

# DIARY OF AN INFILTRATOR

DECEMBER, 1966

UNITED STATES MISSION IN VIETNAM

SAIGON-VIETNAM

I was born in Qui Nhon Province (South Vietnam) in 1923 and  
relocated to North Vietnam, Hoa Binh Province on November 16,  
1954. I was sent by the Party to a political indoctrination course  
in Hanoi which I learned about the Party and Communism. That was  
from August 1, 1955 to February 1, 1956. Then I took a Land Reform  
course in Hoa Binh Province (North Vietnam) and served as a land  
reform cadre for two years in Quang Binh Province (North Vietnam).  
I then became an administrative cadre in Quang Binh, married and in

NOTE: All entries in this diary are direct quotations in translation  
from the Vietnamese. Extracts from several hundred captured diaries  
were screened to produce this composite. Most of the diaries were  
taken in the Highland and cover the period from July 1965 to August 1966.

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The Vietnam War; Nature of People's Army; Military Tactics;

I -- Xuan Mai

I was born in Qui Nhon Province (South Vietnam) in 1920 and regrouped to North Vietnam from Binh Dinh Province on November 16, 1954. I was sent by the authorities to a political indoctrination course in Hanoi where I learned about Socialism and Communism. That was from January 1, 1965 to February 15, 1966. Then I took a Land Reform course in Thai Binh Province (North Vietnam) and served as a land reform cadre for two years in Quang Binh Province (North Vietnam). Then I became an administrative cadre in Quang Binh, married and had a son. Now I've been ordered to Xuan Mai Training Camp (Ha Dong Province -- North Vietnam). Today I arrived at Xuan Mai for three months training.

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Most of the men at Xuan Mai are draftees and frankly their morale is not too high. But cadres explain carefully that our mission is to help the South Vietnamese people fight the Americans and their henchmen and to liberate and unify the country. Most of us do our utmost to study and work, and have high senses of responsibility. Some of the draftees, however, are afraid of the sacrifice and the difficulties ahead and are bothered by family problems. Some have even sent in official requests asking permission to return to their home villages.

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Study consists of these subjects: Policies of the Lao Dong Party; Nature of People's War; Nature of People's Army; Military Tactics;

Ten Principles of Leadership; Use of the Ambush and the Surprise Attack; How to React Quickly to Opportunities; Use of Explosives; Social Classes in Socialist and Capitalist Societies; Proselyting Efforts; Guerrilla Warfare.

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We were shown the movie, Heroic Soldiers. It was about the life of a soldier. A true revolutionary not only knows how to fight but knows how to reason.

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In the South, the Catholics for the most part are reactionary and against the Southern Revolution. They use the slogan: counter communism and protect our religion..... The Protestant church is smaller and did not develop much under Diem. It is not against the Revolution but few of its followers participate..... Most of the Buddhists are reactionary and bad elements. Many of the bonzes are VNQDD. Their leader, Thich Tam Chau, has given orders to oppose the Revolution....The Cao Dai generally now are anti-communist and their priests advise youth not to join the Revolution.

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Fundamentals of a War of Liberation: When the revolutionary force becomes stronger and stronger, the nature of the war of liberation will shift from guerrilla warfare to conventional warfare. Conventional warfare is much more important -- it can produce decisive victories.

At first, however, guerrilla warfare is essential. Gradually, conventional warfare assumes importance parallel to the progression of guerrilla warfare.

The jungle of Vietnam plays an important role in the present Special Warfare. The jungle protects our forces. Also it can be used to attack the enemy. The jungle can be a major theater of operations in which large enemy forces are annihilated. The (Mekong) Delta theater of operations is important only to wear down the enemy forces. Also, the Delta is an immense source of human and natural resources for the theater of operations in the Highlands.

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We revolutionary soldiers are more determined to fight the U.S. aggressors than are the Front soldiers in the South. We can endure more hardships and have more confidence in the victory of the Revolution. This is due to our better class consciousness and discipline. We cadres have greater sense of responsibility and are more effective in combat. We are more mature.

