Vietnam communique

July 14-20

Reds, US clash on Nui Ba Den

VC sappers twice attacked LZ Bronco, headquarters for the 11th Inf. Bde., Americal Division, on July 16 and 17. The enemy was turned back both times. Americans killed seven VC sappers in the two nights of fighting.

Soldiers from the 25th Infantry Division killed 43 NVA soldiers on Nui Ba Den Mountain in three days of activity.

An attack by an estimated two NVA regimental units July 17 against a 1st Cavalry Division (Airmobile) convoy 12 miles south of An Loc resulted in eight NVA soldiers killed. Tanks of the 11th Armored Cavalry Regiment and ARVN soldiers helped the 1st Cav fight the enemy.

Americal Div

Americal Division soldiers killed 38 Communist troops and found the bodies of 12 more July 15. Three platoons from Co. D, 3rd Bn., 1st Inf. engaged an undetermined number of NVA soldiers four miles southwest of Duc Pho in one of the largest actions of the day. Six NVA soldiers were killed in the action.

The division's LZ Bronco, headquarters for the 11th Inf. Bde, was the target of an abortive VC sapper attack July 16. The enemy soldiers moved close to the LZ about 2:30 a.m. under the cover of RPG fire. Tanks and 4.2mm mortar fire, plus small arms fire by the Americans turned back the Communists. The bodies of six enemy soldiers were counted on a sweep of the perimeter at dawn. Also found were two AK47 rifles, two AK50 rifles and fifty Chinese Communist grenades.

The next night the VC again tried to attack LZ Bronco. Again the Americans turned them back, this time killing one VC. In other Americal action July 17, two NVA and 22 VC soldiers were killed. The guns of the 3rd Bn., 82nd Arty., and Btry. C, 3rd Bn., 16th Arty, firing at targets 22 miles northwest of Tam Ky in support of Republic of Vietnam Popular Forces, killed 11 of the VC soldiers.

1st Cav Div

Skytroopers of the 1st Cavalry Division (Airmobile) killed 23 NVA soldiers July 14, with division artillery and armed helicopters accounting for the bulk of the enemy death toll.

In the largest reported contact of the day, infantrymen from Co. A, 1st Bn., 12th Cav., were sweeping through an area of previous action in heavy jungle 18 miles northeast of Tay Ninh City, when they came upon an undetermined number of NVA regulars. The ground forces called for artillery and air support, and in a sweep of the battleground, found the bodies of six NVA killed.

Division soldiers killed one VC and 26 NVA soldiers July 15, with the largest toll reported by three companies of the 1st Bn., 12th Inf., operating 13 miles north of Dau Tieng.

Several division ambushes resulted in 19 NVA soldiers killed July 16. Soldiers from the 5th Bn., 7th Cav., killed five NVA soldiers in a pair of ambushes nine and one-half miles southwest of Song Be.

Two NVA regimental units opened up on a 50-truck division convoy July 17, 12 miles south of An Loc. Eight NVA soldiers were killed in the action. See story on page one.

Division soldiers killed 20 NVA soldiers throughout the area of operation July 18. The largest actions occurred 12 miles northeast of Tay Ninh City, where airmobile soldiers from Co. D, 1st Bn., 12th Cav., engaged an estimated platoon of NVA troops in a series of skirmishes, killing eight of the enemy.

1st Bde, 5th Inf Div

A team from Co. P, 75th Rangers, attached to the 1st Brigade, 5th Infantry Division (Mechanized), July 18 spotted three NVA soldiers walking down the side of a draw in the rolling plains nine miles southeast of Quang Tri City. The enemy soldiers, talking loudly, were headed toward the Rangers, who were on a reconnaissance mission. When the Rangers opened fire on the enemy, two of the three Communists fled, but the third was killed by the Americans.

1st Inf Div

Soldiers from the 1st Infantry Division killed nine VC soldiers in several small clashes July 14. Most of the clashes were south of Dau Tieng.

Division soldiers killed 13 VC soldiers, July 16. Nine of the enemy were killed in a battle five miles southwest of Ben Cat. The infantrymen also located a small arms cache and detained one VC suspect.

On July 17, division soldiers killed eight VC in two skirmishes 15 miles west of Lai Kai.

