



A quality production of 52 pages including eight maps/sketches, nine photographs and a description of all enemy weapons, D Company weapons and support weapons used during the battle.

LONG TAN: A REAPPRAISAL

The Battle of Long Tan on 18 August 1966 was the greatest challenge faced by an Australian infantry company during the Vietnam War. Despite suffering significant casualties, D Company, 6 Battalion Royal Australian Regiment, succeeded in holding off a regimental-sized enemy Main Force unit, comprising both North Vietnamese Army and Viet Cong elements.

This reappraisal draws on several new sources including recently declassified Signals Intelligence records and translations of Vietnamese unit histories. Initially, the Australian commanders failed to act on obvious signs of an imminent large-scale enemy operation. Then, arguably the Vietnamese succeeded in luring D Company out of the defensive Australian base at Nui Dat and into the Long Tan rubber plantation where an ambush was setup.

D Company responded with skilful and courageous infantry tactics but was largely saved by the intervention of artillery in what was the largest Australian artillery barrage since WWII. In falling light and heavy rain, victory was assured by the arrival of Australian reinforcements including M113 armoured personnel carriers. This allowed the battlefield to be secured against further attack.

The author, Fred Fairhead, is a Vietnam Veteran with experience as a 6RAR company commander. He retired from the Australian Army in 1985 as a Lieutenant Colonel.

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