

Vietnam communique

Oct 27-Nov 2

Skytrooper gunships net 41 NVA

Skytrooper gunships of the 1st Cavalry Division (Airmobile) were credited with the majority of 72 enemy kills in day-long action on Oct. 31. A series of air-to-ground flare-ups centered around the Song Be area pitted gunships of B Troop, 1st Squadron, 9th Cav., against small NVA units resulting in 41 NVA regulars killed.

Sister gunships of A Troop, 1st Squadron, 9th Cav. also engaged small NVA forces two miles from the Cambodian border in Tay Ninh Province. In a series of four skirmishes involving artillery and tactical air strikes, the Americans killed eight NVA soldiers and destroyed several uncompleted bunkers.

A recon team from Co. H, 75th Inf., added to the tally when they tangled with an estimated two platoons of enemy soldiers 20 miles northeast of Tay Ninh City. Aided by Co. D, 2nd Bn., 7th Cav., gunships, artillery, aerial-rocket artillery and tactical air strikes, the unit accounted for 22 additional kills.

Infantrymen of Co. C, 2nd Bn., 7th Inf., killed a single NVA soldier 20 miles northwest of Tay Ninh City bringing the total of enemy kills for the day-long stepped-up action to 72.

1st Inf. Div

First Infantry Division soldiers combined with U.S. Navy patrol boats in two nights of activity to kill 32 enemy soldiers attempting to cross the Saigon River.

Soldiers of the 2nd Bn., 2nd Inf., sighted seven pack-carrying VC swimmers five miles west of Ben Cat moving across the river the night of Oct. 27. The infantrymen and sailors from the 531st River Patrol Division opened fire on the Communists with M60 and .50-caliber machine guns, killing five. The next morning, the patrol boat-mounted soldiers were waiting motionless in the water 30 yards from the original contact when 14 more VC tried to make the crossing. Again, the U.S. force opened fire, killing all 14 enemy soldiers.

In two separate actions the night of Oct. 28, infantrymen again combined with Navy patrol boats to kill an additional 13 Communist soldiers attempting to cross the river west of the division's base camp at Lai Khe.

On Oct. 29, soldiers of Co. C, 2nd Bn., 2nd Inf., spotted and killed five VC soldiers again trying to cross the Saigon River in the same general area. Nine other enemy deaths were recorded in five separate actions on the same day.

A trio of early morning ambushes netted nine VC killed on Nov. 1.

America Div

America Division soldiers killed eight VC soldiers and one NVA rifleman in nine individual skirmishes and found the bodies of two additional NVA soldiers for a day's total of 11 on Oct. 27.

The next morning, Co. D, 1st Bn., 46th Inf., soldiers spotted a small VC force moving about 75 yards from their positions, 19 miles southwest of Tam Ky. The soldiers opened fire, killing four of the enemy and capturing three AK47 rifles.

On Oct. 31, minigun fire from division helicopter gunners of Co. B, 123rd Avn. Bn., killed three NVA regulars and a lone VC soldier in two separate actions three miles south of Duc Pho.

3rd Bde, 9th Inf Div

"Go Devils" of the 3rd Brigade, 9th Infantry Division, killed 28 VC soldiers on Oct. 28 in Long An Province.

In the largest action of the day, Co. C, 2nd Bn., 47th Inf., soldiers were attacked while on patrol seven miles southeast of Tan An. The infantrymen responded with small arms fire driving the enemy force off immediately. Ten VC soldiers were killed in the brief encounter.

A day earlier, members of Co. D, 5th Bn., 60th Inf., manning a canal-side ambush, spotted an enemy sampan floating down the stream. The troopers detonated claymore mines, killing all three VC soldiers aboard.

Minutes later, an unidentified number of VC soldiers were spotted moving across a rice paddy toward the 3rd Brigade infantrymen. The Americans opened up with small arms, killing two of the enemy and routing the rest. Artillery fire directed on the fleeing enemy killed another two. Late that night, the unit returned to their ambush site and again skirmished with a small VC force, killing three. Other sporadic action brought the day's enemy death toll to 25.

On Oct. 29, infantrymen of the 3rd Brigade teamed up with 17th Air Cav. gunships to kill 12 VC flushed from a Long An Province napalm grove. The 2nd Bn., 60th Inf., soldiers were patrolling a densely wooded grove shortly before noon when they engaged an estimated enemy squad, killing eight. Supporting gunship crews accounted for the other four enemy deaths.

1st Cav Div

A 1st Cavalry Division (Airmobile) gunship received automatic weapons fire on Oct. 27, while on a routine mission near Phuoc Binh. The B Troop, 1st Squadron, 9th Air Cav., Cobra pilot directed several rocket and minigun runs on a cluster of NVA regulars around an 82mm mortar emplacement, killing 12 enemy soldiers. Several other unconnected fire fights netted a day-long total of 28 enemy killed.

