

Vietnam Communique

101st Abn Div

Units of the 101st Airborne Division combined with the Panther Company of the 1st ARVN Division and a Popular Forces unit to kill 217 enemy in two days of battle.

The action, part of Operation Carentan II, began as the Panther Company conducted a cordon operation around the hamlet of Thong Duong Son, four miles northwest of Hue. The hamlet was suspected of containing a North Vietnamese Army (NVA) battalion.

As the ARVN infantrymen advanced toward the hamlet, they received intense small arms and 57mm recoilless rifle fire.

They returned the fire while four companies from the 1st and 2nd Battalions, 501st Infantry and 1st Battalion, 502nd Infantry moved into the area to block off possible routes of escape.

Heavy fighting continued throughout the day and into the night and artillery poured heavy concentrations of fire into the hamlet along with gunship crews of the 308th Combat Aviation Battalion.

The second afternoon, the Panther Company moved into the village under the cover of artillery and gunships. The enemy continued to return fire with small arms and rocket grenades, but the fighting lasted only a short time.

As the infantrymen swept through the village, they counted 208 NVA and VC bodies and captured four crew-served weapons. Allied casualties for the battle were light.

Paratroopers began to penetrate the village from the north. Some moved in on the ground while others were helicoptered in to tighten the cordon.

The airborne troopers drew heavy small arms, automatic weapons and RPG fire as they advanced. Artillery and tactical airstrikes pounded the enemy positions. This latest sweep netted the paratroopers nine more killed raising the total bodycount for the two-day battle to 217.

1st Inf Div

A search of a village erupted into a 10-hour battle recently resulting in 236 Viet Cong killed by infantrymen of the 1st Infantry Division.

Elements of the 1st Battalion, 18th Infantry had just begun to search the village of Tan Uiep, two miles north of Di An when they received a heavy barrage of small arms and automatic weapons fire followed by rocket grenades.

They immediately called for helicopter light fire teams from a troop of the 7th Squadron, 1st Cavalry. Two companies of the battalion were also deployed to reinforce the infantrymen. In addition, two troops of the 1st Squadron, 4th Cavalry were called in.

Throughout the morning and afternoon the U.S. units continued the fierce battle. Artillery batteries from Battery C, 2nd Battalion, 33rd Artillery in Di An and Battery B, 2nd Battalion, 13th Artillery in Phu Loi poured over 1,600, 105mm howitzer rounds into the enemy positions.

During the action, five suspects were detained, one of whom was a probable VC battalion commander. All five, four of whom were reported to be officers, were taken to Di An for further questioning.

After darkness set in and the action had subsided, the Big Red One units swept the battlefield and counted 236 enemy bodies. They also found a large number of weapons including 38 individual and eight crew-served weapons.

Seven U.S. soldiers were killed and 18 others were wounded and evacuated during the action.

25th Inf Div

Units of the 25th Infantry Division participating in the Toan Thang offensive reported killing 56 enemy in a day-long series of encounters.

Tropic Lightning soldiers and supporting gunships killed at least 36 Viet Cong as they battled an enemy force estimated to be as large as 500 soldiers 15 miles northwest of Saigon and four miles south of the division's Cu Chi basecamp.

In the morning gunship crews of the 3rd Squadron, 17th Cavalry spotted approximately 200 VC wearing green uniforms and pith helmets and carrying assault rifles. The crews observed the enemy while flying aerial reconnaissance missions.

The crews opened up with rockets and automatic weapons and called in Army artillery and U.S. Air Force airstrikes. During the day, the crews counted 31 enemy killed.

By late afternoon, elements of three battalions—the 4th Battalion, 23rd Infantry; 4th Battalion, 9th Infantry; and 2nd Battalion, 34th Armor—had moved into blocking positions around the enemy killing an additional five Communist soldiers.

Gunships, artillery and tactical airstrikes continued to bombard the enemy throughout the night as ground units received light small arms and rocket grenade fire.

