



Vol 4 No. 27

TROPIC LIGHTNING NEWS

July 7, 1969

Index

Unit	Page	Unit	Page	Unit	Page	Unit	Page
1/5	8	2/22 Photo	8	25th Aviation	7	3/22 Photo	8
1/27 Arty	8	2/27	3	25th Avn Photos	7	4/9	1
1/27	6	2/27 Photo	3	3rd Bde	8	4/9	6
1/27	8	2/32 Arty	1	3/4 Inf	8	4/9	8
187 AHC	4	2/32 Arty	8	3/22 Photos	4	4/23	1
187 AHC Photo	4	2/34 Armor	6	3/22	4	4/23 Photo	1
2/12	6	2/34 Armor Photo	6	3/22 Photos	4	4/23	6
2/12	8	2/34 Armor	6	3/22	8	7/11 Arty	8
2/14	3	2/34 Armor Photo	6	3/22	8	725th Maint	6
2/14 Photos	3	2/34 Armor	8				

Lancer Brigade Stuns NVA Again

Tomahawks Drive NVA Bananas

By SGT Roger Welt

TAY NINH - Yes, there were no bananas, at least none left in the old banana grove four and a half miles northeast of Tay Ninh. That was the scene of the second Tropic Lightning trouncing of the NVA in less than ten days.

Soldiers of the 4th Battalion, 23d Infantry tore into the 1st Battalion, 88th Regiment of the 9th NVA Division, killing 94 in an early morning battle on the flanks of Nui Ba Den.

ELEMENTS OF THE mechanized Tomahawks detected enemy movement near the perimeter of their night laager just before dawn and called in artillery and air strikes on the suspected enemy position. Charlie Company swept out of its laager as the artillery lifted and accounted for 32 enemy dead before breakfast.

Shortly after 8:45 a.m., however, movement was detected in the direction of Nui Ba Den as the remains of the NVA battalion sought sanctuary on the mountain's slopes. Bravo Company of the 4/23 raced up to reinforce Charlie Company on a planned assault and trapped the enemy in the banana grove at the foot of the mountain. With Charlie Company on one side and Bravo on the other, air strikes were called in.

U. S. Air Force F-100s dived down below the 1,500-foot cloud cover to pound the caves and crevices where the enemy was hiding. The Division Commander, Major General Ellis W. Williamson, circling overhead in the command helicopter, commented, "The delivery of those air strikes on the enemy took guts under those conditions." The fighters had to approach almost directly into the side of the mountain, which was partially obscured under monsoon clouds.

"**THEY WERE** outstanding," said Williamson, "the troops on the ground really appreciate this type of extra effort by their supporting elements."

PFC Thomas Bucolic of Chicago, echoed the general's thoughts: "After we opened up the enemy answered with RPG fire. They had more RPGs than AKs, but we beat them from the start. We destroyed all of their positions with our superior firepower."

The battalion commander, Lieutenant Colonel G. E. Taylor of Shelby, N.C., praised his men, "They were great. Fighting is difficult in this terrain, but the men hung right in there and came out on top. I'm proud of each and every one of them."

AN AFTERNOON sweep of the area turned up the other 62 enemy dead as well as 28 AK-47s, four RPG launchers, a medic bag, and three detainees, one of whom identified himself as part of the 88th Regiment during questioning by ARVN soldiers.

In an unusual employment of artillery during the battle, the big eight-inch guns of Charlie Battery, 2d Battalion, 32d Artillery,

were used in direct fire against the caves on the side of the mountain, destroying the positions with 200-pound projectiles.



MOVING OUT - An armored personnel carrier from Bravo Company, 4th Battalion (Mechanized), 23d Infantry heads for the night laager position of its sister company to block avenues of retreat after the position had been attacked the night before. (PHOTO BY SGT ROGER WELT)

Manchus Batter NVA Ambushers

TAY NINH - What started as a routine ambush patrol by the 4th Battalion, 9th Infantry turned into a fierce battle recently when the small enemy platoon the Manchus attacked turned out to be a security element from a nearby enemy base camp. The camp was defended by an estimated battalion of NVA. Forty-five enemy were killed.

Charlie Company surprised 30 North Vietnamese soldiers in the Renegade Woods southeast of Tay Ninh City. But within seconds after the initial contact, the Manchus came under intense artillery and machine gun fire from the enemy bunkers.

Gunships were immediately called in to protect the pinned down Manchus and the enemy was soon bombarded by heavy artillery fire from Fire Support Bases Stoneman and Sedgewick II. Further help was provided by Delta Company of the 4th Battalion, 9th Infantry and air strikes by Air Force Phantom jets.

By early evening the enemy force had been routed and the two infantry companies swept into the enemy base camp, destroying what remained of the North Vietnamese fighting positions. Caches of rocket-propelled grenades and 107mm rockets were found while the Manchus were clearing out the area.

Later sweeps of the base camp turned up seven AK-47 rifles, one .30 caliber machine gun, and one RPG launcher.



FAST PICK-UP - Tropic Lightning soldiers prepare to be lifted off a hot pick-up zone. Airmobile assaults played a key role in defeating the enemy throughout the month.

