

TROPIC LIGHTNING NEWS




Ready To Strike.... Anywhere, Anytime

Vol 4 No. 30

TROPIC LIGHTNING NEWS

July 28, 1969

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IN THE MORNING MIST Bravo Company, 2d Battalion, 27th Infantry, takes an eagle flight to a landing zone south of Go Dau Ha. (PHOTO BY SP4 KARL KARLGAARD)

Tomahawks Work Out at Foot of Nui Ba Den

Arty, Tac Air Help

By SGT Roger Welt

TAY NINH - Twenty-four NVA soldiers died as action flared again at the base of Nui Ba Den near Tay Ninh City.

Members of Company C, 4th Battalion (Mechanized), 23d Infantry, were greeted with heavy small arms and automatic weapons fire as they swept through the dense jungle at the base of the mountain.

Tomahawk infantrymen answered back with Lightning speed.

STILL MAINTAINING contact, the mechanized soldiers pulled back and called in artillery, air strikes and mortars - a method of action that has worked to perfection for the Tomahawks in their recent defense of the Mountain's

base.

The artillery answered the call with 105s, 155s and eight-inch howitzers.

The air support included three light fire teams and one air strike. Four-deuce and 81 millimeter mortarmen kept the tubes hot as they pumped out the rounds.

AFTER SATURATING the area with the heavy array of ordnance, the Tomahawks advanced on the enemy position. Once again they were met with machinegun fire, this time from one position.

"That enemy machinegunner didn't last long. A few bursts and that was it. My men zeroed in on him before he knew what hit him," said Captain Arthur Minnefield, Charlie Company Commander from Anderson, Ind.

Alpha Company, sweeping on C Company's right flank, contributed four to the body count as an alert infantryman spotted movement to his front. Two dusters and 81mm mortars soaked the area, killing four surprised enemy.

The Tomahawks have been keeping a tight noose around this area. The jungles at the base of the Black Virgin provide excellent concealment for the enemy. The vicinity is often used as a staging area before an enemy attack is launched against Tay Ninh.



A VC EYE VIEW - Sergeant Roger Welt took this shot of a Tomahawk armored personnel carrier sweeping in the area of recent 4/23d contact..

Manchus Foreclose On Cong's Estate

By PFC Richard Sears

TAY NINH - While on a sweep eight miles south of Tay Ninh City, soldiers from Bravo Company, 4th Battalion, 9th Infantry, located and destroyed a huge enemy bunker complex containing more than 100 bunkers. The complex lay deep in the triple-canopied Straight Edge Woods.

The bunkers looked as though they had been built within 48 hours of their discovery by the Tropic Lightning soldiers. They were totally deserted. Strewn throughout the area were empty fish cans, cigarette butts, plastic nose protectors from RPG rounds, and clothing.

The Manchus of the 4/9th flew into the area on an eagle flight to the northern edge of the woods, where they began chopping their way into the dense jungle. The troopers first located fresh fighting positions, and as they pushed on, they uncovered the bunkers.

There were eight command bunkers, measuring 10 feet by 10 feet and eight feet deep. The other bunkers were two feet by four feet and all had heavy overhead cover. Also each bunker had a five-foot tunnel leading into it.

"Engineers working with the battalion blew as many of the bunkers as they could in the time we had," said Lieutenant Colonel John R. Randolph of Columbus, Ga., "but it was just too big for them to finish before our eagle flight was to pick us up."

Air strikes and artillery worked over the area the rest of the night, and the complex was fully destroyed.

During a year's tour, the average GI will take over 400 daily and weekly malaria pills. It's worth the trouble.

A STEEL POT DOES WORK -
Private First Class Charles Crawford, from Delta Company, 4th Battalion, 9th Infantry Manchus received a hole in his steel pot from an AK round during a firefight 15 miles southwest of Tay Ninh City. Crawford, a Tampa, Fla., native, is alive today because he used the proper equipment. **(PHOTO BY PFC RICHARD SEARS)**



Light in the Bananas

By PFC Sam Dixon

TAY NINH - From a night defensive position at the base of Nui Ba Den, Alpha Company, 4th Battalion (Mechanized), 23d Infantry put the squeeze on the enemy, killing five Viet Cong.

The slopes leading up to the sacred mountain are covered with a dense growth of banana trees and the 4/23d Tomahawks have had frequent contact with enemy forces in recent weeks.

Early in the morning, alert Tomahawks spotted moving light in the banana trees. The lights gave away the Viet Cong position. The Tropic Lightning soldiers waited, then opened up with their .50 caliber machineguns.

Captain Jon Blades of Schofield Barracks, Hawaii, commanding officer of Alpha Company, said, "It looked like the VC had no idea where their target was in this case, the good cover usually given by banana groves worked against them. They couldn't see out."

The Viet Cong withdrew to the higher slopes of the mountain seeking cover and concealment among rocks and crevices.

In the faint light of morning, the Tomahawks swept through the area, finding the five enemy bodies.

