

BATTLE OF SUOI TRE
3D BATTALION 22D INFANTRY
APO SAN FRANCISCO 96260
ACCOUNT OF BATTLE 21 MARCH 1967

WEAPONS

Evacuated	Destroyed
41 - RPG2	8
26 - LMG	4
39 - AK-47	11
3 - US 12 GA.	0
11 - US BAR	2
2 - 12.7AA	0
5 - M-14	0
9 - SKS CARBINES	3
1 - P-38 PISTOL	0
13 - CHICOM 7.92 RIFLES	6
2 - US M-79	0

AMMO & EQUIPMENT

31,000 RNDS SMALL ARMS DESTROYED

580 RNDS RPG EVACUATED

(EST 600 RNDS EMPLOYED AGAINST
BDE. TROOPS).

1900 STICK GRENADES

40 RNDS 82MM MORTAR DESTROYED

500-700 RNDS 82 MM MORTAR EMPLOYED BY V.C.

13 RNDS 75 MM EVACUATED

21 RNDS 75 MM DESTROYED

7 RNDS 57 MM EVACUATED

21 RNDS 57 MM DESTROYED

VIET CONG CASUALTIES

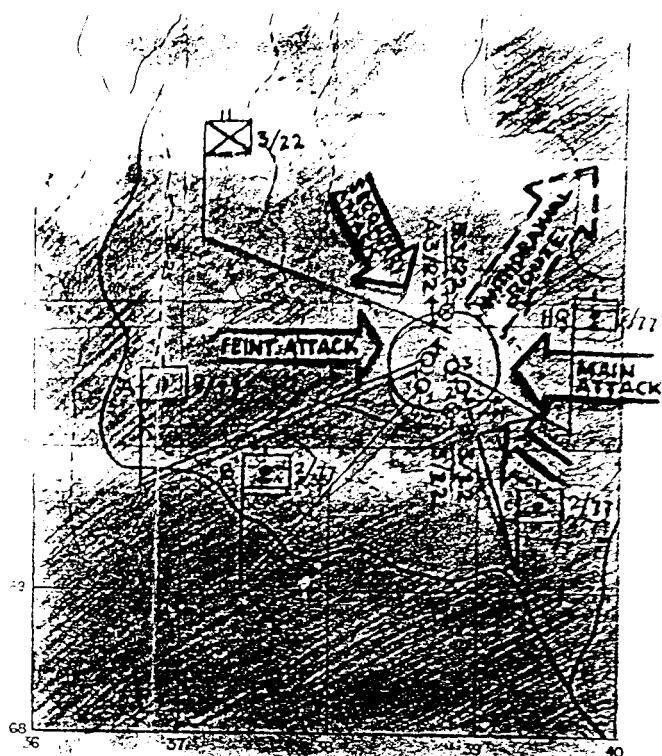
647 KIA - BODY COUNT

200 KIA - PROBABLE

10 - POW

U.S. CASUALTIES

31 - KIA 187 - WIA



On 1910.00 March 1967, while participating in Operation Junction City, Phase II, the 3rd Battalion, 22nd Infantry (-) made an assault landing into LZ Gold, in the vicinity of coordinates XT387702 (Map, Vietnam, 1:50,000, sheet 6232 I) to secure a forward support base for the 2nd Battalion, 77th Artillery. A perimeter defense was established with A Company assuming responsibility for the western sector and B Company assuming responsibility for the eastern sector. (See attached sketch). Three batteries of the 2nd Battalion, 77th Artillery occupied eighteen firing positions in the center of the perimeter to support the 4th Infantry Division, 3rd Brigade Task Force. During the period 1911.00 March 1967 - 2106.00 March 1967, the battalion's elements constructed defensive bunkers, planned and rehearsed contingency defensive actions, conducted aggressive daylight patrolling within the defensive tactical area of responsibility and established night ambushes.