Chopper gunners of the 3rd Squadron, 17th Cavalry reported killing 12 more VC in five separate contacts 20 miles northwest and 27 miles north-northwest of Saigon.

Six more enemy were killed by tactical airstrikes and gunship crews supporting elements of the 2nd Battalion, 27th Infantry in contact with an enemy force 13 miles north-northwest of Saigon. Two U.S. soldiers

were killed and one wounded in the battle.

Americal Div

Action by units of the 198th Light Infantry Brigade in Quang Tin Province netted them 34 enemy killed and nine weapons captured.

Heavy fighting broke out 12 miles south of Tam Ky in the Operation Buckhorn Trail area as infantrymen from the 1st Battalion, 16th Infantry dismounted from helicopters.

The soldiers immediately formed a defensive perimeter and returned the fire while helicopter gunship crews flew close overhead support, employing rockets and miniguns. After contact broke, a sweep of the area was made revealing 27 enemy killed.

In several skirmishes the same day six more VC were killed.

Infantrymen of the 11th Light Infantry Brigade recorded six enemy kills in contacts centered around Duc Pho. They also detained 22 suspects during the day.

199th Lt Inf Bde

Elements of the 199th Light Infantry Brigade killed 44 NVA soldiers in a series of clashes west of Saigon recently. Other units from the 199th discovered enemy fortifications and equipment during reconnaissance-in-force operations south and southwest of Saigon in areas of previous contacts.

A company of the 4th Battalion, 12th Infantry encountered two NVA soldiers near their basecamp shortly after daybreak, killing one and detaining one suspect.

Moments later another company joined with its sister unit and fought an enemy force that attacked the U.S. basecamp. Twelve enemy soldiers were killed and four suspects detained.

Sporadic fire continued into the afternoon. The units of the 4th Battalion killed 44 enemy soldiers and detained seven during the day's action. They also captured a considerable quantity of small arms and rocket ammunition and grenades.

Men of the 5th Battalion, 12th Infantry swept the area of an earlier contact northeast of Sai-



gon and found a cache of booby trap material.

U.S. casualties for the day's action were three killed and 15 wounded.

173rd Abn Bde

Elements of the 173rd Airborne Brigade fought a battle with an NVA regiment-size force and killed 41 enemy soldiers. The action took place on the Hong Son Plains north of Qui Nhon.

Initial contact began shortly before noon when a company from the 1st Battalion, 50th Infantry engaged an enemy force 30 miles north of Qui Nhon.

The mechanized unit found

itself surrounded by the enemy and began receiving rocket and automatic weapons fire from all sides. The unit was able to link up with a sister company and elements of the 1st Battalion, 69th Armor.

Heavy fighting continued until nightfall with the armored unit fighting the enemy from a wagon-wheel formation. Gunships, artillery and light tactical airstrikes supported the ground units.

1st Avn Bde

Gunship crews of the 71st Aviation Company, 14th Combat Aviation Battalion reported killing 20 Viet Cong while flying close overhead armed reconnaissance for infantrymen of the Americal Division's 1st Battalion, 62nd Infantry.

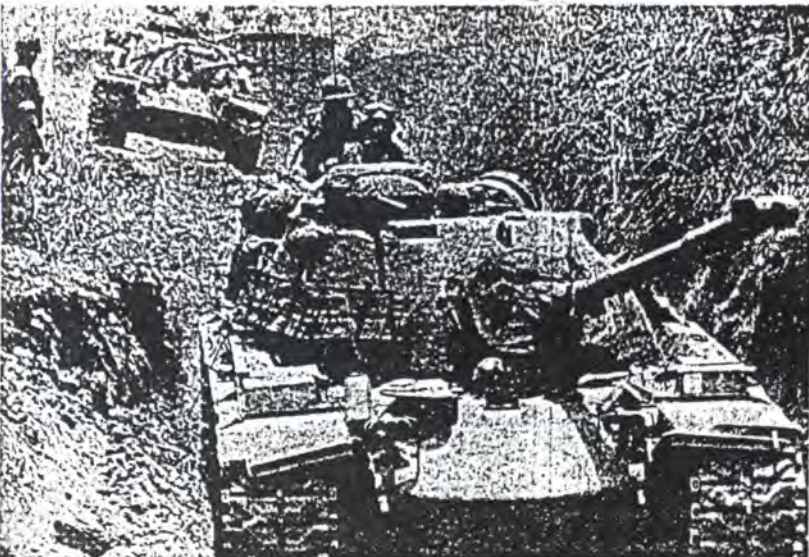
The ground units were conducting a reconnaissance operation seven miles south of Hoi An when they came into heavy contact with an enemy force.

