

TROPIC LIGHTNING NEWS



Ready To Strike.... Anywhere, Anytime

Vol 3 No. 37

TROPIC LIGHTNING NEWS

September 9, 1968

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ENEMY ATTACKS SMASHED 900 VC KILLED IN WEEK

On Sunday, August 18, the enemy came out of hiding to launch a series of attacks on 25th Infantry Division and Vietnamese forces in Tay Ninh Province. He hit an impenetrable wall of fire power - the Tropic Lightning Division.

The enemy was unable to take any of his apparent objectives. His losses were staggering: more than 900 enemy were killed by the 25th in seven days following the first clash. Certainly his plans - whatever they may have been - were foiled.

The 25th knew he was coming; the question was when. Infantry and artillery units had been deployed astride key avenues of approach to Tay Ninh City.

When the enemy struck, the 25th was ready. Determined infantrymen, cannoneers and tankers stopped the enemy's main thrust into Tay Ninh City and then set to finding and destroying the VC and NVA as they tried to move through the rice paddies and rubber plantations around Tay Ninh City and Dau Tieng.

The fierce fighting began around Tay Ninh City. Late Saturday night, two companies from the 2d Battalion, 27th Infantry, set up an ambush along Highway 13 leading into Tay Ninh City from the northwest. The ambush was sprung on the rear element of an estimated 300 NVA as they moved down the road. Five enemy were killed in the short engagement.

About four hours later, the 1st Brigade's base camp to the west of Tay Ninh City received mortars and rockets. The attack was apparently a diversion for simultaneous attacks on two 25th Division fire support bases, a mountain top signal facility, and a special forces camp.

See related pictures and stories on pages 4, 5, 6, 7, and 8.

Fire Support Base Buell four miles north of Tay Ninh City at approximately 1:30 a.m. Sunday started receiving mortar and rocket fire. Under cover of the barrage, the enemy launched a ground attack. Infantrymen and artillerymen fought for three hours; and when it was over, 83 enemy had been killed.

At the same time, the Viet Cong and North Vietnamese attacked a U.S. Special Forces and Vietnamese Combined Civilian Defense Group camp at Katum in War Zone C. There, the enemy's cost was 59 killed.

The signal facility atop 3,200 foot Nui Ba Den mountain also came under ground and mortar attack. Ten VC were killed as the Americans repulsed the enemy.

Sunday morning, an unknown sized enemy force was reported in Tay Ninh City. They had set several fires in civilian areas of the city. The Tropic Lightning Division deployed forces in blocking positions around the city and astride key exfiltration routes as Vietnamese forces moved through the city flushing out the enemy.

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

Ambush Patrol Fights Back, Slays 56 in Fierce Battle

2D BDE - An ambush patrol of the 2d Battalion, 27th Infantry, supported by gunships and artillery, killed 56 Viet Cong in a vicious fight one mile northwest of the 25th Infantry Division's base camp at Tay Ninh. At one point the beleaguered soldiers of Company A burned their clothes and boots to signal helicopter gunships.

The enemy dead were found the next morning, some as close as five meters from the U.S. position.

"Everything went all right until about 1:30 when one of our machine gun positions spotted six VC," explained Sergeant Paul R. Lambers, 26, of Holland, Mich.

They fired on what they thought were only six VC and from that moment on the fighting was hot and heavy.

"Within about 30 seconds after our initial burst we started receiving heavy automatic weapons fire and also very heavy RPG fire. . . the RPG's were coming in at the rate of 6 of 10 a minute," Lambers said.

The Tropic Lightning soldiers responded quickly to the enemy assault and returned a withering volume of fire. At one stage of the battle it seemed as if they would overrun the tiny perimeter, but they were repulsed.

"There were two rows of VC



25TH DIVISION BATTLE ACTION NEAR TAY NINH AND DAU TIENG.

approximately 30 meters apart. We could see them coming at us in a horseshoe formation that covered three fourths of our perimeter," recalled Private First Class Roger P. Rost, a radio-telephone operator from Calument, Mich.

During the enemy assaults a machine gun position was hit with a hand grenade wounding the patrol leader and Lambers assumed command.

Hearing the helicopter gunships circling overhead but not firing, Lambers was puzzled. Locating a radio, he learned that the infantrymen had to mark their positions before the gunships could safely engage the enemy.

The task of marking the friendly position was given to Specialist 4 Kenneth M. Cobb, from Tulsa, Okla.

"The only way we had to mark our location was with fire," Cobb said. "But it was a little bit hard running around looking for fire wood. We burned everything we had, our clothes, boots, everything."

During the battle, gunships, artillery, and an AC-47 Dragonship assisted the besieged infantrymen.

The Wolfhounds also captured 18 AK-50's, 3 AK-47's, 5 light machine guns, 2 RPG launchers, and 11 drums of ammunition.

