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MORTAR ATTACK ON LZ LIZ

12 MAY 1967

DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
Headquarters, 2d Battalion, 35th Infantry
APO San Francisco 96355

AVDC C CTB 13 May 1967

SUBJECT: Combat Operations After Action Report for Mortar Attack on. LZ Liz, 12 May 1967

TO: Commanding Officer
3d Brigade Task Force, 25th Infantry Division
APO San Francisco 96355

1. Name of Operation: Mortar Attack on LZ Liz (Operation MALHEUR).
2. Date of Operation: 122340H - 130900H May 1967
3. Location: Duc Pho District, Quang Ngai Province, RVN.
4. Task Organization:

Co A 2/35 Infantry
 C/3-4 Cavalry (APCs)
 Recon/2/35 Infantry
 C Co (-)
 1 Platoon RF/PF
 Team Strunk:
 C/2-34 Armor (-) (Tanks)
 2/C/2/35 Infantry

Battalion Control:
 HHC
 Heavy Mortars (81mm & 4.2")
 106 RR Section
 C/2/9 Arty (DS) (105mm Howitzers)

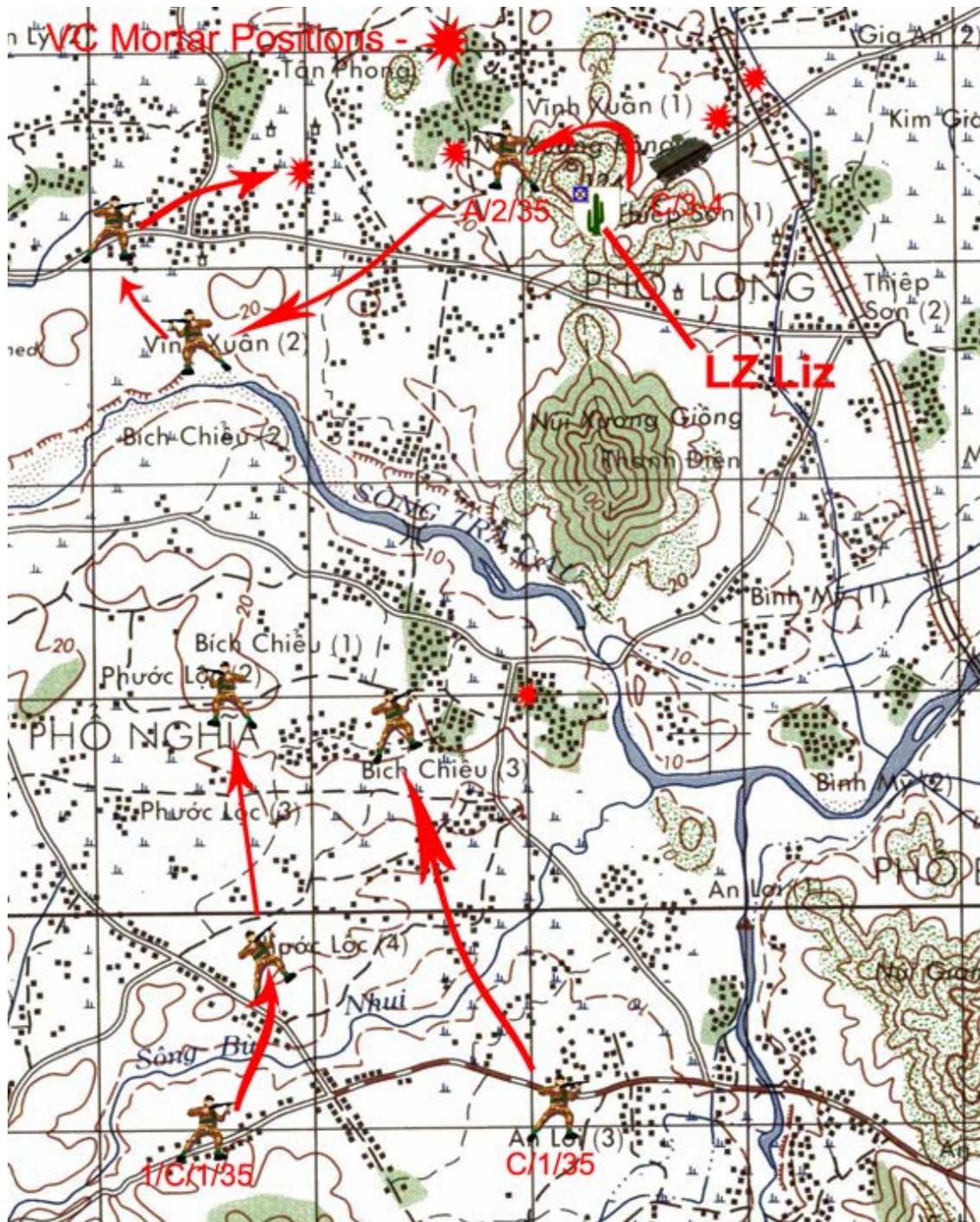


LZ Liz looking North 106mm RR at hill top

5. Command and Control Headquarters.
 - a. Headquarters, 2d Battalion, 35th Infantry.
 - b. Company A, 2d Battalion, 35th Infantry,
 - c. Reconnaissance Platoon, 2d Battalion, 35th Infantry,
 - d. Troop C, 3d Battalion, 4th Cavalry.
 - e. Battery C, 2d Battalion, 9th Artillery.
6. Supporting Forces,
 - a. 2d Battalion 9th Artillery,
 - b. USAF
 - c. 174th Aviation Company
7. Intelligence; Current INTSUM.
8. Execution:
 - a. At 12 2345H May 1967, the 2d Bn, 35th Inf Fire Support Base (FSB) located at 1Z LIZ, vic BS 755431 received 35-40 enemy mortar

rounds from five positions east, northwest, southwest, and west of LZ LIZ. The initial enemy rounds landed in the saddle of LZ Liz where C Battery, 2d Bn 9th Arty was located. Two enemy rounds landed in one of the howitzer positions, hitting the howitzer and the communications bunker. The crew was injured and the howitzer damaged, The round which hit the ammo bunker caused large secondary explosions which further damaged one other howitzer and totally destroyed the howitzer in the position,

b. Approximately four other enemy mortar rounds fell inside the perimeter in the vicinity of the artillery position where it appeared that the main attack was directed. Efforts to shift the mortar fire to the 106RR position to the north of the artillery position proved futile and accounted for the remainder of the mortar fire, There appeared to be little effort made to the south of the artillery where the Battalion CP and an additional 106RR position was located.



