

Fighting explodes near FB Jami

Skycreepers of Co. A, 2nd Bn., 7th Cav., 1st Cavalry Division (Airmobile) combined with Civilian Irregular Defense Group (CIDG) soldiers on Dec. 6 to kill 53 NVA regulars in a pair of related battles near FB Jami, 58 miles northwest of Saigon.

The CIDGs were walking point in the thick bamboo when the NVA soldiers opened up with small arms, automatic weapons and rockets from an estimated battalion-sized enemy bunker complex in the dense jungle only 300 yards from where the allies had camped the previous night.

The combined U.S.-CIDG force pulled back and called in helicopter gunships, artillery and U.S. Air Force jets to pound the area. Under covering artillery fire, the allies swept back in to find 45 NVA bodies. Twelve AK47 rifles, a 60mm mortar with 70 rounds, one .51 caliber machine gun and a Chicom radio were destroyed in the contact.

A second skirmish in the area occurred later in the day when elements of Co. C, 2nd Bn., 7th Cav. fought and killed eight more NVA regulars for a total of 53 enemy killed in the two contacts.

1st Cav Div

On Dec. 7, rifleman of Co. D, 2nd Bn., 7th Cav., 1st Cavalry Division, working for the third day in a row near FB Jami, 58 miles northwest of Saigon, killed 19 NVA soldiers with the aid of helicopter gunships, U.S. Air Force strikes and artillery and mortar fire.

The same day 22 Communist soldiers were killed in two air-to-ground battles four miles northeast of Bu Dop.

In the first action, choppers of B Troop, 1st Squadron, 9th Air Cav. dove in on a small enemy bunker complex, killing nine NVA regulars and destroying two 120mm mortar tubes.

The second contact occurred when other B Troop gunships received automatic weapons fire from a spot only a short distance away from the initial contact. The Cobra miniguns and rockets, aided by artillery killed 13 more NVA soldiers.

Also on Dec. 7, a gunship crew from the 227th Assault Helicopter Bn. reported killing 10 Reds eight miles northeast of Quan Loi.

In other action the same day, rifleman of Co. E, 1st Bn., 8th Cav. killed six enemy soldiers and captured an AK47 rifle, a 9mm pistol and seven other individual weapons.

Twenty-two Communist soldiers were killed by gunships of B Troop, 1st Squadron, 9th Air Cav. on Dec. 3 in action five miles southwest of Bu Dop.

Elements of Co. C, 2nd Bn., 7th Cav., an aerial rifle platoon from A Troop, 1st Squadron, 9th Air Cav., supporting helicopter minigun fire and aerial rocket artillery killed 23 NVA soldiers in a single battle 22 miles northeast of Tay Ninh on Dec. 5.

In an unrelated action the same day, gunships from the 227th Assault Helicopter Bn. came under heavy AK47 fire 15 miles north of Tay Ninh and killed 15 NVA regulars with minigun and rocket fire.

On Dec. 2, ground troops of the 1st Bn., 8th Cav. with the aid of artillery and air support flushed an undetermined-sized NVA force from the heavy growth six miles east of FB Jerri and killed 17 enemy soldiers.

In an unrelated action the same day, six Communists were killed by a 1st Cavalry Division helicopter on a routine night patrol nine miles northeast of Quan Loi.

On Dec. 4, helicopter gunships, patrolling an area 25 miles north of Tay Ninh, killed 12 enemy soldiers with an assist from artillery and U.S. Air Force strikes.

Earlier in the week, two Communists were killed by a 2nd Bde. gunship six miles southwest of FB Buttons, near Song Be.

25th Inf

Forward air controllers of the 25th Infantry Division Tactical Air Control Party teamed up with infantrymen of the 2nd Bn., 14th Inf., 25th Infantry Division and

division artillerymen to kill 13 Communists on Dec. 8, in the bomb-pocked region of the Ho Bo Woods seven miles northwest of Cu Chi.

On Dec. 2, infantrymen of Co. D, 2nd Bn., 12th Inf. killed nine enemy soldiers and captured six AK47 rifles in an ambush seven miles northwest of Cu Chi on the southern fringes of the Boi-Loi Woods.

