71	0710Z	YS632944	U/I	U/I
13-Mar-71	0845Z	YS796863	M1523	D445 Bn
14-Mar-71	0215Z	YS814888	I0019	MR7
14-Mar-71	0650Z	YS835894	M1265	HQ MR7
14-Mar-71	0803Z	YT417032	U/I	U/I
15-Mar-71	0005Z	YT195875	U/I	U/I
15-Mar-71	0020Z	YT353056	U/I	U/I
15-Mar-71	0225Z	YS814973	I0093	Elms MR7
15-Mar-71	0255Z	YS871902	U/I	U/I
15-Mar-71	0335Z	YS832919	M1265	HQ MR7
15-Mar-71	0850Z	YS809910	U/I	U/I
16-Mar-71	0042Z	YT575185	B4165	3 Bn NVA 33 Regt
16-Mar-71	0315Z	ZT030205	E0183	U/I
16-Mar-71	0342Z	YS817895	M1265	HQ MR7
16-Mar-71	0640Z	YS813869	M1523	D445 Bn
17-Mar-71	0010Z	YS201870	U/I	U/I
17-Mar-71	0040Z	YT366049	M0084	HQ VC 274 Regt
17-Mar-71	0205Z	YS695923	M0094	HQ BA LONG PROV



Date	Time (Z)	Loc	Ident	Unit
17-Mar-71	0309Z	YS829880	M1523	D445 Bn
17-Mar-71	0345Z	YS490512	B4024	LONG DAT Dist
17-Mar-71	0738Z	YT777032	E1427	C3 MR7
17-Mar-71	0745Z	YS861882	M1265	HQ MR7
17-Mar-71	0750Z	YS874898	M1265	HQ MR7
17-Mar-71	0800Z	YT380027	U/I	U/I
17-Mar-71	0807Z	YT317017	U/I	U/I
18-Mar-71	0235Z	YS260599	M5908	VUNG TAU City Unit
18-Mar-71	0816Z	YT281058	M4000	HQ 74 Arty
18-Mar-71	2340Z	YT246167	U/I	U/I
19-Mar-71	0202Z	YS687921	M0094	HQ BA LONG PROV
19-Mar-71	0235Z	YS764984	E1427	C3 MR7
19-Mar-71	0315Z	YS843992	I0093	Elms MR7
19-Mar-71	0335Z	YS820881	M1265	HQ MR7
20-Mar-71	0005Z	YS180865	U/I	U/I
20-Mar-71	0020Z	YT323009	U/I	U/I
20-Mar-71	0208Z	YS699939	M0094	HQ BA LONG PROV
20-Mar-71	0705Z	YS699949	M0094	HQ BA LONG PROV
21-Mar-71	0238Z	YS279608	M5908	VUNG TAU City Unit
21-Mar-71	0338Z	YS839874	M1265	HQ MR7
21-Mar-71	0408Z	YS480488	B4024	LONG DAT Dist
22-Mar-71	0010Z	YS203883	B4223	LONG DAT Dist Unit Also seen as 3 Bn 274 VC Regt
22-Mar-71	0215Z	YT642043	U/I	U/I
23-Mar-71	0738Z	YS754054	E1427	C3 MR7
23-Mar-71	0750Z	YS750927	P0569	MR7
24-Mar-71	0004Z	YS178883	B4223	LONG DAT Dist Unit Also seen as 3 Bn 274 VC Regt
24-Mar-71	0020Z	YT335020	M0084	HQ VC 274 Regt
24-Mar-71	0337Z	YS855905	M1265	HQ MR7
24-Mar-71	0735Z	YT755000	E1427	C3 MR7
25-Mar-71	0008Z	YT277125	E1860	2 Bn VC 274 Regt
25-Mar-71	0225Z	YS647979	M0094	HQ BA LONG PROV
25-Mar-71	0338Z	YS483492	B4024	LONG DAT Dist
25-Mar-71	0840Z	YS611725	M1523	HQ BA LONG PROV
26-Mar-71	0040Z	YT555009	B4165	3 Bn NVA 33 Regt
26-Mar-71	0320Z	YS870874	U/I	U/I
26-Mar-71	0724Z	YT668000	M0094	HQ BA LONG PROV
26-Mar-71	0735Z	YT775040	E1427	C3 MR7
26-Mar-71	0745Z	YS850914	M1265	HQ MR7
28-Mar-71	0730Z	YS562738	M1523	HQ BA LONG PROV



Date	Time (Z)	Loc	Ident	Unit
28-Mar-71	0830Z	YS371991	M0093	1 Bn VC 274 Regt
29-Mar-71	0733Z	YT761050	E1427	C3 MR7
29-Mar-71	0810Z	YT873182	B4888	2 Bn 33 Regt
30-Mar-71	0735Z	YT774054	E1427	C3 MR7
30-Mar-71	0745Z	YS840866	M1265	HQ MR7
31-Mar-71	0405Z	YS482514	B4024	LONG DAT Dist
31-Mar-71	0735Z	YS838950	E0902	U/I
31-Mar-71	0810Z	YT880150	B4888	2 Bn 33 Regt
31-Mar-71	0838Z	YT561015	B4165	3 Bn NVA 33 Regt

65.2.6 SSL and ARDF Problems

The Troop had been experiencing many equipment faults in both the SSL and ARDF equipment. On 26 Mar, the Troop sent an urgent signal to Army Canberra, DSD, and WRE regarding faulty equipment and the need for replacement⁹⁷²:

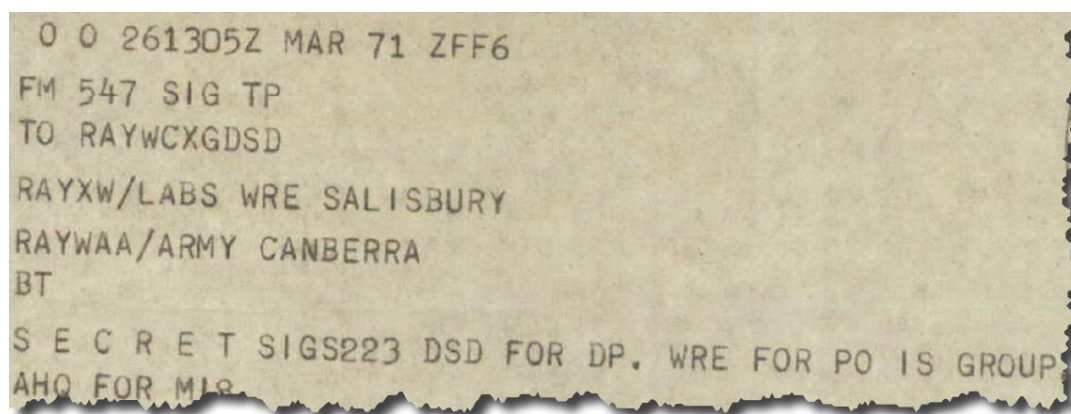


Figure 618: Equipment Problems

SECRET. SIGS223 DSD FOR DP. WRE FOR PO IS GROUP. AHQ FOR MI8.

PROJECT THOROUGH. REF DEPT OF SUPPLY USER HANDBOOK (DRAFT) PARA 19 (COLUMN HOUSING ASSEMBLY)

1. THOROUGH INSTALLATION EQUIPMENT HAS BEEN SUBJECTED TO MECHANICAL WEAR. OUR HQ IS SUFFICIENTLY MOTIVATED BY URGENT OPERATIONAL REQUIREMENTS TO UNILATERALLY DEMAND REPLACEMENT UNIT (NOT DUE UNTO [sic] 1 APR 71).

2. TO RECONSTITUTE OUR MODEL REQUEST REPLACEMENTS FOR FOLLOWING PARTS AS SOON AS POSSIBLE CLN

ALFA. ONE TRAVERSE STOP RING.
BRAVO. THE THREE RETAINING SCREWS FROM ALFA.
CHARLIE. ONE BEARING STOP SCREW (HARDENED).
DELTA. ONE INSERTION TOOL.
ECHO. ONE EXTRACTION TOOL.

⁹⁷² NAA: D174, E5669/3/23 Part 3. Development and manufacture of an airborne direction finding system for department of the army. F189.



3. LOCAL RAEME WORKSHOPS WORKING TONIGHT TO PRODUCE ON LATHES MILD STEEL SUBSTITUTES FOR BEARING STOP SCREW (KOMACHINED THREADED BOLT TO HALT BEARING RETAINING RING) SEE PARA 2 CHARLIE ABOVE). THIS MAY PERMIT TEMPORARY OPERATION OF EQUIPMENT FOR CRITICAL USE 0100Z TOMORROW

65.2.6.1 Follow Up

On 29 Mar, the Troop sent a follow up signal⁹⁷³:

SECRET. SIGS226 AHQ FOR MI8. WRE FOR PO IS GROUP. DSD FOR DP.

FURTHER MY SIGS223.

ONE. THOROUGH.

ALFA. STOP SCREWS PRODUCED. THESE WITH RING AND RING SCREWS SHOULD LAST COUPLE OF WEEKS.

BRAVO. FURTHER FAULTS DEVELOPED AND TRACED TO WEAR IN WIRE LOOM. IMPROVISING WIRING BUT DOUBTFUL OF EFFECTIVENESS FOR LONG. REQUEST WIRE LOOM WITH PLUGS AFFIXED BE SENT ASP. WILL RETURN OLD LOOM ON RECEIPT. LESS URGENT BUT REPLACEMENT COLLAR (WITH KEYWAY) ALSO NEEDED.

TWO. SHORT CELL.

ALFA. RA153 AGAIN IN WORKSHIP AWAITING ALIGNMENT CHECK WHEN TOROUGH [sic] WORKING.

BRAVO. PDP8 WILL NOT WORK IN SHELTER. CURBING POWER SUPPLY. ATF PDP8 ARRIVED TODAY BUT CANNOT YET AFFORD TECHNICIAN LIAISON.

THREE. OPS ROOM. SMALL BACKLOG RACALS FOR REPAIR BUT NO THREAT YET TO OPS.

FOUR. BRIGADIER MACDONALD TOLD BACKGROUND OF ALL PROJECTS AND UNDERSTANDS EXPERIMENTAL NATURE, PROBLEMS OF MAINT PARTS. IS ALSO AWARE NEXT THOROUGH NOT DUE UNTIL APRIL BUT WAS MOTIVATED TO REQUEST REPLACEMENT THROUGH STAFF CHANNELS.

FIVE. FURTHER DISCUSSIONS WITH HIM RESULTED IN HIS SUPPORT FOR MY REQUEST FOR WRE EXPERT TO ADVISE AND ASSIST RESTORE CELL AND COMPUTOR. THIS CONSIDERATION DUE TO CLN ALFA. INCREASING RATE OF FAILURES.

BRAVO. ONLY ONE TECNICIAN WITH EXPERIENCE. ONE STILL ON JOB TRAINING

[Several lines corrupted]

DELTA. LACK OF MANY CIRCUITS, FAULT FINDING AND MAINT WRITINGS.

SIX. SUBMIT REQUEST THAT EFFORTS BE MADE TO HAVE WRE SCIENTIST VISIT TROOP FOR PURPOSES OF ADVICE AND ASSISTANCE IN FIELDS OF TECHNICAL AIDS.

65.2.6.2 1ATF Support

On 30 March, the following signal was sent from 1 ATF to HQ AFV and Army Canberra⁹⁷⁴:

SECRET G0564 FOR ARMY CANBERRA INFO DMI (MI8)

PROJECT THOROUGH AND SHORT CELL

⁹⁷³ Ibid, F190.

⁹⁷⁴ AWM98 R5821/1/8



ONE. SUBJECT PROJECT INSTALLATIONS CMM IN SUPPORT 1 ATF CMM HAVE AT TIMES BEEN OF VERY CONSIDERABLE VALUE. THEY HAVE BEEN KEPT IN SERVICE CONTINUOUSLY AND HAVE RECENTLY BEEN SUBJECT TO FAILURES WHICH HAVE RENDERED THEM UNSERVICEABLE FOR UNACCEPTABLY LONG PERIODS.

*TWO. STATE INSTALLATIONS AT PRESENT IS SUCH THAT ADVICE AND ASSISTANCE OF SCIENTIST CMM CURRENTLY WORKING ON THIS PROJECT IN AUSTRALIA CMM NECESSARY DUE TO CLN ALPHA. INCREASING RATE OF FAILURES
BRAVO. ONLY ONE CORPORAL TECHNICIAN AVAILABLE WITH EXPERIENCE IN COMPUTERS [SIC] AND THE ESOTERIC EQUIPMENTS.
CHARLIE. TECHNICIAN INABILITY TO DIAGNOSE FAULTS AND REPAIR THEM RAPIDLY ENOUGH FOR OPERATIONAL REQUIREMENTS.
DELTA LACK OF CIRCUIT DIAGRAMS CMM FAULT FINDING AND MAINTENANCE WRITINGS.*

THREE. TO ALLEVIATE PROBLEMS ENUMERATED IN THE TWO ABOVE TWO SCIENTISTS FROM WRE BE ATTACHED TO 1ATF AS SOON AS POSSIBLE UNTIL INSTALLATIONS ARE RESTORED TO SATISFACTORY STATUS AND REPAIR AND MAINTENANCE SYSTEMS UPDATED.

FOUR. A SECOND PROJECT THOROUGH EQUIPMENT IS REQUIRED TO BACK UP EXISTING EQUIPMENT.

65.2.6.3 MI8 Response

There appeared to be a crossover of signals as the following signal was sent from Army Canberra to HQ AFV⁹⁷⁵ re the ARDF equipment.

SECRET INT 18827 FR CSO AND EQPT.

PROJECT THOROUGH. YOUR SIGS 4581⁹⁷⁶.

ONE. HAVE BEEN ADVISED BY WRE THAT SECOND THOROUGH MODEL WILL BE COMPLETED WITHIN THREE WEEKS. REPLACEMENT PARTS FOR FIRST EQPT HELD 1 ATF FORWARDED AIR MAIL 30 MAR 71

65.2.7 SSL Faults

As mentioned above, the SSL equipment had been playing up for some time and 547's experiments in the ionosphere fell short due to lack of parts and failures of sensitive circuitry. The Americans did their best to repair them and even acquired parts from Japan.

65.2.7.1 Scientist Assistance

The Troop was depending on the return of Zeb Jeffery and Mal Raymond in April with sufficient spares to get the equipment functioning.

65.2.7.2 Down Time for Operators

During spells of inactivity Norm Gilbert and Bob Watson caught up with a few outstanding jobs. They created a four man fighting pit, complete with overhead protection and then reconditioned the generators.

⁹⁷⁵ Ibid.

⁹⁷⁶ Signal not on file.



65.2.8 Task Force Withdrawal

On 30 March Prime Minister William McMahon announced the withdrawal of 1,000 personnel during the following three months. 547 Sig Tp was not included in the numbers.

65.2.9 25th Infantry Division Departs

Colonel Ulatoski's Brigade operations ceased in March. Prior to his leaving he visited the unit and with a simple, *"Thanks an awful lot fellows"* presented the unit with a magnificent plaque covered with all the insignia of the 25th Division's units.



Figure 619: Col Ulatoski's Plaque

65.2.9.1 LO Departs

Colonel Ulatoski's LO Stu Malone, received his "drop" of a month and opted for discharge in the USA, planning to drift and enjoy himself before he felt the urge to settle down. He had been a really ambitious man earlier in his tour and the Troop members wondered if perhaps they had influenced him in some way? Perhaps also, his R and R in Hong Kong under the tender care of Doug Rodgers, an original member of 547, had some effect?



Figure 620: Stu Malone and Jim McLean's farewell

65.2.10 3rd Brigade Arrives

The 2nd Brigade of the US Army 25th Division was replaced by the 3rd Brigade (Grey Wolf) of the 1st Cavalry Division in the area to the north of the 1ATF AO.



Figure 621: Unit Insignia



65.2.10.1 3 Bde Helicopters

The 3rd Brigade had control of its own helicopters⁹⁷⁷ and 547 soon made unofficial contact with their research flying teams and exchanged duties with some of their operators. Hugh McCartney put their gear through its paces on a couple of missions and finally conceded that it was a very useful installation. Those of the Troop who tried out the helicopter system still preferred the Australian ARDF system which seemed a better all-round installation providing unrestricted observation of the terrain.



Figure 622: Left Bank in flight. Note antenna.



Figure 623: Left Bank Operator Position

⁹⁷⁷ Extract from: http://www.nsa.gov/about/cryptologic_heritage/vigilance_park/origins_of_asa.shtml: The remaining platforms which also contributed to the Army's airborne signal intelligence capability were six specially configured UH-1 helicopters. These aircraft were redesignated as EH-1 LEFT BANK aircraft and were assigned directly to the tactical war-fighting divisions in Vietnam. These LEFT BANK assets were manned and maintained by ASA operators, also found with the same divisions. Their flight profiles included both high- and extremely low-altitude operating envelopes necessary to locate and target tactically oriented enemy threats of immediate and times sensitive value.



CHAPTER 66 – APRIL 1971

66.1 Personnel

66.1.1 Arrivals and Departures

In April there were five arrivals and four departures.

Arrivals

6 April

Signalman Robert Elworthy

7 April

Corporal Herbert Power

14 April

Staff Sergeant Allan Beaver

Signalman James Marshall

28 April

Corporal Anthony Bridges

Departures

7 April

Sergeant Norman Gilbert

Signalman Leon Douglas

21 April

Staff Sergeant Maxwell Watkins

Signalman Paul Stock

66.1.2 Employment Areas

Herb Power, Jim Marshall and Bob Elworthy went to work in the Set Room and after a short time in the Set Room, Jim and Bob joined the ARDF Team. Slim Beaver took over the Tech Maint Section, Tony Bridges, an ex-operator, joined the Processing Cell.

66.1.2.1 Unit Barber

As a secondary yet very essential duty, Jim Marshall took over as the Unit Barber from Ray Seiler and moved his hairdressing centre from the compound to the lines. He set up a one chair stand complete with umbrella, noticeboard and even the traditional striped pole.

66.1.3 Visitors SSL

66.1.3.1 SSL Assistance

On 6 April, HQ 1 ATF received the following signal from HQ AFV⁹⁷⁸:

⁹⁷⁸ Ibid.



PROJECT SHORT CELL. REF YOUR G0564 OF 302350Z MAR 71. INFORMATION HAS BEEN RECEIVED FROM AHQ THAT REQUEST FOR TECH ASSISTANCE FROM WRE SCIENTISTS HAS BEEN PASSED TO DEPT OF SUPPLY FOR THEIR URGENT CONSIDERATION. PROPOSAL IS FOR TWO SCIENTISTS TO BE SECONDED TO ARMY FOR TWO MONTHS. NO TIMINGS AVAL THIS STAGE

66.1.3.2 Approval For Visit

The Dept of Supply subsequently approved the visit of two scientists for one month from 26 April with the further extension of one month if required.

66.1.3.3 Arrival

Mr Zeb Jeffery and Major Mal Raymond from WRE arrived in late April⁹⁷⁹ with spares for the SSL to effect repairs.



Figure 624: Jack Fenton and Mal Raymond



Figure 625: L-R: Stu Malone, Mal Raymond, Jack Fenton, Zeb Jeffery, Tom Billard, Kevin Condon

⁹⁷⁹ Mal Raymond departed after one month and Zeb Jeffery remained for a further month.



66.1.4 Visit Adjutant General

In April, there was also an official visit from Major General Vincent (Adjutant-General of the Australian Army) to the Troop. This was a significant gesture from an ex-Signals officer.

66.2 Operations

66.2.1 547 Sig Tp Operation Report for April 1971

The 547 Sig Tp Op Report for Apr 71⁹⁸⁰ stated:

*S E C R E T COMINT CHANNELS SIGS 329
AHQ FOR M18. OP REPORT 1 – 30 APR 71*

*1. WATCH HOURS - ONE. POSN X 24 HOURS 1 X 17 HOURS 2 X 9.5 HRS.
DEV 1 POSN X 9 HRS. 1 X 16.5.HRS*

2. COVER AS AT 30 APR 71

ALPHA. PRIORITY COVER ALL VCMB EX 22 WHICH IS VCOB

*1 05437 6 05453 11 05452 16 J1816 21 00835
2 05423 7 05448 12 0J262 17 J2981 22 05409
3 05443 8 05449 13 00667 18 05454 23 0067 9
4 05447 9 J2650 14 05221 19 00721
5 05442 10 08101 15 05221 20 00206*

BRAVO. DEV-

1 VCMB J2948 2 VCMB J3145 3 VCMB J2650.

*CHARLIE. 445 BN WAS FIXED FROM DAY TO DAY DURING THE MONTH
OFTEN SEVERAL TIMES EACH DAY. THE FIXED AREAS WERE SURROUNDED
BY ATF COYS AND SEVERAL CONTACTS RESULTED BUT BENERALLY 445
EXTRICATED HIMSELF AND FINALLY FLED FRON THE 1 ATF TAOR. THE BN
PLANS FOR AT LEAST ONE LARGE SCAE ATTACK ON PROBABLY AND RF
BASE AND TO CAPTURE SOME HIGH RANKING DIGIARIES
WERE SUCCESFULLY THWARTED. [corrupt] ONE CONTACT TYPE RADIO
OPERATOR SERVING M1523 APPEARED TO HAVE RETRARED HASTILY
FOR HIS AERIAL WAS DISCOVERED STILL ELEVATED. 547 SIG TP
TECHNICIAN EXAMINED IN SITU, LOWERED AND REMOVED IT.
MEASUREMENTS AND SITING SUGGEST GOOD TRAINING OR MUCH
EXPERENCE IN THIS FIELDNEXT DAY 445 WAS ACTIVE IN SAME AREA
AS E0809(POSSIBLY C36) BUT IT IS NOT YET KNOWN IF HE CARRIED
SPARE AERIAL, IMPROVISED OR BORROWED [corrupt]*

THREE, ARDF

ALFA, TOTAL FIXES 91.

BRAVO, GRADINGS. GOOD 25. FAIR 56. CUTS 10.

- 1. W01 RUSSELL 14.30/32.15*
- 2. SSGT HOWELL 1.00/1.00*
- 3. SGT ABRAHAMSON 42.30/213.0*
- 4. LCPL STOCK 3.30/252.30*

⁹⁸⁰ DSD Declassified, 547 Sig Tp in Vietnam (tranche2).



5. SIG HUNTER 41.45/102.45
 6. SI G SIMPSON 44.05/51.05
 7. SIG ARDAY 21.00/21.00
 DELTA. MSNS ABORTED DUE WX-ONE, DUE ARDF EQPT MALFUNCTION-3.
 FOUR. SSL. NIL TO REPORT. SCIENTISTS TRYING UPGRADE CURRENTLY

66.2.2 ARDF Flying Hours

The total ARDF flying hours for the month were⁹⁸¹:

Year	Month	Flying hours	Total Fixes	Good <1000mts	Fair 1-2000Mts	Poor >2000 Mts	Cut	Missions Lost	Remarks
1971	Apr	168.2	91	25	56		10	4	

66.2.3 ARDF Report

The ARDF Report for April stated⁹⁸²:

<u>Personnel Flying Hours</u>	<u>Hours Flown</u>	<u>Progressive Total</u>
Sgt Abrahamson	42:30	213:00
SSgt Howell	1:00	1:00
Sig Arday	21:00	21:30
Sig Hunter	41:45	102:45
WO1 Russell	14:30	32:15
Sig Simpson	44:05	7:00
LCpl Stock	3:30	252:30

Movement of personnel

Lcpl Stock	RTA – 21 Apr71
Sig Arday	Commence trg – 08 Apr 71
Ssgt Howell	Commence Trg – 26 Apr 71

66.2.4 Summary of Main ARDF Fixes

The following table is a summary of the main ARDF fixes for April 1971⁹⁸³:

Date	Time (Z)	Loc	Ident	Unit
1-Apr-71		YT847126		Elms 2/33 NVA Regt (Poss Bn CP)
1-Apr-71		YT982161		Elms HQ 33 NVA Regt , POSS Regt CP
1-Apr-71		YS837935		MR7 Poss Mil Int Sect
1-Apr-71		YS656957		Elms HQ BA LONG Prov
2-Apr-71	0235Z	YS237618	M5908	VUNG TAU City Unit

⁹⁸¹ Compiled from MI8 Records held at ASD archives.

⁹⁸² Ibid.

⁹⁸³ Compiled by Bob Hartley from 547 Sig Tp ARDF Monthly Summaries contained in ASD files.



Date	Time (Z)	Loc	Ident	Unit
2-Apr-71	040Z	YT773051	E1427	C3 MR7
2-Apr-71	0806Z	YT409014	M0093	1 Bn VC 274 Regt
2-Apr-71		YS847935		Elems MR7 (Poss Mil Int Sect)
2-Apr-71		YS537705		Elems HQ D445
3-Apr-71	0233Z	YS633967	M0094	HQ BA LONG PROV
3-Apr-71	0640Z	YS537705	M1523	D445 Bn
3-Apr-71	0720Z	YS482505	B4024	LONG DAT Dist
3-Apr-71	0747Z	YS832916	M1265	HQ MR7
3-Apr-71	0810Z	YT800062	B4888	2 Bn 33 Regt
3-Apr-71	0818Z	YS611981	M0094	HQ BA LONG PROV
3-Apr-71	0840Z	YS286993	M0084	HQ VC 274 Regt
3-Apr-71		YT401039		Elems 1/274 Regt (BN CP)
3-Apr-71		YT861094		Elems 2/33 NVA Regt (BN CP)
3-Apr-71		YS840866		Elems HQ MR7
3-Apr-71		YT583033		Elems 3/33 NVA Regt, Poss Bn CP
3-Apr-71		YT3511		VC 274 Regt
4-Apr-71	0220Z	YS261588	M5908	VUNG TAU City Unit
4-Apr-71	0831Z	YS524702	M1523	D445 Bn
4-Apr-71		YS859914		HQ MR7
5-Apr-71	0333Z	YT766037	E1427	C3 MR7
5-Apr-71	0730Z	YS841917	M1265	HQ MR7
5-Apr-71		YT880150		Elems 2/33 NVA Regt (Poss Bn CP)
5-Apr-71		YT396030		Elems 1/274 Regt (Poss Bn CP)
5-Apr-71		YS212980		Elems HQ 274 Regt (Regt CP)
5-Apr-71		YS838950		Elems U/I Unit Poss assoc with HQ MR7
5-Apr-71		YS849921		Elems HQ MR7
5-Apr-71		YS849984		POSSIBLY A MIL INT SECT MR7
5-Apr-71		YT577024		Elems 3/33 NVA Regt (BN CP)
5-Apr-71		YS830943		Elems MR7, Poss Regional Comm
5-Apr-71				3 Bn VC 274 Regt
6-Apr-71	0205Z	YS535717	M1523	D445 Bn
6-Apr-71	0238Z	YS638962	M0094	HQ BA LONG PROV
6-Apr-71	0643Z	YS854875	U/I	U/I
6-Apr-71	0735Z	YS862930	M1265	HQ MR7
6-Apr-71	0710Z	YT662023	M0094	HQ BA LONG PROV



Date	Time (Z)	Loc	Ident	Unit
6-Apr-71		YT574035		Elms 3/33 NVA Regt (POSS BN CP)
6-Apr-71		YS638962		Elms HQ BA LONG Prov
7-Apr-71	0243Z	YS817928	U/I	U/I
7-Apr-71	0325Z	YS869890	P0569	MR7
7-Apr-71	0405Z	YS476498	B4024	LONG DAT Dist Forces
7-Apr-71	0715Z	YS660980	M0094	HQ BA LONG PROV
7-Apr-71	0810Z	YS397050	M0093	1 Bn VC 274 Regt
7-Apr-71		YT846145		Elms 2/33 NVA Regt(POSS Regt CP)
7-Apr-71		YT285008		Elms HQ 274 Regt (POSS Regt CP)
7-Apr-71		YS548706		Elms HQ D445
7-Apr-71		YS635989		Elms HQ BA LONG Prov
8-Apr-71	0010Z	YS178865	B4223	LONG DAT Dist Unit Also seen as 3 Bn 274 VC Regt
8-Apr-71	0220Z	YT641013	M0094	HQ BA LONG PROV
8-Apr-71	0235Z	YS880878	U/I	U/I
8-Apr-71	0805Z	YT263044	M4000	HQ 74 Arty
8-Apr-71	0838Z	YS470698	M1523	D445 Bn
8-Apr-71		YS178865		Elms 3/274 Regt (Poss Bn CP)
8-Apr-71		YT641013		Elms HQ BA LONG Prov
9-Apr-71	0335Z	YT782055	E1427	C3 MR7
9-Apr-71	2336Z	YT615285	B4025	U/I
9-Apr-71		YS837927		MR7, Poss Regional Comm
9-Apr-71		YT832139		Elms 2/33 NVA Regt, POSS BN CP
9-Apr-71		YS274993		Elms HQ 274 Regt, Poss Regt CP
10-Apr-71	0006Z	YT866134	B4888	2 Bn 33 Regt
10-Apr-71	0635Z	YS560796	M1523	D445 Bn
10-Apr-71	0810Z	YT390094	M0093	LONG DAT Dist
10-Apr-71	2305Z	YS583804	M1523	D445 Bn
10-Apr-71		YT390094		Elms 1/274 Regt, POSS BN CP
11-Apr-71	0225Z	YT774024	I0093	U/I
11-Apr-71	0230Z	YT851888	U/I	U/I
11-Apr-71	0704Z	YT274052	M4000	HQ 74 Arty
11-Apr-71	0735Z	YS837921	M1265	HQ MR7
11-Apr-71	0835Z	YS570797	M1523	D445 Bn
11-Apr-71		YS272991		3 Bn VC 274 Regt
11-Apr-71		YT854148		Elms 2/33 NVA Regt, Poss Bn CP
11-Apr-71		YS855934		Elms HQ MR7



Date	Time (Z)	Loc	Ident	Unit
11-Apr-71		YS583804		Elms HQ D445
12-Apr-71	0007Z	YS183900	B4223	LONG DAT Dist Unit Also seen as 3 Bn 274 VC Regt
12-Apr-71	0034Z	YT597109	B4165	3 Bn NVA 33 Regt
12-Apr-71	0220Z	YT832930	M1265	HQ MR7
12-Apr-71	0235Z	YS808909	E0902	U/I
12-Apr-71	0810Z	YT285009	M0084	HQ VC 274 Regt
12-Apr-71	2315Z	YS549784	M1523	D445 Bn
12-Apr-71	2335Z	YT266023	M0084	HQ VC 274 Regt
12-Apr-71		YT279063		HQ 74 Arty Regt (Regt CP)
12-Apr-71		YT770028		REAR SVCS MR7
12-Apr-71		YS861941		Elms HQ MR7
12-Apr-71		YT611004		Elms HQ BA LONG Prov
13-Apr-71	0003Z	YT845127	B4888	2 Bn 33 Regt
13-Apr-71	0235Z	YT650067	U/I	U/I
13-Apr-71	0210Z	YS615983	M0094	HQ BA LONG PROV
13-Apr-71	0335Z	YS506866	E0809	Elms Chau Duc
13-Apr-71	0405Z	YS483517	B4024	LONG DAT Dist
13-Apr-71	0737Z	YT775062	E1427	C3 MR7
13-Apr-71	2305Z	YS546819	M1523	D445 Bn
13-Apr-71	2335Z	YT612278	B4025	U/I
13-Apr-71		YT845127		Elms 2/33 NVA Regt, Poss Bn CP
13-Apr-71		YS549784		Elms HQ D445
13-Apr-71		YS611985		Elms HQ BA LONG Prov
14-Apr-71	0810Z	YS292989	M0084	HQ VC 274 Regt
14-Apr-71	2310Z	YS563781	M1523	D445 Bn
14-Apr-71		YS546819		Elms HQ D445
15-Apr-71	0820Z	YS300613	M5908	VUNG TAU City Unit
15-Apr-71		YT781076		Elms MR7, Poss Mil Int Sect
15-Apr-71		YT260163		2/274 Regt HQ
15-Apr-71		YS318986		Elms HQ 274 Regt
15-Apr-71		YS609989		HQ BA LONG Prov
16-Apr-71	0135Z	YS533874	E0809	Elms Chau Duc
16-Apr-71	025Z	YT570021	M0094	HQ BA LONG PROV
16-Apr-71	0242Z	YS270612	M5908	VUNG TAU City Unit
16-Apr-71	0638Z	YS552819	M1523	D445 Bn
16-Apr-71	0740Z	YS522877	E0809	Elms Chau Duc
17-Apr-71	0147Z	YS519882	E0809	Elms Chau Duc
17-Apr-71	0220Z	YS596995	M0094	HQ BA LONG PROV



Date	Time (Z)	Loc	Ident	Unit
17-Apr-71	0836Z	YS562821	M1523	D445 Bn
17-Apr-71	2307Z	YS554811	M1523	D445 Bn
17-Apr-71		YT837107		Elems HQ MR7
17-Apr-71		YT754035		Elems REAR SVCS MR7
18-Apr-71	0235Z	YS287600	M5908	VUNG TAU City Unit
18-Apr-71	0408Z	YS473497	B4024	LONG DAT Dist Unit
18-Apr-71	0710Z	YS520812	E0809	Elems Chau Duc
18-Apr-71	0805Z	YS286999	M0084	HQ VC 274 Regt
18-Apr-71	0815Z	YT412039	M0093	1 Bn VC 274 Regt
18-Apr-71		YT597006		Elems HQ BA LONG Prov
18-Apr-71		YT283063		Elems HQ 74 Arty Regt, Poss Regt CP
18-Apr-71		YS1890		Elems 3/274 Regt
18-Apr-71		YS554811		Elems HQ D445
19-Apr-71	0136Z	YT539867	E0809	Elems Chau Duc
19-Apr-71	0236Z	YS606986	M0094	HQ BA LONG PROV
19-Apr-71	0740Z	YT833096	M1265	HQ MR7
20-Apr-71		YS607987		Elems HQ BA LONG Prov
20-Apr-71		YT277061		HQ 74 Arty Regt
20-Apr-71		YT826084		MR7, Poss Regional Comm
21-Apr-71	2310Z	YS534849	M1523	HQ MR7
21-Apr-71		YT830100		HQ MR7
21-Apr-71		YT896124		HQ MR7
21-Apr-71		YS5384		
21-Apr-71		YT832084		MR7, Poss Regional Comm
21-Apr-71		YS616985		HQ BA LONG Prov
22-Apr-71	0810Z	YS300995	M0084	HQ VC 274 Regt
22-Apr-71		YT2900		VC 274 Regt
22-Apr-71		YS525965		3/33 NVA Regt
22-Apr-71		YT762100		2/33 NVA Regt
22-Apr-71		YT826101		Elems HQ MR7
22-Apr-71		YS534849		D445
23-Apr-71	0835Z	YS530938	M1523	D445 Bn
23-Apr-71		YT848105		MR7, Poss Regional Comm
23-Apr-71		YT850107		HQ MR7
23-Apr-71		YT849130		HQ 33 NVA Regt
23-Apr-71		YS644950		Elems HQ BA LONG Prov
23-Apr-71		YS684919		Elems HQ BA LONG Prov
24-Apr-71	0815Z	YS292002	M0084	HQ VC 274 Regt
24-Apr-71	0802Z	YT352112	M0093	1 Bn VC 274 Regt



Date	Time (Z)	Loc	Ident	Unit
24-Apr-71		YT842109		HQ MR7
25-Apr-71	0905Z	YS836090	M1265	HQ MR7
26-Apr-71	0405Z	YS480500	B4024	LONG DAT Dist
26-Apr-71	0735Z	YT818122	M1265	HQ MR7
26-Apr-71		YT882090		HQ MR7
26-Apr-71		YS308991		HQ 274 Regt
27-Apr-71	0005Z	YS193916	B4223	LONG DAT Dist Unit Also seen as 3 Bn 274 VC Regt
27-Apr-71	0745Z	YT885091	P0569	MR7
27-Apr-71	0805Z	YT340025	M0093	1 Bn VC 274 Regt
27-Apr-71		YT845097		MR7, Poss Regional Comm
27-Apr-71		YT769057		MR7, Poss Mil Int Sect
27-Apr-71		YT763086		2/33 NVA Regt
27-Apr-71		YT314105		HQ 274 Regt
27-Apr-71		YS193916		3/274 Regt
28-Apr-71	0710Z	YS653977	M0094	HQ BA LONG PROV
28-Apr-71		YT650013		HQ BA LONG Prov
29-Apr-71		YT564227		HQ BA LONG Prov, Poss Tpt Gp 30
29-Apr-71		YT600012		HQ BA LONG Prov
30-Apr-71	0805Z	YT328031	M0084	HQ VC 274 Regt
30-Apr-71		YS784909		MR7, Poss Rear Services
30-Apr-71		YS426920		U/I
30-Apr-71		YS481681		U/I
30-Apr-71		YT831192		HQ MR7
30-Apr-71		YT746144		HQ MR7



66.2.5 ARDF Support

In late April or early May, 547 Sig Tp released a report titled *REPORT ON 1 ATF USE OF ARDF IN THE CLOSE SUPPORT ROLE*⁹⁸⁴.

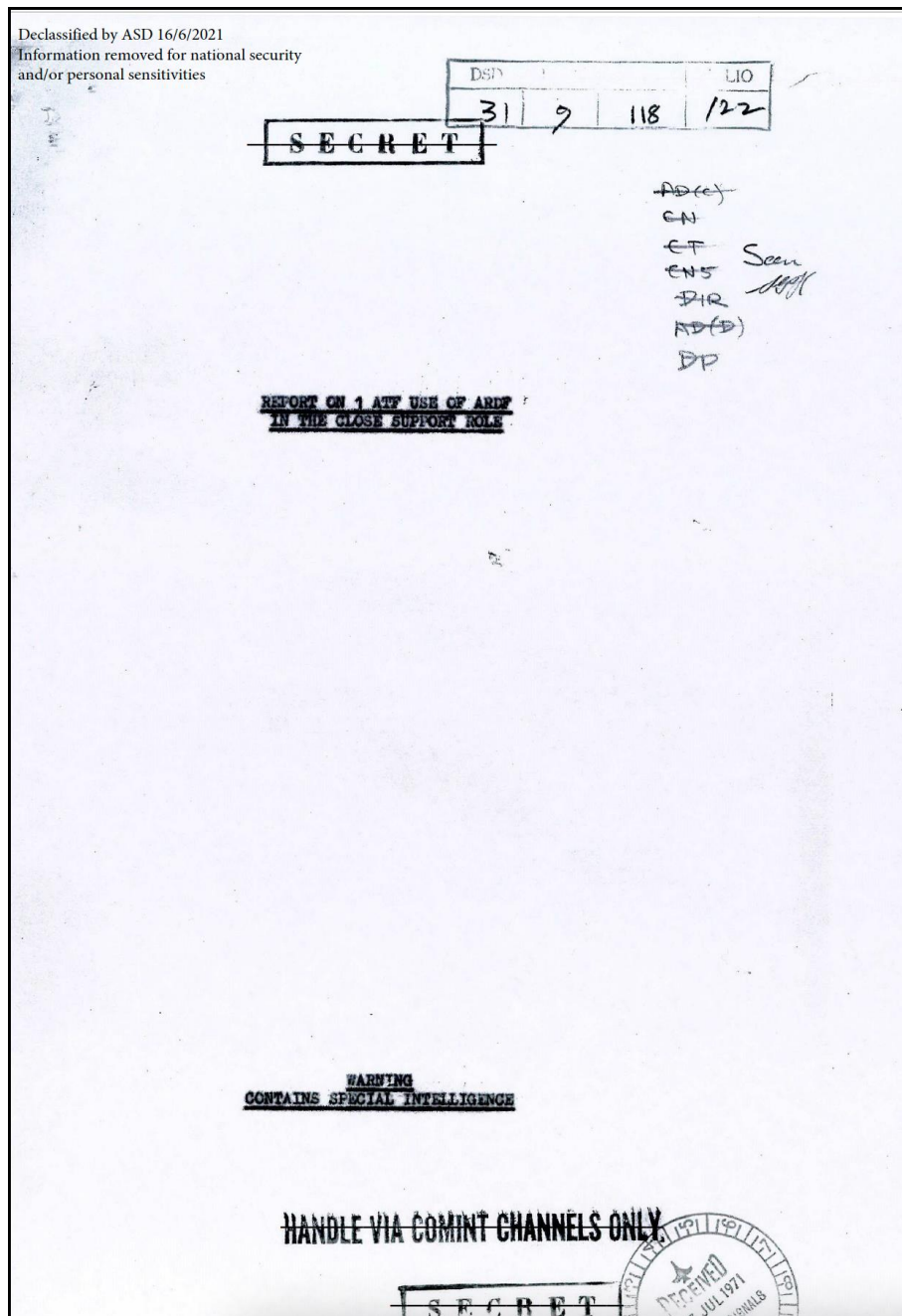


Figure 626: ARDF Report Front Page

⁹⁸⁴ DSD Declassified, 547 Sig Tp in Vietnam (tranche2). Received at DSD 13 July.

~~SECRET~~~~SPOKE~~REPORT ON 1 ATF USE OF ARDF IN THE CLOSE SUPPORT ROLEBackground

1. In late Mar 71, the radio terminal serving the headquarters of D445 Local Force Battalion was located by ARDF approximately 8 kilometres north of XUYEN MOC. Throughout the previous 3 months, the terminal had been located in the NUI BE mountain complex outside the NE corner of PHOU C TUY Province, having relocated to this area to reorganise after a disastrous defeat on 31 Dec 70.

2. Prompt reaction by 1 ATF to ARDF evidence of D445's return to PHOU C TUY resulted in several contacts with the enemy during late Mar and throughout Apr. Finally on 21 Apr C Coy 2 RAR swept through a contact area and located an antenna system in the trees.

Details of ARDF results and clashes with D445 Battalion elements

The following incidents may be correlated by use of map in Annex C.

1. 17 Mar ARDF YS8287.

During the period 17-24 Mar 71 the terminal serving D445 was not heard in communications. The period of silence was held to indicate that the terminal may have been on the move. On the 24 Mar D445 transmitted a message to HQ BA LONG. During the transmission the ARDF operator used the feature of "THOROUGH" equipment that permits an operator to be confident, when a picture does not appear on the ARDF oscilloscope screen, that the terminal is not within an approximate 8 kilometre radius of the aircraft. In this way, a large portion of the North Eastern region of PHOU C TUY Province was eliminated as an area of possible deployment. The move was corroborated and the radio terminal accurately located when, on the next scheduled transmission the planned ARDF run was successful, thus providing the Task Force with confirmation that D445 had once again deployed in the 1 ATF AO.

2. 25 Mar ARDF 1000metres

3. 28 Mar ARDF 500m

4. 31 Mar Contact was made by 2 RAR elements with an estimated 60-80 VC, who documents later proved to belong D445.

5. 3 Apr ARDF 750m

6. 6 Apr ARDF 1000m

7. 10 Apr ARDF 750m

8. 11 Apr ARDF 750m

9. 13 Apr ARDF 1000m

10. 14 Apr ARDF 500m

There had been several minor contacts throughout the period 3-14 Apr 71, but none could be positively identified as being with elements of D445.

11. 15 Apr ARDF 4000m

12. 16 Apr ARDF 1000m

13. 17 Apr ARDF 1000m

14. 18 Apr ARDF 750m

15. 20 Apr A contact with VC (that documents later proved to be of D445), resulted in a bunker system being found nearby.

16. 21 Apr A sweep following the above contact resulted in the discovery of a radio antenna in the trees (See Annex A)

17. 22 Apr ARDF 1000m

18. 23 Apr ARDF 1000m

Since this rapid movement northwards outside the Province border, and consequently an easing of operations against this entity, the terminal has been constantly located in the same area as shown by the 23 Apr fix.

Figure 627: ARDF Report Page 1

~~SECRET~~~~SPOKE~~

2.

CONCLUSIONS

1. The experiences above provide an example of how ARDF results can be employed by a Task Force Commander for tactical planning as they can:
 - a. Show possible direction of movement.
 - b. Indicate possible camp areas/bunker complexes when the terminal shows no indication of movement.
 - c. Supply a degree of accuracy and identification that cannot be matched by any other locative method eg APD (Sniffer). This is of course dependent on allowing for any dispersion of locations of the transmitter and the main body of enemy troops.
 - d. Provide timely information.

Annexes

- A. Technical report of D445 antenna system.
- B. Diagram of captured antenna system.
- C. Map of Phuoc Tuy Province showing ARDF results and 1 ATF calshes with enemy.