The following day, 1st Cav. gunships, Air Force jets and artillery teamed to destroy a large enemy base camp one mile from the Cambodian border, killing 12 NVA regulars. Thirty-two other enemy soldiers were killed during the day in scattered actions throughout the 1st Cav. area of operations.

On Oct. 29, a total of 20 enemy soldiers were killed by 1st Cav. soldiers. In the

largest single action of the day, a Cobra gunship-light observation helicopter team stalked and killed seven Communists 14 miles east-southeast of Song Be.

Skytroopers killed an additional 20 NVA soldiers the next day in widely dispersed contacts with small Communist units.

On Nov. 1, 1st Cav. soldiers and gunships were credited with eight enemy kills in two separate actions near Quan Loi and Tay Ninh.

1st Ayn Bde

Gunships of A Troop, 7th Squadron, 1st Air Cav., spotted an unknown-sized enemy force on the morning of Oct. 30, 10 miles northwest of Ca Mau. Rolling in with heavy minigun fire, the gunship crews killed 21 Communists in the hour-long battle.

Two days earlier, a minigun-packing light observation helicopter of the 7th Squadron, 17th Air Cav., killed seven enemy soldiers while flying in support of the 4th Infantry Division. WO James Chapman followed a well-used jungle trail to an enemy bunker complex nine miles northeast of An Khe. Spotting seven enemy soldiers on a parallel trail, he rolled his LOH in and killed all seven.

25th Inf. Div

Soldiers of the 25th Infantry Division, supported by artillery and gunships, killed 19 enemy soldiers Oct. 28, in sporadic fighting. In the largest action of the day, 2nd Bn., 14th Inf., "Golden Dragons" engaged an estimated 12 NVA soldiers six miles northeast of Trang Bang. The enemy did not return fire, but fled immediately leaving behind the bodies of six NVA regulars.

On Oct. 30, troops of the 2nd Bn., 12th

Inf., spotted several squad-sized Communist elements moving through the flooded rice paddies and intermittent hedge-groves of the Citadel area seven miles northwest of Cu Chi. Covered by gunships of the 116th Assault Helicopter Co., the infantrymen opened fire on the evading enemy forces, killing nine and capturing four AK47 rifles. Seven other Communist soldiers were killed during the day in scattered action.

Tropic Lightning gunships accounted for nine of 20 enemy killed by the division in a pair of air-to-ground battles on Oct. 31. Gunships of D Troop, 3rd Squadron, 4th Armored Cav., supporting soldiers of the 2nd Bn., 12th Inf., rolled in over hedgerows north of Trang Bang, flushing out an unknown number of VC and NVA soldiers into an open marsh area. Bursts of minigun and rocket fire killed six enemy troops as they attempted to flee.

Meanwhile, gunships of the 116th Assault Helicopter Co. killed three more enemy soldiers in a brief battle three miles north of Cu Chi.

The next day, gunships from the same unit hovered over fields and hedgerows six miles north of Trang Bang. As infantrymen from the 2nd Bn., 12th Inf., flushed an unknown number of NVA soldiers into an open area, two gunships rolled in with minigun and rocket fire as the enemy troops tried to flee. In the ensuing four-hour air-to-ground battle, 13 Communist soldiers were killed.

Scattered action netted an additional 11 enemy soldiers during the day.

199th Inf Bde

Patrolling Redcatchers of the 3rd Bn., 7th Inf., killed two enemy soldiers attempting to cross a clearing eight miles east of Xuan Loc on Oct. 27. The next day, a helicopter crew from the 3rd Squadron, 17th Air Cav. came under heavy machine gun fire southwest of Xuan Loc. The gunship returned the fire, destroying an anti-aircraft position and killing four VC gunners.

On Oct. 31, 199th soldiers accounted for two VC deaths in separate contacts near Xuan Loc.

4th Inf Div

Soldiers of the 4th Infantry Division, supported by tanks, artillery and gunships trapped an unknown number of NVA regulars on a hillside in the Central Highlands, killing 20 in a one-hour battle on Oct. 29.

Soldiers of Co. D, 1st Bn., 8th Inf., were patrolling the hill four miles east of An Khe when they received AK47 rifle and B40 rocket fire from the Communist force. Returning fire, they forced the enemy further up the hillside where they came under a heavy air-to-ground attack from supporting gunships.

Artillery from nearby fire bases and tanks from Hq. Co., 1st Bn., 69th Armor, also pounded the enemy. As darkness fell, the enemy fled leaving behind 20 dead.

The following day, infantrymen fought two unknown-sized enemy forces, resulting in 28 enemy kills. Soldiers of Co. B, 3rd Bn., 12th Inf., reacted to an attack by enemy soldiers 24 miles northwest of Pleiku. The soldiers killed eight Communists with the aid of artillery, gunships and tactical air support.

