

REGULARS



COMPANY C

3rd BATTALION 22nd INFANTRY



25th DIVISION



Needs Not Worries



25th DIVISION

# **Historical Summary**

**3<sup>rd</sup> Battalion 22<sup>nd</sup> Infantry**

**1967-1968**

**25<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division**

**3<sup>rd</sup> Brigade**

**1<sup>st</sup> Brigade**

**Vietnam**

**Dau Tieng**

**Saigon**

**Tay Ninh**

**"The Regulars - By God"**

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**BRIGADE CORRESPONDENT 1968-1969**

**3<sup>rd</sup> BATTALION 22<sup>nd</sup> INFANTRY**

**REVISED SEPT. 13, 1993 BY ROBERT O'NEAL - CO. C 3/22 - SECOND PLATOON 1965-1967**

# COMMANDERS OF 3<sup>rd</sup> BATTALION 22<sup>nd</sup> INFANTRY

## BATTALION COMMANDERS:

LTC. Thomas U. Harrold - to Feb, 68  
LTC. Roy K. Flint - to 2 Aug, 68  
LTC. Alexander Hunt - to present

## ALPHA COMPANY:

CPT. Herbert Chancey - to 28 Mar 68

CPT. Gerald Campbell - to 15 May 68  
1<sup>st</sup> LT. Albert Fisher  
1<sup>st</sup> LT. Randolph Behrens - to 1 Aug 68  
CPT. Andre F. Blackmon - to 15 Dec 68  
1<sup>st</sup> LT. William J. Ervin - to present

## BRAVO COMPANY:

CPT. Robert L. Hemphill - to 18 Feb 68  
1<sup>st</sup> LT. Richard J. Prairie - to 12 Jun 68  
1<sup>st</sup> LT. Arthur Gormley - to 14 Jul 68  
1<sup>st</sup> LT. Dean Walker - to 10 Aug 68  
CPT. George D. Featherstone - to 29 Dec 68  
1<sup>st</sup> LT. Hugh E. Stephens - to present

## CHARLIE COMPANY:

CPT. Elliot Fishbrune - to 26 Jan 68  
1<sup>st</sup> LT. Charles Boyle - to 30 Apr 68  
CPT. Gerald T. Brown - to 29 Jul 68  
CPT. James B. Hansard - to 27 Aug 68  
CPT. David Hollister - to 29 Oct 68  
CPT. Donald Haramoto - to present

## DELTA COMPANY:

CPT. William A. Curtis - to 17 Jan 68  
CPT. William J. Monahan - to 10 Apr 68  
CPT. Gerald J. White - to 6 Jul 68  
1<sup>st</sup> LT. Franklin Wilson - to 7 Aug 68  
1<sup>st</sup> LT. Christopher C. Brown - to 18 Aug 68  
1<sup>st</sup> LT. John Pauding - to 28 Aug 68  
1<sup>st</sup> LT. Dale N. Richey - to present

## ECHO COMPANY: (formed September 1968)

1<sup>st</sup> LT. Richard Graves - to 1 Nov 68  
1<sup>st</sup> LT. William Storey - to 17 Dec 68  
1<sup>st</sup> LT. Christopher C. Brown - to present

## STAFF OFFICERS - 1968

### EXECUTIVE OFFICERS:

Major Jerome Johnson - 8 Mar  
Major Gerald M. Davlin - 25 Aug  
Major Walter Burns - 6 Nov  
Major Hacia - 17 Nov

### ADJUTANT S-1:

CPT. Robert Hemphill  
1<sup>st</sup> LT. J. Oscar Harris  
CPT. Ronald Owings  
CPT. Hartmut Schuler

### S - 2

2<sup>nd</sup> LT. Steven Wilder - 1 Jan  
1<sup>st</sup> LT. Michael Balser - 11 Apr  
CPT. Donald Haramoto - 25 Aug  
CPT. David Hollister - to present

### S-3

CPT. Herbert C. Chancey - 11 Apr  
Major Jerome Johnson - 17 May  
Major Gerald W. Delvin - 3 Sept

### S-4

CPT. William Monahan - 12 Jan  
CPT. Robert L. Hemphill - 2 Mar  
CPT. Lee Scripture - 5 Mar  
CPT. Gerald J. White - 7 Apr  
CW-2 Eugene Culver - 1 Jul

### S-5

1<sup>st</sup> LT. Frank R. Bonhart - 5 Mar  
CPT. Gerald T. Brown - 7 Sept  
CPT. David Hollister - 16 Oct  
CPT. Hartmut Schuler

## MAJOR OPERATIONS

### OPERATION YELLOWSTONE

29 DEC. 1967 - 25 JAN. 1968

Operation Yellowstone II was launched when orders were issued to the 3<sup>rd</sup> Battalion, 22<sup>nd</sup> Infantry to conduct offensive operations to destroy VC/NVA forces and their installations. Direct contact with enemy forces was encouraged and a large body count was hoped for.

