

Vietnam communique

September 22-28

Infantry overruns enemy company

On Sept. 26, two companies of 25th Infantry Division soldiers overran the positions of an estimated NVA company 16 miles northwest of Cu Chi, killing 30 Communist soldiers in five hours of heavy fighting.

Acting on intelligence report that enemy forces were in the area, Co. A and B of the 2nd Bn., 12th Inf., were combat assaulted 1,000 yards apart into the dense undergrowth of a once rice-plowed area of the Boi Loi Woods.

Co. A spotted a small party of NVA soldiers and opened fire. As they maneuvered to fight the small enemy force, they came upon an estimated NVA company entrenched in hastily-built fighting positions.

The Tropic Lightning soldiers began taking a heavy volume of small arms and RPG fire from their front and flanks. Artillery was called in, but Co. A remained pinned down.

Soldiers of Co. B, diverted from their original patrol, drove in toward the enemy's flank under protective fires of Co. A and orbiting gunships of the 269th Combat Aviation Bn.

The Tropic Lightning soldiers overran the NVA emplacements killing 30 Communists and putting the remainder of the NVA force to rout.

4th Inf Div

On Sept. 23, minigun-packing LOHs of the 17th Air Cavalry shadowed a NVA platoon through the mountainous jungles 15 miles northeast of An Khe to a pair of bunker complexes where they killed 34 NVA regulars.

LOHs of Troop A, 7th Squadron, 17th Air Cavalry, flying in support of the 4th Infantry Division sighted a wide, six-hour-old trail hacked through thick vegetation and followed it directly to the enemy lairs.

Artillery from Batteries C and D, 5th Bn., 16th Artillery and from Btry. C, 4th Bn., 42nd Arty., pounded the enemy positions for 30 minutes.

The same day, Troop A, 7th Squadron, 17th Air Cavalry, flying in support of the 4th Infantry Division, killed eight NVA regulars in an air-to-ground fight near the "Dragon Trail" 21 miles northwest of An Khe.

On Sept. 27, 25 miles northwest of An Khe, ground forces from Co. A, 1st Bn., 8th Inf., clashed briefly with a platoon of NVA regulars, all carrying AK47 and SKS rifles. The enemy retreated immediately leaving behind the bodies of three of their number killed in the short exchange of gun fire.

3rd Bde, 82nd Abn Div

A company of 3rd Bde., 82nd Airborne Division ground troops combat assaulted into the scrub and marshes of the "Pineapple Region," 158 miles southwest of Saigon Sept. 26 and killed 16 VC soldiers in intermittent, afternoon-long skirmishes.

The same day, infantrymen from the division, acting on intelligence information, found and destroyed a newly-built base camp of a possible VC sapper unit, 12 miles northwest of Saigon.

1st Bde, 5th Inf Div

A company of 1st Bde., 5th Infantry Division ground troops on patrol three miles south of the DMZ Sept. 28, engaged an estimated reinforced NVA company, killing 15 Communist soldiers in a five-hour battle.

The soldiers were climbing a ridge line 19 miles northwest of Quang Tri when they began receiving incoming mortar fire.

Tactical air strikes were called in and U.S. Marine Corps and Air Force fighter-bombers pounded the area. Helicopter gunships unleashed rocket and minigun fire into the enemy-held fortifications for

several hours when the Communists broke contact and fled.

Earlier in the week, soldiers of the 1st Bde., 5th Infantry Division on a mine sweep operation on the Cam Lo Road six miles south of the DMZ spotted seven NVA regulars.

A security force from the 1st Bn., 77th Armor opened fire on the enemy and received a heavy volume of RPG and AK47 fire when a tank reaction force rolled in to reinforce the mine sweeping team. Four NVA soldiers were killed and three detained.

1st Inf Div

Soldiers from Co. B, 2nd Bn., 28th Inf., 1st Infantry Division killed 37 enemy Sept. 22, attempting to cross the Saigon River. Of the 37 killed, 25 were killed in the morning and 17 in the evening as they attempted to cross the river less than two miles from the same spot in the river.

The next day, the 1st Infantry Division's 1st Bde., working in U.S. Navy patrol boats again found VC attempting to cross the Saigon River and killed 14 VC swimmers in two unconnected actions about six miles southeast of Dau Tieng.

On Sept. 24, Big Red One helicopters killed 10 enemy soldiers while the 1st Squadron, 4th Armored Cavalry combat-assaulted into a wooded area four miles southeast of Dau Tieng and killed another four.

