



Vol 4 No. 23

TROPIC LIGHTNING NEWS

June 9, 1969

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Night Assault Against Tomahawks' Laager Costs NVA Unit 51 Dead

By SGT Roger Welt

TAY NINH - Infantrymen from the 4th Battalion (Mechanized), 23d Infantry had settled into their night defensive position 13 miles east of Tay Ninh City. They were ready for anything the enemy might try. Their preparedness was soon put to the test - and 51 North Vietnamese soldiers were killed in an abortive attack.

The enemy began the attack with a mortar barrage followed by rocket-propelled grenade fire.

"The mortar and RPG fire didn't last long," said Specialist 4 Amos Lemmerman of Hempstead, Long Island, New York. "Trip flares started going off illuminating small bands of enemy soldiers crawling toward our position," he continued.

"The .50 caliber machineguns on our armored personnel carriers were very effective. We mowed the enemy down while he was trying to cut the wires to our anti-personnel mines (claymores)," said Specialist 4 Steve Allen of Peonia, Colorado. "One of our men fired into the back of one of the mines, exploding it and wiping out a squad of NVA soldiers.

First Lieutenant Joe Hiembold of Monmouth Beach, N.J., an artillery observer attached to the 4/23 from the 7th Battalion, 11th Field Artillery, was directing fire from five different batteries from the top of an armored personnel carrier during the whole fight.

"Those batteries were beautiful; they just kept firing and firing, right where I told them to," said Hiembold.

Supporting artillery fired more than 1000 rounds during the hour-and-a-half long battle.

Captain John Blades of Schofield Barracks, Hawaii, commanding officer of the Tomahawks' Alpha Company, had nothing but praise for his men. "From the very beginning, my men didn't let up once. The enemy tried to get to us, but he made a fatal mistake," Blades said.

The Tomahawks left their defensive positions at first light to survey the battlefield. They found 14 AK-47 rifles, six RPG launchers, assorted web gear, hundreds of rounds of small arms' ammunition, and a small quantity of medical supplies. Four enemy suspects were detained in the action.



COVER - A Tropic Lightning soldier from the 4th Battalion (Mechanized), 23d Infantry Tomahawks crawls through a kill zone in the enemy infested Crescent area. (PHOTO BY SGT ROGER WELT)

Triple-A Threat Hits Cong; Kills 29, Overruns Bunkers

By SP5 Doug Elliott

CU CHI - Elements from Alpha Company, 1st Battalion (Mechanized), 5th Infantry and Alpha Company, 2d Battalion, 14th Infantry, while working with Alpha Company of the 2d Battalion, 34th Armor smote mightily a Viet Cong force in a rubber plantation northwest of Cu Chi.

By the end of the day, 29 Viet Cong soldiers had lost their lives to the Tropic Lightning troops, and one enemy became a rallier to the South Vietnamese government through the Dreadnaughts.

The American forces lost only one man in the highly successful operation.

The morning found a platoon from the mechanized and armor units sweeping the thickly wooded area. First signs of enemy activity were discovered by Specialist 4 Herbert Monroe of Baton Rouge, La., a member of the Dreadnaughts' Alpha Company, 2d platoon.

While searching a rice paddy dike, Monroe found a metal box containing a small Vietnamese booklet with travel information, pointing out cities and routes and the best means of crossing over the areas.

Monroe also found a box containing carbine ammunition and three rocket-propelled grenade boosters.

The mech-armor task force moved on along the Saigon River banks on the far edge of the area. Swinging back toward Cu Chi, the Dreadnaught-Bobcat team set up a blocking position for two eagle flights to arrive with units from Alpha Company, 2d Battalion, 14th Infantry.

By 1:00 pm, the three Alpha Companies were in contact with a Viet Cong force in a series of bunkers. The initial contact left seven enemy dead in their bunkers and five Viet Cong attempting to escape.

Pushing deeper into the area, the 2d Brigade infantrymen and armor drew AK-47 rifle fire again and once more retaliated on the new enemy positions. Gunships added their firepower and enemy resistance died.

One Viet Cong, seeing the "Triple A" threat approaching him, decided to rally to the steel giants from the 2d Battalion, 34th Armor. One AK-47 was also captured.

Small items were found throughout the day, such as clothing, a helmet liner, an entrenching tool, saws, and 300 AK-47 rounds.

The action ended around 5:00 in the afternoon. After Alpha Company of the Golden Dragons was extracted by

choppers, the armor-mechanized force moved to a new location for the next day's sweep.

...If It's The Last Thing We Ever...

Lieutenant Colonel McLean never misses a chance to use the four-chair Cu Chi Beauty Salon. Neither do several lieutenants, captains and majors. Of course these officers and gentlemen are ladies and very happy over the new PX Salon at the 12th Evac Hospital.

Three attendants give manicures, washes and hair styling service Monday through Saturday, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., by appointment only. Other services for the average 28 customers per week include permanents and tints.

The American female population of Cu Chi is about 70, nurses and Red Cross girls, and the addition of this back-in-the-world facility is expected to provide a definite morale boost.

"They do a very nice job. They're excellent beauticians," said LTC Mary F. McLean, USAMC, of the shop's staff.

