

TROPIC LIGHTNING NEWS



Ready To Strike.... Anywhere, Anytime

Vol 4 No. 25

TROPIC LIGHTNING NEWS

June 23, 1969

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ARVNs, 2nd Bde Join To Blast 72 NVA

By SP4 Art Brown

CU CHI - In a fiercely contested day-long battle ten miles northwest of Cu Chi, the 2d Battalion, 12th Infantry combined forces with troops from the 49th ARVN Regiment, 1st Battalion (Mechanized), 5th Infantry, and 2d Battalion, 34th Armor to smash an enemy base camp, killing 72 of its defenders.

The action began when the 2d Battalion, 12th Infantry Warriors and ARVN infantrymen were conducting search operations in the area. Everything was going well, and the combined elements were turning up stores of enemy supplies.

"The ARVNs were finding things right and left that we could have overlooked," related Captain Paul Allen of Orlando, Fla.

THE INFANTRYMEN were moving into a densely wooded area for further searching when the men were caught in a Viet Cong attempted ambush. "We were pinned down by heavy AK and automatic weapons fire," said Specialist 4 Dennis Lyons of Martin, S.D.

"Superior firepower and helicopter gunships got us out of the kill zone," said Private First Class Bob Cox of Pierce, Neb. "They got down close and let Charlie have it."

The friendly ground troops pulled back, allowing artillery to pound the enemy positions. The Air Force followed the artillery bombardment with air strikes.

Following the afternoon air strikes, the combined force troops stormed into the enemy complex only to meet more heavy resistance. The soldiers returned with blazing fire.

THE BATTLE slowed at dark and the infantry and armor combined to make a night laager.

At first light, the united force swept into and through the enemy camp with no resistance. The fleeing enemy left behind 72 of his dead along with 40 AK-47 rifles, two light machine guns, and seven RPG launchers.

Other supplies, ammunition, and pieces of equipment were destroyed in place. Numerous enemy bunkers were

leveled.

"The ARVN advisor, Sergeant First Class James H. Wood, and his radio-telephone operator, Specialist 4 Leroy Weidnes did an outstanding job of coordinating the Vietnamese troops with ours," said Lieutenant Colonel John E. Mann of Seat Pleasant, Maryland. "The combined effort really hit the enemy hard. They lost a lot of men, equipment and weapons."

Warriors Snip Snipers

CU CHI - While on a security mission with the 65th Engineer Battalion, infantrymen from the 2d Battalion, 12th Infantry, ran into enemy snipers, killing 14.

The incident occurred four miles northwest of Trang Bang. The engineers were working to improve resupply routes in the area when the fire began.

"They started to fire at us with AK-47s from three or four scattered positions about 250 meters away," said Captain John K. Taft of Youngstown, Ohio. "We suppressed their fire with small arms and machine guns."

Artillery from nearby Fire Support Bases Pershing and Stuart laid a barrage of deadly fire into each enemy position. The 105mm and eight-inch guns along with air power blasted the enemy from their hidden fortifications.

When the hail of steel stopped, the Warriors pushed through the area reinforced by Alpha Company.

There was no resistance. Destroyed by air and artillery were four AK-47s and two RPG launchers. One additional AK-47 was found intact.



WHAT A WAY TO GO - Specialist 4 Gerald Johnson of St. Louis, Mo., can verify that there must be a better way to look for Charlie. The 2d Brigade grenadier was on a search-and-destroy mission near Fire Support Base Jackson when Wolfhound photographer Specialist 4 R. B. Williams caught this sticky situation.

Bobcats, ARVNs, Phantoms Stun VC

CU CHI - In a day of enemy contact so close to Cu Chi base camp that Air Force Phantom jets making their strike passes thundered directly over division headquarters, elements of the 1st Battalion (Mechanized), 5th

Infantry, fought a battle of strange twists, killing 17 Viet Cong soldiers and detaining seven suspects.

Early in the day, while sweeping through a heavily booby-trapped area one and a half miles west of Cu Chi, an ARVN unit working with the Bobcat infantrymen discovered two Viet Cong in a hole. Arresting them without a fight, the Vietnamese soldiers learned that a small Viet Cong force was hidden in the immediate vicinity.

AFTER FOUR AIR strikes hit in the area, the Bobcats swept on foot while their armored personnel carriers provided flank security.

Specialist 4 Steve Stubblefield of Conoga Park, Calif., unknowingly stood on a camouflaged trap door over a spider hole containing four VC. He paused a second to consider where his next step should go, then moved on. Apparently the tension had been too much for the occupants of the hole.

As Stubblefield stepped off the trap door, it sprang open, creating a disturbance that caused him to whirl around and find a pair of eyes staring at him. Simultaneously, the underground warrior shouted "Chieu Hoi!"

Startled, Stubblefield leveled his M-16 at the suspect and said, "Okay, come on out of that hole." Stubblefield and the rest of his squad watched him climb out.

