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SHOOTING OF AMERICAN PILOT IN QUANG BINH DESCRIBED

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At the end of last September, the Nguyen Viet Xuan Anti-Aircraft Battalion performed an outstanding military exploit; it destroyed two U. S. "sound of thunder" aircraft in a battle lasting less than half a minute. At noon on 23 November, that heroic unit performed another outstanding military exploit; with 62 rounds they shot down a U. S. RF 4C spy plane.

When we arrived at the spot where the plane had been shot down, the flames were still violently aglow on the jet engines, which had been flattened where they fell not quite a half kilometer away from the battle position. A sickening cloud of smoke surged up from the flames. The pilot had made an effort to direct his parachute off into the distant mountains, but he was quickly spotted. Anti-Aircraft troops, state farm workers, drivers, and some infantry soldiers who had been on the road tightly surrounded the woods, where they checked every tree and bunch of leaves to find and capture the U. S. aggressor. Comrade Kien, the first man in the group, saw the pilot lying down with his head buried in the dirt and his hips exposed. Discovered, he began to tremble and his green eyes darted about in alarm. Then his head quickly fell to one side. Actually, his luck had never been so bad. Under our fire since the time he sat in his plane, there was only one shrapnel wound in his head, the only mark on his entire large body; but his limbs had been blown off when the plane exploded.

At this position we also met some cadre and determined soldiers, people who had kept the picture of Nguyen Viet Xuan and his immortal words, "Aim straight at the hated enemy and fire," deeply engraved in their minds. On 18 November, the unit commemorated the anniversary of Nguyen Viet Xuan's death and reviewed his words. They promised to properly implement the appeal of Uncle Ho and to be determined to triumphantly charge ahead to fulfill their responsibilities during the new period. For nearly the past month, the rain

has been continuous and field fortifications have been continuously muddy as a field about to be planted. The cadre and soldiers have waited throughout the day for the enemy, their clothes never dry and the spaces between their toes worn ragged because of the moisture. The enemy had changed its route of approach, its method of flying, its speed, and its kind of activity. They have gone to small groups, flying from behind the mountains or coming from out to sea, using all of their speed, and circling very quickly. Old operational concepts and techniques of fire can no longer be used, but must be constantly changed. Comrades Luong and Quang spent days diligently re-searching their routes of flight. At night they put their heads together in discussions about how to destroy the enemy. The companies instituted "three quicks and one strict" campaigns (quickly prepare for combat; be quick in skill; and be quick in mobility; strictly enforce operational orders). We met Comrade Nguyen Ngoc Cu, the most skillful observer in the battalion, and one who rarely misses the target. Cu is making great efforts in training so that he can see for greater range, while at the same time using his experience to help Comrade Quy. Quy has promised to his seniors that he will quickly catch up to Cu. Artillery Man Number Four Nguyen Van Chuyen trains throughout his lunch break. He said, "Only through suon effort can I catch up with the comrades about whom the company commander brags." Section Leader Le Trung Lan carries up to 97 kilograms whenever he goes to pick up firewood to help the cooks. Artillery Man Number Six Bui Van Lam gathers twice as many leaves for camouflage as anyone else whenever he goes out. The thoughts of Lan and Lam are very simple. They say, "We try a bit harder in order that our friends in training and on duty can fight."

The stupid U. S. aggressor who flies into the range of this net is asking to become a corpse or a prisoner. Together with the anti-aircraft, militia, and self-defense forces throughout North Vietnam, the weapons of the heroic Nguyen Viet Xuan Battalion are constantly protecting the skies. He who enters there dies.

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