Elements of Co. D, 1st Bn., 8th Inf., were attacked by an enemy force three miles east of An Khe. Gunships from D Troop, 1st Squadron, 10th Cav., assisted the infantrymen in the hour-long battle that left 20 enemy soldiers dead.

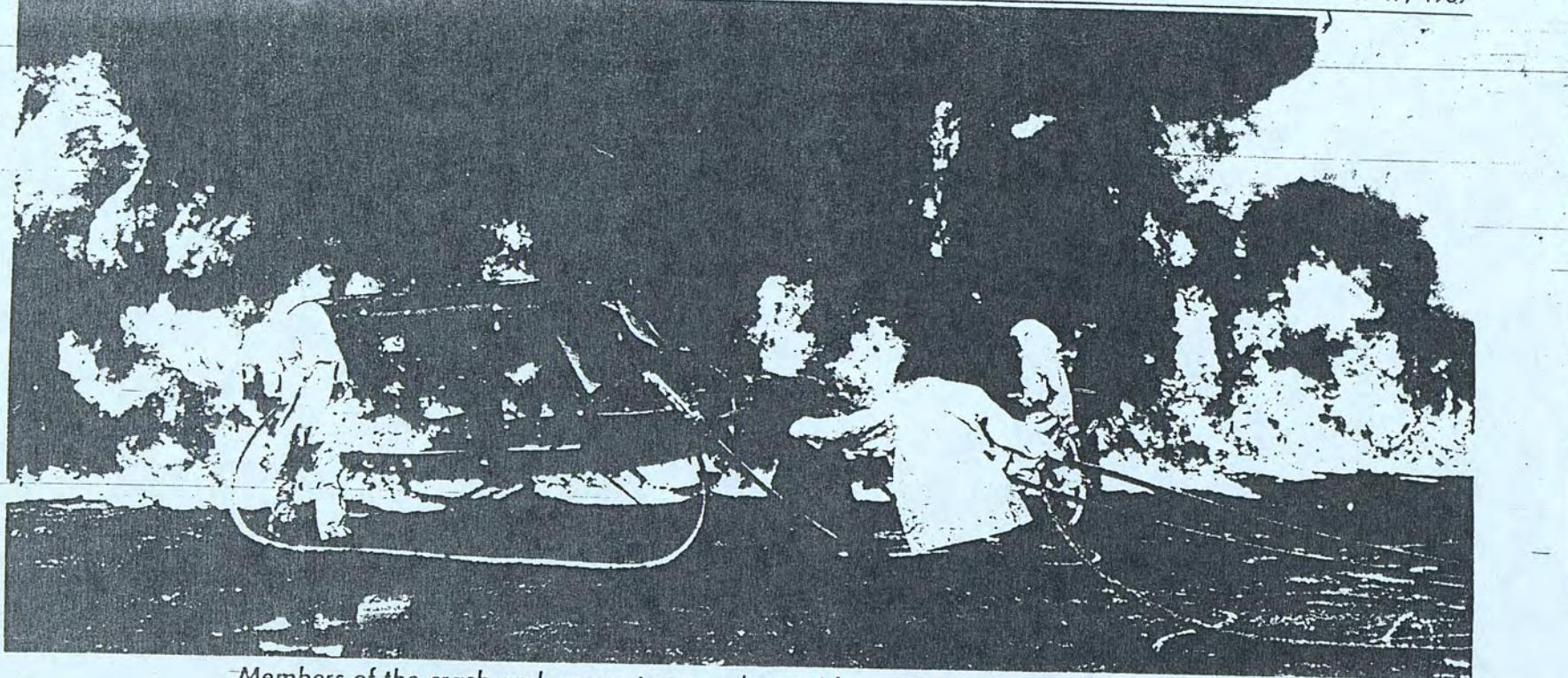
101st Abn Div

Screaming Eagles of Co. C, 2nd Bn., 501st Inf., killed two NVA riflemen while patrolling an area 15 miles west of Hue on Oct. 27.

