

TROPIC LIGHTNING NEWS



Ready To Strike.... Anywhere, Anytime

Vol 3 No. 36

TROPIC LIGHTNING NEWS

September 2, 1968

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Aerial Port Cuts Service Snarls, Traffic Tie-Ups

CU CHI - The Cu Chi Aerial Port Detachment, main transportation facility for the 25th Infantry Division, has grown from a small airfield operations center to one of the busiest in Vietnam.

According to Air Force Master Sergeant William Pierce, "When I came here the airfield was handling about 4,000 people a month; then it went up to 7,000, and now the figure is over 18,000 and still climbing."

Pierce, a resident of Charlestown, W. Va., and NCOIC of the aerial port, also mentioned that the port now handles over 10 tons of cargo a month including mail.

"One of the major reasons for the increase in movement of personnel and equipment is the 101st Air Cavalry Division," said Pierce. "We handle four battalions of the cavalrymen every month plus all their equipment."

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POWER PUNCH - Supporting engaged ground troops of the 1st Battalion (Mechanized), 5th Infantry, with pinpoint accuracy, these gunners of Battery C, 7th Battalion, 11th Artillery, fire from Fire Support Base Rawlins III between Tay Ninh and Dau Tieng. Sergeant Leo Fox, gunner; Sergeant David King, assistant gunner; and Privates First Class William Stapleton and Frank J. Serio, Jr., man the 105mm howitzer firing salvo after salvo of artillery against the enemy. (PHOTO BY SP4 KARL GUTKNECHT)

VC ASSAULTS FAIL

FSB Buell Forces Crush Enemy Drive

1ST BDE - The apparent lull in the Vietnam conflict ended for units of the 25th Infantry Division and Vietnamese forces in Tay Ninh Province. Base camps, fire support locations and numerous outposts came under heavy enemy fire as a determined Viet Cong force attempted to overrun U.S. positions.

The attacks triggered a two-day battle filled with fierce fighting as 179 Viet Cong soldiers were killed near Tay Ninh City before pulling back late Monday. The attacks were apparently aimed at denying U.S. and Vietnamese control of the city itself.

Initial action was triggered as an ambush patrol from Delta Company, 2d Battalion, 27th Infantry spotted an estimated enemy battalion three miles northeast of Tay Ninh City. As they let the Viet Cong force deliberately pass their ambush site they engaged the enemy's rear elements while coordinated artillery fire blasted away at the front of the column. Five VC were killed in the action, two rifles and one pistol captured.

At Fire Support Base Buell II, only three and a half miles to the northwest, base personnel were alerted by the ambush and were aware of the imminent danger. They were ready when at 1:23 am, 75 to 100 rounds of 82mm mortar and 12 rounds of 107mm rocket fire crashed into their perimeter.

Moving under the cover of the rockets and mortars, an estimated enemy battalion made a vicious ground attack on the base, hitting first in the direction of the 7th Battalion, 11th Artillery. During the following four-hour battle, the fire base was hit from the southeast and northwest.

Small arms and sustained automatic weapons fire plagued the staunch U.S. defenders. The 105mm howitzers from Bravo Battery, 7th Battalion, 11th Artillery and the 155mm guns of Alpha Battery, 3d Battalion, 13th Artillery retaliated with point blank fire. Elements from the 3d Battalion, 22d Infantry, 4th Battalion (Mechanized), 23d Infantry and 2d Battalion 34th Armor delivered a devastating fire into the VC as they pushed their attack.

As the elements of the 9th NVA Division attacked from the shelter of a nearby banana plantation to the northwest, Base Coordinator Lieutenant Colonel Alexander H. Hunt, battalion commander of the 3d Battalion, 22d Infantry directed the artillerymen to use direct fire on the approaching enemy.

[\(Continued, on Back Page\)](#)

Regulars Wage Two-Front War, Line And CA Combine Victories

3D BDE - Infantrymen of the 3d Battalion, 22d Infantry, are waging and winning a two front war in South Vietnam.