SILVER STAR MEDAL

LTC Robert B. Carmichael, HHC, 3d Bn, 22nd Inf
 CPT Ronald M. Chatelain, HHC, 1st Bn, 5th Inf
 CPT John W. Gray, Jr., Co A, 3d Bn, 22nd Inf
 CPT Richard C. Pouch, Co A, 25th Avn Bn
 1LT Edward L. Behne, Co A, 25th Avn Bn
 1LT Lawrence L. Rupp, Co E, 2d Bn, 12th Inf
 1LT Edward L. Bruton, HHC, 2d Bn, 34th Armor
 2LT Allen H. Beiner, Co, D, 4th Bn, 9th Inf
 WO1 Robert P. Shandley, D Trp, 3d Sqdn, 4th Cav
 WO1 Andrew J. Elliott, D Trp, 3d Sqdn, 4th Cav
 1SG William J. Novajosky, Co B, 3d Bn, 22 Inf
 SFC Lawrence W. Allen, Co C, 4th Bn, 23d Inf
 SFC Jose Rivera-Hernandez, Co C, 4th Bn, 9th Inf

BRONZE STAR MEDAL (HEROISM)

1LT Hugh E. Stephens, HHC, 3d Bn, 22d Inf
 1LT Don R. Bradley, Jr., A Btry, 2d Bn, 77th Arty
 SSG Joseph W. Clock, HHC, 2d Bn, 34th Armor
 SGT Ronald P. Duran, A Btry, 7th Bn, 11th Arty
 SGT Thomas G. Stidham, Co E, 2d Bn, 12th Inf
 SGT Roger E. Edmond, A Btry, 7th Bn, 11th Arty
 SGT John L. Clark, A Btry, 7th Bn, 11th Arty
 SP5 Berne G. Ellis, Co A, 65th Engr Bn
 SP5 Joseph J. Tamblyn, B Trp, 3d Sqdn, 4th Cav
 SP5 Edmund T. Mooney, B Trp, 3d Sqdn, 4th Cav
 CPL Michael S. Cziska, A Btry, 7th Bn, 11th Arty
 CPL Charles Kinyalocets, Co C, 1st Bn, 5th Inf
 SP4 Larry F. Young, C Trp, 3d Sqdn, 4th Cav
 SP4 Eugene A. Bihn, Co C, 4th Bn, 23d Inf
 SP4 David N. Brinton, Co B, 65th Engr Bn
 SP4 Norman R. Puckett, Co C, 4th Bn, 23d Inf
 SP4 Troy L. Boomer, Co C, 4th Bn, 23d Inf
 SP4 John R. Scriven, A Trp, 3d Sqdn, 4th Cav

ARMY COMMENDATION MEDAL (HEROISM)

SSG Calvin C. Rice, B Trp, 3d Sqdn, 4th Cav
 SGT Charles F. Clendenin, HHC, 2d Bn, 34th Armor
 SP5 Anthony D. Masi, C Trp, 3d Sqdn, 4th Cav
 SP5 Don Davies, HHC, 2d Bn, 34th Armor
 CPL Daniel L. Mafredas, B Trp, 3d Sqdn, 4th Cav
 SP4 Ronnie R. Moser, A Btry, 7th Bn, 11th Arty
 SP4 Glen F. Moorman, A Btry, 7th Bn, 11th Arty
 SP4 Herbert Lottes, HHC, 2d Bn, 34th Armor
 SP4 Richard A. Daly, HHC, 3d Bn, 22d Inf
 SP4 Courtney Cosgrove, HHC, 2d Bn, 34th Armor

SFC Antonio C. Flores, Co A, 2d Bn, 34th Armor
 SSG Donald Higginbotham, Co C 2d Bn, 14th Inf
 SSG Calvin C. Rice, B Trp, 3d Sqdn, 4th Cav
 SP5 John P. Beckers, Co A, 65th Engr Bn
 SP4 Joseph Valesko, Co A, 3d Bn, 22d Inf
 SP4 Luis J. Guarena, D Trp, 3d Sqdn, 4th Cav
 SP4 James E. Dundon, B Trp, 3d Sqdn, 4th Cav
 PFC Louie V. Sanchez, C Trp, 3d Sqdn, 4th Cav
 PFC Floyd D. Wimer, C Trp, 3d Sqdn, 4th Cav
 PFC James A. Mardis, Co C, 1st Bn, 5th Inf
 PFC David P. Callahan, Co C, 1st Bn, 5th Inf
 PVT George B. Tullos, Co A, 2d Bn, 12th Inf

SP4 Gregorio V. Lopez, A Btry, 7th Bn, 11th Arty
 SP4 Thomas G. Hird, B Trp, 3d Sqdn, 4th Cav
 SP4 Donald Heike, Co E, 2d Bn, 12th Inf
 SP4 Larry D. Mette, A Btry, 7th Bn, 11th Arty
 SP4 David A. Suddeth, B Trp, 3d Sqdn, 4th Cav
 PFC James D. Zebert, Co B, 4th Bn, 23d Inf
 PFC Ernest D. Bowling, B Trp, 3d Sqdn, 4th Cav
 PFC Ronald W. Robinson, Co C, 4th Bn, 9th Inf
 PFC William D. Ruff, C Trp, 3d Sqdn, 4th Cav
 PFC Joseph D. Graham, A Trp, 3d Sqdn, 4th Cav
 PFC Terry L. Cook, Co C, 4th Bn, 23d Inf
 PFC David Deitch, Co B, 4th Bn, 9th Inf
 PFC David A. Madden, Co C, 4th Bn, 23d Inf
 PFC Stephen L. McGinnis, Co C, 1st Bn, 5th Inf
 PFC Gary D. Bender, HHC, 1st Bde
 PFC Gene R. Harris, Co E, 2d Bn, 12th Inf
 PFC Robert D. Ledesma, Co C, 4th Bn, 23d Inf
 PFC Cordell Grove, Co B, 4th Bn, 23d Inf