Vuong has received a letter from his daughter Tuyen in Moscow. One letter dated September 27, 1965 told of a demonstration of university students at the American Embassy in Moscow to protest the bombing of North Vietnam. The students were oppressed but showed fearlessness. All of them told a National Liberation Front representative in Moscow they were ready to return to Vietnam any time they are needed. She says

life in Moscow can easily spoil and corrupt young Vietnamese. Young Russians do not like Vietnamese people and often mistake them for Chinese. Or they flatter and praise the Vietnamese people for suffering in a protracted war. These people are really worth insulting, she said. The Vietnamese students in Moscow take up collections frequently to support the South Vietnamese. Most of the Russian people think the Vietnamese are courageous but are not well aware of the reason for the struggle. The Russian people are not very revolutionary in nature and the young enjoy too much the American way of life. Tuyen frequently explains to Russian students that the Americans did not respect the 1954 Geneva Accords. Recently all students staged a demonstration at the Belgian Embassy and ransacked it. Miss Tuyen hung a slogan which read: "American Imperialists, Get Out of Vietnam."

At weapons training session today we were instructed in the use of ammunition during battle.:

<u>Weapon</u>	<u>Basic Load</u>	<u>Rounds per Battle Allocation</u>
CKC rifle	80 rounds	20 rounds
AK submachine gun	120 rounds	50 rounds
Mortar	20 rounds	20 rounds
Recoilless rifle	5 rounds	2 per target
Heavy machine gun	400 rounds	300 rounds
Light machine gun	750 rounds	200 rounds

Morale among many trainees is not good. Most do not want to infiltrate. They are afraid of hardships, difficulties, sacrifices and illness. Some of them have fled the camp for their home villages.

-- At an indoctrination session agitprop cadres listed these Southern achievements during the year (i. e. 1965):

Eliminated 27,787 of the enemy.

Captured 2,139 weapons of all types.

Destroyed 89 trucks, 31 boats and shot down 48 aircraft.

Conducted total of 133,876 meetings.

Conducted 363,321 acts of sabotage.

Induced 14,348 RVNAF soldiers to desert.

Captured total of 1,289 hamlet officials, etc.

Today we were issued our equipment for infiltration:

1 shelter half

1 hammock

1 pack

1 pair of sandals

1 set of uniforms

1 sweater

1 cap

1 mosquito net

1 canteen

2 sets of underwear

1 can of fish paste and three cans of salt; 200 grams of nuoc mam.

Each man in our squad was issued a K-44 rifle or a K-50 sub machine gun and two grenades; also our squad received one automatic rifle and one anti-tank gun.

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Graduation ceremonies were held today. We were addressed by a colonel I have never seen before. He said we should overcome all hardships and achieve outstanding performances. He wished everyone good health, good service and brilliant victories. In an hour it was over. Now we prepare for infiltration.

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Last night in the North. We celebrated.

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With the support of the 17 million North Vietnamese people, and the Chinese, Russian and other Socialist people and with the opposition of the pacifist countries and the American people against Johnson's policy of war in Vietnam, surely we will achieve final victory.

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Some men have written on their undershirts: Sanh bac tu nam ("born in the north, will die in the south").

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## II -- On the Trail

Arrived in Laos. Bivouacked in the forest. We are told that we will get mail from our families if they write to the Reunification Committee in Hanoi. Many civilian workers on this section of the trail, mostly local woodcutters widening the trail under the trees by 1.5 meters. The sun of Laos is very bright and the sky always blue.

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March 30 kilometers today in heavy rain. Have begun to eat

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Marched 17 kilometers today through torrential rain storm. Bridges had been washed out. Fallen trees were across the trail.

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Moved 22 kilometers today. Rain has lessened but the wind is cold. Shortage of rice and other food. Troop morale is down.

