

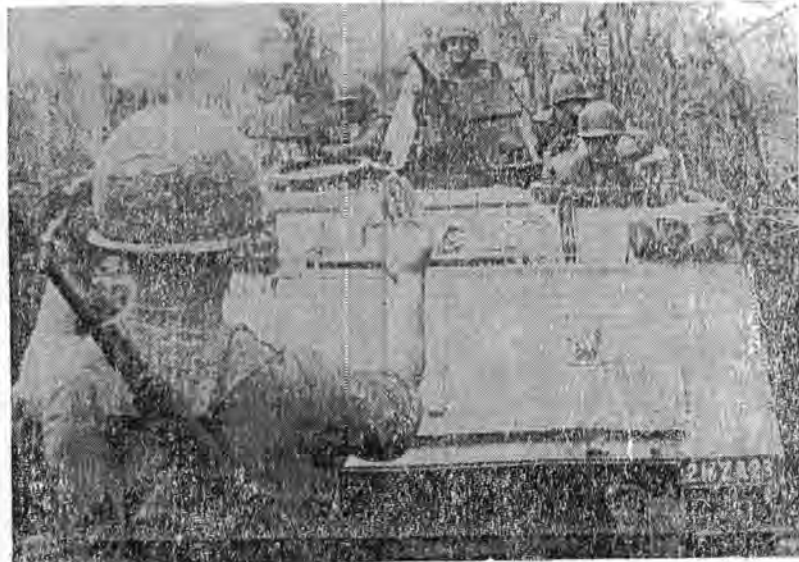
# 3RD BDE KILLS 596 IN FOUR HOURS



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## EASY DOES IT

A 4th Division engineer directs an armored personnel carrier across a narrow bridge in War Zone C during a 2nd Battalion (Mechanized), 22nd Infantry operation. (USA Photo by Sp4 Bradford Bromley)

## OPERATION ADAMS

### 3/12th Strikes Back At Enemy

**Tuy Hoa**—Troops of the 3rd Battalion, 12th Infantry participating in Operation Adams have struck back at the enemy in Phu Yen Province.

While suffering no friendly losses, troops of the 4th Division, 1st Brigade unit have killed 53 enemy during the past week in the operation which provides the shield behind which Revolutionary Development is progressing.

In a series of combat assaults March 17 near Hill 86, 13 kilometers west of Tuy Hoa, infantrymen killed 28 enemy soldiers.

Hill 86 was the scene of a battle March 9 in which a platoon from the 1st Brigade suffered heavy casualties.

Soldiers from the 3/12th made contact at 11:20 a.m. March 20 with an unknown-size enemy force 27 kilometers northwest of Tuy Hoa. After contact broke at 6 p.m., friendly forces found 19 enemy bodies.

Light and scattered action

Tuesday in the Adams area, 25 kilometers northwest of Tuy Hoa accounted for six enemy killed, 21 suspects detained and 31 weapons captured.

Since Adams was initiated October 26, 472 enemy and 44 U.S. infantrymen have been killed. U.S. forces have detained 1,963 suspects and captured 155 individual weapons.

In Operation Sam Houston in the jungles of the Central Highlands, elements of the 1st Battalion, 8th Infantry killed 42 enemy in contact with an enemy company Wednesday.

The Ivy elements in the contact were hit by 82mm mortar, automatic weapons and small arms fire in an area 53 kilometers southwest of Pleiku City in Pleiku Province.

Twenty-seven weapons were captured during the clash.

Tuesday afternoon units of the 2nd Battalion, 35th

Infantry killed 18 enemy when they engaged a North Vietnamese company 66 kilometers west-southwest of Kontum City in Kontum Province.

## FROM MAJOR GENERAL PEERS

### An Easter Message

The Easter Season should remind us that the mission of the Son of God when he came to Earth was to save humanity. His dedication to his mission is unquestioned for as we know he paid the supreme sacrifice in giving his life that we and others might be saved.

In a most humble way I suggest that our mission here in Vietnam, in a more material sense, may be likened unto His. We are here to relieve the oppressed and to insure that the people of the Republic of Vietnam live in freedom and dignity. Many of our comrades-in-arms have paid the supreme sacrifice to gain this end.

This victory has not yet been achieved and during this Easter Season it is my hope that our dedication of purpose will grow ever stronger as we continue our mission. May God grant us strength and fortitude and offer us guidance in the days to come.

