

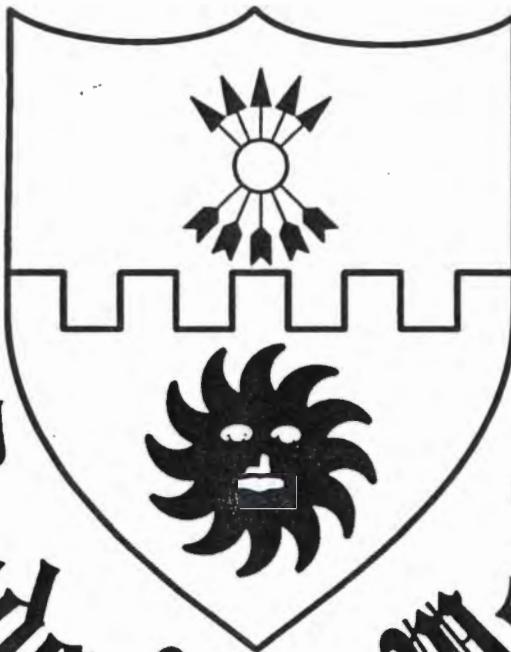


COMPANY C

3rd BATTALION 22nd INFANTRY



4th DIVISION



Deeds Not Words



25th DIVISION

LTC William L. Albright (letter dated 4 February 1968)

To the officers and men of the 2nd Battalion, 77th Artillery and attached units.

The battle of Suoi Cut was a multi-battalion attack against FSB Burt, 10 kilometers from the Cambodian border in the heart of War Zone C. Six enemy battalions participated in the attack with four battalions committed and two battalions held in reserve. The battalions were identified as elements of the 271st and 272nd VC Regiments.

U.S. forces included the 3rd Battalion, 22nd Infantry (-), which defended the FSB eastern perimeter, 2nd Battalion, 22nd mechanized Infantry, which defended the FSB perimeter to the west, 2nd Battalion, 77th Artillery (-), Battery A, 3rd Battalion, 13th Artillery, one section of Battery B, 5th Battalion, 2nd Artillery, one section Battery D, 71st Artillery and one section Battery I, 29th Artillery (SLT) attached.

The attack began with harassing mortar attacks during the early evening hours, followed by intensive mortar and RPG attack beginning at 2330 hours. This was followed by heavy ground fire and human wave attacks which continued until 0500 hours on 2 January when VC forces began withdrawing to the south.

Throughout the earlier part of the evening, personnel located at FSB Burt had been subjected to sporadic mortar fire. Ambush patrols and listening posts located outside the perimeter had reported movement near their positions. Just prior to 2330 hours, heavy movement was reported from outposts all around the perimeter.

Ambush patrols engaged the enemy as they rushed through their positions. At 2330 hours, FSB Burt came under a heavy mortar attack. This attack was followed by RPG, small arms and automatic weapon's fire generally from the southeast and northeast although all sections of the perimeter were subjected to various types and intensities of fire. At about 2400 hours, mortar and RPG fires slackened and ground attacks were launched all around the perimeter. The initial effort seemed to be in the 2nd Battalion, 22nd Infantry's sector to the west. This effort was repulsed and later determined to be a feint. It became apparent that the critical area was to the southeast, defended by Company C, 3rd Battalion, 22nd Infantry and backed up by the 105 mm howitzers of Battery C, 2nd Battalion, 77th Artillery.

By 0100 hours, VC elements had penetrated to the bunker line. The men from Company C, 3rd Bn., 22nd Infantry were fighting from behind and from atop their bunkers. Prior to this, the artillery had been used to counter mortar fire and support the ambush patrols who had been engaged with the enemy from the onset. Direct fire was requested from 3rd Brigade FOC to help repel the attack and keep the enemy from breaking through the perimeter. As the VC reached the bunker line, Battery C, 2/77th Artillery began

delivering heavy volumes of fire into their ranks. Initially HE rounds were used but this was soon augmented with beehive rounds. The effect on the advancing enemy and Company C, 3/22nd personnel fighting outside their bunkers was devastating.