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Marched 12 kilometers today. Many of the slopes we must climb are 35 degrees. Rain continues. I am carrying 33 kilos. Porters with bicycles are hauling most of our food and ammunition.

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Still somewhere in Central Laos. More heavy rain. Mountain pass crossings are difficult. I am tired and hungry. Tired of climbing mountains and wading streams. Hungry. Legs feel like they are ready to drop off. It takes six to seven hours to prepare a meal at night. Impossible to sleep without using leaves as a mattress.

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Mountain people here are very superstitious. They killed pigs and buffalo when we arrived. Not for us, but as sacrifice to the gods in case we defile the earth, which they hold sacred. We have been instructed not to dig foxholes or other fortifications.

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Tet draws near. My heart is stirred with memories of my family. Tears ooze from my eyes. Used the last of my toothpaste today. My whistle doesn't work any more.

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Laotians come trading food for things we are carrying. It is forbidden, but many of the men do it anyway. Today I was caught trading some clothes for rice and was reprimanded. Then I discovered that the sack of rice I had traded my last extra pair of pants for, was a sack of dirt with just a layer of rice on top.

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Southern Laos. This place is miserable. The green jungle is full of birds twittering. Flies sting and sting and the holes don't stop bleeding.

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Had nothing to eat for a whole day. Found a wild vegetable which I ate, but was inedible. I thought I would die. Food is so precious. Rice is blood. Manioc is tears. Salt is perspiration. How powerful are hunger, thirst and weariness.

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Lower Laos. Terrible hardships. Paths again steep. Heavy rains again every day. Loads we carry very heavy. Five men have died of malaria. I didn't think people died of malaria.

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Physically exhausted. Some slopes today were 40 degrees. We can only move for half-hour and then must rest. Oh, My Fatherland: spring is coming to you again and my spring is vanishing.

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Spring also is coming to this land of Laos but the trees are without leaves and the grass is withered. It is cold as ice at night.

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Many stragglers. More rain. Must trade personal belongings to Laotians for food. They have only manioc or wild vegetable to trade. It is difficult to eat.

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Traded more belongings for food. I don't have much left to trade.

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Stricken with malaria today. I was afraid this would happen. Malaria affecting many of my comrades. Orders are to keep going, even if we must crawl.

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It is a good thing to be patient. But life is so short. Am I weak and less than others?

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An incident took place because the Third Squad went to cut wood without telling anyone or notifying headquarters. Thus we thought it was the enemy approaching and opened fire. Four were killed and several others wounded.

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I don't know why I feel sad, discouraged, home-sick and worried about the future. My homesickness is worse at sunset.

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A memo was read to us today saying that wounded and sick soldiers on the trail should not complain nor cause trouble nor make demands. Also, only cadres of company level and up are to be returned to the north in case of serious illness or wounds. Soldiers are to be classified by Medical Sections into categories according to their health:

- a) Physically fit or suffering diseases that have no noticeable effect.
- b) Affected by a disease but incapacitated only three or four days a month.
- c) Affected by serious or chronic diseases such as tuberculosis, heart ailment, nervous breakdown, etc.

III - In South Vietnam

It was night and we started across a river by ferry. No sooner were we on the river than the enemy planes came, dropped flares and strafed us. We are now in South Vietnam.

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Moved 17 kilometers through the jungle. Rained all day. Many of the men have malaria and their legs are swollen. Crossed 32 streams. It took us nearly 15 hours. Enemy planes strafed us at some of the crossings.

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Crossed three streams today. Marched 24 kilometers. Stopped in forest area near village. Villagers seemed to accept as normal the arrival of our rather large contingent. Saw first Montagnards today. Many of the men were afraid of them.

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Stopped at Station Nineteen. It has anti-aircraft defenses but no underground fortifications. This is said to be the safest place on the (Ho Chi Minh) Trail. The station easily took care of 2,000 people.

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Last night, planes kept flying over the area. First came the L-19s which observed and then the F-8s which raided us. The lead element kept moving but the main element kept undercover all afternoon. It was a welcome rest.

