COMBAT AFTER ACTION INTERVIEW

"DOG" COMPANY
4TH BATTALION
503D (AIRBORNE) INFANTRY

173D AIRBORNE BRIGADE
(SEPARATE)

TUY HOA NORTH
30 - 31 JANUARY 1968
TABLE OF CONTENTS

I. Combat After Action Interview - "Dog" Company, 4th Battalion, 503d Infantry (TUY HOA North)

II. Inclosures
   1 - Interview with IPW Team's Contact with NVA Patrol 30 Jan 68
   2 - Roster of Persons Interviewed
   3 - Journal Copies 30-31 March
   4 - POW Report: PFC Nguyen Chuong
   5 - POW Report: PFC Nguyen Van Tuyen

III. Maps, Diagrams and Photographs of TUY HOA North
   TAB A - Aerial Photograph of TUY HOA North
   TAB B - Aerial Photograph - US Scheme of Attack (photo 1)
   TAB C - Aerial Photograph - Upper Village (photo 2)
   TAB D - Aerial Photograph - Occupation of Village
   TAB E - 1:50,000 Map of TUY HOA Area
   TAB F - US & NVA Scheme of Maneuver (3 diagrams)
1. **Name and Type Organization:** D Company, 4th Battalion 503d Infantry 173d Airborne Brigade (Separate).

2. **Inclusive Dates of Operation:** 30 - 31 January 1968

3. **Location:** Map Sheet 6835 II, TUY HOA (Chau Thanh) vic Cu 153477

4. **Control or Command Headquarters:** CJ, 173d Airborne Brigade (Sep)

5. **Persons Being Interviewed:** See Inclosure 2.

6. **Task Organization:** 4th Battalion, 503d Airborne Infantry.

7. **Supporting Forces:** Helicopter Gunships, 375th Assault Helicopter Co, 81mm mortars, (organic) 51st Chemical Detachment, 173d Abn Bde, FO party, 3d Bn - 319th Arty, C Btry 6th Bn 33d Artillery, C Btry, 3d Bn 319th Arty (illumination only), 2d Bn 47th ARVN Regiment, Elements of TUY HOA Regional and Popular Forces and Republic of Korea Artillery (105mm) Army of Vietnam Artillery (105mm). TAC Air Support (X-100's) 308th TAC Fighter Sqn (TUY HOA) and 3d TAC Fighter Wing (BIEN HOA).

8. **Introduction & Background:** This combat after action interview contains not only the after action interview with D Company 4th Bn 503d Infantry but interviews with captured NVA prisoners from the 5th Bn, 95th NVA Regt, men from the attacked C Battery, 6th Battery, 6th Bn, 32d Artillery, the 51st Chemical Det (173d Airborne Brigade), the 172d MI Detachment (173d Airborne Brigade), the Commanding General's aide, and the warden of the South Vietnamese Rehabilitation of PHU Y. The idea is to tell the story of the Communist Tet offense in TUY HOA and the part the 173d Airborne Brigade played in smashing it. Special thanks on this report is due SSG Robert J. Destatte, interrogator from the 172d MI Det who worked many extra hours to provide the NVA POW interviews. POW interviews as well as those from units other than D Company are interjected wherever they pertain either in the background statement of the mission narrative.

Since November 1967 when the majority of the 173d Airborne Brigade (Sep) departed the TUY HOA area to participate in Operation MAGA'THOR in DAK TO/KON-TUM area the 5th in 95th NVA Regt had moved back into the mountains (vic CQ 015461) where they could operate in a group of hamlets in the NW corner of TUY HOA Valley. Here they continued to get rice from the Hoa Quang Village and operate 10 - 15 kilometers west of TUY HOA City.

The 5-95th Regt (NVA) received orders to move down and strike the district capital of TUY HOA on the morning of Tet (30 Jan 68). They were to strike the American Artillery base at TUY HOA North, destroy the airfield there and seal off T&T with the people of TUY HOA.

**HOANG MINH SANG** (QM ASPIRANT, HQ 95th Regt attached to 5th Bn to handle provisions for the operation). "Mission of attack on TUY HOA was to destroy the puppet's (ARVN) troops and puppet government, drive the Americans from the fatherland and to liberate the people of the South and reunite the country under freedom and democracy."

**SGT LEDUC XO** (Squad leader 82mm mortar platoon). "If we weren't successful we were to retreat, rest, then return and hit TUY HOA again."

The attack was suppose to be in conjunction with the 85th VC Main Force Battalion (est. strength 250 men) on the same day. The 5th Bn was counting on the 85th VC Bn's help in the city; however the 85th VC Bn aborted their mission.
SUl3J1: Combat After Action Interview

PHAP NGOC LAM (Asst Company Commander, 2d Company 85th VC Bn, who surrendered himself and 15 men in TUY HOA City on 5 Feb 68): "we (the 85th Bn) were suppose to attack on Tet but we had advanced only half way between the mountains and the city when our recon element returned saying if we continued we'd run into a government ambush on the western edge of the city."

The 5th Bn had three infantry companies: 1st, 2nd and 3rd Company with a strength of approximately 55 men per company. Attached to them was a recon element (est 15 men) from the K-21 Recon/Sapper Company and a mortar platoon (2 82mm mortars) from the Regt's K-17 Mortar Company. There were also a few special support troops such as medics and medics attached from the Regimental HQ, and a small local VC element acting as guides.

The 5th Bn was armed with SKS carbines, AK-47 automatic rifles, B-40 rocket launchers, RPD machine guns, a few DPM medium machine guns and 2 82mm mortars (possibly there was a 60mm mortar per company but none were captured). The soldiers were armed with 1-4 grenades each, riflemen carried between 30 to 50 rounds, automatic weapons men (AK-47) carried 60 to 90 rounds, RPD machine gunners had 300 rounds in 3 100 round drums, B-40's had 3 to 5 rounds (1st) and the 82 mortars had 10-15 rounds per tube.

PFC TUYEN (NVA POW) "I had 60 rounds of ammunition, 2 magazines for my AK-47. This is not a small amount at all, 60 to 90 rounds was plenty for our side because we don't fire our ammunition wastefully like your side does."

"The 5th Bn's morale depended upon the individual, some had high morale others would have preferred to celebrate Tet back at their hospital with their wounded."

1LT Phuoc (S-2 47th Arty Regt) "Generally speaking the morale of the attacking unit was low."

