

An Loc Action Involves 1/16

By MSG Stephen R. Rabourn

(1/16 IO)—The 1st Battalion, 16th Infantry (Mech) "have been up and around An Loc doing their thing for the past few weeks. Since commencing Operation Kentucky Cougar with the 11th Armored Cavalry Regiment on August 9, the "Iron Rangers" have taught NVA elements to think twice before engaging.

Besides daily reconnaissance missions, the Iron Rangers have conducted combined operations with Army of the Republic of Viet (ARVN) units!

The Iron Rangers have decreased the number in the enemy ranks by 90 since the operation began. Some 84 have been killed, five have been detained and one soldier rallied to the side of the Government of the Republic of Vietnam.

Lieutenant Colonel Kenneth G. Cassels' track-mounted infantrymen received an early welcome from NVA when they arrived at Night Defensive Position Eagle II. What the enemy did not know was that the "Iron Rangers" eat 82mm mortar rounds for breakfast. The next day, as a thank-you note, the 2d Platoon from Company C and attached Army of the Republic of Vietnam elements conducted air assault operations to the northwest of An Loc. Three NVA were killed, four were detained and one rallied. Some 40 rounds of 120 mortar ammo were captured before nightfall.

An early morning search on the following day found another 20 NVA bodies waiting for the undertaker. "Charles" promptly accepted the invitation to play and dumped 30-35 rounds of 82mm mortar fire into NDP Thunder IV. But alas, he who gives must also receive. The Iron Rangers put on a little demonstration of track power and killed another 27 NVA to the west of An Loc that afternoon.

The NVA, deciding that the 1/16 played a little rough for them, turned toward the ARVN units at NDP Eagle I. They did not know the Iron Rangers were everywhere. The ARVN soldiers found another 25 NVA bodies in the wire at Eagle I as dawn broke on the 14th. Three more blew themselves up with hand grenades.



ELEMENTS of the 1st Battalion, 16th mechanized Infantry, 1st Infantry Division, team with ARVN forces in a sweep through the dense rubber trees near An Loc, nine miles from the Cambodian border. The unit has had daily contact with NVA forces since the sweep began on August 11th. (Photo By SP5 Orgie Hall)