A Big Red One reconnaissance patrol group killed four NVA soldiers five miles north of Lai Khe July 18.

Seven VC soldiers were killed in three contacts July 19. The largest division contact of the day was 20 miles west of Lai Khe where Co. D, 2nd Bn., 28th Inf., killed six VC

4th Inf Div

Soldiers from Co. B, 1st Bn., 35th Inf., 4th Infantry Division, caught a band of NVA soldiers in midstream 14 miles northwest of Pleiku July 17. The Americans spotted the Communist party, dressed in green fatigues and pith helmets, crossing a stream 300 yards from the hidden 4th Division position. The Americans opened up with small arms fire, and the NVA soldiers answered with small arms and B40 rocket fire.

The Communists then tried to flee to the other bank, but gunners from Btry. C., 2nd Bn., 9th Arty., at nearby LZ Ruth cut off the escape route with a heavy artillery barrage.

Within 30 minutes of the first shots, gunships from the 4th Avn. Bn. were over the enemy to prevent further resistance. Minigun and rocket fire from the helicopters finally silenced the fire from other NVA soldiers hidden in the thick brush on both sides of the stream. A sweep of the area revealed six NVA bodies.

9th Inf Div

In light action July 14, 9th Infantry Division soldiers killed 15 VC, five of whom were killed in an area of recent heavy enemy activity about six miles northwest of Dong Tam.

Two platoons of division soldiers, supported by helicopter gunships, killed 11 VC soldiers in a pair of air assaults in the Mekong Delta south of Saigon July 15.

In other sporadic action throughout the area of operations July 15, division soldiers killed eight VC, bringing the day's total of enemy killed to 19.

In another day of light action, July 18, Old Reliables killed 13 enemy soldiers throughout the Delta.

In the Delta July 19, division soldiers killed 14 VC soldiers, with the heaviest action centering 16 miles southwest of Saigon where 5th Bn., 60th Inf. soldiers killed six enemy in four contacts.

In light action on July 20, division soldiers killed 18 VC and detained one enemy suspect.

25th Inf Div

Nui Ba Den (The Black Virgin) Mountain continued to be the center of enemy activity in the 25th Infantry Division's area of operation, as division soldiers killed 27 NVA soldiers on its base and flanks July 18. Five NVA soldiers were killed on the mountain the next day by division infantrymen.

A lightning-fast air assault by division soldiers, backed by Huey and Cobra gunships from the division and 1st Aviation Brigade and artillery July 19 devastated an NVA element of the 9th VC Division, killing 47 VC soldiers and detaining 10 suspects. See story on page one.

Elsewhere in the division area of operations, 35 enemy soldiers were killed July 19, bringing the day's total enemy killed to 82.

Division artillery proved effective as enemy units avoided major contact throughout the division's area of operation July 20. On Nui Ba Den mountain, cannoneers killed 11 NVA soldiers, after the enemy lobbed about 10 rounds of 82mm mortar at soldiers of the 4th Bn., 23rd Inf.

101st Abn Div

Two squads from the 2nd Bn., 327th Abn. Inf., 101st Airborne Division killed eight VC soldiers July 18 in an ambush 20 miles southeast of Hue. Soldiers from the same battalion killed seven Communists the day before, after enemy soldiers stabbed to death a 68-year-old woman who refused to give them food and money.

Elsewhere, two VC sappers were killed trying to slip through the perimeter wire at the division's Camp Evans, 15 miles northwest of Hue. Also on July 18, Screaming Eagles under the operational control of the Americal Division found the bodies of 15 NVA who died about 10 days earlier in a NVA base camp fight. The bodies were found about 14 miles south of Tam Ky.

199th Inf Bde

Redcatchers of the 199th Light Infantry Brigade found 30 tons of enemy food about 24 miles northeast of Xuan Loc. The caches were discovered in a four-day period, July 16-19.

A platoon from the brigade's 4th Bn., operating 18 miles northwest of Xuan Loc, engaged about 20 well-entrenched NVA soldiers in a brief fire fight July 18.

Following the skirmish, the reconnaissance platoon swept the area and found a company-size base camp containing 17 bootches and 14 bunkers. The Americans also found the bodies of five NVA soldiers killed in the fire fight.