Decorated

ARMY COMMENDATION MEDAL FOR HEROISM

CPT Gary L. Nies, HHB, 1st Bn, 8th Arty
 CPT Michael A. Mitchell, Co B, 2nd Bn, 22nd Inf
 CPT David M. Wahlbom, A Btry, 1st Bn, 8th Arty
 1LT Eugene Forster, A Btry, 1st Bn, 8th Arty
 2LT Raymond C. Robinson, Jr., Co A, 2d Bn, 27th Inf
 2LT William T. Orendorff, Co C, 4th Bn, 9th Inf
 SFC George J. Fedun Jr., HHC, 2nd Bde
 SFC Albert J. White, Co A, 4th Bn, 9th Inf
 SSG Richard W. Beedle, HHB, 2nd Bn, 77th Arty
 SSG Chester L. Eastep, Co A, 4th Bn, 9th Inf
 SSG Adam M. Flores, C Btry, 7th Bn, 11th Arty
 SSG Michael, Jenkins, A Btry, 1st Bn, 8th Arty
 SGT Robert R. Bache, Co A, 1st Bn, 5th Inf
 SGT Frank T. Goins, Co A, 1st Bn, 5th Inf
 SGT Earl L. Hughes, B Btry, 7th Bn, 11th Arty
 SGT Ralph G. Venie Jr., Co A, 1st Bn, 27th Inf
 SGT Edward Q. Bell II, C Trp, 3d Sqdn, 4th Cav
 SGT Daniel W. Quinlan, Co C, 1st Bn, 27th Inf
 SP5 Edward T. Lyons, Co B, 25th Avn Bn
 SP5 John E. Deardeuff, B Trp, 3d Sqdn, 4th Cav
 SP5 Wulde W. Schiurring, A Trp, 3d Sqdn, 4th Cav
 SP5 Jerry F. Ayers, HHB, 2nd Bn, 77th Arty
 CPL Valen W. Stein, B Btry, 1st Bn, 8th Arty
 SP5 Leonard B. Holt, Jr., HHB, 2d Bn, 77th Arty
 SP4 James A. Hall III, Co A, 1st Bn, 27th Inf
 SP4 Charles D. Magnuson, B Trp, 3d Sqdn, 4th Cav
 SP4 Harold C. Wright, B Trp, 3d Sqdn, 4th Cav
 SP4 John Bizer, B Trp, 3d Sqdn, 4th Cav
 SP4 Robert F. Brescia, Co B, 25th Avn Bn
 SP4 Kenneth F. Becker, Co A, 1st Bn, 5th Inf
 SP4 Moy Ming N., B Trp, 3d Sqdn, 4th Cav
 SP4 Kenneth W. Mardesty, B Trp, 3d Sqdn, 4th Cav
 SP4 Terry E. Bess, Co B, 4th Bn, 9th Inf
 SP4 John A. Sullivan, Co B, 3d Bn, 22d Inf
 SP4 Gary B. Winroth, Co B, 4th Bn, 9th Inf
 SP4 Ronald J. Sitarski, Co B, 4th Bn, 9th Inf
 SP4 Theo Gruffin, Co B, 3d Bn, 22d Inf

SP4 Terry Wagner, Co D, 2d Bn, 14th Inf
 SP4 Andre Fontenelle, Co B, 3d Sqdn, 4th Cav
 SP4 Leroy King, Co B, 3d Bn, 22d Inf
 SP4 Donnie R. Chadrick, Co B, 3d Bn, 22d Inf
 SP4 Joseph Pusateri, Co D, 2d Bn, 14th Inf
 SP4 Allan L. Yenney, Co D, 2d Bn, 14th Inf
 SP4 David G. Snyder, Co B, 3d En, 22d Inf
 SP4 Robert L. Fischer, HHT, 3d Sqdn, 4th Cav
 SP4 Stephen C. Pierce, HHT, 3d Sqdn, 4th Cav
 SP4 Robert L. Shead, Co B, 3d Bn, 22d Inf
 SP4 Robert Rossow, HHC, 2d Bn, 22d Inf
 SP4 William G. Thompson, 25th MP Co
 SP4 Richard A. John, C Trp, 3d Sqdn, 4th Cav
 SP4 Lee E. Staton, Co C, 1st Bn, 27th Inf
 SP4 David L. Kemp, HHB, 2d Bn, 77th Arty
 SP4 Delbert R.-Roberts, Co A, 2d Bn, 22d Inf
 SP4 Michael W. Ring, HHB, 2d Bn, 77th Arty
 SP4 Richard E. Bigham, Co F, 50th Inf
 SP4 William H. Bonner, Co F, 50th Inf
 SP4 Frank K. Dasher, Co F, 50th Inf
 SP4 Francis M. Esposito, Co F, 50th Inf
 SP4 Stephen R. Gallo, Co F, 50th Inf
 SP4 Peter J. Husting Co F, 50th Inf
 SP4 Kenneth R. Olowin, Co F, 50th Inf
 SP4 Lewis L. Norton, Co F, 50th Inf
 SP4 Norvell D. Daniels, C Trp, 3d Sqdn, 4th Cav
 SP4 Albert J. Porter, C Trp, 3d Sqdn, 4th Cav
 SP4 Carlos Alverio, Co D, 2d Bn, 14th Inf
 SP4 Andy J. Booth, HHC, 2d Bn, 14th Inf
 SP4 Eddie M. Bowman, HHC, 2d Bn, 14th Inf
 SP4 Frederick L. Bracy, Co D, 2d Bn, 14th Inf
 SP4 Ronnie E. Cavins, Co D, 2d Bn, 14th Inf
 SP4 Ronnie Cichowski, HHC, 2d Bn, 14th Inf
 SP4 Dennis L. Ehnes, Co D, 2d Bn, 14th Inf
 PFC John P. MacQuillim, C Btry, 3d Bn, 13th Arty
 PFC Kenneth D. Wlodarczyk, Co C, 1st Bn, 27th Inf
 PFC David J. Dunn, Co C, 1st Bn, 27th Inf

SP4 Steven Macdonald, Co B, 3d Bn, 22d Inf
SP4 Larry E. Funderburg, Co, B, 3d Bn, 22d Inf
SP4 Jerry Green, Co B, 3d Bn, 22d Inf
SP4 Robert E. Smith, Co B, 3d Bn, 22d Inf
SP4 Ronald T. Theel, Co B, 3d Bn, 22d Inf
SP4 Richard D. Pendell, HHT, 3d Sgdn, 4th Cav
SP4 Alfredo Dungca, Co D, 2d Bn, 14th Inf
SP4 Joachim Halualani, Co D, 2d Bn, 14th Inf
SP4 Robert E. Glennon, Co D, 2d Bn, 14th Inf

PFC Arthur L. Cook, Co B, 3d Bn, 22d Inf
PFC David W. Bailey, Co B, 3d Bn, 22d Inf
PFC Robert Best, Co B, 3d Bn, 22d Inf
PFC Preston L. Johnson, Co D, 2d Bn, 14th Inf
PFC Roger D. Whaley, Co B, 3d Bn, 22d Inf
PFC Michael Wilhelm, Co B, 3d Bn, 22d Inf
PFC Eliseo Cuellar, Co B, 3d Bn, 22d Inf
PFC Tommy P. McKamey, Co B, 3d Bn, 22d Inf
PFC Carl R. Duncan, 25th MP Co

Senior NCO Promotions Centrally Handled By '69

Department of Army will begin centrally promoting noncommissioned officers to grades E-8 and E-9 in 1969. The new procedure will roughly parallel the system currently used to promote officers to field grades, and will insure an equitable and uniform procedure for promotion on an Army-wide basis.

