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By <u>VR</u> NARA Date <u>93</u>

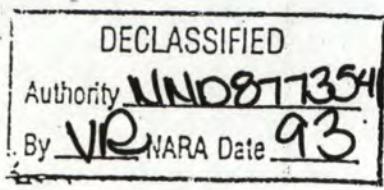
THE 198TH INFANTRY BRIGADE
History Supplement (August - December 1970)

There was little activity in the area of operations of the 198th Infantry Brigade in the spring and summer of 1970. Much of the resources of the 23rd Infantry Division, and much of the attention of the enemy, was focused on the battle zones around Kham Duc and Hiep Duc to the north. But, towards the end of the summer, combat activity returned to the 198th AO, and returned very quickly and very violently.

The first hint of increased enemy activity came in early August. Within a period of several days, naval gunfire directed from the South China Sea to points on the Batagnan Peninsula killed eight enemy and gunships from F Troop, 8th Cavalry, working after dark with "Nighthawk" birds, killed 26 enemy soldiers who were concentrated along the Song Tra Khuc, in the southern part of the AO. Action was picking up.

Towards the middle and late parts of August, large quantities of rice were discovered throughout the Brigade area-- a pattern soon to become familiar. Enemy weapons caches were also being found; in a single day an element of the 1st Battalion, 52nd Infantry found one RPG round and 59 mortar rounds hidden in a tunnel.

In the last week of August, another pattern was set-- heavy activity in the Batagnan Peninsula, an area once controlled by anti-government forces and the "sacred ground" of the almost mythical 48th Viet Cong Local Force Battalion. In one heavy contact, gunships and infantrymen from the 1st Battalion, 6th Infantry killed 15 enemy. It appeared that a massive effort by the Brigade to jar the guerillas loose from their hiding places had begun to work. Throughout the summer,



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a three-pronged project had been implemented. First, a hige land clearing effort was directed at acres of booby trapped land, infested with Viet Cong bunkers, tunnels, and resting areas. Secondly, a large road building and upgrading project was initiated. Finally, great stress was placed on the pacification program with several new hamlets constructed in the area and secured by Brigade elements and Vietnamese territorial forces.

Throughout August and the beginning of September, activity continued to gain momentum. It was becoming evident that the enemy was preparing for the upcoming monsoon season. And it was just as evident that the Brigade intended to do something about that.

In the middle of September, more rice and food caches were found. In one instance, a unit of the 1-52nd Inf found 1200 pounds of rice. There was more activity in the Batagnan area as the enemy was stirred from his resting places. In one week, 19 enemy were killed by the 1-6th Inf.

Three things came with the month of October: the monsoons; the 4th Battalion, 3rd Infantry; and battlefield activity that this Brigade had not seen in a year. The monsoons came hard and fast-- on the first day of the month heavy winds and rains began and lasted several days. Flooding was extensive in the AO and much of the Brigade's resources went to helping the inundated populace.

The 4-3rd Inf came almost as hard and as fast as the monsoons. Coming up from the 11th Brigade area, the battalion arrived at LZ Bayonet in the second week of October and, the next morning, conducted a battalion-sized combat assault into various landing zones in the southern rocket pocket. In it's month stay with the Brigade, the 4-3rd did not, frankly, have much action. But it's presence did free the 1-52nd Inf from the southern pocket and permitted the "Ready Rifles" to

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saturate the area below the Tra Bong Road. And this would pay off.

There was also activity in the northern part of the AO. In early October, gunships brought down 14 enemy in the Ky Tra Valley. And again in the south, the 1-52nd Inf found nearly 14,000 pounds of rice the enemy had cached for the monsoons.

In the middle of the month, the Brigade moved from its headquarters at LZ Bayonet to Chu Lai. The move, planned and prepared for well in advance, went smoothly with the Tactical Operations Center in Chu Lai opening exactly on schedule as the previous one at Bayonet closed. Meanwhile, LZ Bayonet was turned over to the 6th ARVN Regiment.

In the second week of October, the 1-52nd Inf began to go to work. Intelligence estimates had suggested that the 48th VC Battalion, joustled from the Batagnan Peninsula, had crossed Highway 1 and moved into the area of the 1-52nd. The "Ready Rifles" began to look for them, and two companies found them, killing 17 members of the 48th's heavy weapons company and capturing enough munitions and weapons to finance a good-sized offensive. The same week, the 1-52nd also came upon a rice cache-- over 35,000 pounds-- by using the resourceful method of employing metal-detecting minesweep instruments to locate the rice which was buried in metal barrels. In the same area, more rice was found later and was extracted to orphanages and refugee centers in Son Tinh District.

The next week was a repeat performance for the 1-52nd. Again two companies engaged a large enemy unit and again the results were stunning-- 26 enemy killed and not a single US soldier even wounded. Continuing along with the script, the 1-52nd again found a large rice cache, this time about 32,000 pounds.

In early November, there were no large scale engagements, but activity

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remained rather heavy in various small contacts, particularly in the Batagnan Peninsula area and in the Ky Tra area of the 5-46th Inf.

But by the middle of the month, the large contacts reappeared. In one instance, the 1-52nd killed 14 enemy and captured a large amount of equipment. The same week, nearly 2900 pounds of rice was taken by the "Ready Rifles". In late November, a company of the 1-6th killed 9 enemy in a single engagement.

In early December, two large scale actions by the 1-52nd resulted in a total of 19 enemy killed and six detained. Later in the month, the battalion, conducting a series of eagle flights, killed ten Viet Cong and detained three.

But the largest success of the month was the total of 89 former Viet Cong and NVA soldiers who returned to the Government of Vietnam in the Brigade's area. The total was believed to be the largest single month for receiving ralliers in the Division's history in Vietnam.