

Vietnam Communique

Americal Div

The Americal Division experienced a week of heavy fighting, killing 160 enemy soldiers.

The tempo of activity picked up in the southern portion of the I Corps Tactical Zone.

Troopers of the 1st Squadron, 1st Cavalry and gunship crews of F Troop, 8th Air Cavalry accounted for 12 VC killed in scattered action throughout the Wheeler/Wallowa and Burlington Trail area.

F Troop gunners reported seven of the kills during a firefight 25 miles northwest of Tam Ky.

A night assault on a village four miles north of Duc Pho by 11th Light Infantry Brigade soldiers and supporting helicopter crews resulted in nine enemy killed. A VC sapper squad had been trapped in the village.

Soldiers of the 196th Light Infantry Brigade killed eight Viet Cong and captured 65 weapons. Riflemen of the 3rd Battalion, 21st Infantry operating west of Tam Ky called in artillery on a group of enemy seen moving south of Landing Zone Center. The fire mission resulted in four enemy killed. Ground contacts accounted for the other eight.

1st Avn Bde

The 1st Aviation Brigade killed 199 enemy while flying support and reconnaissance missions for infantry units.

Gunship crews of the 235th Armed Helicopter Company, 307th Combat Aviation Battalion conducted reconnaissance operations west of Ca Mau. The Cobra gunners reported killing 18 Viet Cong during the mission. In addition, they sank 21 sampans, damaged 17; destroyed 13 structures and damaged five. The crews also reported two secondary explosions from destroyed sampans and two from destroyed structures.

Helicopter gunship crews of the 121st Assault Helicopter Company, 13th Combat Aviation Battalion supported elements of the 9th ARVN Division in a reconnaissance mission five miles northwest of Can Tho. The infantrymen encountered heavy enemy resistance. The Cobra gunners reported killing seven of the enemy.

1st Air Cav Div

The soldiers of the 1st Air Cavalry

Division killed 76 enemy in a week of moderate fighting.

The heaviest action of the week came when a reconnaissance patrol working an area four and one-half miles south of Quang Tri, spotted enemy movement about 30 yards east of their position. The infantrymen called in brigade scout helicopter crews to check the area. The chopper crews encountered heavy enemy fire. After the soldiers were in position as a blocking force the helicopters from the 1st Squadron, 9th Cavalry saturated the area with rockets and minigun fire. The cavalrymen moved in after contact was lost, and a sweep of the area revealed 14 enemy bodies.

Troopers of the 1st Battalion, 12th Infantry engaged three enemy in a building three miles northwest of Quang Tri. The 15-minute firefight netted the cavalrymen three NVA killed.

The body count in Operation Jeb Stuart III exceeds 1,000 enemy killed.

1st Inf Div

Soldiers of the 1st Infantry Division experienced a week of light fighting and contact with the enemy.

Riflemen from a company of the 1st Battalion, 18th Infantry were conducting a reconnaissance-in-force operation six miles north of Saigon when they discovered an enemy basecamp. The infantrymen searched the camp and moved on. Just after leaving the complex, they came under enemy small arms fire. The troopers returned the fire and called in artillery and helicopter support. After contact was lost, a sweep of the area revealed six enemy bodies.

Soldiers of the 1st Squadron, 4th Cavalry engaged three VC six miles northwest of Saigon. The enemy withdrew immediately, leaving behind 1,000 rounds of ammunition and assorted equipment.

9th Inf Div

The Old Reliabilities killed 123 enemy during the week.

In one day, the troopers killed 81 enemy in three separate contacts.

The first contact was made when helicopters from the 3rd Squadron, 5th Cavalry observed several enemy soldiers running toward a woodland. A short time later, troops of the 2nd Brigade were inserted into the area. Combined efforts resulted in 14 enemy killed.

In the second contact, helicopters from the 7th Squadron, 1st Cavalry killed 14 VC, and artillery missions fired by the 3rd Battalion, 34th Artillery were responsible for 21 enemy killed, while

ground troops added four more.

