

UNITED STATES ARMY INFANTRY SCHOOL

Fort Benning, Georgia

11 January 1968

OPERATIONS OF COMPANY A, 2D BATTALION, 12TH CAVALRY, 1ST CAVALRY
DIVISION (AIRMOBILE) IN OFFENSIVE SEARCH OPERATIONS FOR A SPECIFIC
ENEMY UNIT, IN THE IA DRANG VALLEY, REPUBLIC OF VIETNAM, 10
AUGUST 1966. (PERSONAL EXPERIENCE OF A COMPANY COMMANDER.)

Major Bruce Wilson

Advanced Course No. 1

Roster Number 174, Advisory Group 18

TABLE OF CONTENTS

TABLE OF CONTENTS	2
INTRODUCTION	3
The Brigade Plan	3
The Battalion Plan.	4
The Preparation.	4
The Existing Situation	5
NARRATION	7
Battle Preview	7
Movement to Contact.	8
Initial Contact.	12
Maneuver.	13
Fire Support	15
Reinforcement and Reorganization.	16
Pursuit.	17
Consolidation	18
Summary	20
ANALYSIS AND CRITICISM	22
LESSONS LEARNED	26
BIBLIOGRAPHY	28
APPENDIX 1 - Map of Operational Area	
APPENDIX 2 - Schematic Drawing of Maneuver	
APPENDIX 3 - List of Key Personnel	
APPENDIX 4 - Airmobile Rifle Company TO&E	
APPENDIX 5 - Diagram of Box Formation	
APPENDIX 6 - Extract of Psy War Poster	

OPERATIONS OF COMPANY A, 2D BATTALION, 12TH CAVALRY, 1ST CAVALRY DIVISION (AIRMOBILE) IN OFFENSIVE SEARCH OPERATIONS FOR A SPECIFIC ENEMY UNIT IN THE IA DRANG VALLEY, REPUBLIC OF VIETNAM, 10 AUGUST 1966. (PERSONAL EXPERIENCE OF A COMPANY COMMANDER.)

INTRODUCTION

In August 1966, the 1st Cavalry Division (Airmobile) conducted "Operation Paul Revere II" in the area southwest of Pleiku in the VN II Corps area. The Ia Drang Valley and the Chu Pong Mountain massif were included in the area of operations. The division forward CP was located in the vicinity of Pleiku. The primary mission of the division was to conduct search and destroy operations to reduce the existence of enemy forces in the area. There was believed to be a buildup of enemy forces in the area surrounding the Special Forces Camps at Plei Me and Duc Co.

This suspected threat to the security of the Special Forces Camps, and fearfully Pleiku itself, was what prompted the 1st Cavalry Division (Airmobile) to again enter the area of the Ia Drang Valley. Elements of the North Vietnamese Army's 32d, 33rd and 66th Regiments were believed to be massing in preparation for launching extensive offensive operations. The threat had to be eliminated, and a large force was deemed necessary to do it.

The 2nd Brigade was assigned an area of operations that was adjacent to the Cambodian border and included the entire Chu Pong Mountain massif and extended north to the Ia Drang River.

THE BRIGADE PLAN

The plan of the 2nd Brigade began with an air assault to establish a forward fire base in the area southwest of the Chu

Pong Mountain massif. Operations were planned to completely search the Chu Pong Mountain area beginning in the south and clearing towards the north. The plan called for two battalions of infantry to maneuver ⁱⁿ the area.

The brigade logistical base was established at "The Oasis," an area along Highway 19 southwest of Pleiku which included an airstrip capable of accomodating C-130 aircraft. The brigade CP was scheduled to be forward at the location of the brigade fire base.