The system will eliminate the requirement for a position vacancy to exist in the NCO's current unit of assignment as a prerequisite for promotion and will insure that the best qualified NCO's are advanced to grades E-8 and E-9.

Soldiers in pay grade E-8 who had promotion list status on 31 July 1968 will be considered by the first DA promotion board for E-9. Those in pay grade E-7 having promotion list status on 30 September will comprise those initially considered by the promotion board.

For the initial two zones, commanders who maintain promotion lists to the grades of E-8 and E-9 have been directed to forward through channels to DA the names of individuals in their commands who have promotion list status, together with the following items:

- A new Enlisted Efficiency Report.

- A copy of the individual's Form 20.

- Copies of letters of commendation and appreciation.

- Special recommendations for promotion, if appropriate.

- Copies of other items in the individual's 201 file that would have a bearing on his selection for promotion to include the Enlisted Efficiency Report that formed the basis for current promotion list status.

- A completed Personnel Data Sheet (Figure 7-3, Chapter 7, AR 600-200).

After all the names are received from commanders, DA will publish a circular listing all the individuals who are to be considered for promotion. The promotion board for E-9 will meet in October and the board for E-8, in December.

About January 1, 1969, another circular will be published announcing the NCO's selected for promotion to E-9 during the following six months. The list of E-8 promotions will appear about 1 March.

In the interim period, commanders will be authorized to promote from existing lists to fill vacancies, provided a promotion allocation is received. Commanders are not permitted to add to promotion lists for grades E-8 and E-9 after the cut-off dates, except that newly assigned NCO's who had promotion list status in their old units will be integrated into the list of their new unit.

Commanders must notify Department of the Army when a man is promoted so that his name can be removed from the list of NCO's being considered by the DA board. Once promotions to E-8 and E-9 begin to be made from the published lists, local promotion lists will no longer be maintained for these grades.

Those considered by the DA board and are not selected, will not retain their previous promotion list status. However, they will be considered by future boards along with all others competing for promotion. Subsequent boards will be convened as required and consideration for promotion will be based upon the criteria of AR 600-200, such as time in grade and time in service.

Red Cross H&W Plan Eases Family Worries

Normal communications between servicemen and their families are essential to the maintenance of strong family ties during periods of separation.

When a serious breakdown in family communications occurs, or when normal communications are not adequate to meet the needs of a particular case, the Red Cross Field Director will obtain a Health and Welfare Report in an effort to alleviate a serviceman's anxiety and to restore normal family communications.

A Red Cross Field Director realizes that when families are separated, communications sometimes break down. This results in misunderstandings and added complications in the problems of daily living.

In the military, a serviceman's efficiency is often seriously impaired by lack of communication with his family. Red Cross case histories contain numerous instances of family tragedies due to the failure of a serviceman or his family to take the time to write.

So, if you have loved ones, prove it to them and to yourself by writing frequently and unselfishly. If your family neglects to write to you, don't stop writing to them. This will only make the situation worse.

Red Cross realizes that letter-writing is a difficult task for many. Remember, even inexpensive postcards can go a long way to preserve and strengthen family ties - if sent frequently.

Tell your family about some of your pleasant experiences from daily or weekend life. Tell them about movies you have seen or books you have read or are reading. Write about the life and culture of the country in which you are stationed.

Use the library if you're not informed. Assure your family that you're being well taken care of by the military. Above all assure them of your good health and of your love and affection. Do not magnify your personal problems and cause your family unnecessary worry.

If you go on TDY or special duty away from your unit for extended periods of time, or if you transfer to a new unit, be sure to notify your family. Be sure to fill out postal locator cards with your old and new units.

If you are not able to establish contact with your family, or if you're unable to obtain needed information directly, the Red Cross Field Director will help you.

For further information, please contact the Field Office of the American Red Cross.

Contract Provides Choppers

The U.S. Army Aviation Materiel Command awarded a \$60 million plus contract to Bell Aerospace Corp. for the production of 900 UH-1H Iroquois helicopters commonly called "Hueys."

Work will be done at Hurst, Texas on the \$60,767,550 fixed-price letter contract, which calls for the delivery of the aircraft in 1970.

In a separate order, the corporation was awarded a \$1,700,385 contract for rotary wing blades for the UH-1. Bell Helicopter Co., a subsidiary of Bell Aerospace Corp., also received a \$2,076,740 contract to supply the Army with tail boom assemblies for the UH-1 helicopters. (ANF)

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Triple Deuce Factory Trained, Streetfighting Style Perfected

3D BDE - Intensive training for house-to-house fighting within an urban area is being conducted by men of the 2d Battalion (Mechanized), 22d Infantry.

The 3d Brigade infantrymen are determined to be thoroughly schooled in the arts of urban infighting in the event that the Viet Cong and North Vietnamese attempt a replay of their abortive Tet offensive.

The scene of the training is a bombed out portion of the Vinatexco factory, a huge textile plant on the outskirts of Saigon above Tan Son Nhut air base. Daily classes on the problems and techniques of urban fighting are staged for the men of the Triple Deuce.

The training includes lessons in how to clear buildings of the enemy, how to employ special weapons with the battalion's integral armored personnel carriers, and study of enemy urban tactics. The infantrymen also are taught how to supervise the evacuation of civilian refugees from the combat zone.

For the men of the battalion, the problems of urban fighting present a radical change from the desolate jungle and rubber plantations near their home base at Dau Tieng in War Zone C.

In the blackened Vinatexco factory, which served as an enemy stronghold during the Tet fighting, the infantrymen are able to operate in the partially destroyed buildings just as they would in actual urban fighting. They use grappling hooks and other special gear, much of which was fabricated by the battalion's maintenance section.

"If the time ever comes that my men must fight in the city, they will be trained and ready," said Lieutenant Colonel King J. Coffman, Bn. Co. "They will know what has to be done, and will do it well."