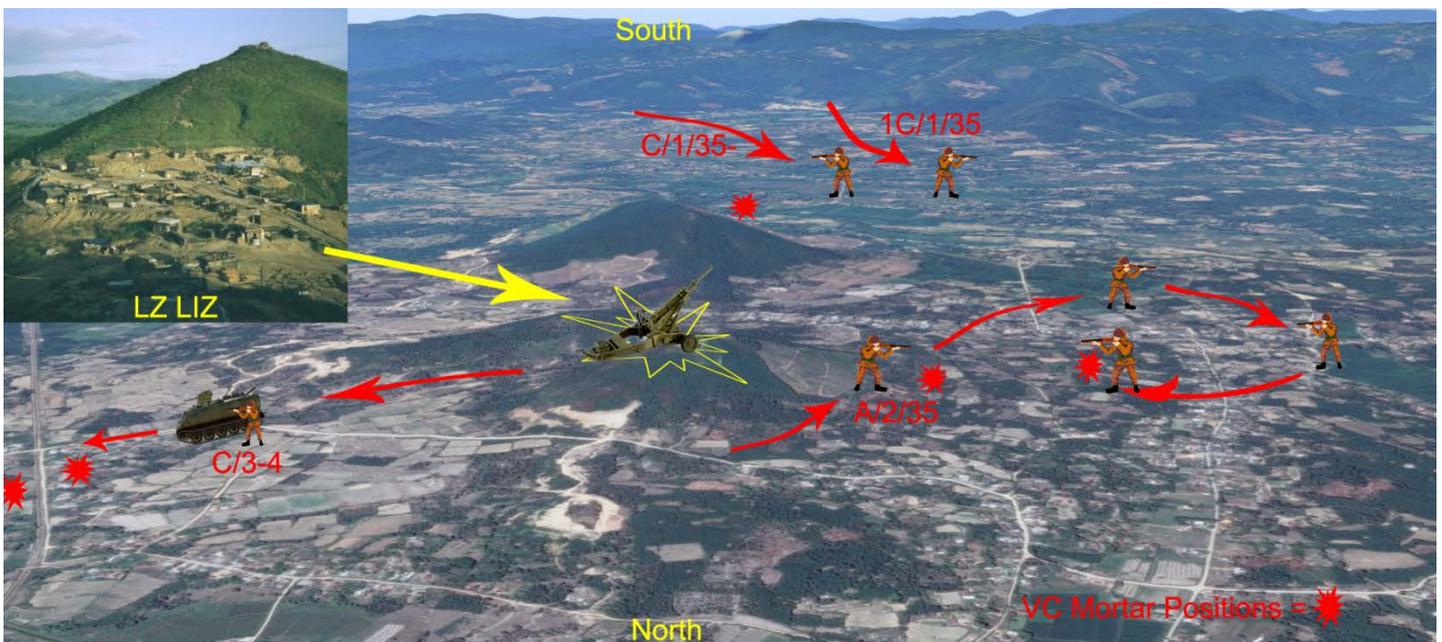
LZ Liz Mortar attack 12-13 May 1967

c. Counter mortar fires were initiated as soon as the first rounds landed and were increased as muzzle flashes were observed in the five different areas. Indirect fires from the 81mm and 4.2 mortar sections at LZ Liz were employed; in addition, C/2-9 Arty and the 106 RR Sections of the 2-35 Inf provided direct fire on the enemy mortar positions. The 50 Cal MG's of C/3-4 Cav flanking the artillery position raked the enemy mortar positions. While artillery fire from the 2d Bn 9th Arty was directed by the battalion artillery liaison officer. By 13 0001H May 1967, armed helicopters from the 174th Aviation Company were on station and firing at the observed tube flashes, They received automatic weapons fire from several positions to the northwest and west of LZ Liz. These were effectively engaged at 13 0001H May, the armed AC-47 arrived on station. Spooky was also fired on by the enemy which only served to locate the enemy positions (BS750410 and BS735436).



d. At 13 0200H, Company A(-) departed LZ Liz in order to reestablish contact with the enemy. At 13 0245H, Co A (-), under the canopy of light provided by the USAF flare ship, detained one NVA vic BS734427, who was attempting to change from his uniform into civilian clothing. At 13 0545H, vic BS740434, Co A (-) observed three individuals leaving a hut. Pursuing the three, Co A (-) captured one who wore black pajamas beneath white pajamas. In a further search of the area, the two platoons located two 60mm mortar positions which had been recently used and

which contained NVA type sandal prints. The company (A-) returned to LZ LIZ, detaining four other VCS enroute.



e. At 0830H, C/3-4 Cav, while making a sweep east of LZ Liz, located three 81mm mortar positions surrounded by eight one man foxholes. One enemy lay dead in the position, a victim of counter mortar fire.

9. Results:

a. Enemy Losses

KIA	3
WIA	2
VC/PW	2
VCS	4
Totals	11

b. Friendly Losses

Personnel:	WIA	KIA
A/2/35 Inf	4	
Recon/2/35 Inf	1	
C/3-4 Cav	1	1
C/2-9 Arty	4	
Totals:	10	1
Equipment Losses		
105mm Howitzer (destroyed)	1	
105mm Howitzer (damaged)	1	
M-16 Rifle (destroyed)	4	
M-60 MG (destroyed)	1	

10. Summary and Analysis:

The 2-35th Inf FSB at LZ Liz received 35-40, 82mm mortar rounds from approximately five positions. The attack was short, lasting about 10-12 minutes and was extremely accurate. Only when the enemy tried to shift fire to new targets did the rounds fail to hit the perimeter,