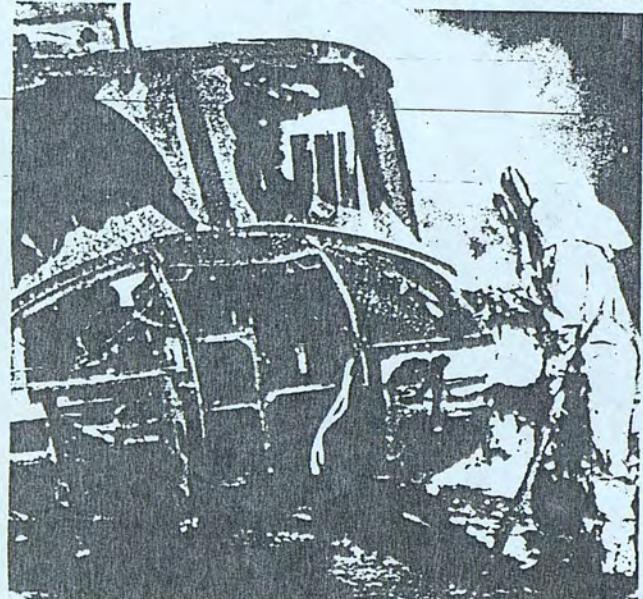
On Oct. 29, soldiers from Co. C, 1st Bn., 502nd Inf., engaged and killed two VC soldiers in the same area. Two more enemy soldiers were killed on Oct. 31, by Screaming Eagles in two unrelated air-to-ground contacts.



SLOSHING ACROSS a stream at the end of a tiring day, this soldier from the 4th Infantry Division watches his footing in the muddy water. His unit from the 1st Bn., 12th Inf., was on an operation in the Central Highlands.



Members of the crash and rescue team rush to a 'downed' Huey as it erupts in flames



A fire fighter searches for trapped victims

Chopper crash simulated

Fire fighters foil flames

BEARCAT — Smokey the Bear was missing but it did not seem to affect a crash and rescue team during a demonstration marking National Fire Prevention Week.

The demonstration, staged for a crowd of Thai soldiers of the RTAVF "Panther Division" stationed here, was conducted by members of the 315th Avn. Detachment, 222nd Avn. Bn., 1st Aviation Brigade.

Its purpose was to demonstrate that an aircraft crash and ensuing fire can be survived.

"We attempted to show that crash rescue is a serious business, but if a crash did occur this would have been the response," explained CWO. Edward D. Cleeves, the rescue team's officer in charge.

Conducted in a barren field south of the jointly held Thai-American outpost, the demonstration was a simulated composite crash involving a UH1

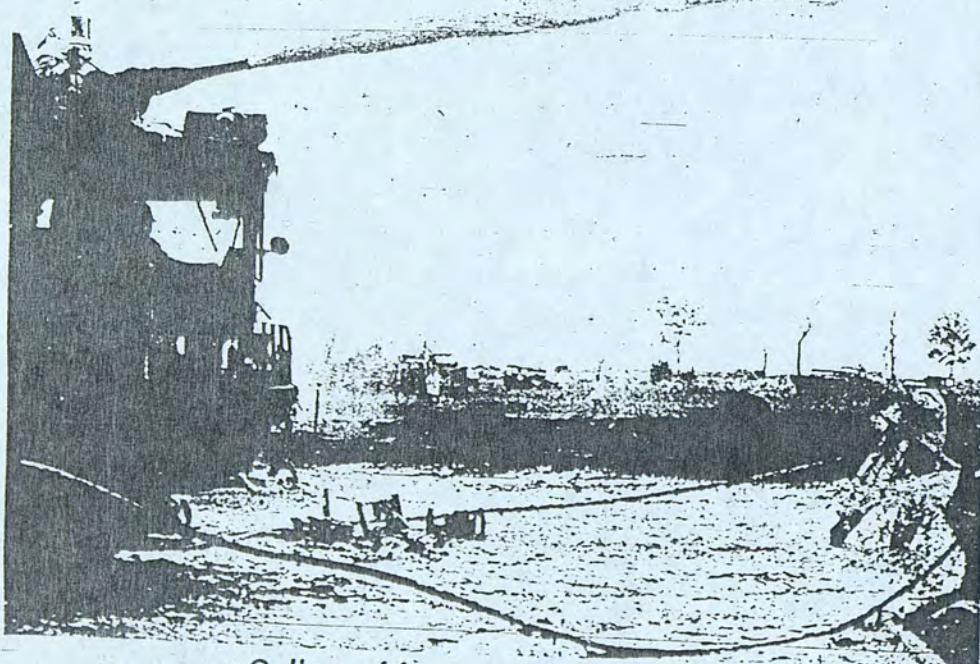
Huey which had been observed to crash by the Bearcat Control Tower which had in turn contacted the crash and rescue team.

According to the simulation, the chopper, thoroughly saturated with highly volatile aviation fuel, burst into flame just as the rescue team and supporting vehicles rushed to the crash site.

Within seconds members of the rescue team were spraying hundreds of gallons of suppressive white foam on the inferno and had safely removed a dummy simulating a trapped aviator.

The six-man team, which Cleeves referred to as "some of the finest and best-trained people in the Army today," was able to extinguish the roaring fire in one minute and 32 seconds from the time of ignition.

Had the accident been for real, the quick response might have made the difference between life or death for the chopper's crew.



Gallons of foam smother the inferno



Foam finishes the fire