

A	
FILE	SUBJ.
DATE	SUB-CAT
8/69	

VIETCONG STRESS AMBUSH AS KEY TACTIC

[Article by Thanh Hong: "The Ambush -- A Constantly Improving Tactic"; Hanoi, Quan Doi Nhan Dan, Vietnamese, 30 August 1969, p 2]

A series of scattered and victorious ambushes on the part of the People's Liberation Armed Forces have broken out on the heroic front lines during this historic month of August following the hundreds of successful and continuous ambushes undertaken during the first 6 months of the year. In only 5 days (from 12 to 16 August) on that section of Route 13 from Loc Ninh to Chon Thanh (approximately 50 kilometers), the Binh Long liberation forces engaged in 10 ambushes. They destroyed 304 military vehicles (mostly tanks and armored vehicles), shot down 39 aircraft, and killed more than 1,500 U.S. and puppet troops. In just the Mang Giang Pass on Route 19, the People's Liberation Armed Forces of Gia Lai staged five ambushes in 2 days (12 and 17 August). They destroyed 104 military vehicles, killed more than 200 U.S. troops, and so forth.

The victorious ambushes of August, as those of the first 6 months of the year, took place under new conditions. They occurred at a time when the U.S. and puppet forces had completely withdrawn to a defensive posture throughout the battlefield, while maintaining their "clear and hold" operations at the highest levels on the vital lines of communications. That fact more clearly proves that the art of ambushing as practiced by the Liberation Armed Forces has not only been developed, but has become more and more expert as well.

At the end of 1968, the U.S. and puppet forces deployed to a group of fire support bases and small, connected bases on strategic lines of communications, thereby establishing a base of fire to support supply convoys. They also intensified their destruction of villages and forests clearing a 500 to 1000 meter wide path on both sides of the road in hopes of destroying the ambush positions used by the liberation army. But the actual situation on the battlefield during the past 8 months did not materialize into the conditions hoped for by the United States and puppets. Large and irregular ambushes by the People's Liberation Armed Forces against important U.S. and puppet lines of communications not only were not reduced, but rather increased.

The People's Liberation Armed Forces actively created opportunities to ambush the enemy. The liberation army forced the enemy to call in relief forces, which walked right into prearranged ambush positions, by destructive attacks against large enemy units in the bases and by continuous attacks against the enemy at large bases. The Binh Long Liberation Army created an opportunity for a series of ambushes on Route 13 by assaults and widespread artillery attacks against U.S. positions at Tech Nich, Loc Ninh, Hon Quan, and Xa Cat during June. On 18, 19, and 20 June the U.S. forces had to call for three relief columns on the road from Chon Thanh to Hon Quan; and three times they were ambushed. The liberation army destroyed 206 military vehicles (including 161 tanks and armored vehicles), killed more than 1,000 U.S. troops, and shot down 26 aircraft. Another series of similar ambushes by the liberation army on Route 13 took place during this past August.

The People's Liberation Armed Forces regularly searched for opportunities to ambush U.S. and puppet supply convoys, as well as actively creating opportunities to ambush and destroy relief columns. With full knowledge of the traffic patterns employed by enemy vehicles and by closely watching the enemy, knowing his intentions, and making accurate calculations and predictions the People's Liberation Armed Forces in the area along Routes 14, 19, 13, 22, 4, and 1 continuously initiated ambushes and destroyed the enemy. During June, July, and August on Routes 14 and 19, the soldiers of Tay Nguyen initiated from five to eight large and medium scale ambushes each month. The ambush of 12 August, which took place at the precise moment when two U.S. convoys met to the east of the Mang Giang Pass and resulted in the destruction of 72 armored vehicles, was one which symbolized the art of reconnaissance and the selection of an opportunity for conducting an ambush.

The People's Liberation Armed Forces are also skillful at hiding troops, mobility, and carrying out the attack during ambush. Another condition that has changed is that the present ambush positions of the liberation army all lie within the defensive system of the U.S. and puppet forces, where the density of enemy firepower is not uniformly heavy in the convoys, along both sides of the road, on the ground, and in the air. In the face of that new situation, the People's Liberation Armed Forces have constantly and totally improved their combat performance.

By closely following the concepts of the people's war, using many ruses, and fully employing camouflage while moving about and while in position, the liberation army still selected ambush positions and maintained secrecy in them. Primarily because of good security and skill in hiding troops and in operations, the liberation army was able to conduct many surprise ambushes during August in the Mang Giang Pass (Route 19) and on the Chon Thanh - Loc Ninh Road (Route 13).

Liberation Army units have fought the enemy with great determination and courage in many ambushes. They have taken advantage of every opportunity for a surprise attack. They have quickly mobilized, blocked the enemy's front

and rear, and bravely penetrated his formations. They have prevented him from regrouping and created conditions under which they could overwhelm the enemy from the beginning of the fight to the end. Many liberation army units have been especially attentive to destroying tanks and accompanying armored vehicles. They have cut off the primary source of enemy firepower right at the beginning, while organizing a base of fire to shoot down aircraft quickly and methodically. All four large ambushes engaged in by the liberation army in Eastern Nam Bo on 6, 18, 19, and 20 June on Route 13 lasted only about 1-hour. Counting all four ambushes, the liberation soldiers killed more than 1300 U.S. troops, destroyed 313 military vehicles (including 197 tanks and armored vehicles), and shot down nearly 30 aircraft. That is an outstanding record in ambushing by the liberation army.

Many units of the People's Liberation Armed Forces have made outstanding progress in the arts of selecting opportunities, creating opportunities, attacking at opportune moments, striking quickly and destroying the enemy, hiding troops, moving troops, and withdrawing troops safely during the fight through many major ambushes.

The most important factor leading to that progress has been the overall improvement of organizational and command standards in many units. Liberation army cadres not only organized their units to perform good reconnaissance against the enemy, but also established a network of reconnaissance by the people along important roads. Command cadres in every fight have prepared many different battle plans in order to be able to take advantage of changing situations and gain opportunities to strike the enemy when the situation is difficult. The building of combat experience and the training of units has been regularly intensified, thereby allowing the units to become more skillful and acquire sharp tactics in response to the new situation.

Ambushes by the People's Liberation Armed Forces, along with other mass attacks, are causing heavy casualties and major damage to the U.S. and puppet troops and war materials.

The U.S. generals are studying every means to cope with the ambush tactics of the Liberation soldiers. But they have found no effective way to do it.

Through new challenges on the battlefield, the art of ambushing by the People's Liberation Armed Forces will continue to be creatively developed and will attain greater combat effectiveness in the future.

6794  
CSO: 3520-D