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DAILY INTERNAL INFO SUMMARY 11-23

CAPTAIN DALE V. SCHWERNERT RELIEVED CAPTAIN ROBERT S. SALZER AS COMMANDER OF TASK FORCE 117 SUNDAY MORNING IN CHARGE OF COMMAND CEREMONIES ON THE BENHAIH FLIGHT DECK.

ATTENDED BY MANY HIGH-RANKING OFFICERS FROM ALL OVER THE DELTA, THE CEREMONIES FEATURED THE PRESENTATION TO CAPTAIN SALZER OF THE REPUBLIC OF VIETNAM'S TWO HIGHEST INDIVIDUAL AWARDS, THE VIETNAMESE NATIONAL ORDER MEDAL AND THE VIETNAMESE CROSS OF GALLANTRY WITH PALM. FEATURED SPEAKER AT THE CEREMONY WAS VICE ADMIRAL ELMO R ZUMWALT, COMMANDER NAVAL FORCES VIETNAM.

CAPTAIN SALZER WILL REMAIN IN VIETNAM FOR THE NEXT SEVERAL WEEKS IN THE CAPACITY OF COMMANDER OF OPERATION DELTA LORDS, AN OFFENSIVE CAMPAIGN IN THE SOUTHERN DELTA UTILIZING BOATS OF TASK FORCES 115,

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116 AND 117.

TROOPS OF THE 4TH VIETNAMESE MARINE BATTALION OPERATING WITH BOATS OF TASK GROUP BRAVO HAD EXTREMELY SUCCESSFUL SWEEPS OVER THE WEEKEND WHILE OPERATING ON THE RACH GIA CANAL, 72 KILOMETERS DUE WEST OF CAN THO.

WITH THE OPERATION CONTINUING ON MONDAY, 13 VC HAD BEEN KILLED AND FOUR LARGE WEAPONS CACHES HAD BEEN SEIZED. THE BOATS HAD THEIR OF ACTION, REPORTING A TOTAL OF SEVEN WOUNDED IN THREE AMBUSHES ALONG THE CANAL.

THE OPERATION HAD STARTED AT 1930 FRIDAY WHEN THE BOATS OF RIVER DIVISION 152 CARRYING THE VIETNAMESE MARINES LEFT THE MRB ANCHORAGE AT BINH THUY ON A 52-KILOMETER TRANSIT UP THE BASSAC RIVER TO LONG XUYEN. THE TF 117 BOATS WERE JOINED AT LONG XUYEN BY FOUR LCM-6'S AND ONE RAG COMMANDMENT, AND THE TASK UNIT BEGAN MOVING DOWN THE RACH GIA TOWARD THE GULF OF THAILAND. THE BOATS COMPLETED THE OVER-ALL 13-HOUR, 125-KILOMETER TRIP TO THEIR OBJECTIVE BEACHES AT 0745.

THE MARINES ENCOUNTERED LIGHT CONTACT DURING THE DAY, SUSTAINING TWO KILLED AND 13 WOUNDED. HOWEVER, THEY CAPTURED SIX BOXES OF 60MM MORTAR ROUNDS, THREE 120 MM MORTAR ROUNDS, TWO 155 MM ARTILLERY SHELLS, THREE 82MM MORTAR ROUNDS AND ONE ROCKET LAUNCHER.

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ON SATURDAY NIGHT, THREE AMERICAN AND SIX ARVN BOATS WERE SLIGHTLY WOUNDED WHEN A RARE (RIVERINE ARMORED RECONNAISSANCE ELEMENT) WAS AMBUSHED ON THE LOWER REACHES OF THE RACH GIA. TWO PLATOONS OF TROOPS WERE LANDED AND THEY REPORTED FOUR VC KILLED DURING OPERATIONS LATER IN THE NIGHT. THE GROUND ELEMENTS ALSO CAPTURED 72 B-40 ROCKET ROUNDS, AND THREE 135 MM BOOBY TRAPS.

THE BOATS WERE HIT AGAIN IN THE SAME AREA ON SUNDAY MORNING AFTER THEY HAD LANDED ADDITIONAL TROOPS OF THE ARVN 31ST RECON COMPANY. THERE WERE NO FRIENDLY CASUALTIES IN THE ATTACK, ALTHOUGH ZIPPO 151-1 TOOK A RECOILLESS RIFLE HIT.

DURING THEIR MORNING SWEEP THE TROOPS CAPTURED STILL ANOTHER CACHE WHICH INCLUDED FIFTY B-40 ROCKETS, 833 CHICOM GRENADES, 10 ANTI-TANK MINES, FIFTY 57MM AND 75MM RECOILLESS RIFLE ROUNDS, ONE HUNDRED TWENTY-FIVE 60MM AND 82MM MORTAR ROUNDS, ONE AK-53 AND 3000 METERS OF COMMUNICATIONS WIRE.