In addition to the 20 reported kills, the chopper gunners destroyed 18 structures, damaged 21 others and sank four sampans.

The 12th Combat Aviation Battalion reported killing 15 Viet Cong while supporting ARVN infantry elements in the Mekong Delta.

Gunnery of the 336th Assault Helicopter Company conducted an aerial reconnaissance mission near the Soc Trang airfield. During the mission they reportedly killed seven VC. They also destroyed three enemy fortifications and sank 25 sampans.

Crews from the 121st and 173th Assault Helicopter Companies flew close support for a 21st ARVN Division unit south of Can Tho. The crews reported killing 26 VC in the operation.



ROLLING ALONG—Tanks rumble over rugged terrain as elements of the 11th Armored Cavalry Regiment's 1st Squadron move towards the Dong Hai River during Operation Toan Thang. (Photo by Sgt. Herb Cole, 11th CAV-IO)

199th Bde Unit Nabs NVA Doctor

CAMP FRENZELL-JONES, (199th INF-10)—The capture of a North Vietnamese Army doctor in Bien Hoa Province recently led to the discovery of an entire NVA hospital complex by Company B, 4th Battalion, 12th Infantry, 199th Light Infantry Brigade.

B Troop Gunships Zap 20

LAI KHE, (1st INF-10)—Gunship helicopters of the 1st Aviation Brigade were credited with killing 20 Communist troops near the northern edge of the 1st Infantry Division's area of operations recently.

At approximately 6:30 p.m., a forward air controller operating 12 miles north of Loc Ninh sighted a battalion-sized complement of North Vietnamese Army troops. After marking the site, he called for helicopter fire teams.

B Troop, 1st Squadron, 17th Cavalry scrambled two gunships under the command of Capt. Gregory Patula, and CWO William Kane.

After the gunships' first pass the enemy force could be seen moving out of the area. Two more passes were made and both ships expended their entire ammunition load from miniguns, rockets, machineguns and personal M16 rifles.

In an after-action reconnaissance of the engagement site, the forward air controller counted 20 enemy bodies killed in the firefight which had ended by 7:10 p.m.

The company, commanded by Capt. Lee H. Smith, was sweeping along the banks of a stream when the pointman of the lead platoon motioned for the men behind him to take cover.

"I was in front and had just started to check out a trail leading to the stream, when I heard someone walking through the leaves down the trail," said Sgt. Harry Atkins.

"Just as he came around a little bend, I stepped into the trail and shouted 'Dung Lai!' (Halt! In Vietnamese). He ducked behind some bushes and then he jumped up and began running, so I shot him," Atkins added.

The NVA doctor, wounded in the leg, returned the fire with a 9mm pistol. Other elements of the company immediately began encircling the area. The trapped NVA officer, a captain who had been an enemy military doctor since 1958, had crawled into the thick brush along the stream.

First Lieutenant George P. Morgan threw two hand grenades over the bank of the stream, again wounding the enemy who was still firing into the surrounding jungle with his pistol.

"We began moving our elements around to help detain him and we ran across a blood trail leading toward the stream," said PSgt. Lloyd E. Tribbett. "Three of us got into the water and began wading upstream."

Private-First Class Walter J. Jop, a radio-telephone operator, and Sp4 Larry D. Daniels, a machinegunner, volunteered to go in after the enemy officer with the platoon sergeant.