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Figure 628: ARDF Report Page 2

~~SECRET~~~~SPOKE~~Annex ATECHNICAL REPORT ON CAPTURED ANTENNA SYSTEM
USED BY D445 BATTALIONTechnical Characteristics

- a. Antenna: WINDOM, Off-centre, half wave length type.
- b. Total horizontal length: 80ft
- c. Side lengths: (i) 25ft 4in
(ii) 55ft 8in
- d. Feeder length: 27ft 6in
- e. Height above ground: 15ft-16ft
- f. Frequencies used: (i) Transmit 5550KHZ
(ii) Receive 6350KHZ
- g. Radiation: Mainly vertical with horizontal component. The horizontal component has been utilized by ARDF at 4 to 5 kilometres around antenna site.
- h. Direction: The horizontal antenna was constructed to 12° to coincide it with the direction of the receiver station location at that time

Materials Used

- a. Horizontal Antenna: A twin, flat, lightweight Japanese commercial make of 14 stranded copper wire with PVC type covering, light blue in colour.
- b. Antenna Feeder: A single strand of the same material as the horizontal antenna, that had been split from the twin wire.
- c. Tie Wire: Same as the horizontal antenna.
- d. Insulator: Nylon cord.

Construction/Layout

1. The single wire feeder was soldered to both strands of the horizontal antenna. Insulation between the antenna and the tie wire was effected by a loop of nylon cord. The tie wire was placed through the forks of trees and secured around their bases allowing for quick release and ease of removal.
2. The tie wire closest to the transmitter site evidently doubled as an antenna for a small transistor receiver as a small transistor receiver and a battery were found close to the site.
3. The transmitter was apparently placed six feet out from the horizontal antenna and 15 feet from the shorter side-length end, supported on a rough wooden platform at ground level. A two-man bunker was located two feet from the transmitter platform.

Figure 629: ARDF Report Annex A

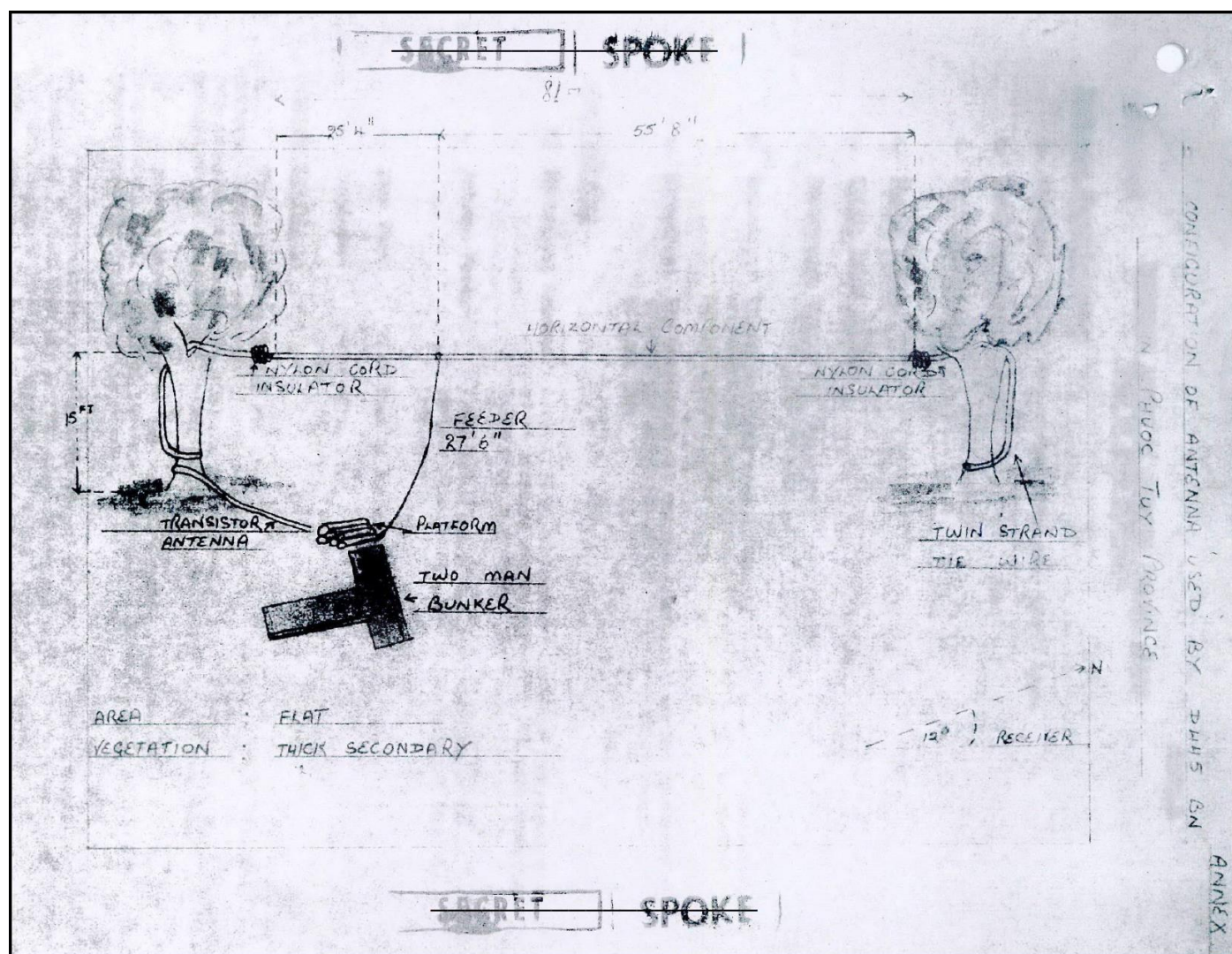


Figure 630: ARDF Report Annex B



CHAPTER 67 – MAY 1971

67.1 Personnel

67.1.1 Arrivals and Departures

In May there were four arrivals and four departures.

Arrivals

12 May

Signalman Daniel Conroy

25 May

Signalman Steven Thuell

Signalman Peter Dencher

26 May

Signalman Larry Gilbert

Departures

12 May

Corporal John Kaarsberg

Corporal Ronald Biddle

26 May

Signalman Kevin Petersen

Signalman Raymond Seiler

67.1.2 Employment Areas

Danny Conroy, Steve Thuell and Larry Gilbert joined the Set Room. Peter Dencher went to technical maintenance to replace Al Thomson. It was possibly one of the longest handovers in Vietnam. The long handover was necessary due to the complex nature of the equipment operated by the Troop, especially the computers.

67.1.3 Visitors

67.1.3.1 MI8

Major Cattanach visited the Troop again from 7 to 12 May.

67.1.3.2 Comd AFV

Major General Dunstan, who had visited the unit in 1968 as Deputy Commander of the Task Force, visited the unit again, this time as the Commander of the Australian Force Vietnam.

67.1.3.3 Red Cross 'Donut Dollies'

The Vietnam War Red Cross 'Donut Dollies' were young, college-degreed women who spent a one-year tour in country as morale boosters for American troops. They ran recreation centres, visited hospitals and, because of the mobility of the helicopters, travelled to front-line landing



zones and base camps to bring games and smiles to soldiers. The Troop occasionally 'snatched' the girls from other venues⁹⁸⁵.



Figure 631: 'Donut Dollies' visit



Figure 632: Bob Howell and one of the 'Dollies'

⁹⁸⁵ The Australian Salvation Army ran similar centres but they were staffed by males.



67.1.4 Saigon Visits

It became possible for Troop members to spend a night and a day in Saigon occasionally as every sixteenth day was now free. Not many of the Troop took the opportunity though, as the word had already spread about the general decay of the city. Vince McQuillan and Charlie Bennett did go and managed to find the race track where they won a few piastre.

67.1.4.1 Kevin Condon Assistance

Kevin Condon (DSD LO) had spent a lot of time in Saigon during visits to the DODSPECREP and often met up with Troop members. Although he was a non-drinker he was more fun than most of the Troop's city-based hosts. A born bargainer with a no-nonsense attitude, he could still change a mediocre night into a few hours of adventure.

67.1.5 Hoa Long Dance Continues

Old jokes die hard and the Hoa Long Dance reared its head once more. Signalman Steve Thuell, who arrived in May, bedecked himself in his civilian finery and fronted up ready to go to the Rice Mill⁹⁸⁶. Nev Hampton set him up nicely and a few others collaborated to embarrass Steve.

67.2 Administration

67.2.1 OOPS

The Task Force had not received in-coming rockets since TET 1969 and alerts were confined to practice drills held only (according to the soldiers) when the Officer's Mess had no films to show. One moment of excitement occurred when someone in the Troop heard a siren and pushed the Troop's own siren.

67.2.1.1 Siren

When members of the Troop heard the siren they scrambled into their weapon pits. Someone at Task Force HQ, hearing 547's siren, set off all the other sirens in the Task Force.

67.2.1.2 E. Elliot Ness to Blame

When radio contact was made everyone in the area was trying to find out who had pushed the first button. Cowards that the 547 lads were, they could not bring themselves to confess, for it had been learned that the initiating siren had in fact come from the Club's television which was screening the *Elliot Ness Story* and a vehicle chase with sirens blasting was in progress.

67.3 Operations

67.3.1 Deactivation of IIFV

II Field Force was de-activated on 2 May 1971, during the withdrawal of U.S. ground combat forces from Vietnam, with its assets providing the basis for its successor, Third Regional Assistance Command (TRAC).

⁹⁸⁶ Venue of the Hoa Long Dance.



67.3.2 Additional ARDF Equipment

On 13 May, the Troop was advised that a complete ARDF Pilot Model No 2 had been despatched from WRE for installation in the aircraft⁹⁸⁷.

67.3.2.1 Equipment Arrival

After arrival the new model was installed in a second Porter aircraft. After fitment the Troop was then able to operate with two aircraft at the same time, either on separate or joint missions.

67.3.2.2 Assistance

Major Kevin McDonald⁹⁸⁸, the Task Force Air Operations staff officer, assisted with the project.

67.3.3 547 Sig Tp Operation Report for May 1971

The 547 Sig Tp Op Report for May 71⁹⁸⁹ stated:

*S E C R E T COMINT CHANNELS SIGS 428
AHQ FOR M18. OP REPORT 1 – 31 MAY 71*

2. WATCH HOURS - NO CHANGE FROM APR REPORT

2. COVER AS AT 31 MAY.

ALPHA. PRIORITY COVER ALL VCM EX 22 WHICH IS VCOB

*1 05437 6 05453 11 05452 16 05455 21 00835
2 05423 7 05448 12 J2062 17 J3145 22 05409
3 05443 8 05449 13 00667 18 J2981 23 00679
4 05447 9 J08101 14 05221 19 05454
5 05442 10 08102 15 05445 20 08206*

BRAVO. DEV

*1 VCMB J2948 3 VCMB V5061 5 VCMB M7033 7 VCMB 00721
2 VCMB V5060 4 VCMB N5062 6 VCOB M7036*

*CHARLIE. 445 VC LF BN, 3BN/33 REGT AND
E0809 TERMINALS REMAIN LOCATED IN GENERAL AREA
JUST OUTSIDE PHUOC TUY NEAR CENTRAL NORTHERN BORDER
WITH LONG KHANH.*

*TOWARDS END OF MONTH 1ST BN/274 REGT TERMINAL CROSSED BACK INTO
1 ATF AO, AND TWO BIG MOVES WESTWARD BY HQ 33
NVA REGT AND HIS 2ND BN TERMINALS ALMOST
COLOCATE THEM JUST NORTH EAST OF XUAN LOC.*

*ATF G2 (INT) TRACK AT PRESENT IN STATION COMPOUND
BEING FITTED WITH COMMS EQUIPMENT AND AWAITING FURTHER
ORDERS*

THREE. ARDF

ALFA. OTAL FIXES 101.

⁹⁸⁷ AWM 98 R5821/1/8

⁹⁸⁸ Kevin McDonald had previously served at 7 Sig Regt and later as CO.

⁹⁸⁹ DSD Declassified, 547 Sig Tp in Vietnam (tranche2).



BRAVO. GRADINGS. GOOD 14. FAIR 83. CUTS 4.
 CHARLIE. FLYING TIME TOTAL 159 HRS 40 MINS.
 1. WO1 RUSSELL 10/42. 15
 2. SSGT HOWELL 32.50/33/50
 3. SGT ABRAHAMSON 13.45/226.45 (TO SET ROOM ON 2 JUN)
 4. SIG HUNTER 34.30/137.15
 5. SIG SIMPSON 34:15/85.20
 6. SIG ARDAY 34.20/54.50

DELTA. MSNS ABORTED DUE EQPT MALFUNCTIONS 5.
 DUE WX ONE. REDUCED DUE WX 4.

ECHO. DUE TO COMD
 15504341 ATF INTENSE INTEREST IN
 LOCATING FAVOURITE ENEMY TERMINALS, SOMETHING OF
 AN OVERKILL WAS APPLIED DURING RECENT PURSUIT
 OPERATIONS RESULTING IN EVIDENCE THAT THE TERMINAL OPERATORS
 SUSPECTED THERE WAS SOME SIGNIFICANCE IN APPEARANCE OF PORTER AT
 SKED TIMES.

VARIATIONS WERE INTRODUCED WHICH INVOLVED FACTORS OF HEIGHT,
 TIMINGS OF RUNS, METHODS OF APPROACH AND RUNS AND
 DUMMY RUNS FROM DECOY PORTER.

VALUE OF THESE EFFORTS AIMED AT CONFUSING ENEMY OBSERVORS IN NOT
 POSSIBLE TO ASSESS YET.

FOXTROT. DURING SSL REPAIR PERIOD, MAXIMUM EFFORT MADE
 TO TRAIN OPERATORS IN ARDF TECHNIQUES,

THE SIZE OF THE TEAM HAS ALREADY BEEN REDUCED,
 AND WILL CONTINUE TO DO SO TO FOUR/FIVE MEMBERS.

GOLF. MEMBERS FLYING - AS LISTED IN PARA 3 CHARLIE.

HOTEL. MEMBERS NOT IN RECEIPT OF FLYING PAY SSGT HOWELL
 AND SIG ARDAY (MOST RECENT MEMBERS TO TEAM).

FOUR. SSL REPAIRED AND TESTED. OPERATIONAL AS FROM 1 JUN 71.

67.3.4 ARDF Flying Hours

The total ARDF flying hours for the month were⁹⁹⁰:

Year	Month	Flying hours	Total Fixes	Good <1000mts	Fair 1-2000Mts	Poor >2000 Mts	Cut	Missions Lost	Remarks
1971	May	159.4	101	14	83		4	10	

67.3.5 ARDF Report

The ARDF Report for May stated⁹⁹¹:

<u>Personnel Flying Hours</u>	<u>January</u>	<u>Progressive Total</u>
WO1 Russell	10:00	42:15
SSgt Howell	32:30	33:50

⁹⁹⁰ Compiled from MI8 Records held at ASD archives.

⁹⁹¹ Ibid.



Sgt Abrahamson	13:45	226:45
Sig Hunter	34:30	85:20
Sig Arday	34:20	54:50

Movement of personnel

Sgt Abrahamson R&R 25 May 71. To main setroom ex R&R 02Jun71

67.3.6 ARDF Problems

As mentioned in the Operational Report, at times the ARDF team must have experienced problems prosecuting targets in the AO. The following report details procedures that were attempted to overcome possible future problems⁹⁹²..

TESTS EMPLOYED AGAINST D445 AND OTHER TARGETS

1. Because of the apparent sensitivity of D445, HQ BA LONG, 3/33 Regt and to a lesser degree the other targets in our AO, the following systems have been tested and employed over the latter part of the month:

a. Varying heights of operation. This proved unsuccessful from 500-1500 feet as it entailed having to get too close to the target to obtain a workable picture. 1500 feet and above has proved satisfactory, although it was noticed that at 4000 feet there was a tendency to cut the sky wave rather than the ground wave of the target.

b. Varied target timings and varied runs. This involved the following methods. Only the apparent disadvantage of each method are mentioned.

(i) Standing off from the selected start point until the commencement of the sked, then flying through the start point to the finishing point and leaving the area immediately.

Disadvantages:

*There is no second run if the run proves unsatisfactory.
Difficulty in determining an accurate finish point.*

(ii) Flying two, three and four legs around the target, cutting the target on each leg as often as possible, and leaving the area immediately after the final finish point has been passed.

Disadvantages:

Great difficulty in determining accurate start and finish and points at the beginning and end of each run.

Too long in the target area.

Can lessen the time available to travel to the next target, which could be some distance away.

(iii) Early and late arrival at the target's location.

Disadvantages:

Brief activity of the target at sked time could result in a non-fix.

⁹⁹² ASD archives.



Early arrival could alert the terminal and cause him not to meet his sked.

c. Decoy aircraft. A decoy aircraft is often deployed to fly in the target area making runs similar to those of the ARDF aircraft either before or after the ARDF aircraft has been the area. This aircraft is also used in the area out of sked time and at irregular intervals as an added deception.

2. The following factors are taken into consideration in determining the above runs, a record of which are held by the SPO.

- a. The power of certain transmitters.*
- b. The types of aerial systems employed if known.*
- c. The terrain.*
- d. The past reaction by targets to aircraft their area.*

3. It is yet too early to assess the value of these and whether the targets are at all deceived as to our intentions. However, it has been noticed that HQ BA LONG seems to pay less attention to aircraft in the area than in the past.

67.3.7 Summary of Main ARDF Fixes

The following table is a summary of the main ARDF fixes for May 1971⁹⁹³:

Date	Time (Z)	Loc	Ident	Unit
1-May-71	0032Z	YS563928	B4165	3 Bn 33 Regt
1-May-71	0745Z	YT582034	M0094	HQ BA LONG PROV
1-May-71		YT288052		74 Arty Regt
1-May-71		YT356027		HQ 274 Regt
2-May-71	0010Z	YT985154	M0135	HQ 33 Regt
2-May-71	0035Z	YS553878	B4165	3 Bn 33 Regt
2-May-71	0105Z	YT569023	M0094	HQ BA LONG PROV
2-May-71	0810Z	YT988176	M0135	HQ 33 Regt
2-May-71	0840Z	YS515939	M1523	HQ D445
2-May-71	2300Z	YS526903	M1523	HQ D445
2-May-71		YT583224		HQ BA LONG PROV, Poss Tpt Gp 30
2-May-71		YT803171		HQ MR7
2-May-71		YS552878		3/33 NVA Regt
3-May-71	0005Z	YT361060	M0084	HQ VC 274 Regt
3-May-71	0210Z	YT604014	M0094	HQ BA LONG PROV
3-May-71	0805Z	YS306613	M5908	Vung Tau Guerillas/ HQ BA LONG PROVince
3-May-71	2305Z	YS573925	M1523	HQ D445
3-May-71		YT569222		HQ BA LONG PROV, Poss Prov Comm
3-May-71		YS526903		D445

⁹⁹³ Compiled by Bob Hartley from 547 Sig Tp ARDF Monthly Summaries contained in ASD files.



Date	Time (Z)	Loc	Ident	Unit
3-May-71		YT784189		HQ MR7
3-May-71		YS543867		3/33 NVA Regt
3-May-71		YT361060		HQ 274 Regt
4-May-71	0213Z	YT578018	M0094	HQ BA LONG PROV
4-May-71	0645Z	YS535942	M1523	HQ D445
4-May-71		YT756166		HQ MR7
4-May-71		YS573925		U/I
4-May-71		YS519921		S Elems HQ D445
5-May-71	0712Z	YT605038	M0094	HQ BA LONG PROV
5-May-71	0802Z	YS239614	M5908	Vung Tau Guerillas/ HQ BA LONG Province
5-May-71	0832Z	YS525920	M1523	HQ D445
5-May-71	0839Z	YS438964	B4165	3 Bn 33 Regt
5-May-71	2305Z	YS548927	M1523	HQ D445
5-May-71	2312Z	YT614051	M0094	HQ BA LONG PROV
5-May-71	2340Z	YS457964		U/I
5-May-71		YT591209		Tpt Gp 30
5-May-71		YS328999		Elems HQ 274 Regt, Poss Regt CP
6-May-71	0035Z	YT475035	B4165	3 Bn 33 Regt
6-May-71	0155Z	YS525920	E0809	Chau Duc
6-May-71	0706Z	YS583987	M0094	HQ BA LONG PROV
6-May-71	2306Z	YS525903	M1523	HQ D445
6-May-71		YT820140		2/33 NVA Regt HQ, Poss Bn CP
6-May-71		YS548927		HQ D445
7-May-71	0006Z	YS469484	B4024	LONG DAT Dist
7-May-71	0834Z	YS529886	M1523	HQ D445
7-May-71	2306Z	YS518955	M1523	HQ D445
7-May-71		YT815090		2/33 NVA Regt, POSS BN CP
7-May-71		YT793175		HQ MR7
8-May-71	0036Z	YS422915	B4165	3 Bn NVA 33 Regt
8-May-71	0815Z	ZT097241	M0135	HQ NVA 33 Regt
8-May-71		YT280063		Elems HQ 74 Arty Regt (POSS Regt CP)
8-May-71		YS331990		HQ 274 Regt, POSS Regt CP
9-May-71	2308Z	YS520931	M1523	HQ D445
9-May-71		YT820179		HQ MR7
9-May-71		YT357003		HQ 274 Regt (POSS Regt CP)
9-May-71		YT785059		2/33 NVA Regt, POSS BN CP
10-May-71	0005Z	YS224875	B4223	LONG DAT Dist Unit Also seen as 3 Bn 274 VC Regt
10-May-71	0024Z	YS286963	M0084	HQ VC 274 Regt



Date	Time (Z)	Loc	Ident	Unit
10-May-71	0706Z	YS579979	M0094	HQ BA LONG PROV
10-May-71	2305Z	YS518922	M1523	HQ D445
11-May-71	0003Z	YT748118	B4888	2 Bn NVA 33 Regt
11-May-71	0203Z	YS619988	M0094	HQ BA LONG PROV
11-May-71	0735Z	YS822935	E1427	C3 MR7
11-May-71	0825Z	YT288092	M4000	HQ 74 Arty
11-May-71	2306Z	YS576944	M1523	HQ D445
11-May-71		YT286067		HQ 74 Arty Regt, POSS Regt CP
12-May-71	0002Z	YS335995	M0084	HQ VC 274 Regt
12-May-71	0203Z	YS684991	M0094	HQ BA LONG PROV
12-May-71	0236Z	YS276604	M5908	Vung Tau Guerillas/ HQ BA LONG PROVince
12-May-71	0736Z	YS820955	E1427	C3 MR7
12-May-71	0905Z	YS473518	B4024	LONG DAT Dist Unit
12-May-71		YT257153		2/274 Regt, POSS BN CP
12-May-71		YS637984		HQ BA LONG PROV
12-May-71		YT788068		HQ MR7, POSS Mil Int Sect
12-May-71		YT323044		HQ 74 Arty Regt, POSS Regt CP
13-May-71	0740Z	YS826927	E1427	C3 MR7
13-May-71	0907Z	YS463488	B4024	LONG DAT Dist Unit
13-May-71		ZT065217		HQ 33 NVA Regt, POSS Regt CP
14-May-71	0005Z	YT649014	M0094	HQ BA LONG PROV
14-May-71	0320Z	YS852926	B5294	U/I
14-May-71	0702Z	YT621022	M0094	HQ BA LONG PROV
14-May-71	2334Z	YT345022	M0094	HQ BA LONG PROV
14-May-71		YS506924		3/33 NVA Regt, POSS BN CP
15-May-71	0012Z	YS194856	B4223	3 Bn VC 274 Regt
15-May-71	0037Z	YS498949	B4165	3 Bn 33 NVA Regt
15-May-71	0106Z	YS638987	M0094	HQ BA LONG Prov
15-May-71	0140Z	YS520945	E0809	Elms Chau Duc
15-May-71	0836Z	YS532932	M1523	D445
15-May-71		YS857948		Rear Services MR7
16-May-71	0110Z	YT610027	M0094	HQ BA LONG Prov
16-May-71	0303Z	ZT017234	E0183	U/I
16-May-71	0336Z	YS855943	E1427	C3 MR7
16-May-71	0405Z	YS465493	B4024	LONG DAT Dist Unit
17-May-71	0510Z	YT338019	M0094	HQ BA LONG Prov
17-May-71		YT782083		HQ MR7
17-May-71		YS394918		1/274 Regt, Poss Bn CP
18-May-71	0710Z	YT658016	M0094	HQ BA LONG Prov
18-May-71	0910Z	YS478502	B4024	LONG DAT Dist Unit



Date	Time (Z)	Loc	Ident	Unit
18-May-71		YT713188		HQ MR7
19-May-71	0105Z	YT656012	M0094	HQ BA LONG Prov
19-May-71		YT782078		HQ MR7, Poss Mil Int Sect
19-May-71		YS212898		3/274 Regt, POSS Regt CP
19-May-71		YS2189		3/274 Regt, POSS Regt CP
19-May-71		YS321983		Elms HQ 274 Regt, POSS Regt CP
20-May-71	0735Z	YS861927	E1427	C3 MR7
20-May-71	0835Z	YS453955	B4165	3 Bn 33 NVA Regt
20-May-71	0907Z	YS469483	B4024	LONG DAT Dist Unit
20-May-71		YS340984		HQ 274 Regt, POSS Regt CP
20-May-71		YT642017		HQ BA LONG Prov
21-May-71	0010Z	YS247891	B4223	3 Bn VC 274 Regt
21-May-71	0512Z	YT543214	B4025	Poss Elms Tpt Gp 30, BA LONG Prov
21-May-71	2320Z	YS528918	M1523	D445
21-May-71		YS845947		Rear Services MR7
21-May-71		YT809143		Elms HQ MR7, Poss Regional Comm
21-May-71		YT577159		2/33 NVA Regt, Poss Bn CP
22-May-71	0735Z	YS853936	E1427	C3 MR7
22-May-71		YS528918		HQ D445
22-May-71		YT783065		HQ MR7, POSS Mil Int Sect
22-May-71		YT283064		HQ 74 Arty Regt, Poss Regt CP
22-May-71		YS327991		HQ 274 Regt, Poss Regt CP
23-May-71	0136Z	YS555942	E0809	Elms Chau Duc
23-May-71	0101Z	YT813160	P0569	MR7
23-May-71	0238Z	YS858939	U/I	Rear Services MR7
23-May-71		YT315002		HQ 274 Regt, POSS Regt CP
23-May-71		YT796016		HQ MR7
23-May-71		YT647019		HQ BA LONG Prov
24-May-71	0212Z	YS526935	E0809	Elms Chau Duc
24-May-71	0235Z	YS853932	E1427	C3 MR7
24-May-71	0810Z	YS417922	M0093	1 Bn VC 274 Regt
24-May-71	1005Z	YS239874	B4223	3 Bn VC 274 Regt
24-May-71	2305Z	YS544914	M1523	D445
24-May-71	2335Z	YT260205	E1860	2 Bn VC 274 Regt
24-May-71		YT800143		Rear Services, MR7
24-May-71		YS535925		D445, Poss Bn CP
24-May-71		YT692045		HQ BA LONG Prov
25-May-71	0005Z	YS258867	B4223	3 Bn VC 274 Regt
25-May-71	0050Z	YT691023	U/I	



Date	Time (Z)	Loc	Ident	Unit
25-May-71	2305Z	YS513942	M1523	D445
25-May-71	2335Z	YT329002	M0084	HQ VC 274 Regt
25-May-71		YT260205		2/274 Regt, Poss Bn CP
25-May-71		YS417922		1/274 Regt, Poss Bn CP
25-May-71		YT328010		HQ 274 Regt, Poss Regt CP
25-May-71		YS544914		D445, Poss Bn CP
25-May-71		YS654998		Elem BA LONG Prov
26-May-71	2333Z	YT289016	M0084	HQ VC 274 Regt
26-May-71		YS200890		3/274 Regt, Poss Bn CP
26-May-71		YS317994		HQ 274 Regt, Poss Regt CP
26-May-71		YT788263		HQ 33 NVA Regt, Poss Regt CP
26-May-71		YS513942		Poss D445
26-May-71		YT645018		HQ BA LONG Prov
26-May-71		YS513942		Elems CHAU DUC Dist
26-May-71		YS5091		
27-May-71	0702Z	YT662023	M0094	HQ BA LONG PROV
27-May-71	0805Z	YS508913	E0809	Elems Chau Duc
27-May-71	0840Z	YS494954	B4165	3 Bn NVA 33 Regt
27-May-71	0905Z	YS485512	B4024	LONG DAT Dist Unit
27-May-71		YS845936		Rear Services, MR7
27-May-71		YT566171		2/33 NVA Regt, Poss Bn CP
27-May-71		YT289016		HQ 274 Regt, Poss Regt CP
28-May-71	0135Z	YS544965	E0809	Elems Chau Duc
28-May-71	0703Z	YT619028	M0094	HQ BA LONG PROV
28-May-71	0740Z	YS855925	E1427	C3 MR7
28-May-71	0820Z	YT315059	M4000	HQ 74 Arty
28-May-71		YT322025		HQ 274 Regt, Poss Regt CP
28-May-71		YT588181		2/33 NVA Regt, Poss Bn CP
29-May-71	0820Z	YS436905	M0093	1 Bn VC 274 Regt
29-May-71	1010Z	YS205889	B4223	3 Bn VC 274 Regt
29-May-71		YT632018		HQ BA LONG Prov
30-May-71	0810Z	YS395879	M0093	1 Bn VC 274 Regt
30-May-71	0837Z	YS519933	B4165	3 Bn NVA 33 Regt
30-May-71	0908Z	YS494536	B4024	LONG DAT Dist Unit
30-May-71		YT589161		Poss HQ 33 NVA Regt
31-May-71	0003Z	YT583189	M0135	HQ 33 Regt
31-May-71		YS504939		U/I
31-May-71		YT778074		HQ MR7, Poss Mil Int Sect



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CHAPTER 68 – JUNE 1971

68.1 Personnel

68.1.1 Arrivals and Departures

In June, there were three arrivals and three departures.

Arrivals

9 June

Signalman Kenneth Borserio

Signalman Phillip Waite

16 June

Major Hubert O'Flynn

Departures

9 June

Signalman William Sampson

15 June

Signalman William Pollock

30 June

Captain Jack Fenton

68.1.2 Employment Areas

Ken Borserio joined the Comcen and Phil Waite went into the Set Room.

68.1.3 In-coming OC

Herbie O'Flynn arrived to replace Jack Fenton. During the handover, a visit to Vung Tau was included in case the Troop had to move to that area when the possible withdrawal from Nui Dat occurred.

68.1.4 Unit Strength

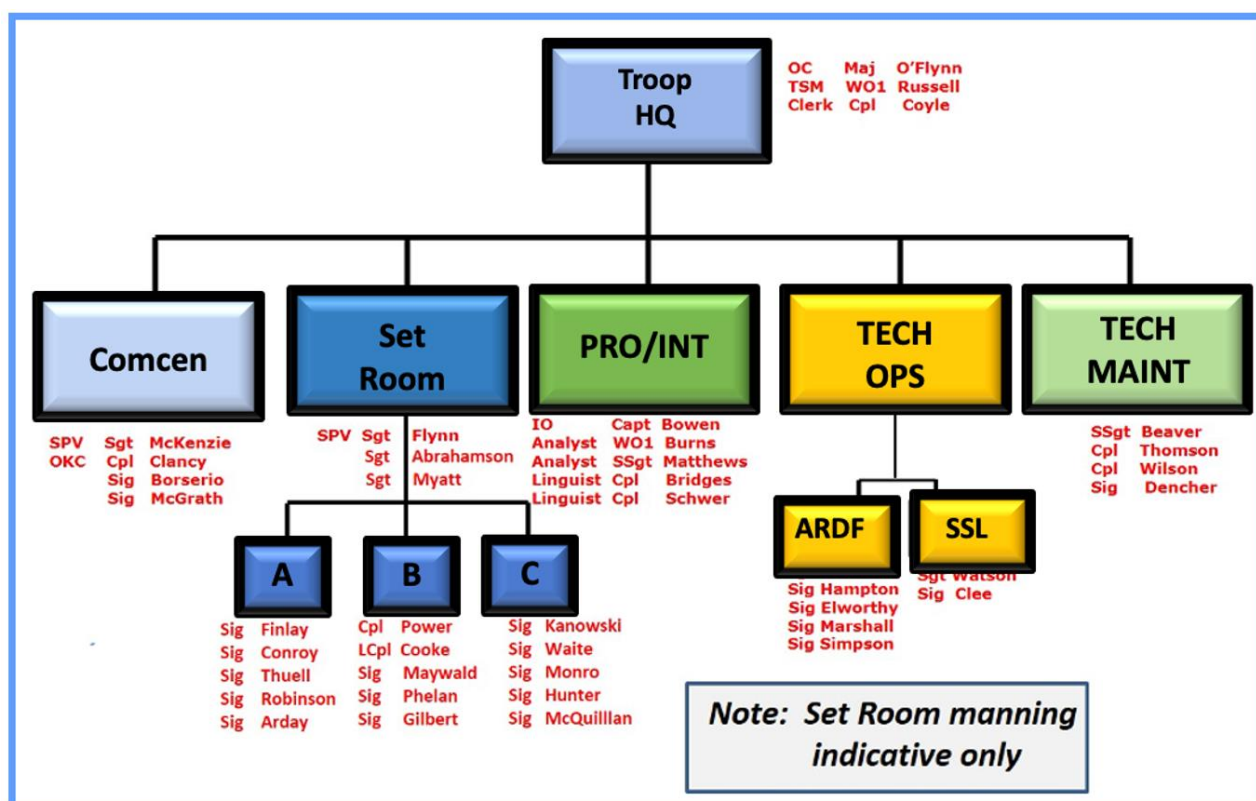
The Troop strength at the end of June was 40.

68.1.5 Troop Manning

The following graphic shows the organisation and manning of the Troop on 30 June:

Note:

The organisational chart only shows personnel who were thought to be employed in ARDF or SSL on the end date. It is realised that other members had been employed in these areas during the preceding six months

Figure 633: Troop Manning 30 June 71⁹⁹⁴

68.2 Administration

68.2.1 SVN Armed Forces Day Parade

In June, the Troop was 'invited' to send a Sergeant to Saigon as part of the HQ AFV contingent to march in the parade⁹⁹⁵. Stan Myatt attended.

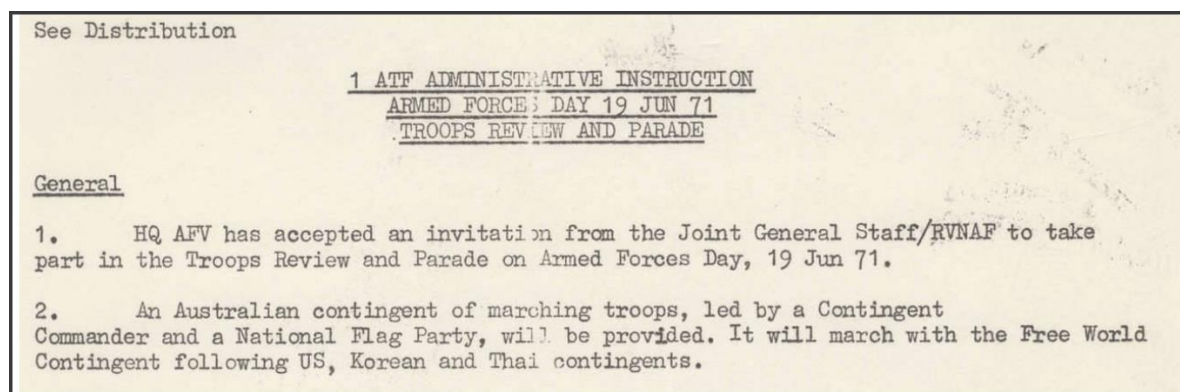


Figure 634: Extract from Parade Instruction #1

⁹⁹⁴ Note: This graphic shows Maj O'Flynn as OC. Jack Fenton departed on 30 June. Compiled by Bob Hartley E&OE.

⁹⁹⁵ RCDIG1028287, AWM95, 1/4/224 HQ ATF Commanders Diary Annex C 1 – 30 June 1971.



- b. National Flag Party - One flag bearer and two escorts nominated by HQ AFV.
- c. Contingent Sergeant Major - WO1 A.G. Stanley AATTV.
- d. Platoon Commander - 1 ARU.
- e. 60 marching troops:
 - (1) 12 from 1 ATF (HQ Coy - 2, 1 ATF LAD - 1, 17 Const Sqn - 1, 104 Sig Sqn - 1, 547 Sig Tp - 1 Sgt (Sect Cmd), A Sect 1 Topo Svy - 1, 161 Recce Flt - 1, TFMA - 1, 8 Fd Amb - 1 and 106 Fd Wksp - 2).
 - (2) 24 from 1 ARU (to include 1 Sgt and 3 Cpls).
 - (3) 12 from 1 ALSG.
 - (4) 12 from RAAF Vung Tau.

Figure 635: Extract from Parade Instruction #2

68.3 Operations

68.3.1 Monthly Operational Report

The 547 Sig Tp Monthly Operational Report for June⁹⁹⁶ included the following:

ONE: WATCH HOURS. NO CHANGE FROM MAY REPORT.

TWO. COVER AS AT 30 JUNE 71.

ALPHA. TWENTY TWO (22) PRIORITY TASKS

BRAVO. EIGHT (8) PRIORITY DEV TASKS

THREE. GENERAL

ALPHA. EN LOCS AND MOVS. DURING FIRST WEEK OF JUNE D445 CMM E809 TERMINAL AND 3 BN 33 REGT WERE LOCATED IN IMMEDIATE VICINITY OF NORTHERN BORDER OF PHUOC TUY PROVINCE. SUBSEQUENT TO OPERATION OVERLORD D445 RELOCATED IN MAO TAO MOUNTAINS CMM E0809^[997] MOVED SOUTH TO WESTERN PHUOC TUY PROVINCE AREA AND 3 BN 33 REGT AFTER BEING FURTHER PRESSED BY US FORCES MOVED 18KM NORTH EAST OUT OF PROVINCE AREA. OTHER UNITS REMAINED STABLE.

1 ATF REACTIONS.

(1) OPERATION OVERLORD (5-15 JUNE) WAS CONDUCTED AGAINST EN CONC IN NORTHERN BORDER REGION AND WAS BASED ENTIRELY ON SIGINT (PREDOMINATELY ARDF RESULTS) AND SUBSEQUENT SAS PATROLS. RESULTS WERE 7 VC KIA AND A MUCH LARGER NUMBER WOUNDED (PROBABLE) FOR FRIENDLY FORCES LOSSES OF 2 KIA AND 2 WIA.

(2) ON 21 JUNE 1 ATF ELEMENTS CONTACTED ELEMENTS OF SR4 IN NORTHERN PHUOC TUY RESULTING IN 12 VC KIA, 3 PWS AND A QUANTITY OF CRYPTO DOCS. THESE DOCS WERE FORWARDED TO US SOURCES WITH A COPY TO DSD.

(3) E0809 TERMINAL WAS CONSTANTLY HARASSED IN PHUOC TUY PROVINCE ALTHOUGH NO CONTACTS WERE MADE.

⁹⁹⁶ ASD archives of 547 Sig Tp material.

⁹⁹⁷ E0809 Sigint RAD for Chau Duc District Unit.



(4) 547 SIG TP CELL. A SMALL CELL CONSISTING OF SPO AND TECH ACCOMPANIED TF HQ ON OPERATION OVERLORD. TRANSPORT WAS A ACV WITH SECURE VOICE COMMS TO 547 SIG TP.

68.3.2 ARDF Flying Hours

The total ARDF flying hours for the month were⁹⁹⁸:

Year	Month	Flying hours	Total Fixes	Good <1000mts	Fair 1-2000Mts	Poor >2000 Mts	Cut	Missions Lost	Remarks
1971	Jun	178.55	72	14	44		14	16	Incl reduced due to weather

68.3.3 ARDF Report

The ARDF Report for June stated⁹⁹⁹:

<u>Personnel Flying Hours</u>	<u>January</u>	<u>Progressive Total</u>
WO1 Russell	20:25	62:40
SSgt Howell	54:40	88:30
Sig Hunter	25:15	162:30
Sig Simpson	36:45	122:30
Sig Arday	30:45	85:35

<u>Training</u>		
Sgt Myatt	4:00	4:00
Sgt Flynn	2:00	2:00

Total Hours Flown 178:55

Movement of Personnel

Sgt Flynn commenced training 29 June 71.

Sgt Myatt commenced training on 01 Jun 71, but only on an 'as available' basis as he was also employed on 'Q' work and other admin duties. Member to hospital 30 Jun 71¹⁰⁰⁰.

Sig Hunter on R&R 15-22 Jun 71.

Notes

1. The increase in the number of missions flown with negative results is largely due to the following factors:
 - a. Special emphasis on M1523, M0809, M0093, B4165 and M0084 before, during and after OVERLORD.
 - b. Airstrikes, artillery and ground activity against our targets of interest.

⁹⁹⁸ Compiled from M18 Records held at ASD archives.

⁹⁹⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰⁰⁰ Sgt Myatt was eventually Medevac to Australia on 28 July.



2. *The increase in the number of aborted and reduced missions is mainly due to the wet season. Missions have been flown to provide a 'top off' facility on various targets of interest in spite of the fact that they could not be worked because of heavy cloud cover.*
3. *During operation OVERLORD two aircraft were used in searching for targets. The second aircraft, using the old equipment, experienced equipment problems which have now been rectified.*
4. *Training schedules have been effected due to poor weather and the low activity of terminals. Consequently additional missions have been arranged to facilitate continuity in the training programme.*
5. *Results of beacon runs have been signalled to WRE who are compiling an up to date correction chart for the Porter aircraft. Owing to the increase in special emphasis targets, operation OVERLORD and training, beacon results have not been signalled since the 11th June, but will continue during July.*
6. *The use of decoy aircraft against targets sensitive to the ARDF aircraft has been discontinued with no noticeable effect on these targets scheduled activity.*

68.3.4 Summary of Main ARDF Fixes

The following table is a summary of the main ARDF fixes for June 1971¹⁰⁰¹:

Date	Loc	Unit
01-Jun-71	YS517941	3/33 NVA Regt, Poss Bn CP
01-Jun-71	YS478494	LONG DAT Dist Unit
01-Jun-71	YS498938	HQ D445
01-Jun-71	YT575035	HQ BA LONG Prov
01-Jun-71	YT800093	HQ MR7, Poss Mil Int SectIOn
01-Jun-71	YS859926	Rear Services MR7
01-Jun-71	YT524240	Tpt GP 30
02-Jun-71	YS468483	LONG DAT Dist Unit
02-Jun-71	YT586164	HQ 33 NVA Regt, Poss Regt CP
02-Jun-71	YT586164	2/33 NVA Regt, Poss Bn CP
02-Jun-71	YS526903	HQ D445
03-Jun-71	YS551978	Poss Elems CHAU DUC Dist Unit
03-Jun-71	YS543867	3/33 NVA Regt, Poss Bn CP
03-Jun-71	YS543867	HQ D445
03-Jun-71	YT593037	HQ BA LONG Prov
04-Jun-71	YT490184	2/33 NVA Regt, Poss Bn CP
04-Jun-71	YT766119	HQ 33 NVA Regt, Poss Regt CP

¹⁰⁰¹ Compiled by Bob Hartley from Bennington, S. (Curator - Official History), Vietnam Battle Intelligence Computer data tapes – Part 2, Australian War Memorial – Canberra, 19 November 2014./ No Monthly ARDF Reports available possible. The data tapes may only include fixes from SPAR reports signalled to HQ1ATF.