FOUR MORE NAVYMEN WERE WOUNDED AT 1325 SUNDAY WHEN MONITOR 152-1, ZIPPO 151-1 AND ATC 151-1 WERE AMBUSHED WITH SMALL ARMS AND ROCKETS. THE TROOPS WERE LANDED AT THE POINT OF THE AMBUSH AND GAINED ALMOST IMMEDIATE CONTACT, KILLING NINE VC AND CAPTURING THE FOURTH WEAPONS CACHE OF THE TWO-DAY OPERATION. INCLUDED IN THIS SEIZURE WERE 50

ANTI-TANK MINES, SIX 82MM MORTAR ROUNDS, SIX CMR RIFLES, ONE COMPLETE 82MM MORTAR, AND 25,000 ROUNDS OF SMALL ARMS AMMUNITION.

THE OPERATION ON THE RACH GIA REPRESENTS THE FIRST MRF PENETRATION OF KIEN GIANG PROVINCE AND IS THE FIRST FULL-SCALE INVOLVEMENT OF TF 117 UNITS IN OPERATION DELTA LORDS.

IN SOME OF THE ASSAULT CRAFTS' MOST PRODUCTIVE ACTION IN MONTHS, BOATS OF RIV DIV 151 KILLED 15 VIET CONG LAST FRIDAY NIGHT AND SATURDAY MORNING 22 KILOMETERS SOUTH OF SAIGON.

PATROLLING ON TRIBUTARIES OF THE VANG RIVER IN EASTERN LONG AN PROVINCE, THE BOATS HAD SEVEN SEPARATE ENGAGEMENTS WITH THE ENEMY DURING THE NIGHT. THE ACTION STARTED AT 2255 FRIDAY WHEN THE BOATS KILLED TWO VC WITH WEAPONS LEAVING A SALPAM. IN THE MOST FRUITFUL EXCHANGE OF THE EVENING, FIVE VC WERE KILLED AT 2215 WHEN THEY WERE OBSERVED SNEAKING ACROSS A FIELD NEAR THE BANK.

ALTHOUGH THE BOATS WERE THE TARGET OF SMALL ARMS FIRE SEVERAL TIMES DURING THE EVENING, THERE WERE NO U. S. CASUALTIES.

THE RIV DIV 151 UNITS HAD MORE ACTION ON SATURDAY NIGHT AS THEY WERE AMBUSHED IN THE SAME GENERAL AREA AT 2032 WITH ROCKETS AND AUTOMATIC WEAPONS. THREE ROCKETS FIRED AT ATC 151-3 ALL MISSED, BUT AUTOMATIC WEAPONS FIRE DIRECTED AT ATC 151-15 RESULTED IN FIVE ARMY SLIGHTLY WOUNDED.

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TWENTY-THREE VC WERE KILLED BY TASK GROUP ALFA AIR AND ARTILLERY ELEMENTS SUNDAY IN CENTRAL KIEN HOA PROVINCE. AIR FORCE PLANES ACCOUNTED FOR 14, GUNSHIPS FLYING COVER FOR THE GROUND ELEMENTS ACCOUNTED FOR SEVEN, AND TWO WERE CREDITED TO 3/34 ARTILLERY.

7TH ARVN TROOPS OPERATING NEAR THE MRF AO SUFFERED SEVEN KILLED AND 32 WOUNDED IN CONTACT WITH AN ESTIMATED VC PLATOON. NEITHER THE VIETNAMESE MARINES NOR 3/63 INFANTRY, SUPPORTED BY RIVER DIVISIONS 91 AND 112 RESPECTIVELY, WERE INVOLVED IN ANY SIGNIFICANT CONTACT DURING THE DAY.

TWO MORE BODIES WERE FOUND ABOARD THE WESTCHESTER COUNTY SUNDAY BRINGING THE TOTAL KNOWN DEAD TO 23. ONE NAVYMAN IS STILL REPORTED MISSING IN ACTION.

TASK GROUP ALFA WAS VISITED SUNDAY BY LIEUTENANT GENERAL LEWIS WALT, ASSISTANT COMMANDANT OF THE MARINE CORPS. THE GENERAL WAS BRIEFED ON MRF OPERATIONS BY COMMODORE SCHERMERHORN AND CAPTAIN SALZER.

HE ALSO PRESENTED FIVE BRONZE STARS TO TF 117 PERSONNEL. RECIPIENTS INCLUDED LT. LEXIE BOSWELL OF RIV RON 11; BMC ROBERT W. DURBIN, SN EDWARD F. GORCZYK AND SN JAMES L. ROZEMA, ALL OF RIV DIV 91; AND SN JAY K. KELLER OF RIV DIV 111.

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