THE BATTALION PLAN

The 2d Battalion, 12th Cavalry was given the mission to conduct the initial assault into LZ CAT, the location selected for the brigade fire base. Company A was selected as the lead element to land in one lift with all aircraft landing simultaneously. Company D was designated to follow Company A and assume the security mission of LZ CAT. Companies B and C were to air assault to an area approximately 5000 meters west and slightly north of LZ CAT. The battalion CP would be established initially at LZ CAT. The plan of maneuver called for Company A to begin searching towards the west and move south of Companies B and C. The overall concept was to clear the Chu Pong Mountain massif, in sector, from the southern portion working north to the Ia Drang River.

THE PREPARATION

On 1 August, the 2d Battalion, 12th Cavalry moved to an assembly area at Bein Ho Lake on the north side of Pleiku. The battalion received the mission to secure the 2^d Brigade

CP and trains area at that same location. The 2/12 Cavalry was also designated as 1st Field Forces Vietnam ready reaction force.

During the static activities at Bein Ho Lake, the battalion prepared reaction plans to reinforce designated Special Forces camps and conducted reconnaissance of the various locations. The battalion also prepared for future offensive operations in the area of the Chu Pong Mountain and the Ia Drang Valley. The date of 8 August 1966 was established as D-day for the 2/12 Cavalry. The battalion and companies conducted CPX's and seminars to refresh and prepare all leaders for the forthcoming operation. Saturation patrolling surrounding the base area dominated the activities of the troops to keep them conditioned for the coming action.

Company A was selected as the lead element to assault the designated LZ - LZ CAT. The plan called for simultaneous touch down of the entire company. Since there was no tube artillery within range of LZ CAT, the only preparation fires planned consisted of a heavy concentration of ARA fires prior to H-hour. They were planned to continue until their fires were masked by the lift helicopters.

THE EXISTING SITUATION

The air assault of Company A was scheduled for 0900 hours on 8 August 1966, but was delayed for 4 hours due to poor

visibility caused by fog. At 1300 hours the lead elements were airborne and enroute to the objective area. Companies A and D landed at LZ CAT in accordance with the plan, and there were no enemy forces encountered in the objective area.

As Companies B and C followed, they were diverted to assist A/1-7 Cavalry. A/1-7 Cavalry was then engaged with an estimated enemy battalion. The arrival of Companies B and C aided in discouraging the enemy and caused him to break contact and flee to the south-southeast. The new circumstances dictated an immediate change of plans as a situation existed that could be further developed.

The immediate objective of the 2/12 Cavalry became the enemy unit believed to be a battalion of either the 32d, 33rd or 66th NVA Regiments. All plans were focused on intercepting or overtaking the enemy unit. Companies A and D were still at the original objective area - LZ CAT - which was a long distance from the location of the current action. The decision was made to air assault Companies A and D into a new LZ to attempt an intercept of the fleeing enemy. The LZ selected was marginal but did facilitate getting the searching elements on the ground in the desired area and established a central location from which the forward battalion CP could operate. The forward CP was composed of the Battalion Commander, S3, Artillery LNO, Operations Sergeant and 2

radio operators. The CP consisted physically of a foxhole, a pancho, a flashlight, a folding map board and necessary AN/PRC 25 radios. The final elements of Company D and the battalion commander did not arrive into LZ "New" CAT until after dark on the night of 8 August 1966. (See Appendix 1)

On the morning of 9 August 1966, Company A departed LZ "New" CAT to begin search operations in an attempt to intercept the enemy unit. Movement was relatively easy throughout the day of 9 August 1966 and no signs of enemy troop movement were detected. Company B continued to pursue the enemy in an attempt to overtake them. Searching ceased that night and resumed at first light on 10 August 1966. Company B continued the pursuit and Company A began a diagonal movement to cross all of the most likely routes of enemy escape. The action described in the narrative is what followed.

NARRATIVE

BATTLE PREVIEW

The purpose of this portion of the monograph is to give the reader the general description of the battle so that continuity of thought may be maintained to develop a complete impression of the maneuver. This will aid the reader in further understanding of the actions as they are described later in much greater detail.