PFC Roy L. Walker, Co D, 2d Bn, 12th Inf
 PFC Cordell B. Simms, A Btry, 7th Bn, 11th Arty
 PFC Terry E. Toole, Co D, 2d Bn, 12th Inf
 PFC Arthur D. Jankowski, A Btry, 7th Bn, 11th Arty
 PFC Lonnie P. Hensley, A Btry, 7th Bn, 11th Arty
 PFC Calvin E. McCarver, A Btry, 7th Bn, 11th Arty
 PFC Thomas C. McCullen, A Btry, 7th Bn, 11th Arty
 PFC James B. Mills, A Btry, 7th Bn, 11th Arty
 PFC Duane M. Moser, A Btry, 7th Bn, 11th Arty
 PFC Ronald J. Wood, A Btry 7th Bn, 11th Arty

RVN Vets Get State Bonuses

Not only Uncle Sam has bennies available to you when you return to the world, but your own state may offer you special considerations.

Currently, there are six states that authorize state bonuses for Vietnam veterans. They are Connecticut, Delaware, Illinois, Louisiana, Massachusetts and Pennsylvania.

Requirements for collecting the bonuses vary slightly from state to state. Generally, in order for one to collect he must have been a resident of the state at time of induction into the armed service. (Some states require a year's residency.)

The amount of the bonuses also varies. Connecticut pays \$10 for each month's service in Vietnam for a maximum of 30 months. Residents of Delaware can collect \$20 per month with a \$300 limit. Illinois and

Louisiana pay \$100 and \$250 respectively. And if you're from Massachusetts, get ready to collect \$300.

Pennsylvania has the highest ceiling. That state allows \$25 dollars per month of service in Vietnam with a limit of \$750.

If your state does not yet offer a Vietnam bonus, don't give up hope of collecting on this bennie. The list is growing every year the war continues.

In case there is a doubt about residency, application, should be made to allow state officials to determine whether a person is a bona fide resident.

Many states that do not traditionally authorize cash bonuses for veterans of periods of armed conflict do, instead, offer other benefits, such as property tax advantages, special farm or home loans and job preferences. If you are interested in what may be available from your home state, write to the veterans affairs office at your state capital.

The bennies are just beginning to roll in.

Think About It

You say you've only been in the Army for 17 months and already you're surprised by all of the bennies? Well, there's a lot more where they came from if you decide to take a burst of three, four or six. If you have an MOS in the series 31, 67, 68 or 91, you may be eligible for a \$10,000 Re-Up bonus. Are you good enough??? Think about it.

TROPIC LIGHTNING

Combat Honor Roll

Platoon sergeant John J. Weiss of C Troop, 3d Squadron, 4th Cavalry, is added to the Tropic Lightning Honor Roll this week for his valorous actions on June 19, 1969.

While on a reconnaissance-in-force mission, C Troop discovered an enemy bunker complex. While investigating, the Troop came under intense hostile fire from a well-entrenched enemy force.

As Sergeant Weiss led his men into the aggressors' stronghold, he spotted an enemy bunker that had to be destroyed before his men could advance.

Sergeant Weiss assaulted the emplacement and destroyed it by throwing several hand grenades. The area was heavily mined, but Sergeant Weiss once again advanced on the insurgents, throwing grenades and firing his rifle, and destroyed a second enemy position.

Exposed to deadly hostile fire, he led his men through the area, investigating spider holes and providing covering fire for the rest of C Troop.

Sergeant Weiss determined where the most strategic enemy stronghold was and crawled forward to eliminate yet another enemy emplacement and its occupants.

For his heroic actions, Sergeant Weiss was awarded the Silver Star by Major General Ellis W. Williamson on July 18.



Tropic Lightning Tots

The Commanding General Welcomes

The Following Tropic Lightning Tots

To The 25th Infantry Division – As

Reported By The American Red Cross.

