

Vietnam Communique

Jan. 27-Feb. 2

Americal Div kills 337

Americal Div

Americal Division soldiers ran up a total of 337 enemy kills in scattered fighting in the I Corps Tactical Zone during the week.

Soldiers of the 11th Light Inf. Bde. accounted for 40 of the 64 enemy killed by the division Jan. 27. In the largest single action, a recon patrol from the 11th Bde.'s 4th Bn., 21st Inf. encountered an estimated 13 enemy, killing 11 of them in the ensuing firefight seven miles northwest of Quang Ngai City.

Three days later, as the total kills for the day rose to 55, elements of the 11th Bde. killed 32 Viet Cong and five NVA soldiers in scattered actions around Quang Ngai City.

The next day, Jan. 31, "Jungle Warriors" of the 11th Bde. accounted for 22 enemy killed and the discovery of a cache containing 27 weapons. The brigade followed this up with the discovery on Feb. 1 of another weapons cache in the same area near Quang Ngai City.

By Feb. 2, the 198th Light Inf. Bde. and Marines under the brigade's operational control had run up a total of 147 enemy killed in Operation Russell Beach. The operation also had netted 230 members of the Communist infrastructure captured, 91 suspects detained and 32 Hoi Chanh. The northern sector of the cordon had reached the South China Sea, while the rest of the forces were within a quarter-mile of the beach.

9th Inf Div

The 9th Infantry Division's "Old Reliabilities" saw heavy action during the week as they killed 268 enemy and uncovered several large caches.

They killed 71 enemy on Jan. 31, when 1st Bde. soldiers and supporting elements accounted for 42 enemy dead in ambushes and operations around Cai Lay.

The following day, infantrymen of the 2nd Bn., 60th Inf. and supporting gunships engaged an enemy force 10 miles north of Tan An in an action that accounted for 28 of the 9th Division's 56 enemy dead that day. Contact began in the afternoon when a battalion element

conducting sweep operations engaged an unknown-size enemy force. Two more companies were inserted later in the evening and during the ensuing fight, the infantrymen killed 21, while gunships of the 3rd Squadron, 17th Cav. killed seven. Continuing the action the next day, sweeps found the bodies of 27 NVA soldiers and the two-day enemy toll put at 55 dead.

1st Cav Div

Thanks to the efforts of "Skytroopers" of the 1st Cavalry Division (Airmobile), the enemy ladders were going to be bare for some time to come. More than 100 tons of rice were uncovered by 1st Cav. soldiers in a series of cache discoveries during the week.

The week also saw the "Skytroopers" kill 135 enemy in a number of actions in the III Corps Tactical Zone.

On Jan. 31, the division killed 47 enemy and uncovered one of the large food caches, in addition to a large weapons cache.

In the day's largest action, a light observation helicopter from the 1st Squadron, 9th Air Cavalry received automatic weapons fire 16 miles southeast of An Loc. The ship engaged the bunker and artillery and airstrikes were ordered, destroying 10 of the 30 bunkers in the complex and killing 34 enemy.

25th Inf Div

Action through the week was generally light for "Tropic Lightning" soldiers of the 25th Infantry Division.

The major actions of the week occurred on Feb. 2, a day when the division accounted for 52 enemy killed. In fighting four miles north of Go Dau Ha, elements of the 3rd Squadron, 4th Armored Cav, supported by the 1st ARVN Marines, killed 34 VC.

At about the same time, soldiers of the 2nd Bn., 3rd Inf., a unit of the 199th Light Infantry Brigade under operational control of the 25th Division, encountered an estimated VC company 22 miles north of Saigon. A sweep conducted after airstrikes were ordered revealed 18 enemy killed.

Elsewhere that day, the 1st Bn., 5th Inf. uncovered a 12,000-pound rice cache seven miles northeast of Cu Chi, while men of the 3rd Bn., 22nd Inf. found a weapons bunker and a small VC hospital containing rice and medical supplies.

1st Inf Div

"Big Red One" soldiers of the 1st Infantry Division encountered light and scattered action while killing 39 enemy during the week and destroying a number of bunkers.

On Feb. 1, two battalion-sized NVA forces initiated a ground attack on the 1st Division's Oran base camp. In an early-morning sweep of the area, seven miles northeast of Dau Tieng, elements of the 1st Bn., 26th Inf. and 1st Bn., 28th Inf. discovered the bodies of 14 NVA soldiers, fatalities in the allied counter-attack.

Infantrymen of the 2nd Bn., 28th Inf. found and destroyed 47 enemy bunkers and 77 fighting positions 13 miles east of Lai Khe, while on another day, the infantrymen destroyed an enemy base camp with 29 bunkers south of Phuoc Vinh.

11th Armored Cav Regt

Blackhorse troopers of the 11th Armored Cavalry killed one enemy and detained three suspects in an incident near Lai Khe Jan. 29. The action began when a regimental reconnaissance helicopter crew spotted an enemy bunker in a heavily wooded area. Blackhorse ground troops joined the battle after enemy fire was received by the chopper.

