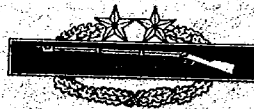
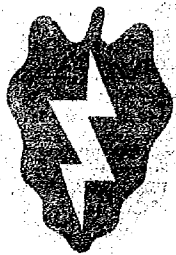


TROPIC LIGHTNING NEWS



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Warriors Uncover Huge Rice Cache, Clue Leads to VC Resupply Village



HARVEST TIME—While on patrol near Duc Hoa, Tropic Lightning soldiers of B Company, 2d Battalion, 14th Infantry, form a sharp contrast to a Vietnamese woman husking rice.
(PHOTO BY SP4 E. R. JAMES)

By Sp4 Charles Haughey

CU CHI — Tropic Lightning troops of the Fire Brigade's 2d Battalion, 12th Infantry, grabbed three huge caches of enemy food stores containing over 23 tons of new rice.

Combat sweep operations along the south bank of the Saigon River, 12 miles north of Cu Chi, netted the huge finds.

Working jointly with Stinger gunships from the 116th Assault Helicopter Company, the Warrior's Alpha Company was first to turn up a substantial amount of the grain when they located a camouflaged stack of bagged rice amounting to nearly 10,000 pounds near the river's edge.

"It was obviously in transit," said Alpha Company Commander First Lieutenant Richard A. Wiggins of St. Petersburg, Fla., "either freshly deposited along the shore for further transport by ox cart or awaiting pick-up by sampan."

Later that same day, B Company acting on reports from gunships, added 4,000 pounds of rice to the day's find.

Working swiftly the Warriors piled the 100-pound bags in cargo slings which were speedily evacuated by Chinook helicopter to Cu Chi.

Eagle flights dropped the 2d Brigade soldiers in the area within the hour.

The Delta Company troops salvaged as much of the precious food as possible and destroyed in place what could not be saved.

Four days of intensive search passed without results. Then the Fire Brigade soldiers of Bravo Company, commanded by Captain Allen R. Wissinger of San Diego, Calif., struck it big.

Sweeping in an area north of Trang Bang, the company's point element, acting on a hunch, probed the ground in a large burnt off area near a village.

Pushing through about 14 inches of earth, the probing infantrymen found a huge hollow spot.

Digging soon turned up rice. Over 3,600 pounds of the hard white grain was carefully extracted and airlifted to Cu Chi. An additional 4,000 pounds could not be saved and was destroyed.

"The rice was a clue to search the village," said Wissinger. "Working with ARVN interpreters, we discovered what appeared to be an enemy resupply point."

Search of the area found most of the hootches with at least one sewing machine, some as many as three.

"These we believe were used to produce VC uniforms from some of the over 40 yards of material found hidden in one of the buildings," Wissinger commented.

The Warriors continued throughout the day finding evidence to support the resupply point theory: 300 pounds of sugar, two hidden 105mm dud rounds, several packages of Cambodian-made cigarettes, 15 Viet Cong type hammocks and small plastic bags full of rice.

'NVA Look Like Beatle Fans'

By PFC Ralph S. Novak

TAY NINH — How does a charging wave of North Vietnamese look?

"Like a bunch of kids running to see the Beatles," said Sergeant Samuel A. Rodgers, Dallas, Tex., a radarman with the 4th Battalion, 9th Infantry Man-chus, who a day before had helped turn back a fierce midnight assault on their Mole City patrol base, 16 miles southeast of Tay Ninh.

Sergeant Shelton F. Barrs, John's Island, S.C., whose platoon bore the brunt of the NVA attack in which 106 enemy troops died, agreed with Rodgers.

"There wasn't any of this 'banzai' stuff or screaming and yelling," Barrs said. "They just came running in."

The estimated regimental attack on the Manchus' Bravo and Charlie companies' well-entrenched patrol base came hard on the wake of a rocket-mortar barrage, "and some of those NVA came right along with the rockets," Rodgers said.

The NVA forces broke through at one point to take two bunkers and 50 feet of trench line.

But the two companies of 1st Brigade infantrymen, with support from mortars, artillery and aircraft, held fast.

Barrs said the NVA seemed over-confident.

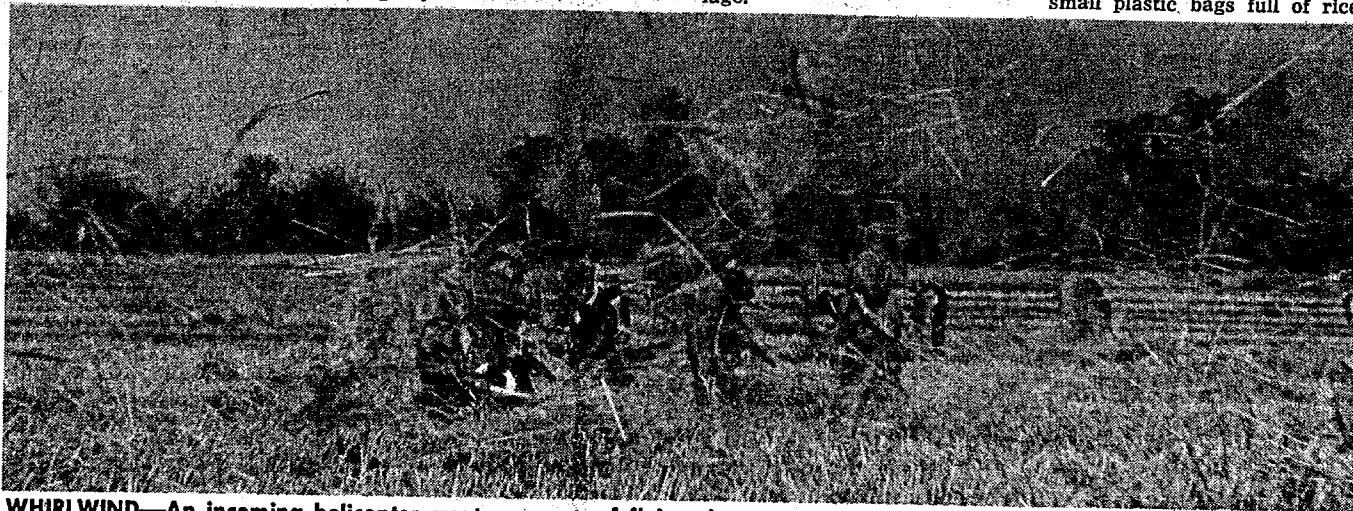
"They made two false assumptions," he contended. "First, they thought we'd fall back, and we didn't. Second, they weren't expecting us to be so well dug-in, and that set them back."

Among the individual efforts that helped repel the attack, Barrs and Rodgers both particularly recalled the work of two men—Charlie Company Commander Captain Ramon T. Pul-

liam of Chattanooga, Tenn., and Specialist 4 Charles E. Cureton, Greenville, S.C., a 2d Platoon grenadier.

"The old man (Pulliam) just kept going from bunker to bunker, passing out ammunition," Barrs said. "He really kept us going."

And Rodgers remembered Cureton "popping away with his M-79, keeping the enemy who'd gotten into our bunkers from going any farther."



WHIRLWIND—An incoming helicopter creates a mass of flying rice straw around Tropic Lightning infantrymen from the 2d Battalion, 12th Infantry, during an airmobile operation near Trang Bang.
(PHOTO BY SP4 CHARLES HARGHEY)