Date	Loc	Unit
04-Jun-71	YS533937	Poss CHAU DUC Dist Unit
04-Jun-71	YS517898	HQ D445
04-Jun-71	YT316053	HQ 74 Arty Regt, Poss Regt CP
05-Jun-71	YT587030	HQ BA LONG Prov
05-Jun-71	YS521945	HQ D445
06-Jun-71	YS525926	HQ D445
07-Jun-71	YT734092	HQ 33 NVA Regt, Poss Regt CP
07-Jun-71	YS493506	LONG DAT Dist Unit
07-Jun-71	YT491182	2/33 NVA Regt, Poss Bn CP
07-Jun-71	YT805165	HQ MR7
07-Jun-71	YT588042	HQ BA LONG Prov
07-Jun-71	YS855928	Rear Services MR7
08-Jun-71	YT487172	2/33 NVA Regt, Poss Bn CP
08-Jun-71	YT759076	HQ 33 NVA Regt, Poss Regt CP
10-Jun-71	YT803168	HQ MR7
10-Jun-71	YS838938	Rear Services MR7
11-Jun-71	YT336072	1/274 Regt, Poss Bn CP
11-Jun-71	YT530035	3/33 NVA Regt, Poss Bn CP
11-Jun-71	YT490182	2/33 NVA Regt, Poss Bn CP
11-Jun-71	YT787177	HQ MR7
11-Jun-71	YT784079	HQ MR7, Poss Mil Int Sect
11-Jun-71	YT336072	2 BN 274 Regt, Poss Bn CP
12-Jun-71	YT525030	3/33 NVA Regt, Poss Bn CP
12-Jun-71	YT476184	2/33 NVA Regt, Poss Bn CP
13-Jun-71	YT734076	HQ 33 NVA Regt, Poss Regt CP
13-Jun-71	YT354051	1/274 Regt, Poss Bn CP
13-Jun-71	YT317078	HQ 74 Arty Regt, Poss Regt CP
13-Jun-71	YT354051	2 BN 274 Regt, Poss Bn CP
14-Jun-71	YT772177	HQ MR7
15-Jun-71	YT784081	HQ MR7
15-Jun-71	YS389940	HQ 274 Regt, Poss Regt CP
15-Jun-71	YT355055	Elms 2BN 274 Regt, Poss Bn CP
16-Jun-71	YS785967	Elms D445
16-Jun-71	YS214894	Elms 3/274 Regt, Poss Bn CP
17-Jun-71	YT756076	Elms DET HQ 33 NVA Regt
17-Jun-71	YS344946	HQ 274 Regt, Poss Regt CP
17-Jun-71	YT348045	2 BN 274 Regt, Poss Bn CP
18-Jun-71	YT803053	Rear Services, MR7
18-Jun-71	YS768913	D445
18-Jun-71	YT622192	2 BN 33 NVA Regt, Poss Bn CP
18-Jun-71	YS343933	HQ 274 Regt, Poss Regt CP



Date	Loc	Unit
18-Jun-71	YT344065	2 BN 274 Regt, Poss Bn CP
19-Jun-71	YT829092	HQ MR7, Poss Mil Int Sect
19-Jun-71	YS775900	D445
19-Jun-71	YS403803	U/I Poss CHAU DUC DIST
19-Jun-71	YT772097	Det HQ 33 NVA Regt
19-Jun-71	YT599187	2 BN 33 NVA Regt, Poss Bn CP
19-Jun-71	YS342968	HQ 274 Regt, Poss Regt CP
19-Jun-71	YT350066	2 BN 274 Regt, Poss Bn CP
20-Jun-71	YT807177	HQ BA LONG Prov
20-Jun-71	YS770914	D445
20-Jun-71	YT798120	HQ MR7
20-Jun-71	YT611200	HQ 33 NVA Regt, Poss Regt CP
20-Jun-71	YT776024	Elms Det HQ 33 NVA Regt
20-Jun-71	YT508021	3 BN 33 NVA Regt
20-Jun-71	YT382126	2 BN 274 Regt
21-Jun-71	YS822960	Rear Services, MR7
21-Jun-71	YT777150	HQ BA LONG Prov
21-Jun-71	YT788174	HQ MR7
21-Jun-71	YT602194	HQ 33 NVA Regt, Poss Regt CP
21-Jun-71	YT607196	2 BN 33 NVA Regt, Poss Bn CP
21-Jun-71	YS394928	HQ 274 Regt
21-Jun-71	YT345010	2 BN 274 Regt
22-Jun-71	YT771122	HQ BA LONG Prov
22-Jun-71	YS744925	D445
22-Jun-71	YT611195	2 BN 33 NVA Regt, Poss Bn CP
22-Jun-71	YS378946	HQ 274 Regt
23-Jun-71	YT828022	HQ MR7, Poss Regional Comm
23-Jun-71	YT804174	HQ BA LONG Prov
23-Jun-71	YS782902	D445
23-Jun-71	YS375757	U/I Poss CHAU DUC Dist
23-Jun-71	YT614195	2 BN 33 NVA Regt
24-Jun-71	YT799172	HQ BA LONG Prov
24-Jun-71	YS737912	D445
24-Jun-71	YS370936	HQ 274 Regt
25-Jun-71	YS374747	U/I UNIT, Poss CHAU DUC Dist
26-Jun-71	YT554227	HQ 33 NVA Regt
26-Jun-71	YT758083	DET HQ 33 NVA Regt
27-Jun-71	YS356976	HQ 274 Regt
27-Jun-71	YS751860	D445
27-Jun-71	YT624015	3 BN 33 NVA Regt
27-Jun-71	YS357782	U/I UNIT, Poss CHAU DUC Dist



Date	Loc	Unit
27-Jun-71	YS495517	LONG DAT Dist Unit
27-Jun-71	YT335020	2 BN 274 Regt
28-Jun-71	YS209881	3 BN 274 Regt
28-Jun-71	YS782954	D445
28-Jun-71	YT550245	HQ 33 NVA Regt
28-Jun-71	YT413127	2 BN 274 Regt
29-Jun-71	YT795176	HQ BA LONG Prov
29-Jun-71	YS355809	D445
29-Jun-71	YT751127	DET HQ 33 NVA Regt
29-Jun-71	YT642029	3 BN 33 NVA Regt
29-Jun-71	YS373962	HQ 274 Regt
29-Jun-71	YS386921	U/I Elems 274 Regt
30-Jun-71	YS852920	Rear Services, MR7
30-Jun-71	YS749936	D445
30-Jun-71	YS484499	LONG DAT Dist Unit
30-Jun-71	YT754095	Det HQ 33 NVA Regt
30-Jun-71	YT598167	2 BN 33 NVA Regt
30-Jun-71	YT628028	3 BN 33 NVA Regt

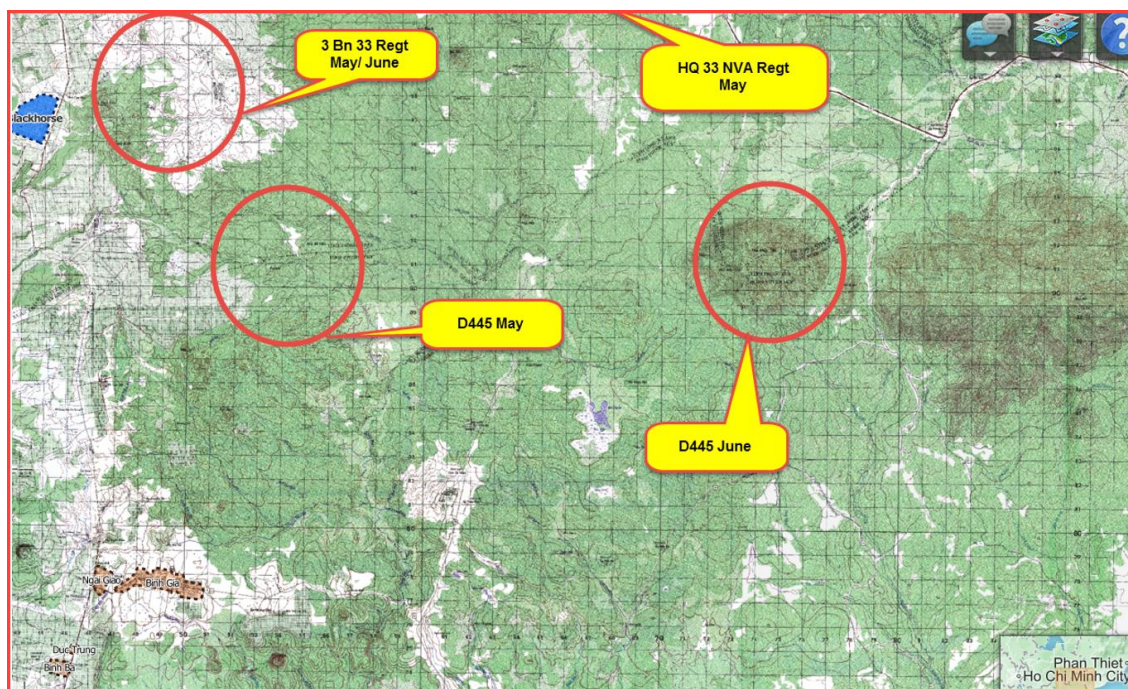
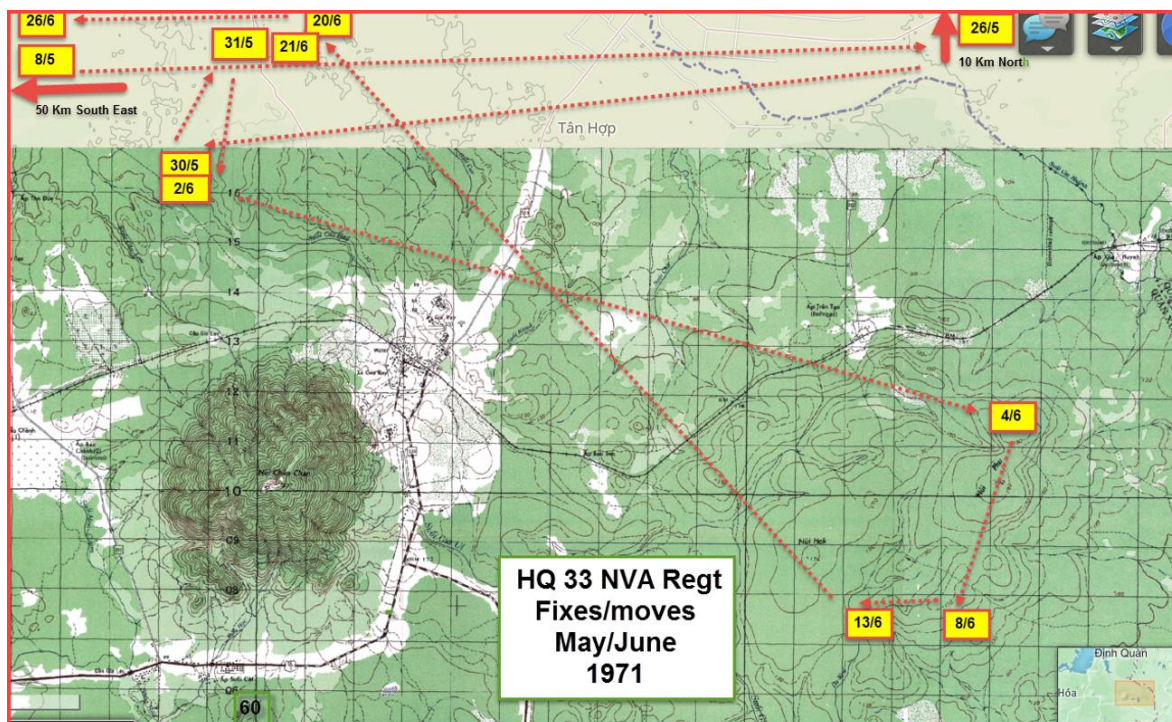
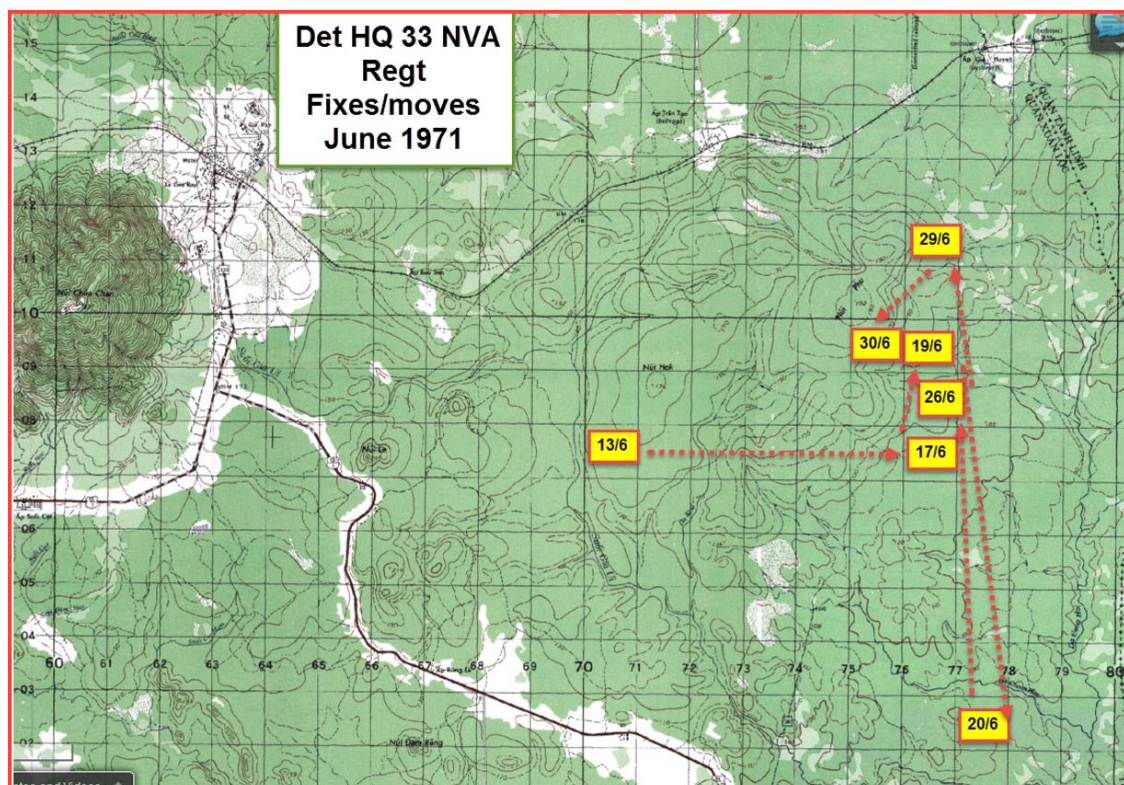


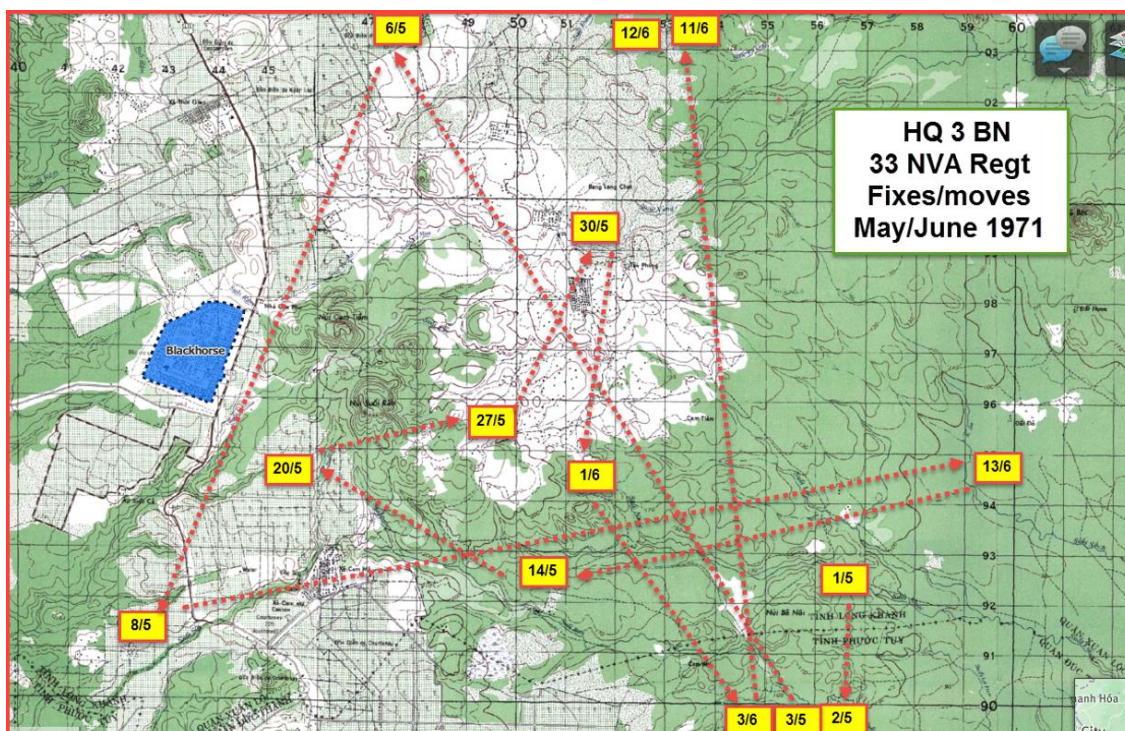
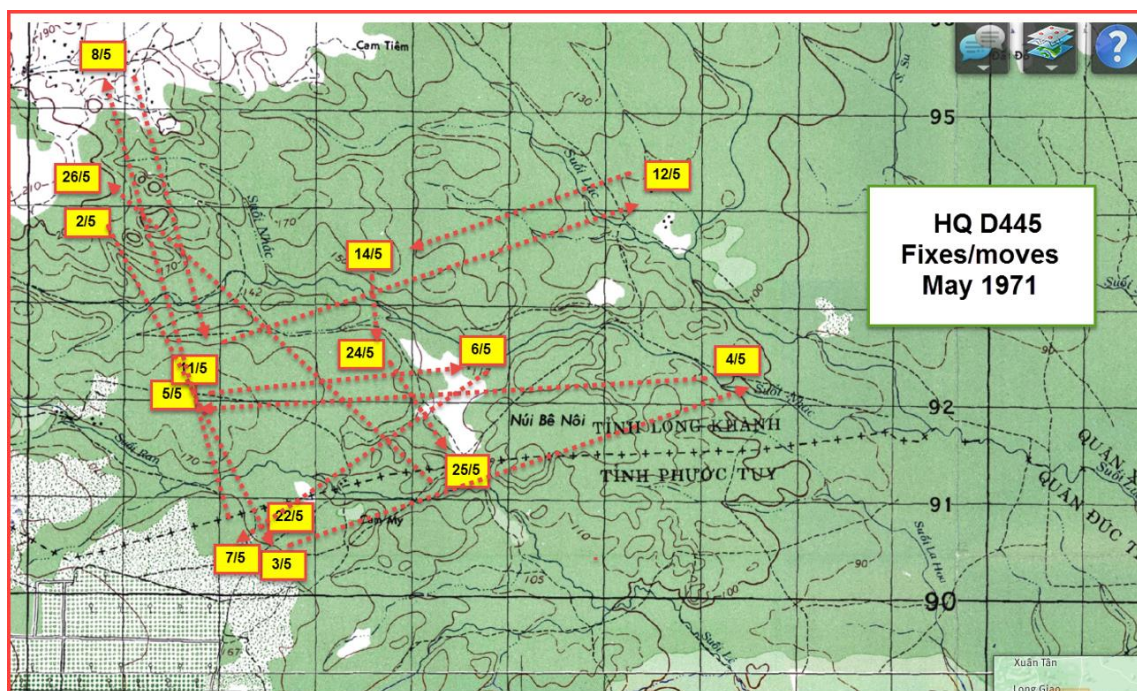
Figure 636: ARDF - HQ 33 Regt, 3 Bn 33 Regt and D445 ARDF Areas May-June 1971¹⁰⁰²

¹⁰⁰² Plot by Bob Hartley from ASD archives.

Figure 637: HQ 33 Regt fixes May and June 1971¹⁰⁰³Figure 638: Det HQ 33 Regt fixes June 1971¹⁰⁰⁴

¹⁰⁰³ Ibid.

¹⁰⁰⁴ Ibid.

Figure 639: HQ 3 Bn 33 Regt fixes May/ June 1971¹⁰⁰⁵Figure 640: HQ D445 Fixes May 1971¹⁰⁰⁶

1005 Ibid.

1006 Ibid.

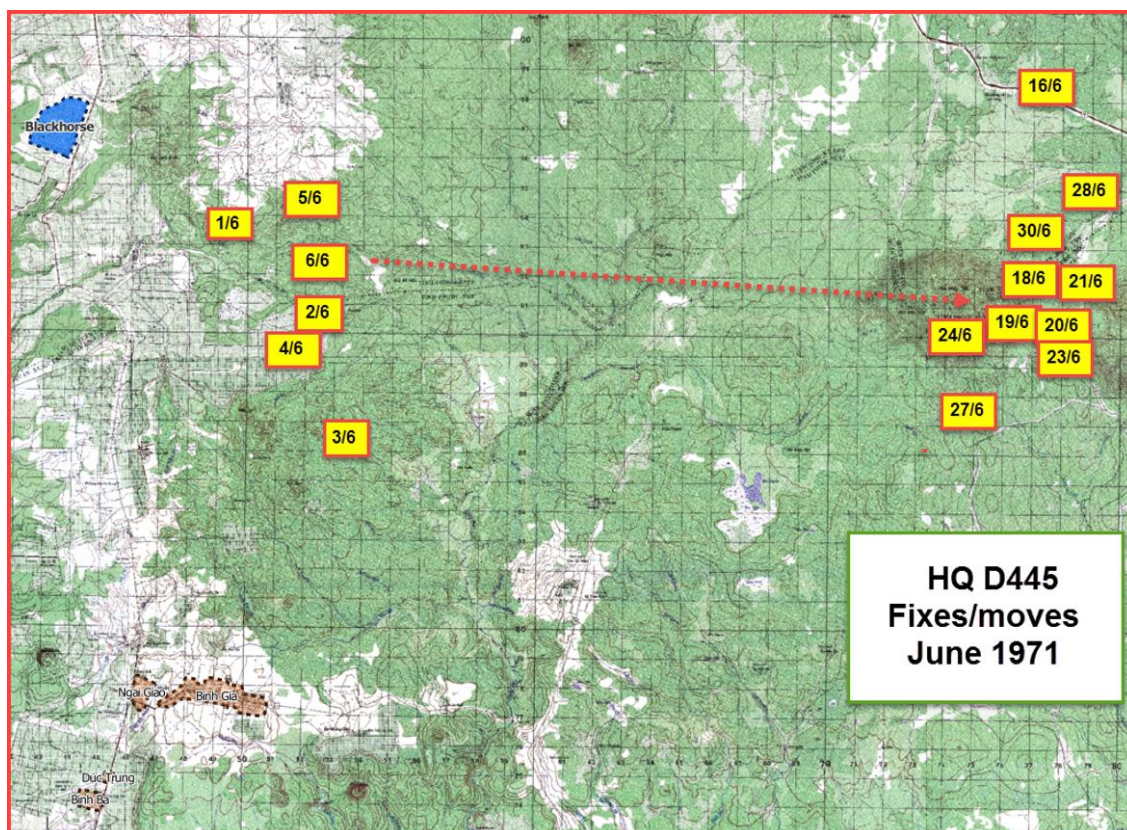


Figure 641: D445 Fixes and moves June 1971¹⁰⁰⁷

¹⁰⁰⁷ Ibid.



68.4 Operation OVERLORD

On 1 June, HQ 1 ATF issued a Warning Order for Operation OVERLORD¹⁰⁰⁸:

40

		MESSAGE FORM		
IMMEDIATE	ROUTINE	01 0900	Z (JUN 71)	R569/2/291
FROM :	1 ATF			SECRET
TO :	3 RAR 4 RAR/NZ(ANZAC) 1 SQN 1 ARMD REGT			OPS1001
	1 SQN 3 CAV REGT 12 FD REGT 1 FD SQN			
	161 (INDEP) RECCE FLT HQ COY 1 ATF 8 FD AMB			
	9 SQN RAAF LIST D 101D 8 101D			
INFO :	AUSTFORCE VIETNAM			
WNG 0 (.)				
ONE	(.)	1 ATF WILL CONDUCT OPS AGAINST VC/NVA IN NORTHERN AREA OF PHUOC TUY PROVINCE (.)		
TWO	(.)	NO MOVE BEFORE 040600Z JUN 71 (.)		
THREE	(.)	ORBAT CLN		
		MAIN HQ 1 ATF		
		3 RAR		
		4 RAR/NZ(ANZAC)		
		C SQN 1 ARMD REGT(-)		
		A SQN 3 CAV REGT (-)		
		12 FD REGT (-)		
		1 FD SQN (-)		
		AC OF 161 (INDEP) RECCE FLT		
		ELMS HQ COY 1 ATF		
		ELMS 8 FD AMB		
		AC OF 9 SQN RAAF		
FOUR	(.)	IN COOPERATION CLN		
		ONE BN 3RD BDE 1ST (US) CAV DIV (AM) (.)		
		ASLT HELI COYS 18 (US) AVN BDE IF AVAL (.)		
FIVE	(.)	MAIN TASKS CLN		
		3 RAR CMM SWEEP FORCE (.)		
		4 RAR/NZ(ANZAC) CMM BLOCK FORCE (.)		
		ONE BN 3RD BDE (US) CAV DIV (AM) CMM BLOCK FORCE (.)		
		C SQN 1 ARMD REGT (-) SWEEP FORCE OPCON 3 RAR (.)		
		A SQN 3 CAV REGT (-) BLOCK FORCE (.)		
SIX	(.)	TIME FOR DETAILED ORDERS TO BE ADVISED (.)		
SEVEN	(.)	NO RECCE WITHOUT AUTHORITY HQ 1 ATF (.)		
ACK TO EBONY CP				
PAGE 1 OF 1 PAGES CLASSIFIED YES MCFARLANE GSO2 (OPS) EBONY 10				

Figure 642: Operation Overlord Warning Order

¹⁰⁰⁸ AWM RCDIG 1028287, AWM95, 1/4/224, HQ 1ATF Commanders Diary Annex C, 1 – 30 Jun 71, F40.



68.4.1 Operation OVERLORD Details

Operation OVERLORD is a Task Force 'search and clear' operation, (5 – 14 June) with 3RAR providing the searching force. The operation to be conducted in the Long Khanh – Phuoc Tuy Province border, centre of mass YS5293. The operation is to be controlled by HQ 1ATF deployed at Courtenay Hill YS4490¹⁰⁰⁹.

68.4.2 NVA/VC Unit Locations

The relative areas/positions of the main NVA/VC elements in May as fixed by ARDF (both Australian and US) and information contained in intercepted decoded material were as shown in the following graphic¹⁰¹⁰:

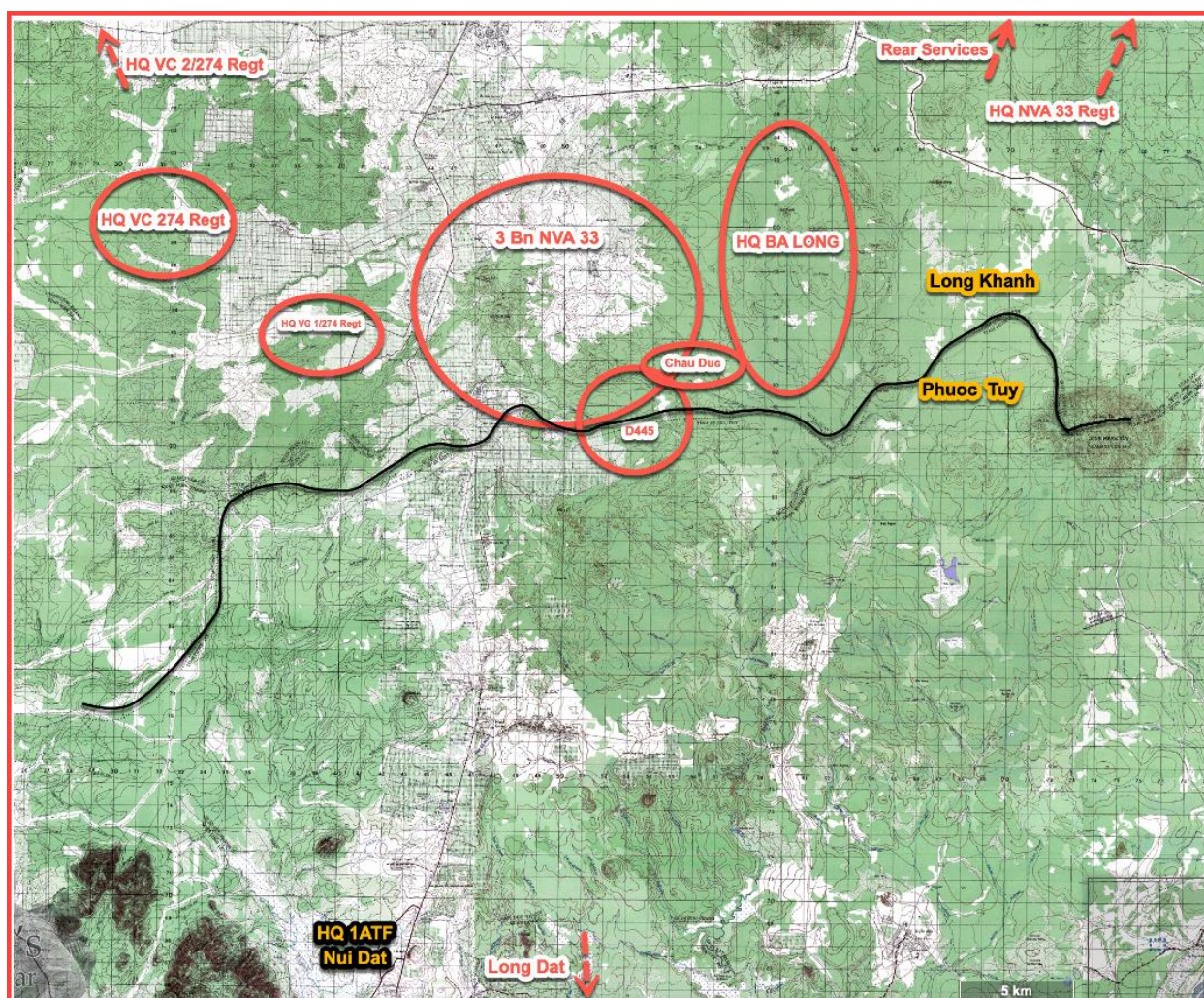


Figure 643: NVA/VC Locations May 1971

¹⁰⁰⁹ Unfortunately, Operation OVERLORD Operation Order not located. Details from AWM95 7/3/78 3RAR Commanders Diary Annexes 1 – 30 June 1971

¹⁰¹⁰ Ibid.. Compiled by author from ARDF Fix Reports April/May.



Figure 644: Operation Overlord AO

68.4.3 Enemy Details

Annex B to 3RAR After Action Report contained the following on *Intelligence Available before the Operation*¹⁰¹¹:

1. Following D445 Bn's abortive attempt to return to PHUOC TUY March/ April 1971, it withdrew under pressure from 2RAR/NZ (ANZAC) Bn and 3RAR into southern LONG KHANH Province. During May, intelligence indicated that D445 was remaining in bases in the SUOI NHAC area and have been joined by 3Bn/33 Regt (NVA) and possibly by Group 13 CHAU DUC. It was also considered possible that a number of other elements, recently unlocated had joined then in the area.
2. Immediately prior to the operation further intelligence indicated the presence of 1Bn/274 Regt WEST of Route 2 in the LONG KHANH- PHUOC TUY Border.
3. The reason for this grouping of units was not known, whether it be in preparation for a major operation, or whether these units were seeking

¹⁰¹¹ AWM95 7/3/78 3RAR Commanders Diary Annexes 1 – 30 June 1971.



refuge from US operations in the NORTH and Australian operations in the SOUTH.

68.4.4 Intelligence Reports

The 1 ATF Supplementary Intelligence Report (SUPINTREP 22/71) covering the period 24 - 30 May included the following¹⁰¹²:

Enemy Unit Identification and Locations

16. D445. The main element of D445 is believed still to be in Southern LONG KHANH East of Route 2 and near the Province border. C1 Company is believed still to be in the LONG HAI's.

17. 3 Bn 33 NVA Regt and Group 13, the main element of CHAU DUC, are also believed to be in the SUOI NHAC and SUOI LUC areas of Southern LONG KHANH.

18. HQ TRAC reports that the Headquarters and 2 Bn of 33 NVA Regt have made significant moves to the West during the past week from BINH TUY Province into LONG KHANH Province, where they are now located North-East of XUAN LOC. These moves are likely to have been in response to US pressure upon them in their former areas.

19. 274 VC Main Force Regt.

a. On 27 May a 1 ATF patrol killed a member of 274 Regt in the Northern Province border area. He was possibly a courier from the Headquarters of the Regt.

b. An agent report has been received that a large group of enemy were sighted West of COURTENAY Hill on 30 May (area YS430900). From recent agent reports, including documents taken from enemy killed in 1 ATF contacts (see sub para a above and also SUPINTREP 21/71 para 17), it is believed that the 274 Regt group in the area is 1 Bn, which has a strength of about 100.

c. On 31 May V Coy 4 RAR/NZ(ANZAC) troops found a lie up place West of the VIET CUONG which appears most likely to have been used on 30 May by elements of 1 Bn (YS405877).

24. D445, 3 Bn 33 Regt and other units still seem to be concentrated in the SUOI NHAC and SUOI LUC areas. No enemy offensive activity appears to be being mounted from this area and it is thought that these units are probably using the area as a refuge close to the resupply area of the COURTENAY.

Figure 645: SUPINTREP 22/71 Extracts

¹⁰¹² AWM RCDIG 1028285, AWM95, 1/4/224, HQ 1 ATF Commanders Diary Annex E-N, F.36.

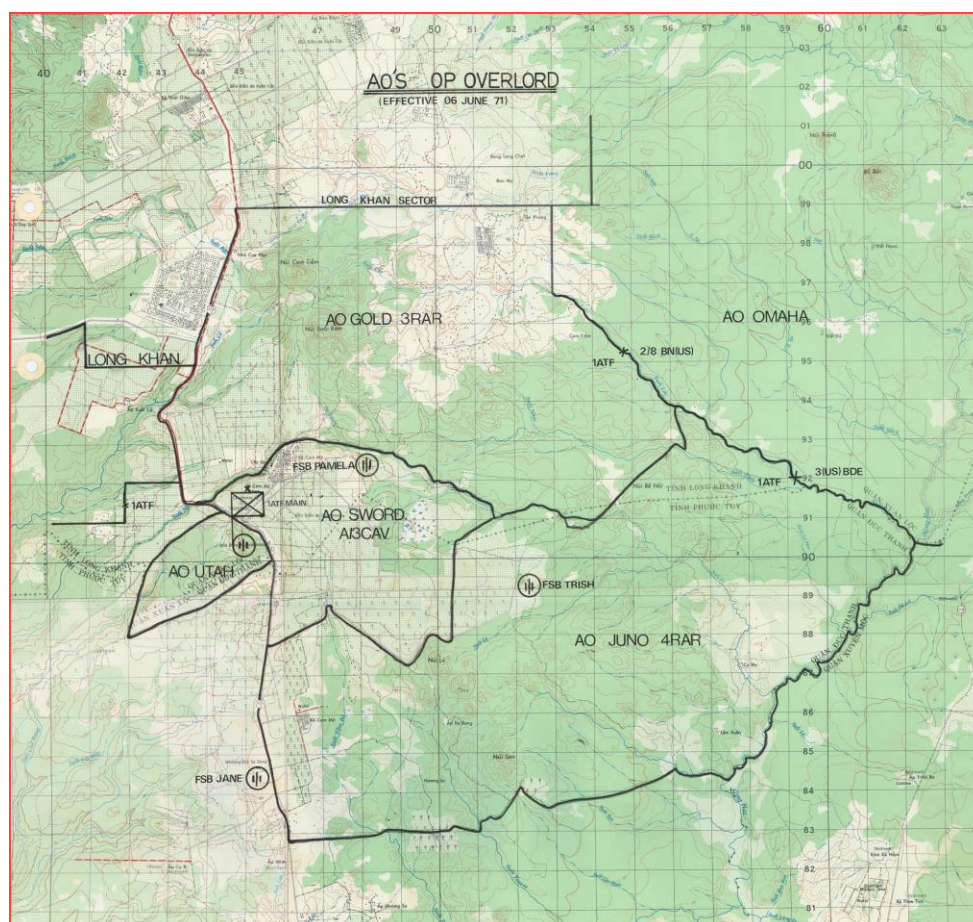


Figure 646: Operation OVERLORD

Figure 647: Courtenay Hill¹⁰¹³

¹⁰¹³ AWM 4P07256 029



68.4.5 I. nsertion of 1 ATF Units

The locations for the two Australian Battalions for Operation OVERLORD after insertion on 5 June were as shown in the following graphic¹⁰¹⁴:

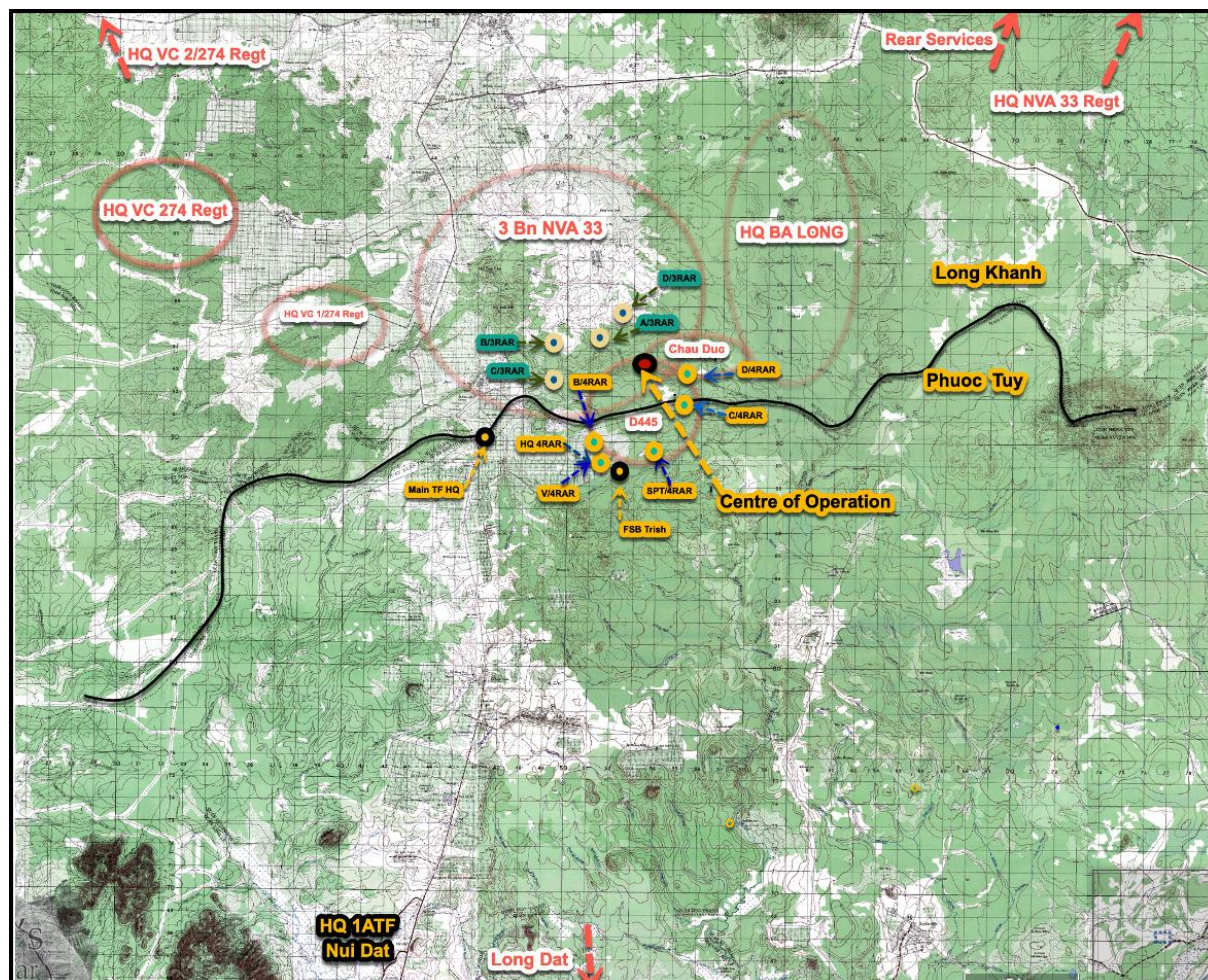


Figure 648: 1 ATF Unit Deployment Areas Relevant to Enemy Locations

As can be seen on the graphic the Task Force elements were deployed into the areas mainly occupied by 3 Bn NVA 33 Regt, D445 VC Bn and Chau Duc Coy as documented by Sigint information.

Extract from Australian Army Official History: *Fighting to the Finish*¹⁰¹⁵:

On 'D Day', 6 June the task force established a forward or main headquarters in an outpost on top of the 20-metre-high Courtenay Hill, leaving deputy task force commander Colonel Weir at the rear headquarters with only 'ad-hoc formations' made up from workshops and forward delivery sub-units to defend the Nui Dat base."

¹⁰¹⁴ Graphic produced by author.

¹⁰¹⁵ *Fighting to the Finish The Australian Army and the Vietnam War 1968 - 1975* by Ashley Ekins with Ian McNeill Allen & Unwin in association with the Australian War Memorial, 2012, page 563.



Aerial view of Courtenay Hill (left) at the commencement of Operation Overlord. Surrounded by jungle and the Courtenay rubber plantation, the cleared hill overlooks Night Defensive Position (NDP) Garth and Fire Support Base (FSB) Cherie (right) containing three circular gun pits beside Route 2. On 6 June 1971, the day after the start of Operation Overlord, 1 Australian Task Force (1 ATF) established a forward or main headquarters in an outpost on top of the hill. It later housed the Headquarters and Command Post (CP) of 4RAR/NZ and was extensively fortified with over 100,000 sandbags, barbed wire and claymore mines.¹⁰¹⁶

68.4.6 547 ACV

As mentioned in the 547 Sig Tp Operational Report, the Troop ACV deployed with HQ 1 ATF: Although not shown on HQ 1 ATF Operation OVERLORD Op Ord, the 547 Sig Tp ACV crewed with the Troop Senior Processing Officer (Int Capt – Ian Bowen) and a Technician (Barry Wilson), deployed with TF Main to provide Sigint support for the operation. The ACV provided secure communications links back to the Troop for the passage of classified information and allowed for constant and timely information to be passed to the HQ 1 ATF G2 Int.

¹⁰¹⁶ AWM P0389.011.

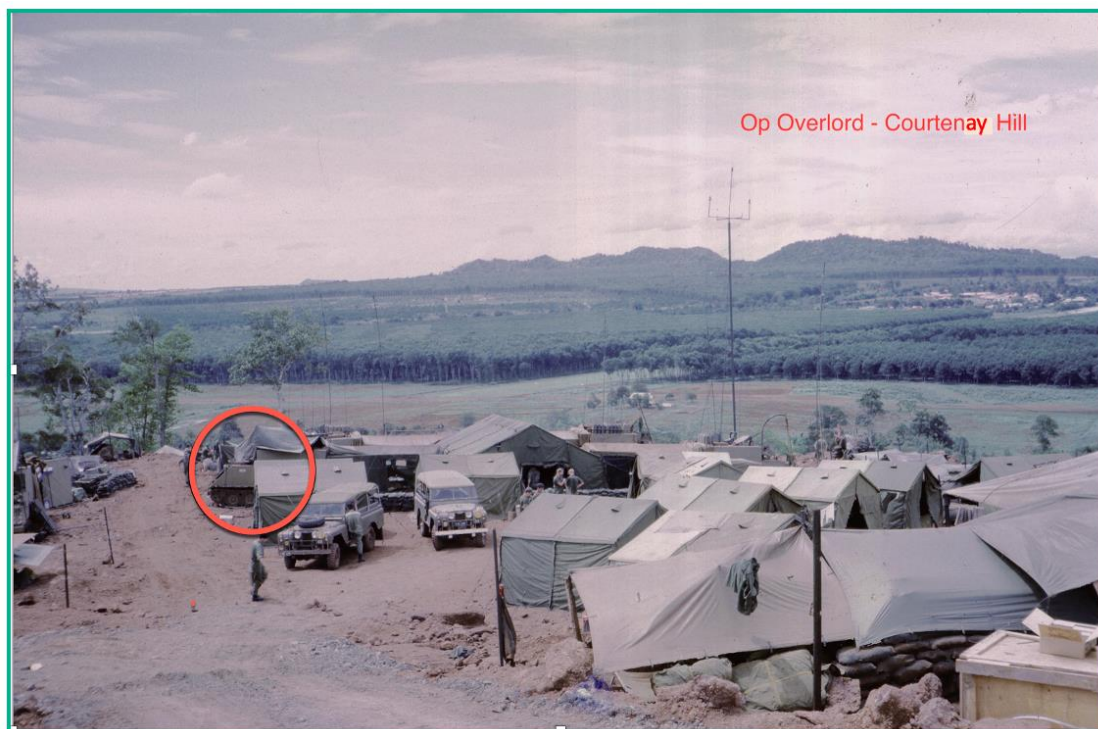


Figure 649: HQ 1 ATF (Main) Courtenay Hill. 547 ACV circled¹⁰¹⁷



Figure 650: 547 Sig Tp Sleeping Accommodation¹⁰¹⁸

¹⁰¹⁷ Photo courtesy Ian Bowen.

¹⁰¹⁸ Ibid.



68.4.7 SUPINTREPs

The 1 ATF SUPINTREP¹⁰¹⁹ 23/71 dated 7 Jun 71 covering the period 31 May to 7 Jun 71 reported the following¹⁰²⁰:

1 ATF TAOR

General

10. 1 TF troops were involved in 13 contacts during the week, resulting in two enemy confirmed killed. It is believed that the enemy suffered greater losses. Three Australians were killed and 12 were wounded, and one Australian was wounded in a mine incident. There were two contacts involving Sector forces, with two enemy being killed and six friendly wounded.

Enemy Unit Identifications and Locations

11. D445.

a. D445 has not been identified in any contact. However on 7 Jun 71 3 RAR troops found a system of 32 T shaped bunkers near the SUOI NHAC (YS513932). The bunkers had been evacuated that morning. In the bunkers were located a letter belonging to a soldier of A Coy 2 RAR/NZ (ANZAC). This letter had been captured by the enemy during the contact with D445 on the SONG RAI on 31 Mar 71. It is therefore thought that an element of D445 was probably present in the bunker system on 7 Jun 71. The main element of D445 is thought to be in the area of the SUOI NHAC (Approx area YS5392).