Born To:

June 24
SP4 Thomas Vick, HHC 725th Maint Bn, a daughter

June 26
SP4 Edward M. Skinner, B Btry, 3d Bn, 13th Arty, a son

June 27
SP4 Ralph I. Frazier, D Co, 725th Maint Bn, a son

June 28
SP4 Gordon Cronic, HHC 1st Bn (Mech), 5th Inf, a son,

June 30
2LT Clark O. Benedict, A Co, 2d Bn, 27th Inf, a daughter

July 1
PFC Oliver Prothro, A Co, 1st Bn (Mech), 5th Inf, a daughter

July 2
SP4 Richard Weber, B Co, 554th Engr Bn, a daughter

July 3
SP4 Evario Alamillo, D Co, 2d Bn, 14th Inf, a son

July 3
SP4 William R. McClullough, HHC, 25th Inf Div, a son

July 4
SP4 Raymond Goodyear, B Btry, 5th Bn, 2d Arty, a son
SP4 Cecil May, 25th MP Co, a daughter
PVT Arthur Edwards, B Co, 554th Engr Bn, a son

July 5
1LT James A. Lake, HHC, 25th Avn Bn, a daughter
CPT Harley J. Manchester, B Co, 1st 27th Inf, a son

July 7
SP4 William T. Hamilton, HHC 554th Engr Bn, a daughter
PFC Kenneth E. Seiler HHC 2d Bn, 77th Arty, a daughter

July 8
CPT John A. Rockensies HHC, 2d Bde, a daughter
SGT Larry A. Owens, B Co, 25th Avn Bn, a daughter
SP4 Dennis J. Beaupre, Co A, 725th Maint Bn, a son

July 9
SSG Mack Togisala, B Btry 3d Bn, 13th Arty, a daughter

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

BATTALION CORRESPONDENTS

SGT Jan Anderson 1/5
PFC Ken Baron 1/8
SP4 Arthur Brown 2/12
PFC Larry Goodson 2/12
SP4 Richard Huhta 2/14
PFC Phil Jackson 2/27
PFC Craig Sampson 2/27

SP5 Doug Elliott 2/34
PFC Steve Duncan 3/4
SP4 K.C. Cullen 3/22
PFC Dan Stone 4/9
SGT Roger Welt 4/23
SP4 Pete Freeman 7/11

ARVNs Learn to Handle Weapons of War

In Classes at Tay Ninh

By SP4 Rick Mizdal

TAY NINH - What doesn't an ARVN officer know about U.S. Army equipment that he needs to know?

How much ammunition does a Cobra gunship carry? What's the range of an eight-inch howitzer? How does one attempt to ride atop an armored personnel carrier?

All these questions and many more were asked by 38 ARVN officers and five faculty members of the Ben Keo Training School on their tour of the facilities of Tay Ninh West Base Camp.

The purpose of the ARVN officers' tour was to thoroughly familiarize them with American combat equipment that they will use in combined operations with U.S. Forces.

The ARVN officers were shown eight-inch howitzers and supporting gunships. They also learned about mechanized infantry units. After a welcome by Colonel Charles Hayward, commander of the 1st Brigade, the group was shown Tay Ninh West's artillery complex. They received translated lectures as well as demonstrations on eight-inch howitzers and 175mm guns.

At the airfield the ARVN officers also viewed helicopter demonstrations. Their tour ended with an introduction to the Tomahawks of the 4th Battalion (Mechanized), 23d Infantry, and their armored personnel carriers.



HUEY VIEW - (Above) ARVN officers receive a briefing on this chopper at Tay Ninh base camp. (PHOTO BY SP4 RICK MIZDAL)

Fire Bde, ARVN, Nat. Police Work as Team

Combined Forces Rid Trung An of Cong

By SP5 Doug Elliott

CU CHI - Elements of the 2d Brigade, Vietnamese soldiers and National Police combined forces to remove hardcore Viet Cong from Trung An Village.

Trung An is located four miles southwest of Cu Chi on Highway 8A. The Viet Cong were known to be using the village as a base of operations for an area of rugged terrain northeast of Cu Chi known as the Spider Web.

ARMOR WAS supplied by Headquarters Company, 2d Battalion, 34th Armor's tank and reconnaissance platoons, and by the attached reconnaissance platoon from the 1st Battalion, 17th Cavalry. Infantry forces came from the 82d Airborne's Company C and Regional Force soldiers and National Police from the Phu Hoa District.

In addition, other units from the 505th Airborne swept south of Trung An to complete the squeeze on the enemy. Planning had been laid down to the most minute details of the operation.

At one o'clock on the morning of the start of the mission, the combined armored column swept out of Fire Support Base Emory and roared down Highway 8A. Reaching the edge of Trung An Village, the U.S.-Vietnamese mounted forces swept to the left and right of the settlement, encircled it, and secured their positions.

THE NIGHT-LONG vigil to ensnare the Viet Cong in the village had begun. Several times movement was spotted, but the Viet Cong could not find a way to break out of the village. The minutes of the night ticked away.

At first light, a tent was erected in the south end of the village, while National Police and Regional Forces soldiers searched the village. The American personnel kept the villagers isolated by their cordon.

No one left the village, and no one got into it. Suspects were taken to the tent on the outskirts of town, where they were checked individually. Two men and one woman were arrested and accused of having operated in the

tunnel complexes of the Spider Web.

Four other Vietnamese were detained for questioning because of illegal residence in the village and improper ID cards. The sifting of the guerrilla from the civilian is a continuing job for combined U.S.-Vietnamese forces.

VC Lose Big Ammo, Rice Cache

TAY NINH - Working separately in areas south of Tay Ninh, two companies from the 4th Battalion, 9th Infantry, found caches in enemy bunkers that included rice and ammunition.

