(4) On Tan Son Nhut, a number of fire-ights occurbetween Air Police and elements of the VC force. Alpha Sector Primary SAT, which had responded to Alpha K-19's distress call (paragraph 10a(1), above), notified CSC at 0118 that his vehicle (M-151 jeep) had been hit by a mortar or grenade, and that he was wounded. (NOTE: Later investigation indicated that a tire of the vehicle had been struck by a fragment from an anti-tank grenade. However, the tail fin assembly of a Chicom 60mm mortar round was later found in this area, but in such a position that it could not have been the missile which struck the jeep. This was one of several mortar rounds fired at the deployed SAT by the mortar position on the west side of AK-15.) At 0140 Alpha Post K-33 reported that he was in the ditch on his post, that there were VC in the ditch, and he was pursuing them. At this point the pattern of alarms raised by sentry dog handlers who had made visual sightings of VC, indicated the retreat route taken by the VC withdrawing from the aircraft parking area. A blocking force of approximately 50 Air Policemen was deployed along the perimeter road which connects the 051 gate to the west ramp. A second force of approximately 50 Air Policemen was deployed facing north along the east-west inner perimeter road which runs east from the west perimeter road to the new runway construction area. A third force of approximately 100 Air Policemen, were deployed south-to-north along the west perimeter road from the inner perimeter road to a point 90 meters south of the Ba Queo Receiver Site. (See Atch 1) Shortly before the arrival of this third group, a jeep patrol posting personnel from south to north on this west perimeter road had stopped after posting the last man. At this time one VC darted out of the bushes from the south and ran for the perimeter fence. As he passed the jeep he dropped a concussion grenade at the feet of one Air Policeman who had dived in the ditch. No injuries were sustained by Air Police personnel. WE APPIVED OF APPROX 0115, WITHIN

(5) The third group of Air Policemen deployed on the west perimeter road was in place by 0210. Unknown to them at this time their position directly blocked the entry-escape route of the VC. Two 1 1/2 ton trucks and one 1/2 ton pick-up truck were located on the road in front of their position. About fifteen minutes after their arrival heavy fire from small arms, automatic weapons, rocket launchers, and hand grenades was directed against them from the west side of the road in the vicinity of the perimeter fence. This was the most intense fire encountered in the entire operation. Two Chicom anti-tank grenades hit the pick-up truck, demolishing it. The two 1 1/2 ton trucks were destroyed by grenades. Air Police forces maintained their positions and returned fire.

5 MINUTES AFTER OUR ARRIVAL PIRMAN COLE AND RIDDLE WERE KILLED - ALL BUT 4 OF MY TEME WERE WOUNDED, WE STAYED AND HELD THE POSITION WATLL APPROX. 0930, I WAS THE LAST TO LEAVE AT 1100.

FIRE SUBSIDED AFTER DAYLIGHT. (1)

I discovered at daylight that the Waymore Mines were set up on And Leftish Detonators were in the mines, and lead wires were laying in the grass Not connected

(6) The fire fi continued until approximately 0235 when VC fire subsided. Upon advancing in a search-and-destroy operation toward the enemy position, Air Policemen found the bodies of two Air Policemen, KIA, and two wounded Air Policemen were found on or adjacent to the road. Across the road, three dead VC were found, killed by small arms fire. (See Atch 2) One VC had a battery pack lying next to his body, suggesting the presence of a "Claymore" mine. Such a mine was found in the weeded area next to the road with the mine pointed diagonally across the road toward the Air Police positions. (See Atch 6) It is hypothesized that the "Claymore" was intended to cover the escape of the VC force in the event of pursuit but that the VC assigned to detonate the device was killed in the fire-fight before he could find and connect lead wires to the "Claymore". There is reason to believe that this group of VC (the 1st Platoon, 1st Co., 6th Bn.), a reserve force according to interrogation reports described in paragraph 8b, entered the base, and later withdrew through the gap cut in the triple perimeter fence by the 2nd Platoon. Later contacts with VC attempting to escape were concentrated near this gap, and indicate it was both penetration route and escape route for the 2nd Platoon. As the Air Police had arrived and deployed directly across the approach to this gap only 15 minutes earlier, at a time when the area was well illuminated by air-dropped flares, it seems likely that elements of the 1st Platoon, in reserve outside the fence, observed the movement of the Air Police. They then apparently passed through the gap and launched a concentrated attack in an effort to re-secure the escape route of the 2nd Platoon. Failing in this, they retreated through the gap and either re-deployed or dispersed to avoid capture. The liklihood that these VC observed the Air Police deploying severely limits the credibility of one theory that this action was an unintentional encounter with Air Police forces by a second, follow-on assault force. This observation is supported by the lack of satchel charges, blocks of explosives and similar munitions on bodies recovered from this action; whereas VC killed in the interior of the base were well supplied with demolition devices.

