

Vietnam Communique

Dec. 29-Jan. 6

Heavy fighting flares in all corps

25th Inf Div

Soldiers of the 25th Infantry Division killed 62 enemy in a week of intense action.

Nineteen enemy were killed in eight scattered encounters on Jan. 4.

Soldiers from the 3rd Squadron, 4th Armored Cav. accounted for nine enemy dead. With the aid of division artillery, the infantrymen killed five Viet Cong eight miles south of Dau Tieng after receiving heavy small arms fire and automatic weapons fire.

Gunship crews killed two more Viet Cong following separate sightings during early evening hours one and one half miles east of Cu Chi and five and one half miles north of Trang Bang.

On Jan. 6 soldiers of the 25th Infantry Division accounted for 13 enemy killed in three contacts.

In a six-hour battle 10 miles northwest of Cu Chi, soldiers of the 3rd Squadron, 4th Armored Cav. killed six enemy and detained one suspect fleeing from the action.

1st Air Cav

1st Cavalry Division (Airmobile) and supporting elements reported killing 139 enemy soldiers in a week of heavy contact.

A gunship crew from the 1st Squadron, 9th Air Cav. operating eight miles east of Quan Loi on Jan. 1 spotted and engaged 18 NVA soldiers after they received small arms fire. The gunners killed two of the enemy.

On Jan. 5 soldiers from the 1st Cavalry Division and supporting elements reported killing 44 enemy in actions mostly west of Phuoc Binh.

Following an airstrike on a bunker complex 14 miles west of Phuoc Binh, elements of the 1st Squadron, 9th Air Cav. reported 27 NVA soldiers killed. Two hours later, squadron helicopter elements flew to an area a few miles east

to support a ground unit. A division recon patrol had engaged an estimated 20 NVA soldiers. Chopper crews and cavalrymen reported 11 of the enemy killed during the battle.

9th Inf Div

Soldiers from the 9th Infantry Division experienced heavy contact the past week, killing 299 enemy.

On Dec. 30 infantrymen of the 9th Division operating in the Mekong Delta killed 23 Viet Cong in scattered contacts.

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The previous day, soldiers of the 9th Division and supporting elements reported killing 36 Viet Cong in scattered contacts.

Rifleman from the 3rd Bn., 47th Inf. killed two Viet Cong after receiving automatic weapons fire while extracting troops during airmobile operations 15 miles south of Dong Tam.

Americal Div

Americal Division soldiers reported killing 181 enemy in a week of intense action.

On Dec. 30 Americal forces killed 39 enemy, detaining 13 suspects and found one ton of rice in scattered actions.

Soldiers of the 11th Light Infantry Brigade accounted for 22 enemy killed in action this day.

Patrolling an area near a lakeside village 10 miles southeast of Quang Ngai City, an element of the 1st Bn., 20th Inf. was fired upon by an estimated 16 Viet Cong. The infantrymen returned fire and called in gunships from the 174th Assault Helicopter Company.

4th Inf Div

Scattered action was reported by elements of the 4th Infantry Division during the week as they reportedly killed 14 of the enemy.

On Dec. 29, operating 16 miles south-east of Kontum, a unit from the 3rd Bn.,

12th Inf. surprised and killed two NVA soldiers, while a 3rd Bde. recon patrol killed one NVA soldier in a mid-afternoon action 12 miles southeast of Dak To.

Five enemy were killed by soldiers of the 4th Division on Jan. 1 in two separate actions.

Infantrymen of the 2nd Bn., 35th Inf. ambushed an enemy force 13 miles north-east of Ban Me Thuot, killing four NVA and capturing three individual weapons.

3rd Bde, 82nd Abn

A reconnaissance patrol from the 3rd Brigade, 82nd Airborne Division engaged an estimated enemy squad, killing three Viet Cong nine miles north of Saigon on Dec. 29.

A light fire team called in to extract the patrol killed one more.

Two days later soldiers of the 82nd Division found three enemy bodies that had apparently been killed by artillery fire a few days earlier in an area eight miles west of Saigon.

101st Abn Div

101st Airborne Division soldiers accounted for 26 enemy deaths in a week of light action.

On Jan. 1, infantrymen killed five enemy in scattered encounters and reported finding the body of an enemy soldier killed in a previous action.

Nine enemy were killed by Screaming Eagle elements and two bodies were discovered on Jan. 2.

An ambush and combat assault mission near Phu Loc netted four enemy killed for soldiers of the 2nd Bn., 327th Inf. A recon craft from the 7th Squadron, 17th Air Cav. killed three enemy near the A Shau Valley, while other gunship crews accounted for one enemy killed near Phu Loc.

1st Inf Div

Twenty-two enemy were reportedly killed by elements of the 1st Infantry

Division during the past week.

Soldiers from the 2nd Bn., 28th Inf., supported by a light fire team and artillery fire, killed four Viet Cong 12 miles east of Lai Khe.

An ambush patrol from the 1st Bn., 2nd Inf. killed one Viet Cong on a jungle trail 14 miles northwest of Lai Khe.