Company A was moving with the 3rd Platoon at the lead, the 1st Platoon on the right flank and the 2d Platoon on the left flank. Initial contact with two enemy trail watchers was made by the 3rd Platoon. One of the enemy soldiers was captured, and the other escaped. The company maintained the same

formation and began to follow the trail that was discovered at the location of the enemy contact. The company had moved less than 200 meters when it received a heavy volume of small arms and automatic weapons fire from the left flank and front. The 3rd Platoon immediately established a base of fire as the 1st Platoon moved to the right front. The 2d Platoon moved up on the left flank. The fire from the 1st Platoon forced the enemy from his positions to the front of the 3rd Platoon. The 2d Platoon then observed several enemy soldiers moving along the left flank to the rear of the company. The 1st Platoon was shifted from the forward right flank position of the company around to the rear left flank to tie in between the mortar positions at the LZ and the left flank of the 3rd Platoon. The 3rd Platoon had moved up to the left flank of the 2d Platoon while the 1st Platoon was coming around to the rear. This placed all of the platoons along the left flank generally deployed in a line. The enemy forces broke contact as Company B arrived in the battle area and passed through the lines of Company A. The total elapsed time of the contact was between three and four hours. (See Appendix 2)

MOVEMENT TO CONTACT

At approximately 0940 hours, 10 August 1966, the scout dogs moving at the lead of Company A sensed something unusual to the front. The dogs were both fresh and had previously been very reliable, at least to the point that they

had not been falsely alerting during movement. At the time the dogs alerted, Company A was moving in moderately rolling terrain with sparse vegetation which permitted limited visibility for about 100 meters. This was very good in comparison to previous areas of operation. The sparse vegetation also permitted the use of a spread, easily deployable, yet compact, formation which greatly increased the security of the unit during movement. It also physically increased the area that was being searched. The formation could be considered as a variation of the standard wedge, but it more closely resembled a box by pure physical dimensions. Since the company commander wanted to keep operations as simple and understandable as possible, the new formation was designated as the box rather than a modified "V" or wedge. A detailed explanation of the formation at this point will aid the reader in understanding the ease and speed with which the company was able to deploy upon sensing the presence of enemy forces ahead. (See Appendix 5)

The lead platoon of the company was formed into three files, each composed of a rifle squad. The distance between the files averaged between ten and fifteen meters. A machine gun team was attached to each flank squad. The lead platoon employed a scout/security team (2men) forward with the two dog teams. Each dog team consisted of a US military handler plus a German Shepherd scout dog.

The remaining two rifle platoons each moved in a column of twos with about a five meter spread between files. These two platoons were oriented behind the two flank squads of the lead platoon so that the inside file of their column was generally located to the rear of the respective flank squad. This increased the width being covered by the company by approximately five meters on each side. Each flank position also placed flank security teams out to a distance of about 50 meters. This distance was generally comparable to that of the frontal security section.

The company mortar platoon closed in the rear of the box. The personnel generally extended between the trail of each of the flank platoons. The mortar platoon had the mission of rear security. This was generally accomplished by observation.

The company command group moved freely within the confines of the established box.

The main advantages achieved by use of the box formation were security and deployability. Security was gained by the dispersion inherent in the formation. Deployability was secured by providing a single commander for all of the forces located forward or to either flank. Since a leader was present with each platoon and each platoon was constantly semi-deployed, it was possible for a company to have a tactically complete unit deployed to fight instantly in any direction. This will be vividly depicted during the forthcoming description of the battle as it occurred.

Upon receiving the alert from the frontal security element, the lead platoon formed into a skirmish line and continued to move forward. One shot was fired from a small gully about 20 meters to the front of the security team, and two soldiers in tan uniforms were observed. One of the enemy soldiers was captured unwounded, and the other escaped. It is unknown if the enemy soldier that escaped was wounded by the hail of bullets that were fired in his direction.

A very freshly used trail was detected within five meters of the position where the enemy soldiers were located. It was determined that they were rear security trail watchers for a larger unit that had just passed through the area. The direction of travel was easily discerned as all of the grass was broken pointing in one direction, and this direction corresponded to that of the suspected route being traveled by the unit for which Company A was searching.