The same day, soldiers of Co. A, 2nd Bn., 22nd Inf. returned to the scene of a battle the previous night four miles southwest of Trang Bang and found the bodies of 17 enemy.

The bodies of 10 enemy soldiers were found by men of Co. C, 3rd Bn., 22nd Inf. after they were air-assaulted into a battalion-sized enemy base camp 16 miles west of Tay Ninh on Dec. 4.

In addition, the soldiers captured 40 pigs, four tons of rice, several pounds of salt and other spices, 73 60mm mortar rounds, 19 Chicom grenades and three SKS rifles. Also found were six ox carts, four bicycles, two large hootches and several bunkers.

In other action the same day, reconning elements of Co. D, 4th Bn., 9th Inf. found the bodies of three NVA soldiers killed in a recent small arms fight, eight miles southwest of Tay Ninh City.

A day earlier, men of Co. B, 1st Bn., 27th Inf. killed three VC soldiers in a sampan along the Vam Co Dong River, five miles west of Bau Tri.

3rd Bde, 9th Inf

Acting on intelligence reports, elements of Co. B, 5th Bn., 60th Inf., 3rd Brigade, 9th Infantry Division were air inserted along the canal banks three miles northwest of Rach Kien on Dec. 4. Aided by artillery and air strikes 12 enemy were killed in a continuing battle.

On Dec. 1, acting on information from a Hoi Chanh, rifleman of Co. E, 75th Inf. crashed an enemy wedding ceremony four miles south of Tan An, killing five VC guests and detaining one.

A day later, soldiers of the 3rd Brigade, riding air-cushioned vehicles, killed five enemy soldiers during an early morning patrol in the Plain of Reeds, 30 miles west of Saigon.

The next day, elements of Co. C, 2nd Bn., 47th Inf. killed another five VC soldiers in a brief clash along the Tam Co River 13 miles southeast of Tan An.

On Dec. 6, men from Co. A, 5th Bn., 60th Inf. killed three Communists in a stream-side ambush seven miles north of Tan An.

11th ACR

Seven enemy soldiers were killed on Dec. 2 by men of F Troop, 2nd Squadron, 11th Armored Cavalry Regiment after an undetermined-sized enemy force tripped a flare at the Blackhorse night defensive position less than one mile from Bu Dop.

101st Abn Div

Eight enemy were killed by helicopter crewmen of A Troop, 2nd Squadron, 17th Air Cav., 101st Airborne Division (Airmobile) in a brief engagement on Dec. 3, 13 miles west of Hue.

In other action the same day infantrymen of Co. D, 2nd Bn., 327th Inf. killed a lone enemy soldier nine miles southeast of their Camp Eagle base camp.

On Dec. 1, gunships from A Troop, 2nd Squadron, 17th Air Cav. spotted an undetermined-sized enemy force 22 miles southwest of Hue and reported killing seven Communists.

Three enemy soldiers were killed the same day in a smaller air-to-ground clash 12 miles south of Hue by gunship

crewmembers of B Troop, 2nd Squadron, 17th Air Cav.

Later in the week, four enemy were killed by gunships of B Troop, 2nd Squadron, 17th Air Cav. in an air-to-ground fight seven miles south of Camp Eagle.

Americal Div

Elements of Co. A, 3rd Bn., 1st Inf., Americal Division, operating 35 miles west of Duc Pho on Dec. 7, killed six enemy soldiers with small arms, automatic weapons and claymore mines.

On Dec. 1, men of F Troop, 8th Cav. killed three VC 13 miles southeast of Tam Ky.

The same day, infantrymen of Co. D, 2nd Bn., 1st Inf. discovered 99 blasting caps, 19 fuses and a text book in Vietnamese describing the proper procedures for teaching a class on booby trap manufacturing in an area eight miles west of Tam Ky.

A day later, three NVA sappers were killed by soldiers of Co. B, 1st Bn., 52nd Inf. as they tried to infiltrate FB Stinson 15 miles southwest of Tam Ky.

On Dec. 4, hunter-killer teams from D Troop, 1st Bn., 1st Armored Cav., supporting Americal infantrymen and a recon element of the 6th ARVN Regiment, killed three VC and two NVA soldiers six miles northwest of Quang Ngai.