The En moved out of the mountains (vic CQ C10540 beginning about 1800 hours, at 1900 hours they had reached canal no. 1 on the valley floor (vic CQ D50490) and pushed on past the Dong Hoa Church (2000 hours) and arrived at the foot of CHAP CHAT mountain at 2130 hours. The local people encountered on the way caused no trouble. From CHAP CHAT they moved into the delta (rice fields) and crossed a shallow river, here they split up with the 1st and 2d company (plus supporting forces and the Lapper/Sapper force acting as security for the Bn HQ) moved to the south of the airfield and the 3d company moved to the front of the American Artillery position. The Battalion had arrived in front of the airfield at about C100 30 Jan 68. The attack was suppose to have started at C150 but according to the NVA POW the local guide took too long to get them there.

The attack was to open by firing the mortars on to the airfield. The 3d Company was to take the artillery position and blow up the aircraft on the field. The task were broken down by platoons, as to taking bunkers, armored vehicles and blowing up aircraft.

PFC BUI VAN TUONG (3d Co) "By cell was assigned to take a pillbox (sand bag bunker), my platoon was to get the pillboxes and tanks (there were 2 dual 40mm dusters on the perimeter) the rest of the company was to get the artillery and airplanes. We didn't have anything to cut the barbwire we were to crawl through it, we didn't have any special explosives for blowing up the artillery. There was no special mission to seize or destroy the radar site I didn't even know there was one there."

(The 3d Bn (Abn) 319th Artillery had a counter mortar radar site inside C Btry 6th Bn 32d Arty perimeter).

SFC VANG SIKEL (Chief of Firing Btry, C 6-32d Arty) "We had four MG bunkers to the front with 2 men to a bunker, there was a dual 40mm gun (SP) on the right front and another on the back of the perimeter. The two 8" howitzers (SP) and 2,175 guns (SP) were about ten to fifteen meters behind the
bunkers. The gunner in the number 3 bunker gave the alert and opened up. They were already into the wire when we started firing. They captured the number three bunker and turned the gun around on us. They blew up one powder magazine and damaged the tube on a 175 gun (which only had 36 rounds of tube life remaining). We tried to keep down the wild firing and shoot at only targets. The dual 40mm duster moved up and blew the captured number 3 bunker away. They pushed about 30 meters into our perimeter and also got into the radar site on our left. When the paratroopers came in at 0630 we pushed them out into the rice paddies and worked them over with MG and 40mm fire. After the battle we counted 19 dead NVA in the perimeter and a ROK sweep in front found 43 more NVA. of the 100 artillerymen, four were killed."

PFC But (NVA) "we were not successful, we were defeated and forced to withdraw."

Meanwhile LT William Kennedy, the artillery battery commander at 0405 had reported to the 173d Abn Bde TAG CP that they were receiving incoming mortar and small arms fire and an estimated Vt platoon (40 men) was inside the perimeter. He requested the Brigade Reaction Force. The TAG CP immediately notified the Commanding General, the S-2, S-3, Aviation Officer, Air Force Liaison Officer, CO 4th Bn 503d Inf, CO 3 Bn 319th Arty, 17th Cav and D Co, 16th Armor. At 0430 the A-503d Inf was notified to have 1 company to move to TUY HOA North.

CPT Jimmy Jackson "Dog Company was alerted about 0500 to prepare for extraction from our field perimeter (vic BQ 9/A447), there was no chance to eat but the men carried plenty of food since we had just been resupplied for five days the night before. (The Company had been on a search and destroy operation for the past 10 days). About 0530 the Battalion CO (LTC James H. Johnson) landed and briefed me on the operational plan."

"Dog Company has two rifle Platoons of 35 men each, a 84 section and mortar section with 2 60mm mortars; attached were an Arty FO Team (3 Bn 319th Arty), 4.2 mortar FO Team, an Engineer Team (2 men) and a dog team (1 man, 1 dog). The men carried 5.5 (+) rounds of H-16 ammo, machine gunners carried 1500 rounds, H-79 men 50 + rounds, the mortars had 100 rounds. Every man carried two frag and two smoke grenades, two claymore mines and two trip flares. Each man carried his rucksack and there were 10 LDRs spread through the company, there was a V-17 protective mask for every four men."

9. Intelligence: It had been reported the TUY HOA North Airfield (CO 154477) had received a probe and the area had been initially overrun from the west. The airfield to the east was still secure.

10. Mission: The company would take helicopters into airfield (southern end) and push to west until they neutralized all hostile positions in the perimeter.

11. Concept of the Operation and Execution: The helicopters (CH-47's and UH-1B's) came in after 0600 o'clock and started extracting Dog Co under illumination furnished by the Artillery, and illumination pots prepositioned along the PZ in an "i" shape. Ships landed to the east of them.

Captain Jimmy Jackson "I arrived at the airfield on first ship with the assault elements around 0645. The aircraft approached the LZ from South to North. Hostile fire came from the west side of the LZ. The aircraft (CH-47) received fire and one of the engines was shot out, we had 32 men on the first lift. Our chopper landed behind artillery perimeter. When we left it the Hook was smoking. The second Hook was diverted to TUY HOA South airfield where the slicks would pick them up after they dropped the 3d lift."

The 3d lift was composed of 6 slicks and they came in same place as 1st lift. The troops entered through the back of the artillery perimeter's wire
and dropped smoke, so as they went through the wire, the on pulled their extra ami off the rucksacks. The 2d platoon and the Spearhead (point of five volunteers) were the first through the wire. The spearhead pushed ahead followed by 2d platoon on line. The assault element pushed due west across the compound and swung to the southwest; the paratroopers were holding their fire because it was still dark and friendly artillerymen were crouched in behind cover.

SGT Michael Flank "The spearhead came on the sand dune a little to the north of the radar site. I... had gotten into the same bunkers. We assaulted the bunkers with fire and grenades. (C-47) said (James L., Jr.) was leading the spearhead, I yelled to him, watch out there are Cooks here."

Flank yelled back, "That's what we're here for."

"And then he grenaded the bunker. We moved up to the generator on the artillery perimeter left and attacked a bunker there. We could identify the artillery people by their black jackets."