"Clear your weapon before cleaning it" is something you've probably heard almost as often as "you're on your own time," or the Hawaii rumors. But it makes sense. Wounding or killing yourself - or one of your friends - because you are careless is all the more tragic because it is so easy to avoid. Clear your weapon before cleaning it.

Decorated

BRONZE STAR MEDAL (HEROISM)

1LT James McKinley Jr, Co C, 1st Bn, 5th Inf
 1LT Jeffrey W. McClain, HHC, 65th Engr Bn
 1LT Joseph M. Logan, Co A, 1st Bn, 27th Inf
 1LT George B. Brown, Co C, 1st Bn, 5th Inf
 2LT Terry C. Smith, Co B, 4th Bn, 23d Inf
 SSG Marshall E. Wickline, Co A, 2d Bn, 34th Armor
 SSG George L. Bowling, Co C, 1st Bn, 5th Inf
 SSG Carroll Logue, Co C, 1st Bn, 5th Inf
 SSG Victoriano Rivera, Co A, 4th Bn, 23d Inf
 SGT Thomas K. Harding, Co A, 2d Bn, 34th Armor
 SGT James F. McMasters, Co A, 1st Bn, 5th Inf
 SGT Dwyn Welch, Co C, 1st Bn, 5th Inf
 SGT Donald C. Crawford, Co C, 2d Bn, 22d Inf
 SGT Malcolm Carroll, Co C, 2d Bn, 22d Inf
 SGT Albert A. Allen, Co C, 1st Bn, 5th Inf
 SGT Ronald T. Inks, Co C, 2d Bn, 22d Inf
 SGT Kenneth Neveau, Co B, 3d Bn, 22d Inf
 SGT Ronald L. Rowley, Co B, 3d Bn, 22d Inf
 SGT Paul D. Boggs, Co B, 3d Bn, 22d Inf
 SGT Jan F. Akerberg, Co A, 3d Bn, 22d Inf
 SGT Michael Restelle, Co B, 3d Bn, 22d Inf

SGT David W. Metz, Co B, 3d Bn, 22d Inf
 SGT John E. Kyzar, Co B, 3d Bn, 22d Inf
 SGT Steven W. Latham, Co B, 3d Bn, 22d Inf
 SP4 Gerard V. Pilkofsky, HHC, 65th Engr Bn
 SP4 Robert W. Hodges, Co E, 2d Bn, 12th Inf
 SP4 Stephen D. Dodd, Co C, 1st Bn, 5th Inf
 SP4 Robert D. Parker, C Btry, 1st Bn, 8th Arty
 SP4 William Mulaney, HHC, 65th Engr Bn
 SP4 Kenneth H. Nevenhoven, Co C, 1st Bn, 5th Inf
 SP4 John A. Odom, Co C, 1st Bn, 5th Inf
 SP4 Major L. Arnett, Co A, 2d Bn, 34th Armor
 SP4 Harry C. Duncan, Co C, 1st Bn, 5th Inf
 SP4 Ralph Mathewson, Co C, 1st Bn, 5th Inf
 SP4 George Bradley, Co C, 1st Bn, 5th Inf
 SP4 Ronald P. Clemmer, Co C, 1st Bn, 5th Inf
 SP4 Bruce Whaley, Co C, 1st Bn, 5th Inf
 SP4 James S. Taketa, Co C, 1st Bn, 5th Inf
 SP4 Emil S. Kosco, Co C, 1st Bn, 27th Inf
 SP4 Larry F. Young, C Trp, 3d Sqdn, 4th Cav
 SP4 Anthony E. Ippolito, C Trp, 3d Sqdn, 4th Cav

Congratulations on Your Pay Hike, Another Bennie

As of July 1, 1969, all Tropic Lightning soldiers will be paid according to the following scale. This pay boost for the armed forces is provided in the Uniformed Services Pay Act of 1967 (Public Law 90-207). The July 31 payday will end the first pay period affected by the new scale.

OFFICERS

Grade	2 or less	Over 2	Over 3	Over 4	Over 6	Over 8	Over 10	Over 12	Over 14	Over 16	Over 18	Over 20	Over 22	Over 26	over 30
0-10	\$1810.20	\$1874.10	\$1874.10	\$1874.10	\$1874.10	\$1945.80	\$1945.80	\$2094.90	\$2094.90	\$2244.90	\$2244.90	\$2394.60	\$2394.60	\$2544.30	\$2544.30
0-9	1604.40	1646.40	1681.80	1681.80	1681.80	1724.10	1724.10	1795.80	1795.80	1945.80	1945.80	2094.90	2094.90	2244.90	2244.90
0-8	1453.20	1496.70	1532.40	1532.40	1532.40	1646.40	1646.40	1724.10	1724.10	1795.80	1874.10	1945.80	2024.10	2024.10	2024.10
0-7	1207.20	1289.70	1289.70	1289.70	1347.00	1347.00	1425.30	1425.30	1496.70	1646.40	1759.80	1759.80	1759.80	1759.80	1759.80
0-6	894.60	983.40	1047.60	1047.60	1047.60	1047.60	1047.60	1047.60	1083.30	1254.30	1318.50	1347.00	1425.30	1546.20	1546.20
0-5	715.50	840.90	898.20	898.20	898.20	898.20	926.10	975.60	1040.70	1118.70	1182.90	1218.30	1261.20	1261.20	1261.20
0-4	603.60	734.40	783.90	783.90	798.00	833.70	890.48	940.50	983.40	1026.30	1054.80	1054.80	1054.80	1054.80	1054.60
0-3	561.00	627.00	669.80	741.60	776.70	804.90	848.10	890.40	912.00	912.00	912.00	912.00	912.00	912.00	912.00
0-2	449.70	534.00	641.40	662.70	676.50	676.50	676.50	676.50	676.50	676.50	676.50	676.50	676.50	676.50	676.50
0-1	386.40	427.80	534.00	534.00	534.00	534.00	534.00	534.00	534.00	534.00	534.00	534.00	534.00	534.00	534.00

