

Vietnam Communiqué

Reds deaths soar in attacks

Feb. 17 to Feb. 23

9th Inf Div

Old Reliabilities of the 9th Infantry Division killed a total of 407 enemy in a week that brought plenty of action throughout the Mekong Delta despite the enemy's self-proclaimed unilateral seven-day ceasefire.

On Feb. 23, 1st Bde. Reconos and supporting elements killed 76 enemy, as cavalrymen of Troop B, 3rd Squadron, 17th Air Cav. killed 28 and infantrymen of the 2nd Bn., 39th Inf. added 13 more enemy killed in scattered incidents.

Earlier in the week, River Raiders of the 2nd Bde. Mobile Riverine Force found 45 enemy bodies on Feb. 21 to conclude a two-day operation that totaled 99 enemy killed in Kien Hoa Province near Ben Tre. The sweep was begun early in the morning by elements of the 3rd Bn., 47th Inf. and the 3rd Bn., 60th Inf., which fought the enemy most of the afternoon and night.

Feb. 22 brought 84 enemy dead as 1st Bde. elements accounted for 48 enemy in actions in Dinh Tuong Province. Night Hunter operations covering a wide area northwest of Cai Be and gunships of Troop B, 3rd Squadron, 17th Air Cav. teamed up with soldiers of the 4th Bn., 39th Inf. to kill 26 Viet Cong.

River Raiders of the 2nd Bde.'s 4th Bn., 47th Inf. that day pounced on an estimated VC company three miles north of Ben Tre. The action began in mid-morning when a battalion element killed nine enemy while sweeping to the southeast of Ben Tre. Firing in support of the infantrymen, artillerymen of the 3rd Bn., 34th Arty. killed five enemy. Then another element was landed just north of the first company by Navy Tango boats of Riverine Division 131. Pushing south to box the enemy, the soldiers killed two VC.

Contact continued throughout the afternoon with ground troops and gunship crews of Troop D, 3rd Squadron, 5th Armored Cav. killing 10 more enemy to bring the total for the action to 26.

25th Inf Div

When the enemy proclaimed their unilateral ceasefire, they made only one mistake as far as the Tropic Lightning soldiers of the 25th Infantry Division were concerned: the enemy ended his ceasefire.

The result was 282 enemy killed on Feb. 23 in actions following attacks on division installations.

Shortly after 3 a.m. an NVA force began a ground attack under cover of mortar and RPG fire against a fire support base five miles southwest of Go Dau Ha. 2nd Bde. infantrymen returned fire with artillery and gunship support and when

the battle ended at 5:30 a.m., the enemy withdrew leaving 109 of their dead behind.

Earlier in the morning a rocket and mortar bombardment preceded enemy ground attacks against a fire support base six miles southeast of Dau Tieng and the 3rd Bde. base camp at Dau Tieng.

An estimated enemy sapper battalion and a rifle battalion attacked the base camp and hard fighting continued until the early daylight hours. Some of the enemy penetrated the perimeter.

By 3:45 a.m., indirect fire had become sporadic but sniper fire lasted until 10 a.m. when the last sniper was eliminated. A sweep of the battlefield yielded 73 VC/NVA dead and numerous enemy weapons.

When the attack on the 3rd Bde. fire support base was broken, infantrymen and artillerymen had killed 38 enemy.

Earlier in the week, an Air Force forward air controller sighted a huge enemy rice cache 14 miles northwest of Tay Ninh. Army and Air Force aircraft and artillery dropped tons of ordnance to destroy the estimated 320 tons of rice.

Division and Vietnamese troops also swooped down on 10 tons of munitions and 150 tons of rice 11 miles east-northeast of Tay Ninh.

America Div

In a week that saw America Division soldiers kill 303 enemy soldiers, the last day of the week again brought heavy fighting.

Division soldiers and supporting forces killed 160 enemy on Feb. 23, with troops of the 1st Squadron, 1st Cav. accounting for 75 and gunship crews from the 174th Assault Helicopter Co. adding 50 more.

The day's largest action took place in the "Pineapple Forest" one mile west of Tam Ky as the cavalrymen battled an estimated enemy battalion generally within a 400-by-600-yard rice paddy area.