There was a lull in the firing then from snipers and automatic weapons. LTC Robert R. Kittel died had already been killed near the radar site. The spearhead pushed to southeast and neutralized the area and recovered the artillery commander's body. They began receiving sniper fire from the Northern Choi Hoi Rehabilitation Center tower. The company then set up a perimeter until 2d platoon arrived. (C-47) came over and picked up 1st platoon from the TUY hoo South airfield and moved them to 2d platoons landing zone.

The 2d platoon pushed up through C battery and C battery filled in behind them. The dual 57mm mortars were to the right. Those were in some of the front bunkers along the front of the wire using small arms and automatic weapons, the paratroopers knocked out the captured bunkers and neutralized the northern tower. The... who were crawling in the drainage ditch which led up to the perimeter were killed with M-60 fire and grenades.

Choppers brought in 1st platoon and mortar section. The 66 mm mortars were set up at the rear of the artillery perimeter. It took Dog Company about 20 to 30 minutes to restore perimeter.

SSG Roscoe Fruiser "I moved up through the compound and came up on the perimeter where the 40mm was leveled. When we got on the perimeter Puff (C-47) came by and opened and kept the rice paddies to the front, with mini-gun fire, we set up on the perimeter."

SGT Flank "We secured the radar site and started moving through the barbwire towards the rice paddies then with C-47 gunfire, opened up."

Lt Burton "Actually we were down next to the rice paddies, sitting in a ditch. The 2d platoon rear elements received the rounds from Snoopy as they cleared the SE portion of the perimeter closing on the spearhead.

SGT John B McCullery "We moved forward past the guns (175mm), 1Lt Greene (Lawrence D.) told SGT Fruiser to move down to the forward edge of the wire. When we came up on the left near the generator we started receiving fire from the North Tower (northern tower of the KVA Chai Yen Rehabilitation Center located about 100 meters left of the artillery compound). I told 1Lt Burton (Michael D) that the tower was firing on us; it wasn't completely light yet and we could see the muzzle flashes. 1Lt Burton ordered them to fire on it and they really smoked it for about 10 minutes. 1Lt Greene fired a LAW into the tower at the climax of the small arms and automatic weapons fire. Then somebody came out and waved."

Capt. John (Choir Dinh Yen Rehabilitation Center) "Several KVA took the northern tower of the compound. The Americans in the artillery compound fired
AVN-50/111
SUBJ: Combat After Action Interview

directly on the tower and the NVA they didn't kill jumped out and ran away. I walked out and waved to them to stop firing. There were 3 dead NVA in the tower."

Upon neutralizing the towers Spearhead pushed thru the wire to a point between perimeter and tower. 1st platoon deployed behind the Spearhead and to the right of the 2d platoon. The 40mm's wire firing at targets of opportunity to the front.

PFC William Ching (cook 2d Co) (AVN: RN) "There were 16 (cooks, finance clerks and quartermaster) of us, most of us unarmed waiting out in the rice paddies during the battle. About 660 a runner came out and told us to move to the village in the South but it was to close to dawn and we would be caught in the open rice fields, so they decided to move into the village. Shortly after we moved into the village we were compromised and surrounded by government troops."

"As soon as we moved into the village the Bn Co positioned the troops and ordered them to dig in with O/H cover and prepare to defend their positions. I was positioned with the Bn Hq element which we dug in one man holes at one and two meter intervals on either side of a village street. Then I started preparing food for the troops."

"About seven or eight o'clock the American forces started to move in. However, the Americans then withdrew."

Captain Jackson "As it got light you could see that some of the die hards were still trying to come in but the others had got the message. The NVA were moving out into the rice paddies. Then we were supported by gunships firing into the rice paddies. Snoopy (C-47) sprayed right on top of the NVA. The NVA were exposed in the rice paddies. The NVA were firing back but it was sporadic."

PFC Willie K. Cox (2nd Plt) "We led out of the perimeter to check the tower but we were told that the area was mined. We moved into a trench, the cooks seemed to have been pushed out so we made some chicken soup and ate breakfast."

SGM Arbuth "We landed and tagged onto the rifle company. It was first light. A few minutes before, the Lieutenant Colonel Robert E. Whitbeck who commanded the 173rd Airborne Brigade's 319th Airborne Field Artillery Battalion was shot and killed by an NVA soldier with an automatic weapon (AK-47). It was on this spot that LTC Johnson chose for his first Command Post. We set up on top of a huge rockpile on the edge of the perimeter nearest the enemy in order to offer maximum visibility."

LTC Frank L. Akers (Aide de camp to Brigadier General Leo H. Schweiter) "We landed at Tuy Hoa North airfield behind the aid station and General Leo H. Schweiter was met by Colonel Johnson and LT Vivonaitis Deputy Senior Providence Advisor."

"We moved up to check bunker positions. General Schweiter inspected the bunker position (we were still getting occasional fire). Then we moved up to the radar site and then moved to the left front of the perimeter behind a small rock pile. The 47th AVN Regt Co came up and General Schweiter, Col Nguyen Van Ba and LTC Johnson started confering when mortar fire came in so they moved to the bunker. They decided to prepare an overlay of ARVN positions for LTC Johnson and discussed coordination of maneuver of allied elements to seal the area off. We didn't know exact size of enemy force, expected an enemy company. LTC Johnson presented his scheme of maneuver which the General acknowledged. Then went to the chopper to coordinate with other allied forces."

SGM Arbuth "General Schweiter and his group had been in our CP area, coordinating with the ground commanders concerned, and making an estimate of the situation."
The area had been neutralized by C73C. The area was then ordered by Lt. Colonel Jackson to clear the village south of TUT HOA north airfield and clearing the village to the north. Captain Jackson ordered the 2d Platoon with the Spearhead as scout to clear the southern village and the 1st Platoon under Lt. Proffitt to clear the village to the north.

It was about 0800 when the Spearhead moved out behind the Rehabilitation Center. The Spearhead led in a diamond formation, followed by Lt. Greene's 2d Platoon in a wide column. They moved up towards the southeastern side of the village.

Sgt. Plank said, "we saw some dead Gooks when we passed the prison compound (on the eastern side). Some legs said there was a NVA down to the south. We saw smoke coming from the direction of the village. We moved along the dirt road."

