

Vietnam Communique

Aviation units kill 275

Americal Div

The Americal Division killed 207 in a week of heavy and scattered fighting with the enemy.

Units of the 196th Light Infantry Brigade killed 17 enemy soldiers in scattered actions in Operation Wheeler/Wallowa. Two companies of the 3rd Battalion, 21st Infantry killed six VC and two NVA soldiers in sporadic fighting 17 miles northwest of Tam Ky.

Elements of the 11th Light Infantry Brigade killed nine VC and eight NVA soldiers in scattered contacts in Quang Ngai Province.

A unit of the 3rd Battalion, 1st Infantry killed eight NVA soldiers and captured three weapons in two skirmishes in rice paddies west of Quang Ngai City. Another unit of the battalion killed one VC and detained one suspect in action six miles northwest of Duc Pho.

1st Avn Bde

The 1st Aviation Brigade killed 275

enemy in a week of heavy fighting.

Helicopter crews of the 13th Combat Aviation Battalion reported killing a total of 16 enemy soldiers while flying missions in support of ARVN infantry units in the IV Corps Tactical Zone.

While supporting elements of the 9th ARVN Infantry Division, six miles south of Vinh Long, helicopter gunship crews of the 114th Assault Helicopter Company reported killing 10 enemy soldiers and sinking four sampans. Operating nearby, chopper crews of the 175th Assault Helicopter Company reported killing three VC.

Helicopter crews from A Troop, 7th Squadron, 1st Air Cavalry and Vietnamese soldiers engaged an enemy force during a patrol in the western portion of the Mekong Delta. The chopper gunners sighted an estimated VC squad 25 miles northwest of Rach Gia. They engaged the enemy force and inserted Camp Strike Force elements. The Vietnamese troopers killed eight VC.

25th Inf Div

The 25th Infantry Division killed 173

enemy in a week of heavy contact.

Action picked up for 25th Infantry Division soldiers and attached elements of the 3rd Brigade, 101st Airborne Division as they cordoned an enemy force near Trang Bang. Following a report by a Hoi Chanh that a Viet Cong battalion was located three miles east of Trang Bang, elements of the 2nd Battalion, 506th Infantry were airlifted into the area. The paratroopers hit the hot landing zone, but after a 30-minute firefight, the contact was lost.

The fighting resumed in the afternoon when units began receiving rocket and small arms fire from a village. During the afternoon elements formed a cordon around the area. At least 19 enemy were killed.

Elements of the 1st Battalion, 27th Infantry killed one VC 13 miles north of Cu Chi, while helicopter gunships of the 3rd Squadron, 17th Air Cavalry killed another eight miles south of Trang Bang. One additional enemy was killed by a division patrol.

9th Inf Div

Riflemen and supporting elements of the 9th Infantry Division reported killing 113 enemy soldiers in a week of moderate action.

Soldiers of the 1st Brigade and gunship crews from the 12th Combat Aviation Group's 3rd Squadron, 17th Air Cavalry reported killing 27 enemy in action between Rach Kien and Can Gioac.

Contact was first made in the morning, when an element of the 2nd Battalion, 60th Infantry killed one VC two miles northeast of Rach Kien.

Late in the afternoon, gunship crews from the air cavalry unit sighted several VC running toward a woodland four miles east of Can Gioac. Two companies of the 2nd Battalion, 60th Infantry were airlifted into the area. As they began to sweep the woodland, they received heavy automatic weapons fire from an enemy force in a bunker complex. Two companies and gunships killed 26 VC in bunker-to-bunker fighting.

At the same time, one mile to the north more VC were spotted. Soldiers of the 5th Battalion, 60th Infantry and the 2nd Battalion, 39th Infantry moved into the area.

As they began their sweep, the infantrymen found 10 bodies in graves. A short time later, they made contact with an enemy force and called in artillery fire.

4th Inf Div

Ivymen of the 4th Infantry Division killed 60 enemy soldiers in a week of moderate action.

Cavalrymen from the 1st Squadron, 10th Cavalry reinforced a Regional Force element in heavy contact with an unknown size enemy force six miles north-northeast of Ban Me Thuot. When contact was lost the RF unit had killed 17 enemy while the cavalrymen had accounted for 30 enemy dead.

Artillery was called in on several enemy soldiers in foxholes 13 miles northwest of Dak To, killing two and destroying one fighting position.

Paratroopers from the 173rd Airborne Brigade's 4th Battalion, 503rd Infantry, operating under the control of the 4th, discovered an enemy staging area three miles south of Duc Lap. A large quantity of bloody garments and bandages were found in the area.

