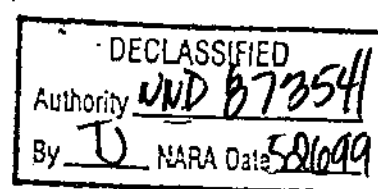


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DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY  
 HEADQUARTERS  
 1ST BATTALION (MECHANIZED), 50TH INFANTRY  
 173D AIRBORNE BRIGADE  
 APO San Francisco 96250

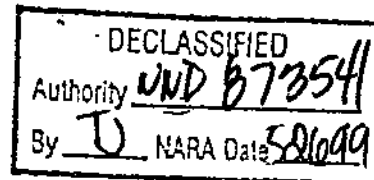
5 June 1968

SUBJECT: After-Action Report - Battle At Trung Hoi (2)

1. (U) Operation: Cochise.
2. (U) Period Covered: 11-13 May 1968
3. (U) Location: Trung Hoi (2) (H) My Trinh, (V) Phu My (D), Binh (P), Republic of Vietnam (BR877735)
4. (U) Command HQ: 1st Bn (M), 50th Inf, 173d Airborne Brigade.
5. (U) Reporting Officer: Captain Richard P Guthrie, 1st Bn (M), 50th Inf
6. (C) Task Organization:
  - a. Co B 1/50 Inf (M).
  - b. Section, Co C 4/60 Arty M-42 40mm (AW)(SP) (2 each).
  - c. Co C (-) 1/50 Inf (M).
  - d. Platoon (-) Co B 1/69 Armor.
7. (C) Supporting Forces:
  - a. 7/13 Arty.
  - b. 7/15 Arty.
  - c. 21st TASS.
8. Intelligence: Intelligence reports on the area of contact were non-committal prior to the action described here. The enemy had recently become more aggressive; as manifested by his actions on 5 May. Following the contact of 5 May, there was a Camp Strike Force contact in the central 506 Valley. The southern exit of the 506 Valley (Vic BR870760) was felt to be a likely avenue of escape for an enemy so recently in two large contacts in the same general location.
9. MISSION: 1/50 (+) conducts reconnaissance in force on 11 May 68 vicinity BR878733, and establishes blocking position in the vicinity of BR875750 to BR883756.

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 intervals, declassified  
 after 12 yrs.



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5 June 1968

SUBJECT: After-Action Report - Battle at Trung Hoi (2)

## 10. Execution:

- a. At 110920 May 68, Co B 1/50, with Section of twin 40mm (Dusters) conducted a reconnaissance in force mission, followed by Co C (-) 1/50. The units moved cautiously to the west, searching and clearing as they went. At 1220, Captain Ronald Dennis, commanding officer of Co B reported that his unit had found three NVA ration bags and 100 pounds of rice at BR878729. Two minutes later, LT John D Martin reported finding a large trench complex at BR881727. LT Martin estimated that the complex would hold a Battalion of enemy soldiers. Both units then halted, established perimeters and dispatched dismounted patrols to cloverleaf in their immediate areas. The units were separated by about 650 meters; but did not have visual contact because of the thick scrub brush, 10-12 feet high, which covers the elevation above the paddy.
- b. At 111250 May 68, LT Martin rendered a follow-up report of his findings. The trench line was 3 1/2 feet deep, 2 1/2 feet wide with one and two-man tunnels traveling off in alternate directions from the main trench. The main trench was circular with an approximate circumference of 500-600 meters. Co C had also located at the center of the complex, a room, 20 feet below ground, which was 6X6 meters. There were access trenches leading off in all directions from the main trench. LT Martin sent a patrol to check the hamlet north of his position. At 111321 May, LT Martin reported finding five additional underground rooms. The search continued.
- c. At 111342 May 68, CPT Dennis reported seeing six armed men wearing packs moving southeast on Rte 506, toward LT Martin's northbound patrol. One minute later, LT Martin's personnel also reported seeing armed men moving southeast along Rte 506. These two sightings were not of the same group of men. Each unit initially saw enemy personnel moving towards each other's location. As the sightings were reported, both units engaged the enemy and both came under attack.
- d. Company C, with one dismounted patrol still approximately 800 meters from the main body, reported that the enemy was probing from all directions, primary effort from the northwest, via the same trench line which they had recently checked.
- e. Gunships, air strikes and artillery were immediately requested. Elements of B 1/69 located at LZ Uplift, performing required maintenance, were alerted and ordered to move to the contact area. By 111347 May 68, Co C was attacked from 360 degrees. Both companies were under attack by mortars, B-40 rockets, grenades, and small arms. Co B's position became untenable as enemy assault waves