The commander of Company A immediately reported the situation to the battalion operations center and requested both an interpreter for field interrogation of the POW and evacuation of the enemy soldier. CO, Company A, also advised the battalion commander that instead of following the originally planned route, he was going to pursue rapidly along the observed trail and attempt to make contact with the enemy. This action was approved.

INITIAL CONTACT

The 3rd Platoon maintained the lead and guided along the fresh trail. The scout dog alerted to the front and left flank within 200 meters of the position previously occupied by the trail watchers. The 3rd Platoon in the lead deployed as did the second platoon on the left flank. Movement became slow, cautious, and deliberate as the company moved forward, carefully searching ahead.

The initial volume of fire delivered from the still undetected enemy was directed at the forward echelon. One of the scout dogs was killed instantly and his handler wounded. The lead platoon instantly came on line even with the dead dog and wounded handler. Small arms fire was returned in the direction from which the fire came, but it was nearly impossible to detect specific targets. The center of the lead platoon was oriented on the trail being followed, and, thus, found itself in a slight draw with the majority of enemy fire coming from the higher terrain to the left front.

It was believed that they had set up a hasty ambush position along the left flank. Company A sustained few initial casualties by being in a deployed posture when reaching what was later determined as the intended killing zone. The company commander immediately moved forward to the 3rd Platoon to estimate the situation. Enemy automatic weapons fire from the front was detected at this point. One burst of automatic

weapons fire fatally wounded the company first sergeant as he moved forward behind the CO. The enemy had effective grazing fire through the low ground in the company position. This greatly restricted movement. (See Appendix 2)

MANEUVER

The 1st Platoon on the right flank was ordered to move further right for approximately 50 meters. This placed them on the high ground to the right of the draw, and thereby, enabled them to move forward of the 3rd Platoon positions. The 1st Platoon was instructed to visually tie in with the right flank of the 3rd Platoon and be employed forward of it to form an "L" shape. This enabled the 1st Platoon to place effective fire on the enemy in the low ground to the front of the company as well as on the high ground directly across the draw. This placed the enemy troops in a cross fire situation and was effective in forcing them from their positions in the low ground. (See Appendix 2) This relieved the enemy pressure from the front by eliminating the grazing fire through the company position.

On the left flank, the second platoon had moved onto the high ground and was delivering fire to their front. It is believed that the combined maneuver and fire of the 1st Platoon on the right flank forced the enemy to withdraw from the front and concentrate on the left flank. This created increased problems for the 2d Platoon as the enemy forces

started to skirt to the left flank and come in from the platoon and company rear. Several enemy soldiers were observed by members of the 2d Platoon during this period. Heavy fighting followed during which the platoon leader and one squad leader were killed.

A tactical air strike employing napalm, cluster bombs, and 20 mm cannon fire was used during this phase. This support was very close and effective.

The threat from the front was relieved by the actions of the 1st Platoon. This allowed the 3rd Platoon to leave their positions in the low ground and move to counter the encircling action on the left flank. The 1st Platoon was withdrawn from their forward right flank position and moved towards the high ground on the left flank. (See Appendix 2) x

The 3rd Platoon had moved to the high ground and joined the 2nd Platoon. The fire support and ground maneuver of forces effectively stopped further enemy movement. The final disposition of troops remained oriented along the left flank beginning with the 2nd Platoon to the front, then the 3rd Platoon, and finally the 1st Platoon. The left flank of the 1st Platoon tied into the 4th Platoon positions.

The landing zone which was colocated with the 4th Platoon had been organized by the company executive officer. It is noteworthy to mention at this point that the executive officer operated without instructions or guidance from the company commander during the conduct of the fight. His ability to function efficiently relieved the company commander of any concern about the company rear area. All evacuation and

and supply was quietly and effectively accomplished.