1st Bde, 5th Inf Div

Elements of the 1st Bn., 77th Armor engaged an estimated platoon size enemy unit Jan. 27 approximately nine miles south of Quang Tri. Contact was lost at an unreported time when the remaining enemy withdrew. Three enemy bodies were found in a sweep of the area. One U.S. soldier was wounded.

3rd Bde, 82nd Abn Div

Ten miles north of Saigon Jan. 28, elements of the 1st Bn., 505th Inf. en-

gaged five VC moving south. One of the enemy was killed during the firefight. There were no U.S. casualties.

199th Light Inf Bde

"Redcatchers" of the 199th Light Infantry Brigade reported killing 26 enemy in a week of light and scattered contacts.

On a cordon operation 12 miles north of Tan An, a company from the 3rd Bn., 7th Inf. killed six VC in several contacts. That same day, elements of the 4th Bn., 12th Inf., operating less than nine miles southwest of Saigon, detained three suspects and captured nearly 12 tons of enemy rice and 1,400 pounds of ammonia nitrate.

101st Abn Div

Soldiers of the 101st Airborne Division (Airmobile) continued probing enemy base areas during the week, killing a total of 24 enemy.

In one day's actions, "Screaming Eagles" of the 2nd Bn., 502nd Inf. killed six enemy and captured two weapons in the coastal area west of Phu Loc, while a similar search and clear operation seven miles southeast of Camp Eagle resulted in two more enemy killed by soldiers of the 1st Bn., 327th Inf.

4th Inf Div

Light and scattered action was reported during the week by the 4th Infantry Division.

"Ivymen" were credited with killing nine enemy, while uncovering 500 pounds of unpolished rice in a cache that was discovered nearly eight miles northwest of Plei Me.

173rd Abn Bde

Elements of the 173rd Airborne Bde. killed 18 enemy in scattered actions during the week.

An armored element of the 173d Airborne Brigade killed seven VC during a pitched 1½ hour battle shortly after midnight near Tuy Hoa.

The action began when an RF/IF platoon came under fire from an estimated enemy company hidden in an abandoned village.

Five armored personnel carriers from the 6th Armor reinforced the local force troops and counter-attacked into the village.

Helicopter and Air Force "Spooky" gunships supported from the air.

23rd Arty Gp

Artillery fire from elements of the 23rd Artillery Group resulted in a reported 23 enemy dead.

High explosive rounds from an eight inch gun battery of the group accounted for four enemy dead and extensive damage to enemy fighting positions.

During five separate fire missions on an area 11 miles north of Tay Ninh, cannoneers from the 2nd Bn., 32nd Artillery fired over 100 rounds.

A 1st Cavalry Division aerial observer reported 36 bunkers destroyed, and four secondary explosions.

Blasting the enemy with its huge eight inch guns, 2nd Bn., 32d Artillery reported five enemy killed approximately seven miles southwest of its Tay Ninh base camp.

From their position just east of Cu Chi, artillerymen from the unit poured 105mm howitzer fire into an area five miles northeast of their location. Four enemy were reported killed.

1st Avn Bde

At 6:30 p.m. Jan. 28 a light fire team from the 134th Assault Helicopter Co., 268th Combat Aviation Bn., was called to an area northwest of Song Cau by "Hawkeye" aircrews of the 223rd Combat Support Aviation Bn. While the light fire team engaged the area with rockets and miniguns another light fire team from the same company joined the action which lasted until nearly 8 p.m. The aircrews reported seven enemy killed, 30 structures destroyed and five secondary explosions.



SCREAMING EAGLES of Co. A, 2nd Bn., 502nd Inf. step with care as they cross a flimsy bamboo bridge near Phu Bai. The 101st Airborne Division

company was moving into an ambush site outside the city.

101st Abn Photo

Battle without bullets is hard-fought victory

PHUOC VINH — Before the last shots had echoed away, after the attempt to over-run remote LZ Dot, on Nov. 14, 1968, another battle was being plotted against the badly beaten enemy force. In the new attack, no bullets would be used, no men would die, and no tangible position would be won.

The new battle, a silent one, was to be fought with words in a struggle for the minds of the enemy soldiers.

The stunned and heavily wounded enemy unit, within hours of its retreat, was flooded with leaflets and loudspeaker broadcasts that instilled doubt in their capabilities, their cause, and their leaders.

"Attention members of V-21 Regiment! You cannot win! You were severely beaten when you attacked the ARVN base camp, located west of the Saigon River in Tay Ninh Province. You suffered more than 289 casualties while the ARVN suffered small losses. You fought well, but against a better and stronger force you didn't have a chance.

Now many of you are wounded and dying. Do you want to be buried in an unmarked grave? You have two choices: die where you are or rally to the government of Vietnam!