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swept up into the perimeter from the southwest. All organic and supporting weapons were brought to bear on the assaulting enemy troops. Captain Dennis gave the order to withdraw to the south-east toward Co C who was in a delaying position covering Co B's withdrawal. As Co B passed through Co C's position, the Company B command track took a direct hit by a B-40 rocket. CPT. Dennis was wounded at this time, and was inadvertently reported as KIA by LT Martin. CPT. Dennis overheard this erroneous report, but was unable to correct it for several minutes.

- f. As the units regrouped for the counterattack, FAC aircraft and Arty ALO spotted several groups varying in size from 30 to 60 enemy in the open as they were assaulting. Airstrikes were directed onto known and suspected enemy locations by the CCH. The FAC and the Aerial Observers reported killing a minimum of 60 enemy as they reacted to the sightings. Companies B and C reorganized at BR895719 for Dustoff, resupply, and to marry up with the 1/69 Armor reinforcements enroute from LZ Uplift.
- g. During the initial contact, one-half of Co C's calibre .50 machine guns were destroyed or rendered inoperative by enemy fires. A large number of M-60 machine guns were rendered inoperative by excessive friendly fires as well as enemy fires. Reorganization and resupply of these critical items was being effected when the 41st ARVN reported intercepting a message from the 3d NVA Division to the 2d VC Regt. ordering an attack on LZ Uplift effective immediately.
- h. When the casualties were extracted, total strengths of the two Companies, B and C 1/50, did not equal one understrength company. Co B fielded 46 men while Co C fielded 50. Personnel at LZ Uplift awaiting transportation for the infusion action program were diverted back to their units.
- i. At 1610 hours, the units moved out on the counterattack. One platoon of tanks had arrived to reinforce, but the M-42 "Dusters" remained at the resupply area because they had not yet received required ammunition. The Companies advanced with no contact to approximately 878727 where they again came under a heavy volume of small arms fire starting at 1648 hours. The units directed air strikes and artillery fire. The FAC's and AO's observed more enemy attempting to evade and immediately engaged them with air strikes.
- j. At 1830 hours the Companies moved to coordinates 882720 for additional resupply. Little enemy activity was taking place at this time. Tactical air strikes continued to arrive on station until after 1900, with artillery filling in the gaps. When resupply had been effected, the units displaced to coordinates 880723, for a night location and were covered by Spooky, now on station. No further significant activity followed.

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k. Co B estimated that their elements alone had killed at least 150 of the enemy. The enemy was dressed in new green uniforms with new web gear and packs. Their use of camouflage was outstanding. Many of our troops saw nothing more than flashes coming from moving bushes. Co C, on the other hand, was not subjected to a ground assault, but received small arms, a large volume of mortar fire as well as fires from a heavy machine gun, possibly as large as Calibre .50. During the sweep on the following morning there was no contact and apparently, the enemy policed the battlefield virtually unmolested by artillery blocking fires.

l. The following is a List of casualties and equipment losses:

	<u>ENEMY</u>	<u>HHC 1/50</u>	<u>Co B 1/50</u>	<u>Co C 1/50</u>	<u>Co B 1/69</u>	<u>Armor</u>
WIA		2	35	3		
KIA	61	1	2			
C/S Weapons						
S/A			2			
APC			1			

12. Reporting Officer's Analysis: Apparently, as in the contact of 5 May at AnBao this Battalion encountered an enemy which was waiting for a mechanized force to arrive. In this case, there were an estimated two Battalions. Unlike the past seven months in this area of operations, the enemy is now willing to sacrifice great losses while he is attempting to destroy personnel carriers. For the second time in one week, human wave attacks bearing down on our vehicles were evidenced. The enemy may be responding to pressures placed on him by his government and is attempting to gain a major victory at any cost. In this case, he was unable to accomplish his mission principally because local security was soundly deployed and the units were mutually supporting when the contact began. No doubt, his positions were prepared in depth, but did not significantly influence the battle. Tactical air support was again highly flexible, responsive and, above all, extremely effective.