The third encounter resulted in 31 enemy dead when soldiers from the 2nd Battalion, 39th Infantry were returning from a night patrol 16 miles southwest of Saigon. The enemy were caught in a triangle with a river to their backs when additional troops were called in.

25th Inf Div

The 25th Division soldiers killed 50 enemy during a week of light and scattered fighting.

The major contact of the week came when 3rd Battalion, 187th Infantry soldiers encountered machinegun and rocket fire eight miles northwest of Chu near Trang Bang. The battle lasted from nightfall until the next morning. Two sweeps of the battle area revealed 21 enemy bodies.

Helicopter gunship crews of the 3rd Squadron, 4th Cavalry spotted 50 VC as they were conducting reconnaissance missions four miles north of Trang Bang. The crewmen also observed 15 bunkers connected by communications wire. The gunners engaged the enemy with minigun fire and rockets and radioed for artillery and airstrikes. After contact was lost, the crews flew over the area and reported 10 enemy killed.

101st Air Cav Div

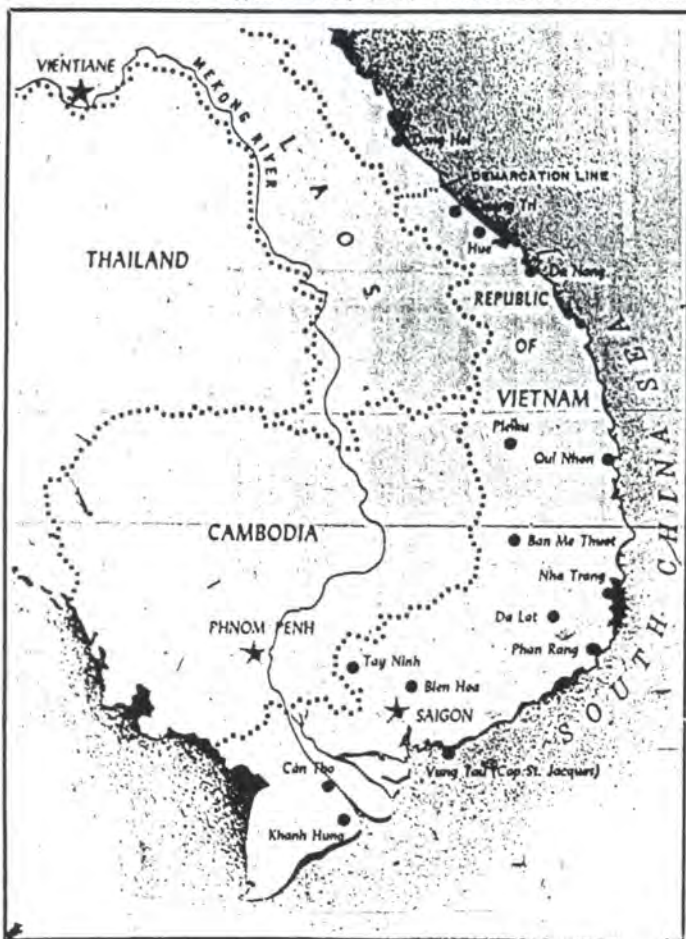
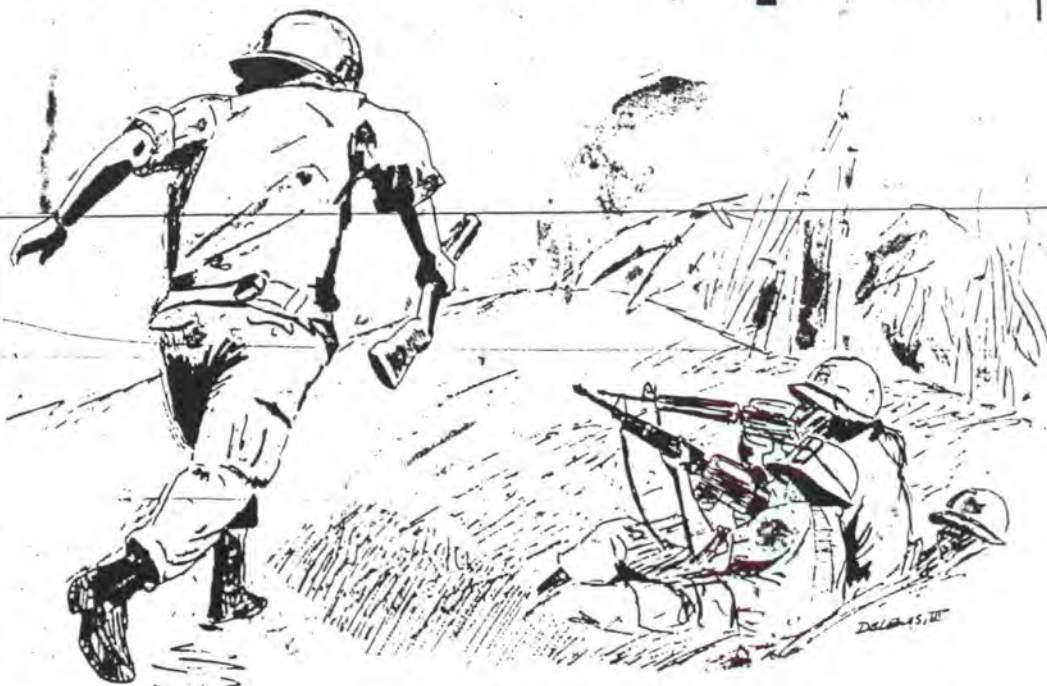
Infantrymen from the 101st Air Cavalry killed 49 enemy during the week's fighting.