AS IF ONE suspect making his presence known in such a striking manner were not enough, two other men and a woman followed the first out of the hole. The group turned in three AK-47 rifles and a supply of ammunition.

Stubblefield's platoon leader, First Lieutenant Michael C. Meilstrip of Bay City, Mich., who was directly behind him, praised his cool-headedness. "The way he handled the situation was great. Because he exercised caution and restraint, we were able to detain four Viet Cong suspects."

During the rest of the day, the Tropic Lightning troops encountered no opposition. The day's activities accounted for 17 enemy killed, seven detainees, six AK-47 rifles, one K-54 pistol, one .45 caliber pistol, and several enemy documents.



BEING LOADED DOWN with 28 pounds of radio can make river crossing a hazardous venture. But this Wolfhound soldier from the 2d Battalion, 27th Infantry, continues to drive on. (PHOTO BY SP4 R. B. WILLIAMS)

Decorated

BRONZE STAR FOR HEROISM

CPT Jon W. Blades III, Co A, 4th Bn, 23d Inf
 CPT Bud R. Brown, Co A, 1st Bn, 5th Inf
 1LT James T. Carter, Co B, 1st Bn, 5th Inf
 1LT Peter F. Mohan, Co A, 2d Bn, 22d Inf
 1LT William A. Hendrickson, Co B, 2d Bn, 22d Inf
 1LT Jerry A. Ashburn, Co D, 2d Bn, 12th Inf
 2LT Lamond R. Mills, Co B, 2d Bn, 22d Inf
 SSG Joseph C. Urkshus, Co C, 1st Bn, 5th Inf

SP4 Luis A. Padilla, Co A, 2d Bn, 34th Armor
 SP4 Bobby W. Thomas, Co A, 1st Bn, 5th Inf
 SP4 Fred C. Forehand, Co F, 75th Inf
 SP4 Douglas R. Miller, HHC, 3d Bn, 22d Inf
 SP4 Veryl Hershour, Co B, 4th Bn, 23d Inf
 SP4 George F. Martinez, Co D, 2d Bn, 12th Inf
 SP4 John Juve, Co B, 1st Bn, 27th Inf
 SP4 Wayne A. Lounsberry, Co B, 1st Bn, 5th Inf

SSG Bobby Q. Brock, Co A, 1st Bn, 5th Inf
 SSG James H. Shope, HHC, 4th Bn, 23d Inf
 SSG Richard Trullinger, Co C, 2d Bn, 22d Inf
 SSG Donald W. Bass, Co C, 2d Bn, 22d Inf
 SSG William L. Merrifield, HHC, 1st Bn, 5th Inf
 SSG Richard L. Hautekeete, HHC, 1st Bn, 5th Inf
 SP4 Dayle Stapleton, Co C, 4th Bn, 23d Inf
 SP4 Michael G. Reece, Co C, 4th Bn, 23d Inf
 SP4 Charles E. Ward, Co B, 4th Bn, 23d Inf
 SP4 Kenneth D. Alford, Co B, 4th Bn, 23d Inf
 SP4 Glenn N. Matsushita, Co A, 2d Bn, 14th Inf
 SP4 William Lamonica, HHC, 1st Bn, 5th Inf
 SP4 David G. Canant, Co A, 1st Bn, 5th Inf
 SP4 Walter P. Stamper, C Trp, 3d Sqdn, 4th Cav
 SP4 David Strong, Co C, 3d Bn, 22d Inf
 SP4 Larry E. Byrd, Co A, 2d Bn, 22d Inf
 SP4 Richard C. Olson, Co D, 1st Bn, 27th Inf
 SP4 Dennis Berryman, Co B, 4th Bn, 23d Inf
 SP4 Gordon L. Schmitz, C Trp, 3d Sqdn, 4th Cav

SP4 Michael Reznick, Co B, 1st Bn, 5th Inf
 SP4 William R. McNelly, Co F, 75th Inf
 SP4 Ronald C. Carey, Co B, 2d Bn, 12th Inf
 SP4 Howard W. Armstrong, Co B, 1st Bn, 27th Inf
 SP4 Edward E. Chapman, Co D, 2d Bn, 12th Inf
 SP4 Ralph W. Buchanan, Co B, 2d Bn, 12th Inf
 SP4 William W. Cushman, Co D, 2d Bn, 12th Inf
 SP4 Doye A. Kersey, Co A, 1st Bn, 5th Inf
 SP4 Clarence W. Pace, Co B, 2d Bn, 22d Inf
 SP4 Larry Hillyard, Co A, 2d Bn, 14th Inf
 SP4 Dean A. Baker, Co A, 2d Bn, 14th Inf
 SP4 Harless Belcher, Co C, 2d Bn, 22d Inf
 SP4 Larry E. Byrd, Co A, 2d Bn, 22d Inf
 PFC Jimmey B. McGowen, A Btry, 7th Bn, 11th Arty
 PFC Kenneth D. Goodwin, Co B, 4th Bn, 23d Inf
 PFC Paul T. Weiss, Co B, 1st Bn, 5th Inf
 PFC William A. Tesauero, Co D, 2d Bn, 12th Inf
 PFC Pedro Olivo, Co B, 1st Bn, 5th Inf

Army Cares for Its Own; AER Drive Opens in July

The annual Army Emergency Relief and Army Relief Society Joint Fund campaign will get under way June 15 and continue through August 16, 1969. Every man in organic and non-divisional support units will have an opportunity to contribute and help the Army take care of its own.