OFFICERS CREDITED WITH OVER 4 YEARS ACTIVE SERVICE AS ENLISTED MEMBERS

Grade	Over 4	Over 6	Over 8	Over 10	Over 12	Over 14	Over 16	Over 18	Over 20	Over -22	Over 26	Over 30
0-3	\$741.60	\$776.70	\$804.90	\$848.10	\$890.40	\$926.10	\$926.10	\$926.10	\$926.10	\$926.10	\$926.10	\$926.10
0-2	662.70	676.50	698.10	734.40	762.90	763.90	783.90	783.90	783.90	783.90	783.90	783.90
0-1	534.00	570.30	591.60	612.90	634.20	662.70	662.70	662.70	662.70	662.70	662.70	662.70

WARRANT OFFICERS

Grade	2 or less	Over 2	Over 3	Over 4	Over 6	Over 8	Over 10	Over 12	Over 14	Over 16	Over 18	Over 20	Over 22	Over 26	Over 30
W-4	\$571.20	\$612.90	\$612.90	\$627.00	\$655.20	\$684.00	\$712.50	\$762.90	\$798.00	\$826.50	\$848.10	\$876.30	\$905.40	\$975.60	\$975.60
W-3	519.30	563.30	563.40	570.30	577.20	619.50	655.20	676.50	698.10	719.10	741.60	769.80	798.00	826.50	826.50
W-2	454.80	491.70	491.70	508.10	534.00	563.40	584.70	605.70	627.00	648.60	669.60	690.90	719.10	719.10	719.10
W-1	378.90	434.70	434.70	470.70	491.70	513.00	534.00	555.90	577.20	598.50	619.50	641.40	641.40	641.40	641.40

ENLISTED MEMBERS

Grade	2 or less	Over 2	Over 3	Over 4	Over 6	Over 8	Over 10	Over 12	Over 14	Over 16	Over 18	Over 20	Over 22	Over 26	Over 30
E-9							\$646.90	\$663.90	\$679.20	\$694.20	\$709.50	\$723.60	\$761.70	\$835.80	\$835.80
E-8						\$544.50	559.80	574.50	589.80	604.80	619.20	634.50	672.00	746.40	746.40
E-7	\$342.30	\$410.10	\$425.40	\$440.40	\$455.40	469.60	484.80	500.40	522.60	537.30	552.30	559.80	597.30	672.00	672.00
E-6	294.90	358.20	372.90	388.20	403.20	417.90	433.20	455.40	469.80	484.80	492.60	492.60	492.60	492.60	492.60
E-5	254.70	313.80	328.80	343.20	365.70	380.70	395.10	410.10	417.90	417.90	417.90	417.90	417.90	417.90	417.90
E-4	214.20	268.50	283.50	305.70	321.00	321.00	321.00	321.00	321.00	321.00	321.00	321.00	321.00	321.00	321.00
E-3	155.10	216.30	231.30	246.30	246.30	246.30	246.30	246.30	246.00	246.30	246.30	246.30	246.30	246.30	244.30
E-2	127.80	179.10	179.10	179.10	179.10	179.10	179.10	179.10	179.10	179.10	179.10	179.10	179.10	179.10	179.10
E-1	123.30	163.80	163.80	163.80	163.80	163.80	163.80	163.80	163.80	163.80	163.80	163.80	163.80	163.80	163.80

Red Cross Is Friend in Need

The Red Cross could be your best friend. You should know something about it, such as how and when to use it.

The American Red Cross is the instrument chosen by Congress to help carry out the obligations assumed by the United States under certain international treaties known as the Geneva or Red Cross Conventions.

SPECIFICALLY, ITS Congressional charter imposes on the American Red Cross the duties to act as the medium of voluntary relief and communication between the American people and their armed forces, and to carry on a system of national and international relief to prevent and mitigate suffering caused by disasters.

Nationally and locally, the American Red Cross is governed by volunteers. Most of its duties are performed by volunteers, and it is financed by voluntary contributions.

One of the many services available from the Red Cross is assistance in sending emergency messages or receiving emergency information. The Red Cross is there to help transmit the word concerning leaves, births, health reports or anything else of an emergency nature.

When an emergency does arise, and a serviceman's family has reached him through the Red Cross, an emergency leave is often necessary. The Red Cross is there to confirm the crisis and report the facts to the commanding officer, the only person who can

grant leave when death or critical illness occurs.