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Went extra long distance today, because the way station we were to have stopped at was closed, because it is too exposed and too subjected to air strikes. Just after we crossed a suspension bridge today, an enemy plane flew in and destroyed the bridge. Then it kept circling us. Rumors in the outfit say an enemy unit is in the area. The men are uneasy.

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Here we found a new portion of the trail under the trees, which runs parallel to the old one about two kilometers away. The old trail is kept up, in the hope the Americans will bomb it and it will be safe to travel the new trail. However, a man at the station said the Americans have been bombing both trails.

Our travel movement is being slowed down by the continuous day and night air strikes.

Food situation is getting critical. Will have to cut the ration below 500 grams. The word tonight is that there is no rice at all stored at the next two stations.

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Damn the Americans. They force us to sleep in the jungle with only rice and, if we are lucky, salt to eat. I am determined to fight and serve my people until my last breath.

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Moved into Quang Nam. Rain continues. Troops exhausted. Many have deserted or fallen out. Comrade Dang could not keep up and had to remain behind.

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Cadre came and talked to us today. He said enemy strength and activities have increased against us lately and that we face many difficulties now. But he said these difficulties are only temporary and that basically we are -- both militarily and politically -- much stronger than the enemy. He said traitors in our midst must be rooted out. And he said the notion of negotiating with the imperialists and their lackey henchmen must be eliminated. We must prepare to fight a protracted conflict, relying entirely on our own capabilities. Wars of national liberation are won by means of the class struggle.

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Station has just received rice supply from Cambodia. Troops here got 800 grams as well as 12 kilos to carry with them. What a relief!

Arrived at a (Highland) rest camp. We now will have one month to recuperate from our ordeal. We get three meals a day. Rice, salt and cooked vegetables, usually sweet potatoes. We can sometimes catch fish in the streams and eat them.

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Fear of hardships and the Americans has caused many desertions and surrenders. One of our companies had seven desertions last month (February 1966). Southern Party officials do not realize the danger in

the enemy's Chieu Hoi program and that it must be massively opposed. Men surrender because they lack solidarity, class consciousness and because political indoctrination has not been sufficient.

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Cadres must make subordinates see that the difficulties of the revolutionary force are only temporary. They must make them see the advantages we have and the basic weaknesses of the enemy, explaining that the enemy's strength is only temporary.

Rightism, peace illusions, subjectivism and reluctance to make sacrifices must be fought to the utmost.

We lack revolutionary vigilance and the enemy's Chieu Hoi campaign has eaten its way into our ranks. We must check this flow of desertions. Fear of the Americans is a cowardice which the Revolution cannot permit to prevail.

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Binh, a Southerner refuses to return to his unit after recovering from malaria in his former village. Further, his relatives will protect him. We must discipline both Binh and his relatives.

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Investigation of (Southern Viet Cong) Main Force units must answer these questions: Does the individual under investigation have any political or ideological problems that might lead him to anti-revolutionary thoughts or actions? Is he politically reliable? Investigate carefully and cover

all details of an individual's life. Pay particular attention to: recruits, new Party member, AWOLs, persons who have been captured and released by the enemy, persons with relatives with the enemy, members of units in which anti-revolutionary rumors abound or from which there have been leaks in classified information.

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The Southerners and even some Northerners who have been in the south for some time fear the Americans and their planes, artillery and strength and so try to avoid contact. They are willing to go on isolated guerrilla operations but find ways of evading concentrated large unit actions. They say we will be surrounded if we try to mount big operations.

In An Tin many people were killed, including Comrade Hay of the PRP Youth League, and many houses damaged.

Some 100 people in various villages now support the enemy. The situation is very confused. People are discouraged. They refuse to serve or join or enlist.

