

# Vietnam Communique

## America Div

America Division soldiers killed 124 enemy in a week of heavy fighting in scattered actions throughout their area of operation.

Fighting increased in the 198th Light Infantry Brigade's area of operations as the infantrymen killed seven enemy. An action fought by elements of the 1st Battalion, 52nd Infantry and H Troop, 17th Cavalry six miles northeast of Quang Ngai resulted in seven enemy killed. Four of the kills were credited to the cavalrymen, who also captured several weapons and a quantity of ammunition. Airstrikes called in by a forward air controller working in the area killed two enemy and the infantrymen accounted for one enemy killed.

Soldiers of the 196th Light Infantry Brigade continued to encounter heavy fighting as they killed 14 enemy in scattered skirmishes. Riflemen of the 3rd Battalion, 21st Infantry killed six Viet Cong soldiers in five separate engagements while conducting reconnaissance missions 11 miles west of Tam Ky. Artillerymen from the 3rd Battalion, 18th Artillery fired on a group of VC seen moving through an open area west of Landing Zone West. Four NVA were killed in the action. A battery from the 3rd Battalion, 82nd Artillery killed one VC west of the landing zone. Three more enemy were killed in widely scattered skirmishes throughout the brigade's operational area.

## 1st Avn Bde

Airmen of the 1st Aviation Brigade reported killing 180 enemy during the week.

The 235th Armored Helicopter Company, 307th Combat Aviation Battalion encountered heavy contact with the enemy while supporting the 21st ARVN Division. The door gunners and Cobras killed 34 enemy, which was confirmed by the infantrymen. They also sank 29 sampans, some of which were 30 to 40 feet long, and destroyed 11 enemy structures. Two secondary explosions with flames shoot-



ing 200 feet into the air were observed when the sampans were hit.

Helicopter crews from the 114th and 175th Assault Helicopter Companies, 13th Combat Aviation Battalion killed 32 enemy while supporting ARVN forces and Regional Forces in an operation 18 miles northwest of Sa Dec. Cobras gunship crews from the 114th caught a group of VC in an open area. The enemy soldiers were taken under fire and 30 of the bat-

talion's 32 kills were recorded. Door gunners from the 175th reported two additional enemy killed in the same area.

## 1st Air Cav Div

Soldiers of the 1st Air Cavalry killed 33 in a week of light contact with the enemy.

Cavalrymen from the 2nd Battalion, 8th Cavalry made contact with an enemy force seven miles west of Camp Evans. A 30-minute firefight ensued before the enemy withdrew leaving three bodies behind.

Five miles further west, another element of the battalion fought a brief battle with an estimated enemy squad. The cavalrymen killed one NVA soldier and captured two assault rifles. They also apprehended two suspects.

The night defensive position of an element of the 2nd Battalion, 7th Cavalry received four mortar rounds at daybreak. One of the perimeter guards spotted the muzzle flash from the enemy tubes and immediately called in artillery. Later in the morning, a patrol sent out to sweep the area found two enemy bodies along with a number of blood-trails.

## 1st Inf Div

The 1st Infantry Division killed 82 enemy in several heavy contacts.

Troopers of the 1st Squadron, 11th Armored Cavalry Regiment, operating under the control of the 1st Infantry Division, killed 34 enemy during a battle east of Loc Ninh.

While sweeping a thickly wooded area elements of the regiment began receiving small arms fire from an enemy force. After a brief exchange of fire the enemy withdrew, leaving behind nine dead.

The troopers moved in to sweep the area of contact and discovered a company-size enemy basecamp. As they were searching the camp the cavalrymen began receiving fire again. Helicopter gunships and artillery were called in to support the ground elements. Sweeping the area, troopers found 25 more enemy bodies and detained two suspects.

## 9th Inf Div

The 9th Infantry Division killed 11 enemy and found the bodies of 53 enemy that had been killed in previous contacts several days before.

Operations 16 miles southwest of Salgon resulted in the discovery of 46 enemy who were killed in previous action. The total body count for the action now stands at 76 enemy killed. The soldiers also found nine individual weapons and

six crew served, including four mortars.