Eight VC suspects were detained and a submachine gun, pistol, two bangalore torpedoes and three homemade grenades were captured in the action.

4th Inf Div

Four NVA regulars were killed by soldiers of Co. C, 1st Bn., 8th Inf., 4th Infantry Division with the aid of artillery support in the jungle just south of Pleiku on Dec. 6.

The same day, helicopter gunships from the 4th Aviation Bn. killed four NVA in two separate contacts in the area 25 miles northwest of An Khe.

1st Inf Div

On Dec. 7, men from Co. C, 2nd Bn., 2nd Inf., 1st Infantry Division ambushed an undetermined number of VC 10 miles west of Lai Khe and killed five with small arms and automatic weapons fire.

Four enemy soldiers were killed by elements of Co. C, 1st Bn., 18th Inf. on Dec. 1 near a village seven miles east of Lai Khe.

On Dec. 4, elements of Co. A, 1st Bn., 16th Inf. were air inserted into an area nine miles northwest of Lai Khe which had been pinpointed by a Hoi Chanh.

The infantrymen discovered 1,500 pounds of recently milled rice buried deep in four straw-lined holes. Several hundred yards to the south of the rice, the soldiers uncovered a command bunker showing signs of recent occupation.

Nearby, the men came upon a hospital complex consisting of 14 large underground rooms, each more than 20-feet long, with two of them containing operating tables. The entire complex was estimated to be no more than six months old.

A day earlier, a patrol of Co. A, 1st Bn., 16th Inf. located a large bunker and six smaller fortified structures in which were found a rice-milling machine, 300 pounds of locally-produced rice and 150 pounds of flour substitute.

The same day, eight miles to the west of Lai Khe, members of Co. C, 2nd Bn., 28th Inf. found a cache of medical supplies. Included in the find were 200 vials of assorted medicines, two pairs of forceps and 18 stitching needles.

