

Redeployment begins with 9th Div

First US unit leaves for home

DONG, TAM — The first Army unit to leave Vietnam under the troop replacement program announced at Midway last month by Presidents Nixon and Thieu will leave the country tomorrow (July 8) on its way back to the U.S.

The first unit to be redeployed will be the 3rd Bn., 60th Inf., which is part of the 9th Infantry Division's 2nd Bde. The battalion is scheduled to be airlifted back to the U.S. for deactivation. The mission of the departing U.S. forces is to be assumed by Republic of Vietnam forces.

The remainder of the 2nd Bde. including its headquarters; 3rd Bn., 47th Inf.; and 4th Bn., 47th Inf., will follow the lead battalion shortly. Also to be redeployed will be division headquarters and support units and the 1st Bde.

The 9th Division's 3rd Bde. will remain in Vietnam along with necessary supporting elements.

Non-divisional Army units totaling approximately 2,000 personnel will be redeployed from the Republic of Vietnam by the end of August. Units moving to the continental U.S. are the 36th Engineer Bn. (Construction) at Binh Thuy; the 6th Bn., 56th Artillery Bn. (Air Defense Hawk) at Chu Lai; the 70th Engineer Co. at Phu Cat, and the 1097th Transportation Co. (Medium Boat) at Dong Tam.

In addition to these Regular Army units, 18 Army Reserve and two National Guard units with an approximate total strength of 2,000 men will return to the U.S. for demobilization.

Reserve units include North Carolina's

312th Medical Evacuation Hospital, Chu Lai; Virginia's 312th Medical Detachment, Phu Bai; Maryland's 472nd Medical Detachment, Chu Lai; Pennsylvania's 305th Medical Detachment, Chu Lai; Tennessee's 378th Medical Detachment, Chu Lai; Virginia's 889th Medical Detachment, Chu Lai.

Ohio's 311th Field Hospital, Phu Thanh; New York's 316th Medical Detachment, Saigon; New York's 74th Field Hospital, Long Binh; Arkansas' 978th Army Postal Unit, Quang Tri; Kentucky's 950th Army Postal Unit, Can Tho; Pennsylvania's 630th Medium Truck Co., Phu Bai.

Washington's 737th Medium Truck Co., Quang Tri; Kansas' 1011th Combat Support Co., Bear Cat; Georgia's 319th Light Truck Co., Long Binh; Arkansas'

356th Ordnance Bn., Da Nang; Minnesota's 452nd Combat Support Co., Da Nang; and Mississippi's 173rd Quartermaster Petroleum Co., Phu Bai.

The two National Guard units are Alabama's 650th Dental Detachment at Long Binh and Illinois' 126th Combat Support Co., Chu Lai.

Total strength of all units to be redeployed or demobilized is 25,000 including Marine and Navy elements which will also leave Vietnam.

In announcing the replacement at their Midway summit the presidents of the two countries also announced that periodic studies would be made following this initial redeployment to consider further reduction of U.S. forces with replacement by Republic of Vietnam forces.



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Sappers derailed at wire

Quick reaction foils attack

LZ BALDY — The dark morning stillness exploded for the 196th Inf. Bde. recently at this Americal Division fire support base (FSB) when a company of NVA attempted an unsuccessful sapper attack that resulted in 43 enemy killed.

The enemy invaders were credited with damaging several bunkers and hootches, two jeeps and a battalion chapel with satchel charges and rocket-propelled grenades before quick-reacting Americans derailed the attack.

Volleys of fire lashed out until

dawn's light yielded temporary peace. Morning patrols of the perimeter discovered 125 Chi-com grenades, more than 25 satchel charges, 8 AK47s, RPG launchers, 3 AK50s, a .45 caliber pistol, an M79 grenade launcher, an M16 rifle and a bangalore torpedo.

Firing erupted initially when a 15-man enemy force penetrated perimeter defenses silently and thrust towards a ranger camp located on a remote sector of the base.

As the NVA stealthily scaled the hill behind the camp, the

ranger's pet mongrel, "Crash," began barking fiercely and ruptured whatever plans the enemy may have had for an undetected entry.

The 11 long range patrol soldiers, members of Co. G, 75th Rangers, asleep in the camp, quickly moved to firing positions and proceeded to pepper the enemy with heavy weapon's fire. Bitter fighting raged within the camp until dawn when the sapper attack was finally repulsed.

During the first moments of the rangers' struggle, other squads of enemy were storming different points on the perimeter. Bunkerline guards were successful in beating off the enemy lunges on the southern and eastern sides of the base. The enemy that did penetrate were first held at bay and then repelled by the stiff resistance of an alerted FSB.

