

DOCUMENT A

TRANSLATION

VC DOCUMENT

CHAPTER IX

Documents:

- A. — COMBAT ORDER FOR AN AMBUSH
BY THE NVA 32nd REGIMENT
- B. — CHARACTERISTICS OF THE 1st
U.S. AIR CAVALRY DIVISION
- C. — DIARY OF A V.C. CADRE
- D. — REFERENCE DOCUMENTS

Translation by
Army Captain NGUYỄN - KHÁI - SIÊU
II Corps Special Staff

the foolish arrogance of the capricious prince who has betrayed the Free World and turned his own country into a communist satellite.

The Bu Kheo Airfield, west of Highway 19 across the border, had an important role in the battle of Pleime. High-ranking VC leaders had landed there, on their way from North Vietnam to the Field Front. By letting the Communists use Bu Kheo, Cambodia which pretends so far to be a neutralist has demasked herself.

COMBAT ORDER FOR AN AMBUSH
The name 'Pleime', pronounced 'Play me' by foreigners has become easily familiar to alien historians and correspondents. In fact, the VC have used all their tricks and deployed all their capabilities in their game at Pleime last year. Is it for this reason that the 'Spring campaign' in 1965 has not taken place in the Highlands?
Pleime, the 1965 Spring Campaign

The name 'Pleime', pronounced 'Play me' by foreigners has become easily familiar to alien historians and correspondents. In fact, the VC have used all their tricks and deployed all their capabilities in their game at Pleime last year. Is it for this reason that the 'Spring campaign' in 1965 has not taken place in the Highlands?

Pleime, the 1965 Spring Campaign

Translation by
Army Captain NGUYEN-KHAI-SIEU
II Corps Special Staff

124

DOCUMENT A

TRANSLATION

Top Secret
(VC Classification)

VC DOCUMENT

(See Map on Pleime Ambush)

COMBAT ORDER FOR AN AMBUSH
BY THE 32D REGIMENT

PREPARED AT REGIMENTAL
HEADQUARTERS/PLEI-LUC-CHIN
AT 1500 HOURS, 12 OCT. 1965

PLEIKU
PLEI THE (YA 815 008)

MAP: SCALE 1/100000, MADE IN 1962

1. After the initial attack on PLEIME the GVN will likely send a relief column. The relief column will probably be composed of one ARVN Battle Group and one Armored Battle Group from the 24th STZ. There will probably be one or two US battalions in reserve. The relief forces could come by air or by road, which ever is the most suitable. They could arrive at the battle area in one or two days. Their battle formation could operate up to one kilometer from the road. They could have the infantry and armor elements interposed with each other; as an example an Armor element leading with the infantry 500m to one kilometer behind. After the ARVN elements are ambushed they will pull back to the O-Gri area to regroup. ARVN forces behind the ambushed element will probably move to the area of PO Post (20-14), O-Gri (22-18) and KLAN (26-22).

127

2. In order to defeat the ARVN forces and those American forces engaged, all general activities must be coordinated throughout the battle area. To widen the liberation zone and develop guerrilla movement, the Field Front Headquarters orders the 32d Regiment (minus 7th Company, 966th Battalion) with two anti-aircraft companies, to destroy the ARVN infantry and armor units moving on Provincial Road 21 (TN. Provincial Route 5) from Phu My (AR750 275) to Pleime (ZA150 065).

a. The sector from O-Gri to Chu Von is the main sector (for the ambush).

b. Units are responsible for attacking any enemy units that are airdropped in their zone. The ARVN air landings will probably be at PO and PIA posts.

c. We will destroy the ARVN forces outside of Phu My (AR750 275) and O-Gri by weapons fire, mines and explosives.

d. We will attack the ARVN forces concentrated at the junction of Phu My and O-Gri.

e. We must be prepared to conduct an attack along with the 33d Regiment.

3. The 33d Regiment has the mission of attacking and encircling Pleime thus causing the enemy to send a relief force which will be destroyed by the 32d Regiment.

4. Based on the missions outlined above the 32d Regiment has the following missions :

a. Set up an ambush to destroy the ARVN units on Road 21 (PR5).

b. The ambush will be conducted using the terrain from Hill 538 (16-14-4) to Hill 601 (20-18-9) (4 kilometers).

c. The 334th and 635th Battalions will be at position 1. The 966th Battalion will be at position 2.