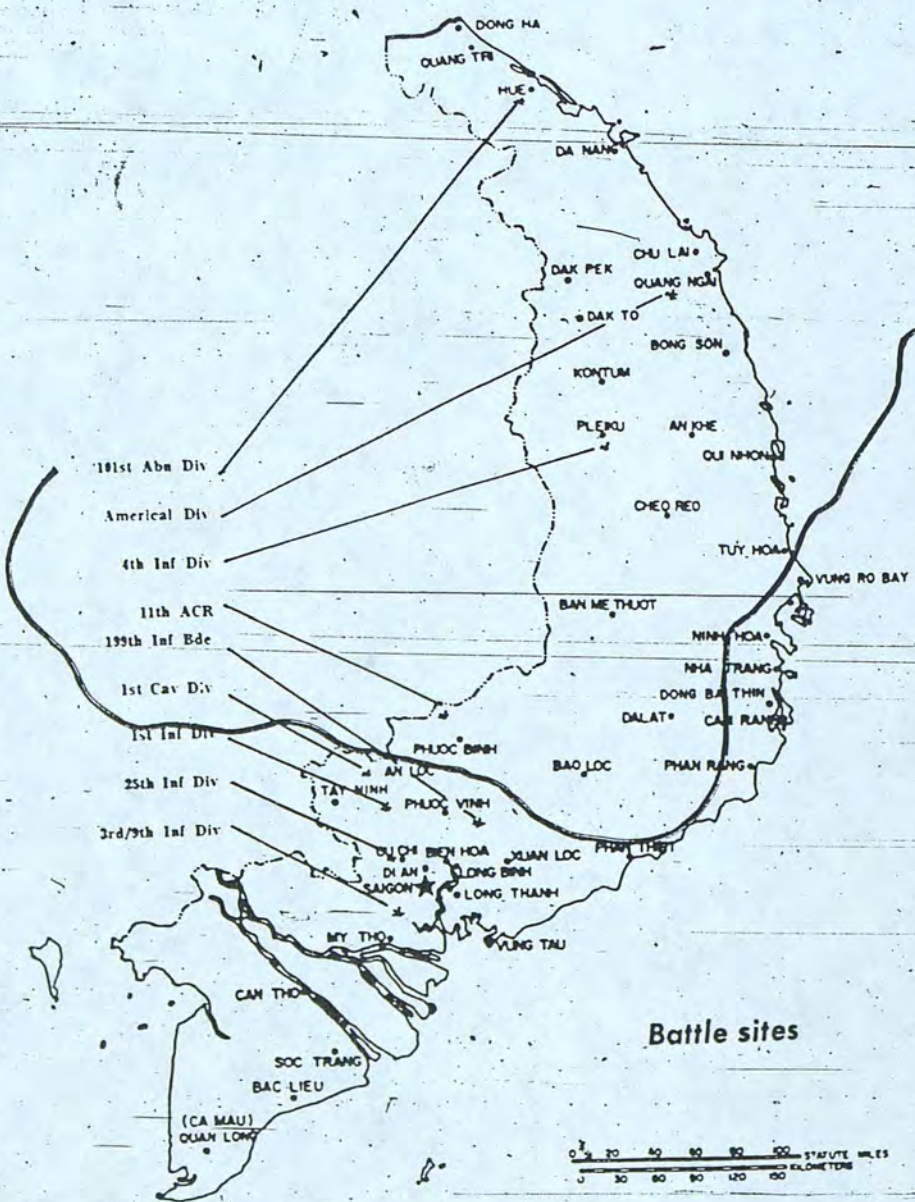
199th Inf Bde

Men of Co. M, 75th Inf., 199th Light Infantry Brigade clashed briefly with an undetermined number of NVA regulars in the double canopy jungle 25 miles northwest of Xuan Loc on Dec. 2, killing four NVA soldiers.

Three enemy were killed by soldiers of Co. D, 2nd Bn., 3rd Inf. in a skirmish with a small enemy force eight miles west of Xuan Loc on Dec. 3.

Two days earlier, infantrymen of Co. M, 75th Inf. killed a lone VC along a trail seven miles northeast of Xuan Loc.

Redcatchers of the 199th Light Infantry Brigade killed two NVA regulars in two separate actions on Dec. 4.



Battle sites

0 20 40 60 80 100 STATUTE MILES
0 30 60 90 120 KILOMETERS

'Odd couple' teamwork packs potent punch



Crewmen discuss the day's mission prior to takeoff

PHUOC VINH—Dusk at the 1st Cavalry Division (Airmobile) base camp brings strange birds of prey to the skies. It's actually two special species.

A sleek Cobra gunship from the 2nd Bn., 20th Arty. glides through the fading light coupled with a rather odd companion, a Light Observation Helicopter (LOH) from Btry. E, 82nd Arty.

The combination of these two seemingly opposites gives division artillery a unique hunter-killer team.

Combining the observation capabilities of the LOH with the quick strike firepower of the Cobra has set these deadly teams apart from the rest of the division's night operating units which use light-toting Hueys and Cobras.

To familiarize crews of these two totally different aircraft with the teamwork concept they are put through a two-week training cycle. A complete revision of engagement tactics was developed to ensure that the firepower of both ships could be brought to bear on the enemy.

"The relation of the target to the low ship (LOH) is never the same on any two actions," said Capt. Thomas Konitzer, operations officer for Btry. B. "Therefore, we had to train the crews to mark and destroy the objectives without delay."

The success of any operation can only be determined in combat, and it has been in combat that the team has made its mark. Engaging hot targets, plotting intelligence targets and general reconnaissance have proven its worth.



LOH drops down to tree-top level



A specialized team searches for the enemy in the jungle near Phuoc Vinh

Chopper trap fails costing 24 NVA

PHUOC VINH — It certainly did look suspicious, that lone North Vietnamese soldier standing in the middle of the field, his AK 47 dangling at his side.

Curious but cautious, a 1st Cavalry Division (Airmobile) Light Observation Helicopter (LOH) pilot dropped in for a closer look at the man in the clearing 25 miles north of Tay Ninh.

"It just didn't look right," said WO Andrew Redmond, pilot from A Troop, 1st Squadron, 9th Cav.

He was right! "It was a trap. They had a .30 caliber and a .51 caliber waiting for us, and plenty of guys with AK's to back up the machine guns."