The 3d Brigade Regulars have complemented military victories in the field with spiritual conquests in the hearts and minds of the people.

An example of this dual victory strategy is seen in recent operations conducted by the infantrymen in Nhi Binh district a few miles north of Saigon.

While line companies were carrying out highly successful small unit operations against Viet Cong and North Vietnamese forces, capturing weapons and destroying several vast bunker complexes, the battalion civic action and medical operations sections were hard at work on the other front.

"We must have treated about 1,000 patients during just the 20 days that I worked on the project," said First Lieutenant Richard Booth of Anaconda, Mont., medical operations assistant.

During the course of their work, the battalion medics diagnosed half a dozen cases of hepatitis, effected several cures of pneumonia, and treated numerous skin infections and minor disorders.

"The two most touching cases came to us in the form of the cutest eight year old girl you will ever see and an 85 year old woman who was both blind and deaf," noted Booth.

"The little girl had second and third degree burns on all of her fingers because of a home remedy used to attempt to clear up what started as a mild skin infection. She cried herself to sleep each day during her seven day treatment, but was really quite brave."

2/22 Facelifts School

3D BDE - The shady Vietnamese village of Dong Tam in Go Vap district north of Saigon will have a freshly painted school building this fall, thanks to infantrymen of the 2d Battalion (Mechanized), 22d Infantry.

The six-room stucco and brick structure has seen heavy use, and was damaged during the Tet fighting in February.

The task of giving the building a long needed face-lifting was undertaken by First Lieutenant Kenneth R. Templeman of Greencastle, Ind., civil affairs officer of the 3d Brigade, 25th Infantry Division battalion.

Armed with paintbrush and whitewash, Templeman, his driver, Specialist 4 Bobby Lamb of Memphis, Tenn., and his Vietnamese interpreter, An, along with the villagers themselves, have set to work on the structure, whitewashing the walls and painting the woodwork.

When the work is completed, the 1,600 children of Dong Tam will have bright school rooms and an improved environment for learning.

Dragons Discover Captives

1ST BDE - Three ARVN soldiers held prisoner by the Viet Cong were set free and an anti-aircraft machine gun captured by the 2nd Battalion, 14th Infantry.

Company C, of the Golden Dragon battalion made an air assault and proceeded on a search and clear mission 10 miles south of Cu Chi.

After engaging a suspicious looking bunker and hootch with recon fire, the troopers were astounded to see three Vietnamese dressed as ARVN soldiers suddenly emerge from the hootch.

"One of the men, whose hands were tied, spoke good English and said 40 Viet Cong in the area had captured them and left them behind," stated Specialist 4 Peter Logoluso of Santa Maria, Calif.

Branches and leaves forming an L-shaped cover attracted the attention of Specialist 4 Haden Stewart. "At first,

I thought it was a fighting position; I was sure surprised by finding a .51 caliber and the other weapons," added Stewart of Arar, Ala.

The cache included one .51 caliber machine gun with anti-aircraft mount and spare barrel; two light machine guns; one 57mm recoilless rifle; one 82 mortar tube and base plate; and 1,000 rounds of .51 caliber ammunition.