Soldiers from the 11th Armored Cavalry Regiment, under the operational control of the 1st Division, killed one enemy in an action just south of Lai Khe.

Soldiers from the 1st Division and supporting elements killed six enemy in light contact on Jan. 1.

Rifleman from the 2nd Bn., 28 Inf. engaged 20 Viet Cong with Claymore mines eight miles north of Lai Khe, killing four.

23rd Arty Gp

Soldiers from the 23rd Artillery Group killed 39 enemy in several fire missions during the week.

On Jan. 2, 27 enemy were killed in action near Dau Tieng.

Firing their 155mm howitzers into an area three miles east of Dau Tieng in three missions, men of Btry. A, 1st Bn., 27th Arty. blasted a group of the enemy. An aerial observer flying over the area reported sighting 22 enemy bodies in the strike area. Soldiers from Btry. C, 2nd Bn., 32nd Arty. fired their eight-inch guns on a bunker complex southeast of Dau Tieng, destroying the complex.

199th Inf

Soldiers of the 199th Light Infantry Brigade discovered an enemy munitions cache during scattered actions on Jan. 1.

The cache was located by infantrymen from the 5th Bn., 12th Inf. 19 miles southwest of Saigon. It included 17 AK47 rifles, and 2,000 rounds of AK47 ammunition.

One Viet Cong was killed 17 miles west of Saigon by other brigade elements.

11th Cav Regt

Soldiers of the 11th Armored Cavalry Regiment killed 13 enemy in a two-hour battle near Lai Khe on Dec. 30.

Conducting a reconnaissance-in-force operation under the control of the 1st Infantry Division, soldiers from the 2nd Squadron engaged an unknown-size enemy force near a creek three miles east of Lai Khe. Reinforced by tanks and gunships, the soldiers battled the enemy for two hours in the heavily wooded swamp area. Thirteen enemy were killed and seven suspects detained.

173rd Abn Bde

Paratroopers from the 173rd Airborne Brigade killed four enemy soldiers during a week of light action.

In action eight miles west of An Khe, soldiers of the 1st Bn., (Mech), 503 Inf., under the operational control of the 173rd Airborne Brigade, thwarted an attempted ambush of a truck convoy along Route 19, killing three Viet Cong and capturing one crew served weapon.

Elsewhere, paratroopers located 6,000 pounds of rice and 500 pounds of medical supplies in three caches 15 miles northwest of An Khe.

54th Arty Gp

Artillerymen from the 54th Artillery Group killed eight enemy soldiers during two fire missions on Dec. 29. Six Viet Cong were killed and two sampans were sunk by elements of the 7th Bn., 8th Arty., after an Air Force forward air controller spotted the enemy moving along a river northwest of Ben Luc.

In other action, artillery crews from the 5th Bn., 42nd Arty. killed two enemy and ignited one secondary explosion in an area southwest of Bear Cat.

1st Bde, 5th Inf

Elements of the 1st Bde., 5th Infantry Division's 1st Bn., (Mechanized), 61st Inf. detained three suspects who had one AK47 rifle in a camouflaged bunker on a beach eight miles east of Quang Tri City. The suspects were later confirmed as Viet Cong.



ROUTING CHARLIE is this Americal Division soldier as he tosses a grenade into a bunker on the outskirts of Viet Cong village during a search and destroy mission.

Americal Photo

Driver busts road ambush

LONG BINH—Sgt. Michael A. Bryne was returning from Phu Loi en route here. After dropping off a load of angle iron he was glad to be heading back.

Enjoying the tranquility of the countryside along MSR 25, little did the driver from the 41st Port Construction Co., 159th Engineer Group, 20th Brigade realize that within the next few minutes he would be engaged in a fight for his life.

As his 2½-ton truck came upon a rubber plantation 20 meters to the right, he noticed an ARVN jeep he had been following was receiving fire. A squad of Viet Cong had opened up with semi-automatic weapons attempting to ambush the two vehicles.

Bryne watched as five ARVN soldiers guided their vehicle off the road after it nearly turned over. As the jeep went into the ditch, Bryne began losing control of his vehicle. A bullet had penetrated the front tire and he was forced to stop.

Immediately jumping from his truck, he low crawled over to the ARVN soldiers. The ARVN officer handed him a carbine and two clips of ammo. Crouching behind the huge wheel of his 2½-ton truck for cover, Bryne began opening fire at the Viet Cong who were 50 meters away on the right side of the road.

Noticing that the ARVN soldiers had depleted their ammo supply, Bryne yelled to them, "Stay low and get your ammo, I'll cover you."

Just as he began to lay down a base of fire, two Viet Cong exposed themselves among the rubber trees opposite his position. Taking advantage of the opportunity Bryne dropped the first Viet Cong with a single shot and then directed his fire on the second enemy soldier.

Noticing the second Viet Cong drop his rifle and grab his chest, a third enemy soldier exposed himself, scurrying through the rubber trees. The ARVN lieutenant had meanwhile reloaded his clip and shot the third Viet Cong with his pistol.