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The population at large is very much frightened by air strikes and the resulting deaths. For example, bombing of Boi Loi took a heavy toll of civilian laborers. Some bodies were buried, others were not and the stench of decaying flesh is unbearable. Relatives of these dead workers requested permission to go to the spot to bury their dead. They were told permission would have to be granted by a higher authority. The

problem is that if their requests are not honored they will complain that their relatives lie stark naked unburied. But if they are permitted to go to the place the ghastly sight will dishearten them. This problem deserves our utmost attention.

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Since the day I left you mother, to follow my companions  
To Central Viet Nam through Laos.  
I've known the hardship of climbing green mountains  
Of plodding through cold rain and under searing sun.  
In this my youth my life should blossom like a flower;  
But gladly I bore hardship and danger,  
For they told me it was in the name of Peace.  
Month after month I marched by day and tried to rest by night.  
My shoes wore out, my jacket is so thin the cold easily cuts through.  
Evening finds me  
Here in the heart of the Truong Son range,  
O Mother I yearn for home.  
I miss the blue smoke, the gourd arbor,  
The butterflies, the old temple roof ---  
Oh, how I miss them all I  
But I am here on foreign soil  
And yet the South too is our country ...

Here the same green-crested coconut trees,  
The same roads perfumed with the scent of rice paddies,  
The same blue smoke tinting the evening sky,  
The buffalo returning to its shelter,  
The sound of the flute singing to me of home ...  
And I feel less estranged.  
I look about and ask  
What here needs "liberation" ?  
The market crowded with people in festive mood?  
The rice field green with the burgeoning crop?  
The curve-roofed pagoda and its worship bell?  
The classrooms,  
Full of happy children singing in joyous chorus?  
The garden  
With tiny butterflies busy on the yellow cabbage flowers?  
Peace and happiness reigned throughout this land  
Why did they order me to burn these quiet villages,  
Destroy the rustic bridges,  
And sow the explosive seeds of sudden death  
Among the people?  
How my hand trembled when I had to set a mine ...  
And then, I watched it do its work:  
Blasting human flesh and splattering a rain of blood ...

Whose blood, my mother?

The blood of people like ourselves---

My people's blood, mother ...

That night my eyes streamed bitter tears,

And my sleep was filled with guilty nightmares.

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We must maintain a seven-day rice ration and a one-day fried rice ration. Adequate food must be insured for the sick and wounded. During the past week we collected or purchased:

16 pigs

9 cows

78 kilograms of sugar

242 cans of milk

6 containers of salted fish

750 kilograms of salt

Rice: 326 kilograms at Toan Ninh depot and 6,222 kilograms at Pho Toan village. Coordination has been poor. Manpower has been wasted. The supply centers have not distributed food on time. This caused some units to go hungry. Improper storage of fried rice resulted in 70 percent loss during a rain storm at one depot.

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A tunnel is a type of secret combat pit and communication link designed to provide cover, concealment and secrecy for guerrilla troops and villagers during enemy bombings, shellings and sweep operations. It helps the guerrilla to follow the enemy closely without being detected

and to attack him at his weak point. It also promotes the morale of the civilians for it constitutes a safe hiding place for villagers. Moreover, a tunnel provides effective mutual support between guerrilla units located in different hamlets or villages. Tunnels are dug zig-zag, about four meters below the surface. Each section is 1.6 meters high, 1.6 meters long and about one meter wide. Overall length is usually about seventy meters. Digging tunnels requires a great amount of work and must be done by the village work force and with village funds. Cadres must be patient and must motivate the people well if the tunnel digging program is to be a success. Tunnels require good drainage systems especially during the rainy season.

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Recently, Liberation Radio referred much to Uncle Ho, Party leadership, class struggle etc. Such open propaganda is not appropriate. The Central Committee directs that propaganda should praise nationalism, patriotism, revolutionary heroism and the role of the National Liberation Front. Indoctrination and propaganda referring to Uncle Ho, Party, class struggle, etc., should be conducted orally within internal organizations and among the people only. Party flags and portraits of Uncle Ho can be hung only in Party meetings. It is better to hang the Front flags and portraits of Nguyen Huu Tho, if available.