Decorated

ARMY COMMENDATION MEDAL

1LT Gaylord B. Herman, Co F, 50th Inf
 SFC George Singleton, Co B, 25th Med Bn
 SSG Robert E. Dailey, C Btry, 3d Bn, 13th Arty
 SSG William W. Viniard, Co B, 725th Maint Bn
 SGT Stanford Wilcox, Co A, 125th Sig Bn
 SGT Douglas L. Morris, 25th Admin Co
 SGT Gerald M. O'Neil, 25th Admin Co
 SGT George G. Jewett, Co B, 4th Bn, 9th Inf
 SGT Garry E. Cochran, Co B, 125th Sig Bn
 SP5 William L. Marshall, C Trp, 3d Sgdn, 4th Cav
 SP5 Claude E. Grooms, C Btry, 1st Bn, 8th Arty
 SP5 James P. Edwards, HHC, 2d Bn, 14th Inf
 SP5 Joseph A. Isham, HHT, 3d Sqdn, 4th Cav
 SP5 Hollis O. Mc Brayer, HHT, 3d Sqdn, 4th Cav
 SP5 Verne V. Charbonneau, HHB, 7th Bn, 11th Arty
 SGT Leon Bailey, Co F, 50th Inf
 SGT Ira B. House, 25th Admin Co
 SGT Lee A. Kliner, 25th Admin Co
 SP5 Robin M. Dehnert, 25th Admin Co
 SP5 Wayne Graves, HHC, 2d Bn, 12th Inf
 SP5 Roger G. Salisbury, HHC, 4th Bn (Mech), 23d Inf
 SP5 Fernando G. Sanchez, Co C, 725th Maint Bn
 SP5 Alan R. Trombley, 25th Admin Co
 SP5 Robert W. Wine, 25th Admin Co
 SP5 John W. C. Pullen, HHD, 25th Avn Bn
 SP4 Clyde P. Myruski HHC, 1st Bn (Mech), 5th Inf
 SP4 Walter J. Panick, Co B, 1st Bn (Mech), 5th Inf
 SP4 Edward P. Guthecht, HHC, 2d Bn, 14th Inf
 SP4 James E. Hall, Co D, 2d Bn, 14th Inf
 SP4 Richard A. Kryszak, Co D, 2d Bn, 14th Inf
 SP4 Kenneth D. Landy, Co A, 2d Bn, 14th Inf
 SP4 Kenneth Maples, Co D, 2d Bn, 14th Inf
 SP4 Larry S. Mc Cormick, Co D, 2d Bn, 14th Inf
 SP4 William Mc Lean, Co A, 2d Bn, 14th Inf
 SP4 Ronnie J. Pate, HHC, 2d Bn, 14th Inf
 SP4 William D. Ranes, Co D, 2d Bn, 14th Inf
 SP4 Charles R. Reed, HHC, 2d Bn, 14th Inf
 SP4 Ernest M. Shorter, HHC, 2d Bn, 14th Inf
 SP4 Robert St. Angela, HHC, 2d Bn, 14th Inf
 SP4 Joseph M. Tomaselli, Co D, 2d Bn, 14th Inf
 SP4 Claude J. Turner, Co C, 2d Bn, 14th Inf
 SP4 Thomas M. Winston, Jr., Co C, 2d Bn, 14th Inf
 SP4 Martin J. Williams, HHC, 2d Bn, 14th Inf
 SP4 Ronald A. Wisniewski, Co C, 2d Bn, 14th Inf
 SP4 Jonathan B. Yule, Co C, 2d Bn, 14th Inf
 SP4 Ronald R. Berg, Co B, 4th Bn, 9th Inf