CANDLE POWER - Before blowing a Viet Cong bunker found five miles east of Cu Chi, Private First Class Robert Maciag of Detroit, Mich., inspects it using a candle he discovered in the bunker. Maciag, a combat engineer from the 65th Engineer Battalion, is attached to Company A, 2d Battalion, 14th Infantry. (PHOTO BY PFC TOM QUINN)

Dragons Net Rockets And Two Enemy

1ST BDE - A Hoi Chanh's help paid off as a rifle company captured forty-one 107 millimeter rockets cached by Viet Cong in a village 10 miles south of Cu Chi.

Company C, 2d Battalion, 14th Infantry was helilifted in after intelligence sources indicated a sizable cache of rockets was in the vicinity. Accompanying the Golden Dragons was an intelligence officer and a Hoi Chanh with knowledge of Viet Cong activities in the area.

Company C moved into the village, and the Hoi Chanh immediately pointed out two suspected Viet Cong. When interrogated, one of the suspects gave the location of several rockets.

"We went to the location; and sure enough, there they were," said Private First Class Gary Shannon of Newville, Pa.

The men quickly formed a human chain and passed 17 rockets to a dike where a helicopter landed and extracted them to Cu Chi base camp. The other suspect led the Tropic Lightning troopers to another site where probing by the Dragons in five feet of water revealed a larger find of 24 rockets.

Close by, mine sweeping teams discovered 18 claymore mines and 300 pounds of TNT.

Search Of Enemy Body Uncovers Lost Wallet

1ST BDE - "It's amazing -I never thought I'd see them again," remarked Sergeant Rex D. Cobb of Des Arc, Ark., when his personal papers and photographs were returned to him.

They had been found on the body of a Viet Cong by a Vietnamese soldier from the ARVN 5th Infantry Division. A month before and nine miles from where the VC was killed, Cobb's wallet had been stolen.

Cobb had returned to the 4th Battalion, 9th Infantry, forward base following a tiring night ambush patrol nine miles northwest of Saigon. The soldier laid his wet clothing and wallet on a rice paddy dike to dry out and then tried to get some sleep.

During the morning, a water buffalo from a nearby village strayed into the camp, and several villagers were allowed in the area to retrieve it. One of them was believed to have stolen Cobb's wallet.

One month later and nine miles to the north, elements of the ARVN 1st Battalion, 9th Infantry, made contact with a company from the Viet Cong Go-Mon battalion. Following the fight, an ARVN soldier was searching the four VC killed when he found Cobb's papers. Through the U.S. advisor to the unit, he returned them to Cobb.

According to Cobb, \$25 and the wallet itself were missing, but all his identification cards, personal and photos were intact. "I'd replaced everything but the photos," said Cobb, "I'm sure glad to get them back."

Ambush Works Twice On VC

2D BDE - Wolfhounds from the 2d Battalion, 27th Infantry sprang their ambush twice only 30 minutes after setting up.

Platoon Sergeant Stephen Hanson of Upland, Calif., said: "We got a call from our company's night location saying that one of the listening posts had spotted 20 VC 100 meters from them and coming our way."

"We really opened the ambush up twice," reported Sergeant Roosevelt Quinney, a squad leader for the 2d Platoon of Company D. "One of the NVA soldiers started to pick up a claymore which forced us to spring the ambush early. The second time was when the enemy reformed and made an attempt to get their dead and wounded," the Louisville, Ky., soldier continued.

Specialist 4 Larry Kern from Folkston, Ga., a machine gunner, triggered the initial ambush. "After I detonated my claymore I went to my machine gun. I used up 900 rounds," he said.

The following morning two dead NVA soldiers were found. The Wolfhounds used scout dogs from the combat tracker teams in an extensive search of the area and turned up one AK-50 assault rifle, two NVA explorer helmets, one NVA gas mask, two ammo pouches and three 30-round clips for an AK-50.

Truck Riding Watermen Keeps The Taps Topped

CU CHI - If you consumed 10 gallons of water a day every day, it would take you more than 10 years to use the quantity of water delivered in a 24-hour period by the water squad of Company B, 25th Supply & Transportation (S & T) Battalion.

According to Captain John R. Moran of Beverly, Mass., "Water is supplied to any unit on the Cu Chi base camp that does not have organic water-hauling capabilities. This includes the Replacement Center, Military Police Company, and the PX snack bar." In all, there are 54 activities that get water from S & T.

"To accomplish this we employ two 5,000-gallon tankers and make deliveries around the clock," stated Staff Sergeant John Person, NCOIC of the water delivery squad.

"We also have a 1,200 gallon truck that we use in places where the big trucks cannot maneuver," added Person, of Trenton, N.J.

Bobcat Gets Hung Up On Wire, Untripped Trap Fails To Blow

2D BDE - People get "hung up" on a lot of things, but a booby trap trip wire is perhaps one of the worst.

Sergeant Odell Posley, 21, of Hodges, S.C., had such a hang up while on a reconnaissance-in-force mission in the Michelin Rubber Plantation near Dau Tieng.

The 1st Battalion (Mechanized), 5th Infantry had been in sporadic contact with snipers and mortared several times the three days before. Ordnance experts of the 65th Engineer Battalion attached to the Bobcats had been blowing bunkers and booby traps as they progressed through the dense, uneven terrain of the plantation.

Walking point on the right flank, Posley suddenly yelled, "Booby trap! Everyone get back!" Sergeant Terance Brady of Denver, Colo., carefully moved toward Posley's position.

"Posley was just standing there like a statue with his hands out to his sides," said Brady. "I asked him if he could see what it was and he said, "don't come any closer I'm hung up on it!"

The taut trip wire had caught on the lower right hand pocket of his fatigue shirt. "I knew I couldn't stand there all day," Posley said, "so I very gently - and I mean very gently - picked the trip wire off my button, expecting it to blow any second."

Throwing himself as far away as he could, and covering his head as he hit the ground, Posley waited for the explosion, but nothing happened. Further investigation turned up a grenade with a half-pulled pin, and the engineers blew it in place.

Taking an offered cigarette with shaking hands, Posley said: "Man, I just aged ten years."

"GET BACK! I'M HUNG UP!" - Sergeant Odell Posley of Hodges, S.C., motions for the others to keep away as he suddenly discovers an almost invisible booby trap trip wire caught on his button.