Shark gunship crews of the 174th scrambled early in the morning to engage an enemy force one mile west of Duc Pho, killing 23 VC in the fight. Later in the morning, the Shark crews were called to a landing zone six miles north-northwest of Duc Pho, where they spotted an enemy force setting up rocket tubes in well-fortified bunkers. The crews reported killing 27 enemy and destroying 20 structures before calling in airstrikes.

Throughout the week, America elements found fairly sharp fighting in scattered actions.

1st Cav Div

Skytroopers of the 1st Cavalry Division

(Airmobile) killed 180 enemy soldiers in a week of scattered contacts.

On Feb. 19, elements of the 1st Squadron, 9th Air Cav. reported killing 15 NVA soldiers about 22 miles northwest of Xuyen Loc after they had earlier found the bodies of six enemy killed in an airstrike in the same area.

The same day, troopers of the 2nd Bn., 12th Cav. found an enemy rice cache consisting of nearly 10 tons.

On Feb. 21, elements of the 2nd Bn., 7th Cav. discovered a large enemy complex 15 miles north of Xuan Loc. A search of the bunkers yielded 19,000 AK-47 rounds, 23 complete 82mm mortar rounds and 74 complete 60mm mortar rounds, all of which were destroyed.

Gunship crews of the 1st Squadron, 9th Air Cav. also killed ten enemy eight miles east of Phuoc Vinh that afternoon.

1st Inf Div

Big Red One soldiers of the 1st Infantry Division killed 44 enemy soldiers in a week of scattered fighting.

A company from the 1st Bn., 28th Inf. killed seven enemy in a battle west of Lai Khe Feb. 21. A post-contact sweep of the area yielded 25 RPG-2 rounds, an RPG launcher, two 60mm mortar tubes and five AK-47 rifles. The unit killed another enemy in the same area a short time later.

Company D, 1st Bn., 28th Inf., discovered more than four tons of enemy rice in an area eight miles west of Lai Khe. The rice was evacuated for distribution to refugees.

1st Avn Bde

Gunship crews from the 1st Aviation Brigade reported killing 44 enemy and sinking 77 sampans in one day's scattered actions.

Viking crews of the 13th Combat Aviation Bn.'s 121st Assault Helicopter Co. reported killing nine enemy and sinking nine sampans in 'firefly' missions 13 miles northeast of Bac Lieu. In actions 17 miles south of Rach Gia, the Vikings sank 41 sampans and killed three enemy. Thunderbird gunners from the battalion's 336th Assault Helicopter Co. accounted for four enemy and four sampans in the same area.

In other Delta action, gunners from the 162d Assault Helicopter Co. reported killing four enemy who were spotted running for cover in a palm area 10 miles south of Dong Tam. Chopper crews of the 135th Assault Helicopter Co. killed six VC, five in an encounter seven miles southeast of Vinh Long.

In fighting to the north, Bandit gunners of the 118th Assault Helicopter Co. killed eight enemy while flying in support

of the 25th Division (ARVN) six miles north-northeast of Trang Bang.

4th Inf Div

Ivymen of the 4th Infantry Division killed a reported 35 enemy in generally light and scattered action during the week.

One morning an ambush patrol of the 1st Bn., 35th Inf. saw 62 NVA soldiers passing through their kill zone 10 miles west of Pleiku. The enemy carried mortars, rockets and rocket launchers. The Ivymen engaged the end of the column, killing five enemy. The NVA later probed the patrol's perimeter and another enemy was killed.

11th Cav Regt

Blackhorse troopers of the 11th Armored Cavalry Regiment found eight enemy bodies at the scene of a Feb. 20 fight about nine miles northwest of Bien Hoa. During that action, a light fire team and a "Spooky" aircraft provided support.

In another action, Blackhorse troopers cordoned a village eight miles west of (SEE RELATED STORY ON

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Tan Uyen while ARVN soldiers searched the area. One enemy was killed, 32 suspects were detained and a quantity of assorted enemy munitions were captured in the cordon.