Sgt. Cook said, "The Spearhead was in an echelon left about 100 meters in front of the 2d Platoon. Mahon was on the road, Plank was on the left, Cox to the right as we swept towards the village. This put one man on the high ground (Mahon) and one in the village (Cox). The 2d Platoon was following in 2 files. Mahon was moving out at the double time, the rest of us were having trouble keeping up. We saw the graveyard on the hill and Mahon was on the ridgeline. All of a sudden I saw some movement and Killer (Mahon) had jumped a bunch of NVA in holes. I threw a grenade in the first hole and Killer knocked out two holes real quick. The NVA were facing in the wrong direction. Killer was grabbing Gooks weapons and killing them with their own weapon, he took an AK-47 and jammed it in a Gook's mouth and blew his head off. In the next hole the Gook was waiting on him and they shot each other. The Gook died and Killer was wounded. The rest of the Gooks who we hadn't killed fragging the holes jumped up and ran, the ARVN's on the next hill took them under fire. I know we killed five right there. The ARVN's came over and stripped the bodies. Killer kept yelling for a weapon so he could go back and kill more. The ARVN's evacuated Killer."

PFC Cox said, "Just before Killer got on top of the NVA holes the ARVN's on the hill waved their arms and yelled 'Beaucoup VC.' We threw RPG and WP then turned towards the village and stopped. I only had a .45 automatic. So I picked up a Gook's rifle."

"We moved up into the village and fired up a likely hole, a hut, and hedge-line. I pulled a grenade and saw a little old lady in a hole. I ran her off and then tossed the grenade into a hut. We moved back and started firing down into the NVA in the village."

The 2d Platoon was strung out in a line east of the village about 100 meters from the village. As the 2d Platoon closed on Spearhead small arms and automatic weapons fire came from the village. The 2d Platoon swept on towards the village, Lt. Greene was trying to move the platoon on line, as they moved up next to a grave SP4 Ralph W. Meader the NVA hit, Lt. Greene moved towards Meader and he was hit. Lt. Greene was killed. Snipers fired on PVT Robert H. Harden when he moved up. The men yelled for a medic but they couldn't get one. Some of the men were begging to go out to the lieutenant and RIO but the others kept them back because of the fire.

PFC Cox said, "We could see the NVA jumping up and running around going in and out of holes. If you got on the wrong side of the ridge you got fired on."

SSG Weymond Wastham said, "PFC Thomas H. Swinnea said he spotted the sniper that was doing the damage but then he was hit. The medic (SP4 Caldwell) moved up and patched him up. I moved down and checked Lt. Greene, he was dead, we grabbed Meader while the others laid down a base of covering fire. While Caldwell was working on Meader a tracked ammunition carrier from the artillery battery pulled up driven by SP4 James L. Murphy (C-6-32d Arty). The track picked up the wounded and evacuated them. We were in the grave yard on top of the hill and bullets were bouncing off the tombstones. We started getting some
machine gun fire up on the hill. A Gook lifted his head up right in front of SSG Fraizer and got it blown away. The platoon laid down suppressive fire to keep the NVA pinned down."

First knowledge of the contact the CO had was when medics were requested by SSG Martinovsky the Plt NCO. Captain Jackson recalled the 1st platoon from the right. Meanwhile the 2d platoon spread out to form a horsehoe around the village from south to north with the ARVNs on the high ground to the south. The recalled 1st platoon followed the 2d platoon's route. Gunships directed by American advisors with the ARVNs were working over the village from the air.

Some civilians came in from the village and the medics help patch up one civilian male. The ARVN advisor coordinated with the left flank of Dog Co. (Spearhead) and directed rocket firing helicopters against spotted enemy positions. The men could only pop up and fire. They spotted a sniper under a board with a red scarf or bloody head firing, there was a machine gun firing behind him. Hand grenades and 7.99 fire neutralized the position but other men (NVA) crawled in and filled the gap.

Targets of opportunity were being engaged by the 2d platoon which occupied the high ground surrounding the village. First estimates put no more than a platoon of NVA in the village. Scrub and catus were the only vegetation growing on the sand dunes. The weather was hot and humid. SGT Artis Knight who had requested a tracked ammunition carrier from the artillery compound brought up ammunition and evacuated wounded with it. The 1st platoon moved in and reinforced the right side of 2d platoon. The 1st platoon under LT Proffitt, deployed with a man about every 8 or 10 yards. It was about nine o'clock when everyone was in position. The first casualties were starting to come in from the flank positions at this time.

While the 1st platoon was moving in CPT Jackson had been unable to contact LT Greene on the radio so he sent his XO Lt. Michael Burton over to see what was happening and to insure the lines were tied in. When notified LT Greene was dead CPT Jackson put LT Burton in command. LT Burton worked around and tied in with the ARVN unit. The ARVNs came up on CPT Jackson's push when LT Burton furnished the 47th ARVNs with a RTO and radio. CPT Jackson then had good grasp of the situation. Men were firing on NVA in the village. On third trip the prime mover brought up the 60mm mortars right behind the hill and put them into action. The mortars initially fired at a range of 300 meters and dropped the adjusting rounds right in the village. With the correct range the mortars commenced firing in 3 round volleys.

Over to the left of the 2d platoon the Spearhead element had set up on a dune with the ARVNs on the high ground to their rear. In the right corner of the village they could see a sniper lifting up a tin cover and firing, they laid heavy semi automatic fire on him. Some NVA started moving out of the village to the south (the left of the Spearhead) and the Spearhead started receiving fire from them. The Spearhead was running low on ammunition when Sgt Cook and PVT James R. Price came up with some more machine gun ammunition. The machine gun opened up the village with a heavy volume of fire and the men saw 3 NVA fall.

The NVA were putting out a lot of return fire. (Sporadic fire whenever there was a lull from gunship, mortars and automatic weapons).

CPT Jackson "As we set up around the village I advised LTC Johnson of the situation, the fire we were receiving and casualties. I also requested additional ammo. Ammo was being resupplied from artillery compound and by chopper re-supply. Fire coordination was good our mortars would cease fire for gunships, their miniguns and rockets were effective. I also received a S-2 report of NVA reinforced platoon located in the village."

"The Battalion Commander informed me he wanted to put CS gas in the village
SUBJECT: Combat After Action Interview

(No friendly civilians in the village had been reported to the CO). LTC Johnson wanted to gas the village and follow it up with a company assault. He also said he was putting C-4 on standby and was sending up additional M-17 masks so each man in the company would have one. He was also sending up a chemical team with E-8 portable CS gas grenade launchers and had called for a helicopter to drop gas also. CPT Jackson rearranged the 1st platoon on the north and the 2d platoon on the east, the spearhead element remained the furthest east. The ARVN were warned to pull back for the gas attack. The ARVN withdrew but the Popular Forces came up, however, they drew back when the American ARVN advisor came up.