SP4 Dee W. Cook, Co C, 4th Bn (Mech), 23d Inf
 SP4 Russell G. Greenlee, Co C, 4th Bn (Mech), 23d Inf
 SP4 Phillip P. Haga, Co C, 4th Bn (Mech), 23d Inf
 SP4 Van D. Johnson, Co C, 4th Bn (Mech), 23d Inf
 SP4 Juan R. Rodriguez-Colon, Co C, 4th Bn (Mech), 23d Inf
 SP4 Wilmer E. Black, Co C, 4th Bn (Mech), 23d Inf
 SP4 Carl Hallmark, B Btry, 1st Bn, 8th Arty
 CPL Jesse R. Harris, B Btry, 1st Bn, 8th Arty
 SP4 Lee E. Jones, B Btry, 1st Bn, 8th Arty
 SP4 Lynned R. Moiser, B Btry, 1st Bn, 8th Arty
 CPL Valen W. Stein, B Btry, 1st Bn, 8th Arty
 SP4 Anthony Giannettino, C Btry, 1st Bn, 8th Arty
 SP4 John Ramsey, C Btry, 3d Bn, 13th Arty
 SP4 Roger A. Eshelman, D Btry, 3d Bn, 13th Arty
 SP4 Terry D. Geller, HHC, 2d Bde
 SP4 Gary L. Kinnaman, Co A, 25th Sup & Trans
 SP4 Ralph D. Lee, 25th Admin Co
 SP4 David K. Seibert, Hq & Co A, 25th Med Bn
 SP4 Bobby L. Turner, C Btry, 3d Bn, 13th Arty
 SP4 Carl L. Vandercook, D Btry, 3d Bn, 13th Arty
 SP4 Troy W. Oldham, Co B, 25th Sup & Trans
 SP4 Salvatore Peluso, 25th Admin Co
 SP4 Harold E. Sears, 25th Admin Co
 SP4 James Currie, Co A, 4th Bn (Mech), 23d Inf
 SP4 Hugh W. Davis, Co A, 4th Bn (Mech), 23d Inf
 SP4 Thomas F. Donohue, Co A, 4th Bn (Mech), 23d Inf
 SP4 Bennie C. Epps, Co A, 4th Bn (Mech), 23d Inf
 SP4 David A. Fulks, Co A, 4th Bn (Mech), 23d Inf
 SP4 James Giles, Co A, 4th Bn (Mech), 23d Inf
 SP4 William K. Haas, HHC, 1st Bn (Mech), 5th Inf
 SP4 Angelo L. Martinez, Co A, 4th Bn (Mech), 23d Inf
 SP4 James R. Sietsema, Co A, 4th Bn (Mech), 23d Inf
 SP4 Johnnie D. Sims, HHC, 4th Bn (Mech), 23d Inf
 SP4 Edward Skelton, Co A, 4th Bn (Mech), 23d Inf
 SP4 Blaine S. Staples, Co A, 4th Bn (Mech), 23d Inf
 SP4 William J. Swain, Co A, 4th Bn (Mech), 23d Inf
 SP4 Allen Triplett, Co A, 4th Bn (Mech), 23d Inf
 SP4 John K. Weil, Co A, 4th Bn (Mech), 23d Inf
 SP4 Earl F. Wenschhof, HHC, 1st Bn (Mech), 5th Inf
 SP4 Luther R. Williams, Co A, 4th Bn (Mech), 23d Inf
 SP4 David N. Kauth, Co A, 25th Supply & Trans Bn
 SP4 Norman R. Belanger, Co B, 125th Sig Bn
 SP4 John A. Edwards, Co C, 25th Med Bn
 SP4 Ernest L. Martin, 25th Admin Co
 SP4 John J. Stern, 25th Admin Co
 SP4 Glenn E. Badgett, Co F, 50th Inf

VA Assistance

Centers Aid Returning Vets

WASHINGTON - More than 25,000 Vietnam veterans have received assistance and council on veterans benefits at Veterans Assistance Centers (VACs) since they were first established four months ago.

Veterans Administrator William Driver said the 21 centers scattered across the country are giving veterans the "personal attention and counsel" President Johnson sought in establishing the program in February.

Nearly 6200 veterans have been assisted in obtaining education and training benefits, Driver said in summarizing VAC activities through May 31.

Jobs in both government and private industry have been found for nearly 3000 of the interviewed veterans who specifically sought employment assistance, Driver said.

Approximately 7000 applications for home loans, compensation and pensions, hospital care and other non-employment and non-education benefits have been handled.

The first 10 VACs were opened February 19, 10 were opened in March, and the 21st was opened in Dallas April 22.

Staffed on a full-time basis by representatives of the Civil Service Commission and the Department of Labor as well as the Veterans Administration, each VAC has also been able to call on specialists from the Department of Justice, Health, Education and Welfare, and Housing and Urban Development, the Small Business Administration, and other government agencies and service organizations concerned with veterans benefits.