FIRE SUPPORT

The fire support for the operation consisted primarily of tube artillery reinforced by aerial rocket artillery and tactical air support.

The first rounds of tube artillery were landing in the battle area in less than five minutes from the time of the initial contact. The artillery fire was continuous and effective in the enemy area and was lifted only when aircraft were in air space over Company A.

A flight of two A1E fighter-bombers arrived in the battle area about one hour after the fighting began. The aircraft were armed with cluster bomb units (CBUs), napalm, and 20 mm cannons. The cluster bombs were used to the rear of the enemy positions in order not to restrict the forward movement of friendly troops. The napalm and 20 mm cannon fire was used on the enemy positions which were within 50 meters of Company A. The napalm and 20 mm was employed along the length of the enemy lines oriented from the southwest to the northeast. The A1E support was outstanding.

Aerial rocket artillery was employed along the enemy lines following the air strikes. The 2.75 inch rockets were very effective for area coverage, and the noise created by the launching was psychologically defeating to the enemy.

The helicopters were employed parallel with the troop disposition.

Full credit for the ground control and coordination of all fire support was given to the artillery reconnaissance sergeant present with Company A. He was always on the front line in the most critical area to insure that the closest possible fire support was being received. He acted with great courage and maintained a cool, clear control of himself at all times. He was a standout hero.

The battalion commander stated after the battle that it was the finest job of fire support control that he had ever observed. He added that it happened as if in a field manual.

REINFORCEMENT AND REORGANIZATION

Company B had been ordered into the battle area and arrived about 1300 hours. / They had been able to move rapidly with guidance and security assistance provided by Brigade aviation section scout team flying in armed H-13 helicopters.

Upon the arrival of Company B into the battle area, Company A reorganized forces and policed up their equipment and personnel. Most of the wounded personnel had been evacuated from the LZ, but equipment remained scattered throughout the area. Members of the company gathered all of the equipment and moved it up to the LZ for evacuation. Ammunition for the 81 mm mortar was included in the items. The companys executive officer coordinated with each platoon sergeant to insure that all personnel present still had all of their equipment. This was done before any of the excess gear was evacuated from the LZ.

The 2d and 3rd Platoons were then alerted by the company commander to prepare to pursue in an attempt to overtake and kill or capture any of the enemy forces.

PURSUIT

The company commander led the 2d and 3rd Platoons during the pursuit operation. The mission was to search out to the rear of the enemy positions and then return for the night to the company perimeter being established at the present LZ. This, therefore, allowed only a limited pursuit.

Scattered indications of the recent presence of enemy troops were detected throughout the area. These indications varied from footprints and blood to dropped equipment ranging up to and including enemy packs.

Four enemy soldiers were detected at approximately 1600 hours and estimated to be at a distance of 200 meters to the left flank. A vain attempt was made to close with this small group. Once it was determined that they were impossible to overtake, a heavy volume of fire was delivered in the direction of the observed enemy soldiers. That ended the small action with unknown results.

The pursuit force returned to the LZ just prior to darkness. Nothing of known significance was gained by the pursuit action except for establishing the fact that the enemy forces had departed the area.

CONSOLIDATION

During the pursuit operation conducted by Company A (-), Company B had withdrawn from the battle area to the LZ position. A two company perimeter was established around the LZ. Several three man listening posts were positioned around the perimeter at night and two ambushes were employed along the trail which had been used by the enemy force. There was no activity on the night of 10 August 1966.

The next day began routinely with normal morning activities. Both companies were preparing to depart the LZ to conduct further search operations to the southwest. At the time of departure from the LZ, movement was detected to the rear of both companies. All troops immediately oriented themselves for 360 degrees security around the LZ. Two enemy soldiers dressed in tan uniforms were observed approaching the LZ. The two men appeared to be surrendering and a squad was sent forward to receive them. They kept their hands over their heads and were brought onto the LZ. A thorough search of the two soldiers and their equipment revealed no weapons, but they stated that they had a machine gun and ammunition hidden outside the perimeter.