The two suspects detained by A/2-35 after the attack were interrogated and determined to be one Viet Cong and one NVA. Information learned revealed that elements of the 219th Main Force VC Unit, combined with at least one NVA platoon (unit unknown) came from the west to attack a US Base (LZ Liz). The NVA platoon carried two mortars (caliber unknown). The force later coerced twelve indigents to carry dead and wounded from the battle area, One of the prisoners detained by A/2-35 reported he carried two enemy dead and two enemy wounded to the west (location unknown) from where they were later moved south.

Since there was no other contact in the area of operation on that evening it can be concluded that the above force was the one which attacked LZ Liz with mortars. It is highly probable that the high volume of fire and quick reaction to the attack aborted a ground attack by the enemy.



LZ Liz from the surrounding fields
photo by Phil Spence B/2/35

11. Lessons Learned

a. Item: Weapons Sight for crew served weapons (starlight Scope)

b. During the attack the, 106 RR sections were used very effectively against the enemy mortar positions; however, they could have been much more effectively used had they been able to employ the starlight scopes for crew served weapons. Due to the positioning of the 106 RR they were able to adjust "Burst on target" to bring effective fire against the enemy. Of course they could not fire until after the enemy had fired and then it was extremely difficult to determine exactly where the mortars were located. The tube flashes are a dead giveaway but

they last only an instant. Had the 106 RR had the starlight scope weapons sight, they may have been able to locate the enemy positions prior to the enemy's initial round but even more important is the fact that mortar flashes seen through a starlight scope are easily identifiable and readily located. Once the enemy fires one round, the starlight scopes could be used to bring extremely effective fire directly into the enemy mortar position perhaps enabling the 106 RR to obtain a first round hit. Even if the 106 RR does not obtain a first round hit with the starlight scope, the first round will be close enough to upset the mortar or sights and at least cause the crew to take cover thus preventing accurate mortar fire.

c, Recommend that starlight scopes be made immediately available to employ on 106 RR as night firing devices.

/s./ Clinton E. Granger
CLINTON E. GRANGER
LTC, Infantry
Commanding

A TRUE COPY:
BEN G. CROSBY
MAJ, Infantry