

RG 1172 USA VN
2/34 AK, Org Hist
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Box 1

History of 2d Battalion 34th Armor
1 Oct 1969 - 1 Sept 1970

During the latter part of 1969 and the early part of 1970 the 2d Battalion 34th Armor, under the command of Lieutenant Colonel William M. Greenberg, operated out of fire support base Buell two kilometers from the foot of Nui Ba Den as a member of the 25th Infantry Division's First Brigade. The mission of the "Dreadnaughts" was conduct reconnaissance in force missions in the heavy growth surrounding the mountain, also to harass the enemy by conducting "fireball" missions designed to eliminate enemy activity on the "Black Virgin" mountain, and stop movement to and from the mountain.

Occasionally the recon element of the battalion would conduct a "RIF" of the mountain. Well entrenched enemy forces would make it stiff going on these occasions, where so many caves gouge into the mountain that finding the enemy was like looking for a needle in a haystack.

Contact with the wily enemy was sporadic during this period. On a few occasions the enemy attempted ground attacks on the M48A3 tanks of the battalion. When some foolhardy enemy attempted this the 90mm guns of the tank battalion quickly discouraged the practice.

A highlight of the operations was the award of the Silver Star for heroism to eight members of the Alpha Company 2d platoon for their activity around the Nui Ba Den area. Making it undoubtedly one of the most highly decorated platoons in Vietnam.

The main plague of the battalion were the anti-tank mines placed on QL22, the road which winds around the western portion of the mountain. These mines caused heavy damage to the tanks and were always a constant source of danger.

Bravo Company rejoined the battalion on 15 February after being OPCONed to the First Division since January of 1967.

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1 March the "Dreadnaughts" moved to Camp Martin Co., better known as Camp Bearcat, to conduct search and destroy operations in the triple canopy jungle to the area south of the base camp. The battalion teamed up with Thai infantry for the operation. Contact was made almost daily with the enemy. The "Dreadnaughts" uncovered huge bunker complexes and rice caches in the thick jungle. Heretofore the jungles had provided a safe hideaway from American ground troops, but the M48 tanks "busting jungle" all day long uncovered sizeable enemy forces continually during the operation.

Enemy RPG, small arms and mortar fire found the range on the tanks frequently and brought about heavy casualties to the battalion. The dense jungle and concentration of well entrenched enemy made it an extremely tough operation.

May brought the temporary extension of the war into Cambodia. Hours before the President's announcement, the "Dreadnaughts" were spearheading the operations into the enemy sanctuary. The 2/34th was the first American unit to enter Cambodia.

The battalion swept approximately eleven miles into the Dog's Face Region of Cambodia. Fleeing enemy left painstakingly constructed bunkers with all the equipment of an American base camp. The prizes were huge in terms of rice, arms and other vital necessities for the enemy. Having done their job to soften up the Dog's Face for the straight leg infantry, the battalion withdrew on 11 May and returned to Tay Ninh Base Camp, and the fire support bases surrounding it.

On 14 May 1970 Lieutenant Colonel Birtrun S. Kidwell Jr. assumed command of the 2d Battalion 34th Armor. The months of May and June were relatively quiet for the "Dreadnaughts." The wet season ~~restricted~~ restricted the movement of the 52 ton tanks to the solid roads, escorting convoys up and down QL22 and securing fire support bases brought little contact with the enemy.

Things remained that way well into July when convoys began to be ambushed around Thien Ngon, northwest of Mai Ba Den. Reacting to these ambushes from Tay Ninh Base Camp in the latter part of July, and working with CIDG and ARVN infantrymen the combined force repelled an attempt by the 7th NVA Division to infiltrate into the southern portions of South Vietnam. The operation was

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The operation was credited with twenty one enemy killed and four huge, commo equipped bunker complexes destroyed.

August brought the job of securing Tay Ninh Base Camp. The "Dreadnaughts" were the last American unit to depart the base camp and had responsibility for base camp defense. The month passed virtually without incident and incoming rounds to "rocket city" were few and far between.

With the end of August the battalion was again on the move this time to Dau Tieng and the Michelin Plantation. Their mission to root out the enemy from the rubber trees. The battalion returned to the First Brigade for this operation.

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