199th Inf Bde

Five enemy fired on Redcatchers of the 4th Bn., 12th Inf., 199th Light Infantry Brigade one day seven miles west of Saigon. The soldiers returned the fire and the enemy fled. As the infantrymen

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chased the VC, Razor Back gunships of the 120th Assault Helicopter Co. were fired on while flying 100 meters south of the first contact. In the ensuing fight, one enemy was killed, two suspects were detained and three weapons were captured.

173rd Abn Bde

Elements of the 173rd Airborne Brigade foiled a would-be NVA ambush battalion, killing eight along Highway 19 east of An Khe.

On Feb. 22, an APC platoon from the 1st Bn., 50th Inf., under the operational control of the 173rd, surprised an NVA force setting up an ambush in high elephant grass along the highway. The infantrymen, who were on a road-clearing sweep between two bridges, killed six NVA with machine gun fire.

At nearly the same time, a bridge a mile east of An Khe came under a heavy mortar, RPG and automatic weapons barrage. The weapons platoon guarding the bridge killed two NVA with mortar and automatic weapons fire.

101st Abn Div

Screaming Eagles of the 101st Airborne Division (Airmobile) and supporting elements killed seven enemy and found one enemy body in light action one day.

Near Hue, paratroopers from the 1st Bn., 106th Inf. killed three enemy and found one body. Chopper crews killed another four enemy elsewhere.

1st Bde, 5th Inf

Soldiers of the 1st Brigade, 5th Infantry Division (Mechanized) encountered generally light and scattered action during the week.

Elements of the 1st Bn., 61st Inf. found five enemy one day while sweeping four miles northeast of Quang Tri City. The soldiers killed two enemy and captured an SKS rifle.

23rd Arty Gp

Cannoneers of the 23rd Artillery Group, acting on aerial observers' reports, fired on enemy positions less than 15 miles north of Tay Ninh Feb. 19 and 20. The artillerymen killed four enemy in each of the bombardments, which also destroyed a total of seven bunkers. After one area came under fire, an aerial observer reported, two secondary explosions were seen.



101ST AIRBORNE Division paratroopers move out to take the night from Charlie.

101st Abn Photo

DOD aids retiree job hunt

WASHINGTON (ANF) — A strengthened program to assist the more than 51,000 enlisted military personnel and approximately 13,000 officers who retire from active duty each year was recently announced by the Department of Defense (DOD).

The average age of military personnel who retire is 45.

The new plan, called Project Referral, was developed in recognition of the fact that increasing numbers of military personnel will be retiring in the years immediately ahead.

For some years, the Department of Defense, in cooperation with other government agencies, notably the Department of Labor, has been conducting a program to counsel retiring military personnel on potential employment opportunities.

With the aid of computers, the Department of Defense now intends to strengthen the various individual programs conducted by the services to

assure that maximum assistance is provided to each individual who completes a career of military service. The program will be conducted on a voluntary basis.

Under project Referral, a centralized DOD Skill Data Referral Service will be established in existing facilities at Dayton, Ohio.

This activity will consist of an automated skill data bank which will systematically inventory the skills of retirees, identify areas where such skills could be used to the benefit of both the nation and the individual retiree, and also refer registrants to prospective employers in both the public and private sectors.

Detailed planning and development of automated procedures to support the referral service began in January. A pilot program will be conducted starting in September with full implementation of the program scheduled to begin in the spring of next year.

Mothers & wives beware

Men return sporting hairy lip

CHU LAI — Mothers and wives of America, when your son or husband returns from Vietnam you may not recognize him. Besides the sun tan, added or lost weight, and the new look of maturity gained in the combat zone, he also may be sporting a hairy upper lip.

Don't worry. It's not a tropical disease, but it does seem to be contagious among the men here. The mustache is definitely "in" among American combat soldiers.

Ever since the Department of the Army came out with Army Regulation 600-20 a year ago permitting soldiers to wear

"neatly trimmed" mustaches, the trend here has been catching on to the point where the number of them nearly equals those cleanly shaven.

The vague phrase "neatly trimmed" is left to the individual unit commanders for interpretation. Generally, however, the mustache should not extend below the corners of the mouth and should be trimmed into a neat shape.

Beards, though, are still not authorized for military personnel.