On 21 March 1967, at 0635 hours, the defensive perimeter came under heavy enemy ground and mortar attack. First indication of the impending attack came at 0631 hours, when elements of the approaching VC assault force were engaged by a (12) man ambush patrol from Company B, 3rd Battalion, 22nd Infantry, which was located in the vicinity of coordinates XT 392697. Simultaneously fire support base Gold, began receiving heavy mortar fire from VC 60 mm and 82 mm mortars located in firing positions to the northwest and southeast. At 0635 hours, the Reconnaissance Platoon of the 3rd Battalion, 22nd Infantry, which was located to the southeastern portion of the perimeter, engaged a large VC force, which had approached to within thirty-five meters of the friendly positions. Within minutes, the entire perimeter was attacked by wave after wave of VC firing recoilless rifles, RPG - 2 rocket launchers, automatic weapons, and other small arms. As the attack continued, the three artillery batteries began firing counter-mortar fire in an effort to neutralize the VC mortar concentration, which continued to rake the entire fire support base. During the initial assault, Company B reported that it's 1st Platoon positions (southeastern perimeter) had been penetrated and that the reaction force from the 2nd Battalion, 77th Artillery was required to reinforce this section. At 0701 hours, this reaction force began moving toward the 1st Platoon's positions. In the meantime, the remainder of the perimeter kept the attacking enemy at bay with a continuous volume of small arms and machine gun fire. Additionally, close supporting fire from two 105 mm batteries and a battery of 155 mm (SP) were called within 100 meters of the outer perimeter. At 0711 hours, the B Company Commander reported that his 1st Platoon had been overrun by a human wave attack and that the Platoon was surrounded. Airstrikes were called in to the outside of the southeastern part of the perimeter and along the eastern woodline. The Forward Air Controller, who was controlling this strike, was hit by heavy VC automatic weapons fire while over the perimeter and shot down. At 0752 hours, B Company's Commander requested that the 2nd Battalion,

77th Artillery fire beehive rounds into the southeastern and southern sectors of his perimeter. A twenty man reaction force from A Company was sent to reinforce B Company's northeastern perimeter, which had been penetrated by another human wave attack. By 0840 hours, the northeastern, eastern, and southeastern portions of the perimeter had fallen back to a preplanned secondary defensive line around the guns of the artillery batteries. During this time, the VC penetrated to within hand grenade range of the Battalion CP and within five meters of the Battalion Aid Station. To counter this new threat, a continuous and devastating hail of small arms and automatic weapons fire was directed at the frenzied VC attackers, while the remaining 105 mm howitzers of the artillery batteries began firing "direct fire" beehive rounds into the attacking VC masses. Airstrikes were dropped within 50 meters of friendly positions and supporting 105 mm and 155 mm batteries threw up a continuous wall of High Explosives. When the 2nd Battalion, 77th Artillery ran out of beehive rounds, HE rounds at charge one were fired "direct fire" at point blank range.

At 0900 hours, the situation, though tense because of ammunition shortages, was still under control. The northern, western, and southern portions of the perimeter were intact and under moderate pressure from VC who had worked their way up to within fifteen meters of friendly positions. Although pushed in, the northeastern, southeastern, and eastern portions of the perimeter were intact and had contained and broken the continuous human wave attacks which had been thrown against them.

At 0901 hours, a relief column led by the 2nd Battalion, 12th Infantry, broke through from the south and linked up with the besieged defenders. Joining forces, the 2nd Battalion, 12th Infantry supported B Company's counterattack from west to east to establish the original perimeter. At 0912 hours, a mechanized infantry and armor column from the 2nd Battalion, 22nd Infantry and the 2nd Battalion, 34th Armor, broke through from the southwest and began sweeping forward along the treeline toward the northeast. By 0928 hours, the original perimeter had been re-established and mopping up operations had begun.

By 1045 hours, medical evacuation of friendly casualties and ammunition resupply had been accomplished, the battle area had been secured, and artillery and airstrikes continued to pound the route of withdrawal of the broken and routed VC attackers.

For four hours, elements of this battalion held off a determined attack by 2,500 hard core guerrillas consisting of elements of six battalions controlled by the 272nd Regiment. At the present time, known VC casualties include 647 KIA - body count, 200 KIA - probable, and 10 VC captives. In summary, LTG Johnathan M. Seaman, in his commendation to this battalion states: " I want to extend my congratulations to you and your magnificient troops for their major victory at LZ Gold on the 21st of March. Fighting against a numerically superior and well equipped foe, the 3rd Brigade 4th Inf. Div. inflicted a devastating defeat on major elements of the 272nd Main Force Regiment. This is the most decisive defeat the VC have suffered in the III Corps Tactical Zone during my 18 months in Vietnam".