Charlie Company of the 4/9 Manchus found the first cache while on a sweep near Fire Support Base Stoneman, 16 miles southeast of Tay Ninh City. The find included a ton and a half of rice.

"I never saw so much rice in all my life," commented Private First Class David J. Guest of Medford, N.J.

The cache also contained forty-eight 60mm mortar rounds, twenty-four 82mm mortar rounds, two hundred and fifty .51 caliber machine gun rounds and five RPG rounds.

Across the Vam Co Dong River, Alpha Company Manchus chopping through the Renegade Woods found a battalion-size bunker complex. The largest bunker measured 20 feet by 20 feet, with 18 inches of overhead cover. It was six feet deep. There were 135 smaller bunkers, most measuring approximately five feet by five feet. They were scattered throughout the area.

Dreadnaughts Blast Tunnels

CU CHI - Tan Hoa village, located along Highway 8A, two miles from Cu Chi, has been abandoned for more than a year. All that remains is a few clay-walled hootches partially destroyed.

Periodically the men of the 2d Battalion, 34th Armor's Headquarters Company, sweep the area and often return with enemy suspects, weapons and ammunition. In the past, the battalion has captured small arms weapons, 122mm rockets, documents and even suspected members of the Viet Cong infrastructure.

RECENTLY THE Dreadnaught company's tracks and recon vehicles joined two companies of Vietnamese Regional Forces soldiers and a MACV advisory team in reshuffling the village's bunkers. The result was the capture of a B-40 rocket launcher, a cooking stove, assorted foods, three sets of black pajamas, one carbine rifle and two Chicom grenades. Four suspected members of the Viet Cong infrastructure were detained.

First Lieutenant Carl W. Grabeel of Dallas, Tex., platoon leader of the Dreadnaughts' Headquarters Tank Section, tells of the operation's initial moves at seven o'clock in the morning: "We took 15 tracks and tanks to the pick-up point at Peri Tan Qui and loaded the Vietnamese soldiers aboard our vehicles. Running down Highway 8A, we dropped the RF troopers off south of Tan Hoa to begin their operation.

"We then swept around to the far side of the village," said Grabeel. "Once on the far side, we moved into a blocking position to seal off all routes of escape."

SECOND LIEUTENANT John T. Aiken of Greenfield, Tenn., forward observer for the Dreadnaught battalion, told about the actual sweep: "We put our blocking force in a semicircle outside the old village. Elements from two RF companies split up and approached the village from both sides."

"The RFs," continued Aiken, "then drove all that was in front of them toward the blocking force. At times, the Vietnamese were past their waists in water, but they pushed on in spite of it. These soldiers really showed spirit."

The first suspect detained led the RF soldiers to his wife in another tunnel. Both suspects were questioned as the sweep continued. As more and more of the tunnels were located, two more suspects were caught, along with their weapons, food and ammunition.



JUST LIKE HOWARD JOHNSON'S - Two Wolfhounds, Private First Class Fred Thatcher of Milan, Mich., and Specialist 4 Cecil Miller of Brooklyn, find that even a thrown track can be comfortable if you're tired enough. (PHOTO BY SP4 JOHN HAYDOCK)



LIFE ON THE VAM CO DONG -

As a sailor takes a shower on his "Zippo" patrol boat, a chopper comes in for a deck landing with the afternoon mail. The setting is on the Vam Co Dong River, four miles south of Tay Ninh, where the 531st River Division is working with Tropic Lightning forces to effectively stop enemy infiltration.

ARTILLERY FO - First Lieutenant Daniel L. Putman of Yuba City, Calif., observes and adjusts the artillery fire he called in on enemy positions across the river. Putman is an artillery forward observer with the 7th Battalion, 11th Field Artillery, who is currently working with the Navy calling in direct artillery support for all of their operations.





A Navy machinegunner scans the river bank for signs of enemy activity while on patrol near Ben Soi, formerly a popular river crossing point for enemy infiltrators planning a trip on Highway 13.

Army, Navy Team Up for 'Slingshot'

Photo Feature by SP4 Pete Freeman

TAY NINH - Imagine a night ambush patrol set up 20 miles from its support base. Sound strange? It was, until the U.S. Navy began Operation Slingshot, which brought it all the way from the Mekong Delta up north into Tay Ninh Province.

Just recently, the Navy's 531st River Division set up a base of operations on the Vam Co Dong River at a location four miles south of Tay. Ninh City.

With nine boats and about 60 men, the 531st is responsible for patrolling 40 miles of river. They were sent up to work with the 1st Brigade in helping stop enemy infiltration across the stream. Enemy infiltrators must cross the Vam Co Dong in order to proceed toward Tay Ninh, a major commerce center and an attractive enemy target.

In the past, Charlie more or less owned the waterways in the area. At night he used the river as a means of transporting troops, weapons and supplies. Now, the enemy has been denied the use of the main waterways in Tay Ninh Province, which has greatly reduced his effectiveness.

Every night, boats are sent out on night ambush patrol, sometimes patrolling as far as 30 miles up river. In their first week of operation, they were involved in eight fire fights.

