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## SOLDIER'S FIGHTING AT FRONT LINE RECOUNTED

[Article by Dong Xuan Chien as told to Trinh Bay; Hanoi,  
Quan Doi Nhan Dan, Vietnamese, 25 October 1968, p 3]

In April 1968 I was admitted to serve in the Liberation Army. My heart was filled with joy when I thought of the moment when I could hold a gun firing at the Americans. My family was also very happy seeing I was admitted to the Liberation Army. I remembered my father's words: "You must try to fight and kill many Americans to avenge our people in the village." I have seen with my own eyes the sweep operations, the shooting and killing by the Americans and South Vietnamese Government troops. I thought: "I must fight to respond to the expectation of my fellow people, of the revolution, of beloved Uncle Ho..."

I was mobilized into a sniper unit. Our duty was to coordinate with the local guerrillas to establish a combat village, destroy the villains and build an anti-American ring.

At X Post (Cua Viet), there were 3 well-known villains. They had caused the local people many tragedies. Our cell was transferred here to liquidate those 3 bullies. When we received the order, Hoa, the cell leader, tapped me on my shoulder and said happily:

"Well, we've got a job now! We have to somehow live up to the local people's confidence in us, make the villains pay for their blood debts."

We deployed in ambush on a hill near the road leading to Post X. We waited for 7 days but the villains did not even come near the fence. We encouraged each other to wait patiently and certainly we would "make it." Just as we anticipated, on the 8th day, when the sun had not yet dispersed the fog covering

the hills, an enemy platoon came out of the post. M, the post commander, was in front. "They go on a sweep operation again," I thought and felt my blood run hot inside me with anger. I raised the gun up and wanted to pull the trigger to end that devil's life. Hoa reminded me: "You must be real calm, following the firing theory, don't let him escape." I was so nervous and could not focus. I was not scared but just worried that I might miss him and waste all our efforts. I said to myself: "Once I fire, it's got to be for sure. I won't fire now, wait until they come back, it won't be late."

Two hours later, they came back from the operation but this time they did not take the old road and instead they fell into Hoa and Y's ambush. Their guns fired crisply. The 3 villains died instantly. The rest of them ran into the post like a bunch of ducks.

Our victory gave the people confidence. Hoa was overjoyed, but I kept blaming myself for not shooting and regretted having wasted an opportunity to kill the enemy. Knowing my feeling, Hoa comforted me: "Don't be unhappy, there will be many more chances to kill the enemy, I'm just afraid we don't have the determination..."

The Americans and South Vietnamese Government troops at T.L. Post were very cruel. This post stands in the way of an important communication road. Women going by here were pulled in the post and raped. They had raped and jailed hundreds of women. Therefore, the local people hated them. Again we were sent there to wash this shame away for the people and pave the way for guerrilla activities.

That day was a market day. The enemies in the Post came out to rob and to act filthily. One big fat American just like a buffalo, was carrying a girl running toward the post. I raised my gun, aimed right at the bandit's face and fired. One short dry shot and the bandit's head broke into pieces. The rest of them were petrified and ran into the post. From then on, anywhere they went, they were shot. The enemies were so scared they didn't even dare to come out to collect their friends' corpses. They had to send out words begging us: "Please, we beg you to be a little lenient." From then on they were not as aggressive as they used to be.

We did especially well in Con Tien. In this area, the enemies built a rather tall observation tower and from there they can look far out in the surrounding areas. The duty of this tower was to discover our military units and transportation forces, then call in airplanes and artillery to strafe. We were given the mission to "erase" this tower.

We lay in ambush all day and killed dozens of enemies, so that none of them dared get up to the tower. Every time one was killed, again they called artillery to pour fire in like rain, but we were not at all hurt. As for them, they had to pay a high price. We kept aiming at the gunners in the post to fire, forcing them to be quiet. Bitter from our crucial blows, they reacted crazily, planning to use firepower to swallow us, but they were mistaken. We kept growing, getting bigger and stronger among the people, and returned them more decisive strikes.

Early one morning, two enemy battalions divided into 2 arrows and attacked us swiftly and strongly hoping to "clean us up" in minutes.

We encouraged each other: "We'll fight as long as we're alive." With that determination, we, together with the local guerrilla unit, fought back strongly. On the hill where our cell deployed, the enemy separated into 3 points coming up. Lying in our fortifications, we saw hundreds of helmets fluctuating in the fog, and waited for them to come close, about 80 m away, before we opened fire. Being attacked suddenly, they just stayed put in their positions. I kept aiming at the heads of those in the front and fired. Four of my bullets killed 6 of them. The guns of the guerrilla comrades also fired crisply. The enemy corpses lay all over the place. It was 9 o'clock already but they could not advance one step and had to call for airplanes. More than 10 airplanes roared overhead, the hill was ploughed up. I was buried in dirt up to the chest. I got myself out of it and continued to fight.

After the bombing, the enemy again divided into 6 points, risked their lives and moved forth. I was almost out of ammunition at this moment and I did not hear any firing from Comrade Y's direction, I thought he had died. The situation was too urgent, if we were slow, our mission wouldn't be fulfilled. I thought so and pulled out a grenade and threw it forward then rolled to Y's fortification. Y was wounded and could not go on fighting. He gave the rest of his ammunition to me and encouraged me: "Fight to the end, hold the hill." After I had bandaged him and took him to a safe shelter, I rushed back to my fortification. The enemy shot at me like rain and I do not know why I was not hit.

We continued to fight courageously.

From early morning until 2:00 o'clock in the afternoon, the enemy had attempted to advance 4 times. They were driven back all four times. Finally they had to retreat shamefully leaving hundreds of corpses lying all over the place like hay.

In that battle, our sniper cell had scored an outstanding victory. I myself killed 48 Americans.

I was very proud.

The Central Committee of the National Liberation Front of South Vietnam awarded me 2 highest victory medals and 2 certificated "American killing hero," outstanding level. Being that well taken care of by the higher command and the people, I need to try harder, must learn from my fellow friends, and contribute my strength to the chasing of the Americans out of our beloved country.

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