We are not greeted as liberators in the villages. When we enter the people come and ask us to leave, saying that if we do not, the enemy planes will come and strafe the village. I feel like a leper...

IV - Battle

I would like to set down an account of our attack against the U.S. heliborne operational forces at Thuan Ninh hamlet. I was attached to the First Company, 95th (North Vietnamese) battalion. The attack took place on September 18, 1965.

On arrival in the area, our Company and Battalion were assigned by Regiment to occupy the Phu Cu Mountain pass and intercept any reinforcements coming through it. You should understand that mountains surround Thuan Ninh Hamlet which is at one end of Binh Tan Village in Binh Khe District of Binh Dinh Province. On the east, the Hamlet is adjacent to Cat Hiep Village, Phu Cat District. To the south is Bo Bo Mountain pass and Binh Gian Village which is not far from National Highway 19 which runs from Qui Nhon to An Khe. There are dry paddy fields in the middle of the hamlet, which were used as a landing zone for the American helicopters. A large stream runs through the village. Hamlet houses are dispersed. The hamlet has one guerrilla squad composed of both men and women.

At this time our unit was fresh from victories at Cheo Reo and Thuan Man and was high spirited and ready for a new mission. Each squad had five or six cadres -- assistant squad and platoon leaders -- who had enlisted in 1962 and 1963. The majority of the soldiers had been recruited in 1964 and 1965.

Military training had been conducted since August 5 and stressed:

- 1) Annihilation of the Americans.
- 2) Shooting down aircraft.
- 3) Destroying M-113 armored personnel carriers.
- 4) Accepting the most difficult missions.
- 5) Following the combat example of friendly units in the Ba Gia Area.
- 6) Our indoctrination discussion group chose the topic: "Dare we fight the Americans?" Upon hearing of the victories of our units at Nui Thanh Mountain and Van Tuong our men were high spirited. We used these victories to motivate and encourage them further. Our men, after being carefully taught about American military tactics and techniques, were very eager to engage the Americans. Many said, "We must not sit here and wait for the Americans, for the country will be reunited before we get a chance to fight." However some comrades were afraid of the Americans because of their size as well as their aircraft and artillery.

Our unit was deployed along a large stream in Thuan Ninh Hamlet, 5 kms from National Highway 19, 30 kms northeast of An Khe.

The Point Company of the Battalion was deployed 30m from the unit location and left of the 2d Company. The terrain is bushy with numerous hills. There is a hill higher than others and a post, formerly occupied by the French. From 15 to 20 mango trees were grown 20m

apart. Few people live in front and on the left side of the rice field.

Our unit operated in the western area for three months before moving here for refitting and military training.

Upon arrival at the location, Company and Battalion cadre reconnoitered counter-operation sites and troop location for the Battalion.

Orders from higher echelons said our troops must maneuver to annihilate the enemy four hours after his landing.

Upon completion of reconnaissance, cadre from platoon level and up were briefed on coordinates on the actual terrain.

According to the message and directive from the Regiment, the enemy would block national highway 19 for the 1st Air Cavalry Division to move to An Khe and the western area.

Company and Battalion cadre met to confirm the counter-operation sites and deploy forces in each direction.

According to the people, the enemy had landed here once or twice before (in front of the 1st and 2d Co's position - the last time in April 1965 to liberate prisoners). The Battalion planned to change its location.

We requested the Battalion to stay there and dig deep trenches which would be used in case of enemy landing. The Battalion approved our request.

The Battalion and we intended to train in the area where the battle would take place, since we could fight the enemy while under training.

We used Go Don post (formerly occupied by the French) in front of 2d Company's position as a fortification to be attacked by the Battalion. Each company was assigned its own area.

After over one month of training on the attack of strongholds, raid and ambush, we received the second message saying that the enemy was planning to conduct a sweep operation in this area. During our training, now and then reconnaissance and jet aircraft flew over the area and bombed Thuan Ninh Hamlet three times.