RED CROSS FINANCIAL assistance is available to servicemen and their dependents to meet emergency needs. Funds advanced by the Red Cross field director are usually in the form of loans (always without interest). Repayment is usually made by salary allotments in line with the serviceman's ability to repay. If repayment will result in undue hardship, a grant is made instead of a loan. Sometimes a combination grant and loan is made.

Your Red Cross field director can give other assistance, too, including counseling on personal and family problems.

It's to your benefit to know what is available to you in time of emergency.

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.

MG Ellis W. Williamson Commanding General
MAJ John C. Fairbank Information Officer
1LT John C. Burns Officer-in-Charge
SP5 Charles Withrow Editor
SP4 Davie DeMauro Asst. Editor
SP4 Ralph Novak Production Supervisor

BATTALION CORRESPONDENTS

SGT Jan Anderson	1/5	SP5 Doug Elliott	2/34
PFC Ken Baron	1/8	PFC Dave Duncan	3/4
SP4 Arthur Brown	2/12	SP4 K.C. Cullen	3/22
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		

Diamonds Are Gone, But Melody Lingers On

By PFC Phil Jackson

CU CHI - During the last week in May, Wolfhound infantrymen from the 2d Battalion, 27th Infantry did what Viet Cong and North Vietnamese soldiers had not been able to do. The battalion's Delta and Bravo companies tore down Patrol Base Diamond II, ending an illustrious series of forward positions near the Cambodian border that had seen savage and futile attacks from the enemy.

The four Diamond bases withstood the attacks and inflicted heavy casualties on the enemy forces. "I don't believe that the enemy will forget us for a long time," said Specialist 4 Cecil Miller of Brooklyn, N.Y., a Delta Company soldier.

For the record, the 2d Brigade troopers compiled a total body count of 626 enemy killed in action at the four Diamonds. For their many gallant acts they have been awarded 21 Silver Stars, 158 Bronze Stars, 14 Distinguished Flying Crosses and 28 Army Commendation Medals.

The awards reflect the heroism shown by the Tropic Lightning soldiers who defended the four bases.

THE WOLFHOUSES' Diamond operations were efficiently co-ordinated by Lieutenant Colonel Vincent J. Oddi, then battalion commander. After the first night attack on Diamond Three, Oddi said, "The NVA were foolish to think they could overwhelm our forces here. We were able to give them a sound beating - and we sent them running."

On the effectiveness of the Diamond operations, First Lieutenant James L. Sullivan of Chaton, N.J., who saw action at all four of the Diamonds, said, "The Diamond bases were a military success for the 25th Infantry Division. We inflicted heavy enemy casualties, and also were able to keep our casualties low."

Delta Company Specialist 4 Robert Sampson of Detroit remembered an ambush patrol at Diamond II. "We spotted NVA a few hundred meters from our position. They were carrying flags, like in a parade, but instead of floats, they had RPGs and satchel charges. I'll be leaving soon, but I'll never forget those nights at Diamond for the rest of my life."

IN A RECENT ceremony, Delta Company received an additional honor for their defense of the Diamonds. The new battalion commander, Lieutenant Colonel Forest Rittgers Jr., gave special praise to the Wolfhound company for its valor.

The sandbags, engineer stakes and other construction material pulled down at Diamond bases represent more than good military tactics. They signify another mission completed with outstanding professionalism.



DOWN GOES THE WIRE as members of Bravo Company, 2d Battalion, 27th Infantry dismantle the remains of Diamond II's outer defense. The 2d Brigade soldiers ended the "Diamond" series - something the enemy couldn't do. (PHOTO BY PFC PHIL JACKSON)

Dragons Eat Flames In Fire Bde Mission

By SP4 Richard Huhta

CU CHI - The Golden Dragons of Bravo Company, 2d Battalion, 14th Infantry, had a real firefight on their hands recently on a sweep near Fire Support Base Meade, just south of Cu Chi.

But it was not the kind of firefight the Fire Brigade troopers were used to running up against.

As the troopers passed a village hootch, they noticed smoke rising from its thatched roof. A gust of wind had fanned the flames from a cooking fire inside the hootch and started it ablaze.

Passing Golden Dragons responded quickly by dumping their canteen water into a wash bowl and throwing it onto the fire. Others searched for a well to get more water for the increasing flames.

As one soldier was beating the flames with a bamboo pole, the unit's Kit Carson Scout, a former Viet Cong turned allied pointman, climbed onto the hootch and smothered the flames.

The hootch was saved and the Vietnamese civilians gave thanks to the Golden Dragons, who were gathering their gear to continue their sweep.



UP IN THE AIR - A Kit Carson Scout from the 2d Battalion, 14th Infantry gets into position to fight a hootch fire found by the Golden Dragons while on a sweep near Fire Support Base Meade. The 2d Brigade soldiers were able to extinguish the flames before extensive damage was done. (PHOTO BY SP4 RICHARD HUHTA)

ALMOST OUT - Golden Dragons use long bamboo poles to beat out the flames threatening a Vietnamese civilian's home. The 2d Brigade soldiers quickly extinguished the blaze caused when a cooking fire went out of control.
(PHOTO BY SP4 RICHARD HUHTA)



President Sends Message

Here is President Richard M. Nixon's Independence Day message to members of the Armed Forces:

"On July 4, 1969, we shall observe the 193d anniversary of the Declaration of Independence. This is a special day to be celebrated by all Americans. It is a time to recall with joy and celebration the proclamation of 'liberty throughout the land,' on that Glorious Fourth in 1776, the day our Nation was born.