Onslaught at LZ another NVA flop

LZ IKE — The North Vietnamese Army (NVA) attempted to overrun FSB Ike, a 1st Cavalry Division LZ 15 miles northeast of Tay Ninh. The attack was a complete flop.

Pfc. Macario J. Mejia was one of six Skytroopers outside the perimeter wire, positioned at a listening post. He heard the NVA soldiers setting up mortar tubes not 20 yards away. Mejia quietly phoned the activity into the LZ command bunker and was told to move inside the wire.

All six Americans pulled the pins on hand grenades and chucked them in the direction where they heard the NVA setting up. They broke for the wire as the explosions cracked the relative silence of the night.

"I've never seen so many NVA in all my life," said Mejia. "There were NVA everywhere. We had to shoot our way back to the LZ."

For the first hour, the Communists seemed content to lay down a deadly barrage of more than 250 mortar, rocket and recoilless rifle rounds into the perimeter. Then after a momentary pause came the NVA onslaught.

More than a battalion of NVA regulars identified as members of the 1st NVA Division streamed in from both the northeastern and southeastern sectors of the perimeter. At one time the Communists actually breached the wire but Co. D, 2d Bn., 5th Inf., defenders quickly plugged the gap.

Howitzers within the LZ were dropped level and fired directly into clusters of the oncoming shock troopers. The word was passed to American defenders on the berm ringing the LZ to keep their heads down. Artillery shells were zinging by, clearing the berm by a foot, exploding 100 yards beyond the bunkers.

"All we fired all night long was direct fire," said Sfc. John A. Kudelka, fire chief of Battery A, 1st Bn., 77th Arty. "With all that enemy mortar and rocket fire coming in, the men just ignored it and kept on firing."

The battery howitzers belched more than 800 rounds of 105mm shells at the enemy in the two-hour battle.

When dawn came, the Skytroopers added up the score. They found 90 dead NVA soldiers stretched on or near the perimeter wire. American casualties numbered seven dead and 18 wounded.

Combined forces smash VC camp

CU CHI — In a fiercely contested day-long battle ten miles northwest of Cu Chi, the 25th Infantry Division's 2d Bn., 12th Inf., combined forces with troops from the 49th ARVN Regiment; 1st Bn. (Mechanized), 5th Inf., and 3d Bn., 34th Armor, to smash an NVA/VC base camp, killing 72 of its defenders.

The action began when the 12th Inf. and ARVN infantrymen were conducting search operations. Everything was going well, and the combined element was turning up stores of enemy supplies.

"The ARVN's were finding things right and left that we may have overlooked," related Capt. Paul Allen.

The infantrymen were moving into a dense wooded area for further searching when they were caught in an attempted Viet Cong ambush.

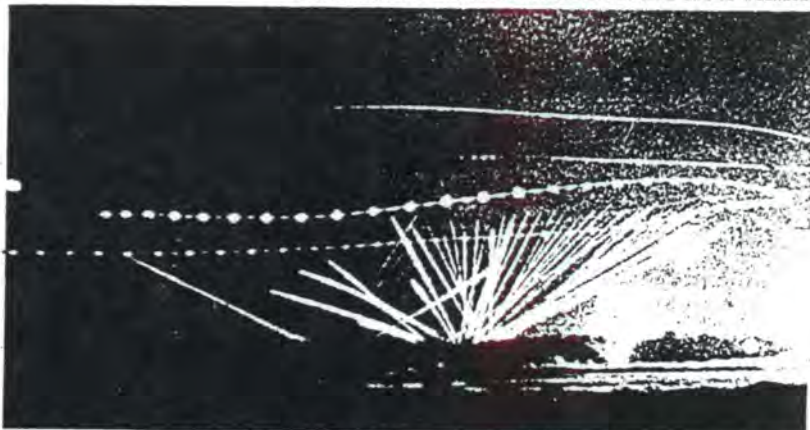
"We were pinned down by heavy AK-47 and automatic weapons fire," said Spec. 4 Dennis Lyons.

"Superior fire power and helicopter gunships got us out of the kill zone," said Pfc. Bob Cox. "The gunships got down close and let Charlie have it." The friendly forces pulled back to allow artillery to pound the enemy positions. The Air Force followed the artillery bombardment with air strikes.

Following the afternoon air strikes, the combined force stormed into the enemy complex only to meet heavy resistance. The soldiers returned with blazing firepower.

The battle slowed at dark, and the infantry and armor combined to make a night laager.

At first light the united force swept into and through the enemy camp with no resistance. The fleeing enemy left behind 72 of their dead along with 40 AK47 assault rifles, 2 light machine guns, and 7 RPG launchers.



INTERESTING PATTERNS FORM when a time exposure is made of gunships bombarding enemy positions outside the

perimeter of LZ Bronco. The gunships are from the 174th Assault Helicopter Co.

