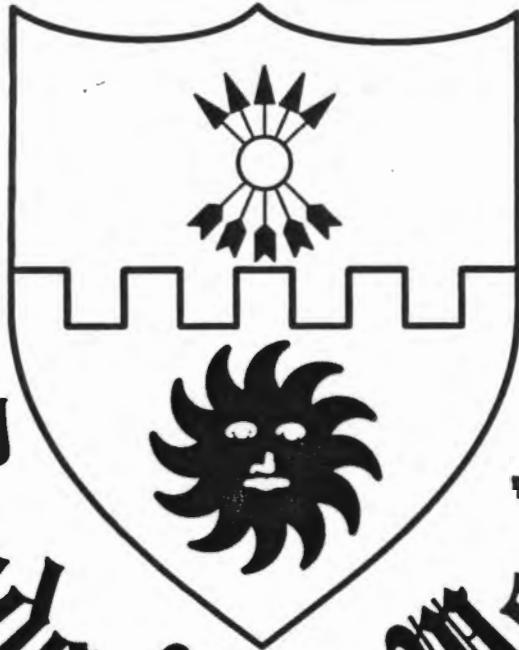


COMPANY C
3rd BATTALION 22nd INFANTRY



4th DIVISION



Reeds Not Mighty



25th DIVISION

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"

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COMPILED BY - DAVID DeMAURO

BRIGADE CORRESPONDENT

3RD BATTALION 22ND INFANTRY

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

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

1st LT. Franklin Wilson - to 7 Aug 68

1st LT. Christopher C. Brown - to 18 Aug 68

1st LT. John Paulding - to 28 Aug 68

1st LT. Dale N. Richey - to present

ECHO COMPANY: (formed September 1968)

1st LT. Richard Graves - to 1 Nov 68

1st LT. William Storey - to 17 Dec 68

1st 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

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

CW-2 Eugene Culver - 1 Jul

S-5

1st LT. Frank R. Bonhart - 5 Mar

CPT. Gerald T. Brown - 7 Sept

CPT. David Hollister - 16 Oct

CPT. Hartmut Schuler

OPERATION YELLOWSTONE

29 DEC. 1967 - 25 JAN. 1968

Operation Yellowstone II was launched when orders were issued to the 3rd Battalion, 22nd 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 2nd Battalion 77th Artillery was to be air lifted into the FSB. After the FSB was well established, the 2nd Battalion, 22nd Infantry (Mechanized) was to link up with it's 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, the 3/22 expected plenty of enemy contact since the dense jungle containing many streams and rivers, allotted the enemy a good staging area.

Intelligence reports indicated that the 165th NVA regiment had been operating in Binh Long Province along with the 2nd Battalion of the 141st 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 the night laarger position known as 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 3rd Battalion 22nd 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 ben 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 2nd Battalion, 22nd 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 immediately started firing direct support with beehive rounds to route the enemy from the bunker line.

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 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 Biell in January 1969 to present the two awards.

1. There were 16 US KIAs and 47 WIAs.
2. Enemy KIA - 153 and 53 possible.
3. 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 mile 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 3rd Battalion, 22nd Infantry, 34th Armored Regiment, 4th Battalion (Mechanized) 23rd Infantry, and the 4th Battalion, 9th 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 33,000 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

3rd Brigade, 25th Infantry Division

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

From their base camp north of Saigon, Alpha Company, 3rd Battalion 22nd 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 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

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 3rd Battalion 22nd Infantry and the 2nd Battalion 77th 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 3rd Battalion 22nd 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 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.

ROUND ONE

The waiting ended. On the night of August 17, an ambush patrol from Bravo Company 3rd Battalion 22nd 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 1st 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 7th Battalion 11th 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 4th Battalion (Mech) 23rd Infantry and FSB Schoefield held by the 2nd Battalion 27th 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, 3rd Battalion, 22nd 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 4th Battalion 23rd 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 2nd Battalion 13th Artillery. 76 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. 4th Battalion, (Mech) 23rd 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, 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.