The presence of the Vietnamese interpreter was invaluable at this point. The interpreter had been bought in on 10 August 1966 as requested.

One of the enemy soldiers was kept at the LZ while the other one guided a platoon to the location of the weapon. A 12.7 mm machine gun with ammunition was recovered and evacuated back to the LZ.

The loads that are carried by the North Vietnamese soldier are normally extremely large. This was definitely true for this pair of machine gunners.

The soldiers were interrogated at the LZ while waiting for a helicopter to arrive to evacuate them to higher headquarters. They stated that they were members of a 300 man NVA battalion that had been in a big fight three days earlier. This fight was presumed to be the one with Company A, 1/7 Cavalry. They further stated that there had been approximately 100 soldiers hidden waiting for / ^{Co. A} yesterday, and that the remaining 200 were located to their rear. They reported that extremely heavy casualties were sustained during the fight. They added that most of the casualties were inflicted in their rear areas by the artillery fires and the air strikes.

The two enemy soldiers estimated that their battalion had received 100 casualties on the previous day. They both believed that the fighting effectiveness of the battalion had been destroyed as they had broken down into small groups to exfiltrate the area. It was in this way that these two men were able to separate unnoticeably from their command element.

It was not possible to determine from the enemy soldiers when and where the force was going to reassemble.

The psychological effect of their surrender was immediately exploited by preparing posters and handbills for saturating the area of operations. (See Appendix 6)

SUMMARY

Company A had been given the mission to intercept and destroy the enemy force that had been in contact with Company A, 1/7 Cavalry on 8 August 1966. As part of the battalion plan, Company A was to serve as a mobile blocking force along the predicted enemy withdrawal route while Company B served as the driving force.

Company A did meet the enemy force, but it was at a time and place in which the enemy had the advantage. The enemy force had apparently received adequate warning from the one trail watcher that escaped to anticipate the pursuit movement. This Company A did and found the enemy waiting in concealed positions.

The superior fire power available to American forces through artillery and aerial fire support contributed decisively to the defeat of the North Vietnamese Army battalion. The degree of destruction of the enemy unit was not exactly known, but the number of enemy soldiers left dead on the battlefield did exceed the number of US soldiers killed.

This mission of the battalion to intercept and destroy the specific enemy force was considered as accomplished following the fight on 10 August 1966. It was determined that the enemy unit no longer posed an offensive threat. Since the enemy had broken into such small groups, it was determined that further attempts to engage them would be futile.

Following the evacuation of the two enemy soldiers that surrendered on 11 August 1966, Company A resumed search and destroy operations oriented towards the original mission assigned on 8 August 1966.

ANALYSIS AND CRITICISM

As both the author of this paper and the company commander during the described action, I have spent considerable time in analyzing the actions taken during the battle. I have primarily attempted to determine what action would have produced a more decisive victory for Company A.

The time lapse between the contact with the two enemy trail watchers and the contact with the main body was perhaps 30 minutes, yet the distance traveled on the ground was less than 200 meters. Perhaps less time delay at this point would have prohibited the enemy from being as well prepared in his hasty ambush position. If Company A had pursued more rapidly along the trail, it is possible that offensive movement could have been easily attained by engaging the enemy before he was prepared for it. The 30 minutes was spent searching the prisoner and the immediate area, analyzing the trail, determining the best course of action by estimating the situation, and reporting to battalion all known information. All of the above actions were necessary, but it is now felt that they probably could have been accomplished in less than half of the time.

The formation used during movement was responsible for minimizing the initial effects of the heavy volume of fire received from an undetected enemy. The semi-deployed disposition of the forward platoon (3rd Platoon) prevented heavy losses and allowed the rapid return of fire. Movement within the lead platoon was restricted due to very accurate enemy automatic weapons fire into their area and therefore, the 3rd

Platoon Leader was ordered to maintain ^a constant volume of fire from fixed positions. With the base of fire provided by the 3rd Platoon, the 1st and 2nd Platoons were able to maneuver freely to both flanks. This maneuver proved to be uncostly in lives, but it failed to bring decisive results.