"In the words of John Adams, our second President, this day 'ought to be commemorated by solemn acts of devotion to God solemnized with pomp and parade from one end of this continent to the other, from this time forward, evermore.'

"Our heritage of the democratic principles of the equality and dignity of all men and their 'unalienable rights of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness' stems from this document. These principles, to which the Declaration's founders mutually pledged their lives, their fortunes, and their sacred honor, are today protected by all men and women in the Armed Forces. For this, all Americans can be proud of your contribution to our security - to ensure that succeeding generations of Americans will always be able to celebrate Independence Day."

(Signed) Richard Nixon.



SGT HUYNH DAN DUC zeroes in the mortar while being guided by members of the 4.2 mortar crew of the 3d Battalion, 22d Infantry. The first round he shot was right on target.

A NATIONAL POLICEMAN and her male counterpart inspect a motorcart at the gates of Cao Xa. Men and women alike have taken part in stopping the passage of arms and munitions by the Viet Cong.



PLATOON SGT Charles Noble Jr., of Camillus, N.Y. points out the correct use of a sighting device on a 4.2-inch mortar to Sergeant Huynh Dan Duc. Thanks to Noble's instruction, Duc is capable of dropping the first round on target. Noble instructed the Regional Force soldier without the use of an interpreter.

REGIONAL FORCES leap off the chopper as it touches down on the landing zone. The RFs waste no time in getting off and heading for cover before moving out on their preplanned operation.



EVERYTHING AND EVERYBODY gets checked, and the villagers are quite used to being stopped and checked by the National Police and members of the Combined Reconnaissance Patrol of the 3d Battalion, 22d Infantry. Plenty of firepower is concealed nearby should it be needed.

**Photo Feature by
SP4 David DeMauro**



COMBINED TROOPS on a combined operation pass down the main street of Cao Xa after making a rift in the Tay Ninh rocket belt. The sight of

the Vietnamese and the Americans working together is a common one in Phuoc Ninh District.

Regulars Combine Efforts to Rout Sir Charles

TAY NINH - Bearing its part of the burden in both combating the enemy and training the soldiers of South Vietnam, the 3d Battalion, 22d Infantry has made major gains against enemy forces operating northwest of Tay Ninh.

Coupled with the forces of the 1st Brigade, Regional and Popular Force units are now conducting aggressive operations against North Vietnamese soldiers and Viet Cong.

Co-ordination of the combined operations is handled by a MACV Advisory Team led by Major James Petty of San Antonio, Tex. CPT. Donald Haramot of Makawao, Maui, Hawaii, serves as liaison officer at Cao Xa to insure that all operations are well integrated with the U.S. forces.

Classroom instruction and practical exercises ranging in all phases of infantry and support were conducted by the Combined Reconnaissance patrol of the 3d Battalion, 22d Infantry. Mortar training and heliborne assault classes were conducted at Cao Xa where the Regional Forces gained enough knowledge to conduct their own operations within days.

Choppers belonging to the 187th Assault Helicopter Company were set down at Cao Xa for the RFs to practice entry and exit procedures. Merely two days later they were performing practice assaults at Fire Support Base Washington. Soon after, they did the real thing northwest of Mo Cong where enemy forces had been congregating. Their missions were performed quite successfully and resulted in breaking up enemy troop concentrations in War Zone C.

"Through our training efforts the ARVN soldier has grown very strong and is able to share a much larger burden of the war," commented LTC Robert Carmichael of Columbus, Ga.

"The Regional Force soldier in particular has gained more confidence in himself and has learned enough about tactics to easily defeat the Viet Cong. Now that he has realized that he can overpower both the North Vietnamese and the Viet Cong, he is more willing to fight."

The Phuoc Ninh District Chief, Major Nguyen Thang Long, is responsible for the entire district. His job compares very much with that of a U.S. Brigade Commander. Long and Petty spend many hours scrutinizing maps and planning the defense of the district. "The Regional Forces now realize that they must assume an aggressive posture during daylight operations and keep up their defense at night," said Petty. "They have now gained enough confidence to operate outside of their defensive compounds."

The Regional Forces from Cao Xa have been participating in many missions which are directly responsible for turning enemy forces away from Tay Ninh Province.

The training has been conducted in all fields ranging from infantry tactics to logistical support. As a result, the ARVN forces can rely upon support from their own units. Air support is even available to them from their Air Force pilots, who were also trained by the U.S. forces.

"All in all, the ARVN soldier is better equipped and better trained than he has ever been," contended Haramoto. "He is steadily becoming more aggressive and assuming a greater part of the war."

With the way the Army of South Vietnam is improving it looks as though it won't be long before their soldiers will be completely capable of fighting the war without the help of the allied forces. Many areas surrounding Tay Ninh Province which were once Viet Cong and NVA sanctuaries are now controlled by Popular and Regional Forces. They are capable of defending their area of responsibility during darkness and hunting the enemy during the day. To the people of South Vietnam, things are looking better every day.