101st Abn Div

Screaming Eagles of the 101st Airborne Division raised the total number of enemy killed in Operation Nevada

Eagle to 1,858 by killing 36 during the week.

During combined operations Regional and Popular Force units teamed with gunship crews of Company D, 101st Assault Helicopter Battalion in an encounter six miles west of Phu Loc. During the assault 17 enemy were killed.

In action northwest of Hue, units of the 1st Battalion, 502nd Infantry killed three enemy soldiers and captured one individual weapon. While in an ambush two miles east of Hue, paratroopers of the 1st Battalion, 501st Infantry killed another NVA soldier.

In another night ambush, a patrol from the 2nd Battalion, 505th Infantry, a 3rd Brigade, 82nd Airborne Division unit under the operational control of the 101st, killed one NVA soldier and captured three weapons south of Phu Bai.

1st Cav Div

Soldiers of the 1st Cavalry Division killed 23 enemy soldiers in light action.

In Operation Jeb Stuart III a forward air controller working with the 1st Battalion, 5th Cavalry called in artillery and airstrikes on a group of soldiers in the jungle 12 miles south of Quang Tri. Eight NVA soldiers were killed in the action.

Troopers of the 5th Battalion, 7th Cavalry found the bodies of six NVA soldiers during a search-and-clear operation in the mountains 19 miles west of Hue. The enemy had apparently been killed by artillery.

1st Inf Div

In a week of light action, elements of the 1st Infantry Division killed 15 enemy soldiers.

Acting on information received from a Hoi Chanh, an aero-rifle team from the 11th Armored Cavalry Regiment, operating under the control of the 1st, was inserted into an area south of Lai Khe.

Searching through dense jungle and rubber trees, the cavalrymen encountered an estimated enemy platoon. After a brief firefight, the enemy withdrew. A sweep of the area yielded six enemy bodies.

A short time later, troopers of the 11th's 3rd Squadron together with elements of the 5th ARVN Infantry Division killed two more enemy in the same area. The cavalrymen also detained two suspects and captured 13 rocket rounds.

Other action

Soldiers of the 199th Light Infantry Brigade met little resistance in a week of light action.

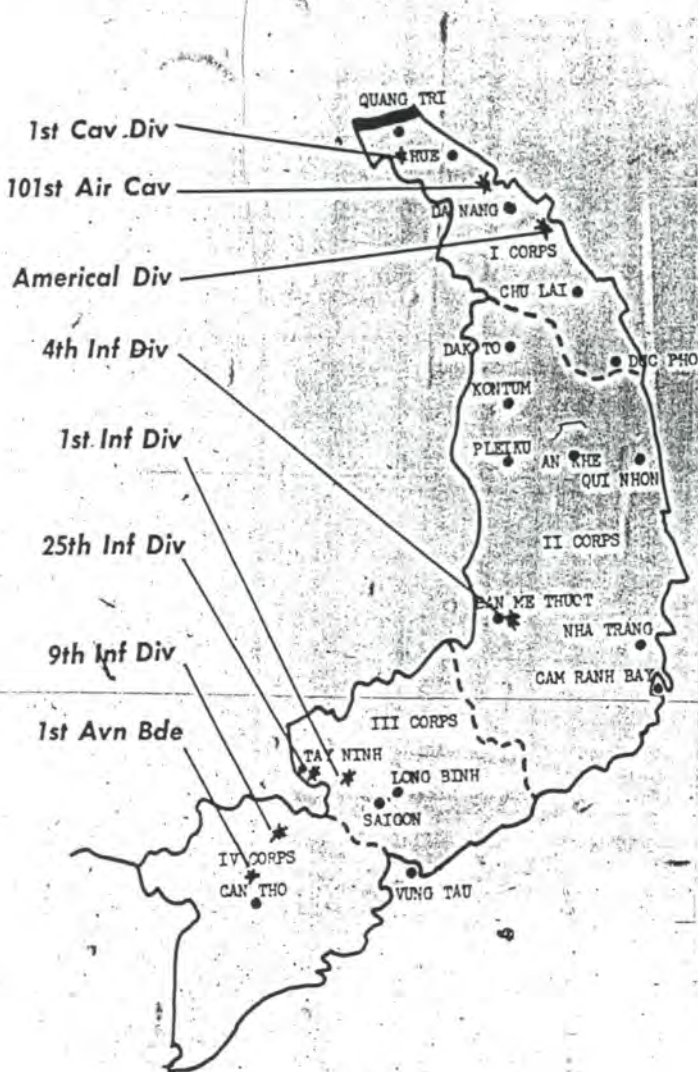
Reconnaissance helicopter crews led soldiers of the 199th Light Infantry Brigade to a large bunker complex three miles south of Duc Hoa. Elements of the 4th Battalion, 12th Infantry moved to the area and destroyed 67 bunkers, which were arranged along the banks of a canal.