Figure 651: SUPINTREP Extract #1

12. 3 Bn 33 NVA Regt.

a. On 6 Jun 71 near SUOI LUC, in the PHUOC TUY-LONG KHANH Province border area (YS547956) troops of 2/8 Bn, 3 Cav Bde (AM) contacted a group of 15 enemy who were approaching cautiously from the east. One enemy was killed. He was identified from documents as probably a member of C9 Coy, 3 Bn 33 NVA Regt.

b. On 7 Jun 71 troops of 3 RAR contacted an enemy force in a bunker system near SUOI NHAC (YS507938). The enemy fired heavy machine guns, RPGs and small arms at the 3 RAR and C Sqn 1 Armd Regt troops opposing them and at aircraft. Three Australians were killed, including two RAAF, and 12 Australians were wounded. Enemy casualties were unknown. The enemy were identified from documents as members of C10 Coy 3 Bn 33 NVA Regt. Later in the same day one enemy was killed by elements of A Sqn 3 Cav Regt under command C Sqn 1 Armd Regt. He was identified from documents as belonging to C12 Heavy Weapons Company of 3/33, which is thought to possess two 82mm mortars and two 12.7mm HMGs.

c. Elements of 3 Bn 33 NVA Regt are believed still to be located between the SUOI LUC and the SUOI RAN.

as yet

17. Only three enemy are/confirmed killed as a result of the contacts in the SUOI LUC - SUOI RAN area (including two by 2/8 Bn, one of whom has not yet been identified). However it is likely that many more casualties have been sustained by 3/33, which must detract from his capability to avoid the 1 ATF troops searching for him and for D445.

Figure 652" SUPINTREP Extract #2

¹⁰¹⁹ Supplementary Intelligence report.

¹⁰²⁰ AWM RCDIG 1028288, AWM95, 1/4/224, HQ 1ATF Commanders Diary Annexes E - N, 1- 30 Jun 71, F8.



Note

In early and mid-May ARDF fixed HQ D445 within 200 metres of YS513932 on several occasions and in mid-May ARDF fixed HQ 3 Bn 33 NVA Regt within 300 metres of YS507938

The 1 ATF SUPINTREP 24/71 dated 14 Jun 71 covering the period 8 – 13 Jun 71 reported the following¹⁰²¹:

1 ATF TAOR

11. There were 10 contacts during the period 8 – 13 Jun involving 1 ATF troops. One enemy was confirmed killed, and at least three were probably wounded. In addition four bodies were found, together with evidence that other enemy had been wounded in the bunker system at YS507938 in which a major contact had occurred on 7 Jun (see para 14 b. below and SUPINTREP 23/71 para 12 b.) During the period 8 – 13 Jun seven Australians were killed and five wounded.

12. There was one contact involving Sector forces during which two enemy were killed, one of whom died of wounds. Two GVN soldiers were wounded in a mine incident. One HOI CHANH rallied to Sector forces.

Enemy Unit Identifications and Locations

13. D445.
a. On 8 Jun troops of 3 RAR searching the bunker system found near the SUOI NHAC the previous day and suspected to be a D445 camp (YS5293 SUPINTREP 23/71 para 11 a.) found documents which clearly identified D445. This has probably been the major camp used by D445 since arriving in the area at the end of Apr. Warm fire-places and discarded food suggests that the camp had been vacated hurriedly on 7 Jun when the contact at the 3 Bn 33 Regt camp was heard to commence to the West. The main element of D445 is thought to have infiltrated out of the area and may have withdrawn to NUI EE/MAY TAO area.

14. 3 Bn 33 NVA Regt
a. Further documents have been found by 3 RAR in the bunker system near the SUOI NHAC (YS507938, see SUPINTREP 23/71 para 12 b.) in which troops of 3 RAR and C Sqn 1 Armd Regt engaged elements of 3 Bn 33 NVA Regt on 7 Jun. These docs confirm that the main enemy force present were C10 Coy of 3 Bn, with a strength of about 40 (Annex B to INTSUM 159/71), but from the documents it seems probable that a group from the Battalion Headquarters were also present. The identification of the enemy killed by A Sqn 3 Cav Regt on 7 Jun (YS503938) indicates that an element of C12 Heavy Weapons Company were also present in the area. This camp is believed to have been the main base of 3/33 since about mid-May.
b. A search of the bunker system by 3 RAR has revealed four bodies, together with evidence that a number of others were wounded. In addition it is known that a number of other enemy were killed by tanks of C Sqn.
c. The group from 3/33 who were involved in the contact with 3 RAR and C Sqn are believed to have withdrawn to the area North of the SONG VONG River.
d. On 7 Jun troops of 2/8 Bn, 3 (US) Cav Bde killed a member of C11 Company of 3/33 near the SUOI LUC (YS542963).

15. XUAN LOC District Force. On 11 Jun troops of 4 RAR/NZ(ANZAC) located a system of eight bunkers East of NUI SUOI RAM (at YS496950) in which propaganda documents were found which indicated that the system was probably used by elements of XUAN LOC District Force.

16. K8 Heavy Weapons Coy. On 7 Jun troops of 2/8 Bn, 3 (US) Cav Bde, found a fairly new system of eight bunkers near SUOI LUC (YS557941). There had been heavy recent use in the area. In the system was found a 12.7mm HMG pit which suggests that the system may have been used by a group from K8.

Figure 653: Extract from 1 ATF SUPINTREP 24/71 dated 14 Jun 71 #1

¹⁰²¹ Ibid, F16.



Enemy Capabilities and Intentions.

20. On 10 Jun a further three PSDF and one civilian returned to LONG DIEN from captivity in the LONG HAI's, where the remaining 12 PSDF who were abducted from LONG DIEN on the night 25/26 May are believed still to remain. No further abduction of PSDF have occurred in PHUOC TUY during the week.

21. On 12 Jun West of COURTENAY (at YS420891) elements of A Sqn 3 Cav Regt and the D and E Pl 1 ATF were contacted by an unknown sized enemy force whilst patrolling in APC's. Seven Australians were killed and three wounded from an enemy initiated explosion. Later elements of A Sqn were involved in further contact (YS418887 and YS414886) to the West of the original contact location, resulting in further two Australians wounded with unknown enemy losses. The size of the enemy force is not known. The enemy fired RPG rounds and small arms, and possibly fired a claymore. The enemy force are believed possibly to be an element of 274 Regt, and this aggressive enemy action may further demonstrate the recently improved capability of 274 Regt units (see SUPINTREP 21/71 para 23, 22/71 para 23 and 23/71 para 15). Further information from documents captured by a 1 ATF patrol on 3 Jun (SUPINTREP 23/71 para 15) indicate that 1 Bn 274 Regt, which was to receive extra 60mm mortar and B40 rounds, plans to carry out offensive activity.

24. It is believed that 1 ATF operations in the SUOI NHAC and SUOI RAN areas have resulted in the disruption of what has been an important base area to 3/33 and D445, in which these two units have no doubt been co-operating closely, and in which they have been un-molested for the two and a half months that they have been using the area. Both units have been forced to re-locate. One document captured by 2/8 Bn on 6 Jun (YS 547956) mentioned that C9 and C11 Coys of 3/33 were to attack a hamlet of BAO BINH (hamlets in YT4703 to YS5198). This planning may have been disrupted. It is unlikely that 3/33 will enter PHUOC TUY on an offensive task for the time being. D445, although forced to re-locate may have suffered no casualties and can be expected to return to PHUOC TUY on an offensive mission when he considers that the time is opportune.

Figure 654: Extract from 1 ATF SUPINTREP 24/71 dated 14 Jun #2

Note

In May, ARDF fixed HQ D445 on several occasions close to YS5293. On 5 June at YS521945 and 6 June YS525926.

On 27 May ARDF fixed HQ 3 Bn 33 NVA Regt at YS 49495438



The 1 ATF SUPINTREP 25/71 dated 21 Jun 71 covering the period 14 – 20 Jun 71 reported the following¹⁰²²:

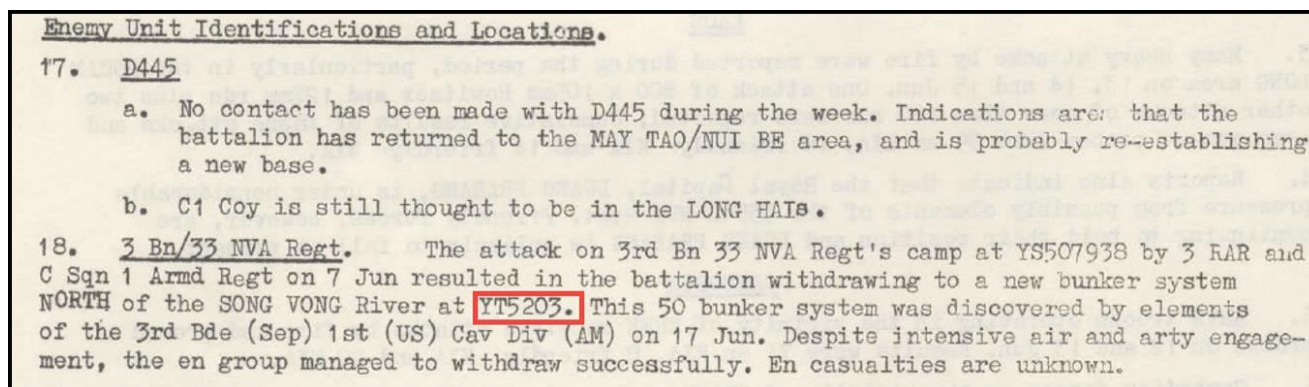


Figure 655: Extract from 1 ATF SUPINTREP 25/71 dated 21 Jun 71

Note

On 11 June ARDF Fixed HQ 3 Bn 33 NVA Regt at YT 530035

68.4.8 Additional Recounts

Extract from *Australian Army Official history: Fighting to the Finish*¹⁰²³:

During May, the task force received reliable intelligence of a build-up of NVA and Viet Cong main force units along the central southern border of Long Khanh province just north of the Phuoc Tuy province boundary in the vicinity of Route 2. The concentration of enemy forces could indicate that they were massing for offensive operations in Phuoc Tuy.

In June, 547 Signal Troop tracked the movement of the NVA 3 Battalion, 33 Regiment, estimated at 185 strong, into the north of Phuoc Tuy province. Further intelligence put the location of the enemy base area near the Courtenay plantation. A main element of D445 Battalion, estimated at 100 men, was also believed to be nearby. The enemy were clearly using the province boundary region as sanctuaries, exploiting the overlapping and ambiguous lines of sector responsibilities. SAS patrols observed considerable daylight enemy activity in the area, including the sounds of weapons firing and a radio station operating on Morse code, they reported that the enemy appeared to 'feel secure' in the area. McDonald was determined to prevent the enemy establishing a foothold in Phuoc Tuy, which might threaten the planned withdrawal of the task force. He mounted Operation Overlord to locate and destroy 3 Battalion, 33 NVA Regiment.

The operation was codenamed after the Normandy invasion operation of June 1944, with six AOs named after the famous codenamed landing beaches and objectives: Juno, Sword, Utah, Gold, Omaha and Orne. Operation Overlord was conceived as a combined, hammer-and-anvil and search-

¹⁰²² Ibid, F24.

¹⁰²³ *Fighting to the Finish The Australian Army and the Vietnam War 1968 - 1975* by Ashley Ekins with Ian McNeill Allen & Unwin in association with the Australian War Memorial, 2012, page 562.



and-clear operation over a large area extending northwards from the Courtenay plantation and deep into southern Long Khanh province. McDonald obtained permission to extend the area of operations four kilometres north from the Phuoc Tuy province border, making this the first major task force operation out of the province in over two years, since Operations Goodwood, Federal and Overlander in early 1969. Major General Dunstan, COMAFV, was aware that his directive allowed him to agree to the deployment of the force outside Phuoc Tuy, but he realised 'there was a great deal of sensitivity should the force or elements of the task force be employed much out of the province'. During Defence Minister Gorton's visit in March he raised the possibility of operations against enemy sanctuaries over the northern border and agreed to give Canberra advance notice.

Calculating that his two battalions were insufficient to cover the area, McDonald sought assistance from American forces. He wanted to plan the operation to include saturation aerial bombing of the suspected enemy area but B-52s were not available due to higher priority missions and the Canberra bombers of RAAF No. 2 Squadron returned to Australia two days before the operation began. He did obtain the assistance of American infantry and artillery.

The Book Vietnam: The Complete Story of the Australian War reported on Operation Overlord¹⁰²⁴:

Over the period of 5– 13 June 1971, the two remaining Australian battalions and supporting arms were despatched by Brigadier Bruce McDonald to conduct Operation Overlord. The American 2/ 8 Battalion joined the operation 'in cooperation'. Although the American forces were in the midst of major changes in their countrywide redeployments, they maintained a watching interest in what the Australians were doing. II Field Force Vietnam had merged with the US Army Advisory Group, III Corps, on 30 April and Major General Jack Wagstaff assumed command of the newly titled Third Regional Assistance Command (TRAC) on 1 May 1971. He retained operational control of 1ATF and continued to provide the Australians with combat support, but the withdrawal of American forces and their safety in that process was a more pressing demand. That task also meant he kept a very close eye upon what the ARVN was doing. **Operation Overlord's mission was to destroy the NVA/ VC units in the area of the Suoi Nhac, a creek 8 kilometres northeast of Courtenay Hill in an area that spanned Phuoc Tuy's northern border with Long Khanh Province 25 kilometres north of Nui Dat.** The border ran in a ragged but generally east– west direction to the May Tao Mountain at its eastern pivotal point. That well-known enemy hideaway was 45 kilometres northeast of Nui Dat. The boundary line also sat in a naturally tough topographical corridor along which the enemy had moved their supplies over many years. The enemy's combat arms had also crisscrossed the regional provincial boundaries frequently and had laid up in base camps, especially in a tract to the east of Courtenay Rubber and around the notorious Hat Dich region over on the western edge of Phuoc Tuy where it joined Bien Hoa Province. Some of the enemy's provincial units that the Task Force normally fought against were thought to be located in the Suoi Nhac jungle hideaway, along with the 3rd Battalion of 33 NVA. **In May 1971, according to an Australian intelligence summary, the 3rd Battalion had an estimated total strength of 185. At this stage, D445 Battalion had dispersed its three companies around the province, with 3 Company located in the Chau Duc, a region a few kilometres southwest of the Overlord area of operations.**

Extract from the book *Fire Support Base Vietnam*¹⁰²⁵:

Under the Task Force plan for Operation Overlord (the Battle of Long Khanh from 5 June to 14 June), US 2/ 8 Battalion would block north-east and east along the Song Luc, 4 RAR/ NZ Battalion would provide blocking forces in the south and 2 Troop A Squadron 3 Cavalry Regiment would block in the south-east along the Suoi Rau. 3 RAR provided the search group moving from the north-west to the

¹⁰²⁴ McKay, Gary; Davies, Bruce (2012-07-25). *Vietnam: The complete story of the Australian war* (Kindle Locations 9404-9421). Allen and Unwin. Kindle Edition.

¹⁰²⁵ Picken, Bruce (2012-03-25). *Fire Support Base Vietnam* (Kindle Locations 9793-9797). Big Sky Publishing. Kindle Edition.



south-east in an attempt to locate and destroy the enemy, with the blocking forces preventing them from escaping. This was the biggest operation to involve 1 ATF (and particularly 3 RAR) during 1971.

Extract from the book *In Good Company: One man's war in Vietnam*¹⁰²⁶:

Intelligence had found that two enemy units, namely 3rd Battalion, 33 North Vietnamese Army (NVA) Regiment and D445 Local Force Battalion (Viet Cong) were somewhere in the northeast of Phuoc Tuy Province. With the 3rd Brigade, 1st US Cavalry Division (Air Mobile), the 1st Australian Task Force was going to try to search for and destroy the enemy and his bases. The operation would involve thousands of men, aircraft and vehicles.

Extract from the *Australian Army Official History*¹⁰²⁷:

In June, 547 Signal Troop tracked the movement of the NVA 3 Battalion, 33 Regiment, estimated at 185 strong, into the north of Phuoc Tuy province. Further intelligence put the location of the enemy base area near the Courtenay plantation.

A main element of D445 Battalion, estimated at 100 men, was also believed to be nearby.

SAS patrols observed considerable daylight enemy activity in the area, including the sounds of weapons firing and a radio station operating on Morse Code. They reported that the enemy appeared to 'feel secure' in the area.

McDonald [Comd 1ATF] was determined to prevent the enemy establishing a foothold in Phuoc Tuy, which may threaten the planned withdrawal of the Task Force. He mounted Operation Overlord to locate and destroy 3 Battalion 33 NVA Regiment.

Major Mike Peters was the GSO2 (Int) for 1 ATF at this time. He later related the following¹⁰²⁸:

The Chairman [of the Tribunal] asked if on any occasion the Commander had deployed units of the Task Force solely on intelligence from 547 Sig Tp. I replied that there was one particular occasion, Operation Overlord in June 1971, when the Commander deployed all combat units of the Task Force (the two battalions, the Tank Squadron and the Armoured Personnel Carrier Squadron) against D445 and the Third Battalion of the 33rd NVA Regiment, solely on information from 547 Sig Tp. I remember clearly that there was no other information at all. The two enemy units were identified several times by 547 Sig Tp as in the Courtenay Rubber Plantation right at the northern point of the Province.

The Task Force had at least one major contact on this occasion, which involved the Tank Squadron. The enemy unit in this contact was Third Battalion of 33rd NVA Regiment. This opportunity to contact the enemy on this occasion was made possible solely from 547 Sig Tp's reporting.

¹⁰²⁶ McKay, Gary (1998-09-01). *In Good Company: One man's war in Vietnam* (Kindle Locations 1407-1411). Allen & Unwin. Kindle Edition.

¹⁰²⁷ Extracts from *Fighting to the Finish "The Australian Army and the Vietnam War 1968 - 1975"* by Ashley Ekins with Ian McNeill> Allen & Unwin in association with the Australian War Memorial, page 562.

¹⁰²⁸ Extracts from oral submission of Colonel (Rtd) Mike Peters at the DHAAT Hearing at Canberra on 26 Oct 13 and subsequent emails to Bob Hartley.



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CHAPTER 69 – JULY 1971

69.1 Personnel

69.1.1 Arrivals and Departures

There were no arrivals and one Medevac departure during the month.

69.1.2 Change of Command

On 1 July, Major Herbie O'Flynn assumed Command of the Troop.



Figure 656: Major O'Flynn¹⁰²⁹

69.1.3 161 Recce Flt Fixed Wing Pilots

In July, 2nd Lieutenant Charles Marsden joined 161 Recce Flt as a fixed wing pilot.

69.1.4 DSD LO Changeover

In July, Ron Hall replaced Kevin Condon as the DSD LO.

69.1.4.1 Stan Myatt Medevac

On 28 July, Sergeant Stan Myatt was medically evacuated home to Australia. A few months earlier Stan had been bitten by a particularly nasty mosquito and had spent several weeks in hospital.

¹⁰²⁹ Photo courtesy Herbie O'Flynn.

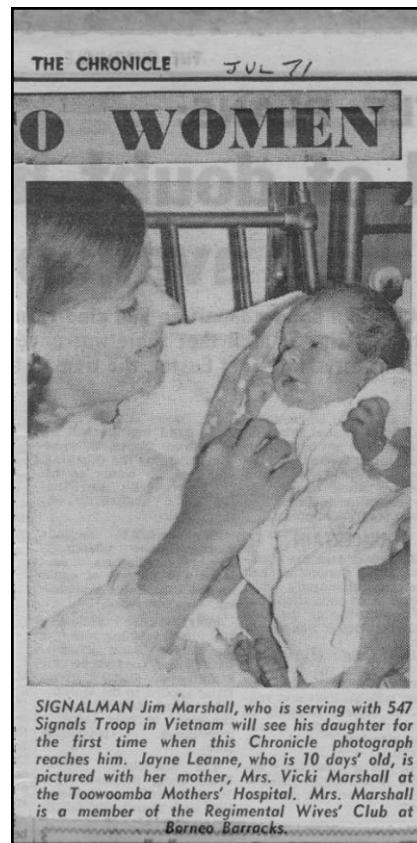


69.1.4.2 Internal Checker

The unit internal checker, Brian Abrahamson, hastily took over Stan's job as it was becoming obvious that a move was imminent.

69.1.5 Life Keeps Going in Australia – The Marshalls

Jim Marshall was a very happy man this month. The following picture appeared in the Toowoomba Chronicle.





69.2 Administration

69.2.1 Compound

The following photographs of the compound were taken in mid/late 1971¹⁰³⁰:



Figure 657: Vehicles. Right building Processing



Figure 658: Left- OC Office, Right - Set Room

¹⁰³⁰ Photos courtesy of Herbie O'Flynn.



Figure 659: Set Room/ARDF Building



Figure 660: Troop ACV - 85D



69.3 Operations

69.3.1 ARDF

69.3.1.1 Beacon Assistance

The following item was included in the 104 Sig Sqn Commanders Diary for July 1971¹⁰³¹:

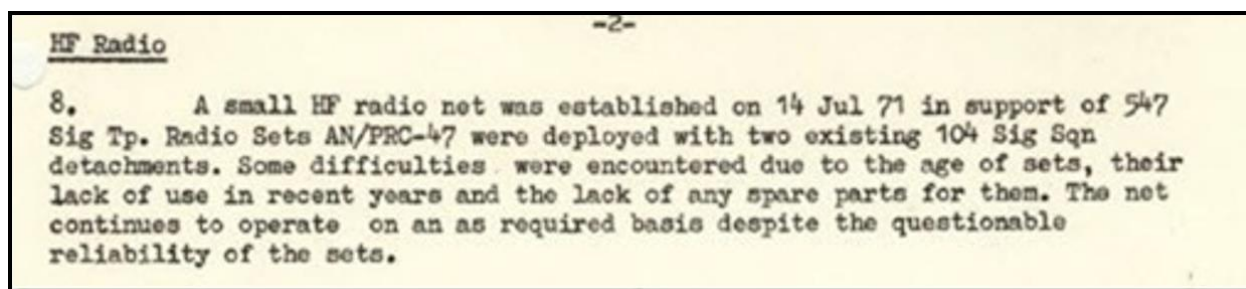


Figure 661: 104 Sig Sqn Diary extract -Beacons

69.3.1.2 ARDF Flying Hours

The total ARDF flying hours for the month were¹⁰³²:

Year	Month	Flying hours	Total Fixes	Good <1000mts	Fair 1-2000Mts	Poor >2000 Mts	Cut	Missions Lost	Remarks
1971	Jul	173.5	35	7	24		4	5	

The ARDF Report for 01 – 31 JU L stated¹⁰³³:

Flying Hours for Jul 1971

<u>PERSONNEL</u>	<u>HOURS FLOWN</u>	<u>PROGRESSIVE TOTAL</u>
Ssgt Howell	31:35	120:05
Sgt Flynn	27:10	29:10
Sig Hunter	30:15	192:45
Sig Simpson	29:15	151:45
Sig Arday	46:15	131:50
Sig Marshall	8:45	8:45

Total Hours flown 173:15

Break-down of Missions

Missions flown with fixes	obtained	30
Missions flown - no fixes	obtained	31
Missions aborted/reduced		15

Total missions flown 81

¹⁰³¹ <http://static.awm.gov.au/images/collection/bundled/RCDIG1030014.pdf>

¹⁰³² Compiled from MI8 Records held at ASD archives.

¹⁰³³ Ibid.



Total missions rostered 96

Gradings of Fixes

Good	7	(0000-0750 Metres)
Fair	24	(1000-2000 Metres)
Poor	00	(2000 Metres & above)
Cuts	4	(Area indication only)

Total Fixes 35

Details of Reduced/Aborted Missions due to inclement weather

07 Jul AM Mission 1 Reduced
 11 Jul AM Mission 1 Reduced
 12 Jul AM Mission 2 Aborted
 13 Jul AM Mission 1 Reduced
 16 Jul AM Mission 1 Reduced
 AM Mission 2 Reduced
 17 Jul PM Mission. Reduced
 21 Jul AM Mission 1 Reduced
 22 Jul AM Mission 1 Reduced
 AM Mission 1 Reduced
 27 Jul AM Mission 2 Reduced

Notes

1. Continued low number of fixes is attributed to the same factors which affected last months results.
2. Inclement weather has been the cause of a number of missions with negative results. Instead of aborting or reducing these missions, they were flown to provide a "tip off" service to the main set room.
3. Low activity of targets continues to affect training. However the training programme has been supplemented with additional beacons situated at Vung Tau, FSB Ziggy and at Xuyeen Moc. Results of beacon runs have been signalled to WRE.

69.3.1.3 Summary of Main ARDF Fixes

The following table is a summary of the main ARDF fixes for July 1971¹⁰³⁴:

Date	Loc	Unit
01-Jul-71	YS791885	D445
01-Jul-71	YT570158	HQ 33 NVA Regt, Poss Regt CP
01-Jul-71	YT576157	2/33 NVA Regt, Poss Bn CP

¹⁰³⁴ Compiled by Bob Hartley from Bennington, S. (Curator - Official History), Vietnam Battle Intelligence Computer data tapes – Part 2, Australian War Memorial – Canberra, 19 November 2014./ No Monthly ARDF Reports available possible. The data tapes may only include fixes from SPAR reports signalled to HQ1ATF.



Date	Loc	Unit
01-Jul-71	YT632038	3 BN 33 NVA Regt, Poss Bn CP
01-Jul-71	YS407950	HQ 274 Regt, Poss Regt CP
01-Jul-71	YT489395	2 BN 274 Regt, Poss Bn CP
01-Jul-71	YS391895	U/I ELM 274 Regt
02-Jul-71	YS859929	Rear Services MR7
02-Jul-71	YT802174	BA LONG Prov
02-Jul-71	YS825931	D445
02-Jul-71	YS304594	VUNG TAU City Unit
02-Jul-71	YT655030	3 BN 33 NVA Regt, Poss Bn CP
02-Jul-71	YT467227	2 BN 274 Regt, Poss Bn CP
03-Jul-71	YS773942	D445
04-Jul-71	YT496152	HQ 33 NVA Regt, Poss Regt CP
04-Jul-71	YT755071	A Det HQ 33 NVA Regt
04-Jul-71	YT493156	2 BN 33 NVA Regt, Poss Bn CP
05-Jul-71	YS859935	Rear Services MR7
05-Jul-71	YT843099	BA LONG Prov
05-Jul-71	YS297608	VUNG TAU City Unit
05-Jul-71	YT845108	HQ MR7
05-Jul-71	YT496172	HQ 33 NVA Regt, Poss Regt CP
05-Jul-71	YT781079	Det HQ 33 NVA Regt
05-Jul-71	YT510162	2 BN 33 NVA Regt, Poss Regt CP
06-Jul-71	YT841098	BA LONG Prov
06-Jul-71	YT847102	HQ MR7
07-Jul-71	YT824116	HQ MR7
07-Jul-71	YT847098	BA LONG Prov
07-Jul-71	YT757085	2 BN 33 NVA Regt, Poss Bn CP
07-Jul-71	YT589029	3 BN 33 NVA Regt, Poss Bn CP
07-Jul-71	YT512228	Poss VC TPT GP 30
08-Jul-71	YT752063	HQ 33 NVA Regt, Poss Regt CP
09-Jul-71	YT758082	DET HQ 33 NVA Regt
09-Jul-71	YT512030	3 BN 33 NVA Regt, Poss Bn CP
09-Jul-71	YS378945	HQ 274 Regt, Poss Regt CP
09-Jul-71	YT340043	Tpt Elems 274 Regt
10-Jul-71	YT782176	HQ MR7
10-Jul-71	YT752099	HQ 33 NVA Regt, Poss Regt CP
10-Jul-71	YT759075	2 BN 33 NVA Regt, Poss Bn CP
10-Jul-71	YS376924	HQ 274 Regt, Poss Regt CP
10-Jul-71	YS391895	U/I 274 Regt
10-Jul-71	YS395914	U/I 274 Regt
11-Jul-71	YT792150	HQ 33 NVA Regt, Poss Regt CP



Date	Loc	Unit
11-Jul-71	YT757067	DET HQ 33 NVA Regt
11-Jul-71	YT504026	3 BN 33 NVA Regt, Poss Bn CP
11-Jul-71	YS375944	HQ 274 Regt, Poss Regt CP
13-Jul-71	YT199008	U/I Poss Assoc with SR4
13-Jul-71	YS698982	HQ BA LONG Prov, Poss the Security Sect
13-Jul-71	YS403917	1/274 Regt, Poss Bn CP
13-Jul-71	YT805185	Elems HQ SR4
13-Jul-71	YT506036	3/33 NVA Regt, Poss Bn CP
13-Jul-71	YT731007	2/33 NVA Regt, Poss Bn CP
13-Jul-71	YT752080	HQ 33 NVA Regt, Poss Regt CP
13-Jul-71	YT814197	HQ MR7
13-Jul-71	YT801170	HQ BA LONG Prov
13-Jul-71	YT847098	HQ BA LONG Prov
14-Jul-71	YT822173	HQ MR7
14-Jul-71	YT756020	HQ 33 NVA Regt, Poss Regt CP
14-Jul-71	YS397878	1/274 Regt, Poss Bn CP
14-Jul-71	YS416941	HQ 274 Regt, Poss Regt CP
14-Jul-71	YS851988	Rear Services MR7
15-Jul-71	YS393896	1/274 Regt Poss Bn CP
15-Jul-71	YS405953	HQ 274 Regt, Poss Regt CP
15-Jul-71	YT780157	HQ MR7
15-Jul-71	YS590690	HQ D445
16-Jul-71	YT830204	HQ SR4
16-Jul-71	YT714322	HQ MR7
16-Jul-71	YS604674	HQ D445
17-Jul-71	YS361931	HQ 274 Regt, Poss Regt CP
17-Jul-71	YT706074	HQ 33 NVA Regt, Poss Regt CP
17-Jul-71	YT711072	Elems of a Poss DET HQ 33 NVA Regt
17-Jul-71	YT704073	Elems of a Poss DET HQ 33 NVA Regt
17-Jul-71	YT798166	HQ BA LONG Prov
17-Jul-71	YT813038	HQ MR7, Poss Regional Comm
17-Jul-71	YT878000	Rear Services MR7
18-Jul-71	YT709068	HQ 33 NVA Regt, Poss Regt CP
18-Jul-71	YS617665	HQ D445
18-Jul-71	YS397901	1/274 Regt, Poss Bn CP
18-Jul-71	YT803172	HQ BA LONG Prov
19-Jul-71	YS383905	1/274 Regt, Poss Bn CP
20-Jul-71	YT812168	HQ MR7
20-Jul-71	YT804176	HQ BA LONG Prov
21-Jul-71	YS282610	VUNG TAU City Unit



Date	Loc	Unit
21-Jul-71	YS371943	HQ 274 Regt, Poss Regt CP
21-Jul-71	YT671069	HQ 33 NVA Regt, Poss Regt CP
21-Jul-71	YS435988	3/33 NVA Regt, Poss Bn CP
21-Jul-71	YS849944	Rear Services MR7
22-Jul-71	YT809178	HQ BA LONG Prov
22-Jul-71	YS849947	Rear Services MR7
23-Jul-71	YS493497	LONG DAT Dist Forces
23-Jul-71	YT807161	HQ BA LONG Prov
24-Jul-71	YS507963	3/33 NVA Regt, Poss Bn CP
24-Jul-71	YT698105	HQ 33 NVA Regt, Poss Regt CP
24-Jul-71	YS405916	1/274 Regt, Poss Bn CP
24-Jul-71	YT809051	HQ BA LONG Prov, Poss Prov Comm
24-Jul-71	YT834096	HQ MR7, Poss Mil Int Sect
25-Jul-71	YS513958	3/33 NVA Regt, Poss Bn CP
25-Jul-71	YT686100	Poss S Elems HQ 33 NVA Regt
25-Jul-71	YT775090	Poss S Elems HQ 33 NVA Regt
25-Jul-71	YT793168	HQ BA LONG Prov
25-Jul-71	YS845947	Rear Services MR7
26-Jul-71	YS510915	3/33 NVA Regt, Poss Bn CP
26-Jul-71	YT809188	HQ MR7
26-Jul-71	YT788141	HQ BA LONG Prov
27-Jul-71	YS464497	Elems D445 Poss co-located with LONG DAT Dist
27-Jul-71	YT790158	HQ SR4
27-Jul-71	YT793165	Elems HQ BA LONG Prov
27-Jul-71	YT780152	Elems HQ BA LONG Prov
28-Jul-71	YS490513	LONG DAT Dist Forces
28-Jul-71	YS388957	HQ 274 Regt, Poss Regt CP
28-Jul-71	YT760127	Elems HQ BA LONG Prov
28-Jul-71	YT788174	Elems HQ BA LONG Prov
29-Jul-71	YS505967	3/33 NVA Regt, Poss Bn CP
29-Jul-71	YT808068	HQ MR7, Poss Regional Comm
30-Jul-71	YT806135	HQ MR7
30-Jul-71	YT793117	HQ 33 NVA Regt, Poss Regt CP



69.3.2 SSL Report

On 8 July, AUM 352 signalled Labs Weapons Salisbury, MI8 and DSD details of the SSL¹⁰³⁵

S E C R E T COMINT CHANNELS

SIGS 501

INFO FOR MI8. FOR PO/IS GROUP. SSL.

*ONE. SSL IS ON THE AIR AND INTEND TASKING AS SOON AS ALL FACETS
VERIFIED.*

TWO. STORES REQUIRED.

*ALPHA. CRO TUBE FOR RM 564 REMOTE VIE WER. THE TUBE HAS NO
STORAGE FACILITY AND HAVE REPLACED IT WITH OLD TUBE, SINCE
EXPECTED LIFE IS ONLY 3-4 MONTHS REQUEST TWO (2) BE FORWARDED*

BRAVO. IF TRANSFORMER FOR TWIN CHANNEL.

*THREE. AM ENDEVOURING AT PRESENT TO ESTABLISH BEACONS AT VARIOUS
POINTS THROUGH PROVINCE TO ACT AS CHECK TARGETS*

69.3.3 Operation Hawker

Operation Haker was conducted by 3RAR from 18 June to 27 July in the north-east of Phuoc Tuy Province.

Extract from the book *Fire Support Base Vietnam*¹⁰³⁶:

Operation Hawker: 3 RAR 18 June to 27 July 1971 The purpose of Operation Hawker was to maintain continuous surveillance within AO Xuyen Moc and to ambush north and north-east of the AO. Although no definite sign of D445 VC Local Main Force Battalion had been found in the Nui Dat 3 area, D445 Battalion was still thought to be in the area and 3 RAR continued with search and sweep operations in AO Xuyen Moc. Operation Hawker was supported by forward fire base areas FSB Ziggie and FSB Lynette.

Extract from the *Australian Army Official History*¹⁰³⁷:

By mid-July it was evident that elements of D445 Battalion had slipped past the widely dispersed companies of 3RAR.

[3RAR was operating in the NE area of the province on Operation Hawker]

Signals intelligence indicated that they had joined up with the remainder of D445 Battalion and the Long Dat District HQ in the Long Hais.

¹⁰³⁵ DSD Declassified, 547 Sig Tp in Vietnam (tranche2).

¹⁰³⁶ Picken, Bruce (2012-03-25). *Fire Support Base Vietnam* (Kindle Locations 10538-10542). Big Sky Publishing. Kindle Edition.

¹⁰³⁷ Extracts from *Fighting to the Finish* The Australian Army and the Vietnam War 1968 - 1975" by Ashley Ekins with Ian McNeil> Allen & Unwin in association with the Australian War Memorial, page 585.



69.3.4 Operation Yellow Jacket

The following signal dated 13 July, referring to Operation Yellow Jacket was found in the HQ 1ATF Commanders Diary for July 1971¹⁰³⁸:

MESSAGE FORM

FOR OTHER CHAIN/STAFF USE

PRECEDENCE	PRECEDENCE INFO	DATE-TIME GROUP	MESSAGE DESCRIPTION
PRIORITY	ROUTINE	131500Z	
FROM:	1 ATF		TO:
TO:	HQ 1ATF		FROM:
INFO:	G3Cps, G2Cps		SECURITY CLASSIFICATION
			CONFIDENTIAL
			ORIGINATOR'S SIGNATURE
			OPS 1209

ATTN: MACTR - G3Cps (1)
 YELLOW JACKET OPERATIONAL SUMMARY (1)
 (1) REPORTING PERIOD 062400H TO 13 -
 - 2400H (1)
 TWO (1) ALL SERIALS NIL RETURN (1)

Figure 662: Operation Yellow Jacket Summary for 13 July 1971

YELLOW JACKET WEEKLY OPERATIONAL SUMMARY (.)
 ONE (.) REPORTING PERIOD 062400h TO 13 -
 - 2400h (.)
 TWO (.) ALL SERIALS NIL RETURN

69.3.4.1 Yellow Jacket Description

The following description of Operation Yellow Jacket was contained in a *Senior Officer Debriefing Report* dated 15 June 1970¹⁰³⁹:

CONFIDENTIAL

DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
 OFFICE OF THE ADJUTANT GENERAL
 WASHINGTON, D.C. 20310

Best Available Copy

IN REPLY REFER TO

AGDA (M) (10 Jun 70) FOR OT UT 70B016 15 June 1970

SUBJECT: Senior Officer Debriefing Report: LTC Julian J. Ewell, CG, II Field Force, Vietnam, Period 2 April 1969 through 15 April 1970 (1)

¹⁰³⁸ AWM RCDIG1028291, AWM95, 1/4/228, HQ 1 ATF Commanders Diary 1-31 July 1971 F 80. This is the first mention of Operation Yellow Jacket found by the authors.

¹⁰³⁹ <http://oai.dtic.mil/oai/oai?verb=getRecord&metadataPrefix=html&identifier=AD0509550> Senior Officer Debriefing Report: II Field Force, Vietnam, Period 2 April 1969 through 15 April 1970.



9. (C) There have been several concepts which have come to fruition in the last year which may be worth mentioning:

a. (C) Heavy Reaction to AA Fire: The enemy began a campaign in the summer of 1969 to shoot down as many choppers as possible. Our losses increased somewhat so we decided to have a routine heavy fire-power response to any ground fire. All available fires (organic, gunships, artillery, tac air) were concentrated on any ground fire. This held our losses down to a reasonable level and, as a bonus, produced a modest number of enemy kills.

b. (C) Yellow Jacket: A deliberate policy of attacking enemy headquarters was adopted in order to degrade their command and control system and for other reasons beyond the security classification of this paper. This operation, called "Yellow Jacket", was quite successful in open terrain, moderately so in semi-open terrain and less so in jungle. In Long An province for example, the enemy went back to officer couriers--a rather slow and inefficient system vulnerable to ambushing.

8

CONFIDENTIAL

Figure 663: Report extract - Yellow Jacket

69.3.4.2 1ATF Response to Yellow Jacket

On 15 July, HQ 1ATF sent the following signal to Commanding General TRAC¹⁰⁴⁰ reporting that a response to Yellow Jacket was in effect based on a 'Usually Reliable Source'¹⁰⁴¹ (URS) was in effect:

T HH
 OO UUMSB
 DE UUMSB 042 1960236
 ZNY SSSSS
 O 150230Z JUL 71
 FM 1 ATF
 TO CC TRAC LBN SVN
 BT
 SECRET OPS1220. YELLOW JACKET OPERATION.
 ONE. CATEGORY ALPHA RESPONSE IN EFFECT.

Figure 664: Yellow jacket Initiation

¹⁰⁴⁰ AWM RCDIG1028291, AWM95, 1/4/228, HQ 1 ATF Commanders Diary 1-31 July 1971 F 81.

¹⁰⁴¹ A 'Usually Reliable Source Report' was a sanitised Sigint report i.e., ARDF Fix or Spot Report.



YELLOW JACKET WEEKLY OPERATION.

ONE. CATEGORY ALFA RESPOSE [Sic] IN EFFECT.

TWO. **USUALLY RELIABLE SOURCE** REPORTS PRESENCE D445 PROVINCIAL BATTALION IN VICINITY YS5966 LATE PM 14 JUL AND IN GENERAL VICINITY YS6269 MORNING 15 JUL 71. AUST EVALUATION IS BRAVO TWO.

THREE. REDEPLOYMENT 3 RAR AND SUPPORTING CAVALRY TROOP AND ELEMENTS OF 12 FD REGIMENT ARE CURRENTLY TAKING PLACE WITH A VIEW TO DESTROYING D445 BATTALION AND SHIELDING ZUEN MOC YS 6568 AND SURROUNDING FRIENDLY LOCATIONS.

FOUR. 4 RAR/NZ (ANZAC) REMAINS IN CLOSE VICINITY SUSPECTED LOCATIONS HQ 274 (VC) REGT AND 1ST BN 274 REGT AND WILL CONTINUE OPERATIONS IN PRESENT LOCATION

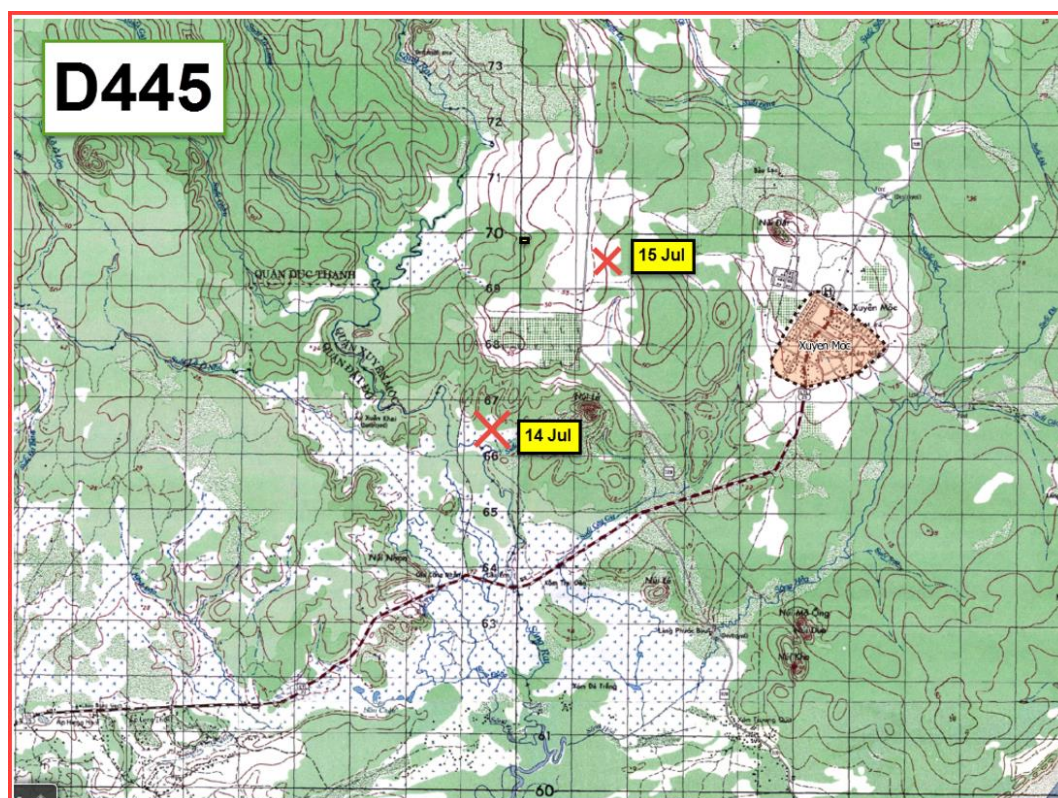


Figure 665: D445 Locations

69.3.4.3 Response Against HQ VC 274 Regt

On, 19 July 1971, HQ 1ATF sent the following signal to Commanding General TRAC¹⁰⁴² reporting that another response to a 'Usually Reliable Source'¹⁰⁴³ was to commence against HQ 274 Regiment on 20 July 1971:

¹⁰⁴² AWM RCDIG1028291, AWM95, 1/4/228, HQ 1 ATF Commanders Diary 1-31 July 1971. F 82.

¹⁰⁴³ A 'Usually Reliable Source Report' was a pseudonym for ARDF Fix or sanitised Sigint report.



FM 1 ATF
TO ZEN/CG TRAC LBN SVN
INFO RAMARL/AUSTFORCE VIETNAM
BT
SECRET OPS1238. ATTN G3 OPS. YELLOW JACKET OPERATION.
ONE. CATEGORY ALFA RESPONSE TO COMMENCE 20 JUL 71
TWO. USUALLY RELIABLE SOURCE REPORTS PRESENCE OF HQ 274 (VC)
REGIMENT IN GENERAL VICINITY (YS4095) ON 18 JUL. AUST.