The major action came when the 101st and Popular Force soldiers combined efforts in Operation Nevada Eagle. Troopers from a company of the 1st Battalion, 502nd Infantry joined forces with Popular Forces from the Quang Dien District to conduct reconnaissance operations nine miles northwest of Hue. During the mission contact was made with a reinforced enemy platoon. After the enemy withdrew, a sweep of the battlefield was made and 23 enemy bodies were found—19 of which were credited to the Popular Force soldiers.

In other action, riflemen of the 1st Battalion, 501st Infantry killed five NVA soldiers in two brief clashes and an element of the 2nd Battalion, 327th Infantry killed two more enemy in scattered actions.

11th Armd Cav

Colonel George S. Patton assumed command of the 11th Armored Cavalry Regiment July 15 in a ceremony at the Blackhorse basecamp, about 40 miles east of Saigon.



Battalion Uncovers Weapons

TAY NINH, (25th INF-10) — Infantrymen of the 4th Battalion, 23rd Infantry, who have been called the "Palace Guards" of the massive Tan Son Nhut Air Base, probed into the rocket belt around Saigon and came up with an impressive cache of enemy rockets and mortars.

The battalion had staged armored personnel carriers outside one of the main gates of Tan Son Nhut and kept vigil 24 hours a day, ready to react if the Allied base became jeopardized. By day the unit conducted eagle flights, pushing the enemy farther and farther from the capital as they were hell-lifted into suspected enemy-infested areas.

When the Viet Cong resorted to indiscriminate rocket attacks on Saigon, the battalion responded with all-night roving patrols to seek out the enemy rocket sites. Enemy movement was detected often, and artillery and mortars were called in on the enemy positions.

Intelligence reports suggested one area where the rockets were being smuggled in, and Company C made an eagle flight into the area, eight miles northwest of Saigon. The infantrymen had walked through the swamps and canals for about 1,000 yards when suddenly they spotted a fresh sampans trail through the swamp.