On their first night ambush patrol, the boats were responsible for turning back an estimated NVA Regiment near Ben Soi. Until that first night, the enemy could cross the river quite easily, especially at night. After losing a number of sampans and personnel, the NVA soon realized they had no chance of crossing the river and withdrew.

Like all units operating in Tay Ninh Province, the Navy receives great support from Army artillery and gunships. Working with the 531st is First Lieutenant Daniel L. Putman of Yuba City, Calif., a Tropic Lightning forward observer with the 7th Battalion, 11th Field Artillery.

Putman calls in artillery from nearby fire support bases to support the patrol boats when they make contact or to provide blocking fire as they patrol up river. Operating from the communications boat at the base, Putman can provide effective artillery fire anywhere along the river within seconds after the boats make contact.

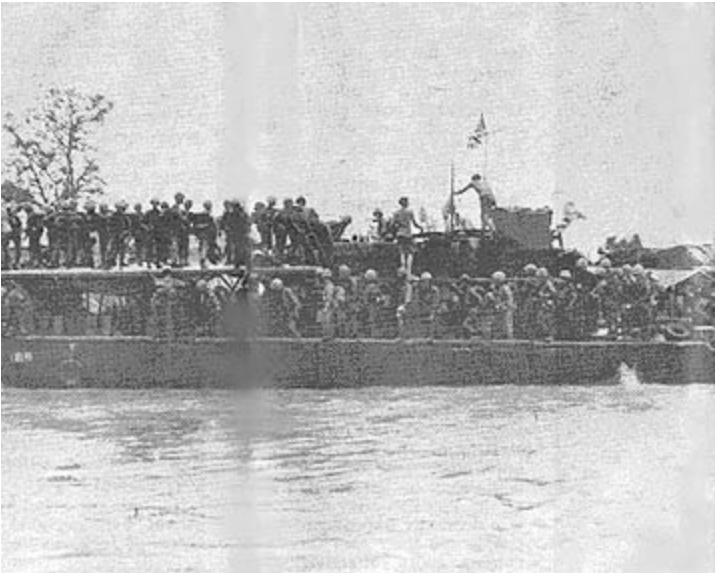
"The Navy was given a tremendous task to perform this far inland," said Putman. "They are operating a great distance from their own support units. Consequently they must depend on support from the Army. It is my job to show them how to make maximum use of artillery support."

The 531st River Division is commanded by Lieutenant Colonel Thomas K. Anderson of Eugene, Ore. About their work in the 1st Brigade area of operations, Anderson said: "After operating independently on other operations north of the Mekong Delta we greatly appreciate the Army support we are getting here. Teaming together with direct artillery support has produced great results. In addition, the Army has been extremely

helpful in supplying us with ammunition and anything else we need, making Operation Slingshot the best one we've had."



Equipped with five .50 caliber machineguns, this patrol boat searches the shoreline.



The U.S. Navy transports ARVN Marines to an area five miles south of Tay Ninh for a sweep.

A river patrol searches for enemy bunkers and hidden supply points.





Two U.S. Navy river patrol boats along with three South Vietnamese Navy boats head out on a morning patrol which will take them some 25 miles up the Vam Co Dong River.

3d Bde Troops Aid Dau Tieng Orphans

CU CHI - More than a thousand dollars was donated recently by troops of Tropic Lightning's 3d Brigade for a proposed orphanage near the brigade's former base camp at Dau Tieng.

The orphanage idea came about when the brigade staff chaplain, Major D. Clifton Banks of El Paso, Tex., took personal interest in four children in Dau Tieng after their mother had been killed by an enemy rocket earlier in the year.

When Banks investigated the situation further, he discovered that the children had no living relatives. Immediately, Banks went to Major Nguyen Ngoc Chau, Tri Tam District Chief, to find out what could be done for the four orphaned youngsters.

At the district office, Banks found out there were 50 more orphaned children in much the same plight as the four he had taken under his wing. Roles were rapidly reversed, and it was Major Chau who asked Banks for assistance in finding a home for the children.

Banks responded with a request for a donation to begin work on an orphanage in the Dau Tieng area. There was already \$300 in the fund, and brigade troops put in more than \$700 to start the ball rolling. Banks' wife started a similar collection in El Paso.

Construction of the orphanage is in progress now.



I GOTTA GET OUT OF THIS PLACE might be the cry from A Company, 2/34th Armor's newly enlisted mascot.

Phu Hoa Stays Safe

CU CHI - The men of the 2d Battalion, 34th Armor, are helping the Vietnamese accomplish their goal of peace. Training teams that give practical help to the villages in the Phu Hoa District are parts of the Dreadnaught program.

Captain James Crocker of Hubert, N.C., is part of a MACV advisory team. His team works in the District along with the 2d Battalion, 34th Armor.

SAYS CROCKER: "We run combined operations both day and night with Tropic Lightning Armor."

"We have an average of three combined daylight missions and two combined night missions a week," continued Crocker. "Reaction forces for night contacts are usually Vietnamese Infantry and 2/34th Dreadnaught Armor."

Another side of the fighting force is led by 1st Lieutenant Edward L. Bruton of Troy, N.C. A platoon leader of the Dreadnaught scout platoon, Bruton and his men work directly with the Province Reconnaissance Unit.