Americal Div

Americal Division soldiers combat-assaulted onto a thickly vegetated jungle

slope 16 miles west of Tam Ky near FV West Sept. 22, and locked up with an undetermined number of NVA regulars killing 28.

Elsewhere in the Americal's area of responsibility, another four Viet Cong and 10 NVA soldiers were killed raising the number of enemy dead to 42.

The next day, soldiers of Troop D, 1st Squadron, 1st Armored Cavalry fought 10 to 12 VC regulars in a fire fight 10 miles northeast of Quang Ngai City. Five VC regulars were killed.

On Sept. 26, 10 NVA soldiers and 13 VC were killed in a number of widespread, unrelated clashes with Americal Division soldiers.

A day later, gunners of Btry. A, 3rd Bn., 82nd Artillery killed three NVA soldiers in an afternoon fire mission and Scout helicopters of the 123rd Aviation Bn., engaged five VC soldiers 10 miles west of Quang Ngai City, killing one.

25th Inf Div

Infantrymen from the 25th Infantry Division and ARVN soldiers found and engaged an estimated platoon of NVA regulars heavily entrenched in a treeline four miles northwest of Cu Chi, killing 19 in a three-hour night fire fight on Sept. 23.

Soldiers of Co. C, 2nd Bn., 14th Inf. and troopers of the 49th ARVN Regiment, 25th Infantry Division, spotted the enemy in bunkers shortly before midnight and struck hard and fast with small arms and automatic weapons fire. They were aided by artillery, helicopter and Air Force gunships.

Two days earlier, tank-mounted troop-

ers of the 35th Infantry Division flushed out and engaged an estimated reinforced squad of NVA regulars in the banana grooves on the northern base of Nui Ba Den, killing 11 NVA soldiers. The tankers were from 1st Co., 2nd Bn., 34th Armor.

1st Cav Div

An estimated platoon of NVA regulars were trapped in a heavily-entrenched position on Sept. 24 by 1st Air Cavalry Division ground troops 11 miles east of Nui Ba Den.

Soldiers of Co. E, 1st Bn., 12th Cav. held the enemy in check long enough for Air Force jets to blast into the area killing 24 enemy soldiers and destroying a large munition cache.

Earlier in the week, helicopter gunships and artillery of the 1st Air Cavalry Division accounted for 17 of the 19 NVA soldiers killed in action occurring 15 to 20 miles northeast of Tay Ninh City.

On Sept. 22, a 1st Squadron, 9th Air Cavalry gunship flying with a LOH, unleashed rocket and minigun fire into an enemy position, killing six NVA 25 miles west of Quan Loi.

Three days later, infantrymen of Co. D, 5th Bn., 7th Cavalry ambushed a six-man NVA force 10 miles south of Song Be, killing three.

The next day, a helicopter-Cobra gunship team of the 1st Squadron, 9th Air Cavalry took fire from several enemy positions in the jungles 20 miles north of Tay Ninh City and responded with rocket and minigun fire killing five NVA soldiers.

3rd Bde, 9th Inf Div

Helicopter gunships of the 240th Assault Helicopter Co. and 3rd Bde., 9th Infantry Division ground troops virtually destroyed an NVA platoon positioned in an area of chest-high water one mile south of Saigon on Sept. 26, killing 28.

The NVA regulars were spotted by the gunships and the information was radioed to the soldiers of the 6th Bn., 31st Inf., who waded into the marshland in search of the 30-man enemy force.

The infantrymen killed two as they flushed the enemy from their bunkers, and the gunships killed 24 of the fleeing enemy.

In another encounter the same day, other elements of the 6th Bn., 31st Inf., killed five VC soldiers and detained nine two miles east of the Can Giuoc base camp.