1st Avn Bde

A gunship of the 116th Assault Helicopter Co., 269th Combat Avn. Bn., killed a lone VC soldier in an enemy bunker complex July 14. At the time, the gunship was flying cover for the 2nd Bn., 12th Inf., 25th Infantry Division, four miles northeast of Tran Bang.

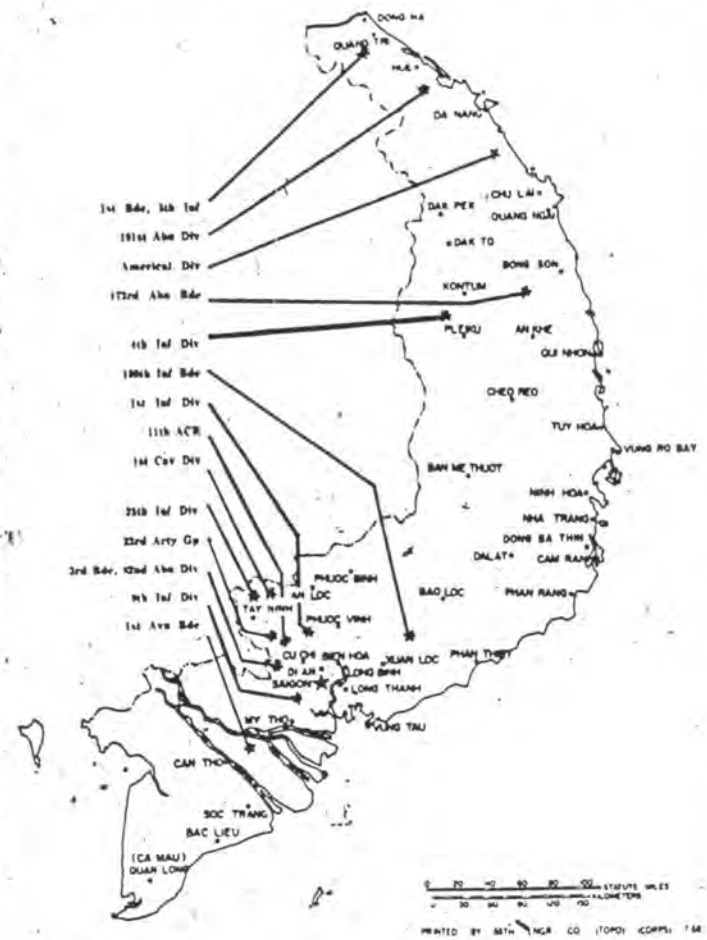
Gunships of the 335th Assault Helicopter Co., 214th Aviation Bn., July 16 were flying cover for the ARVN 9th Division about 20 miles south of Dong Tam when VC soldiers, camouflaged in sampans, opened fire with heavy machine guns.

One of the slugs nicked a helicopter, but the chopper turned around, found the sampan where the fire was coming from and destroyed it, killing the VC soldiers with a burst of four rockets. Flying in the same area hours later, the same helicopter spotted eight VC soldiers with weapons and web gear hiding in a woodline. The gunship attacked them and killed all eight.

11th ACR

Tanks of the 11th Armored Cavalry Regiment rolled over a VC base camp nine miles southeast of Dau Tieng July 14 after VC soldiers attacked the oncoming column with RPG fire.

D Troop, 1st Squadron soldiers, under the operational control of the 1st Infantry Division, were sweeping the swampy forest near the banks of the Saigon River when they located a number of enemy bunkers. As they rolled in, the Communists hurled a lone RPG at one of the tanks. The Americans answered with .50 caliber machine gun fire. Pushing ahead into the Communist positions, the soldiers drove the VC troops from their bunkers, killing 11 of them along the way.

Soldiers from Co. C, 2nd Bn., 18th Inf. unearthed 10 rounds of ammunition for a 75mm recoilless rifle July 18, 10 miles east of Saigon. A squad of regiment soldiers, under operational control of the 1st Infantry Division, killed two VC soldiers the same day, 15 miles west of Lai Khe.

Quickly rallying to a 1st Cavalry Division convoy that had been ambushed July 17 about 12 miles south of An Loc, I and K Troops from the regiment's 919th Engineer Co. helped 1st Cav and ARVN soldiers counterattack the enemy and kill eight NVA regulars. See story on page one.