



Vol 3 No. 39

TROPIC LIGHTNING NEWS

September 23, 1968

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Record Civic Action Program

3D BDE - With the lull in fighting near Saigon continuing all during the month of August, the 3d Brigade has turned some of its attention on a record program of civic action.

A massive outpouring of medical help, rebuilding of schools and roads, and a popular series of Country Fairs highlighted activities by the brigade's four battalions of infantry and one of artillery.

More than 12,000 Vietnamese were treated during 102 medical civic action programs (MEDCAPs) by medics of the 2d Battalion, 12th Infantry; 2d Battalion (Mech), 22d Infantry; 4th Battalion, 9th Infantry; 1st Battalion, 27th Infantry, and 2d Battalion, 77th Artillery.

As part of village improvement efforts in hamlets scattered near Tan Son Nhut airbase, brigade units distributed 6,000 lbs of cement, 67 gallons of paint, 861 board feet of lumber, 146 sheets of tin roofing, and 2,450 lbs of other building materials.

During the County Fairs and other civic action events, the "Tropic Lightning" infantrymen distributed 18,530 lbs of food and 2,300 lbs of clothing. Also handed out were 465 lbs of health items.

In the village of Vinh Thanh, five miles northwest of the capital, Manchus of the 4th of the 9th painted a marketplace and also helped the villagers by providing paint for them to restore the finish of their two brightly colored Cao Dai temples. The village is unique in the area for being virtually 100 per cent Cao Dai.

At other nearby villages, the same battalion screened in three dispensaries used for its MEDCAPs.

In the hamlet of Ba Diem, the 2d of the 12th White Warriors repaired a roof and fence at the community school, then put up a new gate. Meanwhile the 1st of the 27th Wolfhounds dug a new well and repaired a water pump at the hamlet of Ap Sau.

In all, there were more than 30 such individual construction projects included in the month's civic action accomplishments.

Simultaneously, during the civic action programs and at 16 marketplaces daily, psychological operations teams were broadcasting messages urging villagers to support the government and offering tips on battling plague and other health problems. The PSYOPS teams also stressed traffic safety.

"We've been getting a lot of help and cooperation from district chiefs and other local officials," said Sergeant First Class John Johnston of Saugus, Mass., brigade civic affairs noncommissioned officer in charge.



HOLEY TOE, BATMAN - A young Batman fan who is temporarily immobilized by a cut on his foot receives first aid in the form of a band-aid from First Lieutenant Richard Booth of Anaconda, Mont., assistant medical operations officer of the 3d Battalion, 22d Infantry. (PHOTO BY SP4 HERB BURDETT)

Hounds Blast NVA, Ambush Kills Seven

2D BDE - Tropic Lightning soldiers from the 2d Battalion, 27th Infantry, tallied seven enemy killed and a large variety of weapons captured when they engaged a platoon-sized element of NVA soldiers.

Specialist 4 Levi Simmons, a grenadier from Jamaica, N.Y., reported that, "I had been watching the two men at my left put out their claymores. When they returned, we were choosing who would pull the first guard. Suddenly I noticed eight figures approaching our position. I pointed them out to the others around me."

Specialist 4 John De Robertis triggered the Wolfhound ambush by detonating both of the claymores.

A thorough search of the area the next day revealed seven NVA soldiers dead. Also, four suspects were detained. Four automatic assault rifles, four shoulder-carried rocket launchers, 2,000 rounds of small arms ammo, 14 RPG rounds, eight Chicom hand grenades, one antitank mine, one Chicom 9mm pistol and a bag of medical supplies were captured.

Soldier Gets Vietnamese Decoration

3D BDE - Specialist 4 John Saffo of St. Louis, Mo., has been awarded the Gallantry Cross with Bronze Star by the South Vietnamese government for his part in an action termed by his company commander "the most

successful small unit action in our company's history."

Company D, 3d Battalion, 22d Infantry, was conducting a reconnaissance-in-force a few miles north of Saigon when they ran into a well entrenched force of NVA in the banks of a canal.

After calling in air strikes the 25th Div. infantrymen assaulted the bunker complex killing 14 NVA without suffering a single casualty. "I was attempting to outflank the enemy position by tossing hand grenades into their bunkers when I realized I needed someone to cover the rear", said Platoon Sergeant Robert Nelson of Hannibal Mo. "I asked for volunteers."

"I just jumped up and started spraying the area with my M-16," said Saffo. "I fired at every bunker we passed in an effort to protect Nelson."

"He sure did" replied Nelson as he congratulated Saffo, who was beaming from ear to ear with pride in his award.

More Than 73 Tons

Resupply Hectic For 3/22

1ST BDE - The support platoon of Headquarters, Headquarters Company, 3d Battalion, 22d Infantry, resupplied the battalion's units in the field with more than 73 tons of ammunition during a recent hectic three days which saw the lull in the Vietnam fighting come to an abrupt halt.

A battalion sized Viet Cong and North Vietnamese Army force had struck at the Fire Support Base Buell II, four miles north of Tay Ninh. "I knew what that meant for me and my people", said Lieutenant Jan K. Pierson of Hackensack, N.J., platoon leader for the support platoon, "We would be working around the clock and then some to resupply the base."

Specialist 4 Jack Garland of Houston, Tex., had been working with the platoon for over six months but he was still a little anxious that night. "I couldn't remember the last time we mishandled a Chinook load of ammo, but I was more than just a little bit concerned that night. We had to resupply tons of ammo and we had to do it quickly."