OPERATIONS BRIEFING - 1LT Ahn, Major James Petty, CPT Donald Haramoto, 2LT Sang, and CPT John Malone (from left to right) go over the next day's operation order. Petty and Malone provide guidance while Haramoto coordinates for the 3d Battalion, 22d Infantry. Regulars and Vietnamese frequently work together.

STRATEGY - Petty (L), Haramoto (C), and District Chief Major Nhuyen Thang Long discuss the tactics they will use in defending Tay Ninh City.



Dreadnaught Four-Deuce Rings Lightning's Thunder

By SP5 Doug Elliott

CU CHI - In the murky hours of darkness, soldiers from the 2d Brigade spot movement outside their night laager position. From a distance, nearly a mile and a half away, the four-deuce mortar platoon from the 2d Battalion, 34th Armor cranks up its tubes: "Section, fire mission! Deflection one-zero-five-niner. Charge one-eight. Five rounds illumination. Zero niner zero without. At my command . . . FIRE!"

SOON THEREAFTER, the mortarmen switch to high explosive rounds to help the men at the night laager position finish off the enemy caught in the bright light. Platoon Sergeant Dick Philps of Baltimore, Md., and his crews have started their night's work.

Deeper into the night, the Dreadnaught mortarmen receive a call from the Phu Cuong Bridge complex. The generator-driven searchlights aren't functioning properly.

Twenty-three seconds later, illumination rounds are making the fields and water surrounding the bridge as light as day. After ten minutes, the bridge lights are working perfectly, and the mortar fire ceases.

CHANGING MISSIONS again, the mortar crews fire harassment and interdiction missions throughout the night at suspected enemy positions.

At first light, the Dreadnaught mortar-track crews mount their vehicles and move to Fire Support Base Emory for daylight support missions. It was another typical night for the mortar tracks from Headquarters Company, 2d Battalion, 34th Armor.

During daylight hours the mortarmen remain ready to fire any support that may be needed for elements operating within their range. One tube is kept ready to fire as the others are thoroughly cleaned and cared for. All equipment is readied for the next night's activities.

HANG IT HIGH - Crewmen drop a round down the four-deuce mortar during a fire mission at the Ba Bep bridge, 18 miles northwest of Saigon. (PHOTO BY SP5 DOUG ELLIOTT)



U.S. Scouts Live and Work With Vietnamese

By SP5 Doug Elliott

CU CHI - Battles alone cannot win a war. Small units play an important role in the final victory. The 2d Battalion, 34th Armor's Scout Patrol is designed for this part of the war.

Under the direction of First Lieutenant Edward L. Bruton of Troy, N.C., the patrol lives and works with the Vietnamese people 365 days a year. Their goal is to help win the hearts and minds of the Vietnamese and to defeat the enemy forces whenever met.

Ambush patrols are conducted by the Scouts in combined operations with Vietnamese Scouts. Their efforts have kept the enemy out of the villages so that the people are able to construct a working democracy.

The 2d Battalion, 34th Armor Dreadnaught Scouts work closely with the Province RECON Unit and other Vietnamese groups in and around the villages. By this method, the enemy is denied access to the villages to collect taxes, conduct terrorist activities, and run propaganda missions. The people in return provide key information on the enemy's movement.

QUESTIONING VILLAGERS provides helpful information for the combined Dreadnaught-Province Reconnaissance Unit sweep. By frequent association, villagers and soldiers cement better relations and confidence in each other to defeat the enemy. (PHOTO BY SP5 DOUG ELLIOTT)



The Year That Was...

Last year at this time, the Tropic Lightning News was reporting that:

THE 2D BATTALION, 12th Infantry had captured a Viet Cong tax agent, gaining valuable information about the enemy's extortion program aimed against South Vietnamese civilians near Dau Tieng;

WOLFHOUSES OF THE 1ST BN, 27th Infantry had confiscated 32 rockets and 88 mortar rounds found in an enemy cache near the Hoc Mon canal, 12 kilometers north of Saigon;

THE 4TH BATTALION, 9th Infantry Manchus had returned to Tay Ninh for their first stand-down in 65 days after killing more than 500 enemy soldiers during operations near Saigon;

COLORS OF THE 3D BRIGADE had been passed to Colonel Lewis J. Ashley from Colonel Leonard R. Daems in a ceremony at Tan Son Nhut Air Force Base;

A SERGEANT FROM THE 725TH Maintenance Battalion had proved the M-16's superiority over the Soviet-built AK-47 by firing three rounds from one specimen of each weapon at two angle irons - while the AK-47 rounds barely dented the metal, the M-16's penetrated it.

Warning Device Fails; 7 VC Die

TAY NINH - A patrol from Alpha Company, 4th Battalion (Mechanized), 23d Infantry literally scared a Viet Cong early warning

device to death and eliminated a surprised squad of seven Viet Cong 12 miles east of Tay Ninh City.

Apparently confident that their unique alarm system, a bird tied to a stake, would provide complete protection, the enemy soldiers went about their business.

