

To Capt Coleman

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HEADQUARTERS 3RD BRIGADE
1ST AIR CAVALRY DIVISION
APO San Francisco, California 96490

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BAYONET THRUSTS #2

Once again, each Bayonet trooper can take personal pride in the outstanding success this brigade achieved on OPERATION SILVER BAYONET, during the period 9 - 20 November 1965. Through your efforts this unit displayed a high degree of professional competence as it carried the fight to the enemy and inflicted the heaviest losses of the Vietnamese war upon the best he had to offer. The task was a formidable one, but the indomitable spirit each of you displayed surpassed even your efforts during OPERATION SHINY BAYONET, and will always be a tremendous inspiration to your comrades-in-arms. You have set the standard by which future brigade operations will be judged. The noteworthiness of your accomplishments deserves further examination.

Our massive firepower and superior combat skills accounted for one thousand two hundred and twenty-four enemy dead by body count alone. Further more, your efforts accounted for another one thousand five hundred and ninety-five estimated killed and wounded in action, and nineteen prisoners. You confiscated three hundred and sixty-eight individual weapons and ninety-nine crew-served weapons, with an equal number destroyed in place. The significance of these accomplishments is that you degraded the enemy's offensive capability in the West central sector of the Republic of Vietnam by destroying the combat effectiveness of two PAVN Regiments. Thus, through your combined efforts, we dealt a decisive blow to the enemy that he will long remember.

We treated an estimated six hundred civilians at daily sick calls held during our stay in the area, and large amounts of medical supplies and food were distributed to the populace.

Representative of the countless individual acts of heroism performed by men of the Brigade are the following:

On 15 November, Staff Sergeant George Gonzalez was the senior man present when the Company Commander of D Company 1/7 Cavalry was seriously wounded. He immediately assumed command of the company and repelled an enemy attack. Even though wounded in the face he refused to be evacuated even though ordered to do so.

On 15 November, PFC Larry D. Stevenson of D Company 1/7 Cavalry single-handedly held a 100 meter portion of the perimeter until help could arrive.

During the period 15 - 19 November, 2/Lt Cyril R. Rescorla, B Company 2/7 Cavalry, with complete disregard for his own personal safety, moved from foxhole to foxhole encouraging his men. He is personally responsible for eliminating two machine guns with hand grenades.

On 15 November, 2/Lt Joe Marns of A Company 1/7 Cavalry single-handedly charged a machine gun bunker and killed 18 enemy soldiers.

PFC Toby Braveboy of A Company 2/7 Cavalry, although seriously wounded evaded capture for seven days in an area infested by North Vietnamese troops.

As in past operations, our combat effectiveness improved noticeably during this engagement; primarily because of previous training and experiences. The importance of the "Nuts and Bolts" aspect of soldiering, however, warrants the repetition of some lessons previously learned as well as pointing out some learned during OPERATION SILVER LAYONNET.

1. For hygienic purposes as well as for troop morale, periodic clothing changes are important. A barracks bag or waterproof bag should be used by each fire team to carry a change of clothing and additional socks for each man. These bags can be appropriately marked and left at the Battalion Rear CP for transportation forward as the tactical situation allows.

2. A favorite enemy tactic is to shoot at radio-telephone operators and thus disrupt the command and control structure of a unit. Additional soldiers in each platoon should be familiar with radio-telephone procedures and utilization of TOE signal equipment.

3. PAVN troops often would attempt to confuse US troops during battle at night by yelling "Friendly Forces, Friendly Forces". This sometimes caused momentary confusion among our troops and allowed the enemy to either fire first or take evasive action. Each soldier should be aware of this enemy stratagem.

4. An extremely successful anti-sniper practice is, at first light and on a given signal, for all individuals to fire their weapons at a pre-selected tree, bush or heavy grass that might harbor an enemy rifleman.

5. Aggressive reaction upon enemy contact is one of the primary maxims of basic combat training in our army, provided of course, that the principles, "FIND'EM, FIX'EM, FINISH'EM" are judiciously employed. Troopers should, upon initial enemy contact, employ these principles before conducting fire and maneuver techniques.

6. The proven enemy tactic of concentrating efforts towards elimination of key personnel makes it imperative for all personnel to know how to call for airstrikes, adjust mortar and artillery fire.

7. The recent operation indicates that the enemy has excellent camouflage discipline. During the engagement, many were camouflaged as "movable bushes" and quite a number wore camouflage face masks. Such targets were extremely difficult to pick up and engage. There is no reason why we can't borrow a page from the enemy's tactics book and improve our own camouflage.

During the next several weeks the emphasis in the Brigade will be on training new replacements to take their part as members of the team. Each fire team, section and squad has a rebuilding job to perform. Emphasis must be placed on basic squad tactics, knowledge of individual and supporting weapons, and the basic rudiments of fighting and living as a team. Each officer, NCO and trooper must exert his every effort in the weeks immediately ahead toward this end.

If we apply these recently learned lessons future operations will be even more successful than those of the past. Again I commend all Platoon Troopers for the outstanding job done during OPERATION SILVER BAYONET.

"SHARPEN YOUR BAYONETS"



THOMAS W. BROWN
Colonel, Infantry
Commanding