Specialist 4 Rick Umlauf of Goldendale, Wash., was in charge of drawing ammo and definitely had his work cut out for him. "I knew they would need ammo and need it fast." We had several thousand rounds of various types of ammo on hand that could be shipped out right away, but we still had to requisition much more. In fact we even had to request emergency resupply requisitions to get the ammo we needed," he said.

"Then the news reached us that our Alpha Company had been attacked up on Nui Ba Den," said Pierson, "and that we would also have to supply .50 caliber rounds to the units at Dau Tieng. All of this had to be done in addition to our normal resupply duties of providing food, and water for our troops in the field."

The 3d Battalion, 22d Infantry, crew worked all that night, all the next day, plus "overtime" on the day following. "The ammunition went out by Hueys, by Chinooks and also by flying cranes," said Specialist 4 Elroy Conway of Albuquerque, N.M. Conway was in charge of the slings and rigging. He also made sure that the loads were secured correctly and had the tricky task of attaching each load to the Chinooks and Flying Cranes.

During those hectic days the 3d Brigade, 25th Infantry Division support people shipped 118,000 M-16 rounds; 100,000 .50 caliber rounds, 72,000 M-60 machine gun rounds, 935 81mm and 700 4.2 inch mortar rounds, 3,300 M-79 rounds and more than a thousand fragmentation grenades. The total exceeded 73 tons.

RESUPPLY - A Flying Crane waits in the wings as a Chinook carries a "water buffalo" to 3d Battalion, 22d Infantry Regulars, at Fire Support Base Buell II four miles north of Tay Ninh City. (PHOTO BY SP4 HERB BURDETT)



Div Pilot Saves Hit VN Pilot

CU CHI - A 25th Infantry Division helicopter pilot took his unarmed craft down into a heavy barrage of enemy .50 caliber bullets to rescue a Republic of Vietnam (RVN) Skyraider pilot downed five miles southeast of Cu Chi.

Captain Barry W. Lambert from Ekron, Ky., the aircraft maintenance officer of Company A, 25th Aviation Battalion, and Staff Sergeant Garry K. Paris from Canton, Tex., maintenance supervisor, were airborne in a Huey on a routine test flight when they spotted three Skyraiders on a bombing run.

As they watched, one of the Skyraiders, hit by .50 caliber fire, crash-landed into a swamp only yards from the bunker complex it had been bombing. Making a pass over the downed aircraft, Lambert saw the pilot crawling along the wing.

Lambert pointed his Huey at the Skyraider and rapidly descended.

A volley of .50 caliber bullets rained out from the bunker complex and forced Lambert to whip through one evasive maneuver after another.

As the bullets splashed in the murky water around and beneath the Huey, the Vietnamese pilot slid off the wing, swam to the waiting helicopter and crawled aboard. The Huey zoomed back into the sky and headed for Cu Chi.

Bulletin

At press time for this paper the Viet Cong were dealt another resounding defeat by the 25th Infantry Division.

For the second time in less than a month, the enemy attempted to push into heavily populated areas of Tay Ninh Province.

Decorated

BRONZE STAR MEDAL

LTC DONALD M. EDWARDS, 25th Admin Co
 MAJ FRANCIS G. LEE, HHC, 25th Inf Div
 CPT DENNIS G. O'LEARY, HHC, 25th Inf Div
 CPT JAMES F. OAKS, HHC, 25th Inf Div
 CPT ROLAND D. BOLLACKER, HHC
 CPT JAMES A. TOWN, HHC
 1LT DAVID R. AYERS, Co B, 2nd Bn, 12th Inf
 1LT THOMAS E. HIRSCH, Co A, 4th Bn (Mech), 23rd Inf
 W02 CHARLES P. EASTES, D Trp, 3d Sqdn, 4th Cav
 1SG JAMES T. SILLS, Co B, 2nd Bn (Mech), 22nd Inf
 PSG BOB H. SMITH, Co B, 2nd Bn, 12th Inf
 PSG ADMIRAL J. BOWSER, Co B, 2nd Bn, 12th Inf
 SFC-ROBERT E. MARSEE, HHC, 25th Inf Div Arty
 SSG RICHARD JACOBS, HHC, 2nd Bde
 SSG JOHN A. FARMER, HHD, 125th Sig Bn
 SSG WILLIE A. MYERS, HHC, 65th Engr Bn
 SSG LARRY W. FRANKLIN, HHC, 2nd Bde
 SSG ROBERT W. RYBASKIK, 25TH MP Co
 SSG RICHARD E. PIVER, Co C, 65th Engr Bn
 SGT JOHN A. WARDROBE, Co D, 2nd Bn, 12th Inf
 SGT MARTIN KELLY, Co A, 2nd Bn, 27th Inf
 SGT SHEDRICK WILLIAMS JR., Co A, 2nd Bn, 27th Inf
 SGT JESSE L. B. SOTEIO, Co A, 4th Bn (Mech), 23rd Inf
 SGT GARY A. HANSEN, Co A, 4th Bn (Mech), 23rd Inf
 SGT DANIEL JOUDREY, Co B, 2nd Bn, 27th Inf
 SGT LARRY HENSLEY, Co C, 1st Bn (Mech), 5th Inf
 SGT SHED B. WADDY, Co B, 2nd Sn, 12th Inf
 SGT ELBERT T. COLLEY, Co B, 2nd Bn, 12th Inf
 SGT EUGENE J. CARBTREE, Co A, 4th Bn (Mech), 23rd Inf
 SGT LARRY G. LEE, Co A, 4th Bn (Mech), 23rd Inf
 SGT RICHARD W. ROGERS, Co B, 2nd Bn, 27th Inf
 SGT DONALD F. GREEN, Co A, 4th Bn (Mech), 23rd Inf
 SGT BILLY J. KIRBY, Co A, 4th Bn (Mech), 23rd Inf
 SGT CHARLES L. BARNETT, Co A, 4th Bn (Mech), 23rd Inf
 SGT PAUL D. LATIMER, Co B, 2nd Bn (Mech), 22nd Inf
 SGT BRUCE K. MURWIN, Co B, 2nd Sn, 12th Inf
 SP5 DANIEL V. ROPER, HHD, 125th Sig Bn