Inf. Sweep Catches NVA Mortarmen

2D BDE - Sweeping through the early morning mist of the Michelin Rubber Plantation four miles northeast of Dau Tieng, the 1st Battalion (Mechanized), 5th Infantry, got an NVA mortar squad's day off to a bad start.

Pointman, Sergeant Phillip McFarland of Vidor, Tex., was crossing a deep gully when he noticed a fish trap in a stream. Before he could cross to the other side, heavy small arms fire erupted from the dense underbrush to his front.

Quickly reacting to the commands of Alpha Company commander, Captain Donald Schiltz of Big Fork, Mont., the men got on line and charged through the gully laying down a heavy base of fire.

The first to break through the underbrush, McFarland stated, "Charlie had gone, but his hammocks were still swinging and his chop-chop was cooking on the fire with gear all over the place."

Captured were several 60mm mortar fuses, a sight and various other mortar equipment along with several pounds of documents and propaganda literature. The Bobcats also found AK-47 ammo, various clothing articles, web gear and other personal gear and cooking utensils.

Bobcats Slay 182 In 1 ½ Hour Battle



Bobcat APC'S advance on line through the Ben Cui Rubber Plantation

2D BDE - When the smoke lifted, the 25th Infantry Division's 1st Battalion (Mechanized), 5th Infantry, counted 182 enemy killed in the fierce battle two miles southwest of Dau Tieng.

The action began shortly before noon and lasted only 1½ hours as an unknown size force of Viet Cong and North Vietnamese regulars met their match in the Ben Cui Rubber Plantation.

The Bobcats, working with the 3d Brigade's Combined Reconnaissance-Intelligence Platoon (CRIP), were sweeping through the rubber plantation when they began receiving small arms, mortar and rocket fire.

Using the on-line tactic the men and their armored personnel carriers (APCs) moved forward and encountered the enemy head on. The combined, mech-CRIP force firmly stood their ground as the enemy attempted a brazen human wave assault.

With crushed determination and heavy losses, the enemy began to retreat, but the Bobcats pulled out in fire-and-maneuver pursuit burning up several .50 caliber machine gun barrels in the process.

Dangerously low on ammunition, the Bobcats pulled back as tactical air strikes, gunships and artillery continued to pound the enemy.

After a short, yet fiercely fought battle, the 25th Division force returned to Dau Tieng leaving 182 enemy dead.

**PHOTOGRAPHS BY
SP4 Don Mousseau**



**AN INFANTRYMAN LAYS DOWN A FIELD OF FIRE
WHILE HIS BUDDY CHARGES.**

REACHING HANDS STEADY A LITTER TO AID A WOUNDED BUDDY.



A CHARGING SOLDIER GIVES FIRE SUPPORT TO A GRENADIER.



A DEADLY MACHINEGUN TEAM BLAZES AWAY.



POSITIONED TROOPERS DISH OUT A WALL OF HOT LEAD TO CHARGING VC.

A GRIMACING CHAPLAIN TURNS TOWARD A CALL FOR HELP.



MECH, ARTY CRUSH ENEMY CHARGE

1ST BDE - Infantrymen and artillerymen of the 25th Division fought valiantly to halt a determined enemy ground attack on Fire Support Base Rawlins, four miles east of Tay Ninh City. The enemy lost at least 25 killed in their ill-fated attempt to break through the perimeter.

Having been in contact with the Viet Cong all afternoon Companies A and B, 4th Battalion (Mechanized), 23d Infantry, withdrew from the area of contact to secure Rawlins along with elements of the 1st Battalion (Mechanized), 5th Infantry; the 3d Battalion, 13th Artillery; and the 7th Battalion, 11th Artillery.

Just after midnight the enemy began to pour a heavy volume of 82mm and 60mm mortars into the fire support base. Within minutes the mortars were dropping in at a heavier rate and the VC and NVA launched a ground attack. Specialist 4 Loni Ramey of Massillon, Ohio recalled: "They came charging at us firing RPG-2's and 7's like they were M-16's. There just wasn't a hole deep enough to hide and fight from."

The Tomahawks countered with barking .50 caliber machine guns putting down a devastating hail of fire. "I saw four of them crawling toward the wire," reported Private First Class James A. Brown of Ashland, Ill., "So I

dropped a few M-79 rounds out there. There was no more movement from that area for the rest of the firefight."

Captain William R. Houston of St. Petersburg, Fla., who was responsible for the security of Rawlins requested gunships from the 3d Squadron, 17th Air Cavalry. With the Tomahawk mortar sections and supporting artillery illuminating the U.S. position, gunships rained a hail of tracers on the exposed enemy in the rice paddies in front of one sector of the perimeter.

Since the gunship fire was not effective on the enemy attacking from a rubber plantation, Houston directed the artillery pieces in the perimeter to fire short-fuzed artillery rounds on the enemy camouflaged by the rubber.

The gunship team braved enemy .51 caliber machine gun fire as they supported the infantrymen but had soon expended almost all of their ammunition and had to return to Tay Ninh Base Camp to rearm. Specialist 4 Larry Sutherland of Rushville, Ind., recalled: "When the gunships left, the crack of the AK's seemed to come closer and closer."

At this point Houston directed tactical air strikes on the determined VC and NVA. As the tactical fighters cruised in to support the Tropic Lightning soldiers, the enemy countered with anti-aircraft fire. Specialist 4 Wayne D. Finch of Middleport, N.Y., saw the position and pointed it out to the Tomahawk mortar section. On the next pass the fighters received no fire - the mortar section had silenced the gun.

Ammunition was getting low, and Houston requested an emergency resupply. When the helicopter arrived at the scene of battle, the fire was so intense that it was unable to set down. It hovered over the U.S. position and cases of ammunition were kicked out to fall freely to the ground.

The fire fight raged on, as the 1st. Brigade soldiers used star clusters to mark their position for the air strikes which dropped 500-pound bombs on the weakening enemy. After three air strikes and a withering hail of fire the enemy force began to break contact and retreat - after five bloody hours Fire Support Base Rawlins was saved.