"Jop and I went in and got him while Daniels covered us. I just pointed my weapon at him and he dropped his pistol and surrendered," the platoon sergeant said.



CACHE CARRIER—Infantry men of the 4th Battalion, 12th Infantry, 199th Light Infantry Brigade load captured rice aboard a chopper. The brigade captured rice totaling 18,000 pounds. It will be distributed to orphanages and relocated families.

(Photo by PFC Jose N. Gonzalez, Jr., 199th INF-10)

For TET Action

Viets Decorate MP Bn

SAIGON, (HAC-10)—Saigon's 716th Military Police Battalion and 28 of its men were presented Vietnamese awards for gallantry during a formal ceremony held recently in the Vietnamese Joint General Staff compound at Tan Son Nhut.

While an honor guard stood at attention, General Cao Van Vien, chairman of the Joint General

Staff, Vietnamese Armed Forces, accompanied by General William C. Westmoreland, presented the men.

Later, Gen. Vien pinned the Vietnamese Cross for Gallantry with Palm to the battalion's colors and presented Lt. Col. Gordon D. Rowe, battalion commander, with the same award.

Twenty-seven other members of the battalion received the Vietnamese Cross for Gallantry also.

"During the Viet Cong general offensive against the capital during the recent Tet holidays, the battalion reacted swiftly and, in conjunction with friendly forces, put up stiff resistance to the VC pressure, blocking all enemy attempts at infiltrating facilities under its protection."

"They fought valiantly, scoring victories in four major confrontations with the Communists: the battles at Gate No. 5 of Camp Tran Hung Dan, at the U.S. Embassy in Saigon, at the race track in the Phu Tho areas of Cholon, and at the MACV Headquarters in Tan Son Nhut."

Units of the battalion killed 84 VC during the first two days of fighting. The battalion suffered 27 killed in action and 45 wounded.

The citation continued, "During the period February 1-10 1968, units of the 716th continuously assisted Vietnamese MP units and the National Police in sweep operations conducted throughout the city. In making the above efforts, the battalion contributed greatly to the restoration of security in the Saigon area."

101st Finds Sweatshirt; Gives Charlie Hot Time

BIEN HOA, (101st ABN-10)—Paratroopers of the 1st Brigade, 101st Airborne Division caught Charlie in an enemy basecamp north of here recently and killed 11 enemy soldiers.

While on a routine reconnaissance mission, members of Company B, 2nd Battalion, 502nd Infantry happened upon an NVA basecamp.

"We knew that the NVA soldiers were in the area because we had intelligence reports from one of our other elements that had spotted enemy activity in the area we were searching," said 1st Lt. Henry Fritts.

While advancing down a dry creekbed, the point man, Sgt.

Joe Agniet, spotted an NVA sweatshirt hanging up to dry. He immediately alerted Fritts who put the point element of his platoon on line for a sweep of the area.

"The enemy soldiers were everywhere," Agniet said. "Four were standing along the edge of the creek and one was even bathing."

Specialist Four Franklin Heyward opened up with his M60 and began providing his fellow paratroopers with a heavy volume of firepower.

After the initial firefight, 1st Lt. Andrew Porter began maneuvering his element to the left flank in order to box in the unsuspecting insurgents.



FIRE POWER—Soldiers from the 5th Battalion, 60th Infantry use available cover to shield themselves as they fire into Viet Cong positions near the village of Binh Phuoc. The 9th Infantry Division unit was conducting operations to clear the area of VC elements.

(Photo by Sp5 Thomas L. Farley, 9th INF-10)

School Bells For 9th Inf?

FIRE BASE GREY. (9th INF-10)—School bells are ringing for members of the 2nd Battalion, 47th Infantry.

Volunteers from this 9th Infantry Division unit are teaching basic English to almost 100 elementary school children at Binh Son, about eight miles southeast of the division's Bear Cat basecamp.

Second Lieutenant Randall J. Lancaster, battalion civic actions officer, and Sgt. William Hampton conduct 30-minute classes three to six days a week with the aid of an ARVN interpreter.