*Richard P. Guthrie*  
 RICHARD P GUTHRIE  
 Captain, Infantry  
 S-3 Air

- 1 Incl
- 1 - Lessons Learned
- 2 - Skatch #1

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**D E N T I A L**

Lessons Learned - The Battle of Trung Hoi (2)

1. Dismounted local security prevents surprise by enemy attempting to infiltrate friendly positions.
2. The enemy is applying different tactics in his attacks on friendly positions.

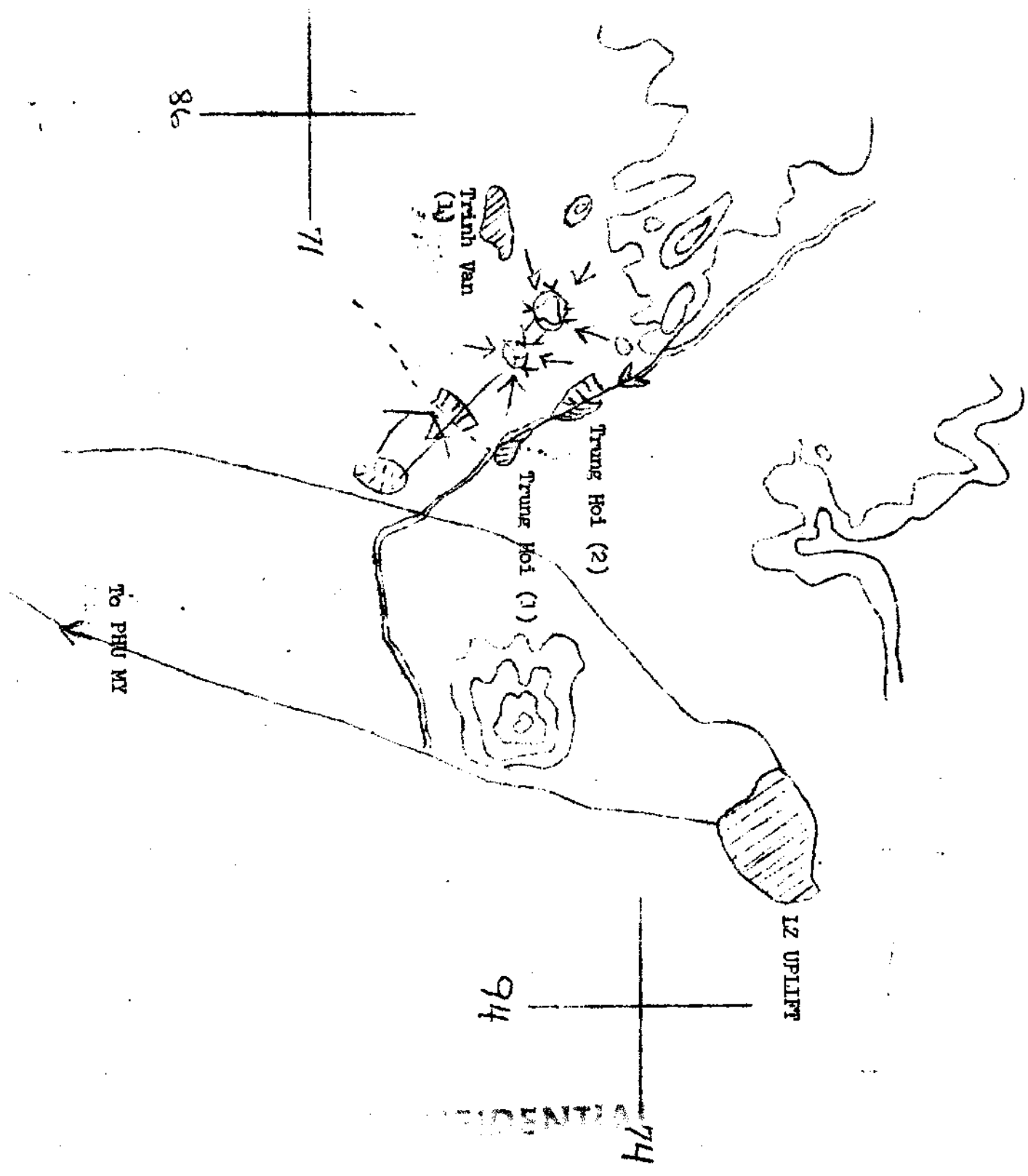
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SKETCH #1 Battle at Trung Hoi (2)



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