Figure 666: Yellow Jacket to Commence

SECRET OPS1238. ATTN G3 OPS. YELLOW JACKET OPERATION,

ONE. CATEGORY ALFA RESPONSE TO COMMENCE 20 JUL 71

TWO, USUALLY RELIABLE SOURCE REPORTS PRESENCE OF HQ 274 (VC)
REGIMENT IN GENERAL VICINITY (1\$4095) ON 18 JUL. AUST.
EVAL B2.

THREE. REDEPLOYMENT OF 4 RAR/NZ(ANZAC) SUPPORTING CAVALRY
TROOP AND ARTY ELEMENTS OF 12 FD REGIMENT AND C BTY 5/42 (US) ARTY
TAKING PLACE WITH A VIEW TO DESTROYING HQ 274 (VC) REGIMENT.
FOUR. 3 RAR REMAINS IN GENERAL VICINITY WEST OF XUYEN MOC (YS 6166)
TARGETED AGAINST D445 BATALION CMM AND SHIELDING XU YEN MOC. AND
SURROUNDING FRIENDLY LOCATIONS, TO DATE NO SIGNIFICANT RESULTS

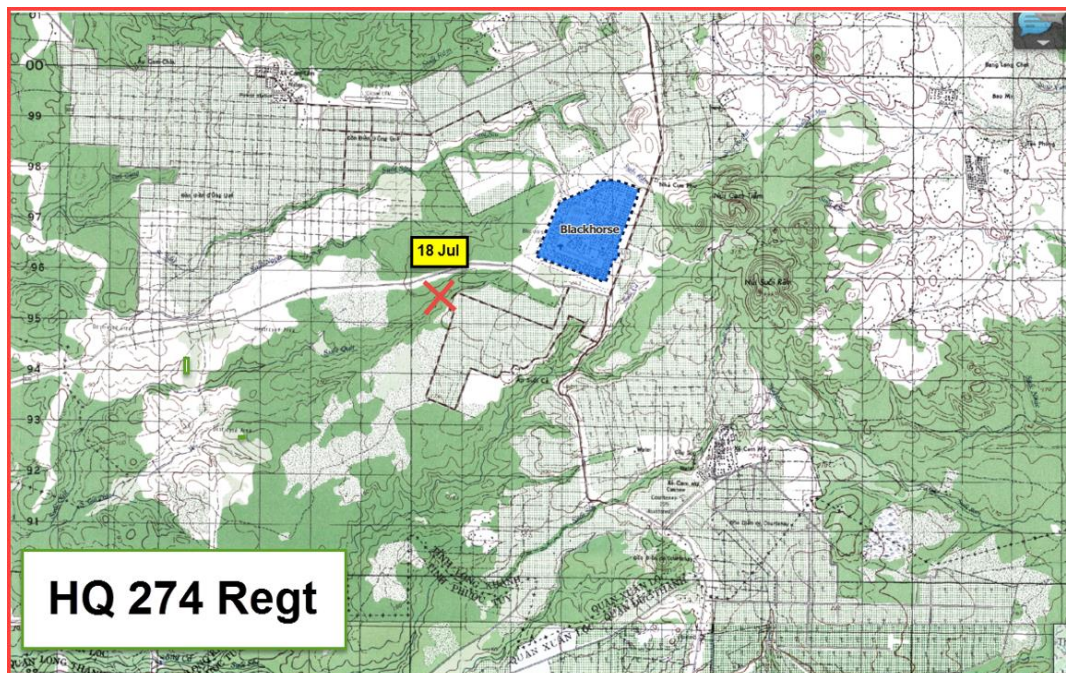


Figure 667: HQ 274 VC Regt Location



69.3.4.4 21 July Weekly Summary

On 21 July, HQ 1ATF Signalled the weekly Yellow Jacket Summary to HQ TRAC¹⁰⁴⁴:

PRECEDENCE-ALPHA	PRECEDENCE INFO	DATE-TIME GROUP	PRECEDENCE SYMBOL-ALPHA
PRIORITY	PRIORITY	210800Z Jul 71	
FROM:	IATF		GR
TO:	HQ TRAC		SECURITY CLASSIFICATION
INFO:	G3003 (IATF) AUST FORCE VIETNAM		SECRET
			ORIGINATOR'S NUMBER
			OPS 1249
ATTN G3 OPS (a)			
YELLOW JACKET WEEKLY OPERATIONAL SUMMARY (a)			

Figure 668: Yellow Jacket Weekly Summary 21 July

YELLOW JACKET WEEKLY OPERATIONAL SUMMARY (.)

ONE (.) TWO (.)
ALFA (.) NIL
BRAVO (.) NIL

TWO (.) ALFA (.) **USUALLY RELIABLE SOURCE** CMM AUST EVAL B2 CMM ON 14 – 15 JUL REPORTED PRESENCE D445 PROVINCIAL BN IN GENERAL VICINITY YS3966 (.) 3RAR DEPLOYED 15 JUL TO AREA WEST PF XUYEN MOC (YS6568) TARGETED AGAINST D445 BN (.) RESULTS 9 VC KIA (BC) CMM ONE IDENTIFIED AS MEMBER RECCE ELEMENT D445 BN (.) OPERATION CONTINUING (.)

RAVO (.) **USUALLY RELIABLE SOURCE** CMM AUST EVAL B2 CMM ON 18 JUL REPORTED PRESENCE OF HQ 274 VC REGIMENT IN GENERAL VICINITY YS4095 (.) 4RAR/NZ (ANZAC) DEPLOYED GENERAL AREA YS4095 TARGETED AGAINST HQ 274 REGIMENT CMM BN CURRENTLY SEARCHING WEST GENERAL VICINITY YS3693 (.) RESULTS 1 VC KIA (BC) CMM IDENTIFIED AS MEMBER FROM C23 SURGICAL COY OF 274 VC REGT (.) OPERATION CONTINUING (.)

69.3.4.5 Another Operation Against HQ 274 VC Regt

On 27 July, HQ 1ATF advised the Commanding general TRAC that another Yellow Jacket operation against 1 Battalion 274 Regiment was to commence on 28 Jul 71¹⁰⁴⁵:

¹⁰⁴⁴ AWM RCDIG1028291, AWM95, 1/4/228, HQ 1 ATF Commanders Diary 1-31 July 1971. F 83.

¹⁰⁴⁵ AWM RCDIG1028291, AWM95, 1/4/228, HQ 1 ATF Commanders Diary 1-31 July 1971. F 84.

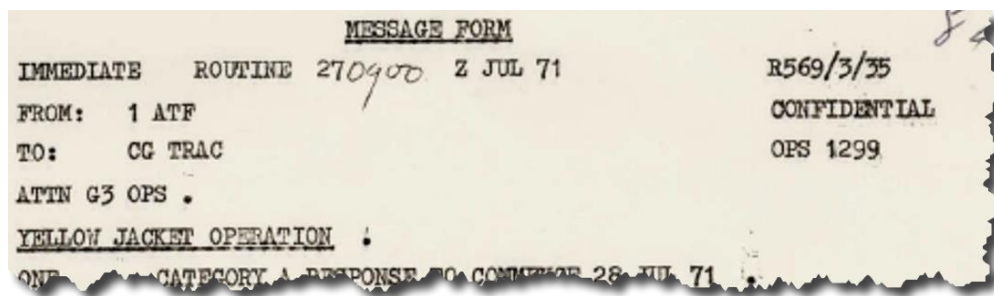


Figure 669: Yellow Jacket Response

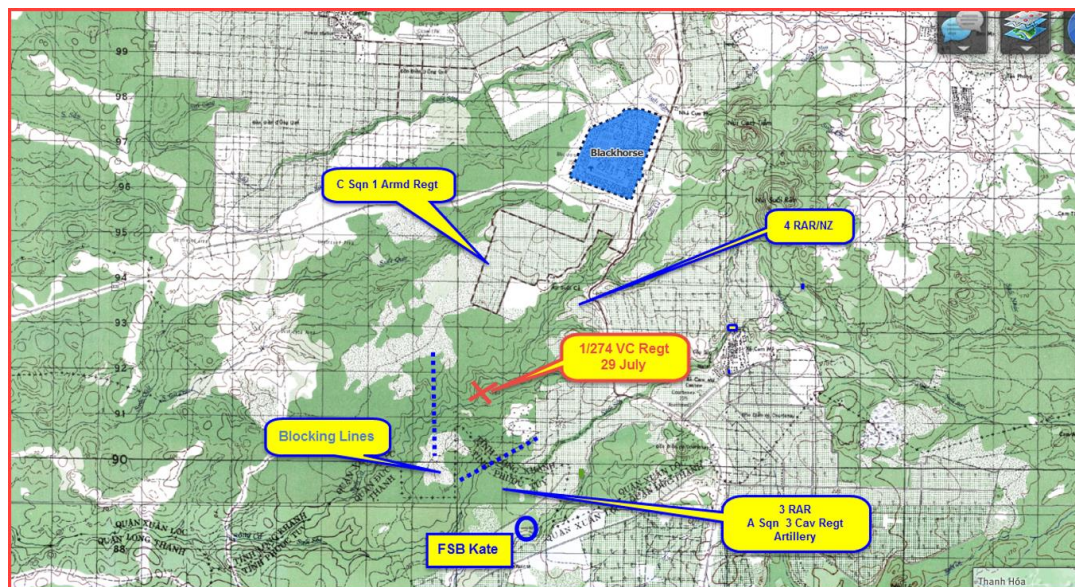
YELLOW JACKET OPERATION

ONE CATEGORY A RESPONSE TO COMMENCE 28 JUL 71

TWO **USUALLY RELIABLE SOURCE REPORTS PRESENCE OF 1 BATTALION 274 (VC) REGIMENT IN GENERAL VICINITY YS 4091 ON 26 JUL 71**
AUST EVAL B2

THREE REDEPLOYMENT OF 3 RAR CMM A SON 3 CAV REGT AND ARTY ELEMENTS OF 12 FIELD REGIMENT TAKING PLACE CMM WITH A VIEW TO FORMING A BLOCKING POSITION ASTRIDE THE SUOI CA RIVER ALONG A GENERAL LINE YS 3992 TO YS 5990 TO YS 4089 TO YS 4290 .FSB KATE WILL BE ESTABLISHED AT YS 4288 ON 28 JUL

FOUR REDEPLOYMENT OF 4 RAR/TZ (ANZAC) AND C SON 1 ARIM RECT (-) TAKING PLACE 4 RAR/IZ (ANZAC) MOVING GENERAL VICINITY YS 4293 TO POSITION ITSELF FOR ATTACK SOUTH WEST TOWARDS **SUSPECTED LOCATION OF 1 BATTALION 274 REGIMENT ON 28 JUL**. C SON 1 ARMD RECT (-) IN LOCATION AT YS 4094 UNDER OPERATIONAL CONTROL 4 RARAIZ (ANZAC) FOR ATTACK FORCE ON 28 JUL

Figure 670: Proposed operation against 1 Battalion 274 Regt¹⁰⁴⁶

¹⁰⁴⁶ Prepared by Bob Hartley.



CHAPTER 70 – AUGUST 1971

70.1 Personnel

70.1.1 Arrivals and Departures

In August, there were arrivals and six departures.

Arrivals

5 August

Warrant Officer Phillip Reid
Corporal Ashley Terrell

12 August

Warrant Officer Peter Weir-Smith

19 August

Corporal Jack Morgan

26 August

Staff Sergeant Evan Mooney

29 August

Signalman Stephen Innes

Departures

5 August

Signalman Malcolm Simpson

12 August

Warrant Officer Bryan Russell
Corporal Allan Thomson

19 August

Staff Sergeant Allan Beaver
Corporal Andrew Coyle

26 August

Signalman Vince McQuillan

70.1.2 Employment Areas

Phil Reid replaced Bryan Russell as the TSM. Ash Terrell took over the position of Troop Clerk. Peter Weir-Smith became the head of the Tech Maint area. Danny Mooney, Jack Morgan (on his second tour), and Stephen Innes went into the Set Room.

70.2 Administration

70.2.1 1ATF Telephone Directory

For historical records an extract from the 1ATF Telephone Book is shown below:



Subscriber	Extension	Subscriber	Extension
547 SIG TP			
OC	EBONY 24	Orderly Room/Comcen	EBONY 2
TSM	EBONY 22	Tech Maint	EBONY 24

Figure 671: 1ATF Telephone Book extract

70.2.2 Recall of ACV 85D

On 2 August, HQ 1ATF ordered the return of ACV 85D from FSB Robin¹⁰⁴⁷ to Nui Dat¹⁰⁴⁸:

RESIDENCE ACTION	RESIDENCE INFO	DATE-TIME GROUP	MESSAGE NUMBER
PRIORITY		020925 2	AUG 71
FROM: 1ATF			OR
TO: A SQN 3 CAV REGT			SECURITY CLASSIFICATION
INFO: 12 FD REGT	104 SIG SQN		RESTRICTED
547 SIG TP			OPERATIONAL NUMBER
CP ARTY TAC	LSO 2 (OPS)		OPS 1515
EMPLOYMENT OF ARMoured COMMAND VEHICLES (ACV)			

Figure 672: Recall of ACV

EMPLOYMENT OF ARMoured COMMAND VEHICLES (ACVS)

(.) ACV 85D CURRENTLY DEPLOYED
AT FSB ROBIN IS TO RETURN TO NUI
DAT NO LATER THAN 041200 HRS FOR
FITTING FOR USE BY 547 SIG TP (.)
547 SIG TP IS TO LIAISE WITH A SQN
2CAV ON DETAILS.

70.2.3 Cessation of Australian Operations

On 18 August 1971, the Prime Minister announced that the bulk of Australian Forces in South Vietnam were to be withdrawn, leaving only a modified training team. This news was first heard by the Troop on the Australian Forces Radio station and, strangely, was not greeted with cheers. Over the next few weeks many details became known and many discussions were held with the Task Force Commander on the role of 547 Sig Tp in the withdrawal. Extract HQ 1ATF Commanders Diary¹⁰⁴⁹ (Transcribed):

28 Aug	Comd attended majority of withdrawal conferences throughout the morning and afternoon concerning: 3 RAR, 4 RAR/NZ(ANZAC), 12 Fd Regt, A sqn 3 Cav Regt, 17 Const Sqn, 1 Fd Sqn & 21 Engr Sp Tp, 104 Sig Sqn & 547 Sig Tp
--------	--

¹⁰⁴⁷ FSB Robin (aka Maureen and Rhode Island area) – YS 436765. Picken, Bruce (2012-03-25). Fire Support Base Vietnam (Kindle Location 10661). Big Sky Publishing. Kindle Edition.

¹⁰⁴⁸ AWM RCDIG1028298, AWM95, 1/4/234, HQ 1ATFD Commanders Diary Annex C, 1 – 30 Sept 71, F 40.

¹⁰⁴⁹ AWM RCDIG1028294, AWM95, 1/4/230 HQ 1ATF Commanders Diary 1-31 Aug 1971.



70.2.3.1 Difficult Decision

The decision was a difficult one because of the unique position of the Troop and the invaluable service it had rendered throughout the years. For a while it looked as though the Troop would be the last unit to leave Vietnam.

70.2.4 547 Sig Tp Relocation dvice to MI8 and DSD

On 29 August, AUM 352 sent the following signal to MI8, [redacted], and DSD regarding the relocation and withdrawal: of the Troop¹⁰⁵⁰:

S E C R E T COMINT CHANNELS

SIGS 610

FOR MI8. WITHDRAWAL AND RTA \$47 SIG TP.

FURTHER **DETAILS OF UNIT RELOCATION** ARE CMM

ONE. GENERAL OUTLINE OF RELOCATION PLAN IS TO SPEND MAX TIME SETTING NEW LOCATION UP (AND DUPLICATE COMCEN) THE MOVING SETROOM OVER IN SHORT PERIOD OF TIME.

ADVANCE PARTY WILL MOVE TO NEW LOCATION 15 SEP AND WITH HELP OF 110 SIG SQN WILL ESTB WIRE, POWER, AERIALS AND COMMS COMPLETELY, **FOUR POSITIONS WILL THEN MOVE OUT 29 SEP** AND BE ESTB, **REMAINING FIVE POSNS WILL BE ABLE TO HANDLE TASKS (WITH [redacted] HELP IF REQUIRED FOR UNFORESEEN) AND WILL RELOCATE ON 1 OCT 71.** COMMS WILL BE ESTB BETWEEN NEW LOC AND ACV IN OLD LOC PRIOR 29 SEP. **COMCEN TERMINALS WILL CHANGE MORNING OF 1 OCT 71. MOVE COMPLETED BY 1 OCT 71 WITH REAR PART LEFT NUI DAT TO TIDY UP.** CELL WILL REMAIN (IN ACV) WITH TF HQ UNTIL RELOC AT VUNG TAU (APPROX 16 OCT 71)

TWO. HAVE FORMALLY NOTIFIED US AGENCIES AND HAVE ARRANGED VISIT FOR WED. DLO (RON HALL) WILL ACCOMPANY ON VISIT.

THREE. SSL . COMD HAS AGREED TO **SSL CEASING OPS ON 15 SEP 71** - THIS WILL ALLOW TIME FOR PACKING. NO DIFFICULTIES FORESEEN. SSL OPS WILL EASE MAN POWER PROBLEM DURING TRANSITION AND WILL ALSO BE USED FOR PRESERVATION PACKING AND CRATION OF UNIT STORES. ATF HAVE ESTB ORD CELL TO ASSIST UNITS IN THIS REGARD.

FOUR. ARDF. **TWO PORTER AIRCRAFT WILL REMAIN IN THEATRE AND WILL BE ALLOCATED TO TROOP FOR INTEREST AM EMPLOYING BOTH ARDF KITS** TOMORROW TO COVER TRAC SPECIAL AO PLUS NORMAL ACTIVITY. BESIDES BEING OPERATIONALLY REQUIRED IT WILL BE A GOOD DRY RUN FOR FUTURE EM'LOYMENT.

FIVE . R AND R . R AND R WILL CONTINUE TO DEC WITH RESTRICTION THAT ON RETURN MEMBER MUST HAVE 28 DAYS RESIDUAL SERVICE IN THEATRE

¹⁰⁵⁰ <https://www.asd.gov.au/about/history/declassified/2022-03-11-547-signal-troop-vietnam-1966-1971>



70.2.5 547 Sig Tp Operation Report for August 1971

The 547 Sig Tp Op Report for Aug 71¹⁰⁵¹ stated:

*S E C R E T COMINT CHANELS
SIGS623*

FOR MI8. OP REPORT AUGUST 1971.

ONE. WATCH HOURS. NO CHANGE.

TWO. COVER AS AT 31 JUL 71.

ALFA. TWENTY TWO (22) PRIORITY TASKS.

BRAVO. SIX (6) PRIORITY DEV TASKS.

THREE. GENERAL.

ALFA. EN LOCS AND MOVS. OF MAJOR INTEREST WAS THE RELOCATION OF HQ 33RD REGT (NVA) TERMINAL SOUTHWARDS INTO NORTHERN PHUOC TUY PROVINCE BORDER AREA IN CLOSE PROXIMITY TO ITS 9TH BN. ST BN 274 CMM QUIET AFTER CONTACTING 1ATF FORCES IN OP IRON FOX REAPPEARED IN COMMUNICATIONS ON 14 AUG AND AT END OF MONTH REMAINED LOCATED IN THE NORTH WEST REGION OF PHUOC TUY. D445 RELOCATED FROM LONG HAI MTS TO XUYEN HOC AREA BUT HAS NOT BEEN ACTIVE IN COMMIS SINCE 13 AUG.

BRAVO. 1ATF REACTION. BASED ON ARDF FIXES AND INTERCEPT MESSAGE TELLING OF A COMING CONFERENCE CMM SAS PATROLS WERE PLACED BETWEEN SUSPECTED LOCATIONS OF HQ274 REGT A ID SUBORDINATE UNITS. RESULTS WERL 7 EN KIA (INCL THE ASSISTANT CHIEF OF STAFF OF HQ 274 REGT) AND MANY VALUABLE DOCUMENTS BEING CAPTURED INCL MESSAGE REGISTER FROM REG HQ TERIINAL. 3RAR OPS AGAIIST D445 BN ELEMENTS RESULTED TWO MINOR CLASHES BUT AS AT 31 AUG 71 THE MAJOR ELMS REMAINED OUT OF CONTACT.

FOUR. DIRECTION FINDING.

ALFA. ARDF.

- (1) TOTAL FIXES 77.*
- (2) GRADINGS. GOOD 24. FAIR 32. POOR 11. CUTS10.*
- (3) PERSONNEL. HOWELL FLYNN HUNTER AND MARSHALL. UNDER TRG CMM ELWORTHY AND HAMPTON.*
- (4) AS OF 29 AUG TWO AIRCRAFT WERE ROSTERED TO PROVIDE MAXIMUM EMPHASIS IN TRAC SPECIAL AO.*

BRAVO. SSL.

(1) EQPT MALFUNCTION (IIA 190 CRT) CAUSED SSL TO BE IN-OPERATIVE TO 13 AUG.

(2) BEACONS CLOSED 18 AUG 71 AND SINCE THEN SSL HAS BEEN TARGETED AGAINST STATIONS OF LOW ACTIVITY TO ALLOW ARDF MORE FREEDOM.

(3) SSL WILL CLOSE PERMANENTLY ON 15 SEP AND WILL THEN BE PACKED AND SHIPPED TO WRE.

FIVE. INTENTIONS AS PART OF OVERALL PLAN TO WITHDRAW AUST PERS FROM THEATRE CMM AUM352 WILL RELOCATE TO 110 SIC SON AREA IN 1 ALSG

¹⁰⁵¹ DSD Declassified, 547 Sig Tp in Vietnam (tranche2).



VUNG TAU. THIS IS TO BE COMPLETED BY 6 OCT 71 AND WORK WILL COMMENCE ON 1 SEP. NO COVER LOSS WILL ENSUE AS MOVE OF SETROOM WILL TAKE PLACE OVER TWO DAY PERIOD.

70.2.6 ARDF Flying Hours

The total ARDF flying hours for the month were¹⁰⁵²:

Year	Month	Flying hours	Total Fixes	Good <1000mts	Fair 1-2000Mts	Poor >2000 Mts	Cut	Missions Lost	Remarks
1971	Aug		77	24	32	11	10	5	Two aircraft at times

The ARDF Report for September stated¹⁰⁵³:

Personnel

Ssgt Howell

Sgt Flynn

Sig Arday

Sig Elworthy

Sig Hampton

Sig Hunter

Sig Marshall

Movement of Personnel

Sig Arday to Set Room 09 Aug 71

Sig Elworthy commenced training 09 Aug 71

Sig Marshall Qualified 13 Aug 71

Sig Arday returns to ARDF 23 Aug 71

Sig Hampton commences training 29 Aug 71

Break-down of Missions

Missions flown with fixes obtained 59

Missions flown - no fixes obtained 50

Missions aborted/reduced 11

Total missions flown 109

Total missions rostered 120

Gradings of Fixes

Good 24 (0000-0750 Metres)

Fair 32 (1000-2000 Metres)

Poor 11 (2000 Metres & above)

Cuts 10 (Area indication only)

Total Fixes 77

Details of Reduced/Aborted Missions due to inclement weather

¹⁰⁵² Compiled from MI8 Records held at ASD archives.

¹⁰⁵³ Ibid.



05 Aug AM Mission one Reduced
 05 Aug AM Mission two Aborted
 24 Aug AM Mission one Aborted
 31 Aug PM Mission seven Reduced

Details of Reduced/Aborted Missions due to Equipment/Aircraft malfunction

03 Aug PM Mission Aborted - aircraft malfunction
 04 Aug AM Mission One Aborted - equipment malfunction
 07 Aug AM Mission two Reduced - equipment malfunction
 08 Aug PM Mission Aborted « equipment malfunction
 10 Aug AM Mission one Aborted - aircraft malfunction

Break-down of Missions

Missions flown with fixes obtained	59
Missions flown – no fixes obtained	50
Missions aborted/reduced	11

Comment. Total of 25 Missions rostered for period 29 – 31 Aug inclusive were shared by two acft. Reason being special emphasis on HQ 33 Regt and subordinates who had moved into TRAC AO.

70.2.7 Summary of Main ARDF Fixes

The following table is a summary of the main ARDF fixes for August 1971¹⁰⁵⁴:

Date	Loc	Unit
01-Aug-71	YT788165	Elms HQ BA LONG Prov
01-Aug-71	YS469497	HQ D445
01-Aug-71	YT785105	HQ 33 NVA Regt, Poss Regt CP
02-Aug-71	YS330935	HQ 274 Regt, Poss Regt CP
02-Aug-71	YT802117	HQ 33 NVA Regt, Poss Regt CP
03-Aug-71	YT767058	HQ MR7, Poss Regional Committee
04-Aug-71	YT769133	HQ 33 NVA Regt, Poss Regt CP
04-Aug-71	YT306068	HQ 74 Arty Regt, Poss Regt CP
04-Aug-71	YT813055	HQ BA LONG Prov, Poss Prov Comm
05-Aug-71	YT883086	HQ BA LONG Prov
05-Aug-71	YS439960	3/33 NVA Regt, Poss Bn CP
06-Aug-71	YT900062	HQ BA LONG Prov
06-Aug-71	YT806130	HQ 33 NVA Regt, Poss Regt CP
06-Aug-71	YS251883	3/33 NVA Regt, Poss Bn CP
06-Aug-71	YS326923	HQ 274 Regt, Poss Regt CP
08-Aug-71	YT816088	HQ 33 NVA Regt, Poss Regt CP
08-Aug-71	YS342937	HQ 274 Regt, Poss Regt CP
09-Aug-71	YS679712	HQ D445

¹⁰⁵⁴ Compiled by Bob Hartley from Bennington, S. (Curator - Official History), Vietnam Battle Intelligence Computer data tapes – Part 2, Australian War Memorial – Canberra, 19 November 2014./ No Monthly ARDF Reports available possible. The data tapes may only include fixes from SPAR reports signalled to HQ1ATF.



Date	Loc	Unit
09-Aug-71	YS508950	3/33 NVA Regt, Poss Bn CP
10-Aug-71	YT854164	HQ 33 NVA Regt, Poss Regt CP
11-Aug-71	YT859106	HQ 33 NVA Regt, Poss Regt CP
11-Aug-71	YS505950	3/33NVA Regt, Poss Regt CP
11-Aug-71	YS330930	HQ 274 Regt, Poss Regt CP
12-Aug-71	YT933034	HQ MR7
12-Aug-71	YS347939	HQ 274 Regt, Poss Regt CP
12-Aug-71	YT245170	Transport Elems 274 Regt (C18 AND C22)
13-Aug-71	YT983036	HQ BA LONG Prov
13-Aug-71	YS676783	HQ D445
13-Aug-71	YS487925	3/33 NVA Regt, Poss Bn CP
13-Aug-71	YS343914	HQ 274 Regt, Poss Regt CP
14-Aug-71	YT268097	HQ 74 Arty Regt, Poss Regt CP
14-Aug-71	YS320895	HQ 274 Regt, Poss Regt CP
14-Aug-71	YS378838	1/274 Regt, Poss Bn CP
16-Aug-71	YS564943	U/I
16-Aug-71	YT920126	Elems HQ BA LONG Prov
16-Aug-71	YS941144	Elems HQ BA LONG Prov
16-Aug-71	YS482494	LONG DAT Dist Forces
17-Aug-71	YS484495	LONG DAT Dist Forces
17-Aug-71	YS505905	Poss 3/33 NVA Regt (Regt CP)
17-Aug-71	YS525991	U/I UNIT
17-Aug-71	YS315993	HQ 274 Regt, Poss Regt CP
18-Aug-71	YT800047	HQ MR7
18-Aug-71	YS366876	1/274 Regt, Poss Bn CP
18-Aug-71	YS330948	HQ 274 Regt, Poss Regt CP
19-Aug-71	YT794142	HQ BA LONG Prov
19-Aug-71	YS472485	LONG DAT Dist Forces
19-Aug-71	YS373985	HQ 274 Regt, Poss Regt CP
19-Aug-71	YS380840	1/274 Regt, Poss Bn CP
19-Aug-71	YS224863	3/274 Regt, Poss Bn CP
20-Aug-71	YT808143	HQ BA LONG Prov
20-Aug-71	YT793147	HQ MR7
20-Aug-71	YT783185	HQ SR4
20-Aug-71	YS330986	HQ 274 Regt, Poss Regt CP
20-Aug-71	YS412807	1/274 Regt, Poss Bn CP
21-Aug-71	YS236887	3/274 Regt, Poss Bn CP
21-Aug-71	YS422782	1/274 Regt, Poss Bn CP
21-Aug-71	YS338982	HQ 274 Regt, Poss Regt CP
21-Aug-71	YS495516	LONG DAT Dist Unit



Date	Loc	Unit
23-Aug-71	YS482894	LONG DAT Dist Unit
23-Aug-71	YS505988	3/33 NVA Regt, Poss Bn CP
23-Aug-71	YS308973	HQ 274 Regt, Poss Regt CP
23-Aug-71	YS416815	1/274 Regt, Poss Bn CP
23-Aug-71	YT732083	HQ MR7, Poss Regional Committee
24-Aug-71	YT788135	HQ BA LONG Prov
24-Aug-71	YS401857	1/274 Regt, Poss Bn CP
24-Aug-71	YS197757	A U/I UNIT
25-Aug-71	YS518935	3/33 NVA Regt, Poss Bn CP
25-Aug-71	YS417844	1/274 Regt, Poss Bn CP
26-Aug-71	YS413842	1/274 Regt, Poss Bn CP
26-Aug-71	YT354054	HQ 274 Regt, Poss Regt CP
26-Aug-71	YT525167	2/33 NVA Regt, Poss Bn CP
26-Aug-71	YS498943	HQ 33 NVA Regt, Poss Regt CP
26-Aug-71	YT800128	HQ MR7
26-Aug-71	YS468497	LONG DAT Dist Unit
26-Aug-71	YT789144	HQ BA LONG Prov
26-Aug-71	YS510921	U/I UNIT
27-Aug-71	YT259048	HQ 74 Arty Regt, Poss Regt CP
27-Aug-71	YT728067	HQ BA LONG Prov, Poss Prov Comm
27-Aug-71	YS398824	1/274 Regt, Poss Bn CP
27-Aug-71	YT253162	TPT Elems 274 Regt
28-Aug-71	YS496944	HQ 33 NVA Regt, Poss Regt CP
28-Aug-71	YT808159	HQ BA LONG Prov
28-Aug-71	YS242970	AN U/I UNIT
29-Aug-71	YT790142	HQ BA LONG Prov
29-Aug-71	YT460230	2/33 NVA Regt, Poss Bn CP
29-Aug-71	YS513946	3/33 NVA Regt, Poss Bn CP
29-Aug-71	YT787165	HQ SR4
30-Aug-71	YT318019	HQ 274 Regt, Poss Regt CP
30-Aug-71	YS543934	3/33 NVA Regt, Poss Bn CP
30-Aug-71	YT472209	2/33 NVA Regt, Poss Bn CP
30-Aug-71	YS500957	HQ 33 NVA Regt, Poss Regt CP
31-Aug-71	YS335986	HQ 274 Regt, Poss Regt CP
31-Aug-71	YS218898	3/274 Regt, Poss Bn CP



70.2.8 Operation Yellow Jacket

70.2.8.1 9 August

On 9 August, a SPAR reported¹⁰⁵⁵ the location of elements of HQ D445 at YS679712¹⁰⁵⁶. Based on this report a Yellow Jacket Operation was instigated:

PRECEDENCE/CLASS	PRECEDENCE INFO	DATE-TIME GROUP	RELATE DESCRIPTION
IMMEDIATE	IMMEDIATE	100001 Z	AUG 71
FROM:	1 ATF		00
TO:	CG TRAC LBN		
INFO:	AUST FORCES VIETNAM		CONFIDENTIAL
			00
			OPS 1383
ATTN 63 [REDACTED] OPS D			
YELLOW JACKET OPERATION D			

Figure 673: Yellow Jacket 10 Aug 71¹⁰⁵⁷

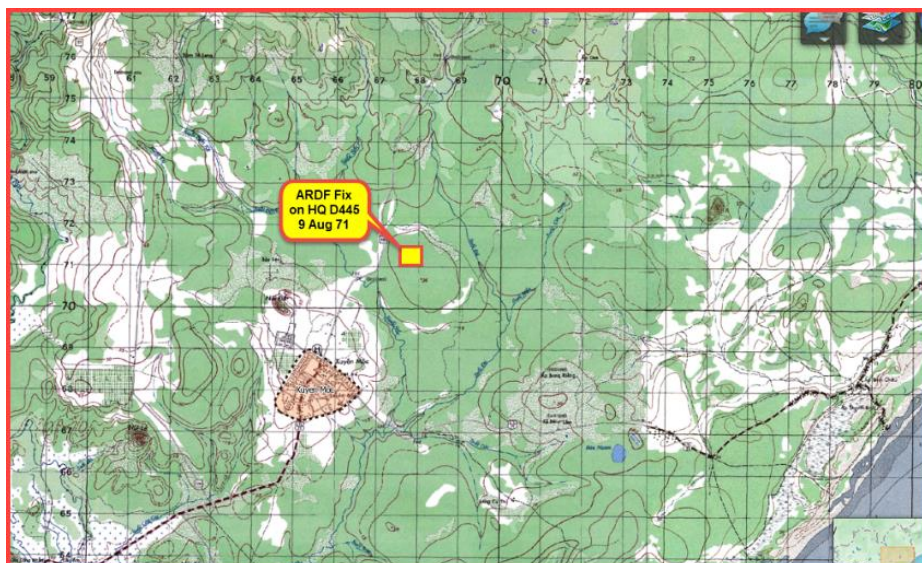
YELLOW JACKET OPERATION (.).

- ONE (.) **USUALLY RELIABLE SOURCE** IDENTIFIES
 T LEAST HQ D445 (LF) BATTALION
 VICINITY YS679712 IN CIVILIAN ACCESS
 AREA OF XUYEN MOC AO AT
 APPROX 091640H AUG 71 (.)
- TWO (.) CLASS A RESPONSE IN EFFECT (.)
- THREE (.) 3RAR WITH UNDER OP CON A SQN
 3CAV REGT (MINUS) DEPLOYS TODAY TO
 XUYEN MOC AO TO DESTROY D445
 BN IN COOPERATION DISTRICT
 FORCES

¹⁰⁵⁵ During this period the Troop placed special emphasis on D445.

¹⁰⁵⁶ In 1971, a "Battle Intelligence Computer Trial" was conducted at HQ 1 ATF with entries from the Intelligence Log and SPAR locations of NVA/VC units typed into a PDP-8/L computer. Earlier, as an aid to the analysis of enemy data – eg pattern analysis of locations, teletypewriters and printers had been used to manage information. In 2014, Australian War Memorial staff were able to recover data from the computer tapes – see: Bennington, S. (Curator - Official History), Vietnam Battle Intelligence Computer data tapes – Part 2, Australian War Memorial – Canberra, 19 November 2014. ¹⁰⁵⁶

¹⁰⁵⁷ AWM RCDIG1028295, AWM95, 1/4/231, HQ 1ATF Commanders Diary 1-31 August 1971 Annex C, F64.

Figure 674: Location of HQ D445 by ARDF¹⁰⁵⁸

70.2.8.2 13 August

On 13 August, HQ 1ATF reported that a Long Range Reconnaissance had contact at YS341918 and that a Usually Reliable Source¹⁰⁵⁹ identified HQ 274 Regt at YS343914. HQ 1 ATF instigated a response.

CLASSIFICATION	REFERENCE INFO	DATE/TIME GROUP	REMARKS/REVISIONS
IMMEDIATE	IMMEDIATE	130150Z Aug 71	
FROM:	1ATF		PUBL: GR
TO:	CG TRAC LBN		SECURITY CLASSIFICATION:
INFO:	AUST FORCE VIETNAM		CONFIDENTIAL
			ORIGINATING NUMBER:
			OPS1396
ATTN G3 OPS			
YELLOW JACKET OPERATION			

Figure 675: Yellow Jacket Operation 13 Aug 71¹⁰⁶⁰

YELLOW JACKET OPERATION (.)

AT 130800H AT YS341918 LRRP HAD CONTACT WITH SIZEABLE EN FORCE (.) **USUALLY RELIABLE SOURCE** IDENTIFIED HQ 274 (VC) REGIMENT AT 130730H AT YS343914 (.) IN VIEW OF THE CLOSE PROXIMITY OF CONTACT TO IDENTIFICATION OF HQ 274 REGIMENT YELLOW JACKET BRAVO RESPONSE INITIATED BY THIS HQ IN AREA CENTRE OF MASS YS340925 (.) RESPONSE CONTINUING

¹⁰⁵⁸ Plot by Bob Hartley.

¹⁰⁵⁹ Pseudonym for ARDF Fix.

¹⁰⁶⁰ AWM RCDIG1028295, AWM95, 1/4/231, HQ 1ATF Commanders Diary 1-31 August 1971 Annex C, F68.

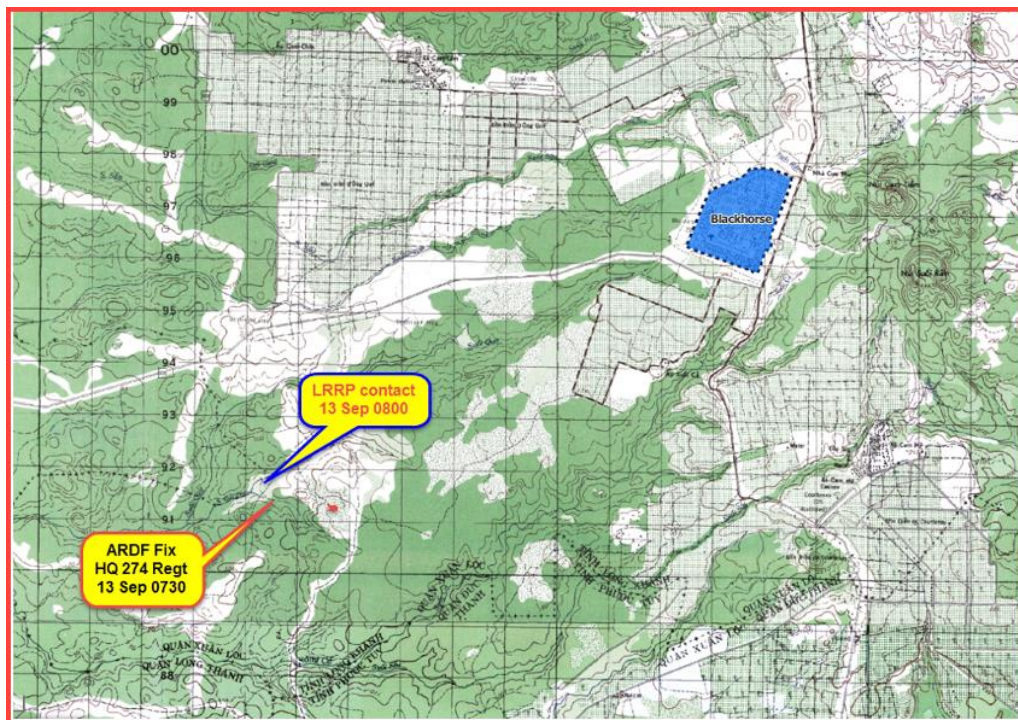


Figure 676: HQ 274 Regt ARDF Fix and LRRP contact

70.2.8.3 17 August

Yellow Jacket Weekly Operational Summary dated 17 August¹⁰⁶¹.

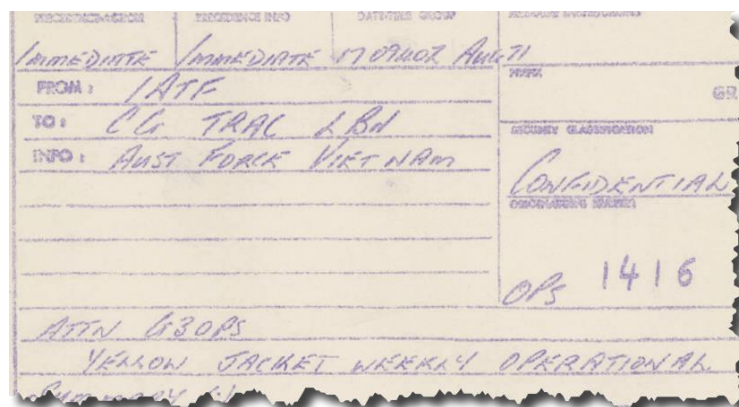


Figure 677: Yellow Jacket Summary 17 Aug 71

YELLOW JACKET WEEKLY OPERATIONAL SUMMARY (.)
ONE (.) ONE (.)
ALFA (.) NIL (.)
BRAVO (.) ONE (.)
TWO (.) YELLOW JACKET OPERATIONS BEING
CONDUCTED BY 3RRAR AGAINST D445

¹⁰⁶¹ Ibid F79.



(LF) BATTALION CONTINUES
 THREE (.) RESULTS (.)
 ALFA (.) D445 (LF) BATTALION CMM NO
 POSITIVE IDENTIFICATION OF THIS
 UNIT WAS MADE DURING THE
 REPORTING PERIOD (.)
 BRAVO (.) AT 130900H AT YS341718 LRRP
 CONTACTED EN FORCE (.) 4 VC KIA
 (BC) (.) EQPT CAPTURED INCLUDED
 TWO AK47 CMM THREE K54
 CMM EQPT AND DOCUMENTS (.) ENEMY
 IDENTIFIED AS BEING FROM HQ
 3 BN 274 (VC) REGT (.) ARTY WAS
 FIRED CMM FOUR TACTICAL AIR
 STRIKES WERE FLOWN IN SUPPORT
 OF THIS CONTACT

70.2.8.4 24 August

Yellow Jacket Weekly Operational Summary dated 24 August¹⁰⁶².

IMMEDIATE	ROUTINE	24 1600 Z Aug 71
FROM:	IATF	
TO:	CB TRAC	
INFO:	ACIST FORCE VIETNAM	
SECURITY CLASSIFICATION		GR
CONFIDENTIAL		
ORGANIZATION		
ADN 63 ORS		Op 1465
YELLOW JACKET WEEKLY OPERATIONAL SUMMARY		

Figure 678: Yellow Jacket Summary 24 Aug 71

YELLOW JACKET WEEKLY OPERATIONAL SUMMARY (.)
 ONE (.) TWO (.)
 ALFA (.) NIL (.)
 BRAVO (.) TWO (.)
 TWO (.) YELLOW JACKET OPERATION CONDUCTED BY 3RAR
 AGAINST D445 CONCLUDED 22 AUG NIL
 SIGNIFICANT RESULTS 9.0
 THREE (.) AT 200730H AT YS 356701 A PTL CONTACTED
 ONE ENEMY SUSPECTED TO BE FROM HQ 274 (VC) REGIMENT
 AT APPROXIMATELY 200900H A YELLOW JACKET BRAVO
 RESPONSE WAS CARRIED OUT AGAINST A BUNKER
 SYSTEM AT YS348902 SUSPECTED OF BEING
 OCCUPIED BY ELEMENTS OF HQ 274 (VC) REGIMENT (.) NO
 BDA/RESULTS AVAILABLE (.)
 FOUR (.) AT 231700H AT YS404824 **A USUALLY**
RELIABLE SOURCE INDICATED THE PRESENCE OF ELMS
 1 BATTALION 274 (VC) REGIMENT (.) AT 232000H AT YS401824
 A YELLOW JACKET BRAVO RESPONSE WAS INITIATED
 TO DATE NO BDA/RESULTS AVAILABLE.

¹⁰⁶² Ibid, F91.



70.2.8.5 31 August

Yellow Jacket Weekly Summary¹⁰⁶³:

PRECEDENCE	REFERENCE NO	DATE/TIME GROUP	MESSAGE INSTRUCTIONS
IMMEDIATE	ROUTINE	311600Z AUG 71	
FROM: IATF			PRER: GR
TO: C. G. TRAC			SECURITY CLASSIFICATION
INFO: AUST F. P. I. E. VIETNAM			CONFIDENTIAL
			ORIGINATOR'S NUMBER
			OPS 1502
ATTN: 63 OPS			
YELLOW JACKET WEEKLY OPERATIONAL SUMMARY (.)			

Figure 679: Yellow Jacket Summary 31 Aug 71

YELLOW JACKET WEEKLY OPERATIONAL SUMMARY (.).

ONE (.) REF OPS 1465 WEEKLY OPERATIONAL SUMMARY DATED
241600Z AUG PARA 3 AND 4 NO BDA AVAILABLE

TWO (.) NIL
ALFA NIL
BRAVO NIL

¹⁰⁶³ Ibid, F105.



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CHAPTER 71– SEPTEMBER 1971

71.1 Personnel

71.1.1 Arrivals and Departures

In September there were three arrivals and four departures.

