

Screaming Eagles  
21st May

# Nevada Eagle

With the beginning of Operation Nevada Eagle on May 17, the Screaming Eagles of the 1st and 2nd Brigades had a new mission. The VC and NVA in the area badly needed the rice from the upcoming harvest. Working in coordination with the district chiefs, the brigades protected the villagers as they harvested their spring rice.

The first significant combat action of Nevada Eagle occurred on May 21 when the 2nd Bn., 327th Abn. Inf. repulsed a probe of their night defensive perimeter with artillery and small arms. Thirty-one enemy dead and 12 weapons littered the perimeter the next morning.

Late in May the first of a series of huge weapons and equipment caches was unearthed deep in the triple canopy jungles west of Hue. The 1st Bn., 327th Abn. Inf. uncovered three light artillery pieces, two anti-aircraft guns and one truck near FB Veghel. Three days later, the largest cache of Nevada Eagle was discovered 12 miles southwest of Hue by the 2nd Bn., 327th Abn. Inf. More than 230 individual and crew-served weapons were pulled from well-prepared storage bunkers dug into the jungle floor camouflaged with several feet of thick, overgrown brush.

During the same period the 1st Bn. 327th Abn. Inf., was again uncovering enemy caches. In a cache 3 miles southwest of FB Veghel, a fleet of 54 enemy trucks was discovered and destroyed in place.

For the 2nd Brigade, Nevada Eagle saw more cordon operations used throughout the coastal plains area. Helicopter assaults became the Communist nemesis. Coordinated operations involving air, land, sea, and Vietnamese-American efforts helped add to the overall effectiveness of the operation.

At 12:30 a.m. on May 21, an NVA battalion, augmented by personnel from a sapper demolition team, launched a daring ground attack against Camp Eagle, following a covering barrage of more than 400 rounds of 122mm rockets, 82mm mortars, B-40 and B-41 rocket-grenades into the Division headquarters area. The ground attack struck the southwest edge of the perimeter and was beaten back by headquarters troops of the 1st Brigade, members of the 2nd Bn., 502nd Abn. Inf. and helicopter gunships.

At dawn a sweep of the area revealed 54 enemy bodies and 16 individual weapons captured. Also seized were 40 satchel charges, 30 Bangalore torpedoes, and 50 RPG rounds. Damage to the base area was light.

Rice denial dominated the actions of Nevada Eagle during the lull in enemy contact. For the period covering May 17 to July 18, Screaming Eagle units from the 1st and 2nd Brigades captured over 325 tons of enemy-held rice.

In mid-July, the Division welcomed a new commander, Maj. Gen. Melvin Zais. "Lucky Eagle" shared his thoughts with his troops when he told them, "My mission as your Division commander is twofold: First, I came here to fight; second, I have a grave responsibility to take care of you."