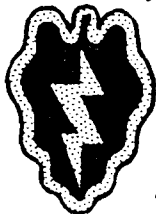


# TROPIC LIGHTNING NEWS



Ready To Strike . . . . Anywhere, Anytime

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TROPIC LIGHTNING NEWS

April 3, 1967

## 635 Viet Cong Killed in 4-Hour Battle

### Reactionary Drill Saves Artillerymen

A battlefield dress-rehearsal is credited with preventing the enemy from completely overrunning the fire support base of the 3rd Bde., 4th Inf. Div., during the massive Viet Cong attack at Soui Da, March 21.

Lt. Col. John W. Vessey, commander of the 2nd Bn., 77th Arty., reported that the night before the attack, the artillery reactionary force of 50 men had rehearsed in what turned out to be the exact area where they were needed.

This comment to the rehearsal was, "It sure paid off."

Col. B. 3rd Bn., 22nd Inf., was in danger of losing its position.

"They had pulled back into a tight circle and hand-to-hand combat had flared up in many places," stated one officer. The 105mm. howitzers were firing at point blank range and the rounds were landing "about 75 meters to our front and we couldn't lower the tubes anymore," Col. Vessey stated.

It was at this point of the battle that the reactionary force was committed.

As the battle raged, units of the 3rd Bde., 4th Inf. Div., were rushing through heavy jungle in an attempt to reinforce the beleaguered infantry and artillery. The 2nd Bn. (Mech), 22nd Inf., and the 2nd Bn., 34th Armor, were pushing in from the west and the 2nd Bn., 12th Inf., was moving in from the northwest.

"It was the closest thing to the 'Late-Late Show' I have ever seen—it was the cavalry coming to the rescue and we were sure happy to see these tracks come out of the woodline," said one officer.

The armored personnel carriers and tanks moved across the clearing using all available firepower to save the hard pressed U.S. troops. They were able to perform to the maximum of their (Continued on Back Page)



BATTLEFIELD—Aerial view of the besieged fire support base shortly after enemy troops broke contact and fled, leaving 635 of their dead behind. A few hours earlier, troops of the crack VC 272nd Main Force Regiment attempted to overrun this position with human wave assaults. (Photo By SP4 Adrian E. Wecel)

### Patrol's Find Signals Start Of Big Fight

The 3rd Bde., 4th Inf. Div., under operational control of the 25th Inf. Div., routed an estimated Viet Cong Regiment recently 30

See Pictures

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km north of Tay Ninh during Operation "Junction City."

A total of 635 Viet Cong were killed in the four-hour, pre-dawn battle. It was believed to be the largest number of enemy soldiers killed in a single engagement during the Vietnam war.

A patrol sweeping an area near the perimeter of a fire support base in War Zone C made contact with the enemy at 6:40 a.m., touching off one of the fiercest battles of the Vietnam war. The enemy struck back with mortar, automatic weapons and small arms fire.

The 3rd Bde. troopers held their ground, throwing back several human wave attacks. Using direct fire from the artillery guns, the U.S. soldiers also called in close air strikes, helicopter gun ships, and other artillery.

After several hours of fierce fighting, the Viet Cong broke contact, fleeing into the heavy jungle with other elements of the brigade in hot pursuit. As the battle area moved into the jungle, 3rd Bde. troopers counted 635 enemy dead around the fire support base perimeter. In addition, more than 150 enemy weapons have been found including small arms, heavy machine guns and machine guns.

A military spokesman said 31 U.S. soldiers were killed in action and 109 wounded.

### 'Wolfhounds' Use 'VC Detectors'

"VC detectors" were used with great success by the 2nd Bn., 27th Inf., "Wolfhounds," during Operation "Junction City."

Not a mechanical device, these VC detectors were a soldier and his scout dog, from the 38th Scout Dog Platoon.

Working as a team, the keen senses of the dog coupled with the equally alert handler invariably provided an early warning that "Charlie" was in the vicinity.

In the dense jungle of War Zone

C the dogs proved to be especially valuable. Their ability to detect by scent what the men could not see in the lush undergrowth effectively countered any ideas of surprise the VC may have had.

Taking part in all sweeps conducted by the "Tropic Lightning" infantrymen, the handler and his scout dog take the point position. The handler remains alert for any sign from his dog that would indicate enemy nearby. As soon as the dog alerts the team, their job is done and the Wolfhounds

take over to close with and destroy the VC.

In the dangerous point position many of the handlers and their dogs have been wounded. The men of the 38th Scout Dog Platoon have been awarded eleven Purple Hearts and one of the dogs, Ceaser, has been wounded twice.

On one recent operation, Sp4 Donald Tiener and his dog were both wounded and evacuated to the Cu Chi base camp. SFC Arthur L. Porter, platoon sergeant of the scout dogs, said, "Specialist Tiener saw to it that his dog was in the hospital before he would attend to his own wound."

When asked how a handler knows his dog has alerted, Sp4 Glen Hutchins, 23, commented, "My dog, Troop, will perk up his ears and look in the suspected direction. If it is a really strong scent he will close his mouth and breathe through his nose, so as to be quieter."

1st Lt. Ralph Harrison, commander of the platoon, stated, "The dogs are treated as well as the men. They go through the same conditioning together." Lt. Harrison continued, "We thought we might have a problem with the dogs overheating, but training and conditioning prevented this."

The men and dogs of the 38th Scout Dog Platoon have a dangerous job, but are always ready to lead the infantryman in a mission where their skills will prevent casualties and save lives.

### 2nd Bde. Forward Camp Hit

Machinegun, rifle grenade, and small arms fire raked the combat forward base camp of the 2nd

Bde. recently.