It is at this point that I frequently ponder upon the thought of what would have ^{occurred} if the entire company had instantly executed an aggressive charge and attempted to overrun the enemy. This brings to light one of the most frequently discussed tactics characteristic of the war in Vietnam - that of either holding ground or withdrawing upon receipt of enemy fire until maximum available supporting fires have had an opportunity to drive the enemy forces from their positions. The rationale to support this concept is that the US fire power is far superior to that of the NVA/VC forces, and that it is thereby one of our greatest assets and should be used accordingly to prevent unnecessary loss of life. It must also be accepted that this tactic decreases the chances for decisive victories.

The decision not to openly charge was based upon the following factors: the enemy had extremely accurate small arms and automatic weapons fire covering the area, the enemy forces were in concealed positions and difficult to detect, the exact disposition of the enemy was unknown, and the enemy strength was undetermined. I decided that

the anticipated greater cost in lives would not offset the added probability for victory.

The enemy unit must receive credit for effectively employing delaying tactics by leaving approximately one-third of their total force to engage our force. This stopped our pursuit and allowed the main body to evade out of the battle area.

After once overcoming the major disadvantage of being caught in the low ground, aggressive pursuit by Company A should have been more rapid in an attempt to maintain contact. This probably could have been done before the arrival of Company B as very few enemy forces remained in contact at that time.

Contact was broken by all enemy forces upon the arrival of Company B, and it was not re-established. It is unfortunate that some contact could not have been maintained, but this is another characteristic particularly peculiar to the war in Vietnam - that of not making or maintaining contact with the enemy unless they so desire.

The combined use of tube artillery, aerial rocket artillery and tactical air weapons contributed significantly to the success of the fight. This was well coordinated and controlled by fire support personnel at all echelons. The time lost between employing aerially delivered weapons and tube artillery was minimal.

In summary, I would like to say that the battle resulted in a victory for US forces in Vietnam, regardless of the questions posed during this analysis part of the monograph.

LESSONS LEARNED

1. The use of scout dogs can greatly increase the security of a unit during movement. They are particularly effective in unpopulated areas in which the dogs are not inclined to alert to other than enemy personnel or positions.

2. A formation that provides for maximum dispersion and yet retain tactical integrity capable of rapid deployment is necessary on any battlefield. The primary limiting feature governing the use of a formation is the terrain and vegetation. Formations must be flexible to permit a simple adjustment to conform with changing surroundings.

3. The coordinated use of tube artillery, aerial rocket artillery and tactical air support can provide outstanding, continuous fire support.

4. Rapid and aggressive pursuit of an enemy force is necessary to obtain decisive results.

5. Mortar ammunition should not be distributed to the rifle platoons for the purpose of carrying. The best solution to increase the number of mortar rounds being carried within a company is to attach rifleman to the mortar platoon to serve as ammo bearers during movement only.

6. Equipment not essential to active combat is frequently discarded in the battle area by the individual soldier.

7. The presence of a qualified interpreter at company level is necessary in the field to exploit immediately available combat intelligence.

8. Scout helicopters increase the security of a unit during movement and permit a more rapid rate of march. Scout helicopters are also able to assist commanders on the ground in route selection and are invaluable in aiding the link up of two units.

9. Never follow the exact footsteps of a person that has just moved and exposed himself during a firefight. The first person that moved will have attracted the attention of enemy gunners and the following persons are likely to be hit by enemy fire. Furthermore, any movement must be rapid, low and for a short distance to reduce exposure time.


BRUCE WILSON
Major, Infantry

BIBLIOGRAPHY

1. "Dog Gives Life for GI Pals," published News Article, Chicago Tribune, 21 September 1966.
2. Unit History, 2d Battalion, 12th Cavalry, 1st Cavalry Division (Airmobile), 1966.
3. Psychological Warfare Poster Number SP-1372.