5. The 635th Battalion, with one machinegun platoon from the regimental machinegun company and with two 57mm recoilless rifles and two 90mm Rocket launchers (B.40) from the 966th Battalion will deploy on the west side of Hill 538 and Hill SIU (18-14-9) ; and has the following mission :

a. Occupy one part of the regimental area and block one part of the road into the regimental area. This section of the regimental road is from Hill 538 to the north side of the « lone tree » hill.

b. The battalion will conduct violent attacks on the enemy, attacking from many points in order to separate the enemy forces.

c. The battalion will occupy Hill 538 and the « lone tree » hill in order to canalize the enemy down the valley and destroy them.

d. The 655th Battalion will organize its firepower to destroy tanks and infantry and to shoot down any enemy aircraft bringing reinforcements.

e. The 1 combat formation will be in reserve (T.N. exact translation and thus meaning, could not be determined. Could mean one company will be held in reserve).

f. The left portion of the combat line of the 334th Battalion located on the north side of the « lone tree »

hill, remains under the command of the 334th Battalion.

6. The 334th Battalion with one platoon of the regimental machinegun company, one platoon of the regimental 75mm recoilless rifle company, the regimental mortar company and one 90mm rocket launcher (B.40) from the 966th Battalion ; will deploy on the west side and the south west side of the hill at coordinates 20-16-7 and has the following missions :

- a. Occupy one part of the regimental area.
- b. Blocking one section of the road in the regimental area, within the area from the south side of Hill BLOU to the north side of Hill 601.
- c. Use violent attacks to cut off the enemy forces in the rear.
- d. Cut off the enemy counterattack elements in order to hold the battlefield under friendly control.
- e. Attack at many points to separate enemy formations.
- f. Seize Hill BLOU, Hill 600, and Hill NGON-HO (18-18-1).
- g. Destroy and capture all enemy troops within the battle area.
- h. The battalion will organize its firepower to destroy enemy tanks, and infantry and to shoot down aircraft bringing enemy reinforcements.
- i. The 1 combat formation will be a reserve. (T.N. Exact translation and thus meaning, could

not be determined. Could mean one company will be held in reserve).

7. The 966th Battalion (minus the 7th Company) with the 2d Anti-Aircraft Company deployed at Hill 530 and has the following missions :

- a. Occupy position 2.
- b. Be prepared to move in any direction to support position 1 as follows :
 - (1) Hill BLOU, Hill 600 and Hill NGON-HO.
 - (2) The « lone tree » Hill.
 - (3) Ready to attack ARVN forces air-landed in the areas of PO and O-Gri.
 - (4) Encircle enemy troops from the rear at O-Gri or Hill 600.
 - (5) Be prepared to attack O-Gri or PO post.

8. 1st Anti-Aircraft Company deploy on the west side of the IA DRANG River. Mission is to shoot down enemy aircraft and protect the 334th Battalion during its operations.

9. The Regimental Anti-Aircraft Company will deploy on the South side of Hill SIU. Mission is to shoot down enemy aircraft and protect the 635th Battalion and Regimental Headquarters.

10. The regimental 75mm recoilless rifle company (minus one platoon) is the reserve unit for attacking tanks of the enemy armored regiment. The company must first seize SIU village and then destroy enemy tanks on the north side of Hill 536. After the infantry

has assaulted enemy elements on the road, the 75mm recoilless rifle company will withdraw and be in reserve for destroying tanks.

11. The Regimental Engineer Company has the following missions :

a. CAU TRUC Regimental Headquarters. (Cau Truc is NVA military terminology which could not be translated. It could mean « Protect » or « Secure »).

b. XOI 2 TRUC to protect the regiment during its operation (XOI 2 TRUC is NVA Military terminology which could not be translated).

c. Establish two controlled mine fields at O-Gri and PO post.

d. Establish two deception areas at Hill 516 and on the east side of NGON HO Hill.