"As I entered a large bunker complex I noticed a bird tied to a stake. I must have scared the devil out of that bird. When he saw me, he jumped about two feet in the air, made two short terrified sounds and fell over dead. The bird just didn't have it in him," said Specialist 4 Raymond Page of Franklin, Mo.

Diamondhead Goes Where the Action Is

By 1LT Bernardino Vargas

Diamondhead is Bravo Company, 25th Aviation Battalion, an aerial combat support group that patrols the 25th Division's area of operation.

Diamondhead fire teams have acquired a reputation for immediate, effective and accurate response to commanders' calls for assistance.

Anything from a flare ship for lighting an area, to an escort for a convoy, to a fire team of gunships is available at a moment's notice.

Diamondhead aircraft average a monthly total of almost 1,400 hours in the air. Considering that each hour in the air requires three more spent on the ground for maintenance, Bravo Company runs a full day.

Earlier this year, Diamondhead fire teams were in constant contact during the attacks on Fire Support Base Diamond I, Diamond II and Diamond III. They were constantly in the air over Cu Chi during the post-Tet attacks there, as well as being on station in Dau Tieng and Tay Ninh.

During the June 7th NVA attack on Fire Support Base Crook, Company B, 25th Aviation Battalion, was there in full force. The Diamondhead gunships threw out lead and rockets while their searchlights showed the 1st Brigade troopers on the ground just where the enemy was.

There is no question that a large part of the credit for the overwhelming success experienced there and everywhere belongs to the men of Company B, 25th Battalion.



AWAITING ITS PREY - A Diamondhead Cobra gunship stands on its landing pad waiting for the word to call it into action. Diamondhead light fire teams are available 24 hours a day to support all elements of the 25th Division.



FIXED-WING as well as rotary-wing aircraft are maintained by the 25th Aviation Battalion. The U-6 Beaver above is often used on supply runs and has recently been fitted with search lights, making it a spotter craft as well.



A COBRA GUNSHIP lifts off its Diamondhead pad for a periodic maintenance test flight. All mechanisms must be in perfect operating condition to insure proper functioning during combat operations.

THE COMPLICATED inner workings of a Cobra gunship are laid bare for a facelifting by Diamondhead mechanics of the 25th Aviation Battalion. Three hours of maintenance are required for each hour spent in the air.



MIGHTY MINI NEEDS MAINTENANCE - Specialist 4 Lawrence Babinet adjusts one of the miniguns on a Diamondhead gunship. Constant maintenance is kept on all weapons to insure that they'll fire when they're needed.



Flexible Brigade on the Move

DAU TIENG - The Tropic Lightning's 3d Brigade is on the move again.

So far in its history, the brigade has operated in three different locations through War Zone C and the Saigon area. Now, the Flexible Brigade is moving to yet another area, Cu Chi, and another field of operations.

THE BRIGADE originally belonged to the 4th Infantry Division and worked the Dau Tieng-Tay Ninh areas.

In August 1967, the 3d Brigade, 4th Infantry Division, became the 3d Brigade, 25th Infantry Division. The switch, which strengthened the 25th Division in the Cu Chi-Tay Ninh area, was accomplished by bringing the Tropic Lightning's colors from Pleiku to Dau Tieng and returning the Pleiku area of operations to the Ivymen.

Tropic Lightning troopers were now at full, three-brigade strength in one of the most active areas of III Corps.

During "Operation Manhattan," its first big operation, the brigade uncovered a massive tunnel complex one mile south of Dau Tieng. Some of the tunnels ran more than 200 meters long.

BUT THE REAL trial by fire came later. Fire Support Base Gold, a 3d Brigade outpost 20 miles north of Tay Ninh, was hit hard by two regiments of Viet Cong. The enemy opened fire with small arms, RPGs and hand grenades as wave after wave of enemy soldiers slammed against the perimeter. However, the hard-fighting 3d Battalion, 22d Infantry reinforced its broken perimeter, pushing back the attackers, sometimes with hand-to-hand fighting. Troopers from 2d Battalion, 12th Infantry and 2d Battalion, 34th Armor reinforced the fire support base, driving the enemy into full retreat. When the fight ended, 647 enemy lay dead. The Battle of Soui Tre turned out to be the enemy's worst defeat of the war.

The year 1968 started off with a victory for the 3d Brigade. On January 1, a large enemy force was beaten back from Fire Support Base Burt, near the hamlet of Soul Cut.

For five hours, the enemy hit the base with savage human wave assaults. The 3d Battalion, 22d Infantry and 4th Battalion, 9th Infantry combined to kill 383 enemy soldiers.

THE FIRST major project of the new year was "Operation Yellowstone." The 3d Brigade's mission was to search out and destroy VC and NVA as well as their supplies. On January 29, 1968, the 2d Battalion, 12th Infantry uncovered more than 462,000 pounds of rice. Enemy losses during the operation were two fully-equipped battalions.

Combined operations with Vietnamese government soldiers played an important part in the brigade's history. Many times, the brigade and the 5th ARVN Division worked together, discovering many arms and food caches. In one cache, rockets were found that had been earmarked for use against Saigon and Tan Son Nhut.