Army Emergency Relief is available to all members and retired members of the Army and their dependents. AER came into existence in 1942 when it was realized that some provision must be made to assist members of the rapidly expanding army when they or their families were confronted with financial emergencies for which no appropriated funds were available.

The Army Relief Society (ARS) is closely associated with AER, though it dates from 1900 when it was established to assist needy widows and orphans of Regular Army personnel. It provides scholarships and other aids to eligible dependents.

Contributions to the ARS are strictly voluntary, and no set goal has been set by higher headquarters. Last year II Field Force units contributed \$226,000 of the total \$1,084,000 collected in that year, and the need for emergency assistance is expected to continue at about the same level.

Assistance is available to personnel everywhere with the Tropic Lightning Division authorized to make grants or interest-free loans in amounts up to \$250. A recent and typical case involved a soldier whose wallet containing the money he intended to send his dependents was lost.

AER gave the man enough money to ease the strain on his family until his allotments could take effect.

Generally emergency aid falls into one of the following eight categories: Privation of dependents, non-receipt of pay, allotments or allowances, emergency travel, rent, loss of personal funds, funeral expenses, medical, dental and hospital expenses and various confidential matters.

Contributions are accepted in cash, check or money order, and checks and money orders should be made payable to AER Section 19099.

'Routine' Eagle Flight Gives Golden Dragons Busy Day

CU CHI - One morning recently the Golden Dragons of Delta Company, 2d Battalion, 4th Infantry, took off on what appeared to be a typical eagle flight.

They hit their landing zone and started moving toward the objective. Suddenly they were called back to where

they had been set down.

GUNSHIPS HAD spotted some Viet Cong with weapons near Bao Cong. The Dragons loaded up again and headed for the area where the Stingers of the 116th Assault Helicopter Company were keeping the enemy occupied.

The troopers reached the landing zone again and immediately started sweeping into the area where the action was taking place.

The Viet Cong were shooting back, but Delta Company commander Captain Thomas Waldera of Algona, Iowa, explained the situation this way, "It was a rather one-sided firefight - with our troops doing nearly all the shooting."

THE FIREFIGHT lasted about 30 minutes, with Delta Company and the Stingers finally subduing their prey.

In sweeping the area, the Dragons counted 11 Viet Cong dead. They also found a grenade, four AK-47 rifles, 2 SKS carbines and ten pounds of documents.

In the firefight the Golden Dragons had only one man wounded. A soldier stepped on an anti-personnel mine and received shrapnel wounds.

Waldera remarked that the entire area of the fight was heavily booby trapped and mined with anti-personnel devices and trip wire-initiated charges.

Hey Gang, 30-Day R&R Now Open!

One complaint about R&R is that it is too soon over. Those of you who have been thinking about extending your tour now have a chance to spend thirty days somewhere east of Suez.

The Re-Up office is now authorized to grant a 30-day leave for a six-month extension, a leave that can be taken in any R&R location, Guam, Okinawa, or, for those inured to foreign climes, CONUS.

To qualify, extend to serve six months after your return from leave, secure the approval of your company and battalion, and get all details from the Division Re-Up office or your re-enlistment NCO.

The TROPIC LIGHTNING NEWS is an authorized publication of the 25th Infantry Division. It is published weekly for all division units in the Republic of Vietnam by the Information Office, 25th Infantry Division, APO San Francisco 96225. Army News Features, Army Photo Features, Armed Forces Press Service and Armed Forces News Bureau material are used. Views and opinions expressed are not necessarily those of the Department of the Army. Printed in Tokyo, Japan, by Pacific Stars and Stripes.

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PFC Larry Goodson	2/12	PFC Dan Stone	4/9
SP4 Richard Huhta	2/14	SGT Roger Welt	4/23
PFC Phil Jackson	2/27	SP4 Pete Freeman	7/11
PFC Craig Sampson	2/27		

ARVN-Aided MEDCAPS Draw More Vietnamese

By Sp4 Al Hibler

DAU TIENG - Third Brigade medics have taken on a new ally - the Vietnamese medic, who now works side by side with his American counterpart on medical civil action programs (MEDCAPS).

"These Regional and Popular Forces medics are usually very good," said Captain Willie Black, Jr., civil affairs officer for the 2d Battalion (Mechanized), 22d Infantry, "and the local people seem more responsive when treated by the RF and PF medics."

The Vietnamese and American medics share the workload on each MEDCAP. Changing bandages, diagnosing symptoms, prescribing medicine and giving injections are their usual tasks.

The allied soldiers usually treat more than 100 people at each village stop.