12. Regimental Headquarters will be located on the west side of Hill SIU.

13. Time of completion and preparation of operation.

14. Report time.

15. Report by direct means.

REGIMENTAL COMMANDER
/TO DINH KHAN/
/TO DINH KHAN/

FIELD GRADE
POLITICAL OFFICER
/S/ NGUYEN CHUC
/T/ NGUYEN CHUC

CHIEF OF STAFF
(Paper torn off at this point)

DOCUMENT B

TRANSLATION

Military Intelligence Section B3
No 383/QB

VC DOCUMENT

(See Map on Long Reach
Operation)

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE 1ST US AIR
CAVALRY DIVISION THROUGH THEIR
ACTIVITIES AT PLEIME AND IA DRANG
FROM 24 OCT. TO 19 NOV. 1965.

I. MAIN ACTIVITIES

- a) 1st Phase : cooperate with Vietnamese troops to lift the siege at Pleime (24 to 28 October 1965).
- b) 2nd Phase : use small detachments and coordinate with Vietnamese Special Forces Rangers to conduct raids into our rear (28 Oct to 11 Nov 1965).
- c) 3rd Phase : use larger forces to launch raids deeper into our rear at Chu Pong and Ia Drang (14 to 19 November 1965).

II. TACTICAL CHARACTERISTICS

Through their activities at Pleime and Ia Drang, the 1st US Air Cavalry Division has conducted the following kinds of operations :

- Reinforce Vietnamese troops to lift the siege at Pleime.
- Conduct separate activities in a separate area or in coordination with small detachments of Vietnamese SF Rangers.

1 - Tactics

a) Helilift followed by foot displacement to objectives.

- In the operation to lift the siege at Pleime, the Americans use a Task Force composed of two Cavalry battalions and one 105 How battery.
- On 24 Oct, one battalion is helilifted to Plei Deu Doath NE Pleime then progresses East and South-eastward of Pleiku.
- In the morning of 24 Oct, one battalion is helilifted to 1km5 SW Phu My then progresses on road together with 20 armored vehicles and one 105 How Battery to Plei Ngol Ho (25 Oct), until Plei Xom at 4km North of Pleime (26 Oct), behind the 3rd Armored Task Force. In general, their progression takes place carefully and slowly.

b) Vertical landing by «frog leaps» into our rear by helicopters (28 Oct. to 10 Nov. 1965).

- Forces used : from one battalion to one company of US troops or two companies of US troops coordinated with Vietnamese SF Rangers.
- Purposes : conduct raids, reconnaissance or harass our rear ; disrupt our supply routes ; destroy our aid-stations, CP's, information and telephone stations ; capture isolate soldiers, destroy caches ; designate targets for airstrikes. Their purpose could be also to harass our rear, to compel us to withdraw our troops which are encircling Pleime in order to facilitate their own withdrawal from

Pleime to Pleiku. While conducting raids into our rear, the enemy also use forces of company or battalion size to sweep around their bases in the vicinity of Le Phong, Duc Nghiep, Xung Quen (South of Bau Can and Tan Lac).

- Activities : quick raids into our weak positions followed by quick withdrawals. Right after landing, the enemy could attack quickly the objective. When isolate groups of our soldiers are sighted, they use from 2 to 6 helicopters to make a landing and to capture them. They also helilift a platoon or company size force to cultivated spots, hills and establish their position on the edge of forests to set ambushes along trails which they suspect to be our supply routes (PleiBonGa, PleiThe). Sometimes they occupy high grounds as vantage points to control our axes of movement, for instance the hill 475 and Kuenh Xom. The activities of these detachments could last for a few hours or up to 2 days.
- Remarks on enemy tactics : Thanks to their high mobility the enemy could raid with high speed and surprise into our objectives in our rear. In our movements and halts, we must have contingency plans to counter-attack enemy heliborne troops and to protect our rear, our wounded personnel. Isolate groups must be armed. Our observation and reconnaissance systems must be reorganized to keep us abreast of the enemy situation. All units from company size up must set observation posts at halts or in operations.

c) Vertical landing of large bodies of troops to conduct larger-scale raids into our rear (Chu Pong, Ia Drang from 14 to 19 November 1956).

— Forces used: one reinforced Cavalry brigade composed of 4 battalions (the 1/7, 2/7, 1/5 ; c2/3) and possibly the whole 2/3 battalion, one composite 105-155 How battery, one helicopter squadron (the 9th Hel Squadron belongs to the 1st Air Cav Div.) with strong support by Air Force and B52's bombers.

