

OPERATION AUSTIN II

The arrival of the 1-327th and the 2-502d in Phan Thiet on 9 April was the first presence of major foreign military units in the area since the Communists had defeated two French regiments there in 1954. The mission of the 1st Brigade (-) was to search out and destroy local guerrillas and a main force VC battalion reported to be in northern Binh Thuan Province, astride the II and III Corps boundary. The operation involved cooperation with ARVN forces, Civilian Irregular Defense Groups, Popular Forces, Regional Forces, and National Policemen of Binh Thuan Province. The brigade's principal contribution were long range patrols into the suspected sanctuary and positioning of reaction forces. The patrols were made arduous by a shortage of potable water. The 1-327th conducted a night airmobile assault, but little contact with the enemy was made. The operation netted 21 enemy dead, destruction of over one hundred VC emplacements, and the praise of General Westmoreland for the brigade's ability to coordinate operations with Vietnamese military and paramilitary forces "more effectively than any other U. S. unit."³³ Operation AUSTIN II was concluded on 21 April 1966.

³³Vietnam Odyssey: The Story of the 1st Brigade, 101st Airborne Division, In Vietnam (Texarkana, Ark. - Tex.: 101st Airborne Division Association, 1967).