

Vietnam Communique

Action increases in August

Americal Div

Americal Division soldiers killed 281 in heavy fighting with NVA and VC soldiers.

In one day of fighting, the 196th Light Infantry Brigade and 16th Combat Aviation Group gunship crews accounted for 63 enemy killed and the capture of 13 enemy weapons. In the day's heaviest contact units from the 4th Battalion, 21st Infantry under the operational control of the 196th, teamed with the gunship crews for the kills. The 4th Battalion soldiers were credited with 37 kills and the gunship crews with 28. The action occurred two miles south of Hoi An.

Air and ground forces in the 11th Light Infantry Brigade's area of Quang Ngai Province combined to kill 16 VC and capture six weapons. Aero scouts of the 123rd Combat Aviation Battalion killed 10 VC and captured four weapons south of Quang Ngai. Infantrymen of the battalion were credited with seven of the kills, while gunship crews accounted for three. Other brigade units killed six VC and captured two individual weapons.

1st Avn Bde

Helicopter gunship crews of the 13th Combat Aviation Battalion killed 15 VC soldiers in scattered contacts in the Delta region. In a series of encounters 14 miles northeast of Vinh Long, helicopter gunship crews from the 175th Assault Helicopter Company, 13th Combat Aviation Battalion reported killing 15 VC. The chopper crews also destroyed seven structures and sank four sampans during the action.

Canal interdiction teams from the 334th Armed Helicopter Company, 145th Combat Aviation Battalion encountered heavy traffic along enemy infiltration routes near Tay Ninh. The flight leader directed the night missions in numerous firing passes on flotillas of the enemy sampans. Rockets and minigun fire from the gunships destroyed 35 sampans and leveled three structures.

1st Air Cav Div

Soldiers of the 1st Air Cavalry killed 85 in a week of moderate fighting with the enemy.

Nineteen enemy were killed by a Popular Forces platoon and a 1st Air Cavalry Division rifle company in Operation Jeb Stuart III. As the PF soldiers and Company D, 2nd Battalion, 7th Cavalry were searching enemy bunkers northwest of Hue, they killed 11 VC and captured five prisoners. One of the dead was reportedly identified as the VC chief of Quang Dien District, and one of his assistants. Searching more of the bunkers, the PF troopers took two NVA prisoners and killed five more VC and three NVA who refused to surrender.

In other action, elements of the 1st Battalion, 12th Cavalry encountered scattered contacts nine miles south of Quang Tri. While moving into the area of the previous day's action, the soldiers began receiving mortar and small arms fire. Maneuvering on the bunker, they killed one NVA with hand grenades. Later in the afternoon, the cavalrymen encountered three more NVA soldiers in bunkers and killed all three with hand grenades.

1st Inf Div

First Infantry soldiers killed 26 in a week of light contact with the enemy.

Troopers of the 2nd Squadron, 11th Cavalry Regiment, operating under the 1st Infantrymen, engaged a VC force in a battle south of Loc Ninh. The cavalrymen were moving to reinforce an ARVN compound near Loc Ninh, which was under attack by a large enemy force, when they began receiving heavy small arms fire from a VC force concealed in a clump of rubber trees.

The cavalrymen returned the fire and the enemy withdrew. As the armored vehicles moved in to sweep the area, they began to receive heavy fire. The cavalrymen, supported by helicopter gunships, again forced the enemy to withdraw. A sweep of the area later yielded 17 VC bodies, 10 rifles, three rocket launchers and assorted ammunition.

4th Inf Div

The 4th Infantry encountered a week of light contact with the enemy except for one major battle. The division's toll on the enemy was 53 killed.

Elements of the ARVN 3rd Armored Cavalry, along with a reaction platoon from the 4th Infantry Division's 2nd Squadron, 1st Cavalry, foiled an attempted NVA ambush, killing 31 enemy. The following day the soldiers found 10 more bodies bringing the toll to 41 enemy killed.