The battalion was to combat assault into an area to later establish Fire Support Base Burt. After the area was sufficiently cleared and secured the 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion 77<sup>th</sup> Artillery was to be air lifted into the FSB. After the FSB was well established, the 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion, 22<sup>nd</sup> Infantry (Mechanized) was to link up with its sister battalion, the Regulars.

The execution of the mission was to take place around the FSB. The 2/22 would establish night ambushes while the 3/22 would secure the FSB as well as set up night ambush positions near the defensive perimeter.

Working deep inside of War Zone C near the Cambodian Border, the 3/22 expected plenty of enemy contact. The dense jungle containing many streams and rivers, allotted the enemy a good staging area.

Intelligence reports indicated that the 165<sup>th</sup> NVA regiment had been operating in Binh Long Province along with the 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion of the 141<sup>st</sup> NVA regiment which was located specifically around Katum and Bo Tuc. The enemy was known to be suffering from various diseases which they had incurred while infiltrating from the north. It was anticipated that the enemy would utilize several battalions to secure the passage routes for the others to safely return to Cambodia.

The highlight of the operation came when the NVA forces made a futile attack on Fire Support Base Burt. The furious battle at Sui Cut turned out to be one of the largest enemy losses in a single attack during the Vietnam conflict.

### THE BATTLE OF SUI CUT

The battle of Sui Cut was a massive ground and mortar assault on FSB Burt occupied by the 3<sup>rd</sup> Battalion 22<sup>nd</sup> Infantry. The base was struck initially with a heavy mortar attack consisting of 61mm mortars. It was not anticipated that the base would be attacked by ground forces because it had been receiving incoming mortar rounds since the day it was built.

The main front of the attack was focused on the northern portion of the perimeter at approximately 0001 hours. This section of the perimeter was held by the 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion, 22<sup>nd</sup> Infantry (Mechanized). The attacking force moved toward the western edge as another VC force launched a barrage of rifle propelled grenades, small arms, and automatic weapons at the southern edge of the perimeter utilizing ditches on both sides of the road for cover.

Soon, the eastern edge of the perimeter was also under intense fire and the entire side of the defensive perimeter was under threat of enemy seizure. Organic artillery within the base was ordered immediately to start firing direct support with high explosive and beehive rounds to route the enemy from the bunker line. Many US casualties resulted from the artillery fired into their midst.

Fierce fighting continued until the enemy began to withdraw at first light. During the night the insurgents penetrated the perimeter along the western edge resulting in hand to hand combat and necessitating reinforcements with greater fire power. APCs from the 2/22 were utilized to regain the original bunker line.

Because of the speed and ferocity of the Viet Cong attacks, the ambush patrol and all of the listening posts from Co. C, 3/22 had to remain outside of the base. The ambush patrol had spotted the enemy as they moved in on the FSB. They did not ambush the force because it was too large to fit in the kill zone. One shot would have given away their location which would mean certain death.

Not long after the FSB was attacked, the enemy spotted the ambush patrol and launched an assault at it. Fifty percent casualties were reported immediately. Out of the sixteen man force, one was killed in action, eleven were wounded and one was killed by a friendly air strike.

Helicopter gunships and air strikes were used to thwart the attackers. The assault was so massive and intense that it became necessary to use the air strikes and helicopter gunships within a few feet of the defensive positions. Much of the action occurred between the listening posts and the bunker line.

Estimated enemy casualties the next morning were set at 105 VC KIA, 2 VC prisoners of war, and an undetermined number of individual and crew served weapons. U.S. losses were 16 KIA and 99 WIA.

### OPERATION SARATOGA

26 JAN. - MAR. 1968

Large concentrations of Viet Cong soldiers had massed around Cu Chi and had extensively dug into the village Ap Cho, building numerous concrete bunkers connected by trenches and tunnel complexes. The 3<sup>rd</sup> Battalion, 22<sup>nd</sup> Infantry, was called upon to aid the 2<sup>nd</sup> Brigade forces of the 25<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division in locating the enemy forces and driving them from the locations.

The resulting operation amounted to 37 different enemy engagements accounting for 253 enemy dead. The greatest part of the engagements were made in the village of Ap Cho. The battalion had to attack it daily until all of the enemy were killed.

For a period of 13 days the Regulars supported by several units moved against the enemy and started hacking away at the concrete bunkers. It was obvious that the enemy had no intentions of giving up. They were determined to fight to the end or win. That's exactly what they did, that is - they all died from the hands of the infantry and supporting fire.