SP5 DAVID R. KRAUS, 25th Admin Co
 SP5 WILLIAM D. SKINNER, HHC, 2nd Bde
 SP5 DAVID W. BOLLINGER, HHC, 2nd Bn (Mech), 22nd Inf
 SP5 DENNY R. HEAD, HHC, 2nd Bn (Mech), 22nd Inf
 SP5 JOHN C. LAUNER, Co B, 2nd Bn, 12th Inf
 SP5 JERRY A. MC KINNEY, HHC, 1st Bn (Mech), 5th Inf
 SP5 LUCIAN R. KROHLING, Co D, 2nd Bn, 27th Inf
 SP5 STEVEN W. WELKER, Co B, 2nd Bn, 27th Inf
 SP5 JOHN A. SHEPPERSON, Co A, 4th Bn (Mech), 23rd Inf
 SP5 THOMAS VAN HOY, Co A, 4th Bn (Mech), 23rd Inf
 SP5 THOMAS A. TALARICO, HHC
 SP4 LOUIE G. CUIEL, Co C, 65th Engr Bn
 SP4 ALLAN R. MC GUIRE, HHC, 2nd Bn (Mech), 22nd Inf
 SP4 ROBERT J. MISEVICH, HHC, 2nd Bn (Mech), 22nd Inf
 SP4 CLAY R. ATCHISON, Co B, 2nd Sn, 12th Inf
 SP4 WILLIAM J. CURA, Co B, 2nd Bn, 12th Inf
 SP4 ARTHURO DE LA OSSA, Co B, 2nd Bn, 12th Inf
 SP4 VINCENT P. DIMARZO, Co B, 2nd Bn, 12th Inf
 SP4 JOY L. HODGES, Co B, 2nd Bn, 12th Inf
 SP4 PAUL R. NEWMAN, Co B, 2nd Bn, 12th Inf
 SP4 JOHN W. SMITH, Co B, 2nd Bn, 12th Inf
 SP4 MARSHALL A. TEMPLE, Co B, 2nd Bn, 12th Inf
 SP4 JULIO BALANDRAN, Co C, 1st Bn (Mech), 5th Inf
 SP4 TERRY L. KOHLER, Co C, 1st Bn (Mech), 5th Inf
 SP4 JOHN B. CHENAULT, Co C, 2nd Bn, 27th Inf
 SP4 GEORGE E. LAWYER, Co D, 2nd Bn, 27th Inf
 SP4 JOHN A. LOFTUS, Co A, 2nd Bn, 27th Inf
 SP4 DAVID E. MARTIN, Co D, 2nd Bn, 27th Inf
 SP4 LARRY N. SKUBOVIVUS, Co A, 2nd Bn, 27th Inf
 SP4 RONALD L. SOMPLE, Co A, 2nd Bn, 27th Inf
 SP4 GARY L. PHILLIPS, Co A, 2nd Bn, 27th Inf
 SP4 JOHN P. RIES, HHC, 2nd Bde
 SP4 WAYNE T. SINCLAIR, Co D, 2nd Bn, 12th Inf
 SP4 THOMAS MADRID, HHC, 3d Bde,
 PFC JOSEPH HAYES, Co B, 2nd Bn, 12th Inf
 PVT WILLIAM M. HENDERSON, Co C, 1st Bn, 27th Inf

Larger Pay For Disabled Vets In Jan.

Approximately 1,952,000 service-disabled veterans will receive increased compensation payments beginning next January under a bill signed into law last month by President Johnson.

Some 112,000 veterans with 100 per cent service-connected disabilities will have their payments increased from \$300 to \$400 a month. Payments will be increased eight per cent for about 1,840,000 veterans with 10 to 90 per cent service-connected disabilities.

The new law also authorizes the Administrator of Veterans Affairs to provide invalid lifts, other therapeutic or rehabilitative devices, and medical equipment and supplies to eligible veterans. This provision became effective when the bill was signed.

The increased rates will be reflected in the January 1969 disability compensation checks.

General Urges Vote

"The right to vote is a basic American heritage that our forefathers fought for and won nearly two hundred years ago.

"This is also our primary reason for being here - to protect this right, one which cannot be enjoyed by peoples living throughout the world under Communism. All eligible personnel should exercise this right.

"It is my desire that all personnel who desire to vote are given the necessary information concerning the requirements in their particular State or Territory, and are assisted in preparing the Federal Post Card Application. Subsequently, assistance will be given in preparing their ballot for mailing, if desired."

Maj. Gen. Ellis Williamson



Xmas Mail Date Set

The Department of Defense and the Post Office Department have announced the suggested dates for mailing Christmas cards and gifts to servicemen overseas.

The mailing dates are: surface mail, Oct. 14 to Nov. 9; space available mail (SAM), Oct. 21 to Nov. 23; parcel air lift (PAL), Oct. 28 to Nov. 30; and air mail, Nov. 30 to Dec. 11.