ONSLAUGHT - Dreadnaught armor stalks into enemy positions in search of any North Vietnamese who might remain in an area contested and taken by the 2d Battalion, 34th Armor. (PHOTO BY SP5 DOUG ELLIOTT)



Decorated

BRONZE STAR (HEROISM)

CPT John T. Mader, Co C, 2d Bn, 14th Inf
 CPT Harry L. Ikner, HHC, 2d Bn, 27th Inf
 CPT Clarence W. Cornett, Co A, 2d Bn, 27th Inf
 1LT Burton J. Tepper, Co C, 125th Sig Bn
 1LT Troy E. Ross, Co A, 2d Bn, 12th Inf
 1LT Wayne A. Overcast, C Btry, 1st Bn, 8th Arty
 1LT Allan L. Reuschel, Co A, 65th Engr Bn
 1LT Michael Klages, 25th MP Co, 25th Div
 1LT Curtis McFarland, Co B, 3d Bn, 22d Inf
 2LT Jose A. Yanez, Co D, 2d Bn, 27th Inf
 2LT Paul B. Grigg, Co B, 2d Bn, 22d Inf
 2LT William S. Loper, Co B, 1st Bn 27th Inf
 SFC Robert W. Leathers, Co E, 4th Bn 9th Inf
 SSG Ronald G. Weers, B Btry, 7th Bn, 11th Fld Arty
 SSG John R. Abbott, Co C, 1st Bn, 27th Inf
 SSG Larry J. White, Co C, 1st Bn, 5th Inf
 SSG Jerrie K. Ramage, Co B, 1st Bn, 27th Inf

SP4 Richard D. Herzog, Co B, 1st Bn, 27th Inf
 SP4 Robert G. Berry, B Btry, 7th Bn, 11th Arty
 SP4 Quentin R. Fox Jr., B Btry, 7th Bn, 11th Fld Arty
 SP4 Gerald Anderson, Co B, 1st Bn, 27th Inf
 SP4 Elisio Valles, Co D, 1st Bn, 5th Inf
 SP4 Alfred F. Popp, Co A, 2d Bn, 27th Inf
 SP4 William H. Durden, Co C, 2d Bn, 22d Inf
 SP4 Brad M. Baker, Co B, 2d Bn, 22d Inf
 SP4 Thomas E. Harris, Co C, 2d Bn, 22d Inf
 SP4 Bruce E. Smith, Co C, 2d Bn, 22d Inf
 SP4 William T. Marlow, Co B, 2d Bn, 22d Inf
 SP4 Rudolfo, Gutierrez, Co C, 1st Bn, 27th Inf
 SP4 Dewwy L. Owens, HHC, 3d Bn, 22d Inf
 SP4 Jose T. Zapata, Co C, 1st Bn, 27th Inf
 SP4 Frederick Jenkins, Co C, 1st Bn, 27th Inf
 SP4 Stephen Antonishak, Co A, 1st Bn, 5th Inf
 SP4 George E. Day, Co C, 4th Bn, 9th Inf

SSG William J. Lorenz, Co B, 2d Bn, 22d Inf
 SSG Charles A. Hamilton, Co B, 2d Bn, 22d Inf
 SSG Victoriano Rivera, Co A, 4th Bn, 23d Inf
 SSG Lonnie Jackson, Co B, 2d Bn, 22d Inf
 SSG Erich E. Morris, Co E, 3d Bn, 22d Inf
 SGT Charles Fleck, Co C, 1st Bn, 27th Inf
 SGT David G. Miller, B Btry, 7th Bn, 11th Fld Arty
 SGT Lawrence J. Smith, Co B, 1st Bn, 27th Inf
 SGT Kerry L. Orr, Co B, 1st Bn, 27th Inf
 SGT Billy W. Smith, Co A, 1st Bn, 27th Inf
 SGT Alvin Grimes, Co B, 2d Bn, 22d Inf
 SGT Johnnie J. Jones, Co B, 2d Bn, 22d Inf
 SGT Carlis M. Bryant, Co B, 2d Bn, 22d Inf
 SGT Joseph V. Heltsley, Co D, 2d Bn, 12th Inf
 SP4 Carl Blackburn, B Btry, 7th Bn, 11th Fld Arty
 SP4 August P. Gronniger, B Btry, 7th Bn, 11th Fld Arty
 SP4 Carlos Velozo, Co A, 65th Engr Bn,
 SP4 Allen W. Ray, B Btry, 7th Bn, 11th Fld Arty
 SP4 Daniel E. Scott, B Btry, 7th Bn, 11th Fld Arty
 SP4 Lewis S. Thayer, B Btry, 7th Bn, 11th Fld Arty
 SP4 Danny Hunter, B Btry, 7th Bn, 11th Arty
 SP4 David J. Henry, B Btry, 7th Bn, 11th Fld Arty
 SP4 Rudolph P. Davalos, Co B, 1st Bn, 27th Inf
 SP4 Robert D. Livingston, Co B, 1st Bn, 27th Inf
 SP4 Alan J. Hicks, Co B, 1st Bn, 27th Inf

SP4 William J. Ozanich, Co C, 4th Bn, 9th Inf
 SP4 Warren Johnson, Co C, 4th Bn, 9th Inf
 SP4 Carsem D. Tipton, Co B, 1st Bn, 27th Inf
 SP4 David W. McCormick, Co B, 1st Bn, 27th Inf
 SP4 Stephen R. Tarragon, Co B, 1st Bn, 27th Inf
 SP4 Harry J. Miller, Co B, 1st Bn, 27th Inf
 SP4 Wesley J. Wilber, Co A, 3d Bn, 22d Inf
 SP4 Larry G. Salares, Co B, 1st Bn, 27th Inf
 SP4 Ronald E. Olsen, Co B, 1st Bn, 27th Inf
 PFC Jimmey E. Jewell, B Btry, 7th Bn, 11th Fld Arty
 PFC Robert L. Barber, Co B, 1st Bn, 27th Inf
 PFC Varoul Cook, Co A, 1st Bn, 5th Inf
 PFC Ronald C. Moore, Co A, 1st Bn, 5th Inf
 PFC Larry A. Saville, Co B, 1st Bn, 27th Inf
 PFC Kenneth R. Mackey, Co D, 2d Bn, 12th Inf
 PFC John H. Strange, Co B, 1st Bn, 27th Inf
 PFC Martin C. Waer, Co B, 1st Bn, 27th Inf
 PFC Ronald J. Zollner, Co B, 1st Bn, 27th Inf
 PFC Larry A. Nichlos, Co C, 1st Bn, 27th Inf
 PFC Kenneth G. Sikes, Co B, 1st Bn, 27th Inf
 PFC James C. Jackson, Co C, 1st Bn, 27th Inf
 PFC David D. Mittag, Co C, 4th Bn, 9th Inf
 PFC Russell J. Dreyer, Co B, 1st Bn, 27th Inf
 PFC Donnel Delaney, Co B, 1st Bn, 27th Inf