"I've got a strong hunch this is it," said First Lieutenant Gennero Mellis, a company commander. Three sampans were found submerged in the swamp. From the air, Lieutenant Colonel Clifford C. Neilson, battalion commander, spotted another sampan about 50 yards from the other three.

The excavation began as battalion members dove under water to retrieve the cache. The prize consisted of 10, 122mm rockets with warheads; 9, 122mm rocket fuses; 83, 82mm mortar rounds; 24 cans of primers; 12 cans of fuses for 82mm mortars; and more than 5,000 rounds of rifle ammunition.



Constant vigil is maintained every step of the way by this paratrooper from the 101st Air Cavalry Division. He was participating in a reconnaissance-in-force operation northwest of Phu Bai. (101st AIR CAV Photo)

Cavalrymen Repel Midnight Assault

TRANG BANG, (101st AIR CAV-10) — Screaming Eagles of the 101st Air Cavalry Division's 1st Battalion, 306th Infantry repelled a midnight attack on their defensive perimeter three miles north of here, killing 38 enemy in a four-hour fire-fight.

The battalion had set up its night positions in a huge open field along Highway 6A near several villages.

"My men reported that the villagers appeared to be leaving their homes," said First Lieutenant Arthur J. Short, platoon leader, of Company A. "This is usually a good indication that Charlie is in the area."

Several hours later Specialist 4 Dan R. Burbeula peered to his front with a starlight scope and spotted "approximately three Viet Cong about 150 meters out."

The Co. A troopers opened fire briefly, and a period of silence followed.

Shortly after midnight the uneasy calm was shattered by a long burst from a machinegun manned by Specialist 4 Robert L. Harvey.

"It seemed like they were gathering by a small hut near the corner of the perimeter,"

said Sergeant Ken Brokaw. "Harvey's burst dropped a couple and the rest scattered."

Mortar and grenade rounds began landing inside the perimeter as an enemy suicide squad assaulted a foxhole and attempted to reach the company's portion of the perimeter.

Specialist 4 James E. Burke, already wounded in the hand by a rocket, killed four of the attackers with his rifle. The enemy soldiers fell within five feet of his position.

"They were so close that we were tossing grenades between our positions to insure that they wouldn't slip past us," said Specialist 4 Terry Sherman.

Specialist 5 Ubaldo Maestas, a medic in Company A, was treating a fellow trooper when he glanced up and saw a Viet Cong soldier two yards away. "I emptied a magazine into him and he didn't get back up," Maestas recalled.

Two hundred yards away, Company D also was being rushed by the Viet Cong.

"We were set up in a listening post about 250 yards in front of the perimeter when we observed approximately 15 enemy moving toward our position," related Private First Class Lester D. L'Heureux.

L'Heureux motioned three other men back, blew Claymore mines and threw grenades at the enemy. "Then we got back to the perimeter fast," he said.

The battle raged into the early morning hours. Artillery, helicopter gunships and an Air Force Spooky supplied strong fire support for the airborne infantrymen.

At dawn the troopers counted 31 bodies on the perimeter. A sweep of the area revealed seven more. Twenty-five weapons were captured, including 14 rifles, nine rocket launchers and two machineguns.

There were no trooper deaths. Sherman, Brokaw and Maestas received Bronze Stars for their heroism.

198th Inf Assists Survivors Of VC Slaughter at Son Tra

CHU LAI, (AMERICAL-10) — For almost a year, the tiny hamlet of Son Tra lay nestled along the coast of the South China Sea. Its fishing boats put out daily and returned in peace.

On the morning of June 29th tragedy struck. When the fishing boats returned to anchor, they were greeted by the remains of a burning hamlet — wreckage, rubble and death. The Viet Cong, in one of the bloodiest terrorist attacks of the war, stormed Son Tra that night with one intent — to kill and burn.