At the same time, positions to the south, manned by Company C, 2nd Battalion, 22nd Mechanized Infantry came under heavy attack. Direct fire from Battery A, 2/77th Artillery, was instrumental in blunting the thrust. Helicopter gun ships and flare ships were also heavily employed in the area. At 0145 hours, enemy fire let up and contact was gradually reduced. Rounds from medium and heavy artillery fired from FSB Beauregard located 12 kilometers to the west were employed west of FSB Burt to prevent VC reinforcements from entering the battle and to keep them from withdrawing in that direction. At 0200, enemy fires increased and the entire perimeter was engaged again. The medium artillery battery covering the northern portion of the perimeter resumed direct fire with HE rounds into enemy positions to the northeast, north, and northwest. Once again, however, the weight of the attack was concentrated on the south and southeast. Heavy fires were again delivered by the artillery employing direct fire techniques of both HE and beehive rounds. During this period, artillery indirect fire from FSB Burt and FSB Beauregard were placed along the road to the south. This fire was later credited with being instrumental in breaking up the enemy reserve of approximately two battalions who were assembling to exploit breakthroughs in the perimeter.

The infantry's small arms ammunition began to run low. Artillery men not engaged in firing the howitzers assembled the battalion's basic load of ammunition and distributed it to the infantry men at their positions on the perimeter. The three hours of continuous fire was also beginning to drain artillery ammunition. Some redistribution was necessary within the battalion, but it was soon apparent that we would need a resupply.

Shortly before 0300 hours, TAC air arrived and was employed to the south where heavy contact was still being felt. An almost continuous volume of artillery fire was still being delivered. At 0330 hours, virtually all contact in the south ceased. TAC Air continued to extensively drop napalm, and CBUs which were especially instrumental in breaking the enemy attack formations.

Although heavy direct fire was still being employed to the south, TAC Air allowed direct artillery fire to be used elsewhere around the perimeter. Also indirect fire was placed down the road to the south to interdict withdrawing VC forces and to prevent massing.

At 0330 hours, emergency ammunition resupply began. UH-1D helicopters were used and resupply was conducted from Bien Hoa, Dau Tieng and Katum. The men from the 2/77th directed helicopters onto several makeshift landing pads. They hurriedly unloaded and distributed the ammo which consisted primarily of: 955 rounds 105 mm HE, 60 rounds 105 mm beehive, 58,000 rounds .50 caliber, 150,000 rounds 5.56 mm, and 610 rounds 4.2 mortar.

By this time friendly casualties had increased. An improvised aid station was set up at the Battery C Fire

Direction Center. Artillery personnel were organized to bring the wounded into the aid station for treatment and transportation to the helicopter pads. As the ammunition was unloaded from the resupply helicopters, the wounded were placed aboard for immediate evacuation. More than 100 patients were processed through this facility during the battle.

At 0400 hours, VC .51 caliber machine guns started firing at Air Force aircraft as they completed bombing runs on the south edge of the perimeter. These positions were taken on by direct fire from both Battery A and Battery C and the machine guns were silenced.

At 0500 hours, VC forces began to break contact and withdraw to the south. Heavy artillery fire and air strikes continued to pound their routes of withdrawal. By 0600 hours, it was clear that the battle was over and had resulted in a complete victory for U.S. forces and near annihilation of the attacking enemy.

Enemy Losses:

401 KIA 8 POW

Ordnance Captured:

75 - AK-47 rifles
11 - Chicom light machine guns
12 - RPG-7 rocket launchers
16 - RPG-2 launchers
large quantities of small arms ammo

U.S. Casualties

23 - KIA 153 - WIA

The obvious objective of the attacking VC force was to overrun and annihilate defending U.S. forces. They failed due to the successful integration and team work of the Infantry, Artillery and Air support. Ambush patrols were invaluable in providing early warning and in one dramatic case provided intelligence of VC forces during the battle and directed air strikes on VC in their staging area.

During the middle stages of the battle, the enemy began moving a large concentration of troops up the road from the south in order to exploit a breakthrough in that area of the perimeter. Artillery firepower literally leveled this enemy force.

It is interesting to know that on 21 March 1967, the same 272nd Regiment attacked FSB Gold near Suoi Tre, defended by 3rd Battalion, 22nd Infantry and 2nd Battalion, 77th Artillery. A gallant defense by infantry and artillery augmented by numerous air strikes decimated the attacking enemy forces and provided a substantial victory.

James Jerome Lind, 4th platoon, of Oshkosh, Wisconsin was KIA 1-5-68.

William Henry Scheiber Jr., _____ platoon, of Louisville, Kentucky was KIA 1-27-68