Upon hearing that the units had gained victories at Thanh Mountain and Van Tuong, we were very high spirited. We took these examples to arouse the unit's hatred of the Americans and to urge them to kill as many Americans as possible. Dare we fight the Americans? And choose between life and death? All the comrades actively participated in the discussion. If they (the Americans) are big, we will have "two or three men against one," we will try to act close to them to avoid their strong air and artillery support. It is not difficult to fight the Americans because if other units can, so can we.

Every night, 3-man cells conduct very regular activities. Many comrades said they wished the Americans would jump (from helicopters) right in this area so that they could deal them a long-remembered blow and impress local people. (They once landed in this area before and the province unit quickly ran away. People talk a lot about this.)

Their landing from helicopters on this area will be a golden opportunity. Their landing here means certain death for them.

In brief, all units were in high spirits. Many comrades, group members and youths repaired the camouflage nets and looked for tree branches to make AR supports to fire on aircraft. They were working and talking: "Come here (Americans). If you come here, you will never go back. Our technique and tactics are brand new. Steel is very hard."

Squad, platoon and company cadre re-inspected the terrain and appointed positions for each squad and cell. All of us, soldiers and cadre alike, are very familiar with the terrain.

On 15 and 16 (September, 1965) enemy L-19's and jets were flying continuously over Thuan Ninh. In fact, we were very busy then. Platoon leaders and up had to report to the Regiment Commander for instructions for the battle which starts the Autumn campaign and simultaneously (the activity of) the Division.

On 16 (September, 1965) District unit informed us that the enemy was going to conduct a sweep operation in Thuan Ninh.

At 1400 hours on 17 (September), three helicopters and two L-19's were flying very low over areas likely to be selected as landing zones.

Since 16 and 17 September, we have been alerted and trained at the positions assigned. At 0500 hours, after breakfast, we completed the preparation of weapons and ammunition.

At 0600 hours on 18 September, squad leaders and up reported to the Battalion Headquarters for sand-table exercise on the forthcoming battle. The preparation had just started when L-19s flew in and fighters dropped bombs.

#### Development of the Battle

At 0600 hours, two L-19s flew in and two fighters dropped bombs on our position. The 2d company, 1st and 2d Platoon were hit. Less than 10 minutes later, 40 helicopters came and landed troops on field where the battalion used to train our troops in attacking strongholds. Three minutes later, 40 other helicopters landed troops on the training field of the 2d Company. When the enemy aircraft stopped dropping bombs, we ordered troops to move in the direction assigned by the Battalion.

The 1st Platoon advanced toward the market, protecting the right flank of the Battalion. It had the mission of attacking the enemy troops who landed on the market area and intercepting enemy elements coming from Bo Bo. The 2d Platoon moved on the left, close to the 2d Company. One squad occupied the hill. The 3d Platoon and the Fire-power Platoon were deployed at the main front.

Bombs broke our telephone wire. Our unit lost contact with the Battalion and through the day, we had to fight independently without receiving any instruction from the Battalion.

While advancing we heard the Platoon, moving on our left, open fire and we simultaneously fired at aircraft. As we heard gunshots from the 2d Company, we were very anxious. We sent two squads and a mortar section from the main front to move toward the position of the 2d Company. (At this moment, there were no enemy troops at the main front of the Company). These two squads encountered the enemy moving from the direction of the 2d Company. It planned to occupy the hill but met the resistance of one of our squads deployed on the hill.

The three squads immediately attacked. In the meantime, two squads of the left flank platoon were fighting within 20m of the enemy. Because of a stream, neither side could advance (after receiving the above report from the left flank platoon leader, we carried a 60mm mortar to the area and fired eight rounds on the enemy). The situation was very tense. The enemy was rushing toward us from the direction of the 2d Company and helicopters landed troops for the third time. (The second landing took place right on the main front of our company.)

