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I Roads OPERATIONS

Carentan I

Continuing the fight for the area around Hue, Division Paratroopers teamed with Airborne Infantrymen of the 3rd Brigade, 82nd Abn. Div., to launch Operation Carentan I. The campaign was directed against insurgents in Thua Thien province, north of Camp Eagle, the new forward base camp. It succeeded through a series of cordons and night ambushes.

The initial assault March 8 included "All Americans" from the 82nd, and members of B Trp., 2nd Sqd., 17th Cav., and F Co., 58th Inf. (LRRP). Screaming Eagles from the 2nd Brigade rejoined the Division after participating in Operation Jeb Stuart near Quang Tri City. Two days after the start of Carentan, A Co., 1st Bn., 501st Abn. Inf. uncovered a pair of large weapons caches, while Paratroopers from C Co., 2nd Bn., 501st Abn. Inf. killed 25 enemy in a contact with an NVA company.

Before the end of Carentan's first week, C Co. had killed 41 more enemy in a two-day battle three miles north of Hue. Meanwhile, Screaming Eagles from the 1st Brigade's 2nd Bn., 327th Abn. Inf., charged with the responsibility of clearing Route 547 from Hue to Fire Base Bastogne, killed 25 enemy soldiers, who were fighting from bunker positions along the road.

Late in the evening of March 21, members of the 2nd Bn., 501st Abn. Inf. repulsed an attack on their night defensive position, sometimes resorting to direct artillery fire to kill 22 enemy. The next day, gunships of the 101st Avn. Bn. caught an NVA company in the open five miles west of Hue and killed 34, while a light fire team destroyed three sampans, resulting in nine more enemy deaths.

Sweeps by the 1st Bn., 501st Abn. Inf. accounted for 57 enemy killed in two days of fighting, while D Co., 2nd Bn., 501st Abn. Inf. found 31 NVA killed in previous fighting in their area of operation.

When the operation ended March 31, 861 enemy had been killed. ~~Weapons and munitions captured included 186 individual and crew-served weapons, 1,027 rocket, mortar and artillery rounds, 41,000 small arms rounds and 45 grenades. Paratroopers also kept nearly 17 tons of rice and grain from the enemy.~~

SOURCE: 101st Airborne Division's 1968 Year Book

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Operation Carentan I was initiated 082400H Mar, when the Division assumed operational control of 3d Bde, 82d Abn Div.

The mission of the operation was to locate and destroy enemy forces, base areas and logistical installations in the assigned AO with emphasis on interdicting enemy infiltration routes along Hwy 547. Concurrent with the above, the Division assumed the responsibility for the external security for the Tan My - Cocoa Beach port facility (~~YD 8232~~).

Unit activities during Carentan I consisted of preparation and occupation of fire support bases (FSB); mine sweep and road clearing operations, convoy escort missions and after it joined the Div on 18 Mar, began a reconnaissance in force Op to the southwest astride Hwy 547 to clear the road and to interdict enemy infiltration from the southwest into Hue.

Source: ORL's, 101st AIR CAVALRY DIVISION July 1968