

I'll bet many of us can tell about taking a shower in the rain, getting soaped up, and the rain stopped - but surely there are stories much better than that one.

## Last Casualties in WWII

George Peterman provided a list from the National Archives of the last casualties of the 22nd Infantry Regiment in World War II. From the period April 18-30, 1945, twenty-six men of our Regiment are listed as wounded or killed in action. The last KIA was 2LT Walter E. Jones, killed on April 20, 1945. If you would like a copy of the list, write me and I'll send it.

## Battle of Fire Support Base Burt January 1-2, 1968

In our continuing effort to make us all aware of battles fought by the 22nd Infantry Regiment, I include the detailed account of the Battle of FSB Burt - also called the Battle of Suoi Cut. Several members of our Society fought in that battle, including **Gordon Kelley** who earned the Distinguished Service Cross for his heroic actions. Following is the unofficial account of the battle as written by the 2/77 Artillery commander:

The Battle of Suoi Cut was a multi-battalion attack against Fire Support Base Burt, a 3d Brigade, 25th Infantry Division installation, 10 kilometers from the Cambodian Border in the heart of War Zone C. Six enemy battalions participated in the attack with four battalions committed and two in reserve. The battalions were identified as having been from the 271st and 272d VC Regiments. US Forces at FSB Burt included 2/22 Infantry (Mechanized), which defended the FSB perimeter to the west, 3/22 Infantry (-), which defended the east and the 2/77 Artillery (-) plus Battery A, 3/13 Artillery (155 SP), one section Battery B 5/2 Artillery (M-42SP), one section Battery D, 71st Artillery, and one section Battery I, 29th Artillery.

The attack began with harassing mortar attacks during the early evening hours, followed by an intensive mortar and RPG attack beginning at 2330 hours. This was followed by heavy ground fire and human wave attacks which continued

until 0500 hours on 2 January when VC Forces began withdrawing to the south.

Throughout the earlier part of the evening, personnel located at FSB Burt had been subjected to sporadic mortar attacks. In addition, ambush patrols and listening posts located outside the perimeter had reported movement near their positions. Just prior to 2330 hours, heavy movement was reported from outposts all around the perimeter. At 2330 hours, FSB Burt began receiving mortar rounds in heavy volume. This attack was followed by RPG, small arms, and automatic weapons fire, generally from the southeast and northeast although all sectors of the perimeter were subjected to various types and intensities of fire. At approximately 2400 hours, mortar and RPG fires slackened and ground attacks were launched all around the perimeter. The initial effort appeared to be in the 2/22 Infantry sector defending to the west. This effort was repulsed, however, and was later determined to be a feint. It became apparent that the critical area was to the southeast, defended by Company C, 3/22 Infantry and backed up by the 105mm howitzers of Battery C, 2/77 Artillery. By 0100 hours, VC elements had succeeded in reaching bunker line positions in this area. Prior to this, the artillery had been used for counter-mortar fire and in support of ambush patrols who had become engaged at the outset of the battle. With enemy elements approaching the bunker line, requests for direct fire were received from the 3rd Brigade Tactical Operations Center. As the VC reached the bunker line, Battery C, 2/77 Artillery began delivering a heavy volume of direct fire into their ranks. Initially, high explosive was employed, but this was soon augmented with the APERS (beehive) round. The effect on the advancing enemy was devastating. At the same time, positions to the south, manned by Company C, 2/22 Infantry were also under heavy attack. Direct fire from Battery A, 2/77 Arty was instrumental in blunting this thrust. Gun ships and flare ships were also employed extensively in this area.

At 0145 hours, enemy fires and contact slackened. Fires from medium and heavy artillery at FSB Beaugard, located 12 kilometers to the west were employed west of FSB Burt to prevent reinforcements from entering or withdrawing in

that direction. At 0200 hours, enemy fires increased and all areas were again engaged. The medium artillery battery covering the northern portion of the perimeter resumed direct fire with HE into enemy positions to the northeast, north and northwest. Once again, however, the weight of the attack was concentrated to the south and southeast. Heavy fires were again delivered by the artillery employing direct fire techniques and using both HE and beehive. During this period, artillery indirect fires from both FSB Burt and FSB Beaugard were placed along the road to the south. This fire was later credited with being instrumental in breaking up the enemy reserve of approximately two battalions who were assembling to exploit breakthroughs in the perimeter.

It was at this time that the infantry's small arms ammunition began to run low. Artillery men not engaged in firing the howitzers assembled the battalion's basic load of ammunition and then distributed it to infantrymen at their positions on the perimeter. The three hours of continuous fire was also beginning to drain artillery ammunition supply. Some redistribution was necessary within the battalion but it was soon apparent that resupply would be necessary.

Shortly before 0300 hours, TAC Air became available and was employed to the south where heavy contact was still being felt. An almost continuous volume of direct fire artillery was still being delivered. At 0330 hours, virtually all contact ceased except in the south. TAC Air continued to be employed extensively, utilizing all ordnance. Napalm and CBU's were particularly effective in helping to break the attack formations of the enemy. Although heavy direct fire artillery was still being employed to the south, the use of TAC Air allowed direct fire to be placed in other areas of the perimeter. In addition, indirect fire was placed south down the road to interdict withdrawing VC Forces and to prevent massing.

At 0330 hours, emergency ammunition resupply began. UH-1D helicopters were used and resupply was conducted out of Bien Hoa, Dau Tieng, and Katum. . . . . At 0500 hours, VC Forces began to break contact and withdraw to the south. Heavy artillery fires and air strikes were continued on their routes of withdrawal. By 0600 hours, it was clear that the battle was over and

had resulted in complete victory for US Forces and near annihilation of the attacking enemy. The attack cost the VC 401 dead by body count, plus untold wounded. US casualties were 23 KIA and 153 WIA.

The obvious objective of the attacking VC Forces was to overrun and, if possible, annihilate defending US Forces. They failed due to the successful integration of Infantry and Artillery fire power coupled with the punishing effect of air strikes. The ambush patrols were invaluable in providing early warning and in one dramatic case provided intelligence of VC Forces during the battle and directed air strikes. The devastating effect of direct fire artillery including both high explosive and beehive cannot be denied. . . . .

It is interesting to note that in March 1967, the same 271st VC Regiment attacked FSB Gold, (Battle of Suoi Tre - covered in January 1996 issue of our newsletter), defended by the same units of the 22nd Infantry and 2/77 Artillery. The results were identical; a gallant defense by infantry and artillery augmented by air strikes decimated the attacking enemy forces and provided a substantial American victory. Deeds not Words!

## Book Corner - Books about 22nd Infantry

We don't have but three entries in this column this time - send me information about books that we should let our members know about - be sure to include information on price and how/where to get them.

For those of you interested in the early history of our Regiment, we have arranged for a special 51% discount between now and July 31, 1996 on A.B. Feuer's book, "Combat Diary" Episodes of the 22nd Infantry Regiment, 1866-1905. The special discount price for members of the 22nd Infantry Regiment Society is \$22 plus \$4 shipping. You can order with a credit card 24 hours-a-day by calling 1-800-225-5800 or mail your check to: Order Department, Greenwood Publishing Company, 88 Post Road West, Westport, CT 06881. Be sure to specify Source Code A269.