"We have to use interpreters to find out what's bothering a patient, which makes an American medic's job just that much more difficult," said Specialist 5 Mike Vaughn of Phoenix, Ariz., "but our Vietnamese medical counterparts have no language barrier and can find out what's actually a patient's problem."

A recent MEDCAP at An Phu near Dau Tieng showed the kind of reception the allied medics usually receive. "The MEDCAP started out with an average number of patients," said Vaughn, "but when the word got around that we had Vietnamese medics treating the people, we drew overflow crowds."

The Triple Deuce MEDCAP team treated more than 200 villagers at An Phu and is prepared for more of the same size crowds as they tour the Dau Tieng area.

Black, of Columbus, Ga., explained the complete scope of the 3d Brigade's medical effort. "The use of Vietnamese medics allows us to give better service to the people, but at the same time their presence builds faith in the South Vietnamese government, which we must have before we hope to win the war."

3 Triple Deuce Companies Overrun NVA Base Camp

DAU TIENG - A joint three-company force from the 2d Battalion (Mechanized), 22d Infantry, killed 29 North Vietnamese Army soldiers recently after overrunning an enemy base camp in the area known as the Crescent, three miles west of Dau Tieng.

The attack followed a devastating B-52 strike and marked the third battle in as many days for the Triple Deuce infantrymen of Tropic Lightning's 3d Brigade.

After the heavy bombing strike, the companies pulled their armored personnel carriers on line and blasted the jungle with a barrage of .50 caliber machinegun fire while artillery from the Dau Tieng base camp pounded the same area.

With the mechanized infantrymen dismounted and leading tracks through heavy underbrush and thickly vined trees, the 3d Brigade soldiers began uncovering fortified bunkers, destroying all those that survived the air strike.

Ground elements discovered freshly made bunkers as they pushed past the strike zone. "We were just about on top of them when all hell broke loose," said Sergeant Lon Oakley of Dallas, Tex.



ON GUARD - A tank from the 2d Battalion, 34th Armor Dreadnoughts securing a landing zone for the eagle flight extraction of a company of the 2d Battalion, 14th Infantry Golden Dragons, prepares to make a sweep north of Cu Chi. (PHOTO BY SP5 DOUG ELLIOTT)

Dreadnaughts Open Monsoon Operations Base at Emory

By SP5 Doug Elliott

CU CHI - The Tropic Lightning's 2d Battalion, 34th Armor, in preparation for the approaching monsoons, is quickly shifting gears for the change of operations.

The Dreadnaught armormen, under the direction of Lieutenant Colonel Duane R. Tague of Terre Haute, Ind., are building a new fire support base three miles from Cu Chi.

THE NEW BASE of operations, known as Emory, will provide tight security for a nearby highway, the Phu Cuong and Ba Bep bridges, and offer a ready reaction force to any area east of Cu Chi.

Fire Support Base Emory, deployed on high ground, will eliminate the problem of vehicles sinking into the soft mud of the lowlands. The rainy season will not hamper the tanks from deploying to critical areas from their base.

In the construction, Rome plows from the 65th Engineer Battalion graded the land and pushed into position the outer berm. Engineer stakes were laid out for the positioning of perimeter bunkers.

Then like a swarm of locusts, Dreadnaught tank crewmen, recon platoon members and support personnel arrived on the scene carrying sandbags and shovels. Under a broiling sun the bunkers slowly began to take shape. With only a little groaning, the fire support base grew under the straining backs of the men.

MATERIALS ARRIVED for heavy construction, piping, and defense. Rock was brought in to build a secure roadbed. By the fourth day of construction, the base was ready to use for operations.

A tank-infantry combination has proved to be a tremendous team against the enemy in Vietnam. And a joint operation between the two has all the mobility and heavy firepower of armor and the thoroughness of the ground search.

Nothing gets by the team's notice, and nothing can stand up to its firepower.

IN A RECENT example, 2d Battalion, 34th Armor tanks joined infantrymen from the 2d Battalion, 14th Infantry in a five-day operation north of Cu Chi.

The Tropic Lightning 2d Brigade troops searched the thickly-wooded area for rocket sites, caches, enemy forces and unexploded munitions.

One cache of seven 107mm rockets was uncovered; in the same location the Dreadnaught tank force had made a huge cache haul in February.

Numerous mines, booby traps, tunnel complexes and dud rounds were also destroyed.

Golden Dragons Co Gets Thirty Medals

By SP4 Richard Huhta

CU CHI - Bravo Company, 2d Battalion, 14th Infantry awarded thirty medals to individuals during ceremonies held at the Phu Cuong Bridge. The awards were the result of four recent encounters with the Viet Cong.

The first of the important contacts was in the swamps of the Oriental River when the Fire Brigade Golden Dragons were heliborne into the area early in the evening. They made contact with a reinforced VC squad and Bravo Company gained a body count of five in that encounter.

Their second meeting with the enemy was southeast of Duc Hoa when a point man sighted a group of Viet Cong with weapons. He was wounded by enemy fire.