**WILLIAM R. PEERS**  
Major General, United States Army  
Commanding

## 2,500-Man VC Force Dealt Stunning Blow

**Tay Ninh**—Out-numbered infantrymen of the 4th Division's 3rd Brigade killed 596 members of an estimated 2,500-man enemy force in a fierce four-hour battle Tuesday morning in Tay Ninh Province.

The Ivymen, coupled with air strikes and artillery fire, handed the Viet Cong their worst single battle setback of the year and one of the worst blows of the conflict.

The clash in an egg-shaped dry rice paddy area, 300 by 400 meters, resulted in 31 Americans killed and 109 wounded.

The battalions were alerted Monday of a possible attack by Colonel Marshall B. Garth, 3rd Brigade commander, when he spotted 35 Viet Cong in the open.

He immediately notified Lieutenant Colonel John A. Bender, 3rd Battalion, 22nd Infantry commander, and Lieutenant Colonel John W. Vessey, 2nd Battalion, 77th Artillery acting commander. Both men began preparing for the attack.

The Operation Junction City battle began at 6:40 a.m. with a mortar attack on the position of 450 men comprising the two battalions. The Viet Cong, made up of five battalions, three from the 272nd Regiment and two undetermined, launched an all-out assault at the friendly troops from three directions with the main attack coming from the south.

By 10:15 a.m. the badly battered VC were hastily withdrawing to the northeast and southeast under attack by U.S. air strikes, artillery fire, ground forces of the

Ivy's 2nd Battalion, 12th Infantry and armored vehicles of the division's 2nd Battalion (Mechanized), 22nd Infantry.

Two mortar rounds, landing within the friendly position, located 27 kilometers northeast of Tay Ninh City and 35 kilometers from the Cambodian border, was the ominous signal that triggered the bloody clash. Some 500 rounds of 82 and 60mm mortar fire were lobbed into the Ivy battalion's perimeter during the battle.

A security patrol was attacked while operating outside the friendly position and seven members managed to make it back inside the perimeter after alerting the battalions of the enemy's location.

The fierce, well-trained

(Cont'd on P-6, Col. 1)

## Gen. Westmoreland Pins Silver Stars On Two Commanders

**Saigon**—Two commanders who played key roles in Tuesday's 3rd Brigade clash with a reinforced enemy regiment received Silver Stars within 36 hours after the battle.

General W. C. Westmoreland, commander U.S. Forces Vietnam, pinned the nation's third highest medal for valor on Lieutenant Colonel John A. Bender and Lieutenant Colonel John Vessey Wednesday evening at MACV Headquarters in Saigon.

Colonel Bender has been commanding the 3rd Battalion, 22nd Infantry for 18 months and Colonel Vessey is acting commander of the 2nd Battalion, 77th Artillery.

The two commanders were cited for their outstanding leadership in directing their men during the battle which left 596 enemy dead. On several occasions they both left their command posts and fought side by side with their men.

Both men stated that the victory could not have been accomplished single-handedly but took the cooperation of everyone — airmen, artillerymen, and ground troops.

# Base Camps, Supply Dumps Uncovered In War Zone C

Dau Tieng — As elements of the 3rd Brigade, 4th Division sweep through clearing the northern areas of War Zone C, several large VC base camps and supply dumps are being unearthed.

Believed to be a sizeable complex of the Central Office, South Vietnam (the highest level enemy headquarters in the Republic of Vietnam), these camps have furnished good-size caches of ammunition, new tools and a variety of products vital to the Viet Cong war efforts.

Hundreds of yards of black cloth for uniforms were found still rolled on the bolts and bearing Chinese factory labels.

The larger base camps apparently house a permanent element of an organized female auxiliary, most likely a seamstress team that used to make and repair VC uniforms. Chinese manufactured sewing machines and even an old model Singer have been found in excellent working condition.

In past search and destroy missions, there has been evidence that there was an occasional woman present in the base camp from items of clothing and personal effects left behind.

More recently uncovered camps have produced larger quantities of female pajama-

type garments, new unworn pink and blue cotton sweaters, and under-garments.

Military intelligence translated Vietnamese writing on three handkerchiefs found amid the deserted sewing. On

all three, the seamstresses had embroidered their unit identification in one corner.

One of the handkerchiefs bore an inscription in red thread, "A gift to the heroes who kill the Americans."

## Medic Treats Wounded Despite Intense Fire

Plei Djereng — "No time to think—just do your job."

Private First Class Salvador LaBarbera (Falconer, N.Y.) is a medic serving with Company A, 1st Battalion, 22nd Infantry. He knows his job and has proven himself under the worst possible conditions—when the firing was so heavy there was no time to think.