Redmond never let his LOH get very close, but it was close enough to absorb seven bullets, all of which missed vital parts of the bird's machinery and injured no one.

The LOH headed back to Tay Ninh clearing the field for its Pink Team partner. The Cobra had been prowling the sky overhead, waiting for some incident to reveal the enemy's location.

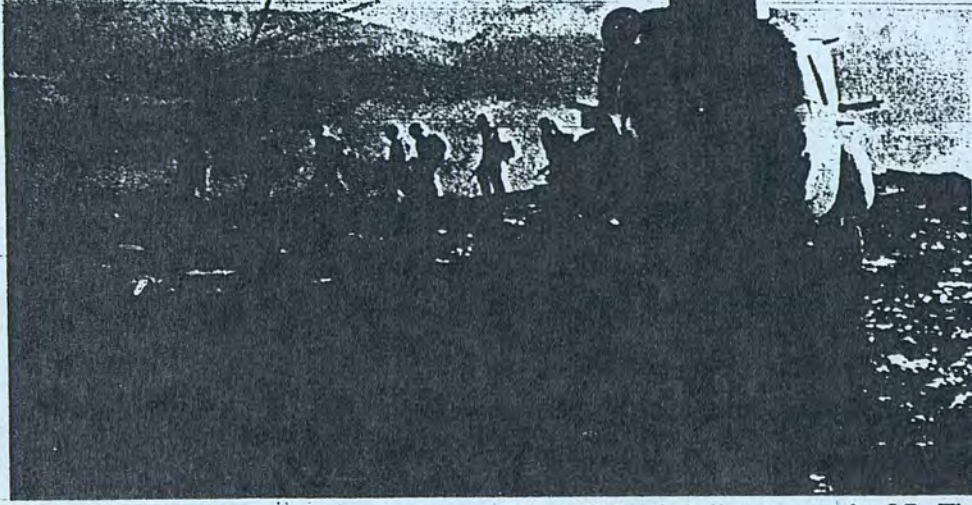
The Cobra hovered momentarily over the machine gun positions, then cranked itself into a near vertical dive, miniguns blazing.

The NVA soldiers scattered, leaving two of their comrades dead and a ruined .30 cal machinegun.

The trap's bait, that lone NVA soldier in the middle of the field, never left his position.

Troops in contact nearby kept the Cobras busy all day. The Pink Teams found several groups of NVA regulars moving rapidly down trails nearly hidden by the tall jungle trees. Altogether, B Troop accounted for 24 NVA killed.

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FOG SHROUDS the rugged mountainous region around LZ Professional as Americal Division infantrymen disembark from a giant Chinook helicopter at the LZ. The soldiers, from the 1st Bn., 46th Inf., 196th Bde., were on a sweep.

US artillerymen win booming showdown

LZ STINSON — Although it sounded like the gunfight at the OK Corral with the volume turned up all the way, it was really one 105mm howitzer from Btry. C, 3rd Bn., of the Americal Division's 82nd Arty. that rumbled through the Hiep Duc Valley in the division's area of operations.

Recently, an NVA recoilless rifle crew began to fire rounds into LZ Siberia, a small fire base, from across Song Thu Bon.

When the first rounds impacted in the area, Staff Sgt. William Parent ran barefoot to the

gun under the charge of Sgt. Ronnie Jackson.

"It was about 6 p.m.," Jackson said, "suddenly a series of rounds came whistling over our heads."

When the enemy fired their second group of two shots, Parent spotted the flash and smoke from the enemy gun, 3,500 yards away.

Though he had returned to the LZ earlier that day after a week's hospitalization for wounds, he helped swing the gun around and jumped up on the gun's trails to observe and adjust fire.

As the enemy gunners fired away, Parent and Jackson and Spec. 4 John Vines fired and made corrections, and slammed their third round into the NVA position.

"The first eight rounds silenced the enemy fire," Vines said.

The next morning, a sweep of the area by men of the 4th Bn., 31st Inf., revealed five enemy killed and three wounded—victims of direct artillery hits.

