

Voting Proceeds In Face Of VC 'Death Threats'

CU CHI, (25th INF-IO)—The people of Thai My hamlet recently learned how much Charlie hates an impartial election.

Local VC warned villagers that voting would be the same as signing their own death warrant. Even so, 50 percent of the registered voters did vote.

To reward the citizens' defiance of Communist threats, the Vietnamese government promised a shipment of lumber, cooking oil, food, clothing, and toys for the children.

On delivery day a convoy of 16 oxcarts stood waiting at the landing zone near Phu Cat, about 1500 yards from Thai My.

By the time the supply ship arrived with a small group of Regional and Popular Force

troops, the convoy was nowhere in sight.

The carts were found lined up along the road from Phu Cat to Thai My.

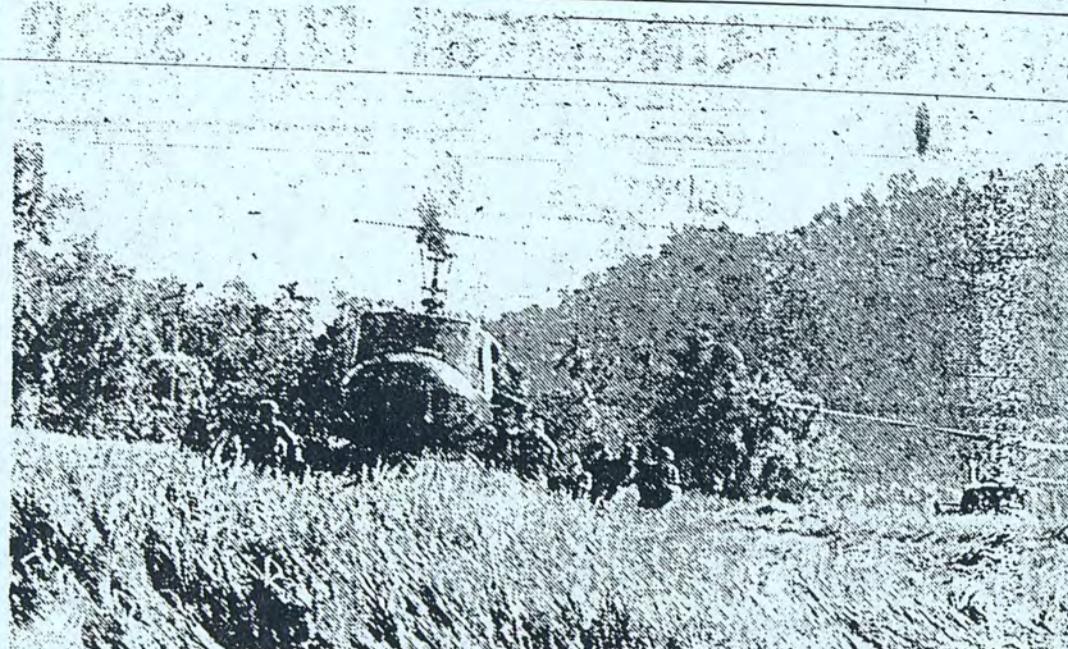
The local chief said that VC snipers had set up on both sides of the hamlet.

Within half an hour the scout platoon of 4th Battalion, 23rd Infantry had arrived.

After a quick briefing the platoon closed in with six armored personnel carriers and blasted away at the enemy. Two hours later the VC firing ceased.

With peace restored, the oxcart drivers drove down to Phu Cat and picked up the supplies.

Because the road was partially underwater few carts made the plunge without overturning. The 25th Infantry Division soldiers helped right the carts and escorted the relieved Vietnamese home.



SECURING FORCE—A company of Vietnamese Rangers jump from hovering slicks to secure a landing zone while gunships provide support.

(Photo by Sp4 A. P. Honegger, I FFV-IO)

Former Enemy Aiding 4th Div

PLEIKU, (4th INF-IO)—

An Army of the Republic of Vietnam (ARVN) reconnaissance platoon composed mainly of former Viet Cong is assisting the 4th Infantry Division in Opera-

tion Francis Marion.