Mailing within the dates outlined will insure timely delivery to the overseas destination.

By using the SAM and PAL services, senders can save in the cost of shipping packages.

Be sure to wrap packages securely and address them correctly, using the APO or FPO number. (ANF)

Tropic Lightning

Combat Honor Roll

This month, Major General Ellis W. Williamson, Commanding General of the 25th Infantry Division, initiated a program to spotlight, each week, the soldier who has exhibited the characteristics and traits representative of the spirit of the American Fighting Man.

The first soldier to be placed on the Tropic Lightning Honor Roll is Sergeant E-5 Angelo L. Anselmo, US54510775, of Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 2d Battalion, 27th Infantry.

Sergeant Anselmo distinguished himself by heroic actions while serving as an assistant squad leader with the Combined Reconnaissance and Intelligence Platoon, 2d Battalion, 27th Infantry in the Republic of Vietnam.

While on a combat operation, the C.R.I.P. was ambushed by an enemy force. During the initial contact, Sergeant Anselmo was pinned down by hostile machine gun fire. Spotting three enemy soldiers assaulting his position, Sergeant Anselmo, with complete disregard for his own safety, exposed himself to the charging hostile soldiers as he killed all three of them.

Although wounded in the leg by an exploding RPG round, he ignored the wound, crawled through withering enemy fire and destroyed a hostile machine gun emplacement which had been placing effective fire on his squad.

Sergeant Anselmo remained in his exposed position providing suppressive fire allowing his squad to withdraw to safety. His valorous action contributed immeasurably to the defeat of the enemy force and the success of the



mission.

Sergeant Anselmo's personal bravery, aggressiveness and devotion to duty are in keeping with the highest traditions of the military service and reflect great credit upon himself his unit, the 25th Infantry Division and the United States Army.

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MG Ellis W. Williamson Commanding General
MAJ Andrew J. Sullivan . . . Information Officer
2LT Don A. Eriksson Officer-in-Charge
SP4 Bill Berger Editor

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TROPIC LIGHTNING NEWS

September 23, 1968

159 Medals Go To 2/22

3D BDE - The men of the 2d Battalion (Mechanized), 22d Infantry, were presented 159 medals by their outgoing commander, Lieutenant Colonel King J. Coffman of LaCrescenta, Calif.

The awards presented by Coffman had been earned by his 3d Brigade soldiers during May and June, while the Triple Deuce was engaged in road sweeping operations in Tay Ninh province.

Included were valor and service awards of the Bronze Star and Army Commendation Medal, plus Purple Hearts.

Speaking to his men at the time of his departure, Coffman said, "I am no hero, but I had the honor of commanding a battalion of heroes."

During the time of Coffman's command the Triple Deuce fought 23 battles, including an extended three-day battle in War Zone C over Easter weekend. The battalion's tally for the period was 247 enemy killed, 28 rifles, nine rocket launchers, two recoilless rifles and three .51 caliber machine guns.

The tall, lanky Coffman, who was readily identifiable by the machinegun headspace and timing gauge in his collar button-hole, goes home to a well-earned rest, and will then proceed to the Pentagon for a new assignment in the Office of the Army Chief of Staff.

Soldiers Teach English In Bac Ha

Story and Photos By SP4 Richard Patterson

CU CHI - "This is a book. The sky is blue. This is a pencil."

These are simple English phrases from the mouths of children. But wait a minute. There is something unusual.

The classroom is sparsely furnished with wooden benches, and there is only one text book for every two students. The voices are those of Vietnamese children, and the teacher is dressed in jungle fatigues. This is indeed an unusual classroom.

The school is the Minh Tan High School in the Village of Bac Ha and the teacher is U.S. Army Private First

Class John E. Young, a laboratory technician in the 12th Evacuation Hospital at the 25th Infantry Division's base camp at Cu Chi.

Every Saturday morning Young, of Reno, Nev., and Specialist 4 Robert J. Dubi, of Chicago, Ill., leave the base camp and travel three miles to the school to teach English to Vietnamese youngsters.

"When I first started teaching," explained Young, "I was a little apprehensive, but now I wouldn't give it up for anything. These kids and I get along great, and it's such a wonderful feeling to help them."

According to Young, Father Phan, head of the school, asked him if he would teach the children English. Young "jumped at the chance to do something for these people," and the program began.

The high school students were being taught text-book English by their teacher, Nguyen Van Hue; but there were many sounds that the children could not pronounce correctly.

"That's where I came in," said Young, a 1967 graduate of the University of Nevada. "I am able to give the kids the correct pronunciation of such words as 'this'. There are no Vietnamese sounds comparable to 'th'," Young explained.

As Young became involved with teaching and started receiving some of his old English text books from home, Dubi became more interested in the project and finally received permission to accompany Young.

Both GI's work all day Sunday and sometimes at night so they can teach on Saturday morning without falling behind in their regular duties.

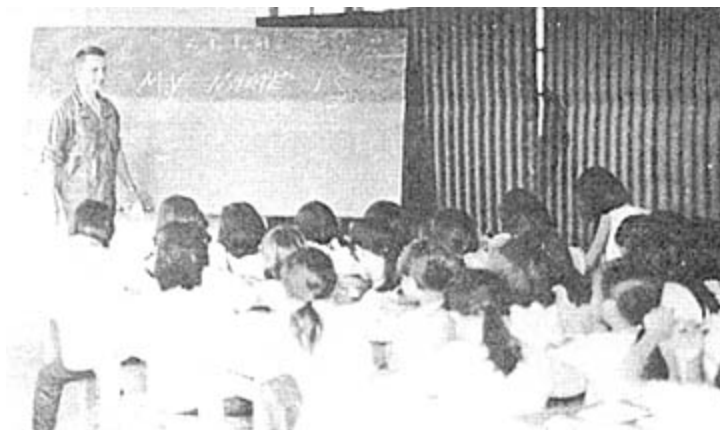
Dubi did not know exactly who he would teach and his first day at the school was quite an experience.