(7) While the engagement discussed above was in progress, action was continuing in other areas. At 0220 Alpha Post K-33 reported he was hit and wounded, but was pursuing the enemy. This sentry dog handler observed a six-man mortar squad near the west side of Alpha Post K-15. He testified later that he observed the mortar being fired toward the aircraft parking areas. When he proceeded to within 175 meters of the mortar position he took cover and began firing on the mortar crew. The enemy returned small arms fire, but ceased their activity. Despite sustaining a wound below his eye and through his ear, he maintained radio contact with CSC report-



The mortar team was last observed moving ing the enemy movel ones. the mortar in a southerly direction toward the flight line where its second position, 350 meters north of the active runway, was identified later that morning. (See Atch 1 and 6) At this second location, five US 60mm mortar shells, two of which had been fused, along with a food tin, several empty 60mm mortar shipping casings, discarded increments and a few separate fuses, were found. (M-3) The base plate for this mortar was found and turned over to an Air Policeman by a civilian RMK worker, several days later. The identity of the civilian (an American) has not been established and the precise location of the plate when found is unknown, although it was several meters from the rest of the equipment. The tube itself was not recovered despite extensive searches by EOD and Air Police personnel.

(8) Alpha Post K-20, (area in which referenced mortar was located) advised CSC at 0305 that VC were on his post. He advised that he was receiving fire and requested an ambulance for a sentry dog supervisor who was wounded. This was the last transmission from this handler. He was found KIA at 0415 by the Alpha K-21 sentry dog handler. At 0350, the Air Policeman on Alpha K-21 encountered VC heading west on his post. He engaged them and released his dog, which was wounded by hostile fire. (b-3)

THIS IS WHEN I CAUGHT ASSAULT FORCE VL) TRYING TO ESCAPE IN THE

- (9) It was apparent by this time (approximately 0400) that the VC were withdrawing from action in an attempt to escape. A number of minor exchanges continued to occur throughout the remainder of the night between VC and Air Police.
- (RF) Bn and the Air Police during this early morning period. One of their helicopters. "Recorbect 35" the first support for the 53rd their helicopters. "Recorbect 35" the first support for the 53rd their helicopters. "Recorbect 35" the first support for the 53rd their helicopters. "Recorbect 35" the first support for the 53rd their helicopters. "Recorbect 35" the first support for the 53rd the 5 (10) The 120th Aviation Co. provided fire support for the 53rd Staline to harrass any VC in that area, and fired into the area through which the 1st Platoon had retreated. The result of this fire Other helicopter assault which the 1st Platoon had retreated. The result of this fire is unknown. Other helicopter assault teams placed the mortar position behind the Vinatexco factory under heavy fire; and provided effective support fire for the 53rd RF Bn., which was engaged with VC force after the ambush of their convoy mentioned in paragraph 7d(1).
 - (11) The US Army Advisor to the 53rd RF Bn. later stated that the 53rd was in direct contact with the VC force from about 0200 to 0215. It was reported to TSN/SA later that morning that losses of this unit (53rd) were: 3 KIA, 4 WIA, four carbines and two M-1 rifles lost. In the course of the morning, the 2nd Service Bn was directed to assist the 53rd by TSN/SA. (5)



