



PUMPING HOT LEAD towards suspected enemy movement, this .50-caliber machine gun shatters the stillness of the hamlet's night. Co. B, 2nd Bn., 27th Inf., 25th Infantry Division, and Vietnamese Popular Forces share the guard responsibilities protecting border villages.

Single day's action

Sweep yields 11 NVA dead

LZ BAYONET — Soldiers of the North Vietnamese Army recently learned that it doesn't pay to mess around with the cavalry.

They learned that bitter lesson in the "Horseshoe" area on the Song Tra Khuc River, 20 miles south of Chu Lai, headquarters of the Americal Division. The "teachers" were the men of H Troop, 17th Cav., 198th Bde., who were sweeping the area.

The action began early in the morning when the armored personnel carriers (APCs) moved out of their night defensive positions. The 3rd platoon, commanded by Lt. Paul Wiekell, saw two NVA soldiers out of range on the other side of the river.

"But four more popped up ahead of us," said Spec. 4 Herbert Brady, a combat photographer from the 523rd Signal Bn., who was riding on the lead APC.

"The river bank was too steep and they couldn't get down until they came to a break in the bank," said Brady. "The tracks chased them and fired on them as they tried to cross the river."

The .50-caliber machine guns and smaller weapons killed one

of the NVA soldiers and wounded another who was taken along with two AK47s and two Chinese Communist hand grenades.

The 1st platoon, following immediately behind, came across a vast tunnel complex. When an NVA sniper opened up on the vehicles from a spider hole, the cavalrymen returned fire, killing the enemy soldier and capturing another AK47 and two more Chicom grenades.

Dismounting, the soldiers moved to check out the tunnels. Tunnel rats moved through the maze, paving the way with fragmentation grenades. A search of the complex turned up seven dead NVA soldiers, six AK47s, 27 Chicom grenades, four RPGs and four loaded rucksacks.

Turning south, the troop proceeded further into the Horseshoe and soon came across another set of tunnels, this one apparently deserted.

Turning north, a track commander saw 10 NVA regulars fleeing up a hillside and called for gunship support. As the APCs moved cautiously into the area to check out the results,

they came upon yet another base camp living area.

But the troop was still running up a score — two VC suspects, one of them wounded, were found near the base camp. As they headed for a new night defensive position, the troopers could account for 11 NVA killed and three enemy suspects detained.

LZ CENTER — Two 196th Inf. Bde., Americal Division, companies along with artillery from a fire base recently teamed up to prevent an estimated company-sized NVA force from overrunning a fortified hill in Hiep Duc Valley.

A sweep of the area by elements of Co. C later revealed 17 NVA dead attributed to artillery and infantry efforts. Countless Chicom grenades were found intact along with mortar boxes and casings.

Co. A, 3rd Bn., 21st Inf., had the job of assisting Co. B, which was in hot pursuit of a company of NVA soldiers near Vinh Dong, a hill one mile southwest of here.

"Once on Vinh Dong, we had a clear view of the valley below," said Lt. Alan Freeman, forward observer from Btry. B, 3rd Bn., 82nd Atry.

The mountainous terrain prevented Co. A from placing effective fire on the Communist mortar platoon. Freeman requested artillery support from his battery here. In no time 105mm howitzer rounds were impacting on the NVA location, silencing the tube and killing seven NVA soldiers.

With the mortar tube knocked out, Co. A figured the enemy had been discouraged.

Late in the evening the Communists moved up the north side of Vinh Dong, shooting sporadic RPG rounds. Again the forward observer requested artillery support. The guns responded with illumination and high explosive rounds.

"It was the first time I ever saw the enemy attack under illu-

mination," said Freeman.

Well secured in foxholes on top of the hill, the 60 men of Co. A blasted the NVA element with a 106mm recoilless rifle, M79 grenade launchers, and CS gas grenades. Meanwhile Co. C, which had been notified of the attack, had moved up behind the enemy and was firing small arms. After 30 minutes of intense fighting the NVA unit retreated.

Combined firepower routs enemy platoon

CAMP RADCLIFF — The combined firepower of artillery, armor, and helicopter gunships was brought to bear and resulted in the deaths of 16 NVA soldiers during a two-hour battle one mile east of An Khe.

A point on Highway 19 between An Khe and Qui Nhon secured by two Armored Personnel Carriers (APCs) of the 4th Infantry Division's 1st Bn., 69th Armor, was approached by an estimated platoon-sized element of NVA soldiers.

Headquarters Co. opened up with .50-caliber machine gun fire and small arms fire.

The enemy countered with AK47 rifle and B40 rocket fire. Five more APCs and an M48 tank added their firepower to the skirmish.

Gunrunner "B" model gunships, piloted by WO Robert Bell and WO Lawrence Hanf racked the area with rocket and minigun fire.

During the initial sweep of the area contact was made with an estimated platoon-sized NVA element. Gunships expended rockets and miniguns on the area.

In addition, 105mm howitzer high explosives fired by Btry. A, 2nd Bn., 17th Arty., from here pounded the enemy location.

"The maintenance section reacted quickly and played a major role in the contact," complimented Capt. Rodger Arango, Headquarters Co. commander.

Maintenance APC driver Spec. 5 Raymond Maney was credited with killing one NVA soldier.

A second sweep of the area revealed two four-foot deep bunkers, two fighting positions and an observation post.

Recovered enemy equipment included four AK47 rifles, three RPG rounds, a B40 rocket launcher, three star clusters, two NVA pith helmets, a protective mask, and a spool of communications wire.



KEEPING A SHARP eye out for the enemy, this cavalryman from the Americal Division relays what he sees to the command vehicle. His unit, the 1st Squadron,

1st Cav., is making its way through thick tropical jungles near Minh Long, south of Quang Ngai.

VC rice harvested

CU CHI — In two separate days of operations north of FB Pershing, the men of Co. C, 2nd Bn., 12th Inf., 25th Infantry Division, took 6,600 pounds of rice right out of Charlie's mouth with some seasoning and dessert — 300 pounds of salt and 50 pounds of sugar.

After air assaulting on both occasions, division soldiers swept through two areas near the Boi Loi Woods.

On the first day several puzzling shapes were noticed in a hedgerow along a road. Pfc. Gene Loving described the scene: "The road ran off into some thick brush and the rice was just lying there in the open, covered with NVA ponchos."

The rice found in that location was in 100-pound bags and totaled 6,600 pounds.

Early in the afternoon a salt caches was discovered consisting of 300 pounds located in a deserted hootch.

The following day while conducting operations through the same area, another 100 pounds of rice located along with the 50 pounds of sugar.

Other items found on the second day included several items of clothing, a hammock and an NVA poncho.

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