



# 9<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division



## The Old Reliable

Vol. 2, No. 41, Page 1

Republic of Vietnam

October 16, 1968

### **Black Knights, 1<sup>st</sup>/16<sup>th</sup> kill 138 VC 3d Bde units capture tons of weapons, ammo**

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**Assistant Information Officer**

DONG TAM – Pursuing the enemy until they could run no more, the 9<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division's 3d Brigade and supporting elements killed 138 Viet Cong during fierce fighting 12 miles west of the city of My Phuoc Tay Oct. 4-5.

It marked the first major contact in the Mekong Delta for the 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion, 16<sup>th</sup> Infantry, since it came to the Old Reliables recently from the 1<sup>st</sup> Division at Lai Khe.

Contact began when Company B of the 1<sup>st</sup>/16<sup>th</sup> inserted into a hot landing zone about 10:30 a.m. Oct. 4.

"The first lift came under heavy automatic and small arms fire which downed two Slicks," said Lieutenant Colonel John Hemphill, of Boise, Idaho, 3d Brigade commander.

The enemy was dug in along a heavily wooded and bunkered area bordering a canal. Six more companies were inserted to surround the enemy and air and artillery called in.

Troops on the ground pulled back slightly, allowing the 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion, 11<sup>th</sup> Artillery, to pound the beleaguered enemy. Air Force jets then streaked in to continue the meatgrinder while elements of the 7<sup>th</sup> ARVN Battalion solidified their clocking positions south of the canal in their part of the joint operation. Later that night, the ARVN killed 20 VC from ambush positions as they tried to escape in sampans.

Two more airmobile units inserted and by nightfall three companies of the 1<sup>st</sup>/16<sup>th</sup> and four of the 6<sup>th</sup>/31<sup>st</sup> had encircled the enemy. Sporadic contact continued through the night and 33 enemy bodies were found by sweeping infantrymen the next morning.

"In addition to the bodies, we found many bloody clothes and bandages and numerous blood trails leading into the water," said Lieutenant Colonel Willard Latham, of Arlington, Texas, 1<sup>st</sup>/16<sup>th</sup> commander.

As pressure from sweeping infantry mounted, the enemy began fleeing the area in twos and threes, hoping to elude the moving trap. Gunships from Troop D, 3d/5<sup>th</sup>, were called in and teams of three Cobras and two LOH "Warwagons" soon hovered over the area.

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"I was scouting a north-south trail leading away from the area of contact when I saw a fresh trail heading west," said Warrant Officer Tom Boeshore, 20, of Reading, Pa., a Warwagon pilot. "I started following the trail and spotted a VC laying in a canal line with reeds pulled over him. As I flew over, I looked back and saw two more VC and a sampan."

Giving his wingman instructions to follow him down, Boeshore led a minigun run on the VC.

"As soon as I started firing, VC popped up from all over," Boeshore said. "They ran all over the place. There were so many I couldn't count them. We shot until we were out of ammo and then called 'Big Brother'."

"We moved into the area and found nothing but VC running in the open" said First Lieutenant Bryan, of Lynn, Ala., Black Knight pilot who was leading a "heavy team" of three Cobras. "We circled until the Warwagons began receiving automatic weapons fire. Then I directed a strike on the VC and a couple of sampans until the Warwagons had pulled out."

Bryan said the VC had been laying in a series of canals that ran through open rice paddies. Most were wearing green shorts in an effort to help camouflage themselves. Hot and heavy contact continued for about four hours.

"We had VC running everywhere," Bryan said. "We would run one Cobra in until he had expended his ammunition. He would go back to re-arm and the other two would work the area over. We kept alternating until the Warwagons came back and then moved into another area where we found more camouflaged supply sampans and blasted some more VC."

Trapped in the open, the VC force had no chance. The gunships were credited with 62 enemy killed and soon the infantry swept the area. Nine suspects were detained and eight VC rallied to the government under the Chieu Hoi program.

Sweeping into the area of contact, the 3d Brigade troops captured 89 AK-47 rifles, 12 RPD machineguns, two 82mm mortars and sights, 110 mortar rounds, 62 RPG launchers, two heavy machine guns with wheel mounts, 58 VC gasmasks, 97 B40 rockets, 46 B-41 rockets, 82,000 rounds of AK-47 ammunition, 89 boxes of mortar charges, 91 sets of web gear and 80 pounds of medical supplies.

U.S. casualties were one killed and 25 wounded.

"It was the best team effort by a combination of the 3d Brigade, gunships, the 1<sup>st</sup>/11<sup>th</sup>, Air Force and ARVN that I have ever seen," Hemphill said.



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## The Old Reliable

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### *New Sgt. York battles VC for medals*

DONG TAM -- If you ask someone what the name "York" means to them, the most frequent answer probably will be Sergeant Alvin York, the most decorated soldier in World War I.

But to the men of the 9<sup>th</sup> Division's, 6<sup>th</sup> Battalion, 31<sup>st</sup> Infantry, York is one of them – Specialist Four Robert Louis York, 23, of Downey, Calif.

York is not sure if he is related to the famed Sergeant (a relative once told him he was a distant cousin or nephew), but since arriving in Vietnam in April, the Company C rifleman has been following in the footsteps of the senior York.

He is averaging a medal a month. His awards include two Silver Stars, an Army Commendation Medal with "V" device and a pair of Purple Hearts. The Vietnamese Government also has lauded the soldier with the Cross of Gallantry.

A former construction worker in Downey, York has received both Purple Hearts while retrieving wounded comrades who were unable to move because of heavy enemy small arms fire.

While waiting for his own dustoff on one occasion, he manned a machine gun and laid down a base of fire, enabling his fire team to maneuver to better positions.