These representatives have been available to assist all returning Vietnam veterans, Driver said. Special effort is being directed at helping "educationally disadvantaged veterans" to find jobs and further their education.

Of the 25,000 veterans who have received counseling from VAC, nearly 7000 are educationally disadvantaged, including more than half of those who obtained jobs, and nearly one-third of the veterans assisted in obtaining education and training benefits.

Driver emphasized that while there is not a VAC in every major city offering multi-agency, one-stop service on veterans benefits, the VA has installations in every state.

Weekly Drill Out For Vets

The Pentagon announced that military reservists who have served two years' active duty generally will be exempt from the weekly drills in the Ready Reserve.

"In no event," announced the Pentagon, "shall a man who has served in Vietnam be involuntarily assigned to a Ready Reserve unit for purposes of weekly drills."

The policy may mean the release of thousands of men currently required to attend weekly meetings of the Active Reserve or National Guard Units.

Normally, after a man completes his two or three years' active duty, depending on whether he was drafted or volunteered for the Army, he spends three years in the Active Guard, then sits out one year of stand-by Reserve.

This announced policy is not a blanket exemption. The Pentagon said that some Reservists may be held in Ready Reserve units, if "after diligent recruiting, it is determined that a vacancy cannot be otherwise filled."

At the same time, the Pentagon said, the new policy does not mean that men exempt from making weekly drills will not be required to attend the usual two-week summer active duty camps.

The policy was laid down in a memorandum to the services by Deputy Secretary of Defense, Cyrus Vance.

Letter To Finance

Dear Sir:

My husband went away and left me with 30 fox terrier hounds. I raised all these 30 dogs myself, waited on them, ran after them, gave them shelter, fed and watered them with no income.

These dogs went hungry at times, chewed the rugs, curtains, my dresses and stockings they were so hungry. Will you see what you can do about getting me and them an allotment?

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Chieu Hoi Directs Dragons to Weapons Cache

1ST BDE - Information from a Chieu Hoi paid off with an unexpected bonus for elements of the 2d Battalion, 14th Infantry, when they found not only a large Viet Cong munitions cache, but also a recruiting officer for the National Liberation Front.

The cache - including more than 25,000 rounds of small arms ammunition; 86 RPG rocket grenade rounds; 22, 82mm mortar rounds; and a 122mm rocket warhead - was found by Companies A and C six miles north of Duc Hoa after a Chieu Hoi had given the location.

As the companies moved across the open fields, an escorting helicopter gunship spotted movement to their front. The element nearest the location was Company A, which sent a platoon to check out the area.

"I was walking down a dike when I saw a man off to one side hiding in the brush," said Specialist 4 George Timmons. "I pointed my M-16 at him and he came out with his hands up," added Timmons of Sumter, N.C.

Through interrogation it was learned that the man had infiltrated into the area to coordinate future activities with the local leaders.

A more thorough search of the area by the two companies turned up two other suspects including one man who said he was "the local head of the Viet Cong farmers' association," whose main job is believed to be coordination of food supplies with troop movements.

A night defensive position was set up. Early the next morning, mine sweeping teams were airlifted in, and the task of uncovering the hidden supplies began.

With the help of the villagers, men on the mine detectors quickly located ammunition, RPG rounds, and other objects buried in rice paddy dikes.

After extracting 40 rounds of RPG-7 cached in a dike, Specialist 4 Louie Curiel of Azusa, Calif., an engineer attached to Company C, exclaimed: "I didn't think so much could be hidden here. It makes me wonder about all those dikes I've walked on."



WATERPROOFED RPG'S - Specialist 4 Louie Curiel of Azusa, Calif., hands an RPG-7 round to Private First Class Gary Smith of Milner, Ga. The 2d Battalion, 14th Infantrymen found 86 rounds wrapped in waterproof plastic and buried in rice paddy dikes near Duc Hoa.

LONG REACH - A Golden Dragon reaches deep into a hole to recover Viet Cong supplies buried near a Vietnamese village six miles north of Duc Hoa.