— Purpose: conduct deep raids into our rear to destroy or neutralize a part of our forces, destroy our infiltration routes, our caches, conduct reconnaissance, detect targets for artillery and strikes. Duration: 6 days from 14 to 19 November.

— Activities: After landing, the 3rd brigade form 3 battalion positions and one artillery position:

the 1/7 Bn East of Chu Pong 02-90

the 1/5 Bn West of Ba Bi 06-94

the 2/7 Bn at 04-98

the Arty Position West of Quenh K1a 06-00, 08-98, 06-02.

The Brigade CP is at Bau Can which serves also as its rear and base of departure. The 9th Hel Squadron at Pleiku.

— Remarks: Thanks to their high mobility (by helicopters), they could attack with high speed and surprise into our flanks and our rear. They

could land in many places and then concentrate to attack an objective or one of our units.

They receive very strong support from the artillery and Air Force, as well as from the B52's bombers (over 20000 arty rounds in 3 days, 140 sorties per day, 21 sorties of B52's).

2 - Tactical tips

a) Before landing.

Reconnaissance of landing zones by repeated air reconnaissance or by small Vietnamese SF Rangers teams.

Prestrikes over landing zones. Usually there are no prestrikes when small landing is conducted. For large landing of troops battalion size, sometimes prestrikes are not conducted to achieve surprise. During prestrikes, smoke bombs are also used.

b) Landing zones (in rough terrain)

— Small landing: the enemy could land almost everywhere, on small cultivated spots, on tops of hills, on slopes (15 degrees), on clearings with a diameter of 30m, for instance at Kuenh Xom and Hill 475.

— Landing of battalion size forces: the enemy needs large landing zones but could land even in places covered with high elephant grass or in valleys. The width of the LZ is approximately 200m. Most of the time LZ are selected in the

vicinity of trails (Plei The, East of Chu Pong, Ba Bi). The enemy does not need to establish their positions near water sources and is supplied by helicopters.

c) Landing of troops.

— Small landing : from 2 to 6 helicopters at one time or separately, one after the other.

— Large landing : from 8 to 10 helicopters (sometimes 20) at one time ; each landing lasts for 2-5 minutes. The helicopters land on the ground or hover over the LZ 1 to 2m and the soldiers will jump off.

Small landing is supported by 2-4 armed helicopters. Large landing is covered by fighter and jet aircraft. The flight formation used by helicopters is one or two columns. In small landing, the helicopters fly straight to the objectives. In large landing they usually hover over other areas before heading for the objective.

Vietnamese SF Rangers or US reconnaissance elements always land first to secure the LZ for the landing of riflemen, fire support elements and CP.

d) After landing.

— Right after landing, the enemy could raid immediately into the objective : capture isolate groups of our soldiers, destroy our information stations, aid stations. For two times, they have raided into the 2nd battalion of the 33rd regiment on 6 Nov and the 9th battalion on 14 Nov.

DOCUMENT C

— They can move into blocking positions on trails or in the vicinity of axes leading toward our rear (Kuenh Xom, Lang Ga, Hill 475).

— Their positions, either in ambushes or in defense are always established near the LZ to facilitate resupply and withdrawal.

— The Vietnamese SF Rangers usually push far in patrols.

c) Air support.

— During the lift of the siege at Pleime, the average of enemy air sorties amounts to 200 per day (maximum : 240 sorties)

— Permanent air cover ensured by 10 to 12 jets and 8 to 10 fixed wings fighter aircraft.

— During the activities at Chu Pong and Ia Drang the average of enemy air sorties is 120 per day (night not included) with a maximum of 162 sorties per day. Maximum of B 52's sorties : 18 per day.

3 — Equipment

(See organization charts of Air Cavalry Division and battalions already distributed)

— The Division is equipped with many helicopters and possesses a high degree of mobility : It can conduct raids with speed and surprise and thrust deeply into our rear. The Division has from 450 to 600 aircraft. The aviation squadron of the Division has 250 aircraft, among which are 220

helicopters. The Air Cavalry battalions and companies have respectively 88 and 27 helicopters according to their TO and E (The Infantry Battalions of the Division are not equipped with helicopters).

— The Division is equipped with a great amount of modern means for reconnaissance (reconnaissance helicopters) enabling the enemy to detect targets quickly.

