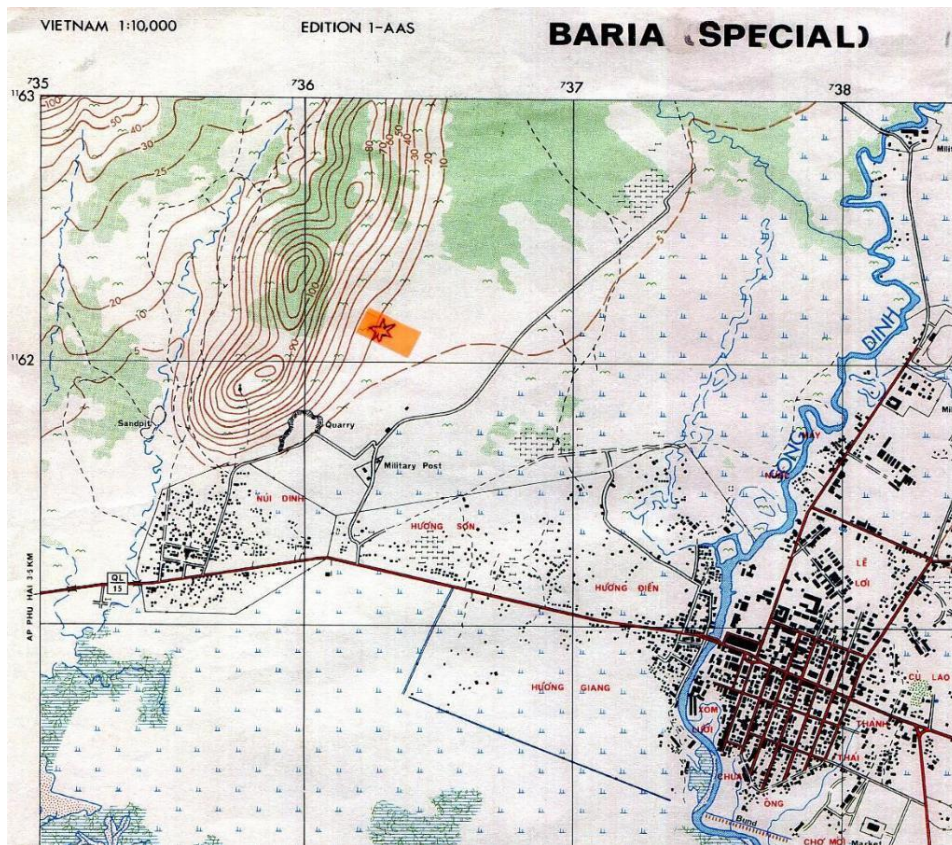


## Việt Cộng Capture 184 ARVN Soldiers Outside Bà Rịa Town – 9 December 1966



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Four months after the Battle of Long Tân, the 274<sup>th</sup> VC Regiment struck a significant blow against Army of the Republic of Vietnam (ARVN) elements on 9 December 1966 when the VC attacked ARVN recruits at the firing range camp of the Vạn Kiếp National Training Centre (VKNTC) on the north-western outskirts of the Phước Tuy Province capital – Bà Rịa Town (Phước Lễ), vicinity YS 363621 - see the notation on the map; ie about nine kilometres south-west of the 1 ATF base at Núi Đất. The major VKNTC itself – with a capacity of 9,000 trainees, was located on the eastern outskirts of Bà Rịa Town - adjacent to the Bà Rịa Airfield (YS402618). ARVN recruits would routinely march westwards through Bà Rịa to their training locations north-west of the Town near Núi Dinh (Dinh Mountain).

According to the 5th VC Division History (2005), this attack at the Vạn Kiếp firing range camp was conducted by the 2nd Battalion of the 274th Regiment and the local force “Châu Đức Company” at 1700hrs on 18 November [sic] 1966 – resulting in “**187** (sic) **ARVN captured** and 71 weapons of various types seized.” The 1 ATF Commander’s Diary (C 2118) for December 1966 summarised: “The VC carried out a most successful raid on 9th December when 265 Bn of 274 Regt attacked ARVN recruits on a rifle range at Baria. ARVN losses were 174 missing believed captured and considerable quantities of weapons and equipment lost.”

A few weeks late - in February 1967, the VC attack and capture of the ARVN personnel was summarised – with some additional detail, in a 6RAR report:

*“Two ARVN Coys on night infiltration course near a camp (ARVN) were attacked and the camp was overrun. ARVN had their weapons stacked and only had blank ammunition. A 57mm RCL opened the attack by the VC who were only 6ft away from the perimeter wire. The shot hit the Command Post – killing the commander and knocking out the radio set. The main attack was from the east, but the enemy had approached from – and withdrawn to, the north. A 12.7mm weapon was also used. Captured by the VC were 79 rifles. Friendly forces’ losses were 11 killed in action, 27 wounded in action, 184 missing in action, three children killed in action, and two civilians wounded in action.”*

A complimentary five-page research note reviewing that little-known ARVN defeat in Phước Tuy – including “SIGINT limitations”, is available from Ernie Chamberlain at [ernestchris@tpg.com.au](mailto:ernestchris@tpg.com.au) .