Arrivals

2 September

Signalman Darryl Singleton

15 September

Warrant Officer Frederick Mitchener

16 September

Signalman John Fulton

Departures

9 September

Signalman Ian Hunter

16 September

Sergeant Brian Abrahamson

Corporal Patrick McGrath

23 September

Signalman Tony Arday

71.1.1.1 Employment Areas

Due to the imminent Troop departure Fred Mitchener became the Troop Logistic (Q) manager for the withdrawal. Darryl Singleton and John Fulton joined the Set Room crew.

71.2 Administration

71.2.1 Re-deployment Date Confirmed

Finally, in early September a decision was reached on the future deployment of the Troop. The Troop was ordered to redeploy to Vung Tau by 6 October.

71.2.2 Communications

There was to be no loss of communications with the Sigint community and HQ 1 ATF during the move, and the Troop was to remain in the Vung Tau area until 4 RAR was withdrawn from operational service.

71.2.3 Troop Resources

The plan allowed for the maximum use of the Troop's services until all fighting elements of the Task Force had been withdrawn.



71.2.4 Reconnaissance of New Accommodation Area

On 11 September, HQ 1ATF issued a signal for the reconnaissance of accommodation in the Vung Tau Area¹⁰⁶⁴. 547 Sig Tp was to send a representative:

MESSAGE FORM

ROUTINE 11 0200Z SEP 71 553.1.10(Q)
 FROM : 1 ATF RESTRICTED
 TO : A SQN 3 CAV REGT Q2103
 12 FD REGT
 1 FD SQN
 1 FD SQN WKSP
 21 ENGR SPTF
 104 SIG SQN
547 SIG TP
 1 AUST CA UNIT

INFO : 1 ALSG

RECCE OF ACCOMMODATION VUNG TAU AREA (.) ADDRESSEES ARE TO SEND REPS TO ALSG FOR
 RECCE OF PROPOSED ACCOMMODATION AT VUNG TAU DURING WITHDRAWAL AS FOLLOWS (.)

MON 11 SEP - 1 AUST CA UNIT
 TUES 12 SEP - 1 FD SQN CSM 1 FD SQN WKSP AND 21 ENGR SP TP
 WED 13 SEP - A SQN 3 CAV REGT
THUR 14 SEP - 104 SIGS AND 547 SIG TP
 DATE TO BE ADVISED - 12 FD REGT (.)

REPS ARE TO REPORT TO DAA&QMG HQ ALSG AT 0930 HRS ON THE DAY OF RECCE AND BE
 PREPARED TO DISCUSS ALL ASPECTS OF THEIR REQUIREMENTS FOR LIVING AND WORKING
 ACCOMMODATION WHILE IN VUNG TAU

PAGE ONE OF ONE PAGES HILDER DAQMG EBONY 52
 MAJ

Figure 680: Vung Tau Reconnaissance Signal

71.2.5 Movement Plan

On 12 September, HQ 1ATF issued the Accommodation and Movement Plan for Vung Tau¹⁰⁶⁵:

R553/1/10
 List A (4, 24, 32)
 List C

RESTRICTED

ACCOMMODATION PLAN
 VUNG TAU
 SEP 71 - DEC 71
 (Figures are approximate only)

Headquarters
 1st Australian Task Force
 NUI DAT
 12 Sep 71

Serial (a)	Unit (b)	Mov to VUNG TAU (c)	Strength				RTD RTA (h)	Method (i)	Remarks (j)
			Offr WO/Sgt (d)	OR (e)	Total (f)	(g)			
1	<u>547 Sig Tp</u>	15 Sep 71		2	3	5			Advance Party. (1)
		29 Sep 71			6	6			Advance Party. (2)
		30 Sep 71	1	6	15	22			Main Body.
		15 Oct 71		2	2	4			Rear Party. (1)
		16 Oct 71	1	1	2				Rear Party. (2)

Figure 681: Extract of Accommodation Plan

¹⁰⁶⁴ AWM RCDIG1028299 AWM95 Australian Commanders Diary 1/4/235 HQ 1 ATF Annex E 1-30 Sept 71.

¹⁰⁶⁵ Ibid.



71.2.6 Re-deployment Plans

Once the withdrawal parameters were known the first of many Troop conferences was held to plan the sequence of activities. The withdrawal plan called for a change in the day-to-day activities of the Troop to ensure that there was not any interruption to its operational role. Therefore, priorities of work had to be established.

71.2.7 Logistic Records

Fred Mitchener had the enormous job of preparing the Troop's logistic records prior to the stores returning to Australia.

71.2.8 SSL Closure and Packing

The SSL operation was to close on 15 September and Bob Watson to move to the job of the chief packer of stores. Over the next few months he became an expert in packing and juggling crates.

71.2.8.1 SSL Operators Change

SSL Operators Col Clee and Duncan Finlay redeployed to the Set Room once the SSL had been closed. It was reported that more than a few tears fell when the SSL was finally closed.

71.2.9 Troop Admin Officer Appointed

Phil Reid quickly went to work as the Troop Administration Officer and then moved to control the operations area, and work as a member of the flying team.

71.2.10 Vung Tau Location

Whilst the initial discussions with Brigadier McDonald (Comd 1ATF) were taking place, discussions commenced with Major Peter Wilkins, OC of 110 Sig Sqn at Vung Tau, into the feasibility of the Troop occupying some of his territory at Vung Tau. Peter Wilkins agreed with the proposal and two huts were made available on the eastern end of the 110 Sig Sqn complex adjacent to their receiver aerial farm. The huts had to be modified to suit the operational role of 547 Sig Tp.

71.2.10.1 OC 110 Sig Sqn Not Happy

The OC 110 Sig Sqn was not completely happy with the arrangements. Some of the discussions concerning accommodation were reported in the OC 110 Sig Sqn War Diaries [not serialised]¹⁰⁶⁶:

11 Sep.

Started clearing out huts 6, 8 and 9 ready for occupation by 547 Sig Tp, and continued doubling up the bunks in the other huts to take all the people from huts 6, 8 and 9.

¹⁰⁶⁶ <http://static.awm.gov.au/images/collection/bundled/RCDIG1030084.pdf>



12 Sep

12	Completed the clearing out of huts 8 & 9, but could not completely evacuate hut 6 - we have an influx of people & have more than we expected. Hut 6 is still partly occupied & will be full within a few weeks. Maj O'Flynn from 547 Sig Tp is unhappy about this as he wants his people in huts, not tents: will have to see what we can do for him, but am not hopeful.
----	---

14 Sep

14	Determined it was essential that we retain hut 6, and informed 547 Sig Tp. They will be conducting a recon on 15 th.
----	--

17 Sep

17	Discussed the accommodation problem on the ground with Maj O'Flynn & Capt Semple, & came up with a proposal which was acceptable to all except Maj O'Flynn ^{who} objected to hut 6 being occupied by 110 Sig Sqn personnel on security grounds. My assessment of the situation was that there was two other areas which posed more of a security risk than 110 Sig Sqn: the perimeter wire and the Sgts Mess, & therefore could not agree to let him have the hut. We agreed to disagree: he is going to take up the matter further, but in the meantime we continue to occupy hut 6.
----	--

71.2.11 Re-deployment Advance Party

On 15 September, the advance party left Nui Dat commanded by Peter Weir-Smith and Dan Mooney. Although the Troop carried no carpenters on establishment, Dan Mooney, Jim Kanowski and Jack Morgan soon became trade professionals and by 29 September the structural changes to the two buildings had been completed. New doorways, covered walkways, security fencing complete with metal gates and office partitions were some of the works undertaken by the advance party.

71.2.11.1 Techs Hard At It

Peter and Barry Wilson worked feverishly on the technical side of the new site and established all aerials, electrical circuits and lighting that were required.

71.2.11.2 Communications Centre

The communications centre had to be sealed and air conditioned with the circuits ready to take over from Nui Dat by 1 October.



71.2.12 New Site Ready

By sheer hard work and determination by the advance party the new site was in readiness by that time.

71.2.13 Conflict Continued

There was still some conflict with 110 Sig Sqn re accommodation and HQ 1ATF directed HQ ALSG to take action¹⁰⁶⁷:

PRECEDENCE ACTION ROUTINE		PRECEDENCE INFO		DATE-TIME GROUP 180219 Z		MESSAGE NUMBER	
FROM: /ATF				PREFIX GR			
TO: /ALSG				SECURITY CLASSIFICATION RESTD			
INFO: 110 SIG SQN				OPERATOR'S INITIALS			
547 SIG TP				G1605			
52 110 X							
INTERFUSE ○ ACQN OF 547 SIG TP ○ OG 547 SIG TP ADVISES HIS AGREED ACQN PLAN WITH 110 SIG SQN NOW PREJUDICED BY INFLOW OF REPLACEMENTS TO 110 SQN ○ 547 TP OPS ARE VITAL AND SECURITY OF THEIR AREA ALSO OF PARAMOUNT IMPORTANCE ○ RECOMMEND MOST STRONGLY THAT BLDG NO 6 BE ALLOCATED TO 547 TP IN PREVIOUSLY AGREED SO THAT PROXIMITY OF TP LIVING ACQN TO WORK AREA CAN ASSIST IN SECURITY							
PAGE 1 OF 1 PAGES TJS REFERENCE 553-1-10 CLASSIFIED ☐ CONF ☐ INFO							
DRAFT		DRAFT'S NAME WEIR		DRAFT		REL. NO. Ebony 29	
FOR OPERATOR'S USE				RELEASING OFFICER'S SIGNATURE N. Weir Col			
DATE	TIME	SYSTEM	OPERATOR	DATE	TIME	SYSTEM	OPERATOR
R				D			

Figure 682: HQ 1ATF direction to HQ ALSG for 110 Sig Sqn

¹⁰⁶⁷ AWM RCDIG1028298, AWM95, 1/4/234, HQ 1ATF Commanders Diary, Annex C, 1 – 30 Sept 1971, F92.



71.2.14 110 Sig Sqn Compliance

The following entry dated 26 September was reported in the OC 110 Sig Sqn War Diaries¹⁰⁶⁸:

26	547 Sig Tp, Maj O'Flynn & OC 104 Sig Sqn Maj Roberts on arrangements relating to the withdrawal from Nui Dat. Reached agreement with 547 on accommodation: a mutually satisfactory arrangement suspiciously close to the proposal we had originally submitted, but face was saved all round.
----	--

71.2.15 Last Social Function at Nui Dat

On 26 September prior to the move of the main body, the last social function was held in the Troop Club. It was a colourful evening and a fitting end to the Club. Films were shown to mark the occasion; the comments made during the showing proved more noteworthy than the films.

71.2.15.1 Guest

The OC 110 Sig Sqn who was a guest at the function made the following remarks in his war diaries¹⁰⁶⁹:

Attended the closure of the 547 Sig Tp JRC (Junior Ranks Club) as a member of the Signals Censorship Board, to view the supply of films which had been obtained for the evening. Unfortunately for other prospective viewers, all films were censored and declared unsuitable for the Australian circuit, but only after some of the films had been re-screened to confirm our opinions.
--

71.2.15.2 Club Auction

An auction was held for some of the Troop's property that was not required to be sent back to Australia. Exorbitant prices were paid and Herbie O'Flynn's moustache fetched \$10 from Ron Hall and \$25 from Jim Kanowski who delighted in shaving it off - one half at a time. The profits from the night were put toward the Troop's final party at Vung Tau.

71.2.16 Main Body Move

On 29 September the main body commenced the move to Vung Tau.

¹⁰⁶⁸ <http://static.awm.gov.au/images/collection/bundled/RCDIG1030084.pdf>

¹⁰⁶⁹ <http://static.awm.gov.au/images/collection/bundled/RCDIG1030084.pdf>



71.3 Operations

71.3.1 547 Sig Tp Operation Report for September 1971

The 547 Sig Tp Op Report for Sep 71¹⁰⁷⁰ stated:

*S E C R E T COMINT CHANELS
SIGS684*

FOR MI8. OP REPORT SEPTEMBER 1971.

ONE. WATCH HOURS. NO CHANGE

TWO. COVER AS AT 30 SEP 71,

ALPHA. TWENTY TWO (22) PRIORITY TASKS.

BRAVO. THREE (3) PRIORITY DEV TASKS.

THREE . GENERAL.

*ALPHA, EN LOCS AND MOVS. AFTER AN ABSENCE OF COMMS
ACTIVITY FOR TWO MONTHS CONI 2 BN 274 REGT WAS LOCATED BETWEEN 1-16 SEP
IN ITS TRADITIONAL AO NORTHWEST OF THE PROVINCE BORDER CMM AFTER WHICH
THE STATION ONCE MORE WENT SILENT. THE 1ST BN 274 REGT RELOCATED FROM
THE NORTH WESTERN BORDER AREA TO 10 KM NORTH EAST AND IS NOW OUTSIDE
THE NORTH WESTERN BORDER AREA TO 10 KM NORTH EAST AND IS NOW OUTSIDE
THE 1ATF TAOI. ON 18/19 SEP BOTH HQ 33 NVA REGT AND 3RD BN 33 NVA
REGT RELOCATED TO NORTHERN PHUOC TUY IN A KM OVERNIGHT MOVE. OTHER
TERMINALS REMAINED STABLE.*

*BRAVO. 1ATF REACTION. THE RELOCATION OF REGT HQ AND 3RD BN OF 33 REGT
(AS FIXED BY ARDF ON 18 SEP WHICH CONFIRMED VR RESULTS) **PRECIPITATED
OPERATION IVANHOE ON 19 SEP.** IN A SERIES OF CONTACTS (SOME WITHIN
100 YDS OF ARDF FIXES) OVER THE PERIOD OF THE OPERATION 22 EN WERE
CONFIRMED KIA WITH 5 AUST KIA AND 24 WIA, THE TERMINALS WERE NEXT
LOCATED BY ARDF AT THE END OF THE MONTH ONCE MORE NORTH OF THE
PROVINCE BORDER.*

*CHARLIE. DEVELOPMENT. TA HAS RESULTED IN THE ISOLATION OF A RECENTLY
ACTIVATED COMMS NETWORK. A TERMINAL LOCATED ON 22 SEP IN NORTHERN
PROVINCE BORDER AREA HAS BEEN FOUND TO CONTROL AT LEAST SEVEN OUTSTATIONS.
AND THE MATRIX TYPE LOW GRADE SYSTEM USED WAS QUICKLY SOLVED IN
COUNTRY, CONTROL HAS BEEN IDENTIFIED AS A FORWARD HEADQUARTERS
(POSSIBLY OF BA LONG) WITH SEVERAL DISTRICT UNITS AND AN UNIDENTIFIED
SUBORDINATE. THIS DEVELOPMENT HAS SUPPLIED FURTHER INFO OF THE
CURRENT REORG OF THE MILITARY REGION DOWN TO DISTRICT LEVEL.*

FOUR. DIRECTION FINDING,

ALPHA, ARDF

(1) TOTAL FIXES 116.

(2) GRADINGS. GOOD 23. FAIR 64. POOR 17. CUTS 12.

*(3) PERSONNEL. HOWELL FLYMN ARDAY ELWORTHY HAMPTON MARSHALL,
UNDER TRAINING REID.*

*(4) TWO AIRCRAFT WERE ROSTERED BETWEEN 1*103 SEP FOR SPECIAL EMPHASIS
ON. HQ 33 REGT AND 1 BN 274 REGT. TWO AIRCRAFT WERE THEN USED FOR DAILY
EARLY MORNING MISSIONS ONLY IN ORDER TO ENABLE ALL ACTIVITY TO BE*

¹⁰⁷⁰ DSD Declassified, 547 Sig Tp in Vietnam (tranche2).



COVERED.

(5) ABORTED/REDUCED MISSIONS DUE TO WEATHER CONTINUES TO INCREASE.
AIRCRAFT REMAIN IN AIR AND PROVIDE TIP OFF SERVICE WHEN CLOUD
COVER PREVENTS FIXES BEING OBTAINED,

BRAVO. SSL.

(1) **SSL CLOSED PERMANENTLY ON 15 SEP 71** AND WAS PACKED FOR
SHIPMENT TO WRE,
(2) EQPT CONTINUED TO SHOW MINUS DEVIATION ON BEARING AND CONTINUED
TO MAINTAIN WATCH ON TARGETS OF LOW ACTIVITY.

FIVE. RELOCATION. **ADVANCE PARTY RELOCATED 15 SEP TO PREPARE NEW SITE.**
AERIALS RE ERECTED AND BUILDINGS PARTITIONED AND WIRED FOR OCCUPATION.
FIVE POSITIONS RELOCATED 29 SEP AND DUPLICATED COVER UNTIL
301700 HRS AT WHICH TIME SETROOM AT VUNG TAU ASSUMED RESPONSIBILITY
FOR COVER.

SIX. INTENTIONS, **REMAINING POSITIONS TO RELOCATED 1 OCT 71 WITH**
MAIN BODY. COMCEN VUNG TAU TO ASSUME RESPONSIBILITY AT 011200 HRS OCT.
REAR PARTY AND INT CELL TO REMAIN OLD LOCATION UNTIL AREA TIDIED
AND STORES PACKED (REAR PARTY) AND TP HQ RELOCATES TO VUNG TAU
(INT CELL),

71.3.2 ARDF Flying Hours

In September the ARDF aircraft flew 318.5 hours in 164 sorties. The aircraft also flew for one hour on a night sortie.¹⁰⁷¹

The total ARDF flying hours for the month were¹⁰⁷²:

Year	Month	Flying hours	Total Fixes	Good <1000mts	Fair 1-2000Mts	Poor >2000 Mts	Cut	Missions Lost	Remarks
1971	Sep	318.5	116	23	64	17	12	5	Two aircraft at times

The ARDF Report for September stated¹⁰⁷³:

Personnel

W01 Reid
Ssgt Howell (IC)
Sgt Flynn
Sig Arday
Sig Elworthy
Sig Hampton
Sig Marshall

Movement of Personnel

Sig Arday to Set Room 20 Sept 71 (RTA 24 Sep ?)
W01 Reid commences intermittent trg 3 Sep 71.
Sig Elworthy qualified 29 Sep 71.

¹⁰⁷¹ <http://www.awm.gov.au/collection/records/awm95/8/1/>

¹⁰⁷² Compiled from MI8 Records held at ASD archives.

¹⁰⁷³ Ibid.



Sig Hampton qualified 29 Sep 71.

Break-Down of Missions

Missions flown with fixes obtained	91
Missions flown no fixes obtained	68
Missions aborted	6
 Total missions flown	 159
 Total missions rostered	 165
 Missions reduced	 8
Missions reduced with fixes obtained	2

Grading of Fixes

Good	23	(0000-0750 Metres)
Fair	64	(1000-2000 Metres)
Poor	17	(2000 Metres and above)
Cuts	12	(Area indication only)

Total fixes 116

Details of Reduced/Aborted Missions due to Inclement weather

1 Sep 71	PM Missions four	Reduced
11 Sep 71	PM Mission seven	Aborted
19 Sep 71	PM Mission five	Aborted
23 Sep 71	PM Mission four	Reduced
25 Sep 71	PM Mission four	Reduced
25 Sep 71	PM Mission five	Aborted
27 Sep 71	PM Mission five	Reduced
28 Sep 71	PM Mission four	Reduced
29 Sep 71	PM Mission five	Aborted

Details of Reduced/Aborted Missions due to equipment/Aircraft malfunction

2 Sep 71 PM Mission seven Reduced
 15 Sep 71 AM Mission one Reduced
 20 Sep 71 AM Mission one Aborted
 26 Sep 71 PM Mission four Aborted
 27 Sep 71 AM Mission one Reduced

Comment. Extra missions rostered utilizing two aircraft on Sep 1,2,5,7,8,9, and 10 for special emphasis on HQ 33 Regt and 1 Bn 274 Regt. Extra missions rostered utilizing two aircraft on 24 Sep 71 for special emphasis on HQ 33 Regt and 3 Bn 33 Regt.



71.3.3 Summary of Main ARDF Fixes

The following table is a summary of the main ARDF fixes for September 1971¹⁰⁷⁴:

Date	Loc	Unit
01-Sep-71	YS310988	HQ 274 Regt
01-Sep-71	YS415981	2/274 Regt, Poss Bn CP
01-Sep-71	YS406914	1/274 Regt, Poss Bn CP
02-Sep-71	YS428993	2/274 Regt, Poss Bn CP
02-Sep-71	YS426877	1/274 Regt, Poss Bn CP
03-Sep-71	YT418011	2/274 Regt, Poss Bn CP
03-Sep-71	YS360959	Elms HQ 274 Regt
03-Sep-71	YT356036	Elms HQ 274 Regt
04-Sep-71	YT815144	HQ MR7
05-Sep-71	YS399889	1/274 Regt, Poss Bn CP
05-Sep-71	YT776135	HQ BA LONG Prov
05-Sep-71	YS693991	U/I EN UNIT
06-Sep-71	YS409912	1/274 Regt, Poss Bn CP
06-Sep-71	YT398024	2/274 Regt, Poss Bn CP
06-Sep-71	YS397978	HQ 274 Regt, Poss Regt CP
06-Sep-71	YT836092	HQ MR7
07-Sep-71	YT412026	2/274 Regt, Poss Bn CP
07-Sep-71	YS399883	1/274 Regt, Poss Bn CP
07-Sep-71	YT802151	HQ MR7
07-Sep-71	YS405983	HQ 274 Regt, Poss Regt CP
07-Sep-71	YT793142	HQ BA LONG Prov
08-Sep-71	YS372901	1/274 Regt, Poss Bn CP
08-Sep-71	YT402032	2/274 Regt, Poss Bn CP
08-Sep-71	YS386965	HQ 274 Regt, Poss Regt CP
08-Sep-71	YT726067	HQ BA LONG Prov, Poss Prov Comm
08-Sep-71	YS568998	U/I
09-Sep-71	YS391928	Elms 1 BN 274 Regt
09-Sep-71	YS379907	Elms 1 BN 274 Regt
09-Sep-71	YT423015	2/274 Regt, Poss Bn CP
09-Sep-71	YS399984	HQ 274 Regt, Poss Regt CP
09-Sep-71	YT803152	HQ BA LONG Prov

¹⁰⁷⁴ Compiled by Bob Hartley from Bennington, S. (Curator - Official History), Vietnam Battle Intelligence Computer data tapes – Part 2, Australian War Memorial – Canberra, 19 November 2014./ No Monthly ARDF Reports available possible. The data tapes may only include fixes from SPAR reports signalled to HQ1ATF.



Date	Loc	Unit
10-Sep-71	YS413908	1/274 Regt, Poss Bn CP
10-Sep-71	YT395008	2/274 Regt, Poss Bn CP
10-Sep-71	YS645948	HQ 33 NVA Regt, Poss Regt CP
10-Sep-71	YS382964	HQ 274 Regt, Poss Regt CP
11-Sep-71	YS444902	1/274 Regt, Poss Bn CP
11-Sep-71	YT407008	2/274 Regt, Poss Bn CP
12-Sep-71	YT405027	2/274 Regt, Poss Bn CP
12-Sep-71	YS396963	HQ 274 Regt, Poss Regt CP
12-Sep-71	YT788122	HQ BA LONG Prov
12-Sep-71	YS486504	LONG DAT Dist Unit
13-Sep-71	YT227110	HQ 74 Arty Regt, Poss Regt CP
13-Sep-71	YS483504	LONG DAT Dist Unit
13-Sep-71	YS403907	1 BN 274 Regt, Poss Bn CP
13-Sep-71	YS378959	HQ 274 Regt, Poss Regt CP
14-Sep-71	YT431005	HQ 274 Regt, Poss Regt CP
14-Sep-71	YT406032	2/274 Regt, Poss Bn CP
15-Sep-71	YT392035	2/274 Regt, Poss Bn CP
15-Sep-71	YT793151	HQ BA LONG Prov
15-Sep-71	YS480927	1/274 Regt, Poss Bn CP
15-Sep-71	YS221753	U/I
15-Sep-71	YS360938	HQ 274 Regt, Poss Regt CP
15-Sep-71	YS225880	3/274 Regt, Poss Bn CP
16-Sep-71	YS488944	1/274 Regt, Poss Bn CP
16-Sep-71	YS485502	LONG DAT Dist Unit
16-Sep-71	YT402015	2/274 Regt, Poss Bn CP
17-Sep-71	YS220880	3/274 Regt, Poss Bn CP
17-Sep-71	YS485928	1/274 Regt
17-Sep-71	YS387982	Pos Elems HQ 274 Regt
17-Sep-71	YS393971	Pos Elems HQ 274 Regt
17-Sep-71	YT789141	HQ MR7
18-Sep-71	YS513922	3 BN 33 NVA Regt
18-Sep-71	YT567143	2 BN 33 NVA Regt, Poss Bn CP
18-Sep-71	YS542825	HQ 33 NVA Regt
18-Sep-71	YS509980	1 BN 274 Regt
19-Sep-71	YS492957	1 BN 274 Regt
19-Sep-71	YS498855	3 BN 33 NVA Regt
19-Sep-71	YT803123	HQ MR7
19-Sep-71	YT574145	2 BN 33 NVA Regt, Poss Bn CP
19-Sep-71	YS485485	LONG DAT Dist Unit
20-Sep-71	YS483832	HQ 33 NVA Regt



Date	Loc	Unit
20-Sep-71	YS488849	Pos Elems 3 BN 33 NVA Regt
20-Sep-71	YS509854	Pos Elems 3 BN 33 NVA Regt
20-Sep-71	YS506868	Pos Elems 3 BN 33 NVA Regt
20-Sep-71	YT390002	HQ 274 Regt, Poss Regt CP
20-Sep-71	YS502971	1 BN 274 Regt
21-Sep-71	YS483948	1/274 Regt
21-Sep-71	YS360991	HQ 274 Regt
21-Sep-71	YS504852	3/33 NVA Regt
21-Sep-71	YS523877	HQ 33 NVA Regt
21-Sep-71	YT803144	HQ BA LONG Prov
22-Sep-71	YS497982	1/274 Regt
22-Sep-71	YS354960	HQ 274 Regt
22-Sep-71	YT779104	HQ MR7
23-Sep-71	YS352952	HQ 274 Regt
23-Sep-71	YS482981	1/274 Regt
24-Sep-71	YS467930	1/274 Regt
24-Sep-71	YT830178	HQ BA LONG Prov
25-Sep-71	YS465964	1/274 Regt
25-Sep-71	YS402958	HQ 274 Regt
26-Sep-71	YS475960	1/274 Regt
26-Sep-71	YS413939	HQ 274 Regt
26-Sep-71	YT787070	HQ BA LONG Prov
27-Sep-71	YS408977	1/274 Regt
27-Sep-71	YS408977	HQ 274 Regt
27-Sep-71	YT545007	3/33 NVA Regt
28-Sep-71	YS371958	1/274 Regt
28-Sep-71	YS371958	HQ 274 Regt
28-Sep-71	YT524013	3/33 NVA Regt
28-Sep-71	YT825147	HQ MR7
29-Sep-71	YS488961	1/274 Regt
29-Sep-71	YS380965	HQ 274 Regt
29-Sep-71	YT569004	3/33 NVA Regt
29-Sep-71	YT572000	HQ 33 NVA Regt
30-Sep-71	YS505963	1/274 Regt
30-Sep-71	YS556985	HQ 33 NVA Regt
30-Sep-71	YT497193	2/33 NVA Regt
30-Sep-71	YS577975	3/33 NVA Regt

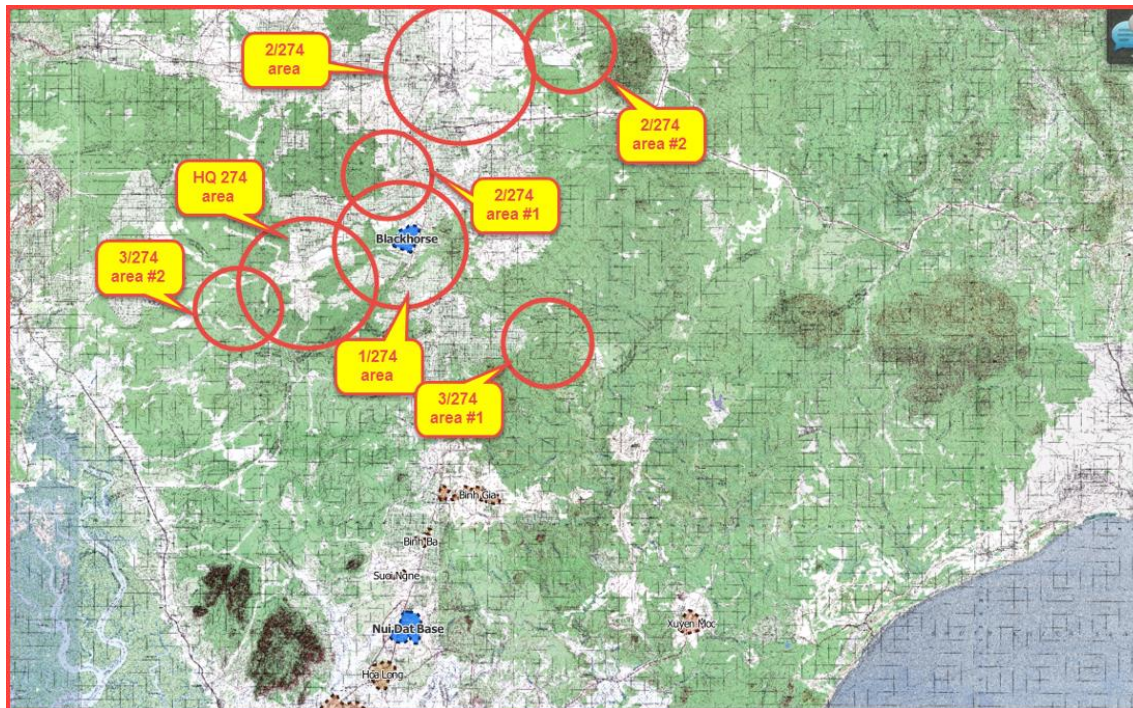


Figure 683: 274 Regt general locations by ARDF Fixes - September¹⁰⁷⁵

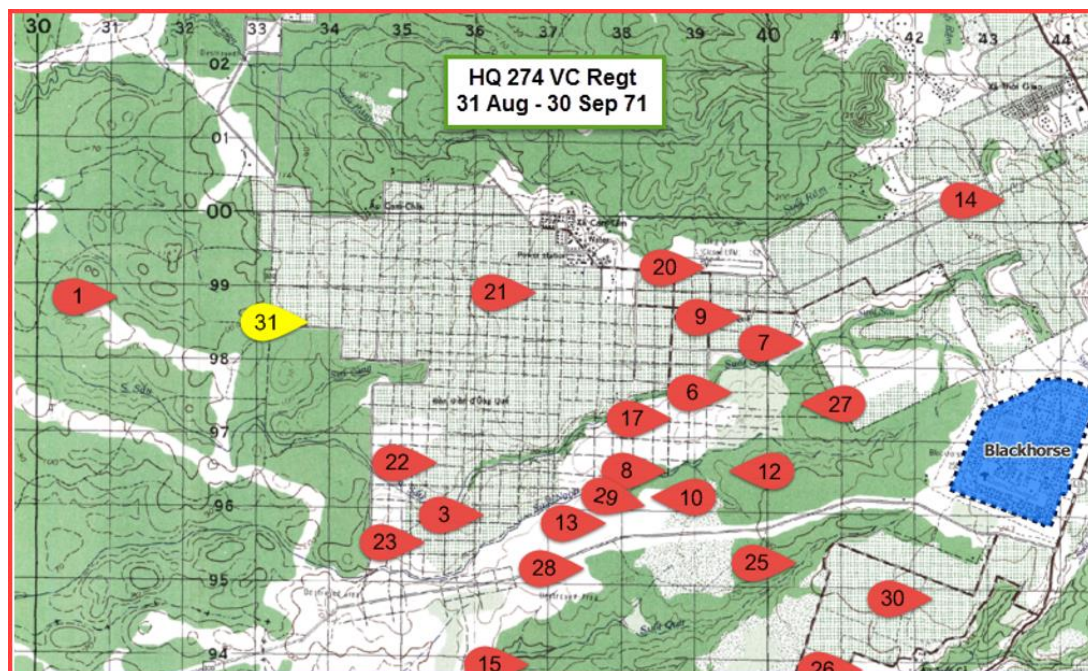


Figure 684: HQ 274 Regt ARDF fixes - Sep

¹⁰⁷⁵ Plots compiled by Bob Hartley from SPAR reports supplied by AWM. In 1971, a "Battle Intelligence Computer Trial" was conducted at HQ 1 ATF with entries from the Intelligence Log and SPAR locations of NVA/VC units typed into a PDP-8/L computer. Earlier, as an aid to the analysis of enemy data – eg pattern analysis of locations, teletypewriters and printers had been used to manage information. In 2014, Australian War Memorial staff were able to recover data from the computer tapes – see: Bennington, S. (Curator - Official History), Vietnam Battle Intelligence Computer data tapes – Part 2, Australian War Memorial – Canberra, 19 November 2014. Maps courtesy of <https://vietnam.unsw.adfa.edu.au/battlemap>.

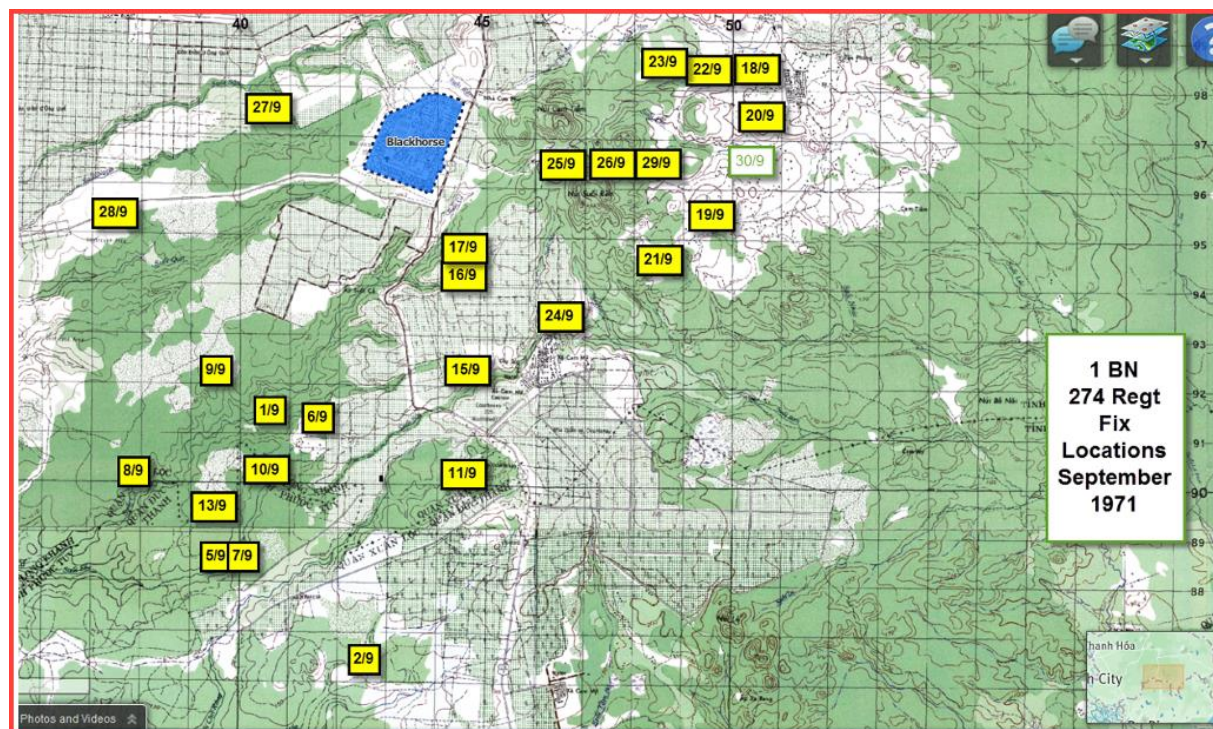


Figure 685: 1 Bn 274 Regt ARDF fixes - September

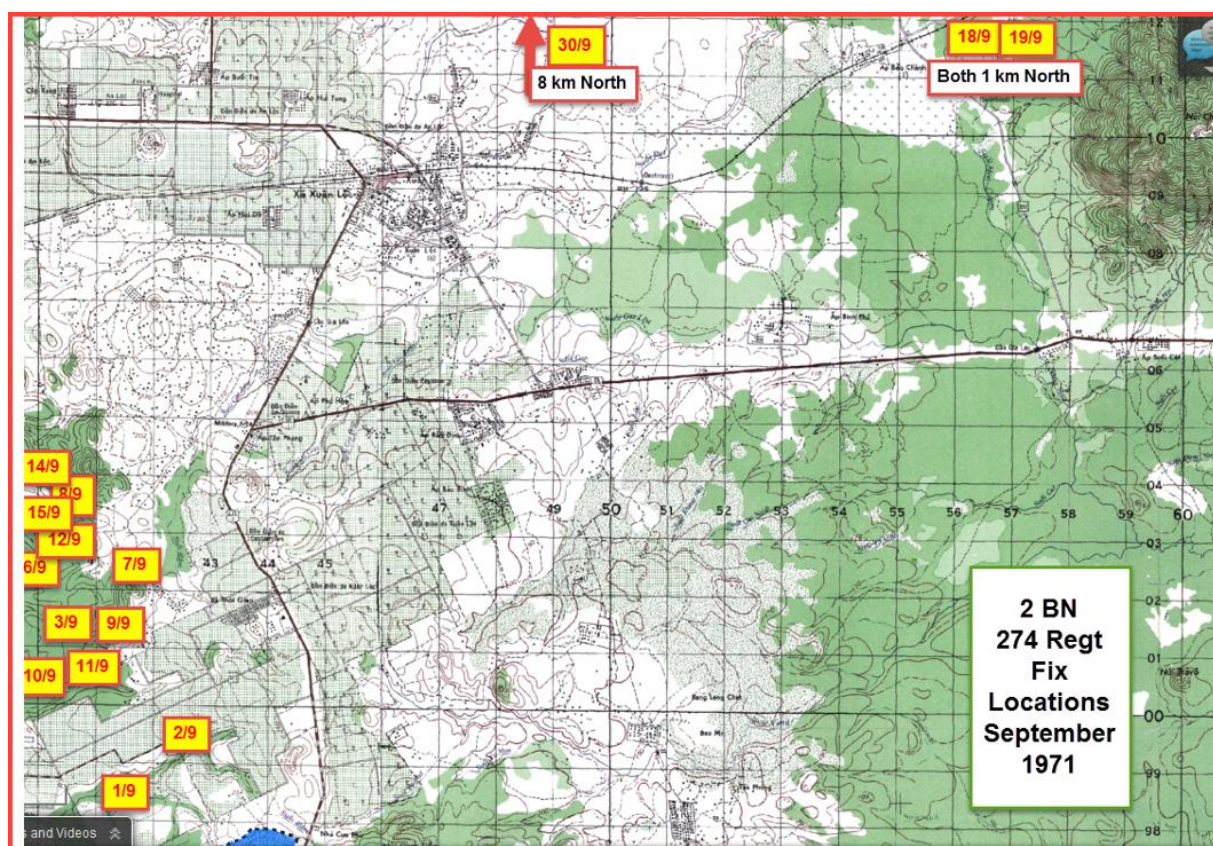


Figure 686: 2 Bn 274 Regt Fixes - Sep

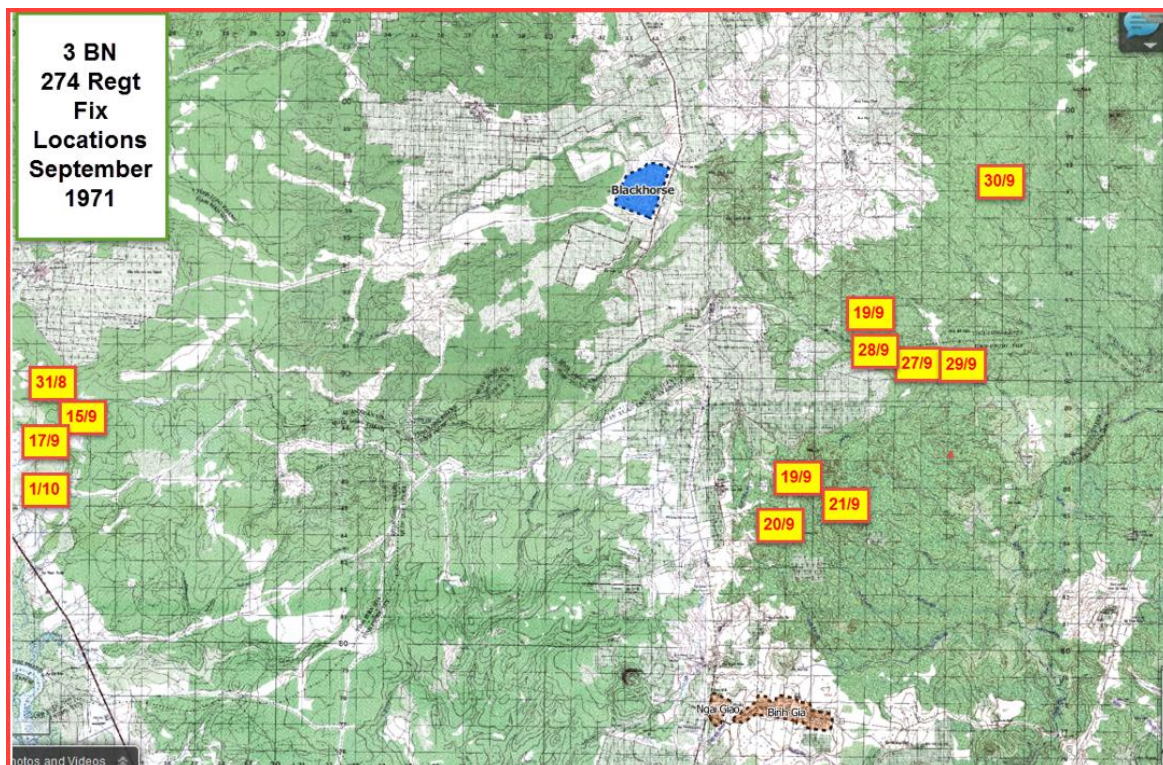


Figure 687: 3 Bn 274 Regt Fixes – Aug to Oct

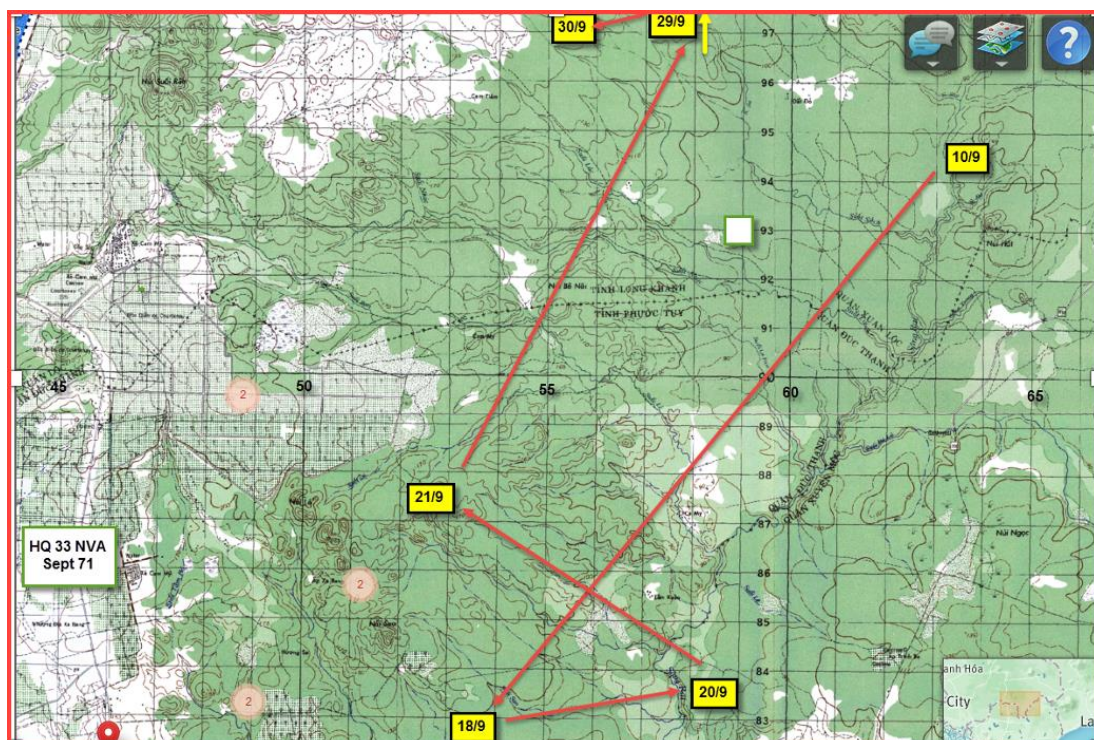


Figure 688: Locations and movement of HQ 33 NVA Regt - Sep

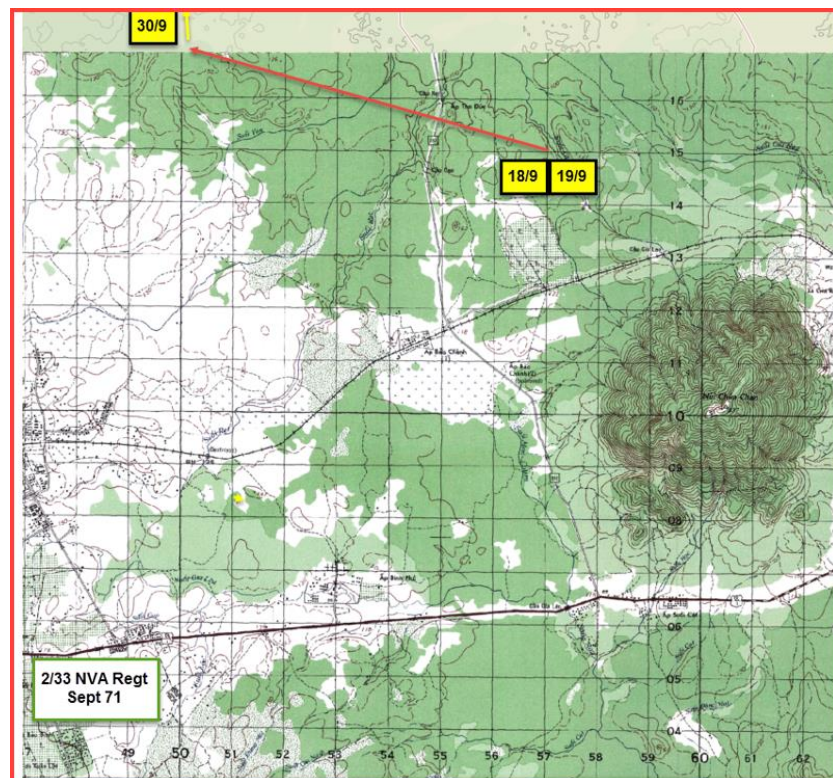


Figure 689" Locations and movement of 2 BN 33 Regt - Sep

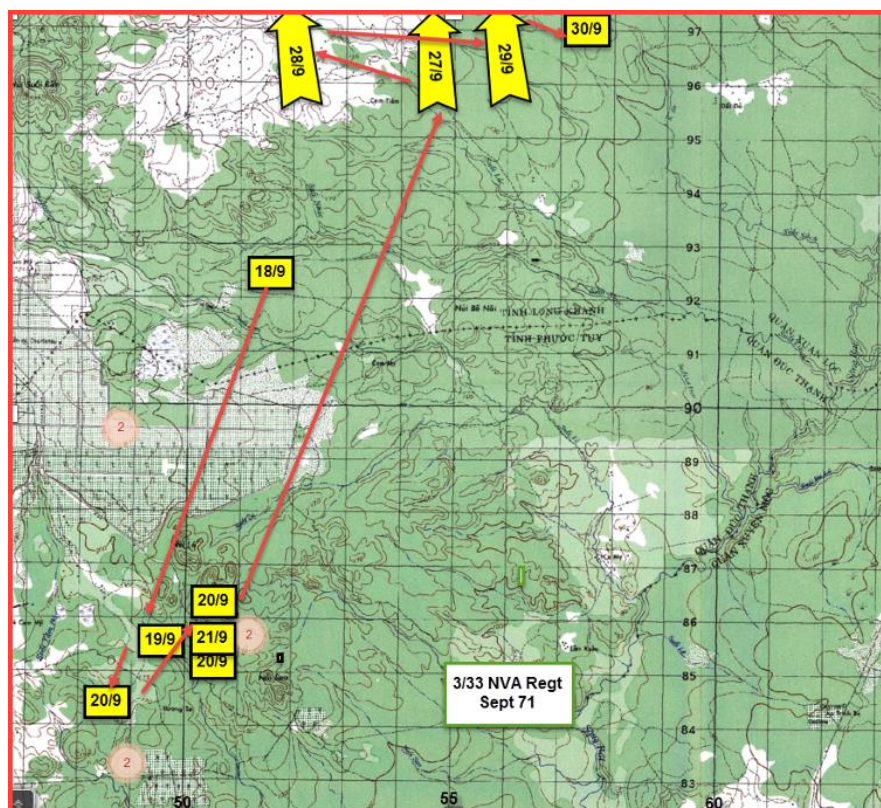


Figure 690: Locations and movement of 3 BN 33 Regt - Sep



71.3.4 Operation Yellow Jacket

71.3.4.1 19 September

On 19 September, HQ 1ATF advised CG TRAC, HQ AFV and 3 Bde 1st (US) Cav Div that 1 ATF elements would be deploying based on 'usually reliable Intelligence Reports'¹⁰⁷⁶. The signal was subsequently reissued as Yellow Jacket.