- (12) At 0400 hours all Air Police activities were placed mas static or "hold" status. This action was intended to prevent indiscriminate firing, to clear certain area, to accurately locate all friendly forces, and to allow key personnel to regroup and reorganize as deemed necessary. Throughout the engagement E.O.D. personnel had been working closely with the Air Police to strip dead VC of weapons and munitions, to pick up "dud" ordnance, to check suspected booby traps, etc. (m)
- (13) Also at 0400 hours, E.O.D. teams began a systematic search of the flight line, aircraft and revetments. At 0445 hours the Law Enforcement Section made a comprehensive search of the cantonment area of the base. At the same time, E.O.D. made a search of all dining halls and the Airmen's, Officers', and N.C.O. Clubs. Each was found to be free of demolitions. Following this search, a thorough sweep was made of the runways, which were found to be safe. By daybreak the base was, for all practical purposes, fully operational apart from the west side where VC were known to be hiding among tombs, in old wells and in extremely dense undergrowth. The main runway (07/25) was opened at 0849 hours 4 December 1966 for normal aircraft operations. (k)
- (14) Not previously mentioned in this narrative was the highorder detonation which occurred at approximately 0230 in the southernmost revetment of the Old Bomb Dump, located in the north
 central portion of the base. Quantities of US Navy five-inch shells
 stored in "conex" containers were destroyed. It was initially assumed
 that this ammunition bunker sustained a direct hit by mortar shells.
 Later investigation by E.O.D., however, indicated that a satchel charge
 with sufficient explosive capability to detonate the five inch shells was
 probably used. This analysis appears correct in light of later developments in this same area involving large VC satchel charges. (i-3)
 (See para 10c(3)).
- one hour. It was correctly assumed that any Viet Cong still on the installation would make an effort to escape before daylight, and thus expose their positions. Accordingly, Air Police forces were retained in their positions as in paragraphs 10a(4) and 10a(5), to cover the most probable escape routes. At 0625, with the approach of first light, Air Police personnel on the west perimeter road, near the entry point used by the VC to penetrate the perimeter, sighted several VC in the field south of their positions. The VC were moving north toward the Air Police personnel immediately opened fire. The VC returned the fire

Topened firm with the A-H with the A-H with the ARVIN on The Truck.



there were 3 VC that oxe had a Was almi soldier ran up and Killey one I did save

seriously wounding one Air Policeman. A cover of small-arms fire was layed down by Air Police to permit the medical evacuation of the SUMPHORIZED wounded. Upon cessation of the covering fire two of the VC in the field waved their hands above the weeds indicating their desire to surrender. Several Air Policemen moved into the field and surrounded the VC while others stood by to provide a cover fire in the event of a ruse. Both POWs were wounded and were released to VNAF authorities. A sweep of the field in which they were captured disclosed two dead VC. A short time later two VC surrendered to Air Police near the west end of the 07/25 runway. (b-4) I didn't see these Z. Of

(16) While Air Police had no further contact with VC there was Let ore himcaptured or had escaped. A helicopter was requested to maintain aerial surveillance of the area, and upon arrival aerial surveillance of the area, and upon arrival of a US Army UH-1 at 0810 hours, a search-and-destroy operation was initiated. A sweep was made with an Air Police line formed perpendicular to the west perimeter road, moving north from the 051 gate to the large drainage canal north of the Ba Queo Receiver Site. The line of this sweep extended eastward 500 meters from the west perimeter road. Small arms fire was encountered by the sweep force in the heavily overgrown area east of the Ba Queo Receiver Site, but the NCO on the scene broke off contact and halted the sweep due to uncertainty as to the orgin of the fire and the possibility that he might direct fire on US Army personnel believed to be in the area. CSC could not immediately confirm the precise location of the Army personnel. When the sweep was resumed Air Police drew no further fire and found the area from which fire had come to be devoid of VC and US Army personnel. Renewed VC activity in the area of the sweep was to be encountered later that day, 4 December 1966; and all personnel involved in both morning and evening encounters are reasonably certain that the VC were in the area covered by the sweep at the time. Since they were able to completely conceal themselves despite a careful combing of the entire area in full daylight highlights the need to eliminate the almost unpenetrable cover afforded by the dense vegetation on this portion of the air base. Since they held their fire and allowed the Air Police to search around them free of harm illustrates convincingly the confidence the VC have in their ability to use available cover and concealment to best advantage.

T WAS 4 December 1966, at which time the total security force reverted from RELIEVED 1966 emergency to normal security posture. The last security force reverted from the continued until approximately 0920 hours 1100 - 1 WHS it appeared that remaining VC elements had been contained, Air Police PLONE IN THAT forces on the south side of the 07/25 runway were reduced to afford those Air Police scheduled to relieve the night shift an opportunity to eat and rest for several hours. Manning was still a first



resources in and around the aircraft parking area and observation of the suspected area of hidden VC.

