

Four Win DSCs For 25th's Biggest Battle

Human Wave Assaults Leave 647 Cong Dead

At daybreak last March 21, three battalions of Viet Cong attacked a U.S. Army 25th Div forward base camp with human wave assaults which threatened to overrun its defenders. After a four-hour battle, the enemy retreated leaving 647 dead behind. American casualties—31 killed and 109 wounded.

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4TH DIV.
ME.

On Aug. 30, four soldiers were cited for "extraordinary heroism and devotion to duty" during this battle when they received the Nation's second highest award for heroism—the Distinguished Service Cross.

Three of the men are members of the 2d Bn, 77th Arty—LTC John W. Vessey, battalion commander from Arlington, Va.; SGT Earl Haupt of Cincinnati; and SP4 Samuel W. Townsends of Detroit; and SP5 Richard Hazel of Otter Lake, Mich., who is assigned to the 3d Bn, 22d Inf.

The awards were presented to the men at the 3d Bde's base camp in Dau Tieng where GEN William C. Westmoreland was present for the ceremony.

"Few men wear this decoration," GEN Westmoreland said, "and to award four of them at a single formation is, I believe, unique in the history of this war."

Return Fire Ruins M-16

"I could hardly believe my eyes," remarked SP4 Roger D. Burke of Hingham, Mass., as he looked at his ruined M-16.

During a heliborne assault into the southern portion of the Iron Triangle, Co D, 4th Bn, 9th Inf, came under sniper fire as they started a sweep through the area.

"As I scanned the area," Burke continued, "I saw a Viet Cong off to my left wearing a steel helmet and flak jacket and heavily armed with hand grenades. I alerted the squad and everybody opened up on him.

The VC dropped as he started to duck behind a rice paddy dike but at the same time something slammed into me and knocked me into the knee deep water of the rice paddy.

"I got up and tried to fire my rifle but it wouldn't work. I started to check it and found that a bullet had knocked out the bolt."



GEN William C. Westmoreland is flanked by (from left) LTC John W. Vessey, SP5 Richard Hazel, SGT Earl Haupt and SP4 Samuel Townsends. The four soldiers, members of the 2d Bn, 77th Arty, and 3d Bn, 22d Inf, received Distinguished Service Crosses for "extraordinary heroism and devotion to duty" during a Viet Cong attempt to overrun a 25th fire support base.

(Photo by SP4 Robert Fungaroli)

*I WITNESSED THIS GUY'S BRAVERY AT SUOI TPE! - JOHN