If you rally you will be given

medicine and be treated well. Rally now! Hide your weapon and rally during daylight hours to any ARVN or Allied soldier or GVN official.

How many NVA rallied primarily because of this message will be unknown for a long time to come. What is known is that because of this and other psychological warfare techniques, the number of rallying NVA is taking a sharp upswing. Deep inroads are being made into the minds of those who believe that they come here as "liberators" from Hanoi according to Maj. Harold M. Carter, division psychological operations officer of the 1st Air Cavalry Division.

"The key to Psyops is timeliness," he continued. "When you hit them with the word as soon as they slip across the border into Vietnam — before they see their first action—they may not listen to you. Your credibility is doubtful.

"Once they have been hit, and badly, then they are vulnerable to what we have to say. They have seen the Cobras, and felt the artillery and B-52 strikes blowing all around them, and they know that they can't just walk in and take over the way they were told by Hanoi. This is the time we have to get to them, while they are still con-

fused and disoriented... and while the defeat is still fresh in their minds.

"We don't go out there and tell lies, or beat around the bush, we tell it like it is. We don't promise things we can't do. The NVA are told that they will be treated well as PWs or Hoi Chanh and the VC are offered the Chieu Hoi program along with a chance to be reunited with their families."

Another theme currently being employed against the enemy is the Paris talks. "The enemy is not well informed about the peace talks. According to various documents we have captured, and Hoi Chanh and ranking prisoners also, Hanoi has issued instruction that the peace talks are not to be discussed with the troops. It could cause their men to not fight as hard and sort of 'drag their feet' in the war effort. They are urging 100 per cent effort on an around the clock basis.

"What we do here is just inform them that the talks are going on, and disseminate pictures of their leaders in Paris. They know what their leaders look like, and when they find out these negotiations have been going on since May, they want to know why they haven't been told about it. Since they have gotten the word, the facts—the political officers have little recourse but to admit it. Since we started telling them about it, evidence is turning up that they may be doing just what Hanoi doesn't want — dragging their feet."

A large problem is getting the "word" of any psyop message to the enemy. "Their leaders won't let them pick up the leaflets, if they can help it. Anyone caught is subject to punishment. Because of this we rely upon our airborne 1,000 watt loudspeaker heavily. After all, they can't stop them from listening. On the other hand, their leaders do try to stop them from hearing.

As the chopper circles at 1,000 feet over head, in a slow bank, the leaders frequently fire their weapons at it. A primary reason is to stop the troops from hearing the broadcast—if they happen to hit the craft in the process well and good.

"The entire psychological operations picture is only a part of the overall pacification program which encompasses the military as well as political, economic, and social process of establishing or reestablishing local government responsive to the involving participation of the people."



MEMBERS of the 9th Infantry Division's 4th Bn., 47th Inf. have their boots and pants washed before boarding boats after a recent operation along the My Tho River in the Mekong Delta.

Engineers pluck pilot from water

CHU LAI—It was the Americal Division engineers instead of the cavalry that came to the rescue recently when an Air Force F-100 pilot and his plane ditched in the South China Sea off Chu Lai.

The 26th Engineer Battalion's command and control helicopter spotted the Air Force pilot after he had abandoned his aircraft and was parachuting into the sea.

The helicopter pilot, WO John R. Elwell a pilot with the 123rd Aviation Bn., hovered over the downed pilot until Lt. Col. Matthew W. Hoey, commanding officer of the engineer battalion, and Spec. 5 Richard D. Melcher, a crew chief in the helicopter, managed to get the pilot into the helicopter.

"I heard the distress call and decided to see if I could help," Elwell said. "I sighted the pilot as he was parachuting down. I then went down close to the

water and waited for the pilot's splashdown," he added.

"Elwell did an outstanding job," Hoey said. At one point, the helicopter pilot deliberately put his ship's left skid into the water and held it there while LTC Hoey climbed out on the skid to get a better grip on the jet pilot, who was encumbered by his flight gear.

According to Hoey, the Air Force pilot landed approximately two miles out in the harbor and the plane went in approximately one-quarter of a mile from the Lai beach.

"We didn't see the plane go in, but we could see the oil slick where it went in," the colonel said.

An investigation to determine the reason for the crash is being conducted.

The Air Force pilot was flown to the 312th Evacuation Hospital where he was treated and released.

Blondie

by Chic Young



search mission when the close call occurred.

The APCs started to push through the dense foliage.

Suddenly, a white snake about five feet long and an inch in diameter appeared hanging from a tree branch in front of the APC.

Half of him was wrapped around a limb and the other half was swaying with its head flexed at a right angle from its body.

"Luckily I saw the snake in time," said Barrows.

The Captain grabbed his rifle and zeroed in on the rigid reptile.

He saw the driver far back in his seat trying to get away from the death-delivering snake. Barrows quickly fired one round but missed.

He fired again, this time taking tighter aim, and cut the snake in half with a direct hit.

The soldier was lucky, for it was discovered that the snake was an albino bamboo viper.