## Enemy Losses:

253 KIA	31 Possible KIA
6 POW	6 Detainees

## U.S. Losses

44 KIA	6 KNHA
134 WIA	1 WNHA

## Ordinance Captured:

2 -AK 50 assault rifles  
28 - AK 47 assault rifles  
8 - RPG -2 launchers  
5 - RPG-7 launchers  
8 - US M-16 rifles  
2 - 81 mm mortars  
1 - 51 cal. M. G.  
4 - Chicom Light M. G.  
2 - US 50 cal. M. G.  
1 - Chicom radio  
44 pounds of documents

## SUPPORTING UNITS:

### ARTILLERY:

A Battery, 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion 8<sup>th</sup> Artillery - 105 Howitzers  
C Battery, 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion 5<sup>th</sup> Artillery - 105 Howitzers  
C Battery, 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion 77<sup>th</sup> Artillery - 105 Howitzers  
B Battery, 3<sup>rd</sup> Battalion 13<sup>th</sup> Artillery - 155 Howitzers

### AVIATION:

B Company, 3<sup>rd</sup> Battalion, 17<sup>th</sup> Cavalry  
C Company, 3<sup>rd</sup> Battalion, 17<sup>th</sup> Cavalry  
B Company, 3<sup>rd</sup> Battalion, 4<sup>th</sup> Cavalry  
116<sup>th</sup> Helicopter Assault Company  
125<sup>th</sup> Helicopter Assault Company  
205<sup>th</sup> Helicopter Assault Company  
269<sup>th</sup> Helicopter Assault Company  
242<sup>nd</sup> Helicopter Assault Company

The battle was long and fierce. The Regulars worked beside the 4<sup>th</sup> Battalion (Mechanized) Infantry. Each morning both units would go "on line" and start another day's assault on the reinforced enemy bunkers. When the day came to an end the troops would pull back only to assault again the next morning.

After a tremendous amount of fighting coupled with immense quantities of artillery and air support the battle was won. Although not very climatic, the victory marked a major upset to enemy troops who tried to remain in good defensive posture and failed.

During the course of the 53 day operation, more than 3300 enemy soldiers fell dead from the guns of TROPIC LIGHTNING'S fury. This fact in itself proved that the 25<sup>th</sup>'s soldiers left little to chance when they attacked their foe throughout their operational zone.

Directed jointly from US II Field Force, Vietnam, and ARVN III Corps Headquarters, the operation also involved the US 1<sup>st</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> Divisions, 11<sup>th</sup> Armored Cavalry Regiment, 199<sup>th</sup> Light Infantry Brigade, and the 1<sup>st</sup> Air Cavalry Division's 3<sup>rd</sup> Brigade.

The offensive was designed to locate and terminate enemy forces conducting aggressive and terroristic activities from isolated and fluid bases of operation.

Once Operation Toan Thang I began, Tropic Lightning soldiers did not have to wait long before they made enemy contact. On Thursday, April 11<sup>th</sup>, the 3<sup>rd</sup> Battalion, 22<sup>nd</sup> Infantry acting on G-2 reports of intensive enemy activities, climbed from choppers into a remote jungle region 13 miles north of the Dau Tieng base camp. In the few hours before darkness, the 3<sup>rd</sup> Brigade Regulars busied themselves by establishing a perimeter of hastily prepared foxholes and bunkers. Then as night fell, the Infantrymen made themselves as comfortable as possible. At 0420 hours on the dark Good Friday morning, all hell broke loose.

Companies B, C, and D of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Battalion, 22<sup>nd</sup> Infantry had combat assaulted into the pre-determined area north of Dau Tieng and carefully swept the designated area before establishing the perimeter. Three ambush patrols and three listening posts were placed outside the perimeter to provide early warning of enemy attack. The laager site was arranged in a clearing surrounded by jungle ranging from single to triple canopy. Scattered trees and large ant hills caused some obstruction, although the flat terrain provided excellent fields of fire.

The Battalion Commander, LTC. Roy K. Flint employed the companies on the defensive perimeter while holding his reconnaissance Platoon as battalion reserve. All elements were arranged to employ interlocking fire.

At approximately 0230 hours, on 12 April, the perimeter received light probing fire from the west. The enemy's fire was answered by small arms, automatic weapons, and claymore mines from the Regulars.

Later at 0330, the enemy launched a heavy and accurate mortar attack on the perimeter using 60 mm and 81 mm mortars. Approximately 125 rounds landed inside the perimeter resulting in numerous casualties.

The mortar barrage reached it's peak intensity at 0400 hours and a massive ground attack was launched at the same time. Bravo Company received the brunt of the attack.

Utilizing small arms, automatic weapons, 90 mm recoilless rifles, and a barrage of hand grenades, Battlin' Bravo repulsed the enemy as fast as they came. As the attack became more intense, LTC. Flint called for artillery support which arrived in a short time.

Launching several "human wave" assaults, the enemy partially penetrated the Regular's bunker line. It became necessary for Delta Company to pull back approximately fifty meters to keep from being overrun. Flint utilized the recon element at this time to reinforce Delta Company and regain the original bunker line. The perimeter was in a state of good posture again by 0630 hours.

Fighting had been extremely fierce during the push to regain the bunker line. Some of the enemy were killed at a range of five meters and some instances of hand to hand combat transpired.

As morning light appeared, the 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion, 22<sup>nd</sup> Infantry (Mechanized) moved into the perimeter to reinforce the Regulars. As the 2/22 arrived, the enemy fled the battlefield and were pursued by friendly forces to the surrounding woodlines.