Gunships were immediately called in and the Golden Dragons caught their prey. In the fracas they killed five Viet Cong and confiscated three automatic rifles with ammunition and one RPG launcher with rockets.

As a result of the firefight, Staff Sergeant Denny Maron, West Covina, Calif., received the Silver Star for his heroism in pursuit of the enemy while under intense fire from their position.

While at Fire Support Base Ayres, west of Bau Tri, the 2d Brigade Golden Dragons came under a heavy mortar attack by the Viet Cong. Soon after they had to stand off a heavy ground attack by the enemy. In that battle the Tropic Lightning infantrymen killed 10 Viet Cong.

In the last of the battles with the Viet Cong, the Golden Dragons came under enemy fire while the outgoing and the incoming battalion commanders were still overhead in choppers - in full view of the action.

Bravo Company, under the command of Captain David J. Boyle of Malden, Mass., was awarded a Silver Star, 11 Bronze Stars with the "V" device, three Bronze Stars, 10 Purple Hearts, one Army Commendation Medal, one ARCOM Achievement Award and three ARCOMs with the "V" device.



A force of 2d Battalion, 14th Infantry Warriors and 2d Battalion, 34th Armor Dreadnaughts prepares to move out on a sweep. (PHOTO BY SP5 DOUG ELLIOTT)

MEDCAPS Bring Health to Ap Ninh Hung

Popular Forces, Tomahawks Adopt Village

Feature By SGT Roger Welt

TAY NINH - Villagers of Ap Ninh Hung, a hamlet of 2,000 people located six miles east of Tay Ninh City, are getting a new and healthy outlook because of a civic action program conducted by Vietnamese Popular Forces and Tomahawks of the 4th Battalion (Mechanized), 23rd Infantry. The PFs and Tomahawks are trying in every way to make life a little easier for the war-torn villagers.

The commanding officer of the 4/23, Lieutenant Colonel G.E. Taylor of Shelby, N.C., assigned several of his men to work on projects that will better the village - among them furnishing the local, barren school yard with badly needed recreation equipment, planting trees, improving roads, and bettering the drainage system for the rainy season. The battalion surgeon also holds a regular "sick call" for the villagers.

"We haven't forgotten the other hamlets in our operational area," said Captain James Norman of Long Beach, Calif., the officer in charge of the new civic action program. "Daily Medical Civic Action Programs are being carried out in different locations so all the local people will benefit."

The Tomahawks work closely with the local Vietnamese Popular Forces. "These are some of the finest soldiers I've seen," said Taylor. "They deserve our support and we're giving it to them in every possible way."

The Vietnamese and Americans are working side by side in all phases of the new civic action program. Little by little the battle-scarred area is turning into a safe and healthy place to live.



WINDY - Children on the outskirts of Tay Ninh City run after leaflets being distributed by the 4th Battalion, 23d Infantry. The leaflets' messages range from telling where and when the next MEDCAP is going to be held to encouraging the civilians to turn in enemy weapons.



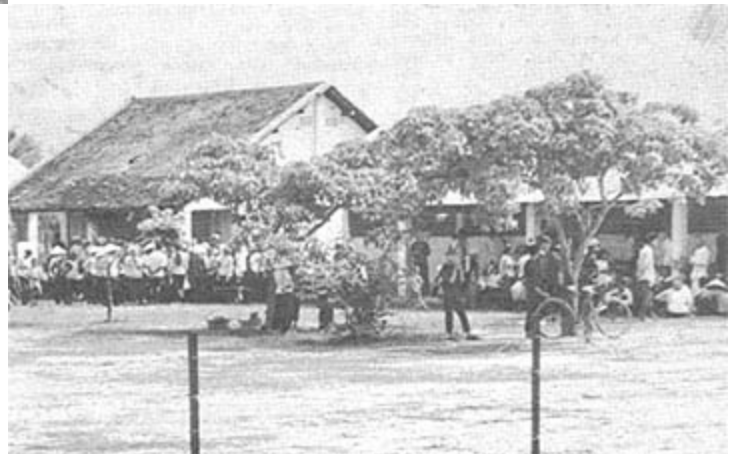
HANDSHAKE - Lieutenant Colonel G. E. Taylor of Shelby, N.C., commanding officer of the 4/23, shakes hands with a small boy during civic action operations.

DIAGNOSIS - The case is diagnosed and the prescription filled. The villagers look forward to each visit of the 4/23 doctor. To a lot of them it means a new life, one free of disease.



GOODIES - A small token for a job well done. The Tomahawks gave a PF outpost a large box of sundries for doing a good job. The outpost, four miles north of Tay Ninh City, has demonstrated outstanding performance in its daily operations.

THE VILLAGERS of Ap Ninh Hung, six miles east of Tay Ninh City, wait their turn to see the battalion surgeon, Major Al Prieto of Colombia, South America. Major Prieto visits the hamlet at least three times a week.