"The PRU's enthusiasm and interest in the people sparks our men to do the best job possible," said Bruton.

"With our combined information sources, we have been able to stop many Viet Cong."

Furthermore, the aid in combat arms is no longer one-sided. Because of some of the area's swampy terrain, the Dreadnaught Armor often relies on the Regional Forces and the Popular Forces for infantry striking power. The Vietnamese units, according to Crocker, are now ready to "go out and jump on the Viet Cong day or night". It is a dramatic improvement. The people see their own forces becoming more effective. They then feel greater security and firmer backing because of it.

AS THE MAIN force Viet Cong are driven away from the populated areas, there is still the problem of the Viet Cong Infrastructure (VCI). The VCI can continue to rule the people by sneaking into the villages and hamlets at night to collect taxes, give propaganda lectures and terrorize the villagers.

The Province Reconnaissance Unit and the Village Self-Defense Teams are prime instruments in defeating the infrastructure. In recent months, the VCI has entered only one village in the Phu Hoa District.

The combined rapid reaction force drove them back out before the Viet Cong could collect taxes or forcibly remove the village youth to join their ranks.

This success is a product of the U.S.-Vietnamese soldiers, working together. "I think," continued Crocker, "we are doing a good job here. A year ago, nightly attacks were common. Now, this is no longer true. An example is the Tan Who Village Self-Defense Team. Villagers of all ages are now volunteering to take arms and aid in defense.

"**A YEAR AGO**, that would have been suicide. The people now feel that there is someone to give them a helping hand. It is an expression of confidence from the people to their government and the free world forces."

The second front of the war, political and economic security, is also important to the pacification program. Once the hamlets have been secured, the people can develop their economic and political systems.

To do this the Government of the Republic of Vietnam, its Army, and the U.S. Forces work together. Elections were held for Phu Hoa District in April. For the first time, all the villages and hamlets have a truly elected government.

In the Phu Hoa District, the 2/34th Armor and ARVN forces still help by giving advice, when required, on construction and sanitation, lending the use of heavy equipment, and assistance in getting materials.

Pooch Packs For Florida

CU CHI - It's not uncommon to hear of a short-timer GI getting decorated before leaving country, but a dog? His name is Scouter and he is owned by Specialist 4 James Grant of Jacksonville, Fla., a 3d Brigade soldier. Grant said that he got Scouter when he was just a pup. "He has been a great 'friend and morale booster,'" said Grant.

Scouter pulls a lot of duty. "He pulled bunker guard every night in Dau Tieng when we were there," said Grant. "He is the first one in the chow line every morning."

Scouter earned a purple heart on June 15 during a heavy rocket attack on Dau Tieng. "He was running for a bunker when a 107mm rocket landed about 20 meters away," said Grant. "He took a piece of shrapnel in the

chest. It's a good thing it wasn't serious. I'd hate to see him dusted off to Japan."

Today Scouter is happy and healthy. With just a few days to go, Grant is taking his dog back to the U.S. "I didn't have the heart to leave him behind."

Crescent Is Starting Point

Rome Plow Everything!

By SP5 Doug Elliott
and
SP4 Carl Detrick

TAY NINH - The Crescent area, 13 miles east of Tay Ninh City, became Charlie's paradise. Double- and triple-canopied jungles in the area have long hampered allied air observations and mechanized sweeps.

Enemy forces used the Crescent to pass heavy loads of arms and munitions to their soldiers operating from Tay Ninh to Saigon. The jungle also doubled as a staging area and as a refuge from combat.

Thanks in large part to a group of Tropic Lightning soldiers, however, the Crescent is gradually losing its appeal to Charles. Over 9,000 acres of thick jungle are being cleared in an effort to end their usefulness for the enemy.

Elements involved in the clearing operation include the 2d Battalion, 34th Armor, Charlie Company of the 2d Battalion (Mechanized), 22d Infantry, and 28 Rome plows from II Field Force's 60th Land Clearing Company. The joint force is commanded by Lieutenant Colonel T.G. Smith of El Paso, Tex., commanding officer of the 2d Battalion, 34th Armor.

"This is the end of the Crescent story for the enemy," said Smith. "Charlie is losing his staging areas, supply routes, and a place to lick his wounds. The morass of fallen jungle will make his passing extremely difficult. When we are finished, air observation of enemy movement in the area will be easy."

Using a leap frog method, the land clearing operation moves into an area of dense growth, clears out a night defensive position, then mows down all the surrounding area. Tanks and personnel carriers from the Dreadnaught Armor and tracks from Charlie Triple Deuce provide security for the daylight cutting operations and the night defensive positions.

The joint operation has met little resistance from the enemy. The force has found numerous fighting positions and hastily abandoned equipment, indicating that Charlie still lives nearby. Armored sweeps of the area have made contact with scattered enemy forces.

The clearing operation may also provide other benefits to the people of Tay Ninh Province besides ridding them of an enemy staging and hiding ground.