On June 7, 1968, the 3d Brigade was moved to another area of operation. Being under the operational control of the Capital Military Assistance Command (CMAC), the brigade began massive reconnaissance in force northwest of Saigon. The brigade, under the command of Colonel Louis J. Ashley, successfully worked with CMAC for nearly four months.

ON OCTOBER 8, 1968, the 3d Brigade came back to Dau Tieng, again under the operational control of the 25th Division. In the remaining two months of the year, the brigade broke two major convoy ambushes, killing many enemy both times.

The first two months of the new year, 1969, were productive for the Flexible Brigade soldiers. However, there were signs that the enemy was planning another Tet Offensive.

On February 24, the enemy attacked every base camp in the 25th Division area. At Dau Tieng, the enemy struck from two sides, partially penetrating the defensive perimeter. Every able-bodied GI participated in the fight. Cooks, clerks and medics fought as infantrymen, and in the morning, the enemy had retreated, leaving behind 89 bodies and several prisoners.

ON MARCH 15, an NVA force attempted to overrun Fire Support Base Mahone II, home of the 1st Battalion, 27th Infantry Wolfhounds. The Wolfhounds reacted quickly, killing 56 attackers.

Today, the 3d Brigade, under the command of Colonel William J. Maddox Jr., is carrying on the tradition of being one of the toughest fighting brigades involved in Vietnam. Even with a remarkably high enemy-killed ratio and an almost uncountable record of uncovered caches, the brigade isn't satisfied yet. The Tropic Lightning patch has been imprinted on the minds of the Vietnamese people and the enemy. Neither will forget the 3d Brigade.

DIVE! DIVE! A track from the 2d Battalion (Mechanized) 22d Infantry takes a dip while on an operation near the Michelin Rubber Plantation. The Triple Deuce APC got through unscathed except for a little water around the "grilles." Just one of the memories of the Flexible Brigade from their late home at Dau Tieng. (PHOTO BY SP5 JACK ANDERSON)



SP4 Directs Arty

By SP4 Pete Freeman

TAY NINH - In the recent action at Fire Support Base Crook, in which soldiers from Alpha Battery, 7th Battalion, 11th Artillery, and Company B, 3d Battalion, 22d Infantry repelled NVA attacks for three nights in a row and killed 402 enemy, one man in particular stood out.

Specialist 4 Harry D. Mills of Salisbury, Md., a radio operator with the artillery forward observer team for Bravo Company, took over as forward observer when the regular FO went on R&R two days before the initial attack. Mills had the extremely important job of calling in and adjusting the artillery fire from supporting units.

While perched atop the tower at the fire support base, Mills did an incredible job of adjusting fire for Alpha Battery at Crook, Charlie Battery, 1st Battalion, 27th Artillery at Fire Support Base Washington, the eight-inch guns of Bravo Battery, 2d Battalion, 32d Artillery firing out of Tay Ninh, and Alpha Battery, 2d Battalion, 32d Artillery firing out of French Fort. There were times when Mills had to adjust fire for all four artillery batteries simultaneously.

Asked if things ever got confusing, Mills replied: "When the fighting was heaviest, it was a bit difficult to distinguish just what artillery splashes came from what guns, but I soon got used to it and it became easier. The real credit should go to the artillerymen. "Mills had nothing but praise for the cannoneers of the 7/11 Alpha Battery and the other supporting artillery units.

The combined artillery fire called in by Mills couldn't have been more effective. As the forward observer, Mills carried a great deal of responsibility on his shoulders and many lives depended on his performance. He came through in grand style, earning great praise from his superiors.

Bush Blown On 16 NVA

By SGT Jan Anderson

CU CHI - In a night filled with exploding rocket propelled grenades, a platoon of the 1st Battalion (Mechanized), 5th Infantry sprang an ambush outside Cu Chi base camp on an estimated Viet Cong company, killing 16 enemy.

An hour after the 2d Brigade patrol from Alpha Company and four ARVN soldiers moved into their ambush site, ten point men ahead of a well spread-out VC company moved into the Bobcats' kill zone. A Claymore mine was detonated, killing ten enemy.

The claymore explosion sent the Viet Cong company into a hasty regrouping exercise. While the Alpha company troopers were calling in mortars, the enemy started firing the first of an estimated 60 RPG rounds.

The mechanized infantrymen pulled back while gunships and artillery worked over the area of contact.

After the bombardment, the patrol moved to a rendezvous with the Bobcats' Bravo Company and mounted armored personnel carriers to continue the night's activities.

As they departed the midnight battlefield, they counted 16 enemy bodies and confiscated 16 AK-47 assault rifles.

FROM THE TOWER at Fire Support Base Crook, Specialist 4 Harry Mills of Saltsbury, Md. shows the strain of three straight nights of fighting during which Mills served as forward observer. Mills adjusted all of the artillery fire surrounding Crook during the recent attacks. (PHOTO BY SP4 PETE FREEMAN)



Thanks to
Mack D. Gooding, 15th PID, 1st Bde., for sharing this issue,
Kirk Ramsey, 2nd Bn., 14th Inf. for creating this page.

This page last modified 8-12-2004

©2004 25th Infantry Division Association. All rights reserved.