During the interim 30 minutes after LTC Johnson informed CPT Jackson of the plan the platoons were briefed and issued fresh ammunition and extra hand grenades. The Battalion Chemical NCO brought up mask and the E-8 launchers and instructed them on their deployment; masks were issued and the chemical apparatus set up. Ammunition resupply and evacuation continued without stopping. About 1145 the Battalion CO crawled up to the Company CP and advised CPT Jackson to kick off the attack at 1200 if the ships were on station at that time with the CS gas. The ships came on station about 1215 made 3 passes putting gas east of the village so that the wind blew it across the village. The 3d pass was the signal to ignite the company gas apparatus. The company gas firing was the signal for attack.

CPT Jackson "I monitored a radio message from the S-3 section to the BN CO of an NVA Co. in the village."

SP4 Danny Suddreth (51st Chem Det) "We were notified about 11:30 that the 4th BN wanted some CS dropped. They furnished us coordinates and we loaded 10 cases (16 grenades to a case with pins pulled and wrapped with det cord which was fired with blasting caps with 20 second fuzes) we which we had pre stocked. We flew over the area and they told us where to drop it. We made 3 passes and threw out one case from either side on the 1st pass at an altitude of 1800 feet. They exploded right over the village. Then we made two more passes and dumped the rest. The effect looked like a big cloud covering the village. Most of it landed on the eastern edge of the village and blew across it as the wind was blowing from east to west."

PFC Cox "When the ARVNs moved back during the gas attack the NVA tried to follow up but I stopped them again with my MG."

D Company assaulted the village from the north with the mission of clearing the village to the south and to the river. Supporting fires from the ARVNs were to shift fires south as US troops advanced, all but one squad of 2d platoon had shifted north to attack with 1st platoon. Due to the toll in casualties LSG Knight was put in charge of the left flank element. The 1st platoon under LT Proffitt was in the middle. The 2d platoon under SSG Miloslav Martinovsky was on the right flank, the CP was in the middle. LT Burton was in charge of coordination with the 47th ARVN Regt on the left.

CPT Jackson "It was hot in those masks and the men were crouching down in sand, sweating in the heat. I ordered every other man to throw a grenade and then assault. When the gas launchers fired I jumped up, threw a grenade and yelled 'Lets go.' I realized that the men might not assault at the same time thus causing half of the assault element to go on line and the remainder to lay and ponder on the idea. I realized if they saw me up and moving in their midst this would instill them to push over the hill into the assault without hesitation, thus activating their military training and reaction. Every other man threw a grenade over the hill and began a walking assault. As the men went over the hill the village was partially masked by smoke from the gas. Contact on the right flank was especially heavy as we hit the outskirts of the village. Then as we moved into the village the men broke into 3 and 4 man teams keeping in a pretty even line."
SUBJECT: Combat After Action Interview

The paratroopers moved down the hill on line, receiving fire from the middle of the village. Several men were hit and others pulled them back to aid. As the paratroopers moved down the hill one man grabbed up an AK-47 and as a NVA jumped out of a hole he tried to fire but the Chinese weapon jammed. The NVA ran around a corner into another group of charging paratroopers, he doubled back and the trooper's AK-47 jammed again, finally he cleared it in time to blast the fleeing enemy soldier. When questioned by his CO as to why he was using the AK-47 instead of his M-16 the paratrooper drawled "Just wanted to try his weapon Sir, ain't never killed a man with his own gun before."

The Company Commander led his group down the third row of huts. LT Proffitt led his platoon down on the right side. LTC Johnson and his party accompanied the assault and set up his OP on the edge of the village.

CPT Jackson "As we moved into the village the team on my left eliminated a hooch with 3 NVA inside. As they moved around to the left side of the hooch one of the team members (PVT Battle) spotted a NVA coming out of a spider hole to his left flank about 3 meters away. He whirled to his left and shot him in the head just as the gook threw a hand grenade. About six men were on his right and when he fired everyone dove for cover in all four directions. I moved towards the right flank and came upon a team pinned down on both sides of a hooch. I told them to move out but they hesitated and I said 'Follow me'. I led out around the right side of the hooch directing fire to the suspected areas of hostile fire. As I fired to my front they maneuvered to my left and placed a heavy volume of fire in the suspected area causing it to be neutralized.

1SG Artis Knight Jr "I hit the left flank we went in on the last building. As we got there we broke contact with the right. As we kept moving in we kept getting more fire from the right. We couldn't get in touch with the right. LT Burton, who was observing the action from his left flank OP, and I agreed over the radio we should link up with the right and wheel right but only if we could contact them. We were taking wounded then. I ran around and came to the right. One man was just clearing a spider hole for the second time. We then planned to wheel right but SGT Tucker called and said Big 6 said to move back and burn everything."

CPT Jackson "The teams were about half through the village when the right side bogged down while the left still advanced. It looked like the NVA had withdrawn into the Battalion OP area in a group of 30 or 40. When the right flank hit the NVA OP area they began to take casualties. I called back to my CO and advised him the right flank had bogged down and was taking casualties. Then we began to take casualties on the left. NVA were coming out of spider holes at a range of 10 and 15 feet. Our only advantage was that the NVA had to come out of their holes arms first and the men were picking them up out the corner of their eye and wheeling to the flank and chopping them down. The biggest problem was making the assault with the protective mask on. The NVA positions were well camouflaged and further helped by smoke from the burning huts.

PFC Nguyen (NVA POW) "Our people were well concealed and dug in and fired sparingly and accurately as opposed to the Americans which had to move in the open and fired a lot in a confused manner. Your own mortars wounded some of your people."

"When they used the gas against us we didn't have any masks. Some men used damp towels and this protected them. Those that didn't have towels the gas was very uncomfortable, it made their eyes water and nose burn, but it didn't cause any confusion in the HQ."