Vietnam presents an excellent opportunity for experimentation with mustaches, and a check of

some of the mustachioed men of the Americal Division, operating in southern I Corps, revealed varying reasons for starting their new growth.

For a few it provides a visible sign of their manliness, but some of the meager products attest to the youth of the would-be mustache wearers.

As one slightly embarrassed "Jungle Warrior" from the 11th Inf. Bde. defiantly said, "I've only been letting it grow for four months. What do you expect? Overnight results?" His mood was darker than his fuzzy upper lip.

Other men stated there wasn't any special reason behind growing their mustaches. It was just something different to do, and since many of their buddies were doing it, they wanted to try too.

"I just thought it would save me a little time shaving in the morning," explained an infantryman from the 198th Infantry Bde. "It hasn't been a bother, and I just may keep it when I return home."

Applications accepted for USMA prep school

FORT BELVOIR (ANF)—Applications are now being accepted by the United States Military Academy Preparatory School (USMAPS) for the academic year 1969-70 commencing in August 1969. The school prepares enlisted candidates to compete for Regular Army and Enlisted Reserve appointments to the United States Military Academy.

A candidate must be between the ages of 17-21, never married, a high school graduate, and show a strong motivation to be a career officer in the Regular Army.

The academic year commences in early August with an average enrollment of 300 candidates. The 10-month program is designed to prepare each candidate to successfully pass the entrance examination at West Point.

The academic program of mathematics and English is equivalent to a first year college course. A rigorous program of physical training, sports and military instruction round out the average day.

During the fall, the entire candidate battalion travels to West Point for an orientation on the Military Academy and cadet life.

The 1968 graduating class from the USMAPS was the largest class in the 23-year history of the school. One hundred twenty-

one enlisted graduates of USMAPS donned cadet grey on July 1, 1968.



"...then I put in a DF requesting Ft. Lauderdale..."



25th Inf. Photo

BINGO, A TRACKER DOG from the 25th Infantry Division's 66th Inf. Platoon (combat tracker), takes a short break after a mission to relax in the sun. The 2nd Brigade pooch's handler is Sgt. Dan Heath.

Snowsleds tested for military use

WASHINGTON (ANF)—The U.S. Army, Alaska, has begun testing 10 snow vehicles for evaluation of their military usefulness. Members of the 171st Infantry Brigade (Mechanized) at Fort Wainwright, Alaska, are putting the vehicles through the paces.

The machines will be operated under various conditions and loads in tactical situations in an effort to determine their potential for military use in cold weather and northern operations.

The selection of the test group of vehicles was governed in part by the requirements that each machine must be capable of being lifted by two men, fit inside an M-113 armored personnel carrier, and be capable of transporting two men over unbroken snow.

The infantrymen will drive the snow vehicles on messenger-courier runs, on reconnaissance patrols, on medical evacuation missions and wire laying assignments. Additionally, it will be used to move rations and ammunition to forward areas and men to and from outposts.

The U.S. Army, Alaska, is interested in the potential of snow vehicles capable of transporting supplies and equipment of a squad of men engaged in cold weather operations. Of special interest is the usefulness of snow vehicles for long range patrols where units can range far ahead to seek out desirable routes of movement that will contribute to the effectiveness of the patrol.

Watch that M16

If you are in a tight spot and can't clean your M16 properly, postpone the cleaning but lube all the working parts with LSA frequently and generously.

Army calls new bird the Kiowa

FORT WORTH — The U.S. Army Model OH-58A will carry the nickname Kiowa, officials of Textron's Bell Helicopter have been informed.

The OH-58A is the Army's version of the Bell Model 206A JetRanger. Last March it was named winner of the Army's reopened light observation helicopter (LOH) competition and Bell was awarded a contract for 2,200 of the five-place, turbine-powered aircraft.

Delivery of the helicopters will begin this summer and continue through 1972.

In naming the OH-58A the Kiowa, the Army continued its tradition of labeling its aircraft with names of Indian tribes. An exception to this practice was the HueyCobra, Bell's high-speed, two-place gunship, which retained the name given it by its developer and manufacturer.

Last month the Navy version of the JetRanger, the TH-57A, was designated as the Sea Ranger.