The younger children, many with older brothers and sisters learning English in Young's class, pestered Father Phan so much that he finally agreed to let them learn English also.

Two elementary classes were combined into one large group for the special lessons with an American GI and Dubi walked into a classroom where 62 eager faces watched every move he made and listened attentively to every word he spoke.

"When I saw all those kids relying on me to teach them English I was a little unsure of myself," Dubi admitted, "but just about everything is working out perfectly."

Young and Dubi agree that the language barrier is one of their biggest problems. "I need Lai Van Doan to interpret for me sometimes. He is the regular teacher for my class and speaks a little English. But once in a while we get all mixed up," Dubi confessed.



BEGINNING WITH BASICS - Specialist 4 Robert Dubi pronounces the English words he has just printed on the blackboard. The class pronounces the sentence several times and then writes the words down in note books.

HANDY INTERPRETER - A Vietnamese teacher follows the translation in a text book while Private First Class John Young pronounces an English word for the class.



Ambush Kills Two

2D BDE - Tropic Lightning soldiers from the 2d Battalion, 27th Infantry Wolfhounds were just nearing their ambush site when they heard voices. The 1st Platoon of Company C set up a hasty ambush and waited.

Sergeant Joe O. Donnell of Peckville, Pa., reported: "We stayed there and waited as the enemy approached. The point man was three feet from me when I opened up on him."

The ambush left two enemy dead and seven sets of enemy web gear, two assault rifles, a carbine, and an M-79 launcher.



TUG OF PEACE - When 25th Division infantrymen began to dismantle a temporary rope railing following a civic action program, youngsters at a village seven miles northwest of Saigon engaged them in a tug of war. The contest quickly turned into a lopsided rout, as the outnumbered soldiers of the 2d Battalion, 12th Infantry, were

swept toward the edge of town by the jubilant, kids. It was the first known "surrender" by the 3d Brigade White Warriors in the history of the Vietnam conflict. Soldiers from left are Specialists 4 Richard E. Anderson of Alta, Ia., Henry D. Towns of Calvert, Texas., Arlyn D. Olson of Proston, Minn., and twin brothers Jerry L. and Terry B. Weigold of Marquette, . Mich. (PHOTO BY SP4 CHARLES HAUGHEY)

2D BDE BRIDGE DEFENSE

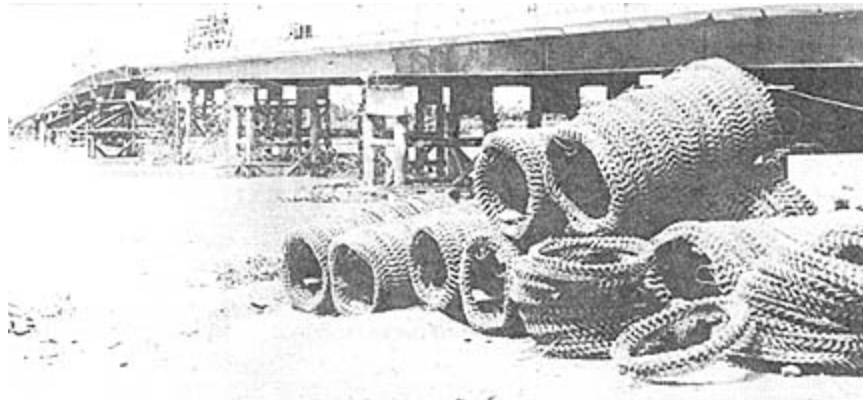
2D BDE - Protecting the major land routes from the 25th Infantry Division base camp at Cu Chi to the main supply points at Tan Son Nhut, Long Binh and Saigon has been a major concern of the Tropic Lightning Division's 2d Brigade.

Elements of the brigade are on constant alert at the Hoc Mon, Ba Bep, Trang Bang, and Phu Cuong bridges to prevent enemy use and guard against sabotage. In their efforts to keep the bridges safe, the brigade units employ every known device.

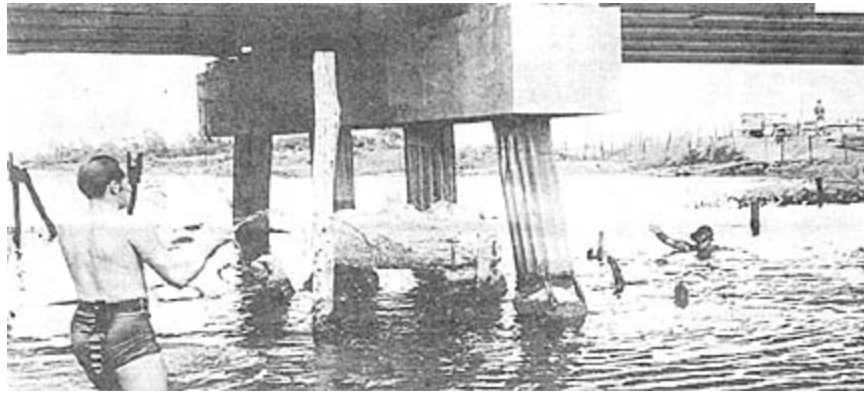
Recently, the Navy's Underwater Demolition Team 12 (UDT-12) spent three days checking the concertina wire and reinforcement of the bridges. Broken sections of wire and weak spots discovered by the team were repaired by the men of the 2d Battalion, 14th Infantry, on duty at the bridge.