In the third day of enemy harassment of convoys along Highway 14 in Kontum Province, an estimated force of two NVA companies attacked a 4th Division convoy 14 miles south of Kontum with mortar, recoilless rifle, small arms, and rocket and machinegun fire. Armored cars from the division's 4th Military Police Company immediately returned the fire. At the outbreak of the attack, tanks and armored cavalry assault vehicles of the 3rd ARVN Cavalry and the 2nd Squadron, 1st Cavalry, which had been deployed along the highway in anticipation of possible contact, began to pour heavy fire into the enemy positions. Under the onslaught of allied armor the enemy broke contact, leaving 41 killed behind.

5th Inf Div (M)

The 5th Infantry Division killed 14 enemy in their first contact.

Elements of the 1st Brigade, 5th Infantry Division (Mechanized) killed 14 NVA soldiers in an action two miles east of Con Thien. Tankers from the 1st Battalion, 77th Armor moved out of their base with three tanks to assist a 1st Marine Division reconnaissance patrol which had come under attack. Two soldiers from the armor unit were wounded in the action.

9th Inf Div

In two days of fighting 11 miles south-east of Tan An, elements from all three brigades of the 9th Infantry Division and supporting units killed 104 VC and captured 26 weapons.

Action began when soldiers of the 5th Battalion, 60th Infantry were inserted into a landing zone and immediately made contact with the enemy. As fighting continued into the afternoon additional troops were moved into the area to

Artillery, airstrikes and gunships were called in to support the infantrymen as intermittent contact continued throughout the night. The following morning the infantrymen made contact with the enemy again. Just after daylight the contact was broken and a sweep of the battle area disclosed 104 bodies.

25th Inf Div

In a week of heavy contact the 25th Infantry Division killed 224 Viet Cong and North Vietnamese Army soldiers.

A series of unsuccessful attacks on several Tropic Lighting bases near Tay Ninh city and heavy fighting within the province capital itself cost the enemy 157 lives.

Only nine Americans were killed as the U.S. forces halted the main thrust into the city; however, two Viet Cong battalions had reportedly infiltrated into the city and set several fires.

Fighting began as elements of the 3rd Squadron, 4th Cavalry and 4th Battalion, 23rd Infantry with Vietnamese forces pushed the enemy into the southeast third of the city. In an effort to minimize damage to the city, helicopter gunships and artillery fire was not used.

The first contact occurred when 2nd Battalion, 27th Infantry soldiers lying in ambush engaged the rear element of an estimated 300-man force moving on a road towards Tay Ninh.

101st Air Cav Div

The Screaming Eagles of the 101st Air Cavalry Division, in a week of light action, reported killing 43 enemy soldiers.

Operation Somerset Plain continued to meet light resistance as the 101st conducted search operations, in the A Shau Valley area. While conducting a screening operation west of A Luoi, helicopter crews of B Troop, 1st Squadron, 9th Air Cavalry, a 1st Air Cavalry Division unit operating under the control of the 101st, spotted a reinforced NVA squad. Airstrikes and artillery killed eight of the enemy.

Soldiers of the 1st ARVN Infantry Regiment working with the 101st killed 10 enemy and captured 10 weapons when they engaged an NVA force in the A Shau Valley. Artillery and airstrikes supported the ground troops in the action.

173rd Abn Div

A former Viet Cong officer saved the life of a 173rd Airborne Brigade paratrooper caught in a deadly booby trap. Nguyen Thanh, a Kit Carson Scout, crawled 30 feet to clip a trip wire entangled in the boots of Specialist 4 Charles W. Scudder.

As the trooper was moving through a gap in a hedgerow, he heard a loud click. "All I could think of was booby trap," Scudder recounted. Looking down, he noticed a thin wire twisted in his boots. Unable to reach the wire himself without moving it, the trooper called for assistance. The ordnance disposal unit which responded was unable to locate the bomb. By this time, nearly 30 minutes had gone by. "My feet were stationary," he recalled, "but I think my knees were knocking."

Then Thanh, a former VC company commander who had rallied to the allied cause, crawled to the troopers aid and cut the wire.

