

Operations Stirrup Cup and Track Duster

3 October and 7-12 October 1968

Anti-guerrilla wars in countries other than South Vietnam have proved that capturing his weapons and food and destroying his assets hurts the enemy as much as killing his soldiers.

Operations Stirrup Cup and Track Duster were good examples of this.

Operation Stirrup Cup was a one-day operation carried out by V Company to the east of Route 15, near Thai Thien, as part of the annual rice-denial programme.

Acting on information that there was a large rice cache in the area, the company deployed on October 3 to AO Mace. The company recovered and destroyed 56,200lb (25 tons) of rice, 1000lb of salt and other food and materials. A small contact with a caretaker group resulted in the killing of one VC.

The company was extracted the same day by APC and moved back to Nui Dat.

In October D Company was relieved on the Horseshoe by B Company and Operation Track Duster was a shake-down operation for D Company. It was to be in the same

area as that just vacated by V Company. D Company was told to find any other caches in the area.

The company moved on October 7, with the tanks of C Squadron and a troop of APCs, to AO Cougar.

A fire support base was established south of Thai Thien.

River and track ambushes were quickly established. The river ambush, though set on a known VC waterway, was sprung only once, indicating that the VC realised they were vulnerable on water while there were troops in the area.

The company found and destroyed 17 tons of rice and other food and materials found in caches.

The hazards of moving on tracks were emphasised when Twelve Platoon was ambushed by VC using claymore mines and automatic weapons. Two Australians died in this clash and six were wounded.

The company moved back to Nui Dat on October 12 to prepare for a battalion operation starting the next day.

Considering the manpower and effort it must have cost the VC to move 42 tons of rice into the area, Operations Track Duster and Stirrup Cup could be considered highly successful.

RESULTS — Own troops: Two killed, six wounded.
Enemy: Three killed.

OPERATION TRACK DUST

OPERATION STIRRUP CUP

AO Cougar

7-12 Oct 68

AO Mace

3 Oct 68

Locations shown are as at 7 Oct 68
Redeployment to Nui Dat 12 Oct 68