**Story And Photos
By
SP4 Larry Weist**



WET HUNT - Four heads and a foot are all that is visible as men of the 2d Battalion, 14th Infantry, probe a pond for enemy munitions. Their efforts were rewarded with a sizeable cache of mortar fuzes.

Cu Chi and Oriental Express

Transportation Office Keeps Div Supplied

CU CHI - Moving the vast amount of supplies and equipment needed to keep the 25th Infantry Division combat ready is a difficult task.

More than 17,000 tons are transported on the Cu Chi and Oriental express each month from the main supply points at Long Binh and Saigon to their final destinations at Cu Chi, Tay Ninh and Dau Tieng base camps.

For the Division Transportation Office, the work begins when individual units request that vehicles be placed in one of the five daily convoys. A member of the transportation office staff takes down the bumper number, organization and phone number of the section calling. This list is then checked prior to the convoy's departure.

Specialist 6 Lemuel M. Metcalf of Lawton, Okla., or Master Sergeant Morris J. Mills of Detroit, Mich., also check each of the more than 200 individual vehicles, to ensure that each has a spare tire, jack, tow chain and lug wrench. The equipment check insures the speedy repair of the vehicles and thus minimum vulnerability to ambush in case of accidental break down along the way.

In addition to checking the individual units the transportation office schedules a wrecker to accompany each convoy; coordinates aerial reconnaissance of the road with D Troop, 3d Squadron, 4th Cavalry; and arranges for Military Police security of the convoys.

Trucks are loaded with every conceivable item needed by combat soldiers. Refrigerated vans, known as reefers, are loaded with meats, fruits and other rations; tankers are filled with diesel, aviation and truck fuel; and five-ton trucks stacked with artillery rounds, small arms ammunition, lumber, tents, mattresses and other equipment.

"The drivers of these trucks are doing one of the most thankless jobs in the Army," declared Major Thomas Gravette of Cleveland, Ohio, division transportation officer. "They put in a long, hard day and very seldom do they receive a pat on the back for a job well done."

As soon as road clearance is received the convoy rolls out of Saigon and heads for the 25th Division's base Camp at Cu Chi. Here some of the supplies are dropped off. The rest are taken to Tay Ninh over a rutted road that jars every bone in the driver's body.

At Tay Ninh the vehicles are unloaded and the drivers prepare for the 3 1/2-hour trip back to Cu Chi and then on to Saigon and Long Binh.

4/23 Jab Nets Big Rice Haul

1st BDE - Elements of the 25th Infantry Division have denied the enemy another meal. While on a reconnaissance in force mission six miles southeast of Tay Ninh, the 4th Battalion (Mechanized), 23d Infantry, commanded by Lieutenant Colonel Clifford C. Neilson of Moblie, Ala., latched on to a 2,000-pound rice cache. Sweeping through an abandoned rubber plantation, B Company made the initial find. Sergeant Thomas R. Hall of Columbia, S.C., recalled: "I saw a fresh trail leading into the brush so I decided to check it out. There it was, sandbags filled with polished rice."

The cache was camouflaged so it could not be seen from the air. Fresh grass was loosely scattered on top of the sandbags leaving the sides completely exposed. Further investigation revealed several 100-pound sacks of rice hurriedly hidden along a side of the ditch.

Private First Class Michael J. Carraher of Wellsville, Ohio, surmised, "I suppose Charlie hid the rice very quickly here last night and perhaps wanted to pick it up tonight. He'll have to go hungry because we've got it now."

The cache was loaded on "Mojo," an armored personnel carrier that usually hauls caches for B Company, and sent to Tay Ninh where it will be distributed to the civilian population under the Civic Action program.