PHAM VAN NGO, a member of a local PF outpost, displays a road mine he found while sweeping Highway 22. The Tomahawks work closely with local Vietnamese soldiers. Captain James Norman of Long Beach, Calif., and Sergeant First Class Ronald Carter of Detroit, flank the soldier.

CHECK-UP - Major Al Prieto checks out a bewildered youngster. The doctor treated over 250 patients in three and a half hours at the small hamlet of Ap Ninh Hung, six miles east of Tay Ninh City.



A YOUNG POPULAR FORCES soldier cleans his 60mm mortar. He has been trained by the Tomahawks and has quickly learned to handle the mortar like a pro.

A SMALL PATRIOT holds a picture of President Nguyen Van Thieu. The PFs and the 4/23 have taken this boy's hamlet under their protective wing. Support for the government of Vietnam is one of the benefits of the program.



Educational Exchange at Work in Dau Tieng

DAU TIENG - What do knowledge-seeking soldiers from the 3d Brigade have in common with young Vietnamese students from a local high school in Dau Tieng?

Would you believe Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays? On each of the three weekdays, both groups are busily studying each other's language.

At the Dinh Thanh High School in Dau Tieng village, Specialist 4 Don Cummings from the 3d Brigade Civil Affairs Section, leads his Vietnamese class through vocabulary drills, sentence structure outlines and then a written test or two.

Back at the American base camp, a young Vietnamese nurse can be found in a similar situation, directing her class of American officers and enlisted men in the finer points of Vietnamese.

The principal at the local high school felt an English class taught by an American would be more meaningful to the students, and brought his request to the brigade's S-5. "It has proved to be a very good idea," explained Cummings, of Lansing, Mich., who has held his three-hour, three-time-each-week class for the last six months. "It is very impressive to see the dramatic progress the kids have made here."

Cummings is not out of place heading his class of interested students. The 22-year-old soldier was studying to become a science instructor before entering the Army.

The English course is based on two texts obtained from the United States Information Agency in Saigon. Cummings, a stickler on grammar and rhetoric, works late many nights stenciling written tests that come often for his students. "The kids are eager and receptive - they really pick up complicated words. I give a lot of tests and they always do amazingly well."

The teacher-soldier studied Vietnamese before beginning his tour of duty here. "There's a lot of give and take in my classes," said Cummings. "I try to speak as much Vietnamese as possible during class and they respond by speaking English as much as possible."

At the 3d Brigade Education Center, Miss Dao Thi Gai conducts one hour Vietnamese classes three times a week. Miss Gai, better known as Kim to her students, is a nurse at the brigade's medical facility.

Two years ago, when Kim was 17 years old, doctors at Bravo Company, 25th Medical Battalion, performed an operation, pulling a jagged piece of shrapnel from her hip. While recuperating in one of the wards at the medical company, her friendly smile and quick mind won the hearts of the unit and she stayed on, learning to be a nurse and acting as an interpreter for Vietnamese patients.

Kim's class for soldiers here is still in the growing stages. "It's very much like a language lab in schools back in the States," observed First Lieutenant Kevin Walters of Bethpage, N.Y. "Right now we're concentrating on learning basic expressions and forming our pronunciation."

The 3d Brigade soldiers are in the first of five phases outlined by a USARV educational program. Each phase consists of a 20-hour block of instruction which is proving "interesting and an awful lot of fun," according to Specialist 5 Jack Anderson of Claremont, Calif.

For both groups, the language classes are more than just an educational exercise. Each is an attempt for better communication, which promotes better understanding and friendship between peoples.



CONFERENCE - in this international teachers conference, the problems of teaching Vietnamese and English are discussed.

WHERE'S THE REGISTRAR? - Kim has no problem keeping her students' interest. The Vietnamese nurse conducts classes three times each week. (PHOTO BY SP5 RICK ADAMS)



GOIN' BACK TO JACKSON - After a day on a sweep near Fire Support Base Jackson, this sure-footed Wolfhound makes his way "home" along a rice paddy berm. (PHOTO BY SP4 R. B. WILLIAMS)



Deuces and RFs: A Tough Hand

DAU TIENG - Deuces were wild, and four North Vietnamese Army soldiers were dealt losing hands during a recent combined reconnaissance-in-force mission six miles south of Dau Tieng.

The combined force of mechanized infantry from Bravo Company, 2d Battalion (Mechanized), 22d Infantry, and Vietnamese soldiers from Kiem Hanh District's Regional Forces were searching for enemy cache sites and possible staging areas in the Boi Loi Woods.

The regional forces unit scored the first success of the operation, uncovering six bunkers and killing three NVA in a brief firefight. Three AK-47 assault rifles were captured during the encounter.

Bravo Company, working west of the RF element, uncovered several bunkers housing five RPG-7 rounds, one RPG booster, 400 rounds of .50 caliber ammunition and one rifle grenade.

Later that same afternoon, Bravo Company observed and engaged an unknown-sized enemy element 300 feet east of their position.