- b. Phase II 1000 hours 4 Dec to 0630 hours 5 Dec 1966.
- (1) After 0920 hours 4 December 1966, activity on Tan Son Nhut Air Base was normal until approximately 2021 hours when Alpha Post K-34 detected a VC crossing his post and opened fire. This sentry dog post had been the scene of much of the morning's activities, and one on which several VC had been killed or captured, as well as the center of the area swept after sunrise. The post also covered the entry-escape route. The combination of these factors, with a confirmed VC sighting at 2021, indicated the start of an attempt by the remaining VC to withdraw by their original route. Simultaneously, the Primary Quick Reaction Team (QRT) was dispatched to cover the escape route and the squadron Security Reaction Plan was implemented. Additional Quick Reaction Forces (QRF's) were formed rapidly and dispatched to pre-selected lines from which they could halt attempts at escape by the VC. Beginning at 2100 hours a search-and-destroy operation was organized to sweep the affected area which extended from the west perimeter road to the north to the new runway construction on the south and from the drainage canal on the east to the inner perimeter road on the west. (c-8) The VC entry-escape route ran through this area. At 2145 hours two VC were taken under fire and killed by Air Police QRF personnel moving southward. A third previously undetected VC opened fire and was also killed. A lull in flare illumination at this time caused a momentary loss of contact with the VC. When flares ON FOOT, and again lighted the area, the sweep was resumed and a fourth VC was locally sighted and killed. This latter VC fell forward still clasping a hand with ammor grenade from which the pin had been pulled. When his body was checked and Hand- by EOD personnel, the grenade rolled from his hand, the handle released and the primer fuze activated. An EOD man immediately seized the missing grenade and threw it a safe distance away where it are missed Mest grenade and threw it a safe distance away where it exploded. Of the Gatian.

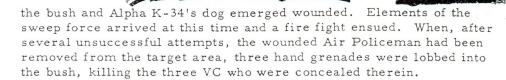
(2) One hour later at 2245, and approximately 275 meters due south, another element of the sweep force searching a nearly impenetrable thicket detected a VC when it had approached to within 1 meter of his hiding place. Simultaneously the VC opened fire which was returned by Air Police killing the VC.

(3) At 0029 hours 5 December the sentry dog team posted on Alpha K-34 detected and fired on a VC moving through that post. The VC dove into a bush pursued by the sentry dog. A second sentry dog team moved into the bush and discovered three VC. The handler withdrew at this time and was shot three times in the shoulder before he had covered more than 5 meters. Small arms fire was heard from



I Was IN

this area



- (4) The search operations continued with negative results until 0630 hours 5 December when they were terminated. A total of eight VC were killed in action and one Air Policeman was wounded in action. There is no doubt that the VC killed in this phase were survivors of the force that had penetrated the base perimeter in the early hours of 4 December. Their close proximity to the penetration route and the absence of any aggressive action unless detected clearly suggests that excape through the original entry point was their primary objective.
- (5) One factor which at times seriously hampered conduct of this operation was the inadequacy of illumination. Because of the large number of Air Police committed and the nature of the terrain which is extremely rough, intersected by deep drainage canals and high mounds of earth and covered in extensive areas by dense growths of brush and elephant grass, adequate illumination was absolutely essential to identification of friendly forces and to detection of concealed VC. The moon on 5 December was in the last quarter when it rose at 0021 hours and thus afforded no assistance. Flare illumination was clearly required, and was requested of the 33rd Group, VNAF. Extreme difficulty was experienced in obtaining this requested support, perhaps due to a committment of this unit to support ARVN operations off-base. Until C-47 flare ships of the 4th Air Commando Squadron, USAF, arrived over the base at 0030 hours, 95% of available illumination was provided by large quantities of M-127 illumination slap flares employed by the Air Police.
- (6) Equally serious and immediately detrimental to the conduct of the search-and-destroy operation was the interference of certain VNAF personnel with the established plan of operation. Despite the explicit instructions and prior objections of the Air Police officer on the scene, at 2220 hours, 5 December 1966, a contingent of VNAF personnel entered the area of the planned sweep in front of the Air Police lines. This obstructed the Air Police field of fire and prevented Air Police from continuing the operation which had already resulted in several firefights and five (5) VC KIA. At 2228 hours a second VNAF group also entered the search area in front of the Air Police positions. The presence of these groups halted all progress for approximately forty-five minutes. In addition, the actions of these two VNAF groups jeopardized the safety of Air Policemen around them for any contact