The 14th Reconnaissance Platoon and its two American advisors gather information regarding Communist forces in the central highlands for the 1st Battalion, 12th Infantry.

"We don't command, we just advise," explained Capt. Walter Plunkett. He is assisted by Sp4 Paul Marshalek.

"The platoon is led by Master Sergeant Siu Tet. He's been fighting the Communists for many years, first for the French and now for the Republic."

Tet's platoon acts as a reconnaissance element for American and Vietnamese forces in the II Corps area. They are based in Cheo Reo in Phu Bon Pro-

vince.

According to Plunkett, the platoon has been very effective in all its operations. Since the members of the platoon speak only French and Djarai, both Americans have learned to converse fairly well in both languages.

19 Saved By AHC Crewmen

TUY HOA, (1st AVN-IO)—A helicopter crew from the 48th Assault Helicopter Company saved the lives of 19 Vietnamese civilians recently by rescuing them from a burning bus after it struck a VC land mine.

The bus was traveling on the road near Nha Trang when it hit the mine and immediately burst into flames and rolled off the road, overturning several times. Vietnamese in the bus managed to escape the raging fire, but most were badly burned and in need of immediate medical care.

A 48th helicopter, commanded by 1st Lt. Jerry T. Carr, was on a resupply mission when Carr sighted the burning bus with passengers scattered on the ground.

Carr directed his Huey to the site of the wreckage and began to airlift the casualties for medical treatment.

Nineteen persons, mostly women and children, were evacuated to the 8th Field Hospital at Nha Trang in several med-evac flights.

CIDG, SFG Surprise VC

LONG BINH, (II FF-IO)—A mobile strike force composed of Civilian Irregular Defense Group soldiers and Special Forces men surprised the Viet Cong in their own base camp recently, killing 97.

The camp was located in Binh Duong Province, approximately 26 miles northeast of Saigon.

"Some VC were doing their laundry when we caught them," a Special Forces soldier said.

Several small arms, rockets, grenades, ammunition drums, and two boxes of documents were captured. The VC also left canteens, tools, clothes, and individual rice rations.

Vietnam Communique

American Division—Units participating in Operation Wallowa have killed a total of 638 enemy in the four-week-old operation. The operation is taking place in the southern part of the I Corps tactical zone. A company of the 1st Brigade, 1st Cavalry Division spotted eight armed enemy moving into a bunker three miles southeast of Hoi An. Artillery was called in and three enemy were killed. Brigade helicopters accounted for 27 more enemy dead in frequent, though scattered, air-to-ground action. And the 1st Brigade, 101st Airborne dealt the enemy a heavy loss in Operation Wheeler, 18 miles west of Chu Lai, thanks to an elderly Vietnamese woman. The Americans followed the woman to an estimated 20 tons of rice hidden on the outskirts of her hamlet. One officer said the woman became apologetic because the bins were not full. "One month ago," she said, all three bins were filled with rice."

4th Infantry Division—Operation MacArthur, a multi-brigade search and destroy mission, was initiated recently in the Provinces of Kontum, Pleiku, Darlac, and Phu Bon. Contacts with enemy forces have been light since the beginning of the operation, with less than two dozen enemy killed. In the first 14 days of operation, 21 suspects were detained and 10 individual weapons captured.

25th Infantry Division—Operation Kole Kole continued with elements of the 2nd Brigade making enemy contact. In action 35 miles northwest of Saigon, a company of the enemy was engaged by a company from the brigade, resulting in 17 enemy dead. The enemy company opened fire from bunkers and surrounding spider holes. The infantrymen returned fire with small arms and automatic weapons.

9th Infantry Division—A platoon from the 3rd Brigade encountered an unknown-sized enemy recently, resulting in several enemy dead. The action took place just outside of a small village approximately 19 miles

southwest of Saigon. The platoon used small arms and automatic weapons and directed artillery fire on the enemy's position. Six Vietnamese civilians were also wounded during the fight.