Contact was broken by 0730 hours as the enemy retreated leaving behind 153 bodies and a substantial amount of weapons and equipment.

At 0800 hours, Brigadier General Gleason, Assistant Division Commander of the 25<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division, arrived to award impact Silver Stars to members of the Regulars.

The following individuals received our nations third highest award for valor:

Cpt. Gerald J. White - Commanding Officer of Delta  
1<sup>st</sup> LT. Richard J. Prairie - Commanding Officer of Bravo

SFC Robert E. Nelson - Company D

Sgt. Edward D. Crow - Company B

Sp4 Carl L. Feigenhauer - Company C Medic

Sp4 David Chodister - Reconnaissance Platoon  
Medic

\*\*\* Because of the extremely valorous nature of their actions on that day, CPT. White and Sp4 Chodister later had their medals upgraded to Distinguished Service Crosses. General Creighton Abrams, US commander in chief in Vietnam, came to FSB Buell in January 1969 to present the two awards.

There were 16 US KIAs and 47 WIAs.

Enemy KIA - 153 and 53 possible.

Weapons and equipment captured:

45 - Ak47 assault rifles

7 - AK50 assault rifles

13 - Light M. G.

7 - RPG-2 Launchers

2 - Bolt action Carbines/w grenade launchers

38 - RPG-2 Rounds

5 - RPG-7 Rounds

45 - RPG-2 Rounds

93 - Hand grenades

29 - Light M.G. Ammo Drums.

Tropic Lightning forces weren't fighting the battle alone. Three days after the Good Friday engagement, US Air Force B-52 Stratofortress pilots set out to prove a point. Acting on intelligence provided by Division troops, the strategic bombers dumped their lethal loads on a series of targets 11 miles north of Dau Tieng in the heart of War Zone C.

The strikes were some of the most successful ever experienced in the Division's area of operation. Attached air cavalrymen performing damage assessment that day counted 59 dead enemy soldiers, 350 destroyed enemy bunkers and artillery structures, and 1500 meters of destroyed trench line.

Artillery also played its role in the game, tossing 85,000 rounds at the enemy. Although casualties resulting were unknown, the damage and body count was bound to be extremely impressive.

April rushed to a close with a series of light contacts at widely scattered locations. But, just as things were looking good, the enemy reappeared and made a run for Saigon. Utilizing a

traditional route through Trang Bang, the Boi Loi Woods, and the Ho Bo woods, the enemy was able to move quickly without being detected.

Elements pursuing the enemy include the 3<sup>rd</sup> Battalion, 22<sup>nd</sup> Infantry, 34<sup>th</sup> Armored Regiment, 4<sup>th</sup> Battalion (Mechanized) 23<sup>rd</sup> Infantry, and the 4<sup>th</sup> Battalion, 9<sup>th</sup> Infantry.

As the units headed for Saigon, they prepared various strategic moves dependent upon the enemy's posture. A tight cordon was immediately drawn in squeezing the enemy into a small portion of the city's northern boundaries.

Operation Thoan Thang I came to a close a few days later after the cordon pulled even tighter and the enemy was no longer in a position to resist.

In addition to the 3,300 enemy left dead, 699 small arms were captured as well as 276 heavy weapons, 1,179 military structures destroyed, 8,123 fortifications, 60 tunnels, and 286 sampans were also destroyed by the allied forces.

## **REGULARS PERFECT RIVER AMBUSHES**

### **3<sup>rd</sup> Brigade, 25<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division**

In a series of ambushes near the Saigon River just 12 kilometers north of Saigon, a unit of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Battalion 22<sup>nd</sup> Infantry has accounted for 35 Viet Cong killed.

From their base camp north of Saigon, Alpha Company, 3<sup>rd</sup> Battalion 22<sup>nd</sup> Infantry used five high powered skiffs and a larger gunboat to travel up the Saigon River where they landed and established a vice like ambush at the mouth of a branch river, a known VC supply route.

"As we swept the immediate area prior to establishing our position we discovered a sleeping NVA soldier with an RPG launcher laying beside him," explained 1<sup>st</sup> Lt. Michael S. Root.

After detaining the trooper, the platoon set up at the mouth of the tributary to act as a lookout. "Shortly before midnight the first enemy sampan glided by our position," Root said.

Opening fire with small arms and grenade launchers and LAW's the company sunk the sampan and killed all of the VC aboard. During the course of the night a total of four VC boats were destroyed by the deadly ambushes. 22 enemy soldiers lost their lives to this one ambush patrol that night.

A similar ambush on the opposite bank of the same river sent five enemy sampans to the bottom the following night and killed 13 Viet Cong.

This type of ambush was something new for the regulars and the 3/22 is believed to be one of the first units to employ this type of tactic in Vietnam. The huge success of these ambushes had quite an effect on the men's morale and caused them to join whole heartedly into the ambush program even to the extent of looking diligently for ambush sites while in the course of their daytime combat operations.