between VNAF and VC forces would have brought fire on one element or another of the sweep force regardless of the direction of fire. Both VNAF groups proceeded to search the area for VC bodies, which they stripped of all equipment and personal belongings, collecting all discarded equipment and material they encountered. Quite apart from the interference with the Air Police operation, this activity on the part of the Vietnamese deprived US forces of the opportunity to gain intelligence information from enemy bodies or equipment. The loss of this intelligence data has proven to be of considerable importance, as indicated by direct communication between Air Police Officers and US intelligence agencies. This interference with the Air Police was the most serious of a number of similar actions by VNAF personnel. VC killed or captured by Air Police were consistently stripped of all identification and equipment, although no Vietnamese support was evident during the killing and capturing. In those cases where VC bodies may have been booby-trapped or were loaded with sensitive munitions, scavenging was delayed until after USAF EOD personnel had secured grenades and demolition charges, and cleared weapons near the bodies.

- c. Phase III 0825 1030, 7 December 1966.
- (1) With the termination of the Phase II search-and-destroy operation, a force of 130 Air Police was assembled to conduct a repeat search of the west area of the base, taking advantage of the daylight. This search continued from 0825 until 1153 without incident or contact with the enemy.
- (2) At 1153 an Air Police observer posted on a 120 foot water tower located in the southwest portion of the base observed a VC moving south of the Old Bomb Dump area in the North Central part of the base. The sweep line was halted near this location and the primary Alpha SAT was dispatched to investigate. The observer directed the SAT to the VC position where he was located, engaged and killed. The search continued until 1340 without further contact or incident. Throughout the search all holes, gullys, culverts and bushes, were thoroughly checked. When a positive check was impractical or impossible, small arms fire and hand grenades were used to flush out possible VC.
- (3) At approximately 1400, 6 December 1966, US Army personnel entered their assigned ammunition bunker at the most southern point in the Old Bomb Dump and discovered satchel charges against the side of a conex box containing high explosives. (See Atch 6) An EOD team responded and cleared the area, removing the satchel charge which consisted of two blocks of plastic explosives bound together and covered with a plastic covering. In addition, two wooden boxes of high explosives and 9 1/2 blocks of Composition 3, all US manufactured, were found



secreted in the weeds adjacent to the same cones body. December at about 1030 a satchel charge was found in the next bunker to the northwest. In both instances the timer had not been set nor had the detonater been placed in the explosives. (9-3) The two revetments affected by these two findings of satchel charges are adjacent to the revetments blasted at 0230, 4 December 1966 (reference para 10a(14)).

- (4) Analysis of these events suggest that at least one, three-man VC team broke off from the 2nd Platoon following their entry to the base and proceeded to the bomb dump area with instructions to destroy three bunkers. The fact that no satchel charges of any kind were found on dead or captured VC tends to support this theory. There appears to be no satisfactory explanation, however, for the failure of the VC to detonate the second and third satchel charges.
- (5) This was the concluding incident related to the VC attack of 4 December 1966.





12. (S) (Gp-3) RESULTS:

- a. US and Free World Forces.
 - (1) Killed in action.
 - (a) USAF 3
 - (b) ARVN# 3 3
 - (2) Missing in action. None
 - (3) Wounded in action.
 - (a) USAF 15
 - (b) ARVN 4
 - (4) Aircraft destroyed. None
 - (5) Aircraft damaged.
 - (a) Major (Requiring depot level maintenance)