Just as suddenly as the fire-fight had started it came to a halt. After a five-minute wait the six men moved out in the direction of the ambush site. As they entered the rubber plantation the men caught a glimpse of three more enemy soldiers quickly making good their escape through the dense undergrowth.

Finding the three Viet Cong dead, the men searched the area for enemy weapons. They searched fruitlessly for 15 minutes and finally determined that others took the weapons with them.

Although a bit shaken, Bryne remarked on the day's events, "When I go back to the States this is the one experience I won't forget."



MINE SWEEPS like this one save many lives along Vietnam's roads. These paratroopers from the 173rd Airborne Division's Engineers Co. conduct a sweep on

a road near Bong Son, looking for something unpleasant Charlie may have planted.

173rd Abn Photo

Aviators blast VC, find TNT

SAIGON—During a two-day action eight miles southwest of here, scout helicopters and gunships from A Troop, 3rd Squadron, 17th Air Cav., 1st Aviation Brigade blasted VC elements and discovered a vast ammunition cache.

Alerted to enemy activity in the area, the gunships thundered a salvo of rockets and mini-gun fire on the VC troops, killing 14. Cobra teams and artillery kept the pressure up during the night, forcing the VC unit to split into small groups in an attempt to escape.

The following morning found the A Troop scout teams relentlessly pursuing the enemy. Lt. William C. Fox, flying an OH-6A observation helicopter, spotted several trails converging on a bunker complex. Continuing his reconnaissance, Fox discovered an extensive ammunition cache.

Infantrymen of the 2nd Bn., 60th Inf., 9th Infantry Division, were inserted into the area to recover the cache. During the insertions, a scout team from the battalion killed two more VC in the area.

Part of the huge cache consisted of 193 pounds of TNT, 382 80mm mortar rounds, 43 73mm and 57mm recoilless rifle rounds, 60 RPG-2 rounds, 21,000 AK-47 rounds, and 28 mines.

A Troop "Hueys" spent the rest of the day hauling out the huge cache of ammunition which would never see the weapons for which it was intended.

No holiday on New Year's

Ivymen trap NVA in ravine

FIREBASE BLACKHAWK—New Year's Day was a holiday for the rest of the world but for Co. A, 3rd Bn., 8th Inf. it was "business as usual." They were up early and patrolling an area the 4th Infantry Division soldiers call "VC Valley."

The company was sweeping through one of the many rocky areas in the valley when Capt. Alfred C. Nelson Jr., the company commander, spotted four NVA soldiers running through a ravine.

Careful check uncovers rice

DAK TO, (4th INF)—A potent new weapon has made sharp inroad into the rice supplies of the VC and NVA units in the Central Highlands. The weapon: another Army report.

The report keeps track of the rice production and purchases of dozens of Montagnard villages here. Whenever an unusually large amount of rice is planted—or bought—by a village, civil affairs officers check immediately.

It's a simple idea, but it makes the life of an enemy supply officer pretty rough.

He ordered the 2nd platoon, led by Lt. Robert E. Griffith, to take his men into the ravine after the soldiers, and had the 4th platoon leader, Lt. Robert W. Feist, set up a blocking force at the other end of the ravine.

Griffith broke his platoon into squads for the search through the bottom of the ravine. The 1st squad, with Sgt. Eugene Howerton acting as squad leader, carefully filed down the side of the hill.

Near the bottom of the hill, Howerton's point man, Pfc. William Barrett, spotted a small hut. He told Howerton, who, having no radio, began to climb back up the hill to tell Nelson of the find. He was no more than 15 feet past the last man in his squad when he saw one of the enemy soldiers staring at him from behind a bush.

"I tried to duck behind a rock and chamber a round at the same time," Howerton said, "but I lost my balance and stumbled backwards."

The noise alerted Nelson who had been perched on a rock near the top of the hill watching his company's progress. He turned and spotted the NVA soldier immediately. The soldier froze when he saw Nelson, and the company commander moved

quickly. He fired seven shots, all of which hit their mark.

At the same instant a sniper opened fire on Nelson, missing him by inches. The company's radio operator, Spec. 4 Manuel V. Fuentes, fired a burst of M16 fire at the sniper, preventing him from taking another shot.

The enemy force broke contact and two more hours of sweeping brought negative results. They did, however, capture the fallen soldier's AK47 and a Chicom light machine gun.

VC killed by psyops hard sell

CHIU LAI—Three Viet Cong who thought the PSYOPs team broadcasting in their area was "all blow and no go" were in for a shock.

The team was using a Navy swift boat to patrol a portion of the coastline in the Americal Division sector of I Corps.

"We were broadcasting standard taped messages," said Capt. Banta York, the 198th Infantry Brigade PSYOPs officer.

As they were cruising back the coastline a helicopter flew out towards the swift boats and opened fire on the tree line. The Viet Cong reacted immediately by returning with a hail of automatic weapons fire.

Reacting quickly, the men in the boat placed .50 cal., M-60 and 81mm mortar fire on the enemy position. "Then the gunships from F Troop, 8th Cav. came in and really worked the area over," York said. The three VC were killed in the action.

Blondie



by Chic Young