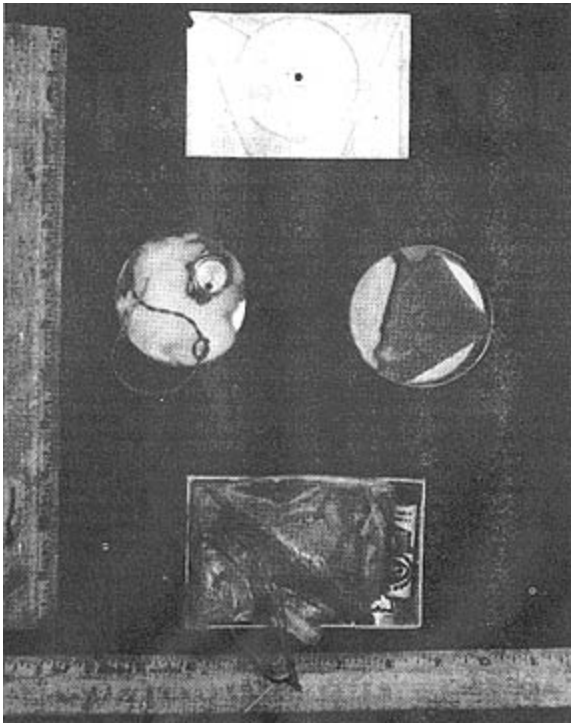
VC Bombing Attempts Up

Intelligence data now seem to indicate that the Viet Cong, frustrated in their attempts to storm or penetrate US bases, are now trying to infiltrate explosive charges onto the bases.

This tactic has been attempted previously, with targets where maximum damage can be inflicted like POL dumps and ammunition storage areas.

Specific methods of smuggling in such explosives are not known. Methods for preventing the successful use of terrorist bombs include thorough checks of the labor force coming onto bases and strictly enforced supervision of groups of indigenous employees during the day.

Additionally, all personnel must be on the alert for objects and packages suspiciously placed. If you spot one of these items, contact the MPs and the EOD team immediately.



TROUBLE - A VC terrorist bomb with its plastic timer was recently picked up by 1st Brigade's S-2 as the result of several tips. Its small size makes detection difficult.

Reminder: You're invited to listen to the 25th Division's Radio Show 'Lightning 25' every Sunday morning at 11:30 on AFVN, 54 on your radio dial. Army Specialist Jack Schmitt each week spotlights new and exciting talent from the ranks of the Tropic Lightning. Listen this Sunday, you may hear someone you know.

Interim Health Plan Set

The Department of Defense has established a special, short-term health insurance program for servicemen being separated from active duty effective September 1st.

Developed in cooperation with the health insurance industry, the new, low cost plan is offered during separation processing and covers its purchasers for the following 90 days.

Servicemen will have a choice of two plans, one offered by Mutual of Omaha and the other by Blue Cross-Blue Shield. The Blue Cross-Blue Shield plan will include maternity benefits.

Total cost of the plan will be paid by the serviceman. The amount for 90 days of coverage will range from \$16.50 for self only. For comprehensive coverage of self and family, the charge will be \$90.

TROPIC LIGHTNING

Combat Honor Roll

Added to the Tropic Lightning Combat Honor Roll this week is Specialist 4 Michael Adams, a rifleman and

radio-telephone operator with Company A, 2d Battalion, 12th Infantry Warriors.

Specialist Adams distinguished himself by heroic actions on May 1st while his unit was moving towards its night defensive position. An enemy force tried to ambush the unit, opening fire on the lead element; which took several casualties.

Reacting immediately, Specialist Adams crawled through 35 meters of hostile fire into the kill zone to aid his comrades. The area was thickly booby-trapped, but Adams, with complete disregard for his own safety, continuously re-entered the area amid a barrage of enemy fire to evacuate the casualties.

Specialist Adams made the trip six times, each time returning with a wounded man and his equipment. His valorous actions were responsible for saving several lives.

Specialist Adams' personal bravery, aggressiveness and devotion to duty are in keeping with the highest traditions of the Army and reflect great credit upon himself, his unit, the Division and the Army.



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SP4 Arthur Brown	2/12	PFC Dan Stone	4/9
SP4 Richard Huhta	2/14	SGT Roger Welt	4/23
SP4 Karl Karlgaard	2/27	SP4 Pete Freeman	7/11
SP4 Robert Williams	2/27		

Finds Freedom from Hunger and Fear

Hoi Chanh Is Pleased with His Decision

TAY NINH - Wearing civilian clothes and an old worn-out pair of sandals, and waving a Chieu Hoi leaflet, Truong Van Hoanh, 17, cautiously walked into the 688th Regional Forces compound near Tay Ninh City.

The Regional Forces, who work in conjunction with the 4th Battalion (Mechanized), 23d Infantry, rushed out to greet the nervous and excited young soldier who had decided to rally to the allied side.

Moments after the young Hoi Chanh walked into the compound, Private First Class James Emerson of Applecreek, Ohio, adviser to the Vietnamese outpost, radioed the 4/23 commander, Lieutenant Colonel G.E. Taylor of Shelby, N.C. Taylor arrived on the scene immediately, followed by an interrogation team.

With everybody participating, the friendly forces were able to communicate with the scared young rallier.

Hoanh was forced to become a Viet Cong several months ago. Until five days before he rallied he had been an ammo carrier. His last five days as a VC were spent as an official squad member. He threw away his rifle before turning himself in.

Constant hunger was his main reason for giving up.

Young Hoanh was very scared at first. His squad leader had told him that Americans kill Hoi Chanh. "His nerves calmed down after we told him that no harm would come to him," said Taylor. "He was very co-operative. If there was ever any doubt in his mind about anything it soon faded. We kept giving him cold soda and iced tea which he thought was great," continued Taylor.