PRECEDENCE-ACTION	PRECEDENCE INFO	DATE-TIME GROUP	MESSAGE DISPOSITIONS
IMMEDIATE		190630 Z	(SEP 71)
FROM: 1ATF			PRIME
TO: CG TRAC			GR
INFO ARKFORGE VIETNAM			SECURITY CLASSIFICATION
3 BDE 1st (US) CAV DIV (AM)			SECRET
			ORIGINATOR NUMBER
			OPS 1611
REDEPLOYMENT OF 1ATF (.)			

Figure 691: Redeployment of 1ATF Assets

REDEPLOYMENT OF 1ATF (.)

- ONE (.) AT 190230H SEP71 XA BANG RF POST (YS453841) RECEIVED AN ATTACK BY FIRE CMM A TOTAL OF 6 X 75 MM RCL RDS AND 15X82 MM MOR RDS WERE FIRED RESULTING IN THE COMPOUND RECEIVING 2X82MM MORS AND 2X75 MM RCL RDS CMM 3 RF WERE WIA (.) AT 190315H SEP71 NGAI GIAO HAMLET (YS4679) WAS ENTERED BY 10 – 12 VC CMM A GRENADE WAS THROWN THE VC WERE ENGAGED BY A RF PATROL AND WITHDREW POSSIBLY WEST CMM THERE WERE NO FRIENDLY AND UNKNOWN EN CASUALTIES (.)
- TWO (.) **USUALLY RELIABLE INTELLIGENCE REPORTS** ON THE 18 SEP71 STATED THAT ELMS OF 274 (VC) REGT AND 33 (NVA) REGT WERE LOC IN THE NORTH EAST OF DUC THANH DISTRICT CENTRE OF MASS (YS5486)
- THREE (.) AS A RESULT OF THE ABOVE 1ATF WILL DEPLOY ON THE 19 AND 20 SEP AS FOLLOWS CLN ALFA (.) FSB ESTB AT YS5981 (FSB MAREE) 19 SEP 71 (.) BRAVO (.) 3 RAR TO DEPLOY ASAP FROM AREA EAST OF XUYEN MOC TO AREA WEST OF CU MY CENTRE OF MASS (YS5487) AND COMMENCE SEARCHING (.) CHARLIE (.) 4 RAR/NZ (ANZAC) TO REDEPLOY ASAP TO AREA NUI SAO CENTRE OF MASS (YS5287) (.) DELTA (.) FSB SHIRLEY (YS7267 WILL CLOSE 20SEP71 (.)

FOUR (.) OP ORDER TO FOLLOW

¹⁰⁷⁶ Pseudonym for ARDF Fix.



71.3.4.2 19 Sep Additional Info

PRECEDENCE	PRECEDENCE INFO	DATE-TIME GROUP	MESSAGE INSTRUCTIONS
IMMEDIATE		19 1200 Z	
FROM:	1ATF		PRIO
TO:	CG TRAC		GR
INFO:	ACIST FORCE VIETNAM		SECURITY CLASSIFICATION
			CONFIDENTIAL
			ORIGINATOR'S NUMBER
			OPS 1614
ATTN 030PS (.)			
YELLOW JACKET OPERATIONAL SUMMARY			

Figure 692: Yellow Jacket Signal 19 Sept

YELLOW JACKET OPERATION (.).

- ONE (.) **USUALLY RELIABLE SOURCE** ON 18 SEP 71 STATES
ELEMENTS OF 3 BATTALION 33 NVA REGIMENT IN
GENERAL AREA YS4986 (.)
- TWO (.) ON 17 SEP 1ATF MOUNTED A CATEGORY A RESPONSE CMM.
WITH MISSION OF DESTROYING ENEMY ELEMENTS CMM IN
AREA CENTRE OF MASS YS 5476 (.)
- THREE (.) RESULTS TO FOLLOW

71.3.4.3 22 SEP

PRECEDENCE	PRECEDENCE INFO	DATE-TIME GROUP	MESSAGE INSTRUCTIONS
IMMEDIATE		22 0200Z SEP 71	
FROM:	1ATF		PRIO
TO:	CG TRAC		GR
INFO:	ACIST FORCE VIETNAM		SECURITY CLASSIFICATION
			CONFIDENTIAL
			ORIGINATOR'S NUMBER
			OPS 1642
YELLOW JACKET WEEKLY OPERATIONAL SUMMARY			

Figure 693: Yellow Jacket Signal 19 Sept

- ONE. ONE.
ALFA. ONE
BRAVO. ONE



TWO. ON 18 SEP USUALLY RELIABLE SOURCE STATE
ELEMENS 33 NVA REGT IN AREA YS5082,
ON 19 AND 20 SEP OPERATION BY 3RAR AND
4RAR/NZ/ANZAC MOUNTED IN GERNERAL AREA,
ON 21 SEP HEAVY CONTACT IN AREA YS5181 WITH
SUSPECTED ELEMENTS OF 33 NVA REG. OPERATION
CONTINUING WITH AKFA AND BRAVO RESPNSES.
RESULT TO FOLLOW

71.3.4.4 30 Sep Summary

REFERENCE ACTION	REFERENCE INFO	DATE-TIME GROUP	MESSAGE OPERATIONAL
ROUTINE	—	30 0 00 25 SEP 71	
FROM:	IATF		PRIO: 62
TO:	C 4 TRAC		SECURITY CLASSIFICATION
INFO:	HIST FORCE VIETNAM		CONFIDENTIAL
			OPERATIONAL NUMBER
			OPS 1693
ANN 630PS			
YELLOW JACKET OPERATIONAL SUMMARY			

Figure 694: Yellow Jacket Summary 30 Sep 71

YELLOW JACKET OPERATIONAL SUMMARY

- ONE (.) OPERATIONS AGAINST ELMS OF 33 NVA REGT
CONTINUED IN AREA NORTH EAST OF DUC
THANH YS5385 (.)
- TWO (.) RESULTS TO DATE CMM EN CASUALTIES 12 VC KIA
9VC KBA (.)



71.4 Operation Ivanhoe

71.4.1 Overview

Operation Ivanhoe (the Battle of Nui Le) was conducted from 18 September to 2 October. On the morning of 21 September, D Company 4 RAR/NZ somehow evaded an ambush and then contacted 2 Battalion (2/33 NVA) and its Regimental Headquarters in their bunker systems to the north-east of Nui Sao. During the morning, while withdrawing from its ambush position, 3 Battalion (3/33 NVA) was itself contacted by a platoon from B Company 4 RAR/NZ which had been following an insulated communication wire. In the afternoon, as D Company 4 RAR/NZ moved south, it bumped into Headquarters 33 NVA Regiment which had advised its 3 Battalion (3/33 NVA) to move north to provide assistance. B Company 4 RAR/NZ was also engaged by 3 Battalion (3/33 NVA) as it withdrew to the north. Further contacts ensued during the night of 21 September and the morning of 22 September¹⁰⁷⁷.

71.4.2 Battle of Nui Le

The Battle of Nui Le was the last major battle fought by the Australian Army in South Vietnam, on 21 September 1971 in Phuc Tuy Province. The battle was fought between B and D Companies of the 4RAR/NZ Battalion and elements of the 33rd Regiment of the North Vietnamese Army during Operation Ivanhoe. After a number of hours of fighting, the elements of the 33rd Regiment pulled out of the bunker system and moved north after recovering all the dead and wounded they could carry. The Australian wounded were evacuated by helicopter in the morning of 22 September. Five Australians were killed and 30 wounded. Total NVA losses were unknown; however, fourteen bodies were found on the battlefield.

Extract from the *Australian Army Official History*¹⁰⁷⁸:

In the second week of Sept 1971, signals intelligence indicated that 33 Regt was moving from southern Long Khanh into the northern part of Phuc Tuy, which 4RAR/NZ had dominated since the end of Operation Overlord.

Brigadier McDonald knew the task force had to respond.

On 19 September, the task force mounted Operation Ivanhoe south of the Courtenay Plantation.

On 19 September, as the forward platoons of Delta Company 4RAR/NZ patrolled through the dark forest, they were advised that signals intercepts had detected two radios, possibly indicating two enemy battalions close by. Soldiers were on edge and moving cautiously.

The Battle of Nui Le/Nui Sao - 4RAR versus 33rd NVA Regt elements broke out on 21 Sept to the east of Route 2.

The Book *Vietnam: The complete story of the Australian War*¹⁰⁷⁹ reported:

¹⁰⁷⁷ Picken, Bruce. *Fire Support Base Vietnam*. Big Sky Publishing. Kindle Edition. Chapter 13.

¹⁰⁷⁸ Extracts from *Fighting to the Finish The Australian Army and the Vietnam War 1968 - 1975* by Ashley Ekins with Ian McNeil. Allen & Unwin in association with the Australian War Memorial, pages 610-612.

¹⁰⁷⁹ McKay, Gary; Davies, Bruce (2012-07-25). *Vietnam: The complete story of the Australian war* (Kindle Location 9724). Allen and Unwin. Kindle Edition.



Major Jerry Taylor (OC D Coy) moved his company off at 0800 hours on 19 September to begin the hunt when, after a few minutes, **he received the first of two coded radio messages that told him:**

A Task Force signals intelligence intercept put the company within 500 metres of an enemy radio set. Twenty minutes later a second message was received . . . D Company, it said, were within 500 metres of two enemy radio sets.

Although there was later disagreement about the number of radios, Taylor assumed that: 'The presence of two radio sets might indicate the presence of two enemy battalions [emphasised]'. That meant there was a possible enemy force of nearly 600 nearby.

Gary McKay wrote in an article¹⁰⁸⁰:

We had been previously advised (before 20 September) by coded radio message that there was a possible large concentration of enemy somewhere close to those hills (Nui Le, Nui Sao). That turned out to be an understatement.

Major Mike Peters was the GSO2 (Int) for 1 ATF at this time. He later related¹⁰⁸¹:

Another occasion when the **Commander deployed troops essentially on 547 Sig Tp information,** occurred in the case of major contacts about six kilometres north of the Task Force base, in the period end of September-early October 1971. The enemy unit again was Third Battalion of 33rd NVA Regiment (3/33). On this occasion the only intelligence we had on 3/33's position was from 547 Sig Tp initially, and on this information the Commander deployed 4RAR/NZ against this target. Several days passed before 4RAR/NZ was able to find the enemy unit in view of the nature of the terrain, and over this time on four consecutive mornings I had tasked "Sniffer" (APDS equipment mounted in an Iroquois helicopter) missions over this area where we believed the enemy unit to be, and on each of these mornings we received very heavy "Sniffer" readings, which I had no doubt provided confirmation of the presence of 3/33. I also tasked light observation helicopter flights over the area, and received a report of a cut stump which, in the pilot's opinion, had been camouflaged with mud. This information from Sniffer and light observation helicopters was to my mind simply confirmatory information, and **the Commander had certainly made the decision to commit 4RAR/NZ to the target solely upon 547 Sig Tp location reports, of which there were several.**

4RAR/NZ was not able initially to find 3/33, because of the nature of the terrain, and withdrew from the immediate area. **We then received another 547 Sig Tp report, upon which the Commander sent 4RAR/NZ back into the area, and this time they made contact.** What followed was several days of quite heavy contacts, with 4RAR/NZ receiving considerable air support also. This was a generally successful operation, which was able to be **mounted essentially upon 547 Sig Tp intelligence.**

¹⁰⁸⁰ "The Last Battle" (Wartime Magazine, Issue 55, July 2011, pp.15-19), LTCOL (Retd) Gary McKay (11/D/4RAR - WIA 21 September 1971).

¹⁰⁸¹ Extracts from oral submission of Colonel (Rtd) Mike Peters at the DHAAT Hearing at Canberra on 26 Oct 13 and subsequent emails to Bob Hartley.



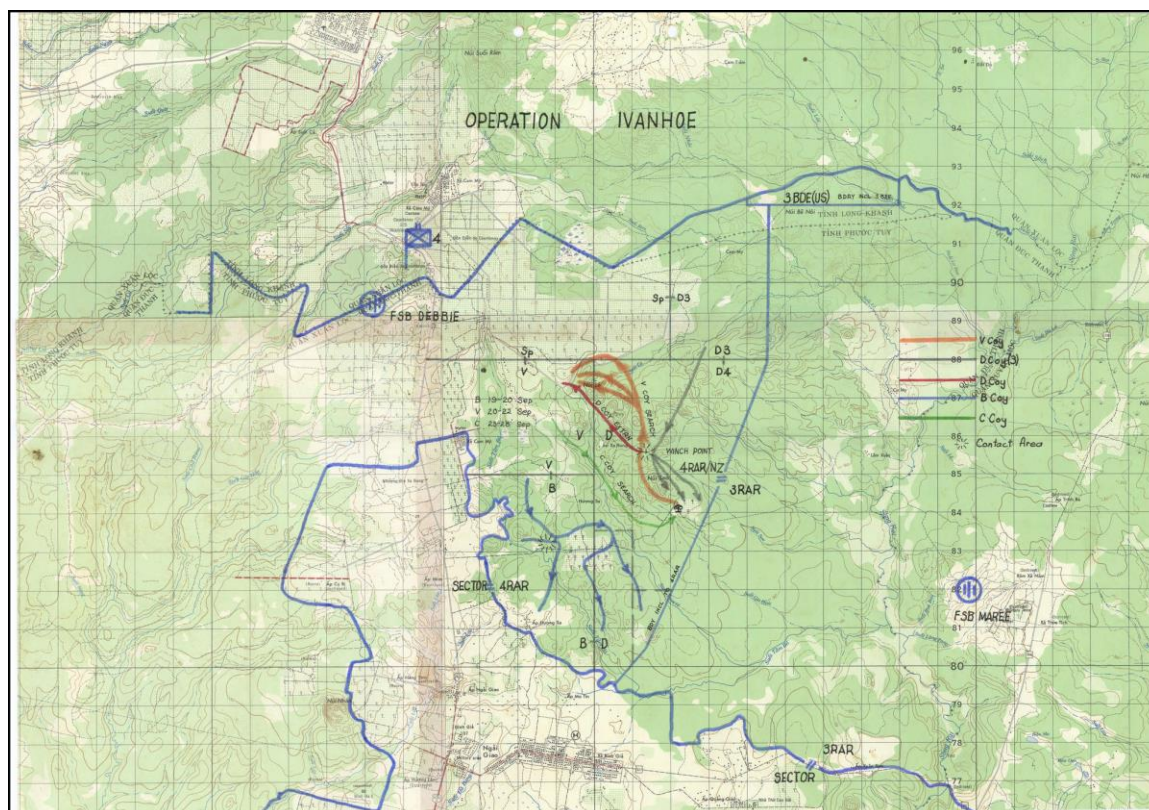


Figure 697: Operation Ivanhoe #2



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CHAPTER 72 – OCTOBER 1971

72.1 Personnel

72.1.1 Arrivals and Departures

The last four replacements for the Troop arrived in October and five personnel departed.

Arrivals

7 October

Signalman Trevor Williamson

14 October

Sergeant Paul Keys

21 October

Warrant Officer Richard Wroe

27 October

Signalman Larry Osborne

Departures

14 October

Signalman Frederick Robinson

17 October

Corporal Ralph Schwer (Posted to Headquarters, Australian Force Vietnam - Army Component)

28 October

Staff Sergeant Daniel Matthews

Sergeant Robert Howell (RJ)

? October

Sergeant John McKenzie

72.1.2 Employment Areas

Paul Keys took charge of the Comcen and Dick Wroe went into the Processing area. Trevor Williamson and Larry Osborn joined the Set Room.

72.1.3 Delayed Departure

Jim Kanowski delayed his departure until mid-December to allow the Troop to remain at full manning for the withdrawal.

72.2 Administration

72.2.1 Vung Tau Operational

The move to Vung Tau was completed as planned by 1 October and operations commenced at the new location.



72.2.1.1 Mian Party Move Complete

On 1 October, the OC of 547 Sig Tp sent the following signal to Army Canberra:¹⁰⁸²

FOR MI8. 547 SIG TP RELOCATION

ONE. SETROOM NUI DAT LOC CLOSED AT 301700H SEP AND SET ROOM VUNG TAU ON THE AIR 301700H SEP.

SECURE VOICE AND PRINTER CCT FROM NEW LOC TO CELL IN AND WORKING. ARDF CONTROL RELOCATED AND PORTERS RELOCATED 1011200H OCT. [SIC] COMCENS CHANGE OVER AT 011200 H OCT.

TWO. BE ASSURED WE FOUGHT THEM ON THE LAND AND IN THE AIR FROM NUI DAT AND WILL NOW CONTINUE THE FIGHT ON THE BEACHES OF VUNG TAU

72.2.2 Rear Party

The rear party under the command of Ian Bowen remained at Nui Dat. Ian Bowen and Peter Dencher were housed in the Troop's ACV, with a circuit to Vung Tau to facilitate the quick passage of information to the Task Force HQ.

72.2.2.1 Rear Echelon Completing Documentation

Fred Mitchener, Bob Watson, Daryl Singleton and Jock Fulton also remained as the rear echelon and continued the task of documenting, packing and tidying up the depleted Troop area. Huts were to be left in going condition suitable for occupation by the ARVN.

72.2.2.2 Stores Despatched

The first shipment home of stores was despatched at this time. The shipment consisted of one container of stores, two shelters of SSL stores and some generators.

72.2.2.3 Rear Echelon Departed Nui Dat

On 7 October, the rear echelon joined the Troop at Vung Tau. The rear party in the ACV remained at Nui Dat.

72.2.2.4 Rear Party Depart Nui Dat

On 16 October, the two-man rear party and ACV departed Nui Dat with the Task Force HQ.

72.2.2.5 Last ACV to Depart Nui Dat

The 547 Sig Tp ACV was the last HQ 1ATF vehicle to leave Nui Dat.

72.2.3 Vung Tau Accommodation

Life at Vung Tau was not at first impression appealing. The accommodation was poor and the ORs club was owned by 110 Sig Sqn and only shared by members of 547. The Sergeant's Mess of 110 Sig Sqn welcomed the Troop seniors and life started to improve socially. Swimming, mini-golf and beach parties soon became all the rage in off-duty hours. The lights of Vung Tau city also provided some distractions.

¹⁰⁸² ASD archives of 547 Sig Tp material.



72.2.4 Vung Tau Photographs

The following photographs show the Troop buildings, the Set Room, and the interior of the Comcen.



Figure 698: Troop area Vung Tau¹⁰⁸³



Figure 699: Set Room

¹⁰⁸³ Photo courtesy of Herbie O'Flynn.

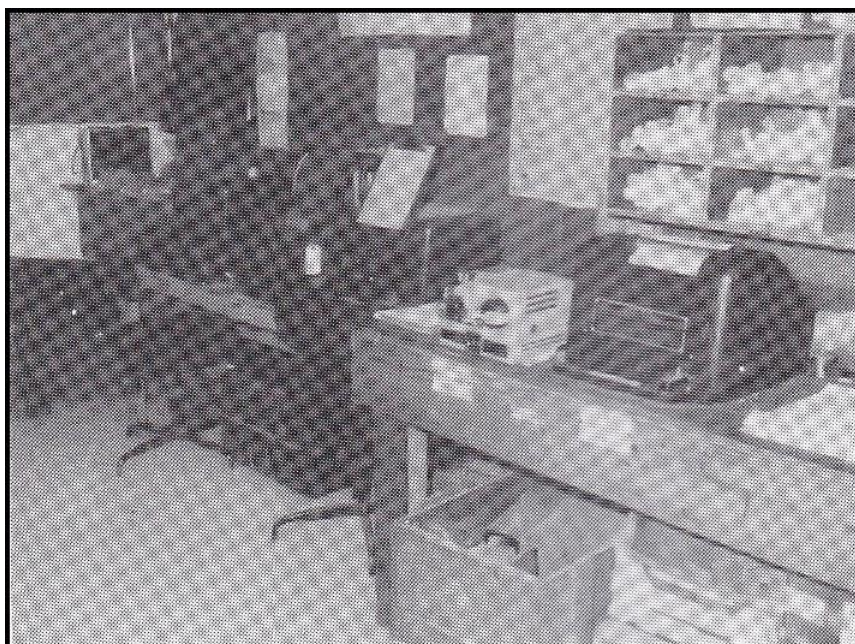


Figure 700: Interior of Comcen

Note:

Although the black and white photographs do not reproduce well, they have been included for their historical significance.

72.2.5 Captured VC/NVA Weapons

On 14 October, HQ Australian Force Vietnam approved 547 Sig Tp to retain two AK47s as mounted trophies. The weapons were to be returned to 2 Base Workshops to be cut in half longitudinally then forwarded to 7 Sig Regt¹⁰⁸⁴. Unfortunately, the weapons are no longer at the Regiment.

72.3 Operations

72.3.1 Communications

As stipulated, there was no loss of cover or circuit time.

72.3.1.1 Crypto Problems

There were some minor problems with the Crypto equipment in the Comcen as reported by the OC 110 Sig Sqn in his War Diaries¹⁰⁸⁵:

1 October

¹⁰⁸⁴ AWM103, R981/52/22, HQ 1ATF Stores and Equipment – Captured – 547 Signal Troop.

¹⁰⁸⁵ <http://static.awm.gov.au/images/collection/bundled/RCDIG1030085.pdf>



547 Sig Tp went into operation but are experiencing some difficulties with crypto machines on their three circuits.

3 October

System 104 was activated & became fully operational. The cause of 547's problems with crypto machines continued to elude us – they returned 18 machines to tech maint but only 4 were found to have any faults – and these were only minor faults. Technically our responsibility for the 547 Sig Tp circuits ceased when we provided them with the circuits: terminal equipments are their problem. However we are helping out to the best of our ability. Apart from this, we had a quiet Sunday.

4 October

Attended the final ALSG Officers Mess Meeting. Continued working on the 547 Sig Tp Circuits: 547 finally realized that they had not re-adjusted the relays for the 20mA operation correctly (we use 60mA) and after this was done the problem vanished.

72.3.2 547 Sig Tp Operation Report for October 1971

The 547 Sig Tp Op Report for Oct 71¹⁰⁸⁶ stated:

*S E C R E T COMINT CHANELS
SIGS722*

FOR MI8. OP REPORT OCTOBER 1971.

ONE. WATCH HOURS. NO CHANGE

TWO. COVER AS AT 30 OCT 71,

ALPHA. TWENTY (20) PRIORITY TASKS.

BRAVO. TWO (2) PRIORITY DEV TASKS.

THREE . GENERAL.

ALPHA. EN LOCS AND MOVES. 1 BN 274 REGT RELOCATED WEST OF ROUTE 2 TO THE VICINITY OF HQ AND 2 BN 274 REGIMENTAL TERMINALS. OTHER UNIT TERMINALS REMAINED IN TRADITIONAL OPERATIONAL AREAS.

BRAVO. 1ATF REACTION. 3 RAR CEASED OPS 1 OCT 71 AND 4 RAR REDEPLOYED TO NUI DAT EARLY OCT. 4 RAR REMAINS NUI DAT AND WILL RELOCATE TO VUNG TAU AND CEASE OPS MID NOV.

CHARLIE. DEVELOPMENT. THE NETWORK ISOLATED AND INITIALLY REPORTED LAST MONTH HAS BEEN FOUND TO SERVE AS AN IMPORTANT LINK IN THE WORKINGS OF THE RECENTLY DEVELOPED BARIA SUBREGION WHICH REPLACED MILITARY REGION SEVEN CMM BA LONO HQ AND SR4 HQ. CONTROL OF THIS LINK HAS BEEN IDENTIFIED AS THE FWD ELM OF THE HQ BARIA SR WITH CONTROL OVER 33 REGT CMM 274 REGT AND 6TH SAPPER BN AS WELL AS SEVERAL DISTRICT UNITS. LOW GRADE TRAFFIC PASSED ON THESE LINKS HAVE PROVIDED UNIQUE INFORMATION ASSISTING IN THE UNDERSTANDING OF THE RECENT REORGANISATION OF MP REG SEVEN.

¹⁰⁸⁶ DSD Declassified, 547 Sig Tp in Vietnam (tranche2).



DELTA, LOWGRADE TOTALS. ONE THOUSAND LOW GRADE MESSAGES HAVE BEEN INTERCEPTED AT THIS STATION THIS YEAR WEF 18 OCT 71. DURING OCTOBER EIGHTY EIGHT (88) LOWGRADE MSGS WERE TRANSLATED BY THIS STATION ON THE RECENTLY DEVELOPED NET. WE NOW REPORT TRANSLATIONS ON THIS NET DIRECT WHEREAS PREVIOUSLY THEY WERE PASSED TO [redacted] FOR REPORTING.

FOUR. ARDF.

A. TOTAL FIXES 65

B. GRADINGS. GOOD 10. FAIR 36. POOR 15. CUTS 4.

C. PERSONNEL. REID MONEY FLYNN ELWORTHY HAMPTON MARSHALL

D. TWO AIRCRAFT WERE USED 9-10 OCT AND 19-27 OCT TO RECOVER SOI AND LOCATE THE NEW NET MENTIONED ABOVE.

FIVE, RELOCATION. SETROOM COMPLETED RELOCATION 1 OCT 71 AND COMCEN VUNG TAU ASSUMED RESPONSIBILITY AT 011200 HRS OCT. REAR PARTY RELOCATED 10 OCT 71 AND INT CELL COMPLETED RELOCATION OF TROOP ON 16 OCT 71.

SIX. INTENTIONS, AUM352 TO CEASE OPS ON 13 DEC 71 AND RTA 23 DEC 71. SIGINT INFO TO BE THEN PROCESSED VIA AUST LO AT TRAC WITH A/SPO (W01 BURNS) LOCATED AT [redacted] AS SIGINT LO.

72.3.3 ARDF Flying Hours

The total ARDF flying hours for the month were¹⁰⁸⁷:

Year	Month	Flying hours	Total Fixes	Good <1000mts	Fair 1-2000Mts	Poor >2000 Mts	Cut	Missions Lost	Remarks
1971	Oct	312	65	10	36	15	4	13	Two aircraft at times

The ARDF Report for 01 – 31 Oct stated¹⁰⁸⁸:

Personnel

WO1 Reid

Ssgt Mooney

Sgt Flynn

Sig Elworthy

Sig Hampton

Sig Marshall

Movement of Personnel

05 Oct 71 – Ssgt Mppney commences trg.

09 Oct 71. – WO1 Reid Qualifies

28 Oct 71 - Ssgt Howell RTAI

Break-down of Missions

Missions flown with fixes obtained 56

Missions flown – no fixes obtained 97

Missions aborted 4

Missions rostered 157

¹⁰⁸⁷ Compiled from MI8 Records held at ASD archives.

¹⁰⁸⁸ Ibid.



Missions reduced with fixes 2
Missions reduced w/o fixes 7

Grading of Fixes

Good 10 (250 – 1000 metres)
Fair 36 (1000 -2000 metres)
Poor 15 (2000 metres and above)
Cuts 4 (area indication only)

Missions Reduced/aborted due equipment failure

07 Oct PM Mission 4 – Reduced
07 Oct PM Mission 5 – Aborted
09 Oct AM Mission 3 – Reduced
24 Oct PM Mission 5 – Reduced
26 Oct PM Mission 5 – Reduced
26 Oct PM Mission 6 – Aborted
27 Oct. PM Mission 5 – Reduced
27 Oct PM Mission 5 – Reduced

Missions reduced/aborted due weather

03 Oct AM Mission 3 Reduced - Aircraft malfunction
12 Oct AM Mission 1 Aborted - Aircraft malfunction
13 Oct AM Mission 1 Reduced - Aircraft malfunction
15 Oct PM Mission 4 Aborted - Aircraft malfunction
22 Oct PM Mission 5 Reduced - Aircraft malfunction

Notes:

1. Special emphasis missions flown using two aircraft 09, 10 and 19 – 27 Oct to recover SOI¹⁰⁸⁹ and fix stations on new MR7 group operating in S/SW Long Khanh Province.
2. High total of “No ARDF” missions due to low level of activity of targeted stations throughout month.

72.3.3.1 Summary of Main ARDF Fixes

The following table is a summary of the ARDF fixes located for October 1971¹⁰⁹⁰:

Date	Loc	Unit
01-Oct-71	YS212866	3/274 Regt
01-Oct-71	YT563006	3/33 NVA Regt
01-Oct-71	YS300618	VUNG TAU City Unit
02-Oct-71	YS585959	HQ 33 NVA Regt
02-Oct-71	YT822174	HQ BA LONG Prov
03-Oct-71	YS474934	1/274 Regt

Remainder missing

¹⁰⁸⁹ SOI = Signal Operating Instructions

¹⁰⁹⁰ Compiled by Bob Hartley from Bennington, S. (Curator - Official History), Vietnam Battle Intelligence Computer data tapes – Part 2, Australian War Memorial – Canberra, 19 November 2014./ No Monthly ARDF Reports available possible. The data tapes may only include fixes from SPAR reports signalled to HQ1ATF.



72.3.4 Operation Yellow Jacket

PRECEDENCE-ACTION	PRECEDENCE-INFO	DATE-TIME GROUP	MESSAGE INSTRUCTIONS
ROUTINE	—	20 0200Z OCT 71	
FROM: IATF			PREFIX
TO: CG TRAL LGV			OR
INFO: AUST FORG VIETNAM			SECURITY CLASSIFICATION
			CONFIDENTIAL
			ORIGINATOR'S NUMBER
			OPS 1864
ATTN 63 OPS(2)			
YELLOW JACKET OPERATIONAL SUMMARY FOR			
PERIOD 051600Z OCT TO 191600Z OCT 71(1)			
ONE (1) NIL			
ALFA NIL (1)			
BRAVO NIL (1)			

Figure 701: Yellow Jacket Operational Summary for October

72.3.5 Procedure after 547 Ceases Operations

On 31 October 1971, the OC 547 Sig Tp sent the following signal to Army Canberra:¹⁰⁹¹

FOR MI8. REF MY SIGS703 OF 230415Z

ONE. SYSTEM AFTER 547 SIG TP CEASE OPS. COMD HAS DECIDED TO USE PLAN BRAVO. AUST LO AT TRAC WILL ACT AS COURIER FOR SIGINT INFO WITH ASST SPO (WO1 BURNS) AT 175 RR FS. WO1 BURNS TO BE POSTED WEF 1 DEC 71 TO HQ ATF AND DETACHED TO 175 RR FS. HE WILL RTA WHEN NO LONGER REQUIRED (TO BE DECIDED BY MAJ J GRAHAM GSO2 (INT) AT TF) AND THIS WILL BE NO LATER THAN END FEB 72 PRESUMABLY. DLO MAY RTA AS PLANNED.

ANY NEWS ON POSTING ORDERS. QUERY.
ALFA. SGT KEYS HAS REQUESTED REPOSTING TO CANBERRA.
BRAVO. SIG DENCHER HAS REQUESTED REPOSTING TO 4 SIG REGT TO FURTHER HIS TECH ETUDI IN BRISBANE.

¹⁰⁹¹ ASD archives of 547 Sig Tp material.



CHAPTER 73 – NOVEMBER 1971

73.1 Personnel

73.1.1 Arrivals and Departures

Arrivals

There were no more arrivals.

Departures

There was one departure in November.

25 November

Signalman Peter Monro

73.1.2 Ron Hall Visits

Ron Hall, the DSD representative at Bien Hoa, paid numerous visits to the Troop. His praise of the Troop's abilities was hard to live up to and his support and advice was always sought on the technicalities of the trade.

73.1.3 Ralph Schwer's Marriage

In November Private Ralph Schwer was married in Saigon to a Vietnamese girl. Tony Bridges attended the wedding as the Troop representative. Ralph, who at times was more of a local than the locals, had left the Troop in October to join 'A' Branch in Saigon as an interpreter.

73.1.4 HQ 1ATF RSM

In November, it was decided that some Troop representation at Task Force HQ was required after the Troop had ceased operations. The Task Force commander, after considering many alternatives decided on WO1 Robbie Burns as the Troop representative.

Herbie O'Flynn recalled¹⁰⁹²:

An amusing anecdote was that as Robbie was a WO1 he was retained on the strength of Vung Tau detachment as the RSM. Surely the most unlikely person to hold the position of RSM in the Australian Army¹⁰⁹³.

73.2 Administration

73.2.1 Vung Tau Antennas

Owing to the limited period of proposed occupancy few changes were made to the new Troop layout. Aerials were changed and rechanged until the best one was found. Various antennas

¹⁰⁹² Ibid.

¹⁰⁹³ By his own admission, Robbie was not very 'Regimental'.



including a long wire antenna, a biconical antenna, two dipoles and a V antenna were constructed. Once established it was found that the biconical was poor while the dipoles were only fair. 110 Sig Sqn came to the rescue and lent the Troop a Jamaican Antenna which proved to be much better.

73.2.2 Technical Maintenance

Technical maintenance, the communications centre and the orderly room remained unchanged throughout the deployment to Vung Tau. Only essential maintenance was carried out and Peter Weir-Smith's 'Steptoe' yard reached an all-time high in tidiness.

73.2.3 Baria Orphanage

Prior to the withdrawal announcement the Troop had decided to supplement the usual gift of clothing to the Baria Orphanage with a set of swings. The money was raised by the 7 Signal Regiment Wives Association. The playgym arrived in October, and on 6 November a work party left Vung Tau to erect it at the orphanage. Bob Watson, plan in hand, held off the enthusiastic amateurs whilst Peter Weir-Smith welded the structure to star pickets to ensure stability. The children waited politely for the play gym to be constructed. Once it was finished all politeness was forgotten and no fewer than sixteen children occupied the set at any one time.



Figure 702: Peter Weir-Smith and Bob Watson erecting the playgym



The above photo is held at the Australian War Memorial with the following caption¹⁰⁹⁴:

Baria, South Vietnam. November 1971. A happy ending to a project started five months ago by members of 547 Signal Troop, based at Vung Tau, and their wives living in Toowoomba, Qld, is depicted by these smiling Vietnamese orphans. The 7 Signals Regiment Wives Association has been holding social functions to raise money for playground equipment for the Dai Dao Tam orphanage in Baria, the provincial capital of Phuoc Tuy Province. The soldiers also raised money towards the venture. The equipment arrived aboard the HMAS Jeparit and seen helping the children test it out are, left to right: Signaller (Sig) Darryl Singleton; Sig Jim Kanowski; Sergeant Bob Watson and Warrant Officer Class 2 Peter Weir-Smith.

73.3 Operations

73.3.1 Hand-Over of Operations

The Americans, who were to undertake the Troop's work after departure, took an increasing interest in the Troop's operations. Visits and exchanges were organised. Herb Power, Peter Cooke, Jim Kanowski and Col Cleve were despatched at various stages to Bien Hoa and Long Thanh to aid in 'on the job training' of the US operators.

Herbie O'Flynn recalled¹⁰⁹⁵:

I remember that a small detachment of our most experienced and competent operators (Jim Kanowski and Herb Power for example) went (somewhere) to "hand over" some of our targets to the US. However the US operators were not up to the task and believed the key must be our location at

¹⁰⁹⁴ <http://www.awm.gov.au/collection/FOD/71/0549/VN>

¹⁰⁹⁵ Email to Bob Hartley.



Nui Dat or Vung Tau which made the difference. Subsequently a US detachment came to Vung Tau but once again failed to hear what our operators could hear.

73.3.2 Troop Representation

As Task Force Units began to leave Vietnam, more and more emphasis was placed on the Troop. Major Jim Graham, who arrived just before the withdrawal from Nui Dat to replace Major Mike Peters as G2 Int on Task Force HQ, kept the Troop apprised of any information he had pulled together from other sources and agencies. The prime objective of his discussions with the Troop was to ensure that the Troop's intercept and ARDF operations fitted into his collection plan

Herbie O'Flynn recalled¹⁰⁹⁶:

My recollection is that the emphasis of Jim Graham's advice was to do with the likely threats faced by Task Force in withdrawing from Nui Dat. At this operationally vulnerable time, the reduced sized Task Force needed reliable information on any movements of enemy forces that could indicate likely enemy action to interdict the withdrawal. We were therefore required to maintain ARDF vigilance and relocate without any loss of set room time which we are proud to say that we did.

73.3.3 ARDF Operations

The flying team kept up their expert and unique facility. The aircraft were located at the Vung Tau airstrip some 3km from the camp. At times two aircraft had to be used in order to meet Task Force requirements.

Bob Elworthy later related¹⁰⁹⁷:

As the TF prepared to withdraw, pressure on the Tp increased immensely. Rest and any sort of leave opportunity disappeared under the combined loads of maintaining ops at Nui Dat while at the same time establishing a new Tp area at Vung Tau, packing and preparing Tp equipment for move to Vung Tau, packing up SSL etc etc. The Tp as a whole was under huge pressure and psychological stress, particularly given that as the TF withdrew, the Tp became a key source (if not the only source) of reliable intelligence in relation to enemy movements and activity. It has already been explained to the Tribunal that HUMINT was problematic at best, and thus the TF was even more heavily reliant on the Tp in the last days.

Additionally, a second aircraft was fitted out for ARDF ops, initially from Nui Dat and then from Vung Tau. It was not uncommon to fly two missions a day on very quick turn around with time for refuel and change of pilot at Nui Dat (I can still taste the cold bacon banjos brought down during turn around!). Ops from Vung Tau were particularly arduous, with a Land Rover trip from 547 to Vung Tau airfield pre-dawn for morning missions, with additional flying time needed to get to the TF location and beyond for first skeds at 0600. Missions often extended requiring refuel at Bien Hoa. Also significant number of afternoon missions I flew from Vung Tau resulted in aircraft returning to Vung Tau at dusk or in the dark, this was particularly so if last tasks put the aircraft at the north eastern border of Phuoc Tuy in the vicinity of the Nui May Tao mountains. Some night missions (absolutely terrifying) also mounted.

Of note is that at this time of the year we were right into the monsoon season and due to low cloud, thunderheads and torrential rain the aircraft often flew at dangerously low levels in order to identify

¹⁰⁹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁰⁹⁷ Email to Bob Hartley.



land marks. This flying was particularly dangerous with numerous close encounters with other aircraft, with the aircraft in constant motion due to the weather conditions, making accurate work all the more difficult - not to mention the difficulty with obtaining and retaining radio transmissions in the middle of a thunderstorm! This flying was exhausting for pilot and operator, and hard on the aircraft and equipment. I was constantly stuffed and often very crook - it was nothing for both me and pilot to be physically ill. I am confident in saying that if not for the importance of the missions in the final months that many flights would not have occurred due to the poor weather. On two occasions, the newly fitted aircraft "cut out" shortly after takeoff as circuit breakers popped when ARDF kit was switched on - the pilot was able to recover. ARDF operators certainly earned their \$1.50 a day flying pay during this time!

73.3.4 ARDF Flying Hours

The total ARDF flying hours for the month were¹⁰⁹⁸:

Year	Month	Flying hours	Total Fixes	Good <1000mts	Fair 1-2000Mts	Poor >2000 Mts	Cut	Missions Lost	Remarks
1971	Nov	N/A	108	24	47	23	14	7	

The ARDF Report for 01 – 30 Nov stated¹⁰⁹⁹:

1. Personnel
 WO1 Reid
 Ssgt Mooney
 Sgt Flynn
 Sig Elworthy
 Sig Hampton
 Sig Marshall
2. Movement of Personnel
 Nil
3. Break-down of Missions

Mission Rostered	111
Missions flown with fixes obtained	66
Missions flown – no fixes obtained	44
Missions aborted/reduced	1
Missions reduced	3
4. Grading of Fixes

Good	24	(250 – 1000 metres)
Fair	47	(1000 -2000 metres)
Poor	23	(2000 metres and above)
Cuts	14	(area indication only)
5. Missions Reduced/aborted due equipment failure
 - 04 Nov PM Mission Four – Reduced
 - 10 Nov AM Mission Two - Reduced
 - 29 Nov AM Mission Two - Abort
6. Missions reduced/aborted due weather

¹⁰⁹⁸ Compiled from MI8 Records held at ASD archives.

¹⁰⁹⁹ Ibid.



27 Nov AM Mission One - Reduced

7. Remarks.
Nil

73.3.5 Director NSA Farewell Signal

On 30 November, the Director of NSA sent the following signal to DSD¹¹⁰⁰:

FROM: DIRNSA
TO: DSD

AS THE 547 SIGNAL TROOP PREPARES TO STAND DOWN FROM SIGINT OPERATIONS IN VIETNAM, I WISH TO ACKNOWLEDGE AND COMMEND THAT ORGANIZATION FOR ITS OUTSTANDING PERFORMANCE IN SUPPORT OF FREE WORLD FORCES IN VIETNAM.