## **MOST SUCCESSFUL ACTION KILLS 14 NVA**

(Dau Tieng) Fourteen North Vietnamese soldiers were killed without an American casualty in what a company commander termed "the most successful small unit action my unit has ever conducted."

Captain Gerald J. White of Oakland, Calif. said the action which took place several miles north of Saigon, was without parallel in the history of Delta Company, 3<sup>rd</sup> Battalion 22<sup>nd</sup> Infantry.

The 3<sup>rd</sup> Brigade, 25<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division unit ran into an L shaped bunker complex alongside a canal, and came under a hail of small arms fire.

"We quickly returned the fire, pulled back several hundred meters, and called in airstrikes and artillery," said Sgt. Richard Wilcott of Spokane, Wash.

The enemy was well dug in, however, and continued to return a heavy volume of fire when the company made a second attempt to overrun the ten bunkers.

While half of the company laid down a base of fire, 1<sup>st</sup> Lt. Franklin Wilson and Platoon Sgt. Richard Nelson led a maneuver team which threw hand grenades into the bunkers, wiping out most of the enemy force.

Several enemy tried to escape by running across a nearby field, but were cut down by rifle fire as the REGULARS finished the task of reducing the stronghold.

The enemy was handicapped by a lack of firing ports in their fortifications, according to White.

In addition to the fourteen bodies, the infantrymen found 6 AK-47 assault rifles, 2 RPG-2 launchers, several sets of new NVA field gear and packs containing fresh clothing and food.

#### REGULARS WRAP UP OPERATION TOAN THANG II - 10 April - 6 July 1968

Operation Toan Thang II proved to be very successful for the infantrymen of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Battalion 22<sup>nd</sup> Infantry. From April 10 through July 6, the 3<sup>rd</sup> Brigade, 25<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division soldiers killed over 275 of the enemy.

While combing woods and jungles, wading through rice paddies and slogging through swamps, the men of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Battalion 22<sup>nd</sup> Infantry came up with more than 75 AK-47 rifles and AK-50 assault rifles, more than a dozen RPG-2 rocket launchers, upwards of 100 hand grenades, and 7,000 plus rounds of small rounds ammunition.

In addition they found nearly 100 RPG rocket rounds, 80 RPG boosters, and over a dozen, light machine guns during the 88 day field operation. To all this was added more than 10,000 lbs. of contraband rice.

After returning to Dau Tieng Base Camp, the REGULARS were cited for their many heroic actions. Brigadier General Carlton Preer Jr. Assistant 25th Infantry Division Commander for support, was on hand to present 11 Silver Stars to the deserving recipients.

LTC Roy K. Flint, Battalion Commander, Presented 42 Bronze Stars, and 141 Army Commendation Medals to the men of his command.

#### GROUND ATTACKS AT DAU TIENG REPULSED -

July 4, 1968

Following an attack of over 400 rocket and mortar rounds, two Viet Cong Companies launched a suicidal attack on Dau Tieng base camp. Ten enemy soldiers were left dead on the wire.

Striking from both sides of the perimeter, the Viet Cong arranged in suicide squads, attempted a ground movement which hit the night defensive positions of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Battalion 22<sup>nd</sup> Infantry and the 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion 77<sup>th</sup> Artillery. Several artillery bunkers were damaged as the enemy suicidal squad, hit the west side of the camp with RPG rocket rounds and satchel charges. At least 7 VC crept inside the perimeter before the attack was halted.

Gunships scrambled and shattered the air with a deafening roar of fire. The ground attacks were completely disrupted by the light of flares and enemy soldiers were soon throwing their weapons to the ground and running for the protective cover of the nearby woods.

Before dawn an AC-47 "puff the Magic Dragon" aircraft began circling the base dropping flares and adding greater firepower to the assault on the retreating enemy.

A preliminary search of the perimeter the following morning recovered in addition to the 10 enemy bodies 434 home made satchel charges, 3 Bangalore torpedoes, 12 RPG-7 rounds, one RPG-2 launcher, numerous hand grenades, and 6 AK-47 assault rifles. American casualties totaled 5 dead and 53 injured.

#### NEW UNIT ESTABLISHED - September, 1968

As the 3<sup>rd</sup> Battalion 22<sup>nd</sup> Infantry moved deeper into War Zone C, commitments became heavier and a great need was generated for another company. As a direct result of this need, Echo Company was formed consisting of one four-deuce Mortar Platoon and a Reconnaissance Platoon. Both units could be used in support of any of the other four "line companies" should the need arise.

Four-deuce was utilized as an organic artillery unit which could be flown out to locations by Chinooks to support the riflemen.

The Reconnaissance platoon was used as a reinforcement element as well as a mobile and fluid unit which could cover areas fast and yet supply reliable reconnaissance for intelligence purposes.

Two months later a CRIP Platoon was forced to work with ARVN forces to further the capabilities of the REGULARS. The combined Reconnaissance and Intelligence Platoon proved to be extremely valuable to provide reliable reports and co-ordination in ARVN operations.