— The fire power of the Brigades and of the Division is very strong, reinforced by armed helicopters, artillery and Air Force.

27 December 1965

CHIEF OF SECTION 2

DOCUMENT C

The following pages are translated excerpts from the diary of Vrong Luyên, an assistant platoon leader belonging to the NVA 32nd regiment. Luyên is also a member of the Communist Party and began to write his diary since 26 August 1964, when his unit started to leave North Vietnam for the infiltration into South Vietnam.

This diary is only one among numberless others captured by the ARVN and US Forces during the big battles of Pleime, Chu Pong and Ia Drang.

These pages are selected because their author has written more regularly and with more details than the others, especially about the ambush on Provincial route N° 5 from Pleiku to Pleime. They cover the period from 16 October to 10 November 1965, the preparation for the ambush, the failure of the VC and their distressing withdrawal to the Chu Pong mountains.

16 October 1965

My unit has been on its way to the Winter-Spring Campaign and in movement for two days. I was so busy yesterday that I could not find time to write my diary. To day I am writing this during siesta time and by the side of a small stream deep into the jungle. The last two days were a series of hardships. The men from C₃ (1) are a lot inferior to those of

(1) For the sake of security and brevity, VC units size is designated by a letter : squad by A, platoon by B, company by C and so on. (T.N.)

C1 in operations. I had numerous troubles with stragglers all day long. I was always at their side to exhort them, to carry for them some of their gear but these irresponsible guys continued to lag behind. The route did not present too many difficulties and I wondered why our men had been so weak. There were times when 1/4 of the unit fell behind. To day some squads have even 80% of stragglers. It is indeed hard for me and the platoon leader to be by ourselves. I have not been equipped with arm and ammo yet but usually have to carry two rifles. I did feel very tired but had to make efforts because what else could be done? My love to my comrade-in-arms dictates me to do so. I firmly believe that I am still able to endure and not to give up when faced with hardships. It is nearly time to resume our movement. I must be ready with my havresack. My dear diary, please wish me success!

19 October 1965

The whole unit came into position at about five o'clock yesterday afternoon and to day since dawn we have continued to dig our positions and to standby for combat. The first day of our waylay to wait for the enemy is over and nothing happens; my platoon is apart in this forest with enough surprise and secrecy in our favor. There is no one else to help me and the platoon leader and so both of us are kept busy all the time. We have to dig our own positions and at the same time control the execution by our men.

I feel very sad when recalling what happened yesterday. Only one hour after our departure, some men in my platoon had lagged behind and I had to be incessantly on their sides. Among the three stragglers, there was one known to me as T2 (1) and that makes me hardly able to stand him. I had carried for him his havresack but even so he was unable to march. It was indeed a hard day; I had to pick up the sick people then strove to catch the unit and so until 2 o'clock P.M.. It was until 11 P.M. that all the stragglers finally reported. It is unfortunate for the second platoon. What would happen when it is time to fight? If this situation continues, I am afraid that the mission would not be accomplished.

21 October 1965

Friendly units had begun their attack against the Post of Me (2) but none of the enemy activities were reported. There were just some helicopters flying around. At 7 P.M., the first information reported that 44 enemy vehicles were making preparation for the relief. We kept hectically waiting overnight; nothing came into view but flareships. As for to day, all our men are under tension and in constant readiness for departure. In the sky aircraft of all kinds: jets, fighters, cargo, reconnaissance, keep flying without respite. Between 8 and 10 o'clock there are up to

(1) T2 is not a proper name and allegedly means in the context « faithful element » (to the Party).

(2) So called by the VC instead of « Post of Pleime ».

50 helicopter sorties in the direction of the Post of Me. Whether they bring in reinforcements or just conduct a diversion, no affirmation could be made. We also receive reports that on the ground, 3 American Battalions, two Ranger Battalions and three Regional Forces companies are on their way for the relief. At about 10 o'clock, 9 vehicles are reported as moving and firing into the battlefield. They break a continued fire into both sides of the route, their machine guns and sub machine guns make a lot of noise and it seems that the engagement has taken place. Do they come upon one of our elements? At 11 o'clock 29 tanks are reported as moving into the battlefield. But it is now 2 o'clock and there still is nothing. I am writing the diary amid a complete silence : no aircraft in the sky, no firing on the ground and no more information about the enemy. Will they move again? Within the next few hours, will there be an assault? Will the third day also be a dull one with its slowness? I hope that from now up to the evening, I could write into this diary some important informations, some success. I have just stopped writing when reports come that the enemy is now taking their meal at A-Di (?). It could be that they will resume their displacement after that.

