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DISTRICT DISPLAYS ENTHUSIASM FOR COMBAT

Article by Than Dong; Hanoi, Quan-doi Nhan-dan, Vietnamese, 24 October 1968, p 37

From the Ruler to the Village's Fire Power Unit

In areas of the Le Thuy District in the Province of Quang Binh, near the cemetery of more than 20 American planes of all types such as A-4's, F-105's, AD-6's, and so on, lie two "graves" which draw the attention of passers-by. One is at C, where the body of an AD-6 was buried. Shot down by the militia of the D. village -- a village of the Van Kieu minority -- in collaboration with the self-defense troops of the C work camp and the L farm camp, this AD-6 skidded some 200 meters and broke up into hundreds of fragments which scattered over 500 meters. Only the head of the pirate pilot remained relatively complete, and the militia buried it near the foot of the rocky slope with a signboard:

"Here lies the body of an American pirate pilot whose plane was shot down by the Quang Binh militia; it is the first shot down at night in North Vietnam." A short distance away from there, a grave may be found of the pirate pilot whose white plane still lies near by. This plane was shot down by infantry weapons of S village's militia. An AD-4 shot down by a local antiaircraft unit in the province also lies in the vicinity.

A short distance to the north is the place where Comrade Nguyen Dang Ngu, a cooperative accountant and militia platoon leader, captured an enemy reconnaissance plane's pilot alive. The story is rather interesting. One day, while Ngu was measuring the "production increasing"

rice paddies with a ruler in his hand, an enemy plane was shot down. The pilot parachuted and landed some 500 meters away from Ngu. The pilot was the commander of the squadron, and his plane was escorted by many A-4's and F-4's. While he was still in the air, his escort swooped up and down, attempting to rescue their commander by strafing all possible paths of approach. Ngu knew that it would take time for the militia to arrive and that they might miss their opportunity to capture this man. But what could he possibly do with only a ruler in his hand? He thought about the pilot, "You are only a defeated pilot. Even if you had wings and all the weapons needed, you could not escape." Ngu looked at his ruler and quickly decided, "Many people could capture the enemy with their bare hands, much less with this ruler. The tradition of the province is to fight with whatever is at hand." Taking a shortcut along the ricefield bank, Ngu closely watched both the pirates in the air and the one on the ground. The enemy's 20 millimeter bullets exploded all around him and the shrieking of the planes' engines seemed to shake the hills and the ground. But, exactly as Ngu had thought, the pirate who had been so brave a few minutes ago while flying, now was trembling with both hands up in spite of his fully loaded revolver. Ngu took the gun from his hand and pushed him into the ditch that the local people had dug to trap wild boars, in order to prevent him from being hit by his own subordinates' bullets. The pirate pilot now hurriedly joined his hands and repeatedly prostrated himself for forgiveness. It was at this same place a few days ago that one of his subordinates had been shot down on a rainy night.

There were other interesting things as we went a little further. Along the foot of the Truong Son Mountain, an AD-7 was shot down and lay on the ground in such a position that it looked like a forced landing. A deputy chief of the P village self-defense group had carefully studied the enemy's flights and, under his command, his group hit the important parts of the plane, leaving it incapable of flight. It was quite a unique case.

Near the M bridge, the old men in M village had courageously and impatiently hung around the bridge to protect the system of communications. They had shot down a "Phantom," whose broken body was scattered all around the area. Three kilometers to the south of M village is D village, one of the first three villages in the district of Le Thuy to have shot down three enemy planes. In this

area, the hamlets lie along the X river, but the beautiful scenery has been destroyed by American bombs. There have been, indeed, continuous and concentrated bombings for weeks. Each time, of course, the enemy was seriously punished as deserved. On a hill in Tay hamlet, an American "Phantom" was completely destroyed and its thousands of pieces scattered almost over a hectare.

This is one of the battles which represents the spirit of collectivization and the timely guidance provided by the village and hamlet party committees. On that day, while the hamlet party committee was in session, enemy planes strafed the Tay hamlet. Being aware of the enemy's scheme, the party's session adjourned. Those comrades with weapons reported immediately to the shelter trench and fought back. The hamlet party's committee also hurriedly dispatched a fire power unit to the area. A decisive battle took place from 6 to 7 p.m., with the result that the enemy could not inflict any damage. On the contrary, an American "phantom" had to pay for his crime. The party committee secretary, Pham Trac, and the hamlet militia chief, Pham Trong, both contributed to this outstanding feat of arms -- a night combat with an enemy plane brought down on the spot.

And, speaking of night combat, we must mention H village. On this piece of vigorous and energetic land along the important Road No. 1, which passes through the village, two American "Phantoms" were shot down during a night attack.

"Outstanding Teachers, Excellent Students"

All the militia members of Le Thuy District, old and young, male and female, have contributed to the shooting down of American planes. Among the 25 planes hit by the self-defense militia, many were brought down on the spot. What occurred in the district where 90 percent of the villages have achieved outstanding performances? Many villages like D and Th have shot down three or more enemy planes. These outstanding performances can be explained by the conclusive evidence of the villages' actual combat.