Truong Van Hoanh no longer has to worry about the lack of food, clothing or medicine. Neither does he need to concern himself with the thought of B-52 raids, artillery and allied firepower. Life means a little more to him; it's worth living again.



HAVE A LIGHT - First Lieutenant James Mitchell of Theodore, Ala., lights a cigarette for Hoanh as interrogators from the 25th MI Detachment stay in background. (PHOTO BY SGT ROGER WELT)

HAVE A SODA - Lieutenant Colonel G. E. Taylor, commanding officer of the 4th Battalion (Mechanized), 23d Infantry, hands Truong Van Hoanh, a Hoi Chanh, a cold soda at Fire Support Base Rawlins, seven miles east of Tay Ninh. (PHOTO BY SGT ROGER WELT)



Chaplains Take Sunday to Fire Bases

CU CHI - To the men of the 25th Infantry Division Artillery, Sunday can be like any other day of the week. When men work 16 hours or more, seven days a week for almost a year, the days can seem all the same.

The two DivArty chaplains help change this. They bring Sunday to the men.

Major Joseph E. Galle of Pineville, La., conducts Protestant services and Captain Donato P. Silveri of Philadelphia, Pa., conducts Catholic services at all DivArty fire support bases at least once a week. The

Chaplains travel together most of the time.

"Every chaplain in Vietnam is required to perform a minimum of four services a week. Generally, we conduct from 13 to 20. We have held up to 22 services in one week," Galle said.

Easter proved to be a busy period for the chaplains. Every fire support base was visited. Silveri commented, "We have men at fire support bases who don't have the opportunity to get into base camp for services. They have to wait for us to come to them. We try to get to every fire support base that comes under our responsibility."

At Fire Support Base Pershing, Specialist 4 Mario F. Santanna of Bravo Battery, 1st Battalion, 8th Artillery, says he enjoys talking with the Silveri. "He helps morale," the Pekin, Ill., native said. "He goes from gun to gun and talks to the men. When he's here he talks to every man he can see. He doesn't always talk about Vietnam, but about what's happening back in the world."

At Fire Support Base Patton, Alpha Battery, 3d Battalion, 13th Artillery's Sergeant Mick Ripley of San Angelo, Tex., thinks Galle is "more like a civilian. He makes you feel like you're at the church back home."

Both chaplains agree morale is extremely high on the fire support bases they visit. According to Galle, "Men on fire support bases feel like they are doing a job, and they are. Their jobs are important and they know it. They know their commanders and NCOs are concerned, too."

According to Silveri's assistant, Specialist 4 Thomas P. Brady of Yonkers, N.Y., and Galle's assistant, Private First Class Dean L. Christensen of Vinton, Iowa, church attendance has more than doubled since the chaplains arrived at the 25th Division Artillery's chapel in Cu Chi. Galle arrived at Cu Chi four months ago and Silveri six months ago. Silveri was chaplain for four months in Saigon prior to coming to Cu Chi.

Galle states, "I try to make the services more active, have more Scripture reading and singing. I try to give them something to think about, for instance, how to handle their fears, loneliness, worries, doubts, things of this nature."

The battery commander lets the chaplains know when the best time is to conduct the service. Fire missions sometimes are called in the middle of a service, and the men scramble to their guns. After the fire mission is over, the service is resumed.

A MOMENT OF PRAYER - Mass is held at Fire Support Base Pershing. Men of Bravo Battery, 1st Battalion, 8th Artillery, pray with Chaplain Donato Silveri. Sometimes a fire mission is called and the men must scramble for their guns. Afterward, the service is resumed.
(PHOTO BY SP4 KEN FAIRMAN)



25th Aviation Is Division's 'Baby'

The 25th Aviation Battalion is the "baby" of 25th Division units.

The battalion, whose motto is "We Fly for the Troops," was organized in 1957. It earned its first battle streamer in Vietnam.

The youngest of the division's infantry and artillery battalions is the 2d Battalion, 34th Armor, which was organized at Fort Knox, Ky. in 1941. The Dreadnaughts earned two battle streamers during five World War II campaigns, and was assigned to the Tropic Lightning Division in 1957.



SCATTER!!! - Regional Forces from the 165th RF Company scatter as the choppers hit the LZ. Immediately after touching down, the Regional Forces set up a defensive perimeter around the landing zone.

RFs Move Fast, Hit Hard

Regulars and Regional Forces Assault Together

Story & Photo Feature

by

SP4 David DeMauro

TAY NINH - Fighting an enemy who chooses to hide within thick jungle and heavy brush necessitates that the allied forces be aggressive in searching for the "little man."

For three years the 3d Battalion, 22nd Infantry, has been conducting extensive air-mobile assaults into the thickly vegetated terrain of War Zone C southwest of Tay Ninh, seeking out Charlie and blocking his infiltration route leading from Cambodia to Saigon.

Mobility has been the key to success in these operations. Highly maneuverable Huey choppers belonging to the 187th Assault Helicopter Company have been dropping the Regulars into remote landing zones within the enemy-infested territory.

Backing up the Regulars as they hit the ground are lethal Cobra gunships from the Rat Pack gunship section of the 187th. Should the enemy decide to show his face, the Cobras are ready to react with grenades, rockets, and flying lead launched from mini-guns.

Since the first plunge was made into the triple canopied jungle 5 miles northwest of Saigon, new and better ways of locating and destroying the enemy have been devised. Recently, well-trained and highly skilled Regional Forces of the Army of the Republic of South Vietnam have participated in combat assaults.

Men of the 165th Regional Force Company were trained in their outpost at Cao Xa, a small hamlet four miles west of Tay Ninh City. Captain John Malone of Mineral Wells, Tex., the Deputy District Advisor, conducted classes in the combat assault school. A chopper was used by the Regional Forces to practice mounting and dismounting. After plenty of ground practice, the Crusaders ran two "nine-ship lifts" from Cao Xa to Fire Support Base Washington to give the Vietnamese some practical experience without the danger of enemy interference.