Close coordination between 25th Division and ARVN units helps to make security of the bridges easier and more efficient. In cooperation with defense units, Division Military Police establish checkpoints at the various bridges from time to time along with Vietnamese National Police to apprehend infiltrators and contraband weapons.

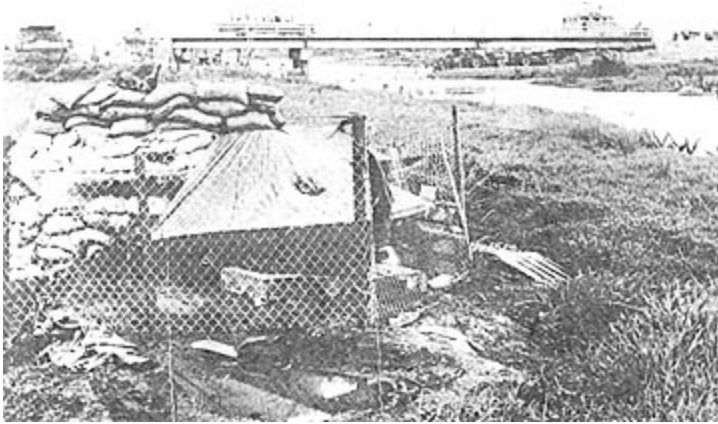
With bunkers at the bridge locations kept in good repair, the use of armor and track vehicles, and alert sentries, the bridges can be well controlled. Forty-millimeter duster from the Division Artillery provide a big punch for the defense when enemy elements are encountered.



Stacks of concertina wire await placement beneath the Phu Cuong bridge which spans the Saigon River.



Concertina wire is strung around pilings at the Hoc Mon site.



Bunkers manned 24-hours-a-day are a vital part of the bridges' defense.

Navy Seaman Mike C. Ferrell, Houston, Tes., prepares to make the initial inspection.





The task of defending the Hoc Mon bridge is shared by both the 2d Brigade and ARVN soldiers.



Men from Company C, 2d Battalion, 27th Infantry, defend the Trang Bang bridge.



The Ba Bep bridge is flanked by 40mm Dusters from Battery B, 5th Battalion, 2d Artillery.

Diamondhead's Smokey Is An Infantry Favorite

CU CHI - In the world they call it smog - and most people are annoyed by it. In Vietnam, they call it smoke - and the infantrymen love it.

Diamondhead helicopters of Company B, 25th Aviation Battalion, create the smog in the area. The smoke dispensing helicopter, appropriately named Smokey, is capable of laying a smoke screen by flying low-level and dispensing smoke over the desired area.

Smokey is used to shield friendly elements by denying the enemy a visual target, and can be effectively employed by ground forces or in airmobile operations, day or night.

Diamondhead Smokey was used recently by one infantry unit to enable them to evacuate wounded men. Enemy fire prevented the infantrymen from getting to the wounded until Smokey screened them from the enemy's view.

The smoke ship made numerous passes over and in front of the enemy. Each time, Smokey received intense enemy fire. Continuing even after darkness had fallen, Smokey made it possible for the friendly elements to recover their casualties and continue the offensive on the enemy positions.

In the airmobile concept, Smokey is employed to shield the troop-carrying slicks in the landing zone and enable the inserted troops to assume an offensive position. On one such mission recently, Smokey was the first to discover that the landing zone was hot.

Asked about the intensity of enemy fire, Captain Jerry Boyington, executive officer for the Diamondheads, said: "It was as if they were in the back seat shooting at us." Boyington really felt smoked when a round passed through both of his boots. However, the wounds were minor, and he was smoking for another combat assault two days later.

The statement "Smoking may be hazardous to your health" certainly applies to flying the smoke ship since the crew must constantly expose themselves to enemy fire to successfully complete their mission.

LOVE THAT SMOG - A Diamondhead smoke ship from Company B, 25th Aviation Battalion, lays a smoke screen to shield infantrymen from the enemy's sights.



Mushy VC Love Letter Costly

1ST BDE - Once again a Vietnamese interpreter proved his value to infantrymen as he used a love letter to identify two suspected female VC sympathizers. Sergeant First Class Nguyen Dang Khoi, the chief interpreter with the 4th Battalion (Mechanized), 23d Infantry Tomahawks, was ambling around the battalion perimeter when two young women attracted his attention.

The 1st Brigade interpreter asked the two women to produce the official Vietnamese identification card, but they were unable to do so. Khoi directed them to enter the U.S. position. Immediately the women were searched

and a letter was found on one of them.

The Tomahawk interpreter translated the letter - "Why it's a mushy love letter," joked Khoi. He continued translating, "Even better than that, her boyfriend keeps making reference to his being a Viet Cong and having taken part in numerous missions," stated Khoi.

Hoi Chanh's Tip Helps To Detain Seven

1ST BDE - Information from a Hoi Chanh triggered a chain of events that resulted in the detention of seven Viet Cong suspects and the capture of their platoon's supply of weapons.

With the assistance of Hoi Chanh, soldiers from the 2d Platoon of Company B, 2d Battalion, 14th Infantry, picked up three VC suspects in a village six miles south of Cu Chi. Information obtained from the detainees indicated there were others hiding nearby.