23 October 1965

While I am writing this diary, the enemy aircraft are hovering low over. There are times they stoop down to tree-tops level but they do not see anything. By now the whole platoon is waiting for the order

to begin the assault. All necessary equipment is at hand and once the order is given, let's go. Informations from the higher command notify that the 21st Ranger battalion belonging to the 42nd regiment (?) and one tank company have departed. It is now about 2 o'clock it is heard that friendly units have also departed. Will there be a fight or will we be again waiting and waiting as the other day? I again hope that this afternoon I will have the opportunity to register some success in the diary. At noon to day, the enemy aircraft conducts a heavy airstrike in a village in the rear of the battlefield. We could hear very distinctly the noise made by their bombs and rockets.

We spent all day long yesterday to keep waiting as we are doing now. Suddenly at half past two the order for departure was given. I thought that « this is it » but it was only an alert : the battalion ordered us to dig alternate positions. We finished the work at 7 o'clock. On their way back to our primary positions, it was very dark and we strayed for a long time.

24 October 1965

At last we met them ! On 23 October, at half past four the enemy fell into our battlefield. My unit received the order to assault. When we approached the route, friendly units had already opened fire and blocked both ends. We came to the positions of T31 (?) at about 6 o'clock but both T (1) found no

(1) « T » allegedly designates a battalion but the unit mentioned here remains unidentified.

enemy to engage and altogether rushed to the opening end of the battlefield. At 7 o'clock I was ordered to stay back with A6 (sixth squad) to secure the flank of the assault unit. We had just settled in our positions when I myself again received the order to go on reconnaissance with the reconnaissance team. When we arrived upto the top of the Doc Lap Hill, we discovered an enemy observation post ; the enemy soldiers were digging their positions. That night I was at the same time assistant platoon leader and reconnaissance squad leader. Afterwards I led the squad to another enemy position then we came back to prepare for the attack. I did not know what time it was by then. A friendly T attack was revealed by the enemy who fired intensely. They made use of all their weapons. We kept quiet. When the shooting was over my platoon was ordered to move forward along the left side of the route. I was with the A5 (fifth squad). After a long displacement, we stopped and waited for the order to open fire. No order was given. Two of our men were sent to establish contact. Unfortunately they strayed and we lay there until dawn. We were planning to withdraw when suddenly we received a volley of machine gun fire and a mortar shell from the enemy. We suffered 5 casualties among, them the platoon leader and a recruit who had his left arm torn off. We immediately gave them first aid and withdrew. But since then we strayed away from the company. It was the first time that I was in charge of the evacuation of the wounded and the command of the unit in separate action. The platoon leader though wounded had been able to withdraw

during the day with some men. He then sent back one man to pick us up. We arrived at K5 at noon that day, sent our wounded to the surgical station. The remaining of us carried all the wounded's weapons besides some left at K5. We reached our unit at 7 o'clock. We had strayed for one day and one night and had eaten during this time only drycooked rice. Three of our comrades are still missing.

26 October 1965

My unit moves to another place. With those who remain, we form a squad, integrated into a friendly platoon to prepare for combat. With those who come back from the evacuation of wounded we also form another squad and keep ready for the mission. But all day long we find nothing. In the sky the aircraft keep flying, numberlessly and incessantly. Our former positions are hit by airstrikes, there are no casualties but some of our equipment which we still leave there is damaged. At 6 o'clock I cross the route with the sixth squad to pick up the friendly platoon on the other side. It is until 2 o'clock in the morning that we finally come back. We do not eat anything and just sleep. At dawn we hurriedly prepare to coordinate with the C company. The enemy aircraft keep flying ; the helicopters lower themselves to the tree-tops in flocks ; the jets too and the Dakotas as well.