"The training has been very effective in building the confidence of the Regional Force soldier in working away from his outpost," commented Major James Petty of Fort Worth, Tex., who is the Senior District Advisor of the Cao Xa compound. Further training will lead the Regional Forces soldier to even more extensive combat operations away from his outposts. RF participation can truly serve to be valuable in the over-all war effort.

**HEAVY LOAD AND HOT WORK -**

Beating your way through the jungle is hot and tiring.

Specialist 4 Ralph Johnson of Vermillion, Kans., a machine gunner with the Regulars' Charlie Company, looks forward to riding back to the fire support base at the end of the mission.

WALKING isn't terribly exciting, but it's a necessary job. Here Sergeant David Strong leads a patrol while he watches for booby traps. Strong is from Houston, Tex., and serves with Charlie Company, 3d Battalion, 22d Infantry.





WAITING FOR THE CALL - After the infantrymen have been dropped at their landing zone the helicopters head back to Tay Ninh base camp where they will wait for the call to pick up the troops.



FLYING AT 2,500 FEET is cool and troublesome. "The Big Fan" blows plenty of refreshing air through its open doors. This phase of the combat assault is "in" with the jet set.

SWITCHING PLACES - The 165th Regional Force Company hits the dirt as the Crusaders lift off from the landing zone. Combined efforts of the Regulars and MACV advisers have aided the Regional Forces on combat assaults after several training sessions.



CHARGING onto a Crusader chopper as it touches down on the pickup zone are Regular infantrymen. They load on both sides of the helicopter before lifting off.

FATHER COBRA of the Rat Pack makes a run above the heads of the Regulars. Protection like this is nice to have around when you're not on familiar ground.



Wolfhounds' Modern Horatius And Platoon Hold That Tiber

By SP5 Jack R. Anderson

DAU TIENG - First Lieutenant Robert J. Moore is a modern-day Horatius.

But unlike that Roman hero, who defended the Tiber River bridgeheads with only two companions and a sword, Moore secures the Dau Tieng bridgehead with a rifle platoon from 1st Battalion, 27th Infantry Wolfhounds plus a host of 20th Century weapons and sophisticated listening and spotting devices.

The Dau Tieng Bridge, spanning the Saigon River near the 3d Brigade base camp, has been tagged the most critical single structure in the brigade's area of operation. It serves as a communications link between brigade and division, supporting operations that extend to the Cambodian border.

"Our biggest threat comes from enemy sappers," said Moore, a Tampa, Fla., native. "I remember when a captured sapper battalion commander outlined his battalion's method for blowing bridges. He said his men could carry up to a 300 pound satchel charge, underwater, moving with the current. When they came to a structure, they simply cut away the charge, and let themselves be carried away from the explosion by the river current," Moore said.

To counter the sapper threat, Moore's bridge defenders have placed a barbed wire barricade, suspended from wooden planks, into the river on both sides of the bridge. "A skillful swimmer might be able to get through the wire, but he'd never be able to drag his charge through. If he tried, he'd make a lot of noise and surface disturbance," said Moore.

In addition to the barbed wire barricade, the defenders blast the surrounding water at irregular intervals with a quarter pound charge of C-4 explosive.

"If that doesn't kill a sapper, it will surely make him think twice about hitting the bridge," Moore said.

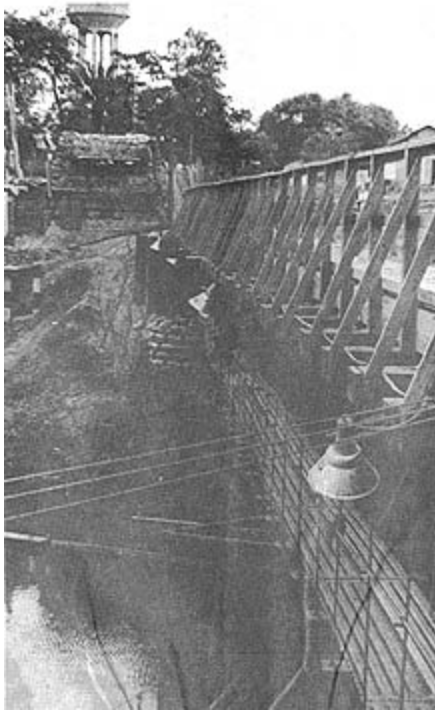
The world of electronics plays an important part in the defense of the Dau Tieng bridgehead. Sensitive listening devices and radar are two of the bridge's front line defenses.

"My radar people stay out here full time. They're trained well, and, with the experience they receive on the job here, they are definitely a threat to any enemy who has thoughts of blowing this bridge. Of course, radar can't stop an enemy, it can only give us extra eyes and ears - but that's enough," Moore said.

The bridge is also defensively equipped with high intensity lighting, a series of well-fortified bunkers and other fighting positions, all constructed by Charlie Company, 588th Engineer Battalion at Dau Tieng.

"About the biggest action we've seen since I've been at the bridge has been a two-hour firefight with some snipers. I really don't think they had any intention of taking the bridge," said Moore. "Every once in awhile, we receive one or two sniper rounds, but it's probably just a North Vietnamese or Viet Cong checking out his weapon after he cleaned it."

Moore won't receive all the land he can plow in a day like his ancient counterpart, Horatius. He'll just get the satisfaction of doing a tough job well.



LINK - The Dau Tieng Bridge, wood, wire and what-not, straddles the Saigon River near the Tropic Lightning's 3d Brigade base camp. The bridge is a vital link in the Brigade's logistical chain that stretches to the Cambodian border.
(PHOTO BY SP5 JACK R. ANDERSON)

Whiskey fifth Readies Roads, Machines for Rainy Day War

By SP4 David C. Mercer

CU CHI - The enemy forces in the Tropic Lightning area of operations are about to be joined by two of their most formidable allies - mud and rain. And, like the enemy, these allies are expected to be beaten. The toll of damages and time lost to mud and rain will be less for Tropic Lightning this year.