As the smoke cleared in the early morning sun the cries of mourning echoed above the flattened grass hills. The VC terrorists had killed 112 innocent civilians, refugees, Popular Forces troops and Revolutionary Development cadre. Another 25 Vietnamese were evacuated to Americal Division's civilian hospital, and 28 more were treated on the spot for burns by medics of the 198th Infantry Brigade. A total of 474 homes lay in ashes and smoke in this hamlet five miles south of Chu Lai.

The attack began shortly before midnight, said Staff Sergeant Tommie Taylor, who runs a small MP river patrol station on a hill 200 yards from Son Tra. "They lobbed in some mortars, and then a sapper squad jumped the fence and started the fire. The breeze off the sea just carried the blaze right across the hamlet."

The MPs manned their bunkers on the hill next to the hamlet while Viet Cong kept a deadly concentration of fire on the perimeter of the hamlet.

1st Battalion, 32nd Infantry was airlifted into the MP site to back up the defenses at 1:30 a.m.

A handful of medics, headed by Captain Michael Strong, were the first to be airlifted in to help treat and evacuate the mounting Vietnamese casualties.

There were numerous burn victims, Strong said. "One victim had gunshot wounds through the foot and leg. One woman I treated had five children. She could only get two out of the fire and had to leave three behind to die."

"Once inside the hamlet the VC ran up and down between the huts burning homes and shooting villagers," said Larry Colbert, refugee officer for Quang Ngai Province.

The attack was over in less than an hour and the burning hamlet blazed in the darkness. Medics worked throughout the morning to evacuate and treat the wounded.

At daylight civic action soldiers from the 198th Infantry Brigade moved into action. Arriving on scene, Major Frederick W. Tonsing, civic action officer for the 198th, coordinated with the hamlet chief and began listing the needs of the 2,000 homeless.

By noon the wounded had been evacuated, fresh supplies were pouring in, and a long funeral procession wound through the rubble to bury the last of the victims of the attack.

Viet Villages Quizzed on Enemy

QUAN LOI, (1st INF-10) — A multi-facet seal operation was conducted in three Montagnard hamlets near the Cambodian border by the 1st Brigade, 1st Infantry Division, and South Vietnamese province units. The seal involved three infantry companies, psychological operations broadcasts, the gathering of intelligence information and MEDCAPS.

Psychological operations broadcasts were made from a helicopter announcing that the hamlets had been sealed and that the people would be questioned about Viet Cong by the Vietnamese National Police. The broadcasts informed the Montagnards in their own dialect that there would be a MEDCAP in each hamlet, and said there was no need to be afraid.

As the broadcasts concluded, rapid searches were made of the villages as insurance against ambushes. Armed propaganda teams spoke with the

villagers. The men were then separated from the women and children for questioning by the national police and U.S. interrogation teams.

Several of the Montagnards stated that Viet Cong had been coming to their villages to take a plaster and a handful of rice from each family. Most recently the VC had been in Son Tra four days before. The villagers were told that the forests to the southwest of the village were off limits and it was suspected that VC bunkers were in that area. One man whose story did not check out with the others claimed, "There have been no VC here for many days."

Some residents of the hamlet had pointed out this man as a tax collector for the Viet Cong. They labeled him as primarily responsible for getting an enemy conference room built near the perimeter of the hamlet.

27 Letters Thank GIs In Vietnam

"Dear Soldier, I hope the war isn't too rough, but I would like to thank you for donating your time in the service to keep our country free. God bless you and keep you safe. Yours with my love, Denise Taylor."

This letter is one of 27 letters, all of which conveyed the same message. All were written by seventh grade students at Saint Mary Magdalene School in Buffalo, New York.

The students are members of the John F. Kennedy Civics Club, who voted at their last meeting of the year to donate the \$50 left in their treasury to the fighting men in Vietnam.

The check was addressed to the Commanding General, United States Army, Vietnam. The 199th Light Infantry Brigade was selected to use the money in its Civic Action program.

The money will be used to buy blackboards and playground equipment for a school that the soldiers help maintain.