Type Se:	rial Number	Man Hours	Repair Cost	Sub-totall Total
RF-101C 56	6 - 08 0	1,900	\$ 4,200.00	
CH-3C 62	12579	135	10,500.00	
RC-47 42	-93166	600	2,680.00	\$17,380.00
	(b) Minor			
RF-4C 64	-1044	144	820.00	
RF-101C 5	6-182	288	6,755.00	5 - 15 % J. **
RF-101C 5	6-071	22	2,800.00	
CH-3C 65	-5695	16	3, 150.00	
CH-3C 62	-5692	150	1,400.00	
RB-57 55	-4237	366	11,500.00	
RB-57 55	-4264	96	2,800.00	
	-1046	24	5,250.00	
20				I6567-0

		1			
RC-47	43-48933	18	1,560.00		
RC-47	44-76668	16	3,500.00	•	
RC-47	43-48767	11	2,800.00	\$42,335.00	(Air Force) \$59,715.00
NC-121J	131641	40	120.00*		
NC-121J	131655	10	30.00*		
SP-2H	140452	85	255.00*		
SP-2H	147968	85	255.00*		
SP-2H	141236	85	255.00*		
SP-2H	141249	1,200	3,600.00*	_	(USN) \$ 4,515.00
	TOTALS	5,290			\$64,230.00

(*NOTE: Dollar computation of damaged US Navy aircraft is based upon estimated number of man-hours to repair only and does not include cost of materials). (SOURCE: p, v, w)

- (6) Facilities/material damaged/destroyed.
 - (a) MD-3 Engine Driven Generator Set, 100% destroyed.Cost factor is \$15,650.00 (w)
 - (b) MA-1A Gas Turbine Compressor, 15% destroyed. 144 man hours to repair at a cost of \$1,025.00 (w)
 - (c) Air Police Vehicles.
 - 1. 65B8560, 11/2 ton, 65% destroyed
 - 2. 65B8525, Pickup, 40% destroyed
 - 3. 65B8552, 11/2 ton, 100% destroyed
 - 4. 65B8509, Pickup, 100% destroyed
 - 5. 65B8512, Pickup, 100% destroyed
 - (d) Weapons (Air Police).
 - 1. M-16, 5.56MM, Rifle 100% damage



I6567-038



- 2. M-16, 5.56MM, Rifle Repairable
- 3. M-16, 5.56MM, Rifle Repairable
- 4. M-16, 5.56MM, Rifle Unknown
- (e) Radios (Air Police).
 - One (1) Motorola U43 HHT 1130E mobile radio unit with accessories. 100% destroyed.
 - 2. One (1) Motorola Portable Handy-Talkie.
- (f) Miscellaneous.
 - 1. One (1) each pair Cannon Binoculars, 7 X 50.
 - 2. Very minor Structural damage from shock.

NOTE: Items in Para (d) $\underline{4}$, (e) $\underline{2}$, and (f) $\underline{1}$ were lost in action.

b. Enemy.

- (1) Killed in action (KBG, TAN SON NHUT AB).
 - 28
- (2) Captured. 4 (Wounded. 3)
- (3) Equipment and Materiel losses.
 - (a). Weapons.

Number	Type
8	SKS Carbines (Chicom Ttype 56, 7.62MM)
5	AK Submachine guns (Chicom type 56, 7.62 MM assualt rifle)
4	VC Type B-40 Anti-tank grenade launchers (Chicom type 56, USSR Model)
2	US M-79 grenade launchers
1	CKC Rifle
1	Machine Pistol (Chicom type 50, 7.62MM)



(b) Munitions

Number	Type
1	VC type 7Kg Directional Mine (Claymore)
10	VC type B-40 Anti-tank grenades (Chicom type 56, USSR Model RPG-2) with eight
	propellant charges.
10	Bangalore Torpedoes
6	US 60MM Mortar rounds with 5 fuses
2	Chicom RKG-3T Anti-tank grenades (USSR Model RKG-3)
2	Chicom type 1/M-33 Frag grenades
5	Chicom type M-32 Frag grenades
41	VC Homemade blast grenades (Resembles OD Pork and Beans Can)
44	VC Stick type blast grenades
35	US 40MM rifle grenades (All removed from VC KIA)
2	US M-26 Frag grenades (dud fired)
1	US Mk III offensive grenade (Removed from VC KIA)
6	9MM small arms clips-approximately 40 rds/clip
41	7.62 small arms clips-approximately 30 rds/clip
130	9MM loose rounds (approximated)
260	8.62MM loose rounds (approximated)
	(SOURCE: g and t)