At this moment, we ordered the two squads of the left flank platoon to change their direction of fire with two MGs which were positioned 80m apart. The distance between the two squads in the direction of the 2d Company and a squad on the right was 150 meters. All types of weapons spat fire simultaneously. Only 15 helicopters landed troops here. The rest flew away without landing the troops.

Over one company was landed this time. The enemy strove to cross the rice field and occupy high terrain. We concentrated our fire at them fiercely because they rushed straight toward us. They were not far from us, 100 meters maximum distance from the two MGs and two mortars and 80 meters from our rifle squads. They stopped in the field. Enemy jets flew very low and sprayed "butterfly" bombs 40 meters from us. Helicopters fired rockets and machine guns on both our positions and the enemy's.

At that moment we had to move the two MGs back to the stream bank.

The enemy assaulted our positions and succeeded in reaching the mangrove where we had one platoon with one MG and one mortar.

(Ed. note; The account of the battle breaks off at this point. It apparently was not a decisive operation for either side and appears to have been a more or less standard military sweep operation.)

#### Experiences Drawn from the Battle

The M. 79 has a large casualty radius. If all squads and platoons knew how to conduct front and flank attacks and how to feint in front to attack from the rear, we could immediately annihilate the enemy without suffering serious losses caused by M. 79.

Although aircraft are very frightening, we can reduce losses by approaching the enemy troops as closely as possible.

Secrecy must be absolutely maintained when approaching the enemy. We have to use hand signals with friendly units. If we shouted, our positions would be discovered and we would be wiped out by enemy

small arms, mortars, M. 79, etc....

The firing at aircraft must be started simultaneously. However, the following point must be taken into consideration. When landing, enemy helicopters fly at very low altitude from 30 to 40 meters above the ground and slowly. If we aim at their nose, we will hit either the engine or the pilot. If we aim at two thirds from the nose of the aircraft, we will hit the gas tank and set the aircraft on fire.

When examining a downed but unburned aircraft, we asked our troops: where did they hit to down it? They said the aircraft was flying very low and they fired at the door. We found that one of the aircraft downed on the battlefield was not burnt but only pierced by bullets from one side to the other side of the fuselage. It is possible that the pilot was killed. One of four rotor blades was broken. It was therefore concluded that this aircraft was down because of its broken propellor.

#### Strong points of the Battle

Plans were carefully drafted. Units were under good control and properly used throughout the battle.

The Company applied the tactic of encircling and disorganizing the enemy forces in small elements and used the successful experience gained in the Ba Gia battle: main objective, secondary objective and flank attack. Our troops fought at close range, strongly and continuously during this battle.

Gallantry of the unit was shown by the squad positioned on the hill and two squads of the 2d Platoon which had fought hand-to-hand with the enemy, using grenades to repel three enemy assaults. Combat coordination was good.

Political motivation was continuously carried out. Troops were urged to make effective the slogan "one bullet for one enemy soldier."

Troops are aware of their role in the care of the wounded and burying of the dead.

#### Weak points

Failure to know clearly whether the unit we were to fight was a U.S. or a puppet army unit in order to motivate our troops beforehand. We know that it was an American unit only when it landed on the battlefield.

A number of cadre and soldiers were afraid of the dangers of the battle and hesitated to move forward and strongly attack the enemy. The longer the battle lasted, the wearier they became.

We also ordered the soldiers to assault and seize enemy weapons but they did not actively carry out their mission, and fire support was not provided for infantry units to conduct assault. Moreover their assaults were repelled because of enemy M. 79s.

A number of cadre and soldiers said that the Americans are strong, brave and determined to remain in their positions. Moreover it is hard to assault their positions because they have the M. 79s. These

cadre and soldiers were afraid of enemy aircraft because of their fierce airstrikes.

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I will Lament for Ten Thousand Graves

When the war has ended and the road is open again,  
The same stars will course through the Heavens.  
Then will I weep for the white bones heaped together in desolate graves  
Of those who sought military honors for their leaders.

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