A thorough search of the area uncovered a bunker where additional enemy soldiers might be hiding. The platoon's point man, Private First Class Ronald Hays of Rensselaer, Ind., began digging a hole in the top of the bunker. "As soon as I got a good-sized hole in the bunker, two hands shot up," said Hays. "I jumped back and lowered my M-79 and three Viet Cong suspects pushed their way up out of the bunker."

From questioning of the three, the whereabouts of an armorer was learned, and the Golden Dragons quickly surrounded the tunnel and tried to talk him out. "As I looked down into the tunnel one of his arms was exposed and when he showed no sign of coming on his own, I reached down and pulled him out," said Staff Sergeant Robert Keefer of Orlando, Fla.

After his extraction from the tunnel, the armorer led the Dragons to his platoon's supply of weapons which included 25 automatic rifles, two light machine guns, and miscellaneous mortar equipment.

WET AGAIN - Stream crossing comes naturally to men of Company C, 2d Battalion, 14th Infantry as they search for the enemy east of Cu Chi. Here, two infantrymen and a medic make their way through the murky water. (PHOTO BY SP4 LARRY WEIST)



Find 5 Tons Of Rice

1ST BDE - More than five tons of rice were taken from the enemy during a reconnaissance-in-force mission seven miles southwest of Go Dau Ha by two companies of the 2d Battalion, 14th Infantry.

The rice, in 100 pound bags, had been carefully concealed in sampans along the banks of a canal. Company A made the initial find.

"I jumped into a large covered sampan loaded with rice and started checking it out, and I saw a man hiding behind some bags in the rear," recalled Specialist 4 Robert Smith, of Lima, Ohio.

When the man came out he was questioned by an interpreter and detained as a VC suspect.

A thorough search of the area by Companies A and C uncovered more than 100 bags of rice. Most of the rice was found in sampans which were sunk after their motors were recovered.

The rice was lifted out by Chinook helicopter to Tay Ninh, where it will be distributed to the populace.

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TROPIC LIGHTNING NEWS

September 23, 1968

Mech Moves In Enemy Moves Out Leaving Ten Dead

Photos and Story By SP4 Denny Ellett

1ST BDE - Following up an intelligence report of NVA troops occupying Trung Hoa, a small village less than a mile southeast of Tay Ninh City, the 4th Battalion (Mechanized), 23d Infantry Tomahawks, moved in to rid the village of the dreaded intruders.

Lieutenant Colonel Clifford C. Neilson, Tomahawk commander, used the main road through the village to deploy the Tomahawks and elements of the 2d Battalion, 27th Infantry Wolfhounds. They were to sweep through the village and meet a blocking force formed of elements of the 2d Battalion, 34th Armor.

As the task force approached the village, Vietnamese Regional and Popular Force (RF-PF) soldiers began to move onto the road. Realizing that the RF-PF's could be NVA in disguise, Neilson directed Staff Sergeant Nguyen Van Dinh, a Tomahawk interpreter, to question the suspicious unit. He reported that they were in fact RF-PF's and learned that they were all that was left of the force protecting the village when the NVA moved in.

Pushing into the village, interpreters questioned the civilian populace and discovered that the NVA forces had taken refuge near the Cau Dai temple. The 1st Brigade infantrymen continued preparing themselves for the battle that was inevitable. When the task force reached the area of the temple, they were surprised to see that this was also the place that the villagers had chosen for protection.

The Tomahawks were beginning to think that the NVA had left because the Vietnamese civilians were gathered so close to where the enemy force was presumed to be. But, suddenly the NVA opened fire, showing no regard for the civilians gathered between the two forces.

The task force backed up slowly hoping that they could evacuate the innocent civilians from the area of contact.

When the villagers were out of the line of fire, the Tropic Lightning force intensified their fire on the enemy positions. Darkness approached, and the NVA showed no sign of slacking up.

The following day the Tomahawks acted as a blocking force while the ARVN 51st Ranger Battalion and tanks from 2d Battalion, 34th Armor swept through the area of contact. They received no enemy fire and learned that

during the night the NVA had fled dragging away their dead and injured.



MOVE OUT - Tomahawks from the 4th Battalion (Mechanized), 23d Infantry, roll through Tay Ninh City after NVA infiltrators fled from the city.

REINFORCEMENTS - Elements of the Tomahawks secure a landing zone for the 2d Battalion, 27th Infantry moving to reinforce units near Tay Ninh City.



SHOT OUT - A pair of Tomahawks from the 4th Bn (Mech), 23d Inf, block their ears against the noise of the 4.2 inch mortar being fired at enemy infiltrators near Tay Ninh City.

RPG's And Mortars Fell Like Rain

Golden Dragons Smash NVA Attack

1ST BDE - Set up in a routine night ambush, a 2d Battalion, 14th Infantry, platoon had only a familiar radio message to warn them of impending danger.

"The battalion S-2 called us about 10 p.m. and said he had information that an NVA force of at least 80 was

going to hit and attempt to overrun us that night," said First Lieutenant D.J. Gillespie of Mt. Morris, Mich., leader of the 3d Platoon, Company D.

The feeling of expectancy ran high among the men, and as Private First Class Duane Athey of St. Louis, Mo., stated: "I think we all knew something was going to happen because by dark all of the women and children had moved out of the village."

The platoon manned their positions and silently waited for anything and everything. Only 10 minutes after the radioed alert, the platoon received half of what they awaited - everything.