27 October 1965

The sixth squad was integrated into the third platoon yesterday afternoon. I have now only the

fourth squad and together with the 1st platoon, we are attached to T32 in order to carry out the mission. I was sent on reconnaissance last night. The battlefield was relatively very large. We made a very careful reconnaissance. The assistant platoon leader of B1 has come back. I am no longer alone, I now have someone to help me. I will certainly accomplish the mission. At noon I returned to our former position to recuperate the equipment of our wounded. This morning two of the stragglers have come back, the third would be certainly missing. I am writing this on the side of a trail in the jungle which has just been recently hit by enemy airstrikes. The aircraft keep flying and flying.

29 October 1965

And so the month of October is nearly over. Time has run too fast and we just have only a fighting. We have been waiting for the enemy but until 11 o'clock this morning, we still have zero as results. At half past four yesterday afternoon, we were ordered to depart. At the same time it began to rain. It would be a good opportunity for us to conduct the attack. We were only at midway when we were ordered to stop. Then suddenly we were ordered to move back! What a sad thing! One after the other our columns returned to our point of departure. We had just begun to sleep when warning orders for an attack were given. But finally nothing happened. At 5 o'clock we were again on the move. At midway we withdrew then advanced anew. When we were near the battlefield,

the enemy was already there. It was the first time that I saw the M113 APC's but not very distinctly. These vehicles were in columns along the route while the enemy troops were moving around. This time there would be a big fight; we did nothing but wait. Then suddenly and finally, we were ordered to withdraw to let the job to the recoilless rifles and the mortar elements. When we reached our positions, there still happened nothing. A moment later the recoilless rifles and mortar elements also went back. The results still remained a zero. What a discouraging situation! Two times already! What are the higher echelons planning to do! We are kept in readiness for an eventual attack.

30 October 1965

All of us thought that the enemy had finally disappeared completely. We felt very sad, particularly those of the 33rd regiment which so far could achieve nothing. I had the same feelings. At about 2 o'clock I was sent with a team to the Ga village for rice resupply. At the same time there were reports that one Ranger battalion was moving on foot toward the battlefield. I regretted to be sent on detail but I kept executing the order. We had been marching for two hours when suddenly we were ordered to rush back to take part in an attack. All of us hurriedly ran back and reached our positions late in the afternoon. The unit having departed, we again had to run to catch them. But at midway, the unit was seen on its way back! Alas, this is the third time that that happens!

Everyone had thought that there would be nothing since departure. and it was true ! My platoon had to move to the periphery because there were already two platoons inside. Again we had to dig fox-holes.

2 November 1965

For three consecutive nights we had been moving. We walked throughout the night, had no time to sleep during daylight. We had at the same time to dig fox-holes and to be ready for combat. The enemy was crafty. They launched their troops into our rear to create for us troubles. In the last few days, helicopters of all kinds together with fighters and jets have been flying all the time over the area. They also audaciously blocked our axes of displacement in order to kidnap our cadres and soldiers. We shall return to protect our bases and shall revenge !

4 November 1965

We reached our base yesterday afternoon. I met a man who was native of the same village as mine. He has been here for some months and gone through a recent fighting. Through his conversation it seems that his morale has lowered a little. I had to encourage him. I must keep helping him in order to prevent any regrettable incidents. Flocks of helicopters keep flying. Where would they land ?

10 November 1965

I had not written anything for the last six days. Our unit had to go forward for resupply of food and

ammo but due to the enemy activities, we could get only a small amount of rice. In the evening of 6 November I went with 10 men to the Ga village to pick up rice. The enemy had just left the village in the afternoon and we had to be very careful. We came back to the unit at 7 o'clock on the next day. I was caught since then by fever. It was the first time that my temperature went up to 40 degrees. Fortunately it gradually went down and I could return with my unit to the place we had left one month ago.

The woods around had been destroyed heavily by enemy airstrikes. We would stay here for a few days then resume our mission. This was only the end of the first phase and not of the whole campaign. But in brief for the first phase we have got no major results.

DOCUMENT D

REFERENCE DOCUMENTS

1. Interrogation Report (Handwritten) of Hoang Van Chung PFC, 2d Plt 8th Co, 966th Bn, 32d Regiment.
2. Summarized report — Activities of 635th Bn, 32d Regiment.
3. Translation (Handwritten) of a diary maintained by a member of the 635th Bn.
4. Translation and Summary of Document concerning 635th Bn.
5. Summary of information obtained from Doan Ngoc Dinh, 4th Co, 635th Bn, 32d Regiment. Captured 9 Aug 65 at Lê Thanh during battle of Duc Co.
6. Interrogation of Doan Ngoc Dinh, 4th CS Company, 635th Bn, 32d Regiment. Captured at Duc Co, 9 August 1965.
7. Knowledgeability Brief of Hoang The U, member 8th Bn 66th Regiment, 7 Nov 65.
8. Interrogation of Pvt Pham Ngoc Hoang, 9th Bn, 66th NVA Regiment, 28 Nov 65.
9. Knowledgeability Brief on Nguyen Nghe Thung, member 635th Bn, 32d Regiment, 23 Nov 65.
10. Summary of VC/NVA Unit Identifications Provided by Captives, 20 Nov 65.

11. Knowledgeability Brief of Sgt Pham Sam, member Signal Company, 101B Regiment, 7 Nov 65.

12. Knowledgeability Brief of Pvt Tran Van Thanh, member C-4 Co, 1st Bn, 101B Regiment, 325th Division, 5 Nov 65.

13. Knowledgeability Briefs of 13 NVA soldiers captured at a Regiment Dispensary on 1 Nov 65.

14. Initial Interrogation of Senior Sgt Cao Xuan Hai, member 2d Bn, 324th Regiment, 3 Nov 65.

15. Initial Interrogation of Tran Ngoc Luong, member C-18 Co, 101st Regiment, 2 Nov 65.

16. Preliminary Interrogation of 3 NVA soldiers who surrendered on 30 Oct 65.

17. Preliminary Interrogation of Hoang Van Chung, 8th Co, 966th Bn, 32d Regiment, 31 Oct 65.

18. Debriefing of NVA Cpl Nguyen Xuan Tien, 29 Oct 65.

19. Hand printed copy of the Initial Interrogation of Pham Ngoc Hoang, member of 9th Bn, 66th Regt, 304th NVA Div. Interrogation conducted by ARVN MI Det, II Corps.

20. Interrogation of 1st Lt Bui Van Con (alias Cuong), Political Officer, Signal Company, 33d NVA Regt (also known as 101B NVA Regt).

21. Initial Interrogation Report. Report concerns interrogation of 1st-Lt Bui Van Cuong (alias Con),

Political Officer, Signal Company, 33d NVA Regt (also called 101B NVA Regt), 27 Nov 65.

2200
22. Interrogation Follow-Up. Report concerns the interrogation of 1st Lt Bui Van Cuong (alias Con), Political Officer, Signal Company, 33d NVA Regt (also called 101B NVA Regt), 30 Nov 65.

2200
23. Rallier, 1st Lt Bui Van Cuong. A Follow-up Interrogation Report of subject who was Political Officer, Signal Company, 33d NVA Regt (also called 101B NVA Regiment), 3 Dec 65.

24. Initial Interrogation Report. Report concerns interrogation of Sgt Le Van Hien, Sqd Ldr, 7th Battalion, 66th NVA Regiment, 2 Dec 65.

25. Headquarters, Special Tactical Zone 24, Advisory Detachment, Combat Operations After Action Report, Dated 15 Nov 65.

26. Translated copy of the 32d NVA Regiment Combat Order for an Ambush, prepared at 32d NVA Regiment Headquarters on 12 Oct 65.

27. Intelligence Report, Hqs, 1st Air Cav Div, Office of the G-2, Dated 24 Nov 65, Subject: Ia Drang Valley (Silver Bayonet 1) YA 9104 14-19 Nov 65.

28. Interview on 10 and 12 Dec 65 with Major James S. O'Neal, Armor, US Army. Advisor to the 3d Vietnamese Armored Cavalry Squadron which was the armored element involved in the relief of Plei Me Special Forces Camp in Oct 65.

29. Armor in Vietnam's Central Highlands by Lt Col. Edward B. Smith, Jr — Armor Magazine, May-June 1966, pp 10-15.

30. Headquarters, 1st Air Cavalry Division, Pleiku Campaign.

31. The Lure and the Ambush, an account of the opening battle of Phase Three in the Struggle for the Highlands 19 Oct 65-26 Nov 65 by Maj William P. Boyle and Major Robert Samabria.

32. Headquarters 1/7 Cavalry Battalion, Combat After action Report, Ia Drang Valley Operation, 14-16 Nov 65.