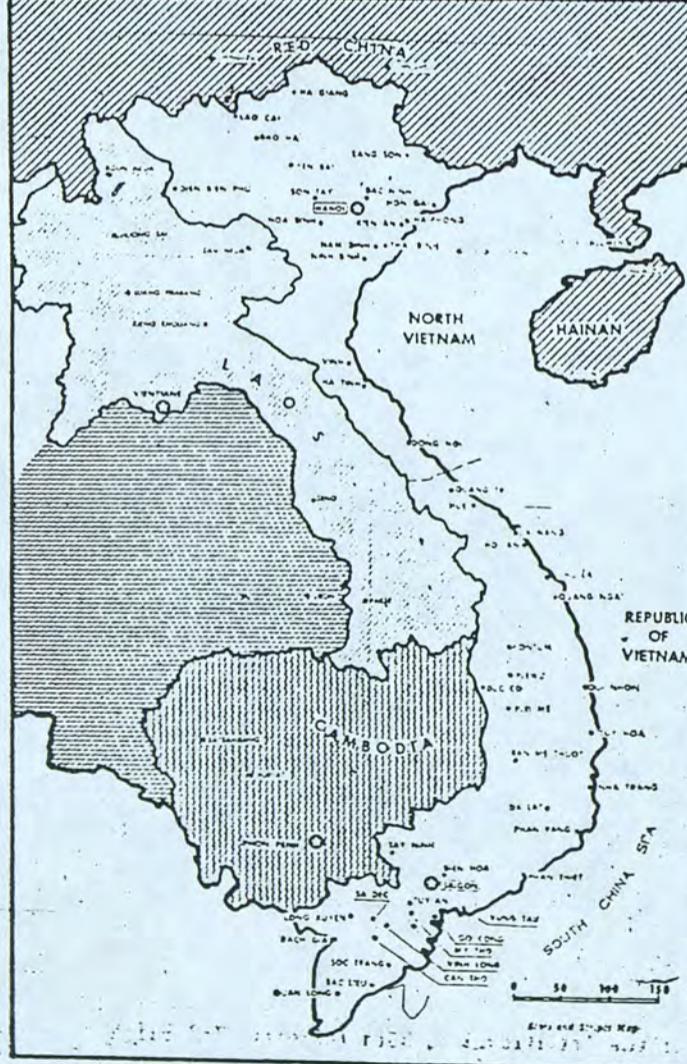
1st Infantry Division—A recent Viet Cong attack against Special Forces personnel near An Loc was repelled by Company C, 2nd Battalion, 28th Infantry and the 5th Reconnaissance Section, 5th Division, Army of the Republic of Vietnam. The enemy body count was 94 when the two-hour battle

ended. The infantrymen established positions near the battlefield during the fighting and engaged the enemy when they tried to retreat from the area. The battalion also captured 14 enemy weapons.

Free World Forces—During

cordons around the hamlets in

Minh Hoa City, Republic of Korea units have killed 66 enemy and detained 30. One crew-served and 14 individual weapons and 36 grenades have been taken.





MOVING OUT—Cavalrymen from B Troop, 1st Squadron, 1st Armored Cavalry Division move into dense jungle during a recent operation with The Americal Division.

(Photo by Sp4 Richard Goral, AMERICAL-IO)

Life Better On DMZ

Log Hauls Materials

CON THIEN, (1st LOG-IO)—Life is becoming a bit more livable for the Army and Marine Corps at this embattled position through the combined efforts of a platoon of Marine engineers and a 1st Logistical Command truck company.

Saigon Support Command's 534th Transportation Company of the 48th Transportation Group is hauling bunker materials from Dong Ha to the artillery-churned hill at Con Thien.

A platoon from the 3rd Marine Division's 11th Mobile Construction Battalion is building bunkers stout enough to withstand a direct hit from a 152mm shell.

Heavy concentrations of artillery and mortar fire are falling on the Marine and Army occupants of Con Thien.

The 534th is fighting against time. Once the northern monsoons begin, both Con Thien and the only access road will be impassable to the unit's 5-ton stake and platform rigs. Thus the Army truckers are stockpiling materials on the hill, hoping to beat the rains.

The guns of the North Vietnamese Army (NVA) are so well zeroed on the American positions here that the Marine commander allows only two trucks on the hill at a time. Otherwise, said one Marine officer, the NVA would surely open up.