Halts combined enemy unit

Firefight erupts in I Corps

LZ STINSON — Communist NVA and Viet Cong forces often team up in the I Corps area, but they ran afoul of a stronger team when combined ground and air elements of the Americal Division found and engaged them, killing 12 and detaining four in a four-hour firefight 12 miles south of Chu Lai.

Helicopter gunships from the 1st Squadron, 1st Cav. and an infantry reconnaissance unit of the 198th Inf. Bde. worked smoothly together to smash a combined NVA and VC force near an abandoned village three miles north of this 1st Bn., 52nd Inf. fire base.

The contact was first made when D Troop gunships spotted the enemy in a treeline.

The "Sabers" opened fire on the Communists from the air and then landed an infantry element on the ground, hitting them from two directions at the same time. This first phase of the engagement killed two enemy and detained two more.

A platoon from Co. E of the 1st Bn., 52nd Inf. then came slicing in on a helicopter combat assault, landing under fire in an open rice paddy 500 yards from the village and beginning an immediate sweep.

"Every time we moved forward we would receive fire from a different spot, so we would drop back, mark our location with smoke and let the gunships work the spot over."

Routing the individual snipers out of their spider holes, trenches and heavy underbrush involved close combat for many of the infantrymen — especially the platoon sergeant, Staff Sgt. Joseph Michaud.

"I took a LAW (Light Antitank Weapon) and worked my way over to a treeline where we had seen a VC disappear a few minutes earlier. When I got there I noticed a ditch running behind the trees, so I began crawling down it."

"He opened up with a burst of automatic fire that potted the LAW out of my left hand, knocked my 'pot' off and busted my glasses."

Throwing himself backward, the unharmed but shaken Michaud returned fire with his M16 and then threw a hand grenade into the hole, silencing the enemy fire.

The Reconnaissance Platoon from Co. E continued their sweep, killing five more Communists and detaining two others.

VC 'cavemen' capitulate

CAMP ENARI — Cavalrymen of C Troop, 17th Air Cav. 17th Aviation Group recently discovered a large weapons cache, detained 30 Viet Cong soldiers and captured 500 pounds of enemy documents about eight miles east of LZ Uplift.

Upon entering their assigned area of operations just after sunrise, C Troop began searching for the enemy on a rocky hillside near the coast. The lead LOH (Light Observation Helicopter), flown by Lt. Thomas J. Burke, was the first to make contact with an enemy element.

"As we started to work nearer, my observer Spec. 4 Gary Phillips, spotted a 'High Speed' trail."

"After a short recon of the area, we spotted four VC soldiers sitting in front of a cave. As my aircraft approached the area, the VC darted into the cave, picking up what appeared to be weapons and packs," said Burke.

The lead LOH pilot immediately notified the command and control ship flown by C Troop executive officer, Capt. John Davis.

An Aero-rifle Platoon, led by Lt. David Flint was called in and inserted on the hill above the cave.

The ARP leader recounted the action that followed: "From the LZ we proceeded downhill about 75 yards to the cave entrance. Several of my men entered the cave. After winding 50 yards

through several tunnels," he continued, "they came upon a weapons cache of eight Chinese Communist assault weapons, three claymores, one AK47, one B-40 launcher and 60 B40 rocket rounds."

New Year's Message

As 1969 draws to a close, it is appropriate that we reflect on the accomplishments of US Army Vietnam and lessons learned during the past year. 1969 has brought progress and increasing hope for the people of Vietnam. The successful operations of the United States and Free World Forces have weakened the enemy and the increasing ability of the Vietnamese Armed Forces to combat and defeat the enemy has been an inspiration to the peoples of the free world.

Pacification efforts have been increasingly successful and have nurtured an atmosphere of optimism and common purpose that is uniting the Vietnamese people in their struggle for freedom against Communist domination.

As we move into 1970 with its challenges and opportunities, we are mindful of the past and confident of continued progress toward a just and lasting peace. Let us rededicate ourselves to the highest standards of professionalism, integrity and respect for the individual and continue our efforts with steadfast spirit in the forthcoming year.

With sincere regards for the New Year,

THOMAS J. BURKE
Lieutenant Colonel, US Army
17th Aviation Group