Lieutenant Colonel Edward C. Gibson, commanding officer of the 65th Engineer Battalion, said, "All of our direct and general support companies have been engaged almost exclusively during the past two months preparing fire support base and main supply routes for the rainy season."

The preparations include the digging of ditches in all fire support bases in the division area of operations, upgrading of roads to include emplacement of culverts, stockpiling of laterite and culverts, and prepackaging of culverts, bridges and rafts.

New fire support bases, such as Devins and Emory, are being built close to paved roads. Bunkers are being built above ground and drainage ditches are being dug around the fire support bases.

Captain Richard Sonstelie of Alexandria, Va., is the company commander for Delta Company. He has the responsibility for building Fire Support Base Wood III and improving Mahone II, and maintenance of roads in the Dau Tieng area.

Captain Sonstelie says, "Our concern is, to the maximum extent possible, to preserve the mobility of the infantry and mechanized units of the Third Brigade."

Echo Company has prepared bridging in advance so that they will be ready to go when and where needed. There are three H-frames ready for airlift in lengths from 23 feet to 45 feet. The H-frames are bridge frames stripped as much as possible so that they can be carried by a flying crane.

A 38-foot dry span bridge is already loaded on a truck ready for immediate use, as is a five-float reinforced bridge. In addition to these, the bridge company has placed four Armored Vehicle Launch Bridges at strategic

locations; Tay Ninh, Dau Tieng, Trang Bang, and Cu Chi, so that they can rapidly provide bridging capabilities anywhere in the division area.

The AVLB is a 60-foot folding portable hydraulic dry-span bridge mounted on a tank chassis. Using the powerful hydraulic system it can lay the bridge and pick it up from either end.

The mud and rain which could hinder the effectiveness of combat units at fire support bases and on operations will present little problem this year as a result of the base relocation, drainage and road work done by the 65th Engineer Battalion.

"Rain has always been a problem to vehicular travel," says Lieutenant Colonel Edward C. Gibson. "This is especially true in Vietnam where it rains almost six months a year, but we think we're ahead of the problem this year."

Yes, Rally Once Again

CU CHI - A former Viet Cong who has been trying to rally to the South Vietnamese government for a year and four months finally made it to freedom recently. He surrendered to elements of the 2d Battalion, 34th Armor, near Cu Chi.

The new Hoi Chanh (rallier), nicknamed Charlie by the Dreadnaughts, first tried to rally shortly before the Tet offensive of 1968. After completing a re-education course at a Hoi Chanh village, Charlie returned to the home of his parents for a visit. There he was recaptured by the Viet Cong.

He was taken to the Hobo Woods and forced to live in a tunnel for five months. Then came six months of hard labor. He escaped once but was recaptured. More long months in solitary confinement underground. Finally he slipped away for good when security became lax.

Information Charlie supplied the Dreadnaughts led to the arrest of four Viet Cong suspects.

Captain James N. Crocker of Hubert, N.C., commander of the Phu Hoa District Scout Section, explained the difficulty of remaining a free Hoi Chanh this way: "Many of the Vietnamese have extremely strong family ties. The Viet Cong realize this and have only to wait and watch to recapture a Hoi Chanh when he makes the inevitable return to his village."

Carson Scout Sparks Victory

By SP4 David DeMauro

TAY NINH - While on an air-mobile operation 11 and one-half miles west of Tay Ninh City, Delta Company, 3d Battalion, 22d Infantry Regulars killed 17 North Vietnamese rocketeers and captured numerous weapons and web gear.

Tom Nelson, a Vietnamese scout who was given the American name by an allied companion, was the first to make contact with the enemy forces. While walking point for the company, Tom encountered an NVA soldier who thought the scout was an NVA and wanted to know what unit Tom was from. Tom asked the NVA if he wanted to Chieu Hoi (rally). Not knowing what was happening, the NVA took a quick look around and noticed the Regulars backing up Tom. The enemy soldier started to run but was cut down by Tom's M-16.

The lead started flying in all directions. The Regulars killed 17 NVA.

During the action, Charlie Company assaulted to assist Delta.

The next morning they moved into the base camp where the enemy force had been and uncovered three 107mm rockets as they entered.

"We knew right away that they had left," said Captain William Vestal of Glendale, Ariz. "Right away we

started finding weapons and munitions and called for mine sweepers."

Lieutenant Colonel Robert Carmichael of Columbus, Ga., battalion commander, was flying overhead in his command-and-control helicopter and returned immediately to Tay Ninh base camp to pick up mine sweepers."

"I knew we needed them to find the buried munitions," commented Carmichael. "They definitely paid off."

All in all, 14 107mm rockets were uncovered, along with an 82mm mortar tube with bipod legs and base plate, 57 82mm mortar rounds with fuses, one AK-47 assault rifle, and 12 rocket launchers.

"I was digging in the bottom of a bunker when I felt something tubular in shape so I called for assistance," one regular said. Specialist 4 Ed Sullivan of Charleston, W. Va., came to help scrape away the dirt. The "something tubular" turned out to be an 82mm mortar tube.



WORKING TOGETHER - United States and South Vietnamese Army officers use radios to move their troops on a combined operation near Duc Hue. First Lieutenant Vincent J. Martin Jr., Trenton, N.J. (left), of the 2d Battalion, 27th Infantry Wolfhounds and Lieutenant Mai The Nghia of Duc Hue 'get on the horn' as the units maneuver. (PHOTO BY SP4 KARL KARLGAARD)

Ambush Turned on Cong

By SP5 Jack Anderson

DAU TIENG - Battling Bravo Company, 1st Battalion, 27th Infantry, fighting their way out of an estimated platoon-sized ambush, killed eight North Vietnamese soldiers and Viet Cong troops recently ten miles south of here.

