

Operation IRON FOX

28 July 1971-5 August 1971

Another Task Force hammer/anvil type operation which was conducted in two phases. However, this time 3 RAR and A Squadron formed the basic blocking force whilst 4 RAR/NZ with C Squadron tanks attacked 1 Battalion, 274 Regiment along the Suoi Ca.

After a substantial artillery and aerial bombardment of the reported base areas, the companies advanced. C Company located an aggressively defended bunker system on the afternoon of 29 July and D Company with tanks, moved to assist them, despite extremely heavy undergrowth and broken ground, and linked up, shaking out into attack formation by last light. Following his usual tactics in such a situation, the VC withdrew during the night and the system was subsequently destroyed the next morning after being searched by D Company.

D Company then spearheaded the drive down the creek line and again at afternoon, contacted a large occupied bunker system. The tanks of C Squadron who were refuelling at the time, performed a minor miracle to scrub bash over "impossible armoured terrain" to rejoin D Company in the attack in less than an hour.

A savage battle followed as V Company and the tanks had previously experienced a month earlier against C2 Company. The VC fire control was well co-ordinated and generally directed at noise and movement. RPG fire appeared mainly directed towards the canopy and the turrets of the tanks, probably to cause shrapnel to splash on the troops below.

C Company joined D Company, and the companies managed to search the captured complex prior to last light. The APCs from 1 Troop had also joined the group and successfully "dusted off" D Company's casualties from the battle. Within a few days, 3 RAR was also committed to a searching role together with 4 RAR/NZ and with guidance from a SAS patrol, located a hospital bunker system further to the west. There was evidence found that indicated that the wounded members of 1 Battalion, 274 Regiment after the D Company assault had been phased through there for treatment.

IRON FOX completed the disruption of the elements of 274 VC Regiment endeavouring to set up operating bases on the north western province boundary, and again pre-empted the newly reinforced (with North Vietnamese Army) 274 Regiment's plans to attack outposts and settlements along Route 2 in Phuoc Tuy Province.

Results: Own Troops — 1 KIA

7 WIA

Enemy — 12 KIA

Remember: The GPMG M60 firing between C and D Company that turned out to be VC owned and operated.

The "highly casual" clearing patrol by the members of the US Artillery convoy mined near Courtney Hill, 4 August, 1971.



*Through the avenue of rubber with 10 pl.
(Cpl Paul Menner, Ptes Kevin Wilke, Alan McKay and
Bernie Pengilly).*

Ref Maps:
6430-I-SW
6430-II-NW
6430-III-NE
6430-IV-SE

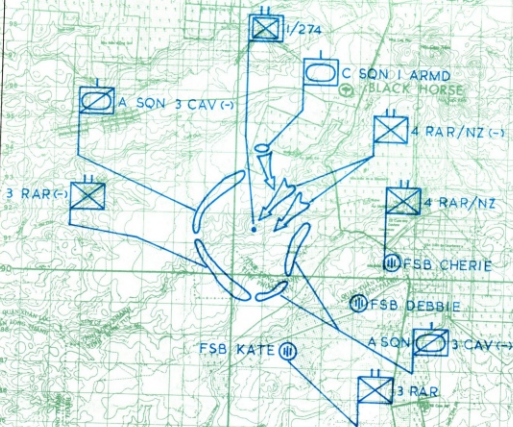
ANNEX B to
1 ATF OPO 71
Dated 26 JUL 71

OPERATION IRON FOX

28 JUL - 4 AUG

Phase I

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OP IRON FOX PHASE 2

28 JUL - 4 AUG

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BLACK HORSE