The 1st Brigade, 5th Mechanized Infantry Division and U.S. Marine elements encountered light resistance in a week of action.

Two companies of the 1st Battalion, 81st Infantry were called in to reinforce a Marine company which was in heavy contact with the enemy in the late afternoon. The companies successfully linked up with the Marines. Fighting continued into early evening when the enemy withdrew. Nine NVA soldiers were killed in the action.

The 173rd Airborne Brigade was awarded the Meritorious Unit Commendation in ceremonies at Landing Zone English.

In recent action a company of the 2nd Battalion, 503rd Infantry engaged an estimated enemy squad in Operation Cochise Green/Dan Sinh. The enemy withdrew after a brief firefight.





Fish, rice and corn have been adding a little variety to the otherwise routine diet of C-rations supplied to the men of the 2nd Platoon, Company C, 70th Engineer Battalion at An Lac. When work at the airstrip slows the engineers use their equipment to help the local Montagnards repair roads and clear areas of trees and brush. In exchange for this help, the natives bring the engineers rice and corn they have grown and fish they have caught.

A platoon from Company D, 299th Engineer Battalion recently completed the construction of two revetments for Chinook helicopters near their company area at Dak To. The primary purpose of the 60-foot-long protective facilities is to house the large double-rotor aircraft when they are stranded there overnight due to adverse weather conditions. The men had to stand in ankle-deep thick red clay mud brought on by the monsoon rains while they built them.

Medics of the 2nd Battalion, 22nd Infantry treated more than 2,000 Vietnamese patients in a little more than 20 days. Daily medical civic action program operations in communities near Tay Ninh averaged in excess of 100 patients.

Driving over some of the most treacherous terrain and enemy-infested roads in Vietnam, the 556th Transportation Battalion recently logged its three millionth mile delivering petroleum products to Free World Forces throughout the III Corps Tactical Zone.

The Vietnam Regional Exchange has almost doubled its food service to the troops as evidenced by sales figures the last six months. From \$1,202,467 in sales in February, VRE food sales increased to \$2,036,998.

South Vietnamese soldiers fulfill vital role with 25th

CU CHI, (25th INF) — At first glance the soldier looked like any other American soldier of oriental ancestry. He pulled details, took his turn on the bunker line and went on patrol.

"It never occurred to me that he might be anything but a U.S. soldier," declared one 25th Division sergeant, "until one day I asked a friend who he was and discovered that he was a Vietnamese soldier assigned to the unit."

Under a program which was started in October 1967, 22 Army of the Republic of Vietnam

(ARVN) soldiers were sent from Vietnamese training centers and assigned to units of the U.S. 25th Infantry Division.

The Vietnamese soldiers assigned to the units are all privates and privates first class. They do everything that the American soldier of equivalent rank does and they are also given the same privileges as their American counterpart.

ARVN soldiers assigned to the division are sent to the five-day replacement training course given to all newcomers. Then they are assigned to a unit as a re-

connaisance scout observer or as a rifleman with the recon element.

Although there is sometimes a slight language barrier when the Vietnamese soldiers are first assigned to the 25th, both they and the American soldier soon pick up a working knowledge of each other's language.

Of the original 22 Vietnamese assigned to units of the 25th, one has been sent to the Vietnamese Officer Candidate School and two have been wounded in action.

The story of one of the soldiers wounded is an example of the dedication that these men show while performing their duties. Private Nguyen Van Thanh was assigned to the recon platoon of the 2nd Battalion, 22nd Infantry. Thanh's unit was sweeping the main supply route from Dau Tieng to Tay Ninh when they came under enemy fire.

In the initial burst, Thanh was shot through the wrist and taken to the platoon medic bleeding profusely. When the medic turned his back to get a dressing, Thanh grabbed his rifle and ran back to the fight. By the time the medic caught up to him, Thanh was on the verge of passing out from loss of blood.

Thanh's story was not an isolated case. Reports from commanders who have ARVN soldiers assigned to their command indicate that the Vietnamese soldiers perform their assigned tasks exceptionally well.

"These men have lived here all their lives," said one commander. "They know the terrain and the enemy and impart this knowledge to the American soldiers. They help us as much with this knowledge as we help them with our knowledge of the terrain."

Commissions are offered to NCOs, warrant officers

LONG BINH (USARV) — Adjutant General officials have reemphasized the USARV direct commission program whereby enlisted men and warrant officers may acquire a direct commission to second lieutenant.