Company A moved from its forward fire support base into the dense Central Highland jungle. "The first day out was uneventful," commented the 21-year-old medic, "like a walk in the park."

Shortly after the 4th Division unit moved out the following morning, the point squad sighted enemy movement to its front.

"It wasn't long 'til we knew we were in trouble," said PFC LaBarbera. "The point squad was attacked and

everyone was under heavy fire. Soon the point was cut off and I moved up with a squad to help them out.

"We reached them and set up a heavy base of fire. I tried to help the injured. There were quite a few wounded—some seriously. One guy was hit four times, but he's okay now. He's in Tokyo or the States.

"We carried the injured with us when we pulled back to the company. Their firepower (the enemy's) was unbelievable. The worst we've ever experienced. Lead was flying everywhere. When Company C arrived in support—four hours later—firing slackened off.

"There were numerous acts of heroism that morning. I don't know the guys' names because there wasn't much time and besides, I'm new in the company."

PFC LaBarbera wasn't wounded during the action although his bag, containing field dressings and medications, was hit several times by enemy rounds.

"It was four hours of hell out there," related the former civil engineer. "Of course it went by fast. No time to think—just do your job.

"You know the life expectancy of a medic isn't too good out here, but I'm going to fool them. Next year at this time I'll be home skiing."



### ADJUSTMENT

Specialist 4 Sean Montez (Puerto Rico) fastens his pack harness during a break in the battle with the enemy west of Pleiku. His unit, Company B, 3rd Battalion, 8th Infantry, 4th Division, is battling Charlie in Operation Sam Houston. (USA Photo by Sp4 Rich Obermaier)

## 'Red Warriors' Battle Four Hours With NVA

Plei Djereng—"Red Warriors" of Company A, 1st Battalion, 12th Infantry killed 47 North Vietnamese Army Regulars and detained three more recently while moving to an objective in the Central Highlands.

The four-hour long battle began when the Ivymen started down a heavily wooded hill and into a small ravine below.

"We had just reached the bottom," related Sergeant First Class Marcelo D. Padilla (Vallejo, Calif.) platoon sergeant of Company A's 1st Platoon, "when one of the men spotted an NVA moving in the brush."

Unable to see him, Sergeant Padilla asked for the enemy's position, but before he could get a reply he saw one behind

a tree and another to his left.

Keeping under cover, Sergeant Padilla crawled behind a log and took aim with his M-79 grenade launcher. The first round landed short, but the next was right on target.

He then noticed movement to his left and knew that the moving twigs and branches meant more NVA. During the next few minutes Sergeant Padilla managed to knock out four enemy positions.

Still receiving heavy enemy fire from the NVA force, the men moved back up the hill for a better tactical position.

"The enemy kept right on coming," explained Second Lieutenant William P. Fisher (Charleston, W. Va.), leader of the 2nd Platoon, "but we managed to hold our own."

"Company C had nearly linked up with us. Charlie then decided he had enough," added Sergeant First Class Robert F. Wright (Tacoma, Wash.), platoon sergeant of the 3rd Platoon.

For the remainder of the day and all through the night the NVA probed the lines with sniper fire to no avail.

A sweep of the surrounding area the next morning located 47 enemy dead and 25 AK-47's and four light machine guns.

## VC Force Battered

(Cont'd from P-1, Col. 5)

and well-equipped VC charged several times from three directions penetrating the perimeter and overrunning command posts. Each time they were forced back by the courageous efforts of the battling Ivymen.

The VC were able to overrun a U.S. Quad 50 position and were preparing to train the big gun on friendly forces when U.S. artillery wiped out the enemy and the weapon.

Sighting mechanisms on several howitzers were damaged by hostile fire and the cannoners employed direct fire to repel the onrushing enemy. At times they were firing at VC within 75 meters of the guns.

A wall of steel from supporting artillery pieces was fired within 35 meters of U.S. troops in the northeast and east area of the perimeter to turn back the swarms of charging black-clad VC.

Numerous times the VC

were hit, would retreat to the protection of the nearby wooded area, and shortly return bandaged up and ready for more action.

"Chinook" helicopters resupplied the U.S. troops with ammunition during the battle.

The 3rd Battalion, 22nd Infantry had moved into the location Sunday morning by air assault and encountered small arms and automatic weapons fire.

Two artillery rounds, which were command detonated while helicopters were hovering over the prepared landing zone, destroying three aircraft. There were eight U.S. killed and nine wounded from artillery fragments and small arms fire.

The Ivymen, after Sunday's attack, were able to prepare their perimeter and all was quiet until just before dawn Tuesday.

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