

OPERATION AUSTIN VI

On 1 May 1966, the 1st Brigade, less the 2-327th still at Tuy Hoa, began Operation AUSTIN VI in the Nhon Co area in Quang Duc Province near the Cambodian border north of Saigon, with the mission of conducting spoiling attacks against NVA concentrations along the border and astride the II and III Corps boundary. For the first week of the operation, the 1-327th and 2-502d operated clandestinely in the jungles along the Cambodian border without result. Then intelligence indicated that enemy activity was taking place near Bu Gia Map in Phuoc Long Province to the southwest. The Recondo Force of the 2-502d was first inserted into the area, followed by the rest of the 2-502d, then the 1-327th, and finally a task force from the 173d Airborne Brigade, which moved from Song Be to link up with the 2-502d. In the course of checkerboard patrolling by the 2-502d, an NVA prisoner revealed the location of a four-company sized ambush site while the Recondo Force executed a flanking movement. The trap thus formed produced an hour-long fire fight in which thirty-five enemy were killed. Artillery fire along the route of the retreating enemy badly mauled an NVA company, according to another captured enemy soldier. A B-52 strike on the following day added to the enemy toll, as the 2-502d pursued the retreating enemy to the Cambodian border. Meanwhile, the 1-327th conducted a sweep to the south and east, during which a VC provincial headquarters and an abandoned prisoner-of-war camp were discovered and destroyed. The operation terminated on 18 May 1966.