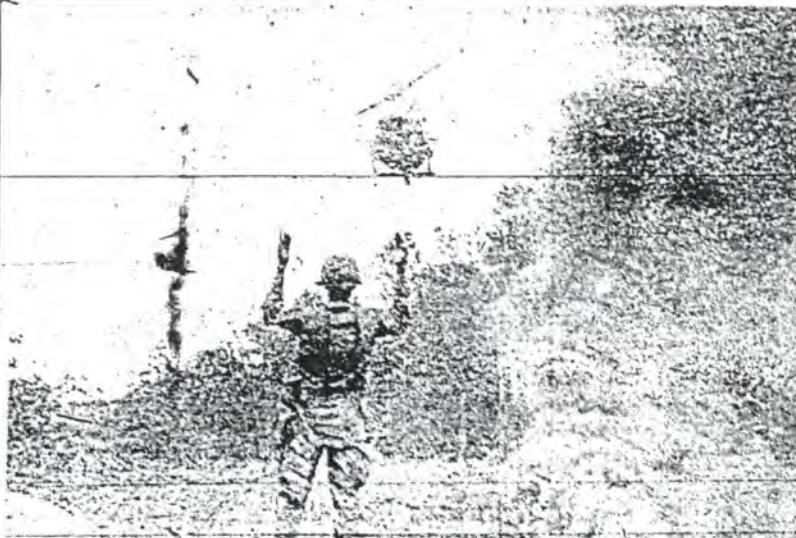
"The classes teach fundamentals," Lancaster said. "Short sentences are composed from a basic word list. After hearing the sentence in Vietnamese, the children speak and write it in English."

"The children have shown high interest and a strong desire to learn."

The battalion also furnishes writing books, pencils, pens, erasers, and rulers. The men also plan to supply Vietnamese-English handbooks for school use.

"Following classes, we give them candy and fruit for their hard work," Lancaster said.

Lieutenant Colonel John B. Tower, battalion commander, said the program started April 12 as a step to end enemy domination in the area.



COMING IN—A member of the 7th Cavalry Squadron, 17th Cavalry guides his slicks into a smoke-marked landing zone. (Photo by Sp5 John S. Stidham, 1st AVN-10)

With Help From 199th Inf

Ho Nai Fights To Recover

CAMP FRENZELL-JONES. (199th INF-10)—Another major battle is being fought at the village of Ho Nai, which was terrorized and ravaged during Tet by the Viet Cong.

In the battle during Tet, over 900 VC were killed by units of the 199th Light Infantry Brigade, which has its main basecamp near the village.

Many villagers suffered injury and death during the at-

tacks. Scores of homes and public facilities were damaged or destroyed. In addition, the town suffered from an outbreak of various diseases.

The new battle going on in Ho Nai is quiet and bloodless, but is just as hard fought. It is the villagers' determined battle to rebuild their shattered homes and buildings.

They are trying to restore the health of the people who suffered injury and sickness during the Tet attacks and the aftermath and to prevent any further enemy terrorism of their village.

Once again, the 199th Light Infantry Brigade is fighting alongside the people. This time, instead of infantrymen, Civil Affairs personnel and medics are waging the fight.

The battle for recovery began before the Tet battles had ended. While the Communist attack was still in progress, the men of the 199th were acting to help the villagers.

As enemy fire came in, guards at the basecamp's perimeter helped injured villagers over the wire to safety inside the camp. Going into the village during the attacks, 199th civic affairs and MEDCAP personnel erected five tents to shelter displaced persons and treat the injured.

After learning that the village water tower had been destroyed, 20,000 gallons of potable water were rushed in, along with emergency food and medical supplies.

At the request of the villagers, a special US-Vietnamese unit assisted hamlet and village officials in preparing the villagers' defenses.

When the Tet attacks ended, members of the 199th's MEDCAP and civic action teams moved into the village in force. Work was begun immediately on damaged homes and buildings.

