

with the mission of coordinating the defense of the An Loc/Loc Ninh/Quan Loi complex. The advanced Command Post was to be on one hour notice.

Other planning included a careful assessment of available resources and steps were taken to insure that full use of all pertinent capabilities was made. Psyops personnel started preparing leaflets and tapes for broadcast, and surveillance missions of all types - Scout teams, Sniffer, SLAR, and IR, just to name a few - were concentrated on the Fishhook area. "Hunter-killer" or "Pink" teams focused on the area to the East of the Fishhook and began getting results almost at once. On the 4th, 5th, and 6th of August they killed a total of 25 NVA in three locations (Circles 11 and 12, Chart IV), and surveillance assets began confirming the presence of the enemy in this area. The picture had begun to clarify, and it is fair to say that by the 6th of August the key personnel on the First Cav staff had decided that the general aspects of the threat outlined by An were true.

Requests for B-52 strikes for the area of the Fishhook were submitted. On the 4th, 5th and 6th only two strikes per night were dropped in this region, but with the increased evidence of the presence of the enemy in large groups it was felt that the number of strikes should be increased. Four were submitted for the night of the 7th, increasing to seven each for the nights of 8 and 9 August, and all of these were dropped (Appendix IV). The First Cav, with its excellent targeting and Bomb Damage Assessment (BDA) systems, gets perhaps maximum benefit from this particular brand of "heavy artillery". The results speak for themselves as will be seen from the events following the massive strikes on the 8th and 9th.

#### V. THE DIVISION ADVANCED COMMAND POST

The 7th of August seems to have been decision day in the build-up before the Battle of Binh Long Province; the day when reputations were staked on the value of the available intelligence. As can be plainly seen, the picture was, at that time, by no means clear, there was still no solid corroboration of An's story, and it is easy to appreciate the quality of a unit that sees when a decision has to be made, and makes it. When resources are spread thin, it takes courage to commit them to one small area on the basis of imperfect information, but in war, he who waits for "perfect information" never moves.