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DEFENSE OF DOCKS AGAINST U.S. PLANES DESCRIBED

[Article by Tran Kim Be; Hanoi, Quan Doi Nhan Dan, Vietnamese, 17 October 1968, p 2]

Carrying on their duties here at this stormy area of socialist North Vietnam, cadres and soldiers of the Third Company of the X anti-aircraft unit feel that on every piece of land, on every blade of grass, every tree limb, every bamboo hedge, every corner of the field, there are crimes committed by the enemy. Each half-burned roof, each bombed and strafed section of the roads arouses immense hatred in their hearts. Everyone asks himself the question: What can I do to stop those savage crimes caused by the Americans and to destroy them? And then everyone answers his own question: Nothing but fight resolutely, fire accurately at the heads of the American pirates, and knock them down.

Receiving the order to bring guns into the ferry dock L which the enemy often bombed and strafed fiercely day and night, the Third Company thought that this was an opportunity to achieve victories. The unit placed their guns right on the bombing area. The first battle was fierce and lasted from 7:00 o'clock in the morning until 5:00 o'clock in the evening. The enemy came as many as 40 times with F-4 and F-105's. They dropped hundreds of demolition bombs, rockets and tens of thousands of cluster bombs. But the Third Company was very resolute, bravely destroyed the enemy and effectively defended the dock.

Amidst the thick smoke of bombs, from the commanding position, political officer Huong shouted: "The enemy is committing crimes, let us aim at his head and shoot him to pieces!"

The battle was fierce but none of the soldiers was shaken. Gun crew leader Nguyen Van Hong was severely wounded, deputy gun crew leader Luu Manh Hung immediately took his place. The first time Hung was wounded, he did not tell the crew and continued to fight. He was wounded a second time. The third time he was seriously wounded, he still tried to stand firm in his position to direct his men's firing. When he was exhausted, he could

still motivate his men in time: "Comrade No. 1 replace me. The rest of you try to fight to the last minute to hold the landing docks and the roads to be worthy of the leading man crew. . . ."

The determined fighting spirit of that young party member, that courageous young man of the harbor, has left in the heart of each cadre and soldier of the Third Company deep admiration and immense love. Political officer Huong shouted: "Follow the spirit of Comrade Hung, let us be resolute and destroy the American pirates to avenge our comrades!"

The guns fired crisply again. One enemy airplane was hit just as it came down. It tried to go up but gave out a long black mass of smoke and crashed into the foot of a mountain in the west. The cruel American pilot had to pay for his crime before the guns of the Third Company.

Develop victories and draw experience in time. The unit opened a democratic military meeting to discuss plans to destroy the enemy at night. With high vigilance and ready-to-fight spirit, in an independent battle at night, the unit had downed an A-6A airplane on the spot with only 11 bullets. The American pilot was captured by the militia troops after he had parachuted to earth.

The Third Company again engaged in new and extremely fierce but also very glorious battles. On 9 August 1968, in a battle at frontline T, the company had, together with its friendly units, fought continually all day. One group after the other of F-4 and F-105's took turns at diving down, pouring cluster bombs and demolition bombs down on the battleground. The air was thick with smoke and dirt. Despite the bombs, the entire unit still fired violently.

A group of F-105's took advantage of the sun's glare, came rushing in one after the other and dove down on the battlefield. The first airplane came right into the focus of Truc's telescope. He reported the distance loud and clear. The flag in the hand of Deputy Company Commander Lien fell swiftly. Dozens of bullets flew up and enveloped the unfortunate Thunderchief. It was hit, bits of the airplane came fluttering down, and then it gave out a big flame. A red parachute snapped open. The Thunderchief swayed back and forth and then came head down, crashing into the hills in the east of the battleground. The pilot was captured by the militia troops just as he landed on the ground.

In the evening, the Americans were furious and came to strafe again. Extend the victories, the Third Company continued to fire crisply. The entire company was stable on the gun mounts. After every battle, they again sing, again recite poetry praising the determined and courageous people who defeated the Americans. The enemy has attacked the Third Company and its friendly units eight times with more than 30 sorties of F-4 and F-105's but they were all either driven away or paid for their crimes.

In the afternoon, the unit downed another F-105 and F-4. Thus, the Third Company has, together with friendly units, achieved outstanding victories by destroying three American airplanes and capturing the pilots.

The Third Company not only fought well but does well in production. The chickens were still always busy around the gun fortifications. The chubby pigs were still grunting in the pig pen. In this urgent and critical fighting situation, the daily meals of the unit still had three dishes.

On the battlefield of the Fourth Military Zone, the Third anti-aircraft Company had effectively contributed to the task of holding the docks and the roads, and assuring through communication from the rear areas to the front. The Third Company is marching forward with firm steps, hatred engraved in their hearts. Day and night their guns point straight at the enemy, ready to open fire and destroy him. They are determined to make the Americans more appropriately pay for their crimes on this part of land where the hero Nguyen Viet Xuan once shouted the eternal words: "Aim straight at the enemy and fire!"

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