The action took place during the brigade-conducted Operation "Waialua" southwest of Cu Chi.

The attack, beginning shortly after 9 p.m., rocked the base area soon after the brigade elements had moved in and begun to prepare defensive positions.

The soldiers attempted to take cover in partially completed shelters as bullets spattered the ground around them. Six men were injured in the attack, one seriously.

Communications platoon leader, 1st Lt. Peter McGuire, said, "We were just beginning to set things up when the first rounds came in. The fire grew very intense and lasted for nearly a half-hour."

### Want to Win an R&R?

Want to win an R&R? It's simple. We're looking for a new name for AMBLUSH magazine—just come up with a new one and you can be the winner. Send your suggestions to the Information Office, 25th Inf. Div. APO SF 96225. Sorry, only 25th Division soldiers may participate.

Include on your written suggestion sheet your full name, rank, service number and complete military address.

All entries must be submitted prior to 5 p.m., April 15, 1967. Some will be accepted after that time. All entries must include the date and time submitted, in the event of a tie the earliest recorded suggestion wins. The decision of the judges (the division's sergeants-major) is final.

SO—WIN YOURSELF A TRIP TO THE R&R CENTER OF YOUR CHOICE. DON'T DELAY, PUT THAT SUGGESTION IN TODAY!



**SMOKE**—The smoke from thousands of rounds of small arms, machinegun, automatic weapons and artillery fire hangs over the scene of the U.S. victory.



**GIVING CHASE**—The U.S. soldiers chase the fleeing Viet Cong.

# 1st Day of Spring—Helluva Day



**WEARY DEFENDERS**—Capt. George Shoemaker, Co. B Commander, and two of his men wearily rest following the four hour battle.

Photos



**RESUPPLY**—A chinook helicopter delivers supplies to the front lines.

*SOURCE: TROPIC LIGHTNING NEWS  
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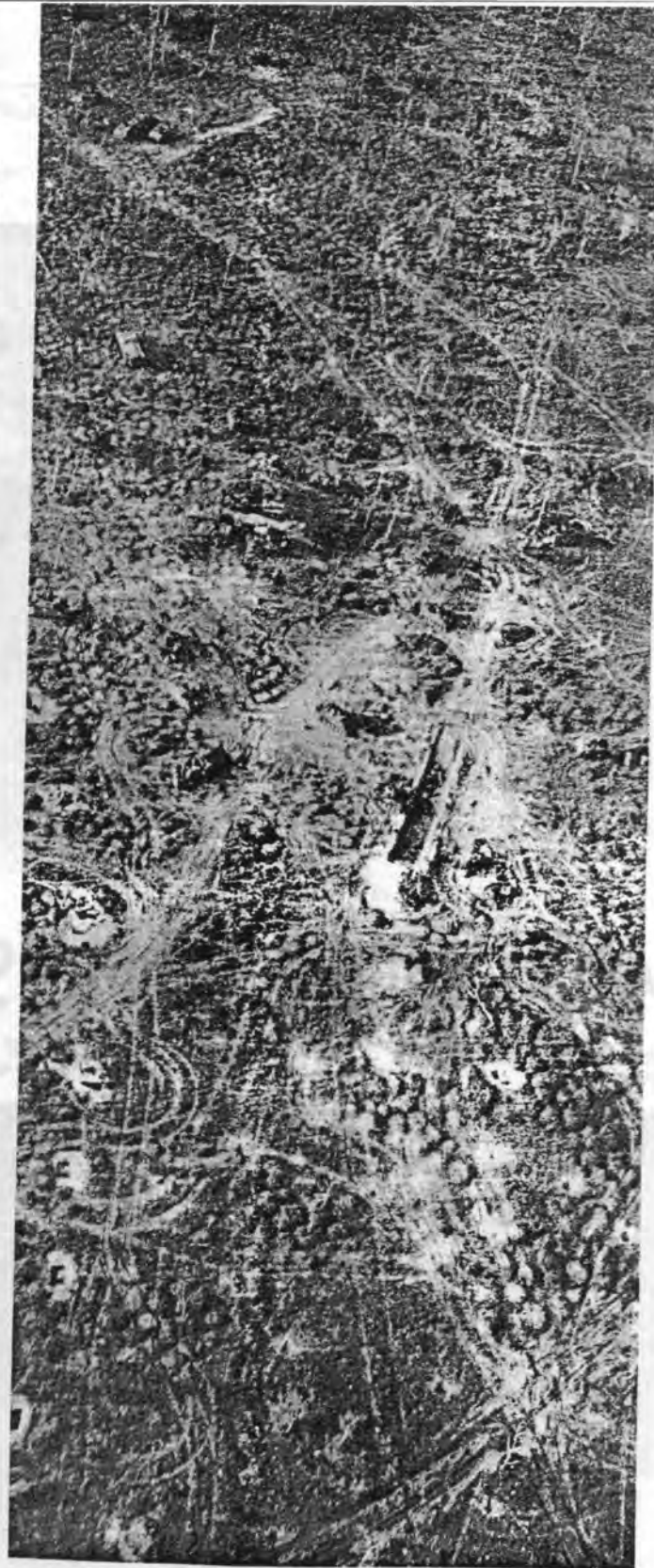
unleashed their firepower on the enemy and gave chase

## r Artillery Base

Lt. John Campbell



in food, water and ammunition to waiting men.



**BATTLE SITE**—The fortifications, the lines of assault by the tracks and tanks, and the ditch which is the grave of more than 600 enemy dead tells the story of the battle.