At the end of April, the brigade civic affairs staff, headed by Maj. Melvin L. Byrd, had completed the rebuilding of six homes, two churches, a school and an eight-building hospital complex.

The construction of a new water tower and a refugee hospital was also completed and work on 19 additional homes continued.

In two days, 1,174 patients were treated by the brigade

surgeon and members of an ARVN MEDCAP team.

Since then, a MEDCAP team making weekly rounds has treated over 21,000 patients.

Shortimer Sam Says

Q: Dear Sam, Can you tell me if the 229th Aviation Battalion has been awarded the MUC? If they have, am I eligible to wear it even if I wasn't here when they got it? PFC A.L.G., IIIIC, 229th Avn.

A: The 11th Avn. Gp received the Meritorious Unit Citation in GO 3006, dated 20 June 67. It was for action September '65 to November '66. The 229th Avn. Bn. was added (your unit was missed on the first order) in GO 787, dated 21 Feb. 68. If you served for 30 days in the unit during the cited period you wear the MUC as a permanent decoration; otherwise, you go bare.

Q: Dear Shortimer Sam, I have a few questions that need answering. I want to know exactly when I can extend. How many months must I have before I can extend and get what I want? Do I have to drop airborne?

You said that you have to serve 10 months with the old unit. How many months must you have on line? What if while you are in Vietnam you get transferred from one unit to the next? I would appreciate your answers. Sp4 J.M.F., 1st Bde., 101st Abn.

A: You may extend at around your ninth month so that the DE arrives at USARV by the time you have served 10 months in-country. If you volunteer for any unit other than your own or the 173rd Abn. Bde., you will have to give up jump status. Your special leave will be between your normal tour and the beginning of your six months extension. Being in the field doesn't help or change the procedures. Transfer within a unit to another company only means you get to make more friends here.

Q: Dear Sam, I was really glad to see your answer about R and it in The Army Reporter. I have been trying to find out all the details on meeting my wife in Hawaii. We get our orders around three weeks before we leave. To complicate matters, we are a support platoon and we have only a very small PX. A buddy of mine is leaving to get married. I looked over his orders and there was no sign of Form 1580. Could you please tell me of some way to get this all taken care of before my orders arrive? As you can see, the situation is pressing. I'm not the only one in our platoon that would like to get this information. Sp5 D.M., 2nd Bde., 101st Abn.

A: Your wife may buy "Discover America" tickets through her local travel agent. That will get her to L.A. or Frisco. She must have two copies of a 1580 to get reduced fare to Honolulu. See your 1st Sgt. or CO. They have them. A potential wife isn't eligible to use a 1580, that's why your buddy didn't have one.

Questions on any subjects may be sent to Shortimer Sam in care of The Army Reporter, HQ, USARV, APO 96375. All questions will be given prompt attention and deep thought. Unsigned or anonymous letters will not be answered.

Troopers Discover Hospital

HUE. (101st ABN-10) — An enemy hospital along the Song Bo river was recently discovered by paratroopers from the 101st Airborne Division.

After receiving information from a villager, the paratroopers from Company C, 1st Battalion, 501st Infantry swept through the complex and found 11 North Vietnamese Army (NVA) regulars and a nurse.

Pfc. Dominick Caputo crawled into the tunnel complex to check for equipment and enemy personnel.

"I crawled into a hole and found some NVA," Caputo said. "Then one of them moved and I saw a rifle poke out. I jumped up and grabbed my rifle."

Three NVA bodies were pulled out of the hole by Caputo's squad members. They were followed by a nurse who tried to shoot the paratrooper with a pistol.

Down in the complex the paratroopers found medical instruments, bandages, syringes and sulfa drugs, according to Sp4 Brian Skehan, a medic with the battalion.



EXTRACTION—Helicopters drop in to extract elements of the 4th Battalion, 39th Infantry after the unit had completed a reconnaissance-in-force operation near Nha Be, 10 miles south of Saigon.

(Photo by Sp5 David Tyler, 9th INF-10)