179 VC Slain In Tay Ninh Area...

(Continued From Page 1)

The VC attempted to penetrate the perimeter of the fire support base, and met a wall of flame and steel from the hard-working artillerymen. Within seconds the 155mm howitzers of Alpha Battery, 3d Battalion, 13th Artillery (The Clan), under Captain Clifford Crittsinger, joined the 105s of the threatened Bravo Battery under Captain Robert A. Snyder in presenting tremendous firepower to the stunned enemy.

Lieutenant Colonel Hunt used flare ships and called U.S. Air Force tactical air strikes within 150 meters of the perimeter. Helicopter gunships from Delta Troop, 3d Squadron, 4th Cavalry and Bravo Troop, 25th Aviation Battalion continually strafed the enemy with machine gun fire and rocket attacks. They were assisted by the 187th Assault Helicopter Company, under the operational control of the 25th Infantry Division.

As the shattered enemy assault forces began to retreat, the 7th Battalion, 11th Arty followed their movement with continuous fire from their 105mm howitzers. Twenty minutes later, another assault force attacked from the southeast. This time The Clan was directly faced with the charging enemy.

Leveling their self-propelled howitzers, the artillerymen once again fired round upon round directly into the enemy's front. Howitzer crews of both batteries continued to man their pieces despite small arms fire and automatic weapons fire throughout the attack.

Heavy fighting continued until 4:40am when the enemy started retreating after suffering heavy casualties from the combined Infantry, Artillery and Armor team at the fire support base. Eighty-three enemy were killed while American forces suffered only one killed and 26 wounded. Over 700 rounds of artillery alone were expended.

"It was a real joint effort. The artillery batteries here did a real fine job as did the tank's direct fire," commented Major Jerome Johnson, the 3d Bn, 22nd Infantry Operations Officer from Green Bay, Wis.

Meanwhile, Tay Ninh base camp was attacked at 1:15am during the enemy operation but little damage resulted from the five 82mm mortar rounds and the nineteen 107mm rockets hurled inside the perimeter.

A second target for the coordinated enemy advance was the communications center atop the 3200 foot Nui Ba Den mountain near the fire support base. The small signal relay station received fire from small arms, automatic weapons and RPG rounds, beginning at 2am. The sharp conflict continued until dawn. At one point, four bunkers were occupied by enemy troops. Ten Viet Cong were killed while eight Americans died and 23 were wounded.

At 7:20 am Monday, Bravo Company, 1st Battalion (Mechanized), 5th Infantry made contact with prowling enemy units three and a half miles due west of Dau Tieng base camp. Two VC companies unleashed small arms, automatic weapons and RPG fire on the infantrymen.

Throughout the day, the Bobcats aggressively fought the enemy, proving too strong for them by 4:30 pm when

the VC broke contact. Forty-two Viet Cong bodies were found.

During the coordinated attacks, Tay Ninh City was hit as the VC mortared the district headquarters in an attempt to move into the city itself. An unknown size enemy force was reported in the city.

As the Regional Force and Popular Force units in the area, assisted by the 51st ARVN Ranger Battalion moved in to rout the VC, it became evident that the enemy could not hold their quarters and the Long Hoa market district, fled to the southwest at night after two firefights between 5 and 8 o'clock at night.

Early Monday morning, the Vietnamese soldiers including elements of the 4th Battalion, 23d Infantry and 2d Battalion, 34th Armor who maintained blocking positions in the southern city limits, swept the city. The sweep confirmed that the enemy had left the city itself. During the two days of fighting around the city, these units killed 14 VC while tactical air strikes accounted for another nine enemy killed.

During the actions, 16 AK-47 rifles, two RPG-7 launchers and 32 rounds, 11 RPG-2 launchers and 84 rounds, six .51 caliber machine guns and one .30 caliber with two barrels, one M-16, one radio, 214 hand grenades and 40 rifle grenades, 4,000 rounds of AK-47 ammunition and twenty-one 57mm recoilless rifle rounds and 10 pounds of documents were captured. Thirteen enemy soldiers were detained for questioning.

Grenade Dud Round Saves GI

3D BDE - In a rice paddy six miles northwest of Saigon, Private First Class Lawrence McCloud experienced a moment of truth he will never forget.

