

- 0. BROKEN ARROW - Story Preface
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The ferocious, smoke-filled battle at LZ X-Ray continued for days.

On the second day, November 15th, the PAVN attacked before dawn. The stillness of morning had been a temporary event. C Company of the 1st Bn, 7th Cav suffered most from the assault. They were soon engaged in hand-to-hand combat.

The Battalion's Forward Air Controller sent a coded radio message:

Broken Arrow, Broken Arrow.

It was a request that all available fighter bombers come to the aid of "an American unit in grave danger of being overrun." Meanwhile, from Landing Zone (LZ) Falcon continued round the clock.

Against nearly insurmountable odds, the men of C Company held their ground. The cost of battle, however, was horrendous. All officers of Charlie Company were dead. In total, 42 men were killed-in-action (KIA) and 20 more wounded (WIA). A mere 49 were unhurt.

But the ultimate price was not just paid by Americans. Bodies of North Vietnamese soldiers (including one inspected by Lt. Col. Moore) and their weapons were everywhere. Many others were taken prisoner and, chained together, were evacuated out of the battle on American helicopters.

One of the planes called in to provide air support dropped napalm in the wrong place. "Friendly fire" killed and wounded more Americans. Joe Galloway, who witnessed the fire bombing, took photographs of the area and the wounded.

The men of the 1st/7th were exhausted and needed reinforcements. Most had little or no sleep for 50 hours. They sustained huge casualties: 79 KIA and 121 WIA.

Relieved by their sister unit (the 2nd Battalion, 7th Cavalry), Hal Moore and his 1st/7th soldiers flew back to the airfield at Camp Holloway. LZ X-Ray was left in the capable hands of the 2nd Bn, 5th Cav as well as the relief soldiers.

It was a good thing the 2nd/7th troopers were more rested than the 1st/7th. Ordered to leave X-Ray - so en route B-52s could drop eight hundred 500-pound bombs at the landing zone - the soldiers began their march to Landing Zone Albany.

What they were about to face was unimaginable.

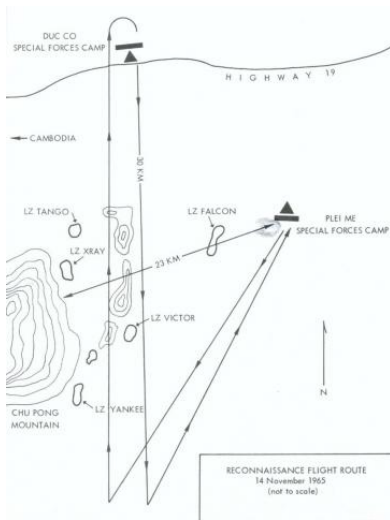
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See Learning Tasks for this story online at:

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Media Stream



Landing Zone Falcon - Ia Drang Battle

Image online, courtesy the U.S. Army Center of Military History.

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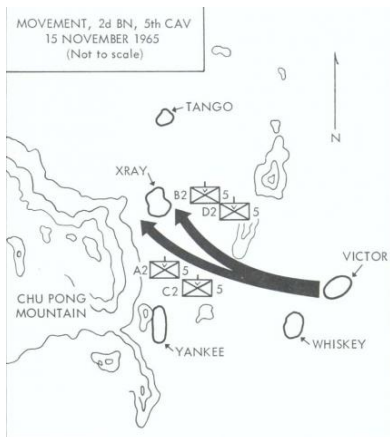
Inspecting Enemy Bodies - Ia Drang Battle

Image online, courtesy the U.S. Army Center of Military History.

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Detail of Troop Movement - Ia Drang Battle

Image online, courtesy the U.S. Army Center of Military History.

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