

GIs Kill 27 Red Ambushers In 7-Hour Battle Near An Hoa

S&S Vietnam Bureau

SAIGON — Two U.S. infantry companies and a cavalry troop battled for seven hours with a large communist force on flat marshlands 10½ miles southeast of An Hoa Thursday, killing at least 27 enemy.

The battle started when the

enemy ambushed the armored column at about 10 a.m. The enemy opened up with mortar, recoilless rifle, machine gun and small arms fire into the advancing U.S. armor. One U.S. soldier was killed and six were wounded in the initial outburst.

The fighting continued for

seven hours as the Communists continued to try to knock out the U.S. armor with 75mm recoilless rifles.

The two infantry companies from the 4th Inf. Div. and the cavalry troop from the 1st Cav. Div. called for artillery and air support in driving the enemy off.

Helicopter gunships killed five additional Communist troops and five more were killed in other action in the Operation Wallowa area, for a total of 37 enemy killed.

U.S. casualties for the day were 15 killed and 78 wounded.

Four miles northwest of the Wallowa action, two companies of the 5th Marines fought for 26 hours with a company of entrenched Communist soldiers.

The Marines called air strikes and artillery fire onto the enemy positions, but the fighting continued throughout the day.

The Reds finally slipped away about 10 p.m. leaving at least six dead behind. More bodies are expected to turn up when Marines sweep the area Friday.

Four Marines were killed and 64 wounded.

Communist mortarmen fired 70mm and 82mm rounds Thursday night into the 3rd Brigade, 25th Inf. Div. base camp at Dau Tieng.

Thirty U.S. infantrymen were wounded in the 20-minute attack. Two scout dogs were reported killed and 25 wounded.

The base camp suffered minor damage.