

Historical Summary

3rd Battalion 22nd Infantry

1967-1968

25th Infantry Division

3rd Brigade

1st Brigade

Vietnam

Dau Tieng

Saigon

Tay Ninh

" The Regulars - By God"

COMMANDERS OF 3rd BATTALION 22nd INFANTRY

BATTALION COMMANDERS:

LTC. Thomas U. Harrold - to Feb, 68

LTC. Roy K. Flint - to 2 Aug, 68

LTC. Alexander Hunt - present

ALPHA COMPANY:

CPT. Herbert Chancey - to 28 Mar 68

Capt. Gerald Campbell - to 15 May 68

1st LT. Albert Fisher

1st LT. Randolph Behrens - to 1 Aug 68

CPT. Andre F. Blackmon - to 15 Dec 68

1st LT. William J. Ervin - to present

BRAVO COMPANY:

CPT. Robert L. Hemphill - to 18 Feb 68

1st LT. Richard J. Prairie - to 12 Jun 68

1st LT. Arthur Gormley - to 14 Jul 68

1st LT. Dean Walker - to 10 Aug 68

CPT. George D. Featherstone - to 29 Dec 68

1st LT. Hugh E. Stephens - present

CHARLIE COMPANY:

CPT. Elliot Fishbrune - to 26 Jan 68

1st 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

STAFF OFFICERS - 1968

EXECUTIVE OFFICERS:

CW-2 Eugene Culver - 1 Jul

Major Jerome Johnson - 8 Mar

S-5

Major Gerald M. Davlin - 25 Aug

1st LT. Frank R. Bonhart - 5 Mar

Major Walter Burns - 6 Nov

CPT. Gerald T. Brown - 7 Sept

Major Hacia - 17 Nov

CPT. David Hollister - 16 Oct

ADJUTANT S-1:

CPT. Hartmut Schuler

CPT. Robert Hemphill

1st LT. John Harris

CPT. Ronald Owings

Cpt. Hartmut Schuler

S - 2

2nd LT. Steven Wilder - 1 Jan

1st LT. Michael Balser - 11 Apr

CPT. Donald Haramoto - 25 Aug

CPT. David Hollister

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

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 airstrikes 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 JANUARY - MARCH 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 3rd Battalion, 22nd Infantry, was called upon to aid the 2nd Brigade forces of the 25th 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 KNIA
134 WIA
1 WNIA

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 - 81mm mortars
1 - 51 cal. M. G.
4 - Chicom Light M. G.
2 - US 50 cal. M. G.
44 pounds of documents
1 - Chicom radio

Companies B, C, and D of the 3rd Battalion, 22nd Infantry had combat assaulted into the area designated north of Dau Tieng and carefully swept the area designated 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 61mm and 81mm 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 ben 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 the morning light appeared, the 2nd Battalion, 22nd 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 25th 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

1st LT. Richard J. Prairie - Commanding Officer of Bravo

SFC Robert E. Nelson - Company D

Sgt. Edward D. Crow - Company B

Sp5 Carl L. Felgenhauer - 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.

"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 1st 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, 3rd Battalion 22nd Infantry.

The 3rd Brigade, 25th 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, 1st 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 3rd Battalion 22nd Infantry. From April 10 through July 6, the 3rd Brigade, 25th 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 3rd Battalion 22nd Infantry came up with more than 75 AK-47 rifles

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 3rd Battalion 22nd 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 3rd Battalion 22nd 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 25th 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 25th'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 23rd, 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 3rd Battalion 22nd 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, intelligence reports were revised, There was no doubt now that the enemy was coming. He would attack between August and September.

After September 20, 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 and September 20, the 25th 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 3rd Battalion 22nd Infantry combat assaulted near the village.

As Charlie Company headed toward the village berm line, Delta Company came barreling in with 1st 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 3rd Battalion 22nd Infantry operated in the thick jungles of War Zone C north of Tay Ninh. Enemy 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 187th 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.