The NVA soldiers, dressed in blue uniforms, were moving south. They were engaged with small arms fire, resulting in one NVA killed. Near the same area, Triple Deuce infantrymen found 15 bunkers and a kitchen complete with pots and pans. All of the bunkers had eight to 10 feet of tunnel leading from them.

"It's combined operations like this that give us a chance to see how effective the RF soldiers can be," commented Captain Jack Johnston of Missoula, Mont., Bravo Company commander. "They are fine troops, excellent at uncovering caches and very responsive when they get in contact with the enemy."

A Play in Three Acts

Regulars Star in 'Crook Story'

Story and Photos

By Sp4 Dave DeMauro

TAY NINH - Preplanned supporting fire and expert co-ordination of all available firepower were the key to success at Fire Support Base Crook, where 402 North Vietnamese Army soldiers fell dead during three successive nights of ground attacks. The outpost was defended by men of the 3d Battalion, 22d Infantry.

The battalion executive officer, Major Joseph Hacia of Wethersfield, Conn., called in artillery, helicopter gunships, and tactical air strikes precisely where they were needed.

RAPIDLY MOVING from his tactical operations center to the berm line and scrambling up and down the tower, Hacia pinpointed the targets and placed his supporting fires right where they counted. The onrushing NVA were cut down before they had a chance to enter Crook's wire. At no time during the three ground attacks did the NVA penetrate the defensive perimeter.

While dodging bullets from six .51 caliber machine gun positions, Major John Bode of Albuquerque, N.M., marked prime targets for Air Force fighter jets as fast as Hacia radioed them to him. Each time Bode dove in to launch his spotter rockets; his Bronco spotter plane was ringed with red tracers spurting from the enemy machine guns.

"I'm going to have to work on these .51s for awhile," said Bode over his radio. Within moments, Bode roared down directly at the enemy machinegun emplacements and marked them for the jets to rake with their 40mm cannons. Once the guns were quieted, Bode went back to marking targets around Crook's perimeter.

CAPTAIN LARRY Thomas of Camp Hill, Penn., scurried from bunker to bunker to organize the Regulars' Bravo Company as mortars and rockets slammed into the fire support base. Every man performed to perfection while cutting down the onrushing NVA.

"My men did a fabulous job," said Thomas. "Each man fought as if he were the only one defending the perimeter, which is why the enemy never penetrated our berm line."

Charging NVA swarmed against Crook like bees buzzing into their hive. But this "hive" was sealed off with a

protective ring of artillery fire. Specialist 4 Harry Mills of Salisbury, Md., co-ordinated with Hacia and zeroed in the guns of Alpha Battery, 7th Battalion, 11th Field Artillery, stationed at Crook. Artillery rounds and shrapnel slammed directly into the faces of the enemy as they ran against the base.

MILLS GRABBED his radio and scrambled up the ladder at Crook during the brunt of each attack. Even while his vantage point was under fire from RPGs and 75mm recoilless rifles, Mills kept sighting the targets and radioing the necessary corrections.

Fire Support Base Crook stood the test of three brutal assaults. Its defenders were prepared.

"We invite the enemy to try and take any of our bases," said Hacia. "We've got what it takes to defeat him no matter what the circumstances, and as long as he continues to carry on his futile effort, we are ready to cope with him."



SEND THE WORD - Private First Class Jack Robey radios that the enemy is entrenched to his front, throwing hand grenades. The recon platoon helped sweep the battlefield around Crook after the first two nights of fighting.

GENERAL ANALYSIS - Surveying the situation at Fire Support Base Crook is 25th Division Commanding General Ellis W. Williamson. General Williamson is flanked by Regular Battalion Commander Robert D. Carmichael. Sergeant Major Howard Brosseau of Highland Falls, N.Y., is in the background.





LUCKY? - This NVA soldier could be considered one of the lucky ones, one of the few lucky ones. Four hundred and two of his comrades didn't live past the three days of fighting at Crook.

QUESTION AND ANSWER PERIOD - A frightened and battle-weary North Vietnamese soldier gives his account of the battle of Fire Support Base Crook. The young soldier's words are being taken down by a Kit Carson scout. Sergeant First Class Donald Neal of Columbus, Go., comforted the soldier as he was detained by Bravo Company of the 3d Battalion, 22d Infantry. Neal speaks fluent Vietnamese, which came in very handy in the aftermath of the Crook battle.



MOVING OUT to sweep the area of the Regulars' greatest victory, two alert riflemen stalk across the formerly NVA-infested turf. All during the early-morning hours, the NVA thundered against Crook's impenetrable barriers of fire and wire.

Five Battalions Get Unit Citations; Two Soldiers Are Awarded DSCs

CU CHI - Five Tropic Lightning Battalions were awarded the Presidential Unit Citation and two Tropic Lightning soldiers were awarded the Distinguished Service Cross by General Creighton Abrams, Commanding General, MACV, in ceremonies in the Division's Cu Chi base Camp.

The battalions cited were the 2d Battalion, 77th Artillery, 2d Battalion, 12th Infantry, 2d and 3d Battalions, 22d Infantry, and the 2d Battalion, 34th Armor.

