

American and Marine units closed their cordon of the Batangan Peninsula which has been probed by as many as 2800 men since Jan. 13 when Operation Russell Beach opened. Units on the central and southern coasts reached the sea yesterday to join two Marine companies which hit the northern coast five days ago.

Work began on a fire base in the coastal area, while many units maintained the rear area sweep which continues to produce scattered encounters with VC, tunnels, caves, mines, and booby traps.

Co. C, 4-3 Inf., working far to the rear 9½ miles northeast of Quang Ngai, recorded yesterday's only kill. The "Old Guard" troops watched a VC who in turn was watching cavalry movements in the area. When the VC discovered he had been spotted, he ran into a tunnel where he was killed after refusing to reappear.

Marine Co. H, 3-26 Regt. captured eight VC suspects easily—all eight walked into the company command post with hands raised high over their heads.

The 24-day cordon sweep produced 11,585 refugees processed and 201 VC killed by American, Marine, and ARVN troops. In addition, 256 members of the VC infra-structure were captured. Also detained were 152 VC suspects, 102 prisoners of war, and 32 Hoi Chanh.

Elsewhere in the 198th Inf. Bde. area, a UH-1 helicopter, working with the 4-52 Inf., killed six VC in three incidents 10-11½ miles southwest of Tam Ky.

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• Action was scarce in the 196th Inf. Aie. area where Co. 3, 3-21 Inf. killed one VC leaving a hut and captured an M-2 carbine 10 miles west of Tam Ky.

Co. C, 2-1 Inf. relocated 39 refugees to Ban Hoa from an area 26 miles northwest of Tam Ky, and Co. C, 4-31 Inf. moved eight refugees to Nui Loc Son from 25 miles west of Tam Ky.

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Two VC were killed in the 1st Sqdn., 1st Cav. area, including one in Operation Hardin Falls, "Blue Ghosts" of F Trp., 8th Cav. killed a VC 15 1/2 miles north-northwest of Tam Ky, and Co. 3, 1-46 Inf., OPCON to the 1-1 in Hardin Falls, killed a VC 8 1/2 miles northwest of Tam Ky.

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For the fifth day in the past week, no American Division soldiers were killed. Sixteen were wounded and evacuated for medical treatment, according to an initial report. There were no Marine casualties.

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