Says Smith, "When the war ends, this cleared land can be cultivated for the first time, and by removing the jungle, we are also ridding Tay Ninh Province of a heavily infested vermin and pestilence breeding area. In fact, the areas of our night defensive positions, once cleared, are large enough to build a village within their confines. A farmer could not possibly remove a triple-canopied jungle by himself, nor could he afford to rent a bulldozer for even a day. When peace comes, the area will be open for many people to live and work."



SWEEPING SHADED TRAILS - (Above, right) Engineers check for mines and booby traps while Headquarters and Alpha Company tanks from the 2d Brigade, 34th Armor, secure the area. (PHOTO BY SP5 DOUG ELLIOTT)



A LOTTA MUSCLE - A Dreadnaught VTR helps unload material for a night defensive position. (PHOTO BY SP5 DOUG ELLIOTT)

T-I-M-B-E-R - A Rome plow from the 60th Land Clearing Company does a job on the jungle terrain in the Crescent. (PHOTO BY SP5 DOUG ELLIOTT)



ROME PLOWS from the 60th Land Clearing Company clear the terrain and prepare a new night defensive position during the operation in the Crescent. (PHOTO BY SP5 DOUG ELLIOTT)

Arty, Air Strikes Support Regulars

Feature By
SP4 K.C. Cullen

TAY NINH - Tactical air power and overlapping concentrations of artillery have always been one of the biggest deterrents to enemy infiltration in Tay Ninh Province. The "King of Battle" and the "Rulers of the Sky" proved their prowess again recently as they forced an enemy element to retreat further into his jungle lairs with a massive barrage.

Charlie Company of the 3d Battalion, 22d Infantry, while on a reconnaissance-in-force mission on the edges of War Zone C, spotted four NVA on a trail, carrying their weapons on their shoulders.

THE REGULARS engaged the surprised enemy who fled into the nearby woodline. The Tropic Lightning soldiers pursued and drew fire from an unknown-size force hidden in the bush. Captain William A. Vestal of Glendale, Ariz., Charlie Company commander, called Battalion Commander Lieutenant Colonel Robert B. Carmichael of Columbus, Ga., to bring in the support.

As the ground troops fell back for a safer and better vantage point, an explosive storm erupted over the enemy

positions. When 155mm rounds were not exploding, Air Force Phantom jets dropped their 750-pound ordnance. Gunships filled in between the artillery and air strikes.

After the continuous bombardment was lifted, the Regulars began to move back toward the area of engagement, but stopped short as night fell.

THE INFANTRYMEN discovered a well-camouflaged trail system before they returned to their pick-up point. The NVA used clumps of sod to make the trails invisible from the air.

Eight inch and 155mm artillery pounded the area throughout the night. Next day, Charlie Company moved toward the woodline as the jets again dropped explosives on the bunker area.

No enemy resistance was met as the Regulars moved up the sod-covered trails and the slow, meticulous search of the bunkers began. By the end of the day 40 of the still-complete bunkers were probed and 30 others, partially or totally destroyed by the bombardment, were checked also.

NINETEEN NVA bodies were discovered in 10 fresh graves throughout the area. The troopers also found two AK-47 assault rifles along with an assortment of ammunition.

Fresh clothing and full NVA packs containing a total of 15 pounds of maps and documents along with 400 pounds of polished rice were hauled from the bunkers.

"The NVA fled rapidly out of the area, and numerous fresh blood trails led through the bombed out area to the north," said Vestal. "It was the best application of tactical air support I have ever seen."

HAND OFF! Captain William A. Vestal of Glendale, Ariz., passes a rucksack full of captured documents and maps as 1st Lieutenant Hugh E. Stephens of Charleston, S.C., keeps the pilot informed of branches nearby. The LZ was formed by a tactical air strike. (PHOTO BY SP4 K. C. CULLEN)



A REGULAR from Charlie Company fights his way through the thick underbrush that covers the entrance to one of the NVA bunkers. (PHOTO BY SP4 K.C. CULLEN)

MANEUVERING - As an enemy force opens up, soldiers from the 2d Battalion, 22d Infantry, maneuver to flank their position in a thick jungle area. (PHOTO BY SP5 RICK ADAMS)



BG Black Honored by Thailand Prime Minister

BANGKOK, THAILAND - In recent ceremonies here, Brigadier General Edwin F. Black, assistant division commander of the 25th Infantry Division, was made a member of Thailand's most Noble Order of the Crown by the Thai Prime Minister, Field Marshal Thanom Kittakachorn.

The honor resulted from Black's service as founder and commander for two years of the United States Army Support - Thailand. Under his leadership, USARSUPTHAI grew from a small support unit at its inception in December, 1966, to a giant complex. USARSUPTHAI sponsored numerous projects, including the massive \$43 million Sattahip Port Complex and a 340-mile road network connecting the port with the northeast sector of the country.

General Black left USARSUPTHAI in December, 1968, to become Tropic Lightning's assistant division commander for support.

One of his most significant accomplishments while in Thailand was the construction of a training facility for the famed Black Panther Division of the Royal Thai Army at Kanchanburi.

Black's citation from the Thai King named him a Knight Commander in the Royal Order of the Crown and read in part: "Brigadier General Black's leadership and distinguished performance of duty have contributed greatly in promoting the friendly relationship and mutual understanding between the United States of America and the Kingdom of Thailand."

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