At almost the same time, Charlie Troop, 3d Squadron, 4th Cavalry, operationally attached to the Wolfhounds for the day, fought off an estimated company-sized element killing two enemy soldiers.

When the action occurred, Bravo Company Wolfhounds were engaged in a sweep operation along the Saigon River near Dau Tieng with the Cavalrymen working in close support.

One of the biggest discoveries of the sweep came when the Wolfhounds, again working with the Cavalrymen, uncovered a tunnel - 10 feet deep and 65 feet long - thought to have been a hospital.

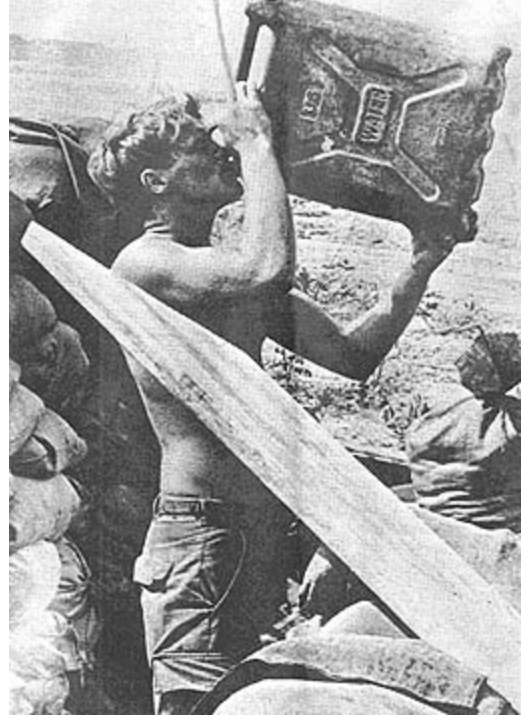
Inside the tunnel, the troopers found four CHICOM hand grenades, four SKS rifles, four life preservers, 12 shot gun shells, 100 pounds of rice, 30 uniforms, and five rifle grenades. In another tunnel close by, they found an 82mm mortar intact, 19 rounds of 82mm ammunition and two RPG-7 rounds.

Other action resulted in the location and destruction of three bangalore torpedoes, 2,000 rounds of .51 caliber machinegun ammunition, 11 CHICOM hand grenades, six rifle grenades, five Viet Cong gas masks, three RPG-7 rounds, one RPG-2 round, and 1,100 pounds of rice.



ACTION FORWARD - Two 2d Battalion, 12th Infantry Warriors team up to point out enemy positions and lay down cover fire. At the same time other troops are moving up on the enemy line. (PHOTO BY SP4 ART BROWN)

THIRSTY WORK - Specialist 4 Courtney Cosgrove of Vanwert, Ohio, tanks up during a break from bunker building at Fire Support Base Emory, three miles from Cu Chi. Cosgrove is a mortarman for Headquarters Company, 2d Battalion, 34th Armor. (PHOTO BY SP5 DOUG ELLIOTT)



Artillery Pounds Enemy Base

By PFC Richard Cunningham

DAU TIENG - The Queen of Battle found it, and the King of Battle destroyed a major portion of it.

This, in a nutshell, is what happened to a North Vietnamese bunker complex four miles east of Dau Tieng.

The King, 2d Battalion, 77th Artillery; 1st Battalion, 27th Artillery; and 2d Battalion, 32d Artillery, pumped 105mm, 155mm, and eight-inch high explosive projectiles into the bunker complex. The Queen, 1st Battalion, 27th Infantry, and 2d Battalion (Mechanized), 22d Infantry, discovered the area, then later found more than 49,000 pounds of rice hidden in nearby caches.

Charlie Battery, 2/77th Artillery, firing from Fire Support Base Mahone II, began pounding the bunker area in mid-morning. Later, with more information from infantrymen in the field, Bravo Battery, 2/77th joined the fighting along with Alpha Battery, 1/27th Artillery, and Charlie Battery, 2/32d Artillery.

Early in the afternoon, artillery fire ceased, allowing the infantrymen to assault the bunkers. Contact was again established and the King was called once more to halt the enemy.

More than 112 bunkers were demolished during the battle and artillery support was credited with destroying much of the enemy stronghold. Artillery was also credited with killing 20 enemy.

Tomahawks Blast VC Siesta Session

TAY NINH - Taking a siesta on the side of fabled Nui Ba Den, 55 miles northwest of Saigon, proved fatal to a group of Viet Cong soldiers. The Viet Cong were rudely interrupted by a reconnaissance element of the 4th Battalion (Mechanized), 23d Infantry, Tomahawks.

Seven of the enemy were killed as they tried to react to the swiftness of the Tomahawks.

"The Viet Cong weren't fast enough. They tried to inflict damage by pumping out small arms fire, 60mm and 82mm mortar rounds, and rocket-propelled grenade fire. They even had a recoilless rifle up there," said First Lieutenant Patrick J. Madison of Gary, Ind. "Everything they used either fell short or went over our heads. We suffered light casualties."

As the reconnaissance force exchanged fire with the Viet Cong, Lieutenant Colonel G.E. Taylor of Shelby, N.C. battalion commander, called in airstrikes on the enemy's position.

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TROPIC LIGHTNING NEWS

June 9, 1969

41 Chieu Hoi to 3d Bde

DAU TIENG -Forty-one Hoi Chanhs can't be wrong.

At least they don't think so and neither does the Government of Vietnam, to which they have recently rallied. The 41 Hoi Chanhs were all received by the 3d Brigade at Dau Tieng in two and a half months.

"Our brigade program doesn't offer anything special; it's just an extension of the Vietnamese government's program," said First Lieutenant Keven Walters of Bethpage, N.Y., the brigade's psychological operations officer.

THE 3RD BRIGADE Chieu Hoi program consists of weekly pre-planned leaflet drops plus loudspeaker appeals to enemy elements in the immediate area. Most of the appeals, both in leaflet and loudspeaker form, are usually made by Hoi Chanhs themselves in an attempt to convince their former allies of the benefits of the Chieu Hoi Program.