SINCE THE ORIGINAL ELEMENTS OF THE 547 SIGNAL TROOP ARRIVED IN VIETNAM MORE THAN FIVE YEARS AGO, THE OFFICERS AND MEN HAVE CONSISTENTLY DEMONSTRATED THE HIGHEST PROFESSIONAL CAPABILITY AND HAVE ACHIEVED EXCEPTIONAL RESULTS IN THEIR AIR AND GROUND CRYPTOLOGIC ATTACK AGAINST ENEMY COMMS. IN SPITE OF HARDSHIPS IN BATTLE AREA AND COMPLEX TECHNICAL PROBLEMS, THE 547 SIGNAL TROOP REPEATEDLY DISPLAYED EXCEPTIONAL SKILL AND RESOURCEFULNESS AS A MEMBER OF THE ALLIED CRYPTOLOGIC COMMUNITY IN SOUTH VIETNAM.

PLEASE EXTEND MY PERSONAL APPRECIATION TO THE 547 SIGNAL TROOP FOR ITS OUTSTANDING PERFORMANCE AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS OVER THE PAST FIVE YEARS IN SUPPORT OF OUR CRYPTOLOGIC PROGRAMS.

The signal must have been forwarded to MI8 and in response, on 6 December, MI8 sent the following signal to DSD¹¹⁰¹:

FROM MI8. WITHDRAWAL OF 547 SIG TP.

ONE. WOULD YOU PLEASE CONVEY TO DIRECTOR NSA THE AUSTRALIAN ARMY'S SINCERE APPRECIATION FOR HIS KIND REMARKS MADE TO MARK THE CONCLUSION OF 547 SIG TP ACTIVITIES IN VIETNAM.

TWO. WE TOO ARE VERY PROUD OF THE CONTRIBUTION MADE BY [REDACTED – 547 SIG TP SIGINT IDENTITY] BUT RECOGNISE THAT WITHOUT THE HELP AND GUIDANCE ALWAYS SO FREELY GIVEN BY NSA AND ASA MEMBERS OUR EFFORTS WOULD NOT HAVE BEEN SO SUCCESSFUL.

¹¹⁰⁰ ASD archives.

¹¹⁰¹ Ibid.



CHAPTER 74 – DECEMBER 1971

74.1 Personnel

74.1.1 Arrivals and Departures

Arrivals

There were no more arrivals.

Departures

1 December

Warrant Officer Ronald Burns
(Posted to HQ 1 ATF. Departed SVN 26 Feb 1972)

2 December

Signalman James Kanowski

13 December

Warrant Officer Peter Weir-Smith

18 December

Warrant Officer Richard Wroe

22 December

Corporal Tony Bridges
Corporal Peter Cook
Corporal Ashley Terrell
Signalman Kenneth Borserio
Signalman Bob Elworthy
Signalman Neville Hampton
Signalman Phillip Waite

In the early hours of the morning of 23 December the remaining 547 Sig Tp (less OC) boarded the buses for the airport. While looking forward to returning home, many left Vung Tau with mixed feelings.

At 1000 hrs 23 December, the 547 Sig Tp members departed Vietnam. No press photographers farewelled the troops, not even the flies bothered them. Some said, "Have we left the war or is this just going to be a long R & R."

23 December

Lieutenant Ian Bowen
Warrant Officer Frederick Mitchener
Warrant Officer Phillip Reid
Staff Sergeant Danny Mooney
Signalman Steven Innes¹¹⁰²

¹¹⁰² AWM 98 524. On 13 January 1972, approval was received for Sig Innes to transfer from RA Sigs to Aust Int.



Sergeant Brian Flynn
Sergeant Paul Keys
Sergeant Herbert Power
Sergeant Robert Watson
Corporal John Clancy
Corporal Jack Morgan
Corporal Barry Wilson
Signalman Colin Clee
Signalman Danny Conroy
Signalman Peter Dencher
Signalman Duncan Finlay
Signalman John Fulton
Signalman Larry Gilbert
Signalman Larry Osborne
Signalman James Marshall
Signalman Rodney Maywald
Signalman Brian Phelan
Signalman Darryl Singleton
Signalman Stephen Thuell
Signalman Trevor Williamson

24 December 1971, Major Herbie O'Flynn was the last member of the Troop to leave South Vietnam.

74.1.2 Robbie Burns Posting to HQ 1ATF

Robbie Burns later wrote¹¹⁰³:

I am probably one of the very few Australian Servicemen to have held the appointment of Garrison Sergeant-Major. When 547 Signal Troop was withdrawn from South Vietnam in December 1971, I was delegated to remain in-country and become the Official Liaison Officer/Safe-Hand Courier between the United States Army Signal Unit in Bien Hoa and the General Commanding HQ 1 Australian Task Force in Vung Tau. This necessitated a posting to a Warrant Officer Class I appointment in HQ 1 Australian Task Force in Vung Tau. The appointment of Garrison Sergeant-Major was vacant, and I was appointed to that position. Of course, I could also have ended up with the less glamorous appointment of 'Hygiene Sergeant-Major'. I was based in Long Binh (Plantation) with the American Forces, and my main duty was to carry the safe-hand material from Bien Hoa to HQ 1 Australian Task Force in Vung Tau, and, due to the nature of the material, I had to return to Long Binh immediately after it was perused by the Australian General; and travel both ways had to be by helicopter. I therefore spent very little time in Vung Tau and never carried out any of the duties of the Garrison Sergeant-Major, which were performed by the Bandmaster.

¹¹⁰³ Extracted from 7 Sig Regt archives. The DVA Nominal Roll shows R G Burns serving with 547 Sig Tp 11 Mar 71 to 1 Dec 71 and then HQ 1 ATF 2 Dec 71 to 26 Feb 72.



74.2 Administration

74.2.1 The Withdrawal from Vietnam Commences

On 1 December, a Task Force parade was held to farewell 4 RAR. 547 Sig Tp, along with other units stood at the edge of the parade ground and watched 4 RAR being paraded. The Commander of Allied Forces in Vietnam, General Creighton W. Abrams, US Army, inspected the parade.



Figure 703: : Farewell Parade 4RAR #1¹¹⁰⁴

¹¹⁰⁴ <http://www.awm.gov.au/collection/FOD/71/0606/VN>



Figure 704: Farewell Parade 4RAR #2¹¹⁰⁵

74.2.2 Troop Personnel Duties

As the day of the Troop's cessation of operations approached, work activity increased. Each senior NCO was detailed a special project in order to achieve the eventual withdrawal.

74.2.2.1 Tech Maint

The technical maintenance section, under Peter Weir-Smith, began dismantling the technical facilities while Phil Reid organised work parties to dispose of the items that were not to be returned to Australia.

74.2.2.2 Vehicles

Dan Mooney's energy was diverted to the preparation of the unit's three vehicles and one trailer. The vehicles had to be cleaned, serviced, painted and then presented to the Australian Quarantine Service prior to loading. Dan's work force of Daryl Singleton and Dan Conroy soon mastered the art of spray gun painting. The vehicles were passed on first presentation, an unusual occurrence by the Inspector.

¹¹⁰⁵ <http://www.awm.gov.au/collection/FOD/71/0592/VN/>



74.2.2.3 Generators

Joe Flynn's project was the preparation of a 2.5KVA generator. This also passed the Inspector first time.

74.2.2.4 Documents

Dick Wroe became the disposer of all sorts of unwanted items while Ian Bowen acted as the archivist of secured documents of historical interest for retention in Australia.

74.2.3 MI8 Signal to AUM352 Re End of Tour

On 10 December, MI8 sent the following signal to AUM352, DSD and Weapons Salisbury¹¹⁰⁶:

*C O N F I D E N T I A L COMINT CHANNELS
FOR OC FROM DM/D SIGS. WITHDRAWAL PF 547 SIG TP FROM VIETNAM*

ONE, PLEASE ENSURE ALL RANKS ARE MADE AWARE OF OUR APPRECIATION OF THE WORK CARRIED OUT BY 547 SIG TP OVER THE PAST FIVE YEARS. THE PROFESSIONAL MANNER IN WHICH YOU HAVE APPROACHED THIS TASK HAS NOT ONLY EARNED THE APPRECIATION OF ALL AUSTRALIAN ARMY COMMANDERS CMM BUT HAS ALSO WON THE RESPECT OF OUR US ALLIES.

TWO. WE ARE OF COURSE VERY CONSCIOUS OF THE SUPPORT GIVEN TO THE TROOP BY OUR US SIGINT FRIENDS CMM WRE AND DSD CMM WITHOUT SUCH SUPPORT YOU COULD NOT HAVE CARRIED OUT YOUR ROLE IN SUPPORT OF COMMANDER 1 AUST FASK FORCE.

THREE. BOTH RA SIGS AND AUST I NT CORPS HAVE GAINED ADDED STATUS FROM THE RESULTS OF THE TROOPS EFFORTS AND NOW THAT YOU HAVE COMPLETED YOUR MISSION WE WISH YOU ALL A SAFE RETURN AND A MERRY XMAS WITH YOUR FAMILIES.

74.2.4 DLO Signal to AUM350 Re End of Tour

On 12 December, the DLO sent the following signal to AUM352¹¹⁰⁷:

*S E C R E T COMINT CHANNELS
FOR OC FROM DLO*

1. WITH THE IMMINENT WITHDRAWAL OF YOUR TROOP I WOULD LIKE TO RECORD MY APPRECIATION OF THE FINE EFFORT ACHIEVED BY ALL PERSONNEL.

2. INDEED FROM PAST ASSOCIATION WITH THE REGIMENT THE EXCELLENT RESULTS, PORFESSIONALISM, DEDICATION AND COOPERATION WERE AS I EXPECTED.

3. IN THE ARDF EFFORT I WOULD BE PLEASED IF YOU WOULD CONVEY CONGRATULATIONS FOR A JOB WELL DONE TO 161 RECCE FLIGHT.

A. I AM PROUD TO HAVE SERVED WITH YOU. MAY GOD BLESS. YOU ALL.

¹¹⁰⁶ DSD Declassified, 547 Sig Tp in Vietnam.

¹¹⁰⁷ Ibid.



74.2.5 After Operations Cease

By 17 December, the unit's lines looked denuded. The antennas were down and the barbed wire security fence just a memory. In all but name 547 Signal Troop had ceased to exist in operational terms, and thoughts of Australia loomed high.

74.2.6 Farewell Functions

Although many small farewell functions were held between 17 and 22 of December, the main Troop party was held on 18 December. The format was a beach bar-b-que in the afternoon to which official guests were invited, while in the evening a more informal party for the Troop friends was held in the lines.

74.2.6.1 Invitees

The whole day was a success, with representatives from the Task Force HQ, 161 Recce Flight, 110 Sig Sqn and the US Allies being invited. The afternoon ended with a swim in the Peter Badcoe pool and even those who did not want a swim, or had not brought swimming costumes, went swimming. Most of the visitors arrived in their own helicopters and after 'refreshments' that afternoon they probably regretted the bumpy flights home.

74.2.6.2 Evening Farewell

The evening farewell soon turned into a sing-song with Bob Elworthy acting as choir leader. The renditions of 'Silent Night' will never be matched again.

74.2.6.3 Allied Unit Plaques

Some of the allied units presented plaques to the Troop:



Figure 705: 175 RR Co

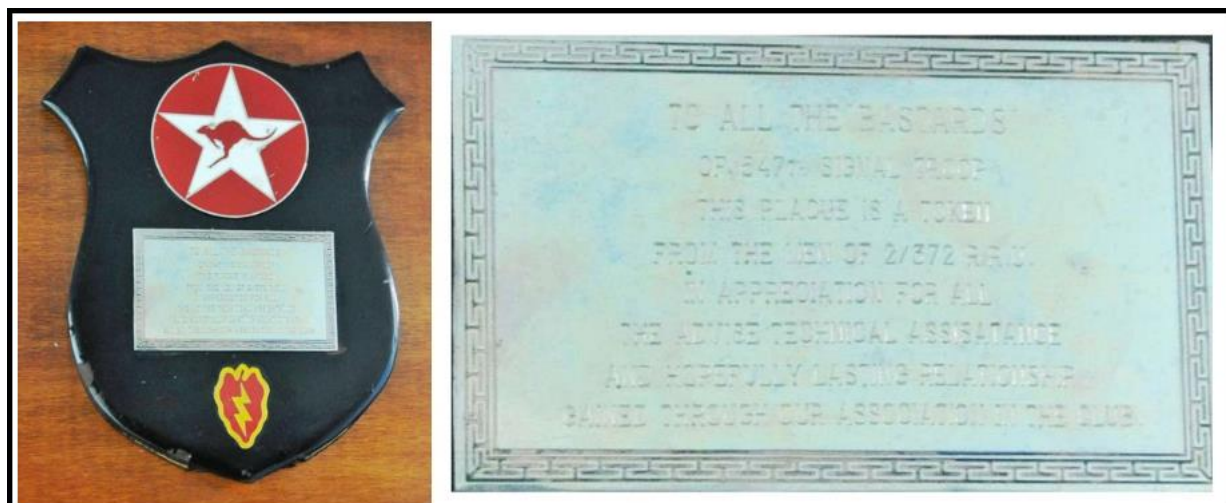


Figure 706: : 2/372 RR Unit



Figure 707: 3rd Brigade 1st Cav Div Left Bank

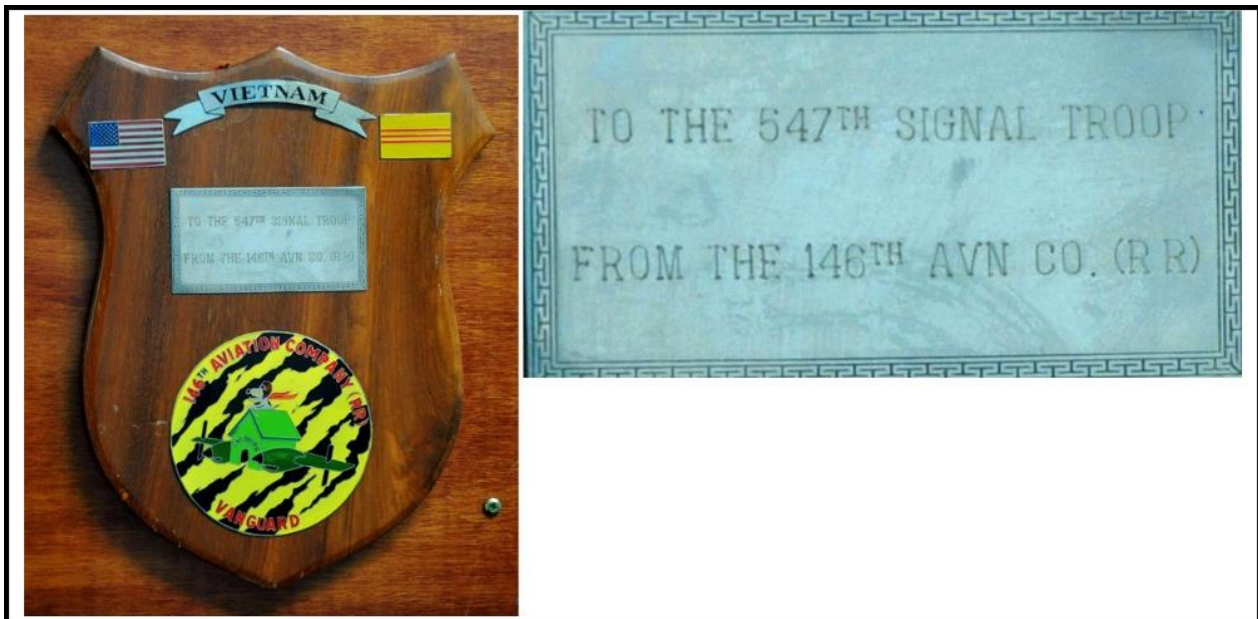


Figure 708: 146 Avn Co (RR)



Figure 709: DODSPECREP



PART 8

1972





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CHAPTER 76 – FEBRUARY 1972

75.1 Regimental Welcome Home Parade

On Wednesday 9 February 1972, Borneo Barracks held a special parade to welcome home 547 Signal Troop.

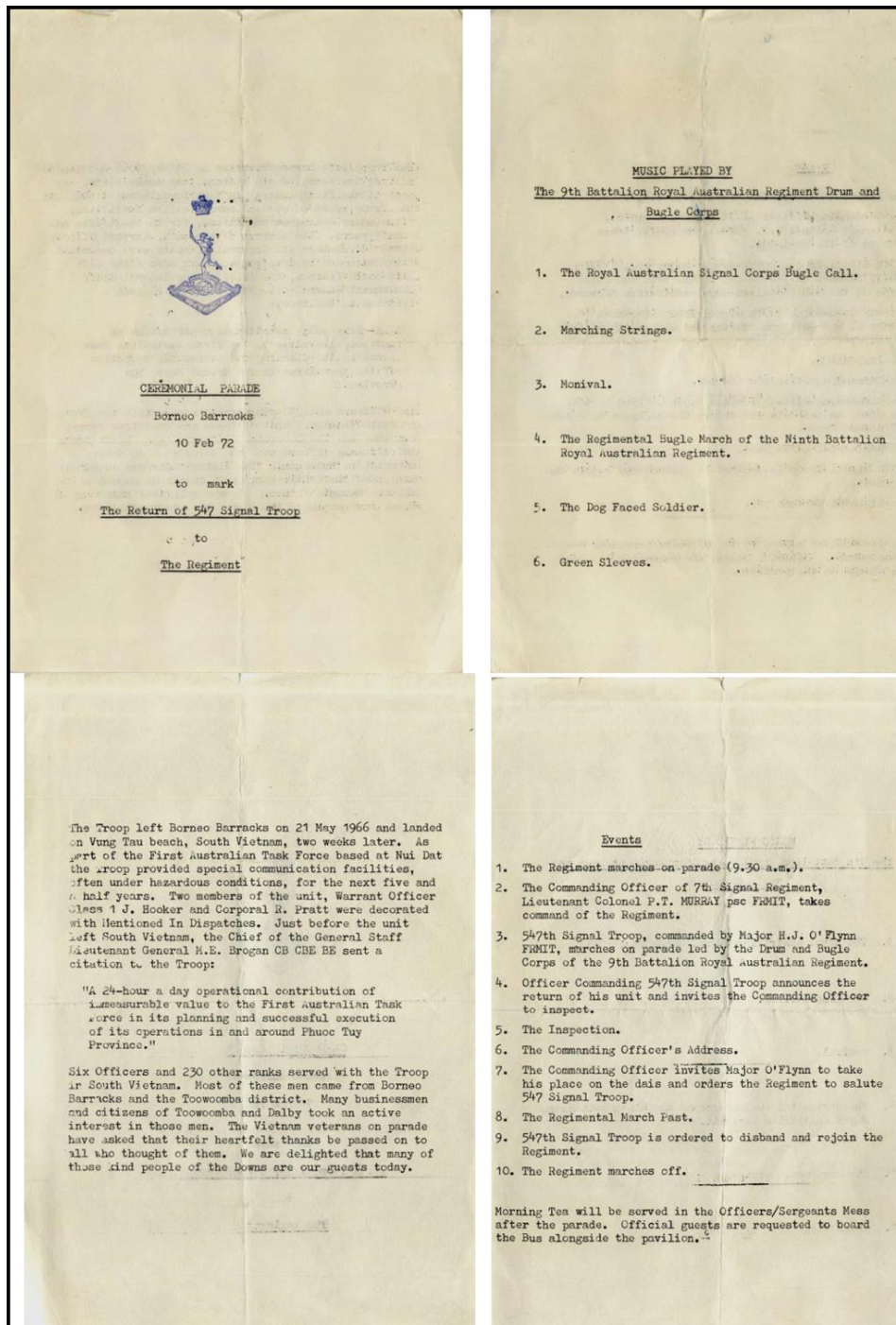


Figure 710: Welcome Home Parade Programme

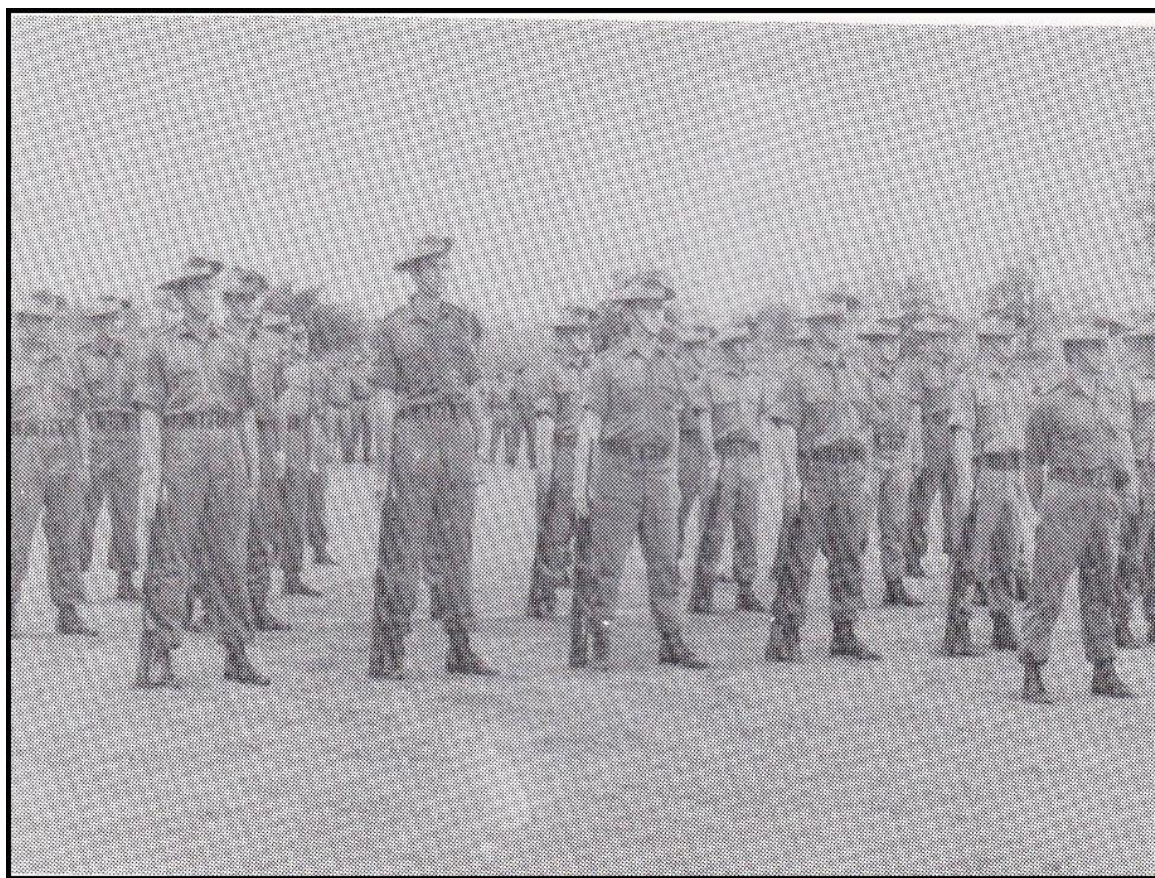


Figure 711: 547 Sig Troop on Parade

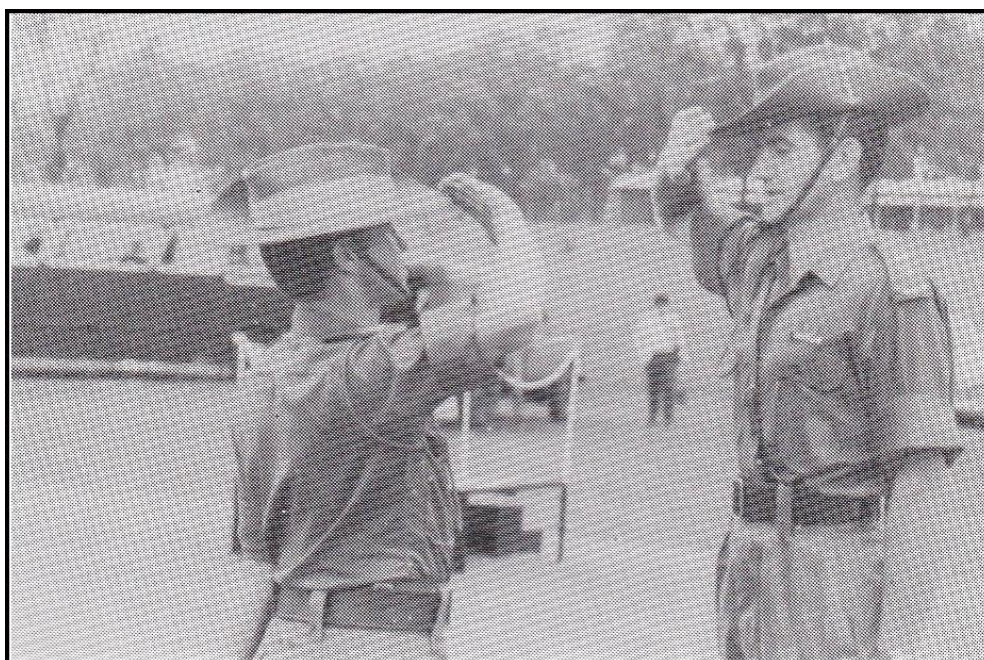


Figure 712: Major O'Flynn and Lieutenant Colonel Murray (CO 7 Sig Regt)



Figure 713: Troop Inspection

75.1.1 VIPs

A special feature of the parade was that instead of the usual VIPs as guests of honour, the Regiment chose to honour those local groups and individuals who had shown the Troop kindness over its five and a half year tour. Despite the fact that the parade was held in the pouring rain it was quite a success as the Troop at last had the chance to thank groups such as the Dalby Country Women's Auxiliary for their many food parcels and Diane's Bakery for the beautiful meat pies. It seemed a fitting end to 547 Signal Troop's tour of Vietnam.

75.1.2 CGS Message

547 Sig Troop's contribution to the Australian effort in Vietnam can be best summed up in the words of the then CGS Lieutenant General M.E. Brogan, CB, CBE, BE;

A 24 hour a day operational contribution of immeasurable value to the First Australian Task Force in its planning and successful execution of its operation in and around Phuoc Tuy Province.



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PART 9

POST 1972





75.2 Cabarlah Memorial Stone

In the mid-1970s a Memorial Stone to commemorate the Regiment's operational service was purchased with funds left over from the 547 Sig Tp Club. The stone was erected outside RHQ. A second stone has now been purchased and both have been inscribed with the places and dates of operational service.

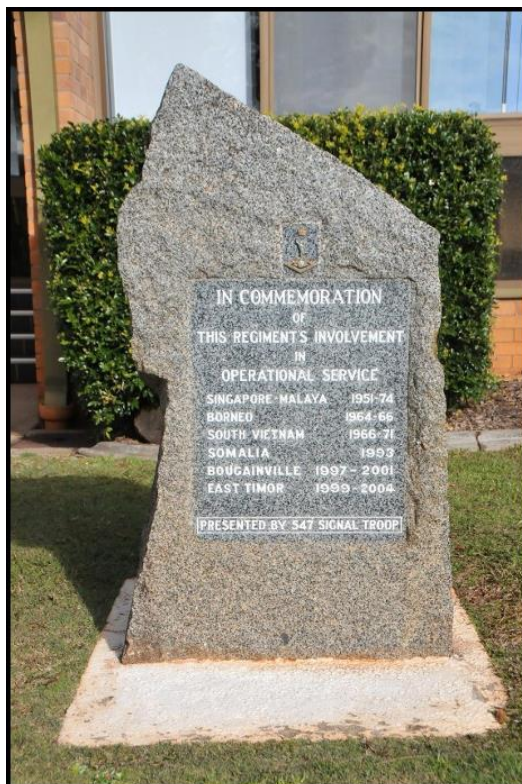


Figure 714: Original Memorial

75.3 Sydney Welcome Home March

On 3 October 1987, thousands of veterans and their families converged on Australia's largest city. Some 25,000 people who had served in Vietnam participated in the march. At the front were the next-of-kin of those who had not returned, each carrying an Australian flag representing the dead. Estimates were that several hundred thousand people lined the streets to watch the march. Fifteen Anzac days had passed since the end of Australia's war in Vietnam, but for many veterans this Spring day was the first time they had marched.

There was a large representation of ex 547 Sig Tp members who marched as a group.

As a commemorative event the march was an enormous success. Veterans, particularly those who had felt shunned on their return, began to feel a sense of acceptance that had previously been lacking. But there was more to be done. Veterans now wanted a national memorial in the nation's capital, on Anzac Parade where a series of memorials commemorate earlier wars.



75.4 National Memorial for the Vietnam War

Five years later, on 3 October 1992, a National Memorial for the Vietnam War was unveiled on Canberra's Anzac Parade.



Figure 715: Vietnam War Memorial Canberra

75.4.1 547 Sig Tp Attendance

A large contingent of ex-547 Sig Tp personnel and their families converged on Canberra with other Vietnam veterans for the service. Several functions were held for the Troop and the Troop marched as an entity in the parade.



Figure 716: 547 Sig Tp marching past the Memorial



75.5 547 Sig Tp Re-born

On 21 November 2003 a parade was held at 7 Sig Regt Cabarlah to rename the Regiment's Contingency Troop to 547 Signal Troop.

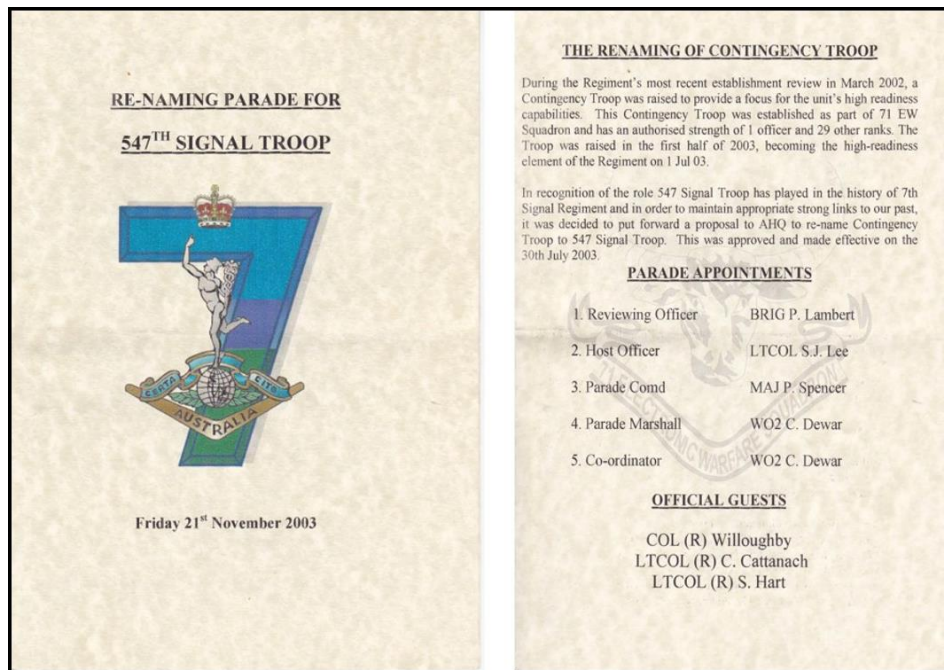


Figure 717: Copy of programme

Many ex-members of 547 Sig Tp attended the parade.



Figure 718: Ex-Members at the Re-naming Parade



75.6 40th Anniversary

On 24 June 2006 a parade was held at Cabarlah to mark the 40th anniversary of 547 Signal Squadron's deployment to Vietnam.



Figure 719: L-R: Danny Mathews, Andy Cockburn, Jack Fenton, Clarrie Day, Kev Lever

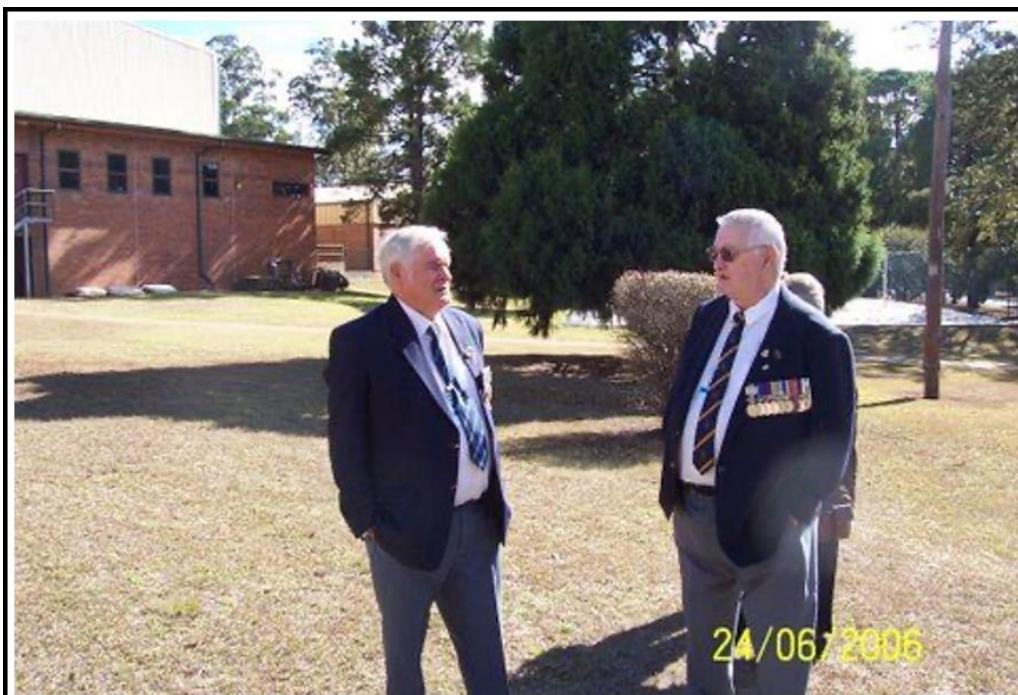


Figure 720: Kev Lever, Roy Dean



Figure 721: L-R Brian Fitzsimmons, Lt Andrew Mullan, OC of 547 Sig Tp, Barry Hampstead, Stan Myatt, Eric Grace



75.7 Australian War Memorial Plaque

On 19 August 2008, a plaque commemorating all the Royal Australian Signals Sub-Units that served in Vietnam was unveiled.

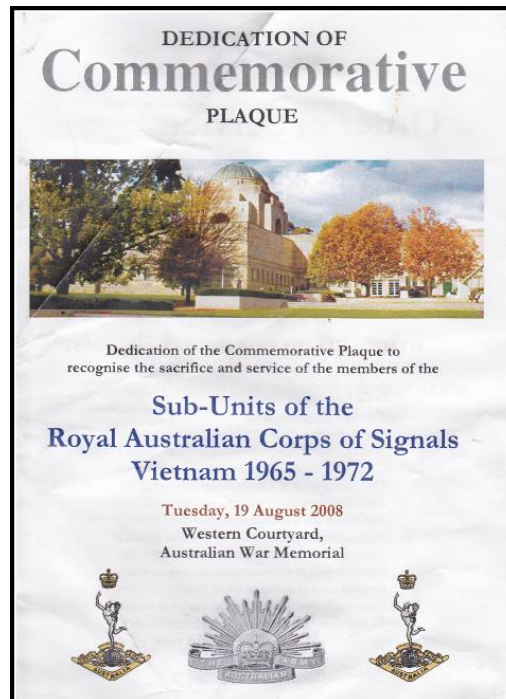


Figure 722: 704: Programme

Several ex-547 Sig Tp personnel attended the ceremony.



Figure 723: Plaque



Figure 724: Location of Plaque



75.8 Vietnam Veterans Commemorative Walk Seymour



Vietnam Veterans Commemorative Walk Seymour

On Saturday 9 March 2013, Stage 2 of the Vietnam Veterans Commemorative Walk in Seymour Victoria was opened.

Extract from the Walk Web Page¹⁰⁰⁹:

The Commemorative Walk is not to memorialise those who served in Vietnam and/or those who paid the ultimate price, but to commemorate the service of all who played their part in what turned out to be a tumultuous part of Australia's history. It will, in the interpretive centre give an accurate history of the times prior to military commitment, the period of our involvement and the aftermath.

The Walk is a meandering red earth path set in native trees and grasses that resemble rubber trees and rice paddies. These two plants are synonymous with Vietnam.

Along the length of this Walk are walls made up of panels of DigiGlass with the name of every Serviceman and Servicewoman who served in their various capacities. The names are separated only by the Service in which they served in alphabetical order. The plinths on which the panels stand have holes for Poppies; the effect is to have a field of Poppies under the names. Behind the names is the picture story of the Vietnam conflict



Figure 725: The Wall in daylight



Figure 726: The Wall at night

Two of the inscriptions:

HAMPSTEAD B V
HARTLEY R W



DEFENCE HONOURS AND AWARDS TRIBUNAL

76.1 Inquiry into Recognition of Service with 547 Sig Tp in SVN from 1966 to 1971

76.1.1 Inquiry into 547 Sig Tp

On 28 April 2012, the following advertisement appeared in all national papers:



76.1.2 Media Coverage

The day that the advertisement appeared in the papers there was a media frenzy and Peter Murray was interviewed by several radio stations and on the ABC stations. The interview was replayed nationally. The following week Jack Fenton was interviewed for a Channel 9 television news programme.

76.1.3 Origin of Inquiry

The Inquiry was instigated by the Labor Government as a consequence of several submissions that Bob Maher had made to various Members of Parliament.



76.1.4 Responses and Hearings

Many ex-547 Sig Tp members presented submissions to the Tribunal to support the claim for a Meritorious Unit Citation.

Three public hearings were held; two in Canberra and one in Brisbane where respondents could also present oral evidence for consideration.

It is known that the following ex 547 Sig Tp members gave oral evidence at the hearings:

Bob Maher
Steve Hart
Peter Murray
Herbie O'Flynn
Ian Bowen
Jack Fenton
Bob Elworthy
Barry Hampstead
Bob Hartley
Phil Rutherford
Adrian Bishop

76.1.5 DHAAT Findings

On 7 May 2015, the DHAAT submitted its findings to the Parliamentary Secretary for Defence. A copy of the full report is contained at Annex W.

The recommendation from the Tribunal was:

No action be taken by the Australian Government to award a Meritorious Unit Citation or any other form of medallic recognition to 547 Signal Troop for its service in South Vietnam between 1966 and 1971.

The report also stated:

The Tribunal would, however, like to place on record that 547 Signal Troop's performance should be highly commended. In particular the Tribunal recognises that for reasons of secrecy the Troop's contribution to the work of the Task Force was not acknowledged adequately in the published accounts in the decades following the end of Australia's commitment in South Vietnam. This has since been rectified. The Tribunal's decision not to recommend the award of an MUC to the Troop should not be interpreted as a slight in any way on the performance of the members of the Troop.

Several of the comments made by the Tribunal and responders are questionable and could be challenged.

The authors will make no comment on the Tribunal findings except to say a heartfelt thankyou to all the personnel who made positive representations to the Tribunal on behalf of all members of 547 Sig Tp.



REPUBLIC OF VIETNAM CROSS OF GALLANTRY WITH PALM UNIT CITATION (THE CITATION).

Australian Army 547 signal troop awarded

1 September 2018

Minister for Defence Personnel, the Hon Darren Chester MP, today announced Australian Defence Force members who served with the Australian Army 547 Signal Troop during the Vietnam War had been recognised with the Republic of Vietnam Cross of Gallantry with Palm Unit Citation (the citation).

The Governor-General, His Excellency General the Honourable Sir Peter Cosgrove AK MC (Retd), has formally approved the awarding of the citation in recognition of the military assistance provided to the former Republic of Vietnam (South Vietnam) while under the operational command of the United States Military Assistance Command (MACV).

Mr Chester said 547 Signal Troop was raised in 1966 and deployed to Vietnam as Australia's contribution to the United States intelligence network.

"The troop's primary role was to locate and monitor enemy radio signals in order to identify their strength, location, capability and future intentions," Mr Chester said.

"To achieve this the troop was in direct contact with the enemy forces from the first day that they arrived in Vietnam to the day before all Australian forces departed that country.

"Throughout their deployment to Vietnam, the troop was credited with providing early warning of imminent large scale enemy action against Australian, US and Thai forces, and were directly credited with saving hundreds of lives.

"Due to the extreme secrecy surrounding the troop's operations their presence in Vietnam continued to be a closely guarded secret. Even today the troop does not appear on many maps drawn up by the Australian Task Force or on a model at the Australian War Memorial showing the locations of all Australian units at Nui Dat."

547 Signal Troop was under operational control of the United States Army Security Agency's 509th Radio Research Group and was assigned to the 303rd Radio Research Battalion. The troop's deployment to Vietnam included responsibility for direct support to the Australian Task Force and American units operating under the US II Field Force Vietnam command.

Mr Chester encouraged Veterans and family members of deceased veterans of 547 Signal Troop to apply through the Directorate of Honours and Awards at the Department of Defence for the citation.

"The extraordinary courage and bravery of this troop is now being formally acknowledged and I hope family members of the deceased come forward to receive this well-deserved recognition."

To be eligible for the citation insignia members must have served in Vietnam under the command of MACV and posted to 547 Signal Troop during the eligible dates, 13 June 1966 to 23 December 1971.

More information is available at - www.defence.gov.au/medals.



The above citation was awarded after a prolonged campaign by Phil Rutherford



ANNEXES

- A. Comint Support for 1ATF
- B. The Early Days in an Operator Signals Duty
- C. Equipment used in 547 Signal Troop
- D. Long Tan Story
- E. US Airforce 6994th Security Squadron
- F. Captain Richard's Tape Transcription
- G. 547 Sig Tp Establishment
- H. US Army Airborne Direction Finding
- I. Australian Airborne Radio Direction Finding
- J. 856 RR Detachment During TET 68
- K. 161 Recce Flt Shush Missions
- L. Single Station Location
- M. Armoured Command Vehicle
- N. The Battle of Binh Ba
- O. Letter of Appreciation
- P. Jim Danskin Baron v Brass
- Q. Jack Fenton's Diary
- R. Lieutenant Ron Estes Visit
- S. Paul Stock – Chau Duc
- T. Vatican Guineas
- U. Jim Kanowski At FSB Bridgid
- V. Nominal Roll
- W. DHAAT Findings



DEDICATION

*THIS STORY IS DEDICATED TO ALL OF
THE PERSONNEL WHO SERVED IN
547 SIGNAL TROOP VIETNAM*

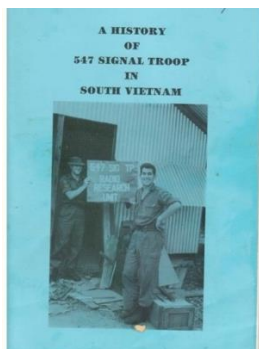


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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

As mentioned in the Preface much of the information contained in this publication came from the *Blue Book*.



A HISTORY
OF
547 SIGNAL TROOP
IN
SOUTH VIETNAM

Written by J. Fenton,
H. O'Flynn, S. Hart, P. Murray

Edited by M.J. Davies

Without the information in the *Blue Book* this story would not be possible.

Over the past few years the following people/publications have provided additional information, stories, photographs and anecdotes that have been included in this story.

The authors are indeed grateful for their input.

*Australian War Memorial
National Archives of Australia
Australian Signals Directorate
7 Sig Regt Web Forums established by Dennis Nicholson
104 Sig Sqn Web Pages
The many Vietnam War Sigint related sites on the WWW via Google*

*Garth (Doggie) Brown –
Ernie Chamberlain
Mike Conaghan
Jim Danskin
Bob Elworthy
Jack Fenton
Clem Foster
Norm Gilbert
Lloyd Giles
John Harding
Bob Harland
Jim Kanowski
Kevin Lever
Dan Matthews
Herbie O'Flynn
Errol Poultney
Sam Rogers
Paul Stock
Tom Williams*



AUTHORS

R. W. (Bob) Hartley, AM

Major (Rtd) Royal Australian Signals
Australian Regular Army: 1957 - 1992
Army Reserve: 1994 - 1995

547 Sig Tp

22 Feb 1969 – 18 Feb 1970

ew.tech@bigpond.com



Vietnam War Service



Sergeant

Robert Walter HARTLEY

Service No: 42014

Service: Army

Service Between: 22/02/1969 and 18/02/1970

Total Days: 362

Unit: 547 Signal Troop



Australian Government
Department of Veterans' Affairs



B.V. (Barry) Hampstead

WO1 (Rtd) Royal Australian Signals
Australian Regular Army: 1957 – 1978

547 Sig Tp

4 May 1967 – 30 Apr 1968

bvh29487@y7mail.com



Vietnam War Service



Staff Sergeant

Barry Victor HAMPSTEAD

Service No: 29487

Service: Army

Service Between: 4/05/1967 and 30/04/1968

Total Days: 363

Unit: 547 Signal Troop



Australian Government
Department of Veterans' Affairs