

BATTALION NEWSLETTER February 1971
 2nd Battalion (Airmobile), 5th Cavalry
 1st Cavalry Division (Airmobile)
 LTC Leonard P. Wishart III, Commanding

CURRENT OPERATIONS

The battalion has continued to operate in Binh Tuy Province over the past several months with the mission of destroying elements of the 33rd NVA Regiment and protecting the villages and rice harvest in our assigned AO. The battalion spent over two months at FSB Peggy—a record for the 2/5th Cav. During that time C Company made contact with elements of the 2nd Bn, 33rd NVA Regiment on 28 November, killing five enemy. Recon Platoon killed two from the Signal Company of the 33rd on 6 December, while D Company killed two and captured one local VC on 27 December and killed one more on 9 January from a local Sapper Company of MR-7. Although our operations around FSB Peggy were generally boring and tedious—patrolling in hot rice paddies and ambushing day and night around the rice fields—every member of the battalion should be proud of our accomplishment. Perhaps our greatest success is the fact that there were no major penetrations of the villages in either Hoai Duc or Tanh Linh Districts, and little or no rice was obtained by enemy forces. B Company captured two VC whose mission was to obtain rice and fish for the VC from the fields around Vo Dat. The remaining members of this VC unit ran off, their hootch destroyed, and the 2000 pounds of rice returned to Vo Dat. Denying food to the enemy is one of our primary missions, particularly during the rice harvest, and we had greater success than anticipated.

On 1 February, the battalion moved to FSB Sandra, with the mission of locating and destroying elements of the Headquarters, and 1st Battalion, 33rd Regiment. On 6 February A Company engaged the 3rd Company of the 1st Battalion, killing six. On the following day, Recon Platoon killed another in a manned ambush. Operations around FSB Sandra are continuing and it appears that the enemy is moving, trying to avoid us if at all possible. This is permitting us to concentrate on ambushing the enemy as he moves into us.

The battalion can be well proud of its accomplishments over the past few months. The enemy is low in strength and supplies, and every VC or NVA soldier we can eliminate; every bit of food, ammunition, or weapons we can capture or destroy will make our overall mission easier to accomplish and get us all home sooner. We must strive to reduce the enemy threat so that the Regional and Popular Forces of Binh Tuy Province can secure the province without assistance. In that way, we will have worked our way out of a mission.

MAILING OF CONTRABAND ITEMS

Active measures are now employed to intercept prohibited items. Parcels are being examined in U.S. customs and postal channels. Items presented for mailing with the contents declared in other than definitive terms and/or improperly addressed will not be accepted. A rigid inspection program has been initiated to identify and remove prohibited items that may be entered into the mail. Use of fluoroscope machines and mine detectors has been increased for examination of parcels by postal and customs officials.

Contraband material is withdrawn from the mail and turned over to criminal investigators. Violators are apprehended and appropriate charges placed against them by military and civilian authorities.

The mailer of firearms, explosives, narcotics, pornography and other contraband such as issue items to include poncho liners, sleeping shirts, boonie caps, jungle fatigues, and jungle boots, can expect to be caught—and punished.

MODERN VOLUNTEER ARMY SUGGESTION PROGRAM

To keep in contact with the grass roots personnel of the army and to gain from its available resources, the "Green Machine" has initiated a suggestion program. Suggestions that would improve the modern Volunteer Army are welcomed and may be written without any mandatory form. This can be done by writing your suggestion considered for implementation and addressing it to: Headquarters, 1st Cav Div (AM), ATTN: AVDAGP, APO 96490

TAX BENEFITS AND INFORMATION

For the serviceman who is money-conscious, your year in Vietnam affords a good opportunity to save that extra cash. In addition to regular pay, combat pay and overseas pay, the serviceman is also entitled to many tax benefits while serving in Vietnam.

Enlisted men and warrant officers do not pay any taxes on any of the money they make while in Vietnam. Officers do not have to pay taxes on the first \$500 of their monthly pay.

The serviceman does not have to file his income tax while he is serving in Vietnam, and for six months after he returns to the States.

What applies to federal income tax also applies to state-levied income tax. This means that you also have the same 180 day grace period from paying state income taxes while serving in Vietnam. Many states also have the same tax exemptions the federal government has for GIs serving in Vietnam.

Internal Revenue Service W-2 forms were sent on or around 29 January 1971. You should see that great care is taken to hold on to these W-2 forms or better still, send them home for safe keeping since your tax return will not have to be filed for six months after you return from RVN.

One important consideration to remember when filling out your Income Tax return is to include a statement noting your inclusive dates of combat zone service and attach this to your return when you file it. **DO THIS BEFORE YOUR 180-DAY EXTENSION EXPIRES**, or you will be in serious trouble with the IRS.

An example of such a statement would read: I, (your name), was on duty in Vietnam from (give your date of arrival) until (give your DEROS date). My postponed Income Tax filing date is (180 days later).

COMMANDER'S NOTES

Once again I want to congratulate each and every trooper of the battalion for their attention to security, whether it be on the move, at breaks, or on the fire base. No element of the battalion has been unprepared when they have met the enemy. This is a credit to the point men, drag men, and flankers. Remember that in the jungle, contact can be sudden and with little warning. We must be alert for the little signs---fresh cut trees and saplings, a broken twig, or a scuff mark on the trail. Though movement through the jungle can be tiring and dull, complacency is our most dangerous enemy. Keep alert and--- "Scouts Out!"

Both Alpha and Delta Companies have recently proven the effectiveness of well planned automatic ambushes which are properly emplaced and camouflaged. The best coverage of the killing zone appears to result when three claymores are employed in such a way that the patterns overlap and also cover the trail in both directions. The trip wire should be attached to the middle claymore.

Recon Platoon continues to be the experts in manned ambushes. To get the best coverage without disclosing individual locations, command detonated claymores and frags are recommended for use in triggering the ambush. Machine guns should be sighted to sweep the entire killing zone, a few inches above the ground. Engagements should be delayed until the maximum number of enemy has entered the killing zone.

Accidents continue to plague us. We take more casualties from them than from the enemy. In the past two months we have had six troopers killed and several injured as a result of these accidents. In most cases, accidents can be avoided by eliminating the causes. How many times have each of us seen an unsafe act, yet failed to say something because we don't want to "hassle" the person committing it? No one wants to be the SOB who is always correcting his buddies, but better that than a death or crippling injury. We deal with explosives, weapons, and aircraft everyday, and each can kill or maim as the result of little things such as:

1. Trash on LZ's and log pads.
2. Weapons with a round in the chamber and not on safe---unless you're walking point, slack, drag etc.
3. Approaching a helicopter from uphill
4. Standing up to watch the artillery firing direct fire.
5. Overloading mules or other vehicles.
6. Throwing live ammunition in trash barrels

The list is endless. Do your part to avoid accidents. When you see an unsafe act, tell someone. You may save a life.