

LZ Sally
INFO

Alert Trooper Helps Spring Night Trap On VC Sampans

AIR CAVALRYMAN

LZ SALLY — An alert division who believed what he saw helped spring a night ambush on three enemy sampans north of here recently, killing 11 Viet Cong.

A reinforced squad from the 2nd Brigade's 3rd Platoon, B Co., 2nd Bn., 501st Inf. was positioned on top of a steep bank facing the Song Bo river when Sgt. Ronald Peabody, Bremerton, Wash., spotted a sampan about 500 yards downstream.

"I was searching up and down the river with a Starlight Scope when I spotted the first sampan," Peabody said. The sergeant immediately notified Platoon Sgt. James Birch, Deland, Fla., who told him to keep watch and report back.

"I looked again through my scope and saw there were now two sampans," Peabody said. "I went over to Birch and let him look through the Starlight, but he didn't see anything. I had a couple of other guys look, but they didn't see anything either."

By this time Peabody was not sure he had really seen anything, but as he looked again he saw three sampans coming up the river.

"I handed the Starlight back to Birch hoping that this time my sightings would be confirmed," Peabody said. This time Birch saw the approaching sampans and notified his men to hold fire until he signaled.

"We watched as the two sampans pulled into the river bank

almost directly opposite us," said Pfc. Patrick Corder, San Antonio, Tex., a machine gunner. "We could see eight Viet Cong in the first sampan and two in the second, plus supplies."

The air cavalymen waited in silence until the third sampan carrying eight insurgents was almost even with their position.

"Birch fired a flare to trigger the ambush and everyone opened up at once," Peabody said.

"We were picking them off in the water as they tried to swim to safety," Corder recalled. "They were so surprised that many of them were caught with their weapons locked on 'safe.'"

A few of the enemy reached the bank and returned fire. Birch pulled his men back and called in artillery and air support.

Source: The Screaming Eagle newspaper