Due to the hot humid condition and burning huts the gas rose fairly fast and between the smoke (created by the burning debris in the village from the supporting fires) and the gas the paratroopers had enough cover to allow them to move over the top of the hill and pass the outer NVA defense. Once inside close in house to house fighting commenced. The maneuver scheme was to move one team right or left and cover the adjacent team.
AVBE-SC/HND
SUBJECT: Combat After Action Interview

CPT Jackson "working in teams to mutually support each other, the teams would neutralize a position from the flank that had a team to their right or left pinned down. When it was neutralized the team in that sector would move forward and support from the flank the advancement of a team on their right or left."

The troopers worked from hut throwing frag grenades and occasional CS grenades. On the left after a CS grenade had been discharged two men ran out of a hut without weapons SGT Oden grabbed one and tied him up and SP4 Harry T. Fower III grabbed the other one.

The NVA started drawing back to their CP which was to the advancing para-troopers right flank and from there started putting out a heavy volume of fire.

The CO lost communications with the left flank and not being abreast of the situation the CO called his reserves (composed of LT Burton, 1 squad from 2d platoon and Spearhead element). They came from their position on the southeast side of the village and followed in behind the company. The Company Commander got separated from the company RTO but still had contact with the Battalion CO. He advised him that right flank was bogged down and he was moving in that direction to determine the situation. After reaching the right flank which was under heavy fire he determined he was stopped cold and was taking heavy casualties.

CPT Jackson "I was separated from the company RTO and had to switch the battalion radio to the company net. This brought me abreast of the complete situation, the right flank had to be moved so I ordered my reserves (LT Burton, one squad from the 2d platoon and the Spearhead element) to come up."

"The right flank was completely stopped. Platoon Leader Proffitt said he had a lot of men wounded. We were in the middle of the village and I asked for a pack count to the right. The count came back eight. I couldn't visualize just eight... then the count came back again: twelve, four of which were dead."

SGM Arthur: "The combat troopers of Company D were either dead, seriously wounded, lightly wounded, pinned down or otherwise so busily engaged fighting the enemy at this point that there was no detail available to carry grenades. Major Oerding, our S3 Officer, and I decided that we would deliver the grenades. He would take some to the center portion of the line, and I had about a sixty yard dash to make with mine."

"Along about this time General Schweiter arrived on the scene. I have never seen a General just a few yards from where his troops were slaying and being slain before, but I can't say that now."

LT Akers: "That afternoon about 1300 hours, we went back and landed and the General asked me if I thought we could find the 4th Battalion's CP. I said it would most likely be forward. So the General said let's go. The artillery ammunition carrier came by with ammunition so I suggested jumping aboard. We jumped on the back of the ammunition carrier. We could hear heavy firing from attacking paratroopers being answered by occasional heavy NVA fire. Then we saw SGM Arthur directing the track to his position just behind the crest of the hill so that you could see the village from the track but it was in bull down behind the hill."

"General Schweiter jumped out of the track and we spotted LTC Johnson located on the forward slope of a sand dune near the edge of the village with a radio on his back. We started to run down to LTC Johnson. Then SGM Arthur came around and yelled 'General you shouldn't be down here, there's a lot of firing going on.'"
"General Schweiter continued onto LTC Johnson's position. They confered at the northeast corner of the village. There was still some gas in the area. LTC Johnson informed the General that the NVA were still offering heavy resistance and that he felt that there was at least a company. They moved behind the wall of the first hut. While they were talking a burst of AK-47 fire came over their heads. I turned around and yelled to SGT Humphreys (4th Battalion's chemical NCO) and the men up the hill behind him."

"Hey! Didn't that come from behind us?"

"SGT Humphreys said, 'Yes.' I told him to get someone up there and get the sniper. Then I crawled up the hill and directed some fire against the sniper's position and they received no more fire from it. As I returned I saw a man staggering up the lane between the huts. I recognized SGT Houtz of the Battalion S3, he was holding his right side. I directed him over and examined his wound (a frag wound in the back). We then called a medic over who bandaged his back and prepared morphine. But the SGT said 'Don't waste it on me.' The SGT refused aid and told me there were several guys about 15 meters down in the village. He said he'd tried to bring some out but couldn't. He said, 'Someone's got to get them out. There's a couple of guys real bad, one of them had a head wound.'"

"I slung my CAR-15 and ran down the lane and picked up the man with a head wound. Another paratrooper materialized with a stretcher and we loaded the man on and moved back to the track. When I got there there were two or three other wounded around it waiting for evacuation and a medic to load the track."

"SGM Arthurs came up yelling for a stretcher. We broke up to search for a stretcher or anything to carry a man with. I went to the left where I saw Major Oerding (Battalion S3) who was also looking for a stretcher. I picked up a basket and ran back. SGM Arthurs and I ran back into the village with the basket but it didn't work. The man was wounded in the chest and face. SGM Arthurs and I started carrying him up by arms and Major Oerding picked up his feet. We got all the wounded loaded up when the SGM saw the ambulance hadn't been unloaded. They unloaded part of the ammo and grenades."

"I ran back to the General and suggested we go back on the track. The General got in the track and it turned around and started moving. As we approached the helicopters, I signaled the dustoff helicopter to start up. The General and I helped load the wounded since most of the men were in shock. After the wounded were loaded on the dustoff chopper the General took 2 walking wounded with him and we flew off to brief the IFFV Commanding General."

"SGM Arthurs: 'General Schweiter and the Colonel decided that being as there were too many of them and they were well emplaced, that we would withdraw, stay on the high ground to prevent the enemy from escaping, and bring in air-strikes.'"

Before General Schweiter left he and LTC Johnson instructed the men to burn all the huts on the left where the sniper fire was coming from.

CPT Jackson: 'The Colonel came down into the CP area to verify the withdrawal. However, snipers had the area zeroed in and the men were getting hit when they tried to move. The area was covered in rubble and smoke from the burning huts.'

SGM Arthurs: 'We found CPT Jimmy Jackson and LTC Johnson set his CP up right there with him. After the battle, prisoners showed us the enemy battalion CP. We couldn't have been more than 25 yards from it. The enemy put some of the closest licks on us at that point, moving into that area, and I thought we had had it.'

"LTC Johnson briefed CPT Jackson. He told him we weren't leaving as long
as there was still one wounded paratrooper in the village, but we would make an orderly, military withdrawal, fighting our way out and put airstrikes in on the foe. At this point, it is impossible to ascertain how many of them we had killed and/or wounded, but just about everybody we saw after the battle had bullet holes in them. Company B's paratroopers were nobody's patsy. Charles paid off with compound interest for every casualty he exacted from us.'