101st Abn Div

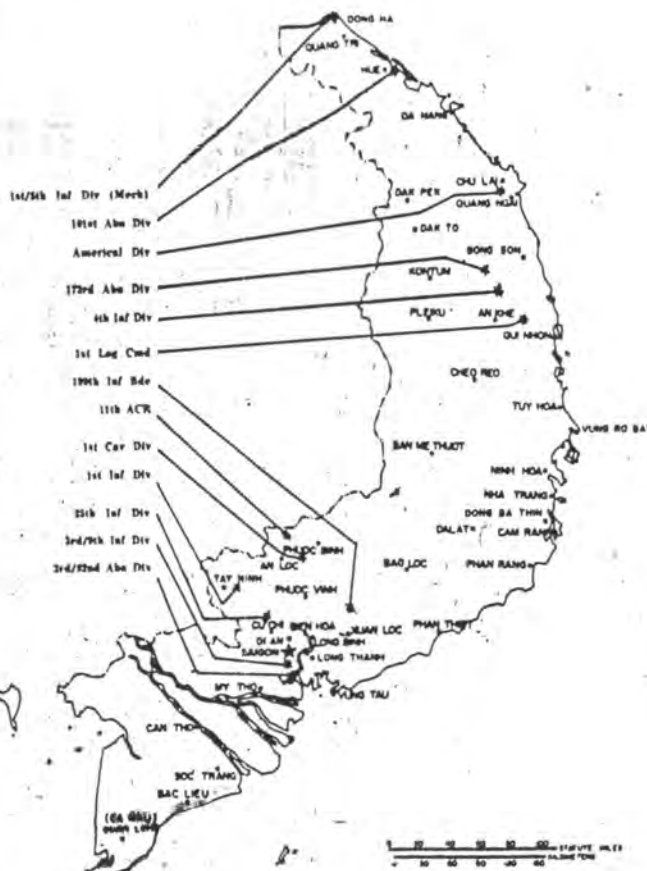
On September 23, infantrymen of the 101st Division's Co. C, 1st Bn., 327th Airborne, killed three NVA soldiers in a brief fire fight nine miles south of Camp Eagle.

A day earlier, helicopter gunships of Troop A, 2nd Squadron, 17th Air Cavalry, flying in support of the 101st Airborne Division, engaged an undetermined number of NVA regulars in an air-to-ground clash 10½ miles east of Hue, killing four enemy soldiers.

199th Inf Bde

Redcatchers of the 199th Light Infantry Brigade accounted for 10 NVA kills in four unconnected actions around Xuan Loc on Sept. 26. A sweep by troops of Co. C, 4th Bn., 12th Inf. the same day found seven NVA bodies which were credited to an earlier action.

Later in the week, a rifle squad of Redcatchers spent an extra day on a cord-on-and-search operation seven miles north of Xuan Loc and spotted an undetermined number of VC trying to infiltrate back into the village. Two of the enemy were killed by small arms fire and the remainder fled the area.



22 NVA dead counted

Dusk firepower routs camp

CAMP RADCLIFF — Night was closing fast over the Central Highlands as LOH and Cobra gunships of A Troop, 7th Squadron, 17th Cav., were returning home from their day's mission in support of 4th Infantry Division soldiers of the 1st Bde. near An Khe.

"We were 16 miles northeast of An Khe when I spotted a lot of high-speed trails leading into a

huge bunker complex," observed WO James R. Muse. "There were at least 70 NVA soldiers in a 150-bunker base camp. It looked like a giant Boy Scout jamboree, with fires burning, people standing around, and NVA gear scattered about."

Muse noted that his lead LOH observer, Sfc. Charles W. Smith, dropped smoke in the center of the camp, and Cobra gunships

rolled in with the screen of rockets and minigun fire killing 10 NVA soldiers.

The Cobras, manned by pilots Charles Mullis and Michael Stefanski, expended the remainder of their ships' blazing fire power on the enemy, his bunkers and his ammo storage dumps, as did Muse's LOH wing man, WO Robert Dahl, who emptied his miniguns on the complex.

With darkness shrouding the ruins of the company-sized enemy base and gunships fully expended, the 17th Cav. called it a day. All except A Troop commander, Maj. Ronald G. Maxson, who remained on station in the unit's command and control ship. He stayed in the general vicinity to direct artillery strikes on the area from Btry. A, 6th Bn., 29th Arty.

The "can do" artillerymen of the 1st Bde. then pulverized the enemy bunkers and killed an additional 10 NVA soldiers, bringing the total to 20.

"The enemy camp was huge," said Muse. "I estimated there were about 110 bunkers measuring 25 by 30 feet, and at least 40 more which were seven by eight feet. They all had about three feet of overhead cover."

The pre-dusk find came just after the A Troop's gunships had discovered another, smaller complex 15 miles northeast of An Khe. Gunships had strafed that area with miniguns and killed two of three khaki-clad NVA soldiers in the camp.



MUSCLES TENSE and eyes alert, platoon leader Lt. Robert A. Duclos of the 101st Airborne Division senses movement ahead as he leads his men on a sweep near Lang Co, south of Camp Eagle, the division headquarters.