AWARDED THE Distinguished Service Cross were 1LT Andres Gutierrez of Co C, 1st Battalion, 27th Infantry and Private First Class Donald E. Evans of B Troop, 3d Squadron, 4th Cavalry.

1LT Andres Gutierrez distinguished himself by exceptionally valorous actions on February 23, 1969 during a rocket, mortar, and ground assault on the Dau Tieng base camp by two NVA battalions reinforced with sapper elements. Gutierrez organized a reaction force and led it to a point in the perimeter that was under heavy enemy pressure.

Spotting three NVA preparing to fire an RPG into a bunker, he killed them with his pistol. During the battle he continually exposed himself to the enemy fire to rescue and treat the wounded and supply his men with ammunition.

PFC EVANS distinguished himself during a reconnaissance-in-force mission in the Boi Loi Woods when his troop came under intense fire from an enemy force in well-concealed, fortified bunkers. As the troop advanced on the bunkers, it was caught in a cross fire. Disregarding his own safety, Evans assaulted a bunker and killed its five occupants. When the troop received heavy fire from another bunker, Evans again ran forward and silenced the position. Later he voluntarily remained behind as his troop withdrew to permit the use of artillery.

The battalions were decorated for their part in the battle of Soui Tre, believed to be the largest single action of the Vietnam war.

The battle of Soui Tre began at dawn, March 21, 1967, as the elite 272d Main Force Viet Cong Regiment surrounded the tiny fire support base 30 kilometers north of Tay Ninh City. In two hours of human wave assaults on the entire perimeter, the VC Regiment penetrated in three places, driving the defending artillery men back to the second defensive position around their guns.

BY 8 O'CLOCK the situation was bleak. All beehive rounds had been exhausted, the artillery men were now doing double duty as infantrymen, and the only ammunition remaining was a pile of high explosive rounds fast being fired into the incoming enemy.

"It was the closest thing to the late, late show I have ever seen," said one officer. "It was the cavalry coming to the rescue ..." It was in fact the 2d Battalion (Mechanized) and 3d Battalion of the 22d Infantry, followed by the 2d Battalion, 34th Armor, thundering out of the woodline using all available fire power to cut down the enemy.

Air strikes were being called in 50 meters from the position as Tropic Lightning soldiers cut through the enemy from behind, firing with every weapon in reach. By 10:45 the Battle of Soui Tre was over, and 647 VC lay dead.

PARADE - left to right, Tropic Lightning Chief of Staff Colonel Robert L. Fair, General Creighton Abrams and Major General Ellis W. Williamson review the color guards on parade at ceremonies in which five battalions were awarded Presidential Unit Citations and two individuals received Distinguished Service Crosses.



Dau Tieng SGT Supervises Base Camp Liquid Assets

DAU TIENG - If someone told you to "go jump in a lake" or implied that you were all wet, you'd have a good reason to take offense. But one Tropic Lightning soldier from the 3rd Brigade takes all such comments in stride with a big, sun-tanned smile.

Sergeant Ron Davenport from Creswell, N.C., holds the job that must be the envy of any division soldier who has sweated his own shower and eaten more than his share of Vietnam's ever-present dust.

DAVENPORT IS the lifeguard at the big, French-built swimming pool that serves all 3d Brigade units at the Dau Tieng base camp. "I know it sounds like it has to be the easiest job in the Army, but it does take a lot of work - honest," smiled Davenport.

The 21-year-old sergeant didn't always have his "easy" job. He spent six months in the field as a squad leader with Delta Company, 1st Battalion, 27th Infantry Wolfhounds before taking over his swimming pool duties.

"The old lifeguard was DEROSing and they were going to have to close the pool if they couldn't find a qualified replacement," explained Davenport. A qualified replacement was someone with a senior lifesaving certificate.

Davenport was just the man. He had earned his lifesaving certificate through a Red Cross water safety program before entering the Army, and had worked as a professional lifeguard at Nag's Head along the Atlantic Coast.

"**I REMEMBER HOW I** felt when my company would come in from the field and we'd all get a chance to use the pool," Davenport recalled. "So I'm doing my best to keep the swimming area in perfect running condition so those guys can really enjoy themselves."

Perfect running condition means daily checks of the complex pumping system and tight control of chlorine content. Armed with mops, scrubbers and lots of detergent, Davenport cleans the shower area first thing each morning. The biggest cleaning problem is falling leaves from nearby rubber trees that add to the beauty of the area but keep Davenport hopping.



DOUBLE THREAT - A tank from Alpha Company, 2d Battalion, 34th Armor and troops from Charlie Company, 2d Battalion, 12th Infantry Warriors move toward a hedgerow containing an NVA force. (PHOTO BY SGT JAN ANDERSON)

Thanks to
Karl Karlgaard, 2nd Bn., 27th Inf (Wolfhounds), for sharing this issue,
Kirk Ramsey, 2nd Bn., 14th Inf. for creating this page.

This page last modified 8-12-2004

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