#### BATTLE OF TAY NINH

The tense darkness was pierced at 1:15 am Sunday, August 18, 1968, as rocket and mortar fire poured into Tay Ninh base camp. The long awaited Battle of Tay Ninh was officially under way.

Eight minutes after the first mortar round hit the base camp. Fire support Base Buell II, two miles north of Tay Ninh City, underwent a thunderous rocket and mortar barrage that preceded a human-wave attack by an estimated two enemy battalions.

As the fighting at Buell raged, the US signal facility atop 3,200 foot Nui Ba Dinh Mountain, with driving winds of 45 mph, was slammed with a six prong attack from a reinforced enemy company. Both Buell and Nui Ba Dinh were held by the infantrymen of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Battalion 22<sup>nd</sup> Infantry.

By dusk, more than 170 NVA and Viet Cong lay dead. A veritable armory of weapons and ammunition were captured.

"My men were real heroes. They did what they were told, and they did it well," commented Alpha Company commander CPT. Ardre F. Blackmon, the infantry commander on Nui Ba Dinh.

But those were not the only heroes that night. As the enemy struck and was repelled and then struck again, each man of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Battalion 22<sup>nd</sup> Infantry performed as he was trained to do.

It was the valor of it's fighting men and the relentless power of pounding artillery coupled with helicopter gunships which thwarted the ferocious enemy attacks.

Since early June, an uneasy lull had engulfed the 25<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division's area of tactical operations. Badly mauled in his May attacks on the South Vietnamese Capital, the enemy had withdrawn his depleted main force units into their traditional sanctuaries in Cambodia and War Zone C to prepare for renewed offensive operations. Reconnaissance in force missions and night ambush patrols realized little more than sore feet and tired, sleepless nights.

Throughout the division the message was the same; Charlie wasn't ready to fight. The 25<sup>th</sup>'s team of intelligence experts know that sometime soon Charlie would be ready to fight. When and where were the questions that resulted in long days and nights of feverish intelligence work.

By late July, a set of hazy answers began to present themselves from the information pouring into Division headquarters at Cu Chi. When reports of large enemy troop concentrations and movements came into the G-2 Office on July 23<sup>rd</sup>, the intelligence team felt certain it knew the key to the enemy's intentions. A report was made to the acting Division Commander, Brigadier General William T. Gleason,

The analysis was that the enemy would come out of hiding early in the second week of August. Tay Ninh would be his target.

Within hours the 3<sup>rd</sup> Battalion 22<sup>nd</sup> Infantry and other units rushed into positions to create a circle of defense around Tay Ninh City. The mission: execute a mobile defense of the heavily populated area.

The Mobile defense of Tay Ninh City would be effected by establishing strong points and blocking positions outside the city that would guard the main avenues of approach. From these positions company-sized forces would patrol the surrounding area; choppers would assault suspected enemy locations; and at night, ambush patrols would be set up in the area surrounding the city. The plan was simple: detect the enemy during his approach and engage him before he can launch a coordinated attack.

Shortly after Major General Ellis W. Williamson assumed command on August 3<sup>rd</sup>, intelligence reports were revised. There was no doubt now that the enemy was coming. He would attack between August and September.

## ROUND ONE

The waiting ended. On the night of August 17<sup>th</sup>, an ambush patrol from Bravo Company 3<sup>rd</sup> Battalion 22<sup>nd</sup> Infantry

observed an estimated 300 enemy soldiers boldly moving in column formation down Hwy 13 toward Tay Ninh City. The platoon leader called in Artillery and sprung the ambush on the unsuspecting enemy. Five dead soldiers were left behind and an unknown number were carried away.

A few hours later the first rocket was fired upon the 1<sup>st</sup> Brigade base camp two kilometers west of Tay Ninh city. The mortar attack was undoubtedly an attempt to divert the Lancers attention from the enemy's major objectives- FSB Buell, Nui Ba Dinh, and Tay Ninh City itself.

The REGULARS were ready and the attack proved to be a fatal mistake for the enemy. The attackers at Buell were greeted by the weapons of Bravo and Delta Companies of the 3/22 and the point blank artillery of the 7<sup>th</sup> Battalion 11<sup>th</sup> Artillery. It would be wrong to say the enemy didn't know what hit them. They know: Tropic Lightning! At least some of them know, that is. One hundred and four NVA soldier died at Buell that morning. Atop Nui Ba Dinh, fifty-two met the same fate, Alpha Company held the mountain with the precision and confidence of real pros.

Fighting raged in Tay Ninh city when some of the NVA/VC were able to reach the "rabbit ears" sector. Division decided to allow the local ARVN forces to clear the city. Routing the enemy would give the ARVN troopers a greater sense of pride and accomplishment when the job was done. It didn't take long.

## MORE TO COME

At FSB Buell the situation seemed like a re-run movie. At 1:20 am Thursday, Buell was hit for the second time. This time Bravo and Charlie Companies were on hand to greet the unwanted visitors. Artillery tubes were again lowered to fire directly into the enemy's face. Infantrymen spewed hot lead from their rifles cutting down the attackers as fast as they appeared. This time the futile attempt cost the enemy 62 lives.