In other actions soldiers of the Mobile Riverine Force found seven enemy bodies during a sweep of the area of a previous battle 59 miles south of Saigon. The seven enemy dead raised the body count to 55 enemy killed in the action.

Division soldiers and supporting airstrikes killed five enemy in scattered contacts as the 9th hit suspected enemy hideouts in the Mekong Delta.

Elements of the 4th Battalion, 30th Infantry killed two VC and detained five suspects six miles northwest of Cat Lay. The soldiers also captured several weapons and small arms ammunition.

## 25th Inf Div

The 25th Infantry Division killed 14 enemy in a week of light and scattered contact with the enemy.

A small force of 25th soldiers and Vietnamese Regional Forces soldiers killed nine enemy in Ha Noi Nghia Province on a night operation.

Shortly after dark 25th and ARVN infantrymen on a combined operation moved into an area 17 miles northwest of Saigon, near the village of My Thanh. They were forced to engage an enemy element when observed, and three VC were killed. A short time later, the allied unit surrounded a group in an enemy hut. As they told the Viet Cong to come outside and raise their hands, two enemy guards tried to reach for their rifles while the others broke and tried to escape. Six enemy were killed in the exchange of fire that ensued.

Several VC patrols were detected in the area and the soldiers moved quickly to a pre-planned pick-up zone for helicopter extraction.

## 101st Air-Cav Div

The 101st Air Cavalry experienced a week of moderate fighting killing 58 enemy soldiers.

Gunship crews of Company B, 101st Aviation Battalion reported killing seven enemy in an engagement five miles east of Hue. The light fire team was supporting a combat assault when the crews spotted seven enemy trying to escape along a trail and engaged them with minigun fire and grenades.

A long range patrol discovered an enemy force in a basecamp southwest of Hue. The infantrymen called in airstrikes and helicopter gunships. Eight enemy were killed in the action.

Troopers of the 1st Battalion, 501st Infantry discovered a cache containing 25 tons of rice while conducting reconnaissance-in-force operations north of Hue.





Specialist 4 Edwin E. Tubbs, a machinegunner with Company A, 2nd Battalion, 502nd Infantry waits for his platoon to move out on patrol during Operation Nevada Eagle. (101st AIRCAV PHOTO)

## Four American Men Secure Hilltop with Captured Gun

CHU LAI, (AMERICAL-10) — Four 198th Light Infantry Brigade soldiers turned a captured North Vietnamese machinegun on an enemy force and drove them from atop a hill west of Tam Ky during Operation Bur-lington Trail.

The four Company B, 1st Battalion, 48th Infantry, soldiers were cut off from their unit by heavy fire from atop the hill. The only way to go was up.

"When we spotted the machinegun position we started lobbing grenades and M79 rounds. The gun stopped firing so we went in close to investigate," said Sergeant Richard J. Drapczuk. Three enemy were dead inside the hole.

The entire hilltop position was heavily fortified. Trenches and tunnels formed a honeycomb complex that included the ma-

chinegun position.

"We could see they had a circular perimeter set up because of the way the fire was going out. It just seemed kind of natural to turn the machinegun on them," Drapczuk said.

Suddenly the NVA soldiers, who had not detected the take-over by the four 198th Infantry Brigade soldiers received fire from their own position.

"I guess it came as a surprise," Drapczuk said. "Their firing going out slowed to a trickle and they started crawling along the trenches to escape."

But Private First Class Dempsey Waters had a different idea and he charged into the trenches firing M79 rounds.

"There were blood trails leading out of just about all the trenches," Waters said. "We

wounded quite a few. One of the NVA soldiers killed in the machinegun position was an officer."

First Lieutenant Larry L. Gragg and Private First Class Evan Gollan made up the rest of the small force.

## Cavalry Lifts Dozers Charlie Left Behind

PHUOC VINH, (101st AIRCAV-10) — Troopers from the 101st Air Cavalry's 3rd Brigade moved up the side of a steep ridge through thick jungle north of here recently and came upon a very unusual find, a trio of bulldozers.

"Hey! There's a red bulldozer up there!" exclaimed Specialist 4 Eugene Hingleton, point man, as he moved to within 25 yards of the site.

Hingleton had discovered three red bulldozers, all in good condition.