RPG's and mortars fell like rain; Gillespie said it was the most he had seen in any attack. The men's flak jackets and steel pots had their work cut out for them.

A thin bamboo curtain prevented several RPG's from penetrating the perimeter. As spontaneous as the barrage had begun, it ceased. But there was no lull in the fighting; the enemy immediately opened up on the American positions with .30 and .51 caliber machine guns.

Three hootches and a haystack within the perimeter were set afire by RPG rounds, and the blazing light marked the heart of the enemy's target.

"It was a good thing we weren't in the hootches," remarked Sergeant Art Helmer of East Herkimer, N.Y. "They (NVA) must have figured half of us would be killed in the initial burst, and they would cut down the other half when we came running out."

The illumination from the leaping flames proved to be more of a disadvantage to the enemy as the company-sized force launched an attack on the platoon's perimeter. The enemy had silhouetted themselves in the open area.

The Golden Dragons, outnumbered four to one, responded with fierce automatic fire, and reacted as human catapults whipping fragmentation grenades at the attackers.

As the close contact raged on, the NVA regulars continued to move closer to the GI's. "I was calling in on the radio for gunships," said Gillespie, "and just a few meters in front of us a mocking voice began yelling back, 'Where is your gunships GI?'"

During the battle, the small group of defenders saw at least 30 of the enemy drop in front of them. Above the din of the fighting, NVA officers were seen and heard talking on radios.

"We kept hearing this one guy yelling the same thing over and over out in front of us," said Sergeant Herb Lapidus of North Bergen, N.J. "So we threw several hand frags at him, and then he was quiet for the rest of the night. We thought he was a wounded officer trying to organize an assault."

When the NVA forces finally realized that the relentless Dragons were not about to withdraw, they pulled back and fired RPG's and M-79's at the impenetrable wall of defenders.

Each man was down to his last full magazine or less when a call came over the radio. The 2d Platoon of Company D gave their position as 150 meters to the north and moving in. The combined force beat back the diminishing NVA company.

A sweep through the area the following morning revealed five ox carts used to supply the communist troops with ammunition and weapons. Four enemy bodies were left behind by the fleeing NVA, and a massive blood slick floating on top of the rice paddy water gave evidence to much heavier enemy losses.

Viet Cong Mortars Hit School Yard Eight Small Children Are Wounded

CU CHI - For the children of Duc Hue, 14 miles southwest of Cu Chi, the morning had been one of running around the school yard much as children everywhere on summer vacation. A meeting had been called by the district chief to discuss the formation of a civilian defense group to protect the hamlet from the Viet Cong. But for the children, the war was far away as they played while their parents met in the schoolhouse.

Then, the children's playful shouts turned to scream of pain as Viet Cong mortars crashed into the school yard wounding eight children and two adults.

Vietnamese soldiers in the area requested a medevac helicopter to evacuate the wounded. A "dustoff" from the 25th Infantry Division's Cu Chi base camp answered the call for help.

"Several of the children were in pretty bad shape and we had to evacuate them to Long Binh," said Sergeant

Isaac E. McLemore at Cu Chi's 12th Evacuation Hospital. "One of the children had a bad head injury, and I don't think he is going to live."

"Three of the children are being treated here at the hospital," continued the Maryville, Tenn., native. "One six year old boy has five wounds in the chest and one in his leg."

The people of Duc Hue will not soon forget what Viet Cong mortars did to their village and eight small children for whom the war was so distant.

Darndest Things In Kids' Letters

3D BDE - Mail call is always an important event in Vietnam, but especially so when you receive 25 letters at one crack!

Specialist 4 Herb Burdett of Company D, 3d Battalion, 22d Infantry of Chicago, Ill., was the unsuspecting G.I. deluged by a raft of letters from the 7th grade students of Dawes Elementary School on Chicago's southwest side.

One little girl seemed anxious to help.

"I sure wish I could help in some way - but it seems like you guys have it pretty well situated." Then she added, "well, I won't keep you any longer from your job" - as if a soldier won't be able to find time to read his mail.

Another little girl came up with this tribute to the American fighting man:

"You must have a lot of courage to hold a gun and face the enemy. Boy! I am sure glad I am a girl! I don't even have the courage to face my mother when I am late."

Army-Navy Provide Ears For Infantry

3D BDE - The 3d Battalion, 22d Infantry, has ears that can hear sounds several miles away thanks to Army-Navy portable radar sets in use throughout the battalion.

It has only been in the past few months that the 3d Brigade, 25th Infantry Division Regulars, have begun to send these radar sets out to the field for use as detection devices.

Sergeant Norris Whitford of Jamestown, N.Y., is in charge of the ground surveillance section that operates the sets. He explained that the device sends out a high frequency radio signal, which bounces off a background such as a treeline. The sender then monitors the set with a pair of headphones. If there are no moving objects between the background and the set, the signal will be constant - otherwise it will pulsate at an irregular rate.

Specialist 4 Fred Moffitt of Rockville, Md., explained that it is a new accurate device. The set runs on two batteries that are recharged by means of a generator.

The 3d of the 22d radar crew was able to recall several situations where their set actually picked up and identified movement out in the field. "One time as we were set up on the bridge at the start of the Ben Cui 'freeway', out of Dau Tieng," said Moffitt, "we detected a man crawling across the 'freeway'."

"Perhaps our most famous achievement" explained Whitford, "was the job we did at Fire Support Base Burt alongside the Ho Chi Minh trail. We were credited with killing five enemy soldiers during that famous battle and were responsible for alerting much of the perimeter to the presence of enemy activity."

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