Other attacks occurred around Tay Ninh. FSB Rawlings occupied by the 4<sup>th</sup> Battalion (Mech) 23<sup>rd</sup> Infantry and FSB Schoefield held by the 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion 27<sup>th</sup> Infantry, "Wolfhounds" were both hit in the same manner as Buell. All of the FSB battles accounted for over 900 enemy left dead.

The new week opened with a mid day attack on the Cu Chi - Tay Ninh convoy. It didn't work. Charlie Company, 3<sup>rd</sup> Battalion, 22<sup>nd</sup> Infantry combat assaulted into the Ben Cui rubber plantation where the enemy had sprung the ambush.

CPT. James B. Hansard, Charlie Company's commander, took command of the entire forces involved when the 4<sup>th</sup> Battalion 23<sup>rd</sup> Infantry lost their commander to a fatal sniper round. Hansard ran the show with split second decisions in the counter attack against the enemy 62 enemy wished they had never tried.

Like madmen, the enemy charged Buell again. A mortar attack estimated to be about fifty rounds per minute reached its peak intensity at 1:50 am. Wave after wave of attackers flung themselves at the wire only to be cut down as fast they came. Again Bravo and Charlie Companies had the honors. The VC had over 1,000 105 mm Howitzer rounds thrown directly into his face by the 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion 13<sup>th</sup> Artillery. Seventy six bodies were left behind this time.

Numerous fights broke out along hwy 26 as the enemy attempted to stop convoy traffic. Again the enemy failed. 4<sup>th</sup> Battalion, (Mech) 23<sup>rd</sup> Infantry worked the road while Bravo Company swept one side and

Charlie Company took the other. 28 enemy died when Charlie Company caught the enemy in the act of setting up an ambush. Under the leadership of CPT. David Hollister, Charlie Company overran the enemy and had the area cleared in time for the convoy to pass without incident. The VC decided to break contact. They had had enough!

After September 20<sup>th</sup>, the fighting tapered off. Most of the enemy which had escaped TROPIC LIGHTNING'S fury withdrew from the area in which they had been dealt their most stunning defeats.

Between August 17<sup>th</sup> and September 20<sup>th</sup>, the 25<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division killed more than 2,200 NVA/VC forces. The Battle of Tay Ninh was over and none of the enemy objectives had been realized. The victory belonged to TROPIC LIGHTNING...

BEN CAO- November 27, 1968

VC/NVA forces had moved into the village of Ben Cao 14 miles southeast of Tay Ninh. ARVN Regional forces immediately locked horns with enemy forces and intense fighting broke out. Although the ARVN's were holding the enemy forces within the confines of the village, it was felt that additional blocking forces should be sent in to stop the enemy should he decide to retreat. Under the leadership of CPT. Donald Haramoto, Charlie Company 3<sup>rd</sup> Battalion 22<sup>nd</sup> Infantry combat assaulted near the village.

As Charlie Company headed toward the village berm line, Delta Company came barreling in with 1<sup>st</sup> Lt. Dale N. Richey heading the team. Mortar rounds were falling and lead was flying every which way. The enemy had planned a welcome for the REGULARS.

It was 6:00 pm and darkness was quickly sneaking into the rain filled air. A direct assault on the village was hoped for, but was not possible because of the time. The enemy had dug in deep and was not about to budge..

The REGULARS moved back to a more strategic location to dig in for the night. Maybe the enemy would be foolish enough to leave the security of the village and attack the REGULARS in their night positions.

LTC Alexander Hunt knew the enemy would make the fatal mistake. Helicopter gunships were standing by as well as a wealth of lethal artillery. Mortar rounds started falling at 0300 Thanksgiving Day. Soon after the perimeter was under attack and the ensuing battle lasted for three and one-half hours.

Air strikes coupled with the raining artillery and helicopter gunships cut the enemy to pieces as he assaulted. ARVN's and REGULARS combined killed over 100 NVA/VC. Delta Company assaulted the village in the morning only to find the enemy had retreated, Strategy had worked perfectly and the friendly forces had taken a minimum of casualties.