"They were arranged in a wedge formation," said Sergeant Barney Frazier, squad leader. "It looked like the North Vietnamese had been clearing a road several months earlier and had just quit for some reason and abandoned their heavy equipment."

A future scout dog peers from a 9th Infantry Division soldier's pocket. For now he is still content to do his scouting from a nice friendly hideaway. (9th INF PHOTO)



## 25th Inf Repels Pre-Dawn Attacks

DAU TIENG, (25th INF-10) — More than 400 enemy rocket and mortar rounds and a pair of pre-dawn ground attacks, by two reinforced Viet Cong companies were recently repelled by 3rd Brigade, 25th Infantry Division.

The attack, largest sustained in the two-year-history of Dau Tieng basecamp, was broken by gunships and infantry. At least 10 enemy soldiers were left dead on the perimeter of the camp.

The attack began shortly before 2:30 a.m. as salvo after salvo of mortar fire struck all corners of the basecamp. Miraculously, no one was killed as an official total of 374 mortars, eight 107mm rockets, and 25 rocket grenade rounds slammed around infantrymen who were huddled in defensive bunkers.

Striking from both sides of the perimeter north of the airfield, the Viet Cong attempted a pioneer movement which hit night defensive positions of the 2nd Battalion, 77th Artillery and the 3rd Battalion, 22nd Infantry.

Several artillery bunkers were damaged as the enemy suicide squad hitting the west side of the camp struck with rocket grenades and satchel charges. At least seven VC broke inside the perimeter before the attack was halted.

On the east side of the camp, a larger VC force emerged from behind tombstones in a cemetery but were cut down by machinegun and duster fire. Two VC planted themselves near the end of the runway and tossed pressure-released satchel charges onto the east end of the airstrip.

As gunships entered the fight, the ground attacks were completely disrupted. By the light of flares, enemy soldiers were seen to toss their weapons to the ground and run for the protective cover of nearby woods.

Before dawn, Puff the Magic Dragon gunships began circling the basecamp, dropping flares

and adding more firepower to the assault on the retreating enemy. Artillery fire and more gunship raids also hit the VC.

A preliminary search of the perimeter the following morning recovered, in addition to the enemy bodies, 434 home-made satchel charges; 3 Bangalore torpedoes; 62 grenade rounds, both RPG-2 and RPG-7; 45, 60mm mortar rounds; a grenade-launcher; numerous hand grenades; and 6 assault rifles.

Later in the day, Vietnamese and U.S. troops found a large cache of ammunition and demolitions, similar to those used in the attack, stored in a nearby village.

## Soldiers Become Sailors

DONG TAN, (9th INF-10) — The 1097th Transportation Company is the only unit of its kind in the U.S. Army and Vietnam. Its mission is supporting the 9th Division's 2nd Brigade, Mobile Riverine Force (MRF), as it plies Mekong Delta waterways in pursuit of the VC.

The 1097th originally was assigned to the 1st Logistical Command and attached to the 9th Division for off-shore loading and lighterage. On June 15, it became an element of the division and was attached to the 9th Supply and Transportation Battalion.

Its main function is insuring that the gun barges of the 3rd Battalion, 34th Artillery, are in the right place at the right time for direct fire support of MRF infantry operations. This is accomplished with a fleet of 27 Landing Craft Mechanized Eight boats, called "Mike" boats by their crews. The 73-foot crafts are powered by four diesel engines and can attain speeds of 12 knots. Each has living quarters for its six to seven-men crew.

Other boats of the 1097th fleet include an Aquajail for immediate questioning and classification of detained suspects, an artillery fire direction center and a dayroom boat which serves hot food and cold drinks to crews of the other vessels.

A damage control boat accompanies the fleet wherever it goes for on-the-spot maintenance and repair. A maintenance barge is based at Dong Tan. In addition to an orderly room, it houses an engine and parts machine shop, living quarters and showers.

Although the crews never leave the boats during an operation, their lives are far from serene.

"We usually draw sniper fire going up canals," said Specialist 4 David Boone, assistant coxswain. "Last trip we went up a canal by Can Tho and the VC tried to get our artillery and mortar barges."

The soldier-sailors returned heavy fire, silencing the enemy while keeping the fleet moving on schedule.