CPT Jackson "RTO Roney Smith was hit and LT Proffitt put fire in the area where the rounds came from. Then he was hit. We put more fire into the area and I ordered LT Proffitt to go back and guide the reserves in so we could execute the withdrawal."

The reserves came under fire as they came in. The CP group and the last elements on the right flank were preparing to withdraw when a grenade came in and suddenly exploded. PFC Richard Cooney a machinegunner was wounded in the arm. SGT James E. Rosenback was hit in the foot. The explosion ignited a CS grenade hanging on PVT Arthur Elliott's chest. CPT Jackson at first thought it was a WP grenade but the gas came spinning out amidst the command group and covering party. Those who had taken off masks were scrambling to mask. As soon as the men masked they evacuated the wounded and resumed their covering fire.

The reinforcements had stopped and started evacuation of the wounded on the right flank which was not what the CO had in mind. Smoke and obstacles kept the CO from seeing and the CS grenade had caused everyone to withdraw about 10 feet.

CPT Jackson "Elements from the left sector under command of the 1st Sgt reached the Co. CP group first, when they met the wounded from the right sector on the way to the rear, they thought it was the right sector withdrawing in total so they helped evacuate the wounded. LT Burton realized this was not the entire right sector by communicating with me over the radio. He pushed the reserves over the hill to my location. SGT Cook volunteered to cover the withdrawal alone but I told him I would be the last one out of this village but he was welcome to stay with me. We covered the withdrawal of the remaining elements of the right sector and the relief force. SGT Cook and I would withdraw by leaps and bounds firing as we went.

The reserves were to have covered the right flanks withdrawal. Then about a squad under 1SG Knight came up. CPT Jackson went up with SGT Burl Barnes and they found out Elliott was dead.

CPT Jackson "We commenced an orderly withdrawal by fire and maneuver. When SGT Cook and I reached the last building I saw SGT Fraizer and Barnes coming up left side of the village. We covered them out. Then they sprinted over the hill. I couldn't see anyone else. Everyone alive and wounded had been taken out so I turned and went back over the hill."

"We reorganized the line on the same location that the attack had been launched from. The company and suffered 29 or 30 casualties during the attack. Six dead were left in the village."

LT Burton "The company pulled back over the hill to the east of the POW Camp on line while C Company deployed along the airstrip, while waiting on the airstrike."

CPT Paul R. Robinson (FR 66049, F-100 Pilot, 308th TAC Fighter Squadron, Tuy Hoa AFB) "We were on alert with our two F100's sitting on the end of the strip. My ship carried four Mark 82's (500 pound high drag bombs) and my wing man (CPT Robert E. Humphreys) carried 4 napalms (700 pounds). We both had 1600 rounds of 20mm. At 1330 hours, we scrambled on alert for action at Tuy Hoa with instructions to contact TONTO 03, the Forward Air Controller."
SUBJECT: Combat After Action Interview

"We held for ten or fifteen minutes over the area waiting for three birds (F100's) from the Bien Hoa AFAB (3d TAC Fighter Wing). The FAC briefed us on the target and layout and we made a dry run from north to south at 500 knots at about 300 feet. Then we made three hot runs, hitting the pickle button (bomb release). The first pass I dropped two 500 pound bombs and one each on the next two passes. My wingman did the same with his napalm. Then we held high and dry."

"The birds from Bien Hoa arrived and the FAC reported troops running into the rice paddies so they dropped their bombs in the rice paddies next to the village. We then made 20mm strafing runs over the rice paddies with explosive 20mm cannons. One of the pilots said he saw about 20 (NVA) on the edge of the village and in the rice paddies. CPT Humphrey's said when he releases his first napalm he saw several people coming out of a building where his bomb was going. As we left, 3 more ships from Phu Cat came on station."

PFC Nguyen (NVA POW) "The airstrikes caused many casualties. You dropped a 1000 pound (500 pound) bomb almost in the middle of the HQ section and followed it 2 or 3 minutes by a fire bomb, followed by aircraft guns. I was wounded by the 1000 pound bomb. It killed political officer and the Battalion CO aide and I heard it wounded the Battalion CO. The fire bomb landed two beds away from me. The fire was hitting within inches of me and burned me on the arm and foot. The aircraft guns hit me in the back (20mm). I think most of the Battalion Staff was killed or wounded by the airstrikes. I just laid there until the Government troops found me."

At about 1530 D and C Company Commanders conducted an aerial recon of the village and were briefed on the method of attack. C Company was scheduled to attack from the northeast to the stream. The airstrikes came and C Company swung around to get in position. While moving south to get in position they received some fire from their flank. It was neutralized. They maneuvered up to their assault position and deployed on line. C/4-503's 81mm mortars went into action and started placing effective fires on the village. D Company moved into position trying to stay off the gun target line. About 1630 hours, Dog Company received instructions to deploy into attack position. Their strength was now about 44 effectives. C Company started taking casualties once they were in position. CPT Jackson crawled forward to the original OP and was maneuvering the left and right flank up. Then word came from LTC Johnson to pull back for more air and artillery strikes. While CPT Jackson issued instructions the 81mm mortars were still firing. A short round came in and hit Dog’s left flank. The round hit between the right portion of the left flank and the right portion of the Company CP element that was just getting up to withdraw. Fifteen casualties were caused by the short round and Dog Company was rendered combat ineffective. Dog Company withdrew to a perimeter across the dirt road next to the airstrip and C Company remained in position dug in. The company set up a 360 degree perimeter for the night.

The ARVN Forces (1st and 2nd BN 47th ARVN Regt) made an attack on the village but they started taking casualties and LTC Johnson had them withdraw and called in more airstrikes. SNOOPY and artillery illuminated and fired on the village all night. ARVN Forces remained in position to the south.

B Company was lifted into Tuy Hoa North at 0600 the next morning and elements of D Company, 16th Armor arrived. The plan was to conduct an assault on the village in armored personnel carriers. B Company occupied Dog Companies former position. The attack was to take place at 1000 hours with the APC's smashing the enemy's first line and the paratroopers to assault from them and sweep the village.

Before the attack could take place the 47th ARVN moved up and occupied the village against light opposition. B Company and C Company also swept the village and mopped the area.

