

Increasing Battles from VC and NVA Actions

The end of September saw my Wolfhound battalion get into a heavy engagement, that beat up Company B.

It was becoming clear that, not only the local Viet Cong were beginning to get more aggressive, but regular North Vietnamese Army units and supplies were coming down the Ho Chi Minh trail inside Cambodia in greater volume and mounting operations across the border more frequently.

On the last day of September, I was ordered to operate closer to the Cambodia boarder west of a place called the "French Fort" - from the days when the French Army colonized Vietnam. When I landed Company B in the afternoon only one Kilometer from the Cambodia border they ran into a hornets nest.

Two Viet Cong Companies were there, and they put up a fierce fight the minute Company B landed. They even had anti-aircraft weapons which managed to shoot down three assault helicopters, heavily damaged three others. and hit five others, mine included.

Even Col Emerson's Brigade Command helicