

23 OCTOBER

1. OPERATIONS SUMMARY:

At 191900 October 1965, the PLEI ME C-I-D-G Camp was attacked by an enemy unit of unknown strength and origin. By 22 October intelligence officers at A-R-V-N II Corps Headquarters were aware of a two-regimental threat in the PLEI ME area. On that same day, the Commanding General, Field Forces Vietnam, agreed to reinforce the PLEIKU area to allow the II Corps Commander to commit a relief force down the provincial road to PLEI ME in sufficient strength to offset the regimental force intelligence sources felt sure was set in ambush. That night TF INGRAM, consisting of one infantry battalion and an artillery battery, was ordered to airlift to CAMP HOLLOWAY at first light on 23 October. The task force began moving by air from AN KHE at 0800 and closed at CAMP HOLLOWAY at 1300. While the move was underway, the Commanding General, 1st Air Cavalry Division, sensing that the divisional involvement was certain to grow once the A-R-V-N relief column was committed, obtained permission from F-F-V to send to PLEIKU the 1st Brigade, then executing Operation SCRIMMAGE in the vicinity of BINH KHE east of the DEO MANG pass along Highway 19. The brigade, with its headquarters element, the 2/8 Cav and two firing batteries of the 2/19 Arty, extracted from the VINH THANH Valley by 1500 hours and closed by air at CAMP HOLLOWAY by 2400, when it assumed operational control of TF INGRAM.

The brigade was still charged with the security of PLEIKU, but had two additional missions: provide artillery support for Operation DAN THANG 21, which was the A-R-V-N relief of PLEI ME; and to provide a reserve/reaction force for possible commitment to PLEI ME.

The actions of that afternoon led to the two latter missions. While the 1st Brigade was moving to PLEIKU, the relief column began moving down the provincial road toward PLEI ME. The total relief force consisted of the 3d Armored Cavalry Squadron, the 1/42 Inf, the 21st and 22d Ranger Battalions, all total; 1,200 men, 16 tanks and 15 armored personnel carriers.

At 1400 hours the 22d Ranger Battalion was helilifted to a L-Z at ZA150157 from which it was to sweep east to the PHU ME-PLEI ME road, destroy any VIET CONG in the area and serve as a blocking force so that any enemy along the road would be caught between them and the attacking Armored Task Force. The official after-action report filed by the Senior Advisor for the 24th Tactical Zone is silent on the role played by the 22d Rangers in the subsequent action.

The A-P-C troops and the tank company moved along the road supported on the left by the 1/42 Inf and on the right by two companies of the 21st Ranger Bn. The trains, protected by two companies of the 21st Ranger Bn, followed approximately two kilometers behind the main attack force. At 1700 hours the main force halted at ZA1717 while a pre-planned air strike was conducted on a suspected V-C position at ZA172164. Following the strike, the main force moved forward and at 1750 hours was taken under heavy fire from the southeast and west of ZA172164. Simultaneously the trains received heavy fire from the east and west. Once the trains were pinned by mortar and automatic weapons fire, they were assaulted from the south by an estimated 2-to-3 company force. An immediate air strike was conducted on the attacking forces but not before considerable damage was inflicted on the soft skinned vehicles of the trains.

When the V-C force was repulsed, the lead element of the A-T-F pulled back approximately one kilometer to the north and established a perimeter at ZA193195. Throughout the night both positions received harassing mortar and small arms fire. Friendly materiel losses were two M8 Armored cars, two 5-ton ammo trucks, and two gas tankers destroyed; two 5-ton trucks, one M8 armored car, one bulldozer, one lowboy, two 3/4-ton trucks and two 105mm howitzers damaged. There was no report of enemy casualties.

## 2. TASK ORGANIZATION

<u>TF INGRAM</u>	<u>FIRST BRIGADE</u>	<u>DIVISIONAL</u>
2/12 Cav	HHC/1st Bde	Div Command Elements
B 2/17 Arty	2/8 Cav	17th Avn Gd
Wpns Sec, 1/9 Cav	2/19 Arty (-)	
A/8th Eng (-)	D 1/9 Cav	
2 Plt, 229	B 1/9 Cav	
Tm, 10th RRU	A 2/20 Arty	
Sqd, 545 MP Co	3d F-S-E, (Spt Cmd)	
F-A-C Tm, U-S-A-F	C/227 AHB (-)	
	B/228 ASHB (-)	

## 3. INTELLIGENCE SUMMARY

Cavalry units, upon arrival at PLEI ME began immediately to collect and assess intelligence. I Corps intelligence advisors had not yet "made" any of the units in or around PLEI ME, other than to correctly estimate that the total enemy strength likely was two regiments. It was also estimated that there could be a regimental sized force due west of PLEIKU. Generally, the intelligence picture on the day the 1st Air Cavalry Division entered the scene is as depicted in Inclosure 4.

## 4. ACTIVITIES STATISTICS

None.