PFC Pham (NVA POW) "The remains of the Battalion tried to escape in small groups thru the rice paddies to the west and bank into the mountains."
"When the 47th AVN moved in I heard a lot of firing. I was afraid they'd shoot me before they realized I wasn't going to resist."

13. Results: The morning of 31 January, Dog Company mustered at an effective strength of 2 officers and 38 enlisted. They suffered 14 KIA (2 were attached personnel) and 44 WIA. NVA casualties were: 189 KIA (BC) and 31 POW's, 77 NVA KIA (BC) were credited to the 173d Airborne Brigade. A large number of small arms (AK-47's, SKS carbines) crew serve weapons and equipment were captured along with 2 82mm mortars. US equipment losses were: 12 M-16 rifles, 5 M-60 machine guns, 14 .45 caliber pistols, 1 90mm recoilless rifle, 2 watches, 2 compasses (M-2) and three sets of binoculars.

14. Analysis: The Battle of Tuy Hoa North was characterized by rapid reaction, aggressiveness, bravery and fire power. However on the minus side better and more rapid intelligence and perhaps a heavier and longer bomb bardment of CS would have been more successful. There were also additional weapons and units in the area which could have been used to advantage.

Battlefield intelligence leading to the initial assault by Dog Company at noon on the 30th had them engaging an enemy platoon when actually an enemy battalion minus these men lost in the attack on the artillery position had been diggin in since 0600 that morning. POW's, refugees from the village had come into Allied hands but no real estimate of the enemy's strength had been made.

The use of CS gas would have been more successful if it had been substained for a longer period. The sea breeze carried it off along with the heat from the burning huts. Some NVA ran from the gas but most stayed and ate it since it quickly blew over. Some men carried CS baseball grenades on the assault but these proved more of a hinder than a help since most of the US troops pulled off their mask once in the village and the fresh CS hurt them more than the enemy. A substained CS attack would have produced better results.

Another incident which hurt the assault was the way in which many troops left the assault to help carry the wounded to the rear. The wounded should be left to the medics. The withdrawal of six to twelve troops during the assault can have painful results; one or two wounded could cause most of a fire team to be withdrawn.

In preparing the village prior to the assault there were two twin 40mm selfpropelled cannons in the artillery position which could have been used to great effect if employed. Armored personnel carriers with their 2 .50 caliber machine guns would also been highly effective but they were held until 31 January before it was decided to use them.

The use of air power and the personal bravery of the officers and NCO's of the men engaged was awe inspiring. From the Commanding General down the paratroopers conducted themselves fearlessly. The lack of accurate, speedy intelligence was the one major weakness. Attachment of a Vietnamese interpreter to US companies and quick action to access all battlefield intelligence to a central point would reduce this problem.
Inclosure 1

SSG Robert J. Destatte (172d MI Det, iPW Team): "We came down to the airstrip to coordinate with ARVN subsector (located at Tuy Hoa north) on some POW's we heard they'd captured. As we drove to the airstrip we heard heavy small arms and mortar fire over in the burning village (1900 hours). Most all of our fire was going into the village. We could see troops on the dunes. Everybody was gone from the ARVN subsector. We about spent 15 minutes and decided to get out of everybody's way and returned to Sector (MaCV at Tuy Hoa)."

"We stopped at the airstrip to see what was going on. Most of the fire was in-going. We drove up the road and saw National Police men crossing the road firing into the upper village. At first we thought they were trigger happy. Then we could hear the firing coming back. Then LT Edward K. Anthony said stop the jeep and take up defensive positions on each side of the road. We parked on the right side of the road. I'd just gotten across the road and laid down when I saw three people sneaking down an alley across the road. All three were wearing shorts and the front one had a scarf of camouflage silk, all wore black shirts. The lead man was carrying a grease gun and I wasn't sure if they were regional force or bad guys. I didn't want to kill our own people. They were interested in the area towards the National Police. The lead man saw me from the corner of his eye and spun around towards me with his weapon. I took him under automatic fire. The lead man fired a burst with the grease gun and the other two took off running around the laundry up the alley. LT Anthony and LT Vincent "anyone stayed behind the jeep and covered the laundry. I moved about ten meters to the right behind a tree and waited."

"I saw a man poke his head around the corner of the laundry and jump back. I knew he'd spotted me and was going to throw a grenade. Then I heard the grenade clip a dry branch over my head. I knew it was near but not where so I squeezed down in the sand. It exploded 10 feet from me in the deep sand and exploded harmlessly only scaring the hell out of me. LT Anthony and LT Panzone moved across the road and took up positions 25 meters to my right. I waited for the NVA to follow up the grenade but they didn't come out so I cut across a couple of fences and got behind a lattice fence. A refugee came out from behind the laundry with bundles, looked both ways and crossed the street."

"I waited for a while, then LT Anthony told me to call across in Vietnamese for them to put their weapons down and surrender and they wouldn't get shot."

"Then I saw one man in black sneaking up the other side of the laundry between a pile of furniture. The one in the scarf moved out behind him in front of the next house. I had good concealment so I took careful aim and opened up on automatic. He fell and I turned my weapon on the other man and tried to fire on him thru the furniture. The man I hit moved back around the corner then they tried to cross an alley under LT Anthony's and LT Panzone's observation and they drove them back by fire several times."

"Then LT Anthony sent me down to the National Police and Regional Forces to see if we couldn't get some to come back and help us. I also told a civilian who was moving towards the airfield to notify the Regional Forces to come. I found Major Hung in charge and he said they'd had the same individuals under fire and the NVA had killed 1 National Policeman. He asked his CO for permission to move into the village to find them. Then 2 squads of Regional Forces Troops moved down from the airfield to help out — so that saved it up."

"LT Trína Ngoc Qui, from Vietnamese Sector Armor Branch, took a squad in and searched the area around the laundry and then broke in the laundry and conducted a room to room search. (Here the LT frisked his own men and made the boy that lived there check to make sure the ARVN troops had not stolen anything)"

"Then we stopped and visited Major Hung and he told us what they'd done. He said they captured 8 weapons, killed 2 and had 2 WIA trapped. They were preparing to move in on the upper village with combat police and Regional Forces. The 47th ARVN was to the left. The ARVN troops seemed pretty well controlled and Major Hung forbid them to fire rifle grenades since they would endanger friendly troops. He left a blocking force and started conducting a house to house search of the upper village. Then we left."