In all the villages of the district, people have been seething with the spirit of "increasing both farming areas and agricultural production regardless of the enemy's

bombs and bullets." This spirit has been demonstrated by an excited atmosphere of emulation aiming both at fighting America and protecting the system of communications. This spirit is in accord with the determination, sentiment, aspirations, and instincts of every combatant and resident in the area. In fact, seeing that the adjacent village had shot down an enemy plane, everybody, from old men to teenagers, whether party member of nonparty member, was saying: "Since our neighboring village has surpassed us in shooting down American planes, we have to get together to find out the source of our shortcomings and try to learn from our neighbors." Then, under the guidance of the hamlet party committee's secretary, the hamlet members democratically discussed and willingly proposed that the cadre organize permanent fighting units with appropriate activities. The village residents also volunteered to work efficiently in the place of those young men and women on permanent combat duty. Everybody was determined that seeing that our neighboring village has performed a good job in the fight against the American pirate aggressors, as Uncle Ho asked, our village should do better.

Many hamlets took the initiative to send for teachers to give their residents lessons. In fact, when P village shot down an American plane at night, L village sent its cadre to invite Comrade Pham Coi, a platoon leader, and a number of militia men to come and teach how they had shot down American planes. Knowing that Th village had shot down an American helicopter and also a "Phantom," C village sent a boat and invited the "experts" to help the residents. And, since the old men in M village could shoot down American planes, the old men in the whole district requested that they also be armed.

In the interchange of experiences among the villages, those who learned did their best to understand as much as possible and, through questions and discussions, to master the problem. Those who teach try sincerely and wholeheartedly to pass on all they know without retaining any secret methods for their own. When the enemy was concentrating its forces to destroy his area, the P village party committee's secretary had hardly expressed his desire to have more guns when a friendly village willingly loaned a number of them "in the hope that P village would defeat the enemy and perform outstanding achievements." L and X villages also dispatched troops to the dangerous

area and immediately joined P village in combat.

In the emulation movement to destroy American planes, to protect the villages and support the battlefront, nobody wants to be "behind his or her comrades," but nobody wants to harm the "general cause" because of his or her "individual pride." The collective spirit of emulation aims at destroying many enemy planes, protecting the population, and maintaining the system of communications in order to raise everybody's thinking to the highest level of revolutionary heroism.

Presence of Guiding and Commanding Cadre in the Decisive Battles

In the district of Le Thuy, the close coordination between production, combat, people's air defense, and protection of the system of communications has become a habit. In each phase of promoting shooting down many enemy planes and capturing many pirate pilots, the guiding and commanding organs worked very smoothly and tightly. The atmosphere was seething and we can say it was like going to battle or taking an oath before the national flag. At the village level, from the village party committee secretary and village militia leader to the hamlet party committee secretaries and company and platoon leaders, everybody spared time to study each type of enemy flight in order to select the most appropriate method of shooting down enemy planes.

The campaign of "two goods" emulation to establish good party committees and to train good party and militia members has sped up all aspects of activities. Those hamlets which excelled in production but had not shot down enemy planes or given good protection to the population, or those which excelled in shooting down enemy planes and giving good protection to the population but yielded a poor production, have not then accomplished the "four goods" demands. Therefore, from the party committee down to the cooperatives and people's organizations, careful consideration must be taken to see to it that organizational arrangements and people's mobilization be made with great enthusiasm. When the cooperative was about to be provided with more antiaircraft guns, the members had to meet and, after due deliberations, promise their superiors that they would mobilize their children and brothers and sisters to

achieve outstanding performances. As they correctly thought, more guns from the party meant more pride and more responsibility to cooperate with the front line to defeat the American pirates.

People can notice in each and every village in the Le Thuy district the cadre's valuable methods of giving guidance. In areas full of large holes left after enemy bombings, the village party committee's secretary, the village administrative committee's chief, the hamlet party committees' secretaries, and so on were frequently seen together with militia leaders going from one place to another and studying the topography and the enemy's tactics in order to find out effective new methods to fight the enemy. In the ricefields or by the sea, our comrades were building up their determination and their plan to stick to the ricefields and the sea in order to increase production. During combat, they became more courageous and sagacious in employing devices to fight the enemy. When the female artillery militia in N village was engaged in battle, the district party committee's secretary started giving advice and encouragement over the telephone. Whenever a new tactic was used by the enemy, the district cadre went immediately to the area and studied it, to draw lessons and experiences for dissemination. In the case of decisive and serious combats, the permanent members of the district party committee, the district militia leader, and the district political cadre all joined the local cadre in order to solve important questions on the spot.

How beautiful is the fighting attitude of those revolutionary combatants and the meritorious spirit of cooperation of those cadres, militia members and people in the frontline areas! They passionately fight the enemy as they passionately work in their ricefields. They know how to build up and maintain the tradition of their native land along with their highest aim of doing their utmost to fight the American aggressors for the sake of the beloved country's independence and freedom.

Their strength is now becoming invincible and weapons of all kinds become most effective in their hands.

The above-mentioned stories about courageous and talented self-defense militia and infantry combatants in the Le Thuy district make us feel more enthusiastic, more confident in and prouder of the outstanding strength of our infantry forces throughout the country.

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