Captain Horace W. Powell, USARV direct commission project officer, said many soldiers serving in combat units in Vietnam are unaware that direct commissions are available to those who demonstrate outstanding leadership ability in a combat environment.

The USARV direct commission program, a substitute for the old World War II "battlefield commission" was initiated in February 1966 for the purpose of giving prompt recognition to Army personnel demonstrating leadership traits in combat. Since its beginning, more than 200 Vietnam soldiers have been granted commissions as second lieutenants helping to fill the Army's shortage of junior grade commissioned officers.

According to Captain Powell, approximately 25 per cent of those applying for the commission will eventually obtain

the gold bar.

Those receiving the commission are squad leaders, platoon sergeants, helicopter pilots and other soldiers who have been placed in positions where they must demonstrate qualities desired in a commissioned officer.

How do you know if you qualify?

You must be in the grade of E-5 or higher with a minimum of six months in grade, assigned to USARV for three months and be recommended by

both your company and battalion commander. Your commanders must point out in the recommendation specific instances where your outstanding leadership ability was demonstrated.

Other requirements include that the applicant must be a high school graduate or the equivalent, possess a minimum GT score of 110 and a minimum OCT score of 115 and be no more than 28 years old on the date of his commission.

173rd Airborne aids Catholic school

AN KHE, (173d ABN) — The chatter of the marketplace was baffled by the uninterrupted drone of passing supply convoys on Highway 19.

It was an ordinary sun-drenched day for most of the villagers of An Khe, set on a plateau in the eastern Central Highlands of Vietnam. But for some it was special.

When a jeep load of Sky Soldiers rolled off the busy highway they were greeted by the glistering eyes of Vietnamese orphan children. Today the children were to receive over \$1,200 from the officers and men of the 173rd Airborne Brigade from collections in both Catholic and Protestant worship services. The money will be used to purchase food and clothing and for the completion of a school building.

"The children and I have much faith, and faith can bring about miracles," said Padre Nguyen Duc Ngoc of the Catholic Church of Assumption, located in the southern edge of An Khe township.

"A lot of faith and no money was the situation that Padre Ngoc faced when I visited the small parish and school a few weeks ago," recalled Chaplain (Capt.) Charles J. Davis from

the Diocese of Camden, N.J.

"The man had undertaken a magnificent task," Chaplain Davis said, "and was doing a remarkable job of providing for the children, despite being sorely handicapped by a lack of financing."

The padre had been feeding nearly 2,000 parish dependents each month, and providing room and board for 32 orphans on a full-time basis as well as conducting a nursery school for 90 tots daily.

In addition to this he and his parishioners had undertaken a project to construct a school building adjacent to the church and reconstruct the church steeple which had been destroyed by a Viet Cong rocket during the Tet offensive.

"There was obviously a dire need for financial assistance," remarked Chaplain Davis. "From my conversations with Padre Ngoc I felt that funds donated by members of the brigade could not go for a more worthwhile endeavor."

"The sight of all those little smiling faces was thanks enough," commented Chaplain Davis, who added, "the brigade made a lot of friends here today."



Captain Richard A. Friedman provides the dental portion of the Medical Civic Action Program offered by the 17th Combat Aviation Group. (1st AVN PHOTO)

Boy Scouts fly in US helicopters

PHUOC VINH, 101st ABN — A brief "time out" from combat operations by personnel of the 101st Airborne Division's 3rd Brigade and the 162nd Helicopter Assault Co. resulted in sky rides for a young group of young Vietnamese here.

Specialist 4 Stephen P. Need, a brigade civil affairs medic, and Staff Sergeant Richard M. Burt civil affairs NCO for the 2nd Battalion, 506th Infantry, requested rides for the local boy scout troop, formed and supervised by the paratroopers. The 162nd pilots and crews agreed immediately.

Need quickly rounded up 25 area scouts and set off for the airfield with his boys in a classic two abreast formation.

"This is the first air ride for these boys so this should be interesting," smiled Need, noting the mixture of fright and eagerness in the boys' faces.

A crewchief, Specialist 4 Thomas D. Bryan, and a gunner, Specialist 4 Phil H. Bishop worked quickly to strap the boys in and signaled the pilots that all was secure and ready for takeoff.

The first of three five-minute flights whirled off in the distance. The waiting boys gave the airborne scouts a verbal sendoff and many friendly waves. The chopper circled the basecamp's perimeter and flew over the village, where most of the boys live.

As the last group of boys dismounted the chopper and the pilots flew off for another combat operation, the appreciative boys gave its crew the traditional Boy Scout salute.

"I've never seen these kids so happy," Burt said. "It's something the boys will remember for the rest of their lives."