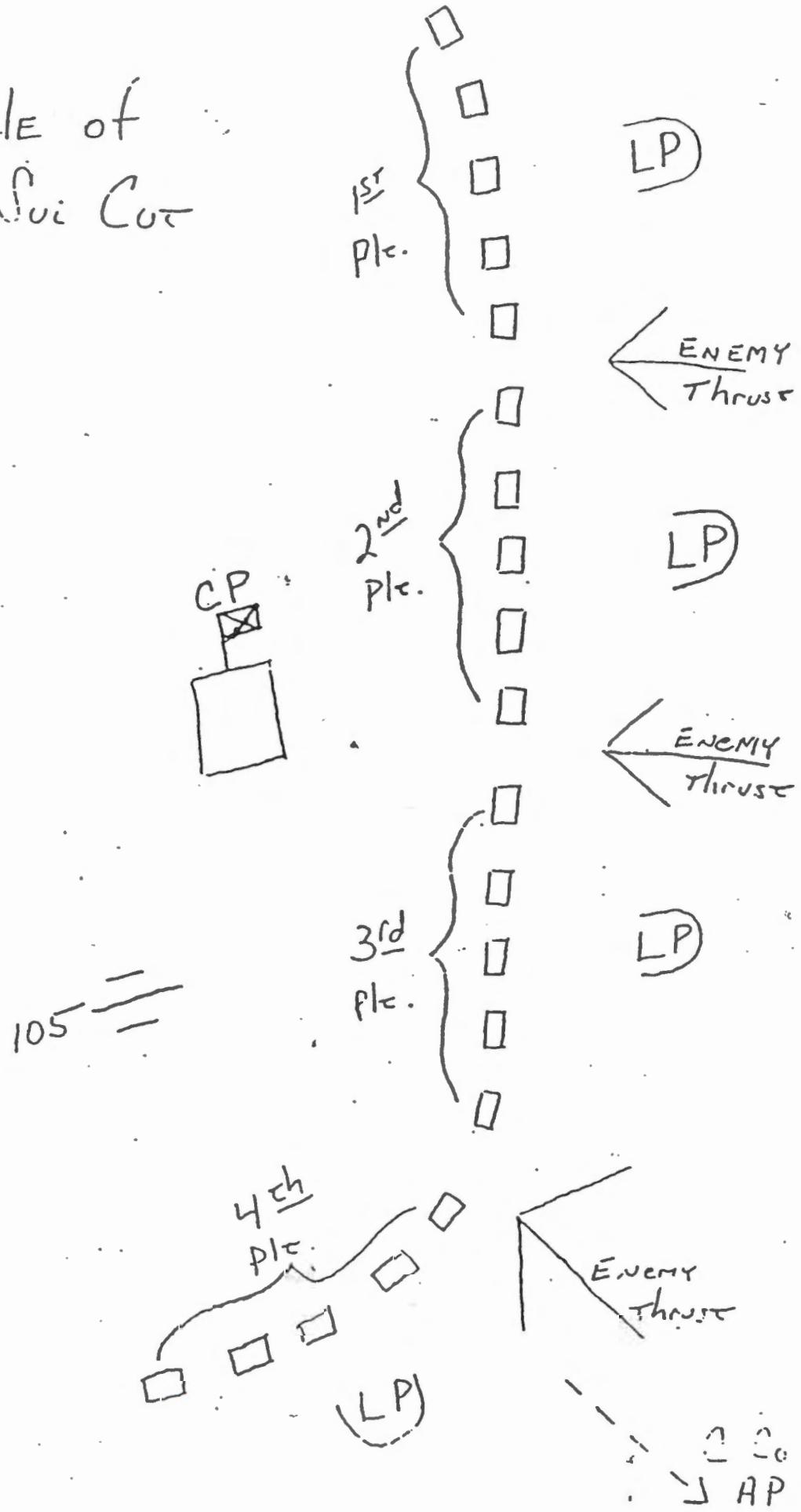
For the remainder of the year, the 3<sup>rd</sup> Battalion 22<sup>nd</sup> Infantry operated in the thick jungles of War Zone C north of Tay Ninh. En emy activity was near zero as the NVA forces headed north to regroup and gather more supplies and men. The defeats they had suffered during August and September proved to be extremely costly for them.

For the REGULARS is was rather quiet as far as contact was concerned. But the task of stalking the enemy to find his locations and hidden materials was still existent. Numerous combat assault missions were made into the "rocket belt" surrounding Tay Ninh. Working with the choppers belonging to the 187<sup>th</sup> Helicopter Assault Company, the REGULARS averaged three "Eagle Flights" per day. This amounted to more then most units with their own choppers.

Working an area 11 kilometers northwest of Tay Ninh, enemy contact was made by Bravo, Charlie, and Delta Companies over a spread out span during December. The contacts were so light that US casualties amounted to little more than scratches. Enemy body counts were not known.

The year closed with a quiet Christmas highlighted by a twenty-four hour cease fire. No violations of the truce were reported in the battalion's area of operations. TET was still to come and all REGULARS were wondering what it would bring.

# BATTLE of Sui Crt



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".

**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	6
<b>RIFLES</b>	
2 - US M-79	0

## AMMO & EQUIPMENT

## 31,000 ROUNDS SMALL ARMS DESTROYED

## 580 RENDS RPG EVACUATED

(EST 600 RENDS EMPLOYED AGAINST  
BDE. TROOPS).

## 1900 STICK GRENADES

40 ROUNDS 82MM MORTAR DESTROYED

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

**13 ROUNDS 75 MM EVACUATED**

### 21 RENDS 75 MM DESTROYED

## 7 RND 57 MM EVACUATED

## 21 ROUNDS 57 MM DESTROYED

## VIET CONG CASUALTIES

## 647 KIA - BODY COUNT

**200 KIA - PROBABLE.**

10 - POW

## U.S. CASUALTIES

31 - KIA 187 - WIA