"The credibility gap is the biggest problem we have to bridge," Walters said. "That's why we always try to have a Hoi Chanh write the message on a leaflet and sign it. We also try to include a picture, if possible. Even with our loudspeaker appeals, we try to have a Hoi Chanh featured on the voice tape," he said.

But what's the reason for the high number of Hoi Chanhs in the brigade's tactical area of operation?

"It's a combination of several things," Walters said. "First of all, we've relocated villagers in the Michelin Rubber Plantation. We've taken the people out of eight villages and put them into two. This creates a hardship for the Viet Cong soldiers - they can't see their loved ones regularly and they have difficulty in obtaining food and shelter," he said. "Many of them turn themselves in just to be reunited with their families."

ANOTHER REASON for the great increase in ralliers may be due to the the use of Vietnamese psyops teams, particularly the one used in the 3rd Brigade area.

"Our team established rapport with villagers, and through this, we were able to influence the Viet Cong," said Walters. "They would explain the benefits of the Chieu Hoi Program to the families, and the families would put pressure on Viet Cong soldiers. Sometimes, the team would take Hoi Chanhs back to their villages and let them tell about the program. This is another way to bridge the credibility gap."

Although the Chieu Hoi Program was developed primarily for the Viet Cong soldier, who is already a citizen of the Republic of Vietnam, the government still holds out its arms to the North Vietnamese soldier.

"MOST OF THE NVA Hoi Chanhs we receive are a direct result of hardships U.S. forces have placed on them, such as B-52 strikes," Walters said. "Many times, they give us valuable information which leads to successes in the field," he added.

An example of this came recently when 3rd Brigade units ran into heavy enemy opposition in the Trapezoid, four miles east of the base camp. An NVA Hoi Chanh gave information that led to the destruction of more than 250 fortified bunkers, the capture of some 48,000 pounds of rice and the death of 103 NVA regulars.

THERE ARE SURPRISES in all aspects of warfare, and psychological warfare is no exception. One of those surprises popped up recently at the brigade's psychological operations center.

"We received our first female Hoi Chanh," said Walters. "She worked for the enemy's psyops team and it was very interesting to compare our methods with theirs.

"Their methods are similar to ours, but lack sophistication because of a lack of technology. You can measure the effectiveness of your own program by evaluating the enemy's propaganda against it, and, going by that yardstick, our program seems to be working quite well," he said.

The Chieu Hoi program isn't a one-way street - all Hoi Chanh's are given a fair shake by the Vietnamese government. They all receive rewards in proportion to the importance of the intelligence they bring with them. They can start all over again, with the choice of learning a trade or aiding the government through participation on psyops teams or in the Kit Carson Scout program.

'Flashlight' Mission Darkens VC Outlook

By SP4 John T. Agnoletti

CU CHI - It was a dark, moonless night in the jungles of Vietnam. Three Viet Cong sleeping in a bomb crater were suddenly illuminated by a powerful light from the sky and killed with a burst of minigun fire.

When Delta Troop, 3d Squadron, 4th Cavalry, is around, the enemy can't always rely on the cover of darkness to provide security.

One of the missions the airmobile troop performs is referred to as the "flashlight" mission. This consists of night flying with a UH-1D helicopter with a powerful light attached to the side of the ship. The Centaur pilots, flying low level, observe the terrain closely in their hunt for the enemy.

On a recent night, Delta Troop commanding officer Major William R. Laird of Tampa, Fla., and Warrant Officer John M. Hofman of Palm Beach, Fla., were credited with seven enemy killed and eight sampans destroyed on a flashlight mission.

Laird and Hofman were flying in an area where 3d Brigade elements had made contact during the day. The pilots spotted three Viet Cong in a bomb crater and immediately engaged them with a minigun. All three were killed and eight enemy sampans were found in the area, destroyed by Centaur firepower.

While flying back to Cu Chi, Laird was in radio contact with Alpha Troop of the 3/4 Cavalry. Movement had been detected outside Alpha's night defensive position, and the flashlight was needed to check the area.

In searching around the perimeter, Laird spotted five Viet Cong setting up a mortar position. When they opened fire, the ship's doorgunners claimed four of them.

This was a typical flashlight for the Delta Troop Centaurs. They headed back to Cu Chi.

A MODERN DAY TARZAN
- That's what
infantrymen must feel
like as they slink through
the trees and underbrush
that crowd the Saigon
River. (PHOTO BY SP5
RICK ADAMS)



Bobcats Zap VC Shipping Engrs

CU CHI - The job of the 65th Engineer Battalion is hard enough without enemy interference. So when the engineers working near the Trang Bang Bridge received RPG and small arms' fire, elements of Bravo and Charlie companies of the 1st Battalion (Mechanized), 5th Infantry, rolled into the area.

The Bobcats, along with tanks from the 2d Battalion, 34th Armor, dispersed their forces to cover a wide area.

As the force entered a thickly vegetated zone, tank-mounted 90mm guns, 50 caliber machineguns and a bevy of small arms' fire assured the armored line a safe passage once they entered the patch of jungle.

The tactics worked. Five enemy were killed, and there were several blood trails in the area.

DANGER: the ice used in beverages sold by local Vietnamese causes infectious hepatitis in one out of every 15 US soldiers who drink such beverages. This disease attacks the liver, often with fatal results and always with lasting damage to health.



NO TIME TO WASTE - in the top picture, an armored personnel carrier secures a dustoff ship as soldiers rush a wounded buddy to the world's fastest ambulance service. Sometimes jungle terrain is too dense for choppers to land. Often dustoff ships get close enough (as in center pic) for a wounded soldier to climb aboard. The bottom shot shows a dustoff rising from the jungle floor and streaking toward waiting doctors from Bravo Company, 25th Medical Battalion at Dau Tieng. (PHOTOS BY SP5 RICK ADAMS)

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