McCloud, of Greenville, Miss., was one of 15 infantrymen of Charlie Company, 2d Battalion, 12th Infantry, on a night ambush patrol in the muddy water of the rice paddy.

Shortly after dark, patrol leader Sergeant Michael J. Granum of Portland, Ore., reported silhouettes moving on dikes about 150 meters from his 3d Brigade platoon's position.

Soon the G.I.s began receiving small arms fire.

From behind a two foot embankment the Warriors watched as five dark shapes rose against the night sky. McCloud saw three of the enemy converging on his position.

"One of them was carrying a loaded RPG rocket grenade launcher on his shoulder. I was fixin' to shoot, but I could see that RPG pointing right through me," he said.

McCloud waited anxiously until the three V.C. were beside his position, only 15 feet away, and opened up.

The figure with the rocket launcher whirled and squeezed the trigger.

"I thought that was it," recounted McCloud. "But nothing happened."

Silence followed as the G.I.s held their ground. They heard movement periodically during the night, but couldn't see anything.

At sun-up McCloud ventured from his slippery position behind the dike and found the anti-tank weapon, still loaded, laying half buried in the mud. A dent in the primer of its propellant charge indicated that the round had been a dud.

No Americans were injured in the action, and no enemy dead were found.

READY TO GO - Men of the 2d Battalion, 27th Infantry Wolfhounds prepare supplies for airlift by the waiting Chinook to the battalion's forward location.
(PHOTO BY SP4 BILL CLEVINGER)



Aerial Port Moves 18,000...

(Continued From Page 1)

To handle this heavy traffic load which includes replacement, R&R, and DEROS flights an average of 30 sorties a day are scheduled by the five members of the Cu Chi detachment.

When a C-7A Caribou, workhorse of the aerial port, takes off with a load of replacements or mail for Tay Ninh or Dau Tieng there are usually a few transients aboard.

Through a unique flight manifest system the 8th Aerial Port Detachment schedules personnel traveling from base camp to base camp on a first-come-first-served basis.

"This standby system is an innovation brought about by the heavy travel load we have to process through here each day," explained Pierce. "It works beautifully," he added.

The 535th Airlift Squadron, based at Vung Tau, provides the aircraft for the aerial port and their support of the 25th Division is enthusiastic due to the efforts of the aerial port members.

Instead of having the aircraft return to Vung Tau to refuel, Pierce requisitioned oil and fuel to service the Caribou at Cu Chi, thus relieving the crew of making extra flights just to service the airplane.

The post exchange erected a snack bar at the air terminal, and consequently the Cu Chi airfield is a favorite stopping place for the pilots.

"All this," says Pierce, "helps to cement friendly relations between the aircrews and our office. Over lunch we can explain the requirements for the afternoon and in most cases the pilots will go out of their way to help us when they understand our situation."

Not content with moving 18,000 men a month the Aerial Port Detachment is working for 20,000 and the use of a second aircraft to provide the Tropic Lightning troopers with the best air transportation service possible.



WORKHORSE - Tropic Lightning troops load onto an Air Force C-7A Caribou for transport from Cu Chi to Tay Ninh. (PHOTO BY SP4 RICHARD A. PATTERSON)

Regular-Type Ambush Nets Seven-Ton Cache

3D BDE - Infantrymen of the 3d Brigade killed three Viet Cong and seized more than 13,000 lbs of enemy supplies in a night ambush two miles west of Dau Tieng.

A platoon of Charlie Company, 3d Battalion, 22d Infantry ambushed an enemy convoy consisting of 10 oxcarts along a road in the Ben Cui rubber plantation.

Among the captured supplies were 3,500 lbs of rice; 2,800 lbs of peanuts; 3,500 lbs of salt; 500 lbs of tea and 2,800 lbs of peas. Also taken were 1700 cans of milk and 200 cartons of cigarettes.

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