MOVING OUT - Company C of the 1st Brigade's 4th Battalion (Mechanized), 23d Infantry, moves out on their tracks to sweep south of Tay Ninh City looking for fleeing Viet Cong who have just set 220 homes afire in the province capital. (PHOTOS BY SP4 RICK ADAMS)

Copter Braves Hostile Fire; Completes Ammo Resupply

1ST BDE - A 25th Infantry Division fire support base besieged by a fierce Viet Cong ground attack was resupplied with ammo at the height of the battle by a daring helicopter crew.

The helicopter crew from C Troop, 3d Squadron 17th Air Cavalry, flew through enemy ground fire to kick off 1,000 lbs of ammunition to troops of the 1st Brigade, holding down Fire Support Base Rawlins III, four miles east of Tay Ninh City.

Troops at the fire support base were running out of M-60 machine gun ammunition used on-line to cut down the charging Viet Cong, and called back to the 1st Brigade headquarters, west of the city, for resupply. Chief Warrant Officer Tom Holer and his crew loaded their UH-1H helicopter with 1,000 pounds of vital ammunition and headed out to the fighting.

When the chopper got near the base an air strike was pounding enemy positions around the perimeter of the camp. As the ship waited for the air strike to lift, they ran low on fuel and had to return to Tay Ninh.

Back flew the chopper, but air strikes still continued to bomb enemy positions. "It looked like a big war down there," stated Holer, 22, of Elmhurst, Ill. "The air strike finally ended and then it was our turn."

Warrant Officer Earl Warwick, a 20-year-old co-pilot from Princess Anne, Md., told of the fine support given the ship as it flew into the camp: "As we flew in from the east to the west, we had gunships covering our flanks with heavy fire. An AC-47 Spooky aircraft was dropping flares which helped a lot. The guys down there had put out a white T to mark our drop off point," Pilot Holer said, "Just as we were close to where we should have been they fired a red star cluster which did not blind me and gave just the kind of light I needed."

The ship's two door gunners did not get behind their M-60 machine guns as they prepared to unload the ammo as the ship flew in. Specialist 5 John Parsons, 21, of Detroit, Mich., and Specialist 4 Jeff Greene, 19, from Sacramento, Calif., explained what it was like as they hovered 15-feet above the ground, shoving the ammunition off the ship.

"All I could see was explosions and flashes all around the ship. Grabbing those boxes of ammo and tossing them off was the fastest thing I've ever done," related Parsons.

Greene remembered, "There were several men below us and they were breaking open the boxes as fast as we could unload them."

At 3:30 a.m., the ship had unloaded all the ammunition and returned to Tay Ninh. Contact at the base broke off at 5 a.m. The infantrymen, gunships and air strikes had killed 25 enemy soldiers in the early morning attack.

BLOCKING FORCE - Captain Henry Philips, commander of C Company, 4th Battalion, 23d Infantry, directs a tank into position as he sets up blocking positions just outside Tay Ninh City. Philips from Columbus, Ga., and his mech unit blocked exfiltration routes as Vietnamese forces flushed VC from the city.



FUNERAL MARCH - While chasing Viet Cong from Tay Ninh City, Company C, 4th Battalion, 23d Infantry, slows down to allow a Vietnamese funeral march to pass by. The 1st Brigade unit gave up its blocking position south of the city to go after Viet Cong fleeing the city.

FSB Buell Repels Two Attacks In Four Days

Bn-Sized Enemy Force Loses 83 During Battle

3D BDE - Tropic Lightning Division infantrymen and artillerymen at Fire Support Base Buell repelled a human wave attack launched by an unknown-sized enemy force, killing 83 enemy.

The enemy attempted to storm the perimeter four miles north of Tay Ninh City after subjecting the defenders to a thundering rocket and mortar barrage.

Infantrymen and tankers from the 3d Battalion, 22d Infantry; 2d Battalion, 34th Armor, and 4th Battalion (Mechanized), 23d Infantry, along with howitzers of the 3d Battalion, 13th Artillery, and the 7th Battalion, 11th Artillery, supported by helicopter gunships and tactical air strikes drove off the enemy and captured hundreds of pounds of equipment, weapons and ammunition during the four-hour night battle.

Lieutenant C.C Brown of Auburn, Ala., of Delta Company, 3d Bn, 22d Inf, credited trip flares with playing a major part in making the night defense a success.

"The flares gave us a clear view of the enemy as he attempted to enter the perimeter."

A sweep near the perimeter the following morning found 40 freshly dug foxholes plus tunnels and numerous bunkers. The Tropic Lightning soldiers policed up ten large piles of enemy ammo, bangalores, grenades, ammunition and RPG rocket rounds, all of which were destroyed by engineers.

During the sweep, men of Delta Company, 3d Bn, 22d Inf, made contact with a straggling enemy force. Sergeant Robert Clark of Atlanta, Ga., and his platoon caught three enemy in an open field and cut them down. They surprised and killed several more in a bunker.

Included in the items captured were 11 RPG rocket launchers, 112 RPG rounds plus 18 boosters, 15 AK-47 assault rifles, three Chicom machine guns and a .30 caliber machine gun.

Also captured were 214 Chicom grenades, 21 57mm recoilless rifle rounds, 40 anti-tank rifle grenades, eight 60mm mortar rounds, 24 bangalore torpedoes and more than 4,000 rounds of rifle ammunition.

"This was the finest piece of work that's ever been done by anyone under my command," said Lieutenant Colonel Alexander Hunt, the 3d Bn, 22d Inf, Co. "Infantrymen, support troops, gunships - all did an outstanding job. Not one enemy soldier got inside the perimeter all night long."



MOP UP - Tired Regulars from the 3d Platoon of Company D, 3d Battalion, 22d Infantry, march back to the perimeter of Fire Support Base Buell II. The infantrymen were returning from a sweep of the area to determine the extent of VC-NVA losses in an unsuccessful ground attack on their perimeter. A tank from A Company, 2d Battalion, 34th Armor, provides security.

VC-NVA Fail Again**U.S. FORCES CRUSH 2D ASSAULT**

3D BDE - An unknown sized enemy force launched a second attack in four days on Fire Support Base Buell four miles north of Tay Ninh City. The enemy lost 39 in their abortive attempt to penetrate the perimeter.