To avoid presenting lucrative targets, the trucks of the 534th stop at a point five miles south of Con Thien. They halt at 100-yard intervals and one truck at

a time makes the hazardous five-mile dash to the beleaguered outpost.

Once on the hill, the "Charioteers" of the 534th waste no time getting off it. They maneuver their huge rigs up the ruts which pass for roads here and dump their loads at the building site.

Occasionally someone shouts "Incoming round," and the Army truck drivers dive for the nearest hole.

"It looks like we'll beat the monsoons," said Army Capt. Lynn A. Lentz, commanding officer of the 534th.

The camp, though showing no signs of recent use, still contained the manacle devices and other means of restraint. There was one hut that could contain 30 prisoners by securing them to a log. The log was hinged and had grooves cut into it to hold the prisoners' legs.

"The camp was well-bunkered and showed signs of a very elaborate and extensive construction," remarked Shirchok.

There were hundreds of punji stakes around the buildings, not for defense, but for containing the prisoners.

Before leaving the area, the men destroyed the complex.

Rosales's unit, Company A, 1st Battalion, 7th Cavalry, had been searching for an enemy regiment in a mass of steep, rocky hills that surround the An Lao River in Binh Dinh Province.

From intelligence reports, the company knew they were pursuing an enemy that was close at hand and one that was greatly weakened.

Rosales's company went to work with an important assignment: get a prisoner who could tell the battalion where the enemy main forces were located.

"We were going down a draw," he recalled. "I saw this mass of rocks ahead of us, and I motioned back for everyone to be especially quiet. I thought there could be something in the rocks."

"Then I heard something. It sounded like someone was tapping a canteen against one of the rocks."

"I motioned to the lieutenant to come up and he heard it too. We looked across the draw, and I saw a pack and an M-1 rifle, just sitting there."

An enemy soldier had played into the company's hands by leaving his weapon unattended. By the time he knew what was happening, there were half a dozen cavalrymen between him and his rifle, and it looked as though the company had its prisoner.

Then the North Vietnamese soldier made his second mistake. He ran and popped into a cave between the rocks.

Sergeant Roger A. Gilliam, possibly the biggest tunnel rat at 6 feet, 7 inches, went into the rocks after him.

To his surprise, the first thing Gilliam found was a 75mm recoilless rifle. The second thing was a 57mm recoilless, and the third was the NVA soldier.

The company had its prisoner, and it had something more. For two days, the men removed four Chinook loads of heavy weapons from caves in the area—81 and 60mm mortars, 75 and 57mm recoilless rifles, 12.75mm machineguns, Bangalore tor-

pedoes, thousands of rounds of small arms ammunition, binoculars, sights, and aiming poles.

The haul was estimated at 85 percent of the heavy weapons of the headquarters of the 22nd NVA Regiment.

Crewmen Rescue Trooper

TUY HOA, (1st AVN-IO)—Two Army helicopter crewmen teamed up to save the life of a 173rd Airborne Brigade paratrooper here recently.

Specialist Five William Cooper and Sp4 Dominic Bonanno, helicopter crewmen with the 10th Combat Aviation Battalion, 1st Aviation Brigade, were spending a few hours off-duty at the beach five miles south of here.

They were swimming in a small jetty when they were joined by a group from the 173rd. "We swam across the jetty to another point where the waves and turbulence became really rough, causing a whirlpool," Bonanno said.

Cooper, swam across to the point rather easily, followed by Bonanno. One of the 173rd troopers then attempted to follow, but about midway to the point got caught in the undertow.

He yelled and went under. Cooper, closest to him, swam about 25 yards through the strong current until he reached him. Within seconds he was pulling the paratrooper back to shore.

Bonanno made his way out to the ledge where the sea shell bottom dropped down about 25 feet and helped Cooper drag the trooper to safety.



DOWN AND OUT—Infantrymen of the 1st Battalion, 35th Infantry, 3rd Brigade of the 4th Infantry make a helicopter assault west of Duc Pho during an Americal Division operation. (Photo by Sgt. Urrea Jones, AMERICAL-IO)