Ex-CO rallies men

LZ BALDY—Accounts of an American-NVA clash 18 miles west of Tam Ky flooded into the Air Operations Office.

Capt. John Whittecar, air operations officer, listened intently as the radio crackled a distress message from Co. D, 4th Bn., 31st Inf., 196th Infantry Brigade. The Americal Division unit had engaged a battalion of NVA and their commanding officer was wounded and had been airlifted for medical aid.

"I couldn't just sit there and listen while D got riddled," said Whittecar. "I caught a resupply helicopter going out to the flight."

Whittecar was the former commanding officer of Co. D.

The men were happy to see their former commander jump from the helicopter despite heavy enemy fire.

The NVA soldiers were attempting to surround the outnumbered American unit. RPGs and machinegun fire laced the air as the enemy tried to keep Co. D immobilized.

"Fire was coming from three sides," related Whittecar. "I knew we had to exit before they closed in. But night was coming on, so I decided to set up a defensive perimeter and wait."

The enemy began to move in the dark. American helicopter gunships pounded the NVA regulars. Hearing the gunships coming, the enemy opened up on the besieged company with RPGs and machinegun fire.

Whittecar directed the gunship's fire to within 60 feet of the company's perimeter. The NVA were close.

"The captain was calm all the time," recalled Pfc. David Roland. "He talked to the gunship pilot as if he were back in the states talking to his next-door neighbor."

At one point he talked to the tactical operations center.

"I've got the enemy where I want them," he quipped. "They're all around me in a complete circle."

The next morning, Whittecar set up his command post in an old French building, continuing to direct defensive fire. An RPG smashed into the room. The blast wounded several men, including Whittecar.

Undaunted, Whittecar helped the medics treat the wounded and "talked in" a Medevac helicopter to remove the more seriously wounded.

Hammer and anvil ploy works; enemy caught by cordon tactics

DAU TIENG — Units of the 1st Bn., 2nd Inf., 1st Infantry Division, completed a cordon operation around a suspected enemy base camp north of the Michelin rubber plantation, near this 1st Infantry Division base camp, 60 miles northwest of Saigon.

There were eight enemy killed and one detainee.

The plan of the operation was to have the unit land at different locations around the objective — then the soldiers on one side were to move in as a "hammer," while those on the other side were to hold their position as an "anvil" against which the enemy could be caught. From the beginning, the tactics produced results.

One of the mobile elements was moving down a trail when they heard noise ahead of them. They faded into the brush on either side and, after a short wait, an enemy suspect walked into their midst. He was quickly detained and sent to the rear for questioning.

Shortly afterward, one of the

scout dogs with the element sniffed out a side trail. During the investigation, the Americans encountered and killed two enemy soldiers.

The battalion continued their drive, encountering an elaborate bunker complex, where several booby-traps were found and destroyed by an attached engineer team from the 1st Engr. Bn.

Meanwhile, another mobile element found a small supply cache containing explosives.

While the other mobile elements did not encounter any other enemy forces, the plan worked. Other enemy soldiers, who evidently were trying to avoid the moving elements, ran into the quietly waiting stationary elements.

Six more enemy were killed.



M16 SHELL CASINGS fly in the air as a rifleman rips a burst of fire into a woodland, while returning enemy fire in Long An Province. The 9th Infantry Division

soldier from Co. D, 5th Bn., 60th Inf., uncovered the enemy while on search operation in the Mekong Delta region of the Republic of Vietnam.

LOH locates trail

CAMP ENARI—While working in an area southwest of An Khe recently, the Ruthless Riders of A Troop, 7th Squadron, 17th Cav., 17th Aviation Group, killed seven NVA regulars.

About noon, a light observation helicopter (LOH) flown by Lt. William H. Luken spotted an open area and some chickens, and several trails believed to have been used recently.

He followed the trails and came upon a storage structure and fields that showed recent use.

Quickly the aero-rifle platoon, led by Sfc. Lowell E. Bowman, was inserted to recon the area. During its search, the platoon found three hootches, four bunkers and some enemy field equipment.

WO James R. Muse, flying the lead LOH, moved south and saw several enemy troops seeking cover under heavy foliage. He killed three with his miniguns.

Behind him, Cobra gunships led by Lt. Donald W. Osborn, rolled in and killed the rest with a quick burst of fire.