Elements of the 3d Battalion, 22d Infantry; 4th Battalion (Mechanized), 23d Infantry; and 2d Battalion, 34th Armor along with cannoneers from the 7th Battalion, 11th Artillery, and 3d Battalion, 13th Artillery, repelled the human wave attack.

At 1:00 in the morning 82mm mortars and rockets came whistling into the perimeter followed by a ground attack that lasted until 5:45 a.m. "The mortars even continued after the ground attack started," said Specialist 4 Al Gibbs of Philadelphia, Pa. "That's what made this attack harder to handle than the first one."

Company D and the Reconnaissance Platoon from the 3d Bn, 22d Inf, were responsible for one side of the perimeter and Company C of the 4th Bn (Mech), 23d Inf, for the other, with the tanks and artillery providing support.

"Our listening posts spotted movement, and we immediately pulled them in," commented Platoon Sergeant Robert Nelson of Hannibal, Mo., from Delta Company. "They hit two of our platoon sectors hard. Many VC lay out in the brush firing RPG's at our bunkers. Others tried to charge the wire and insert bangalore torpedoes, but we stopped them cold," said Nelson.

"The VC marched right up the road that bisects the perimeter," said Sergeant Robert Clark of Atlanta, Ga. "We held them off with our machine guns and M-16's. Unfortunately our claymores were not too effective. The VC had shot them full of holes. Some APC's from 4/23 and one of the tanks came up quickly to help us. The tank was firing point blank at the attackers which had the effect of turning a giant claymore mine on them."

First Lieutenant C.C. Brown, reconnaissance platoon leader from Auburn, Ala., had his unit deployed as a reaction force behind Delta Company. "As soon as the attack started we moved right up to help hold the bunker line. We came up to plug gaps in the line and to help out those positions that were pinned down."

Once again artillery and mortars played an important part in making the defense a success.

"We had 105's and 155's firing point blank just outside the perimeter. These high explosive projectiles showered the enemy with shrapnel," said Lieutenant James W. Carper, 3/22 liaison artillery officer from Tampa, Fla. "We also called for 8 inches from the 1st Brigade at Tay Ninh and 175's from Camp St. Barbara," continued Carper.

Delta's 81mm mortar crew fired 137 illumination rounds and 235 high explosive rounds during the attack. "The crew. (Privates First Class Alex Sudano, of Los Angeles; Bob Searfoss, of Summit Hill, Pa.; and Dennis Bealka, of Chaska, Minn.) put out a maximum effort that helped save the base," said Lieutenant John Paulding, New Cumberland, Pa., Delta Company platoon leader.

A sweep around the perimeter the next morning turned up the 39 enemy.

"Once again the men under my command did an outstanding job. Once again, not one VC set foot inside the perimeter," said Lieutenant Colonel Alexander Hunt, commander of the 3d Bn, 22d Inf.

Major Jerome G. Johnson from Green Bay, Wis., operations officer for 3/22, praised the efforts put forth by all units in the perimeter: "We couldn't have done it without them. The tanks, APC's, and the artillery were just what our infantry troops needed to help repel the attackers successfully."

**Story and photos
by
PFC Herb Burdett**



NEVER USED - A rifleman from the 2d Platoon of Company D, 3d Battalion, 22d Infantry, polices up RPG rounds just outside the wire at Fire Support Base Buell. An enemy force launched a second unsuccessful ground attack on the 1st Brigade base.

AFTERMATH - A weary Regular from Company D, 3d Battalion, 22d Infantry, shovels expended M-60 links and brass away from his position at FSB Buell. The huge pile of links and brass is a partial indication of the tremendous fire power put out at his position the previous night.



Smash VC Attacks, 900 Killed In Week

(Continued From Page 1)

In the southeastern portion of the city elements of the 4th Battalion (Mechanized), 23d Infantry, and the 3d Squadron, 4th Cavalry, killed 10 enemy.

Meanwhile, the 1st Battalion (Mechanized), 5th Infantry, was moving into the Ben Cui rubber plantation 11 miles east of Tay Ninh City near Dau Tieng. They clashed with the enemy at 10:30 a.m. and in six hours of heavy fighting, killed 50.

After a comparatively quiet night, mechanized forces of the Division again set out looking for the enemy. They found him.

At 9:30 a.m. Monday, the 3d Squadron, 4th Cavalry, was moving down Highway 26 when four miles east of

Tay Ninh City, they received small arms, automatic weapons and RPG fire from an unknown-sized enemy force entrenched in nearby rice paddies. Reinforced by elements of the 1st Battalion (Mechanized), 5th Infantry, and the 4th Battalion (Mechanized), 23d Infantry, they fought until 5:45 p.m. killing 40 enemy.

At the same time, elements of the 1st Battalion (Mechanized), 5th Infantry, again made contact in the Ben Cui Plantation. They were reinforced by elements of the 3d Squadron, 4th Cavalry, and killed 67 enemy in the ensuing four-hour battle.

Before dawn Tuesday, several U.S. camps received harassing mortar fire. But, an ambush patrol from the 2d Battalion, 27th Infantry, met with more than harassment.

The patrol opened fire on six VC moving to their front and immediately came under heavy attack from an unknown-sized enemy force. "The RPG's were coming in at a rate of six to ten a minute," recalled Sergeant Paul Lambers of Holland, Mich., who took charge of the patrol when the patrol leader was wounded. After four hours of intense fighting, the enemy withdrew. He left 56 bodies on the battlefield.

Except for a mortar attack on Dau Tieng base camp, all was quiet during the night and until almost noon Wednesday. Then, at 11:30 a.m., the 1st Battalion (Mechanized), 5th Infantry, was again searching out the enemy in the Ben Cui Plantation when they ran head-long into an unknown-sized enemy force. Track-mounted .50 caliber machine guns blazed until the barrels burned out as the enemy launched three human wave assaults at the Tropic Lightning troops. After 1½ hours of all-out battle, the Bobcats had to return to Dau Tieng base camp for more ammo, and airstrikes and artillery continued to pound the enemy during the afternoon. The sharp battle left 182 enemy dead.

At 1:00 a.m. Thursday, the enemy launched a pair of mortar and ground attacks on two fire support bases. Buell was hit for the second time in five days. Artillery tubes were lowered to fire point blank and determined infantrymen spewed hot lead at the attacking force. This time, the enemy's abortive attempt to overrun the base cost him 39 lives.

Simultaneously, Fire Support Base Rawlings, two miles east of Tay Ninh City, was hit by a mortar and ground attack. Here, the infantrymen and artillerymen took a toll of 25 enemy killed.

At first light Thursday, the 1st Battalion (Mechanized), 5th Infantry, and the 2d Battalion, 27th Infantry, again swept into the Ben Cui Plantation. Early in the morning, they met light resistance and killed 10 enemy.

After five days of fierce fighting, Friday was comparatively quiet for the soldiers. But, the breather was not long-lived.

Just 20 minutes after midnight Saturday morning, the 2d Battalion, 27th Infantry, at Fire Support Base Schofield five miles southwest of Dau Tieng was attacked by an unknown-sized enemy force. Close-in artillery fire and gunships supported the infantrymen as they killed 62 enemy.

As fighting tapered off somewhat, the soldiers had time to reflect on an exhausting but highly successful week. The combined fire power of infantry, artillery and helicopter gunships along with always-present tactical jet fighters had dealt the enemy a crushing blow. More than 900 Viet Cong and NVA soldiers were killed as they tried to dent the Tropic Lightning Division's impenetrable wall of fire power.



PARTNERS - Muleskinners of the 242d Support Helicopter Company move the 1st Battalion, 8th Artillery during action around Tay Ninh. (PHOTO BY SP4 KARL GUTKNECHT)

Diamondheads Give Support During Seven Hour Battle

CU CHI - More than seven hours of continuous fire support was provided by Diamondhead gunships from Company B, 25th Aviation Battalion, as a platoon-sized ambush patrol from the 2d Battalion, 27th Infantry, beat back enemy attacking from three sides. Firing as close as 15 meters from the friendly position, the choppers were guided by a fire of burning clothes and boots.

While performing counter-mortar duties at Dau Tieng Base Camp, the Diamondhead 20 light fire team was called to assist the besieged infantrymen near Tay Ninh City. Enroute to the contact area, the fire team leader Second Lieutenant Neil M. Weems, received the tactical briefing from the ground commander. The U.S. element was surrounded on three sides with the enemy no more than 30 meters from the friendly unit's perimeter.

Arriving at the contact area, a more thorough briefing revealed the situation to be critical. The Wolfhounds had suffered numerous casualties, and their ammunition supply was dangerously low. The seriousness of the situation was magnified by the lack of any means to mark the limits of their perimeter, which prevented immediate fire support.

The urgency of the mission heightened when the ground commander reported he had visual contact with numerous enemy as close as 15 meters to his perimeter and expressed doubt that, due to critical ammunition shortage and massing enemy troops, he would be able to withstand the imminent ground attack.

As a last resort for position identification, the infantrymen set fire to a pile of clothes, boots and anything else they could find. With this one light, aided by artillery illumination, immediate firing passes were initiated by the Diamondheads. After expending all rocket and minigun ordnance the situation remained such that the Diamondheads resorted to firing personal weapons.

Having expended all ordnance aboard and dangerously low on fuel, a member of the fire team, First Lieutenant Kenneth Griffith, an artillery officer, adjusted supporting artillery fires enabling an airborne forward observer to pinpoint the location of the ground unit.

With repeated passes through enemy ground fire, it became apparent that continuous air support was required. Coordinating with his wing ship, commanded by Warrant Officer Robert H. Moore, Weems arranged to have one gunship continue to engage the target while the other aircraft returned to Tay Ninh to rearm.

The continuous fire support over a seven-hour period was instrumental in deterring the imminent ground attack long enough to allow reinforcements to reach the area. Later sweeps of the area revealed that at least 56 enemy were killed in the fierce battle.

WELL DONE! - Sergeant Paul Lambers receives congratulations from Major General Ellis W. Williamson, 25th CG. Lambers took command shortly after his platoon leader was wounded and directed his men in a fight that killed 56 enemy.
(PHOTO BY SP4 BILL CLEVENGER)



Six-Pronged Attack**Regulars Save Relay Site**

3D BDE - Driving off a reinforced Viet Cong company and killing at least 10 attackers, 25th Division infantrymen staged a heroic defense to save the retransmission and relay site atop Nui Ba Den mountain.

Plagued by 45 mile-an-hour winds, the defenders, including Alpha Company, 3d Battalion, 22d Infantry and members of the Provisional Company, 125th Signal Battalion, which operates the communications facility, held their ground despite near-zero visibility.

The mountain outpost was hit with a six-pronged attack in the midst of a rainstorm four hours before dawn.

"The VC were running all over the edge of the perimeter," said Captain Andre Blackmon of Augusta, Ga., Alpha Company commander. He said the enemy used wire cutters to get through the concertina and rubber bands to render trip flares harmless.

While the 3d Brigade Regulars were holding the bunker line, First Lieutenant Philip A. Girmus, signal officer from Seattle, Wash., was leading his reaction force of signalmen from the signal site at the crest of the peak down to the threatened perimeter.

Shortly after the attack started, Captain Blackmon was faced with a decision whether to pull his men back to the top of the outpost or to have them stay and hold the bunker line. He chose to have his men hold, and this was seen as a major factor in saving the site and in defeating the enemy, probably saving many lives.

"My men are real heroes," said Blackmon. "They did what they were told and they did it well."

Many individual acts of heroism were cited by infantrymen who withstood the murderous assault.

Men of the 588th Engineers Battalion put a security force in position around the signal buildings at the top of the mountain.

Lieutenant Edward D. Montgomery of Burns Flat, Okla., Alpha Company's forward observer, kept eight-inch artillery shells raining in on all avenues of approach.

A sweep around and throughout the perimeter revealed the dead and numerous blood trails. More than 15 weapons were confiscated, among them eight RPG rocket launchers, two AK-50 assault rifles and four Chi-Com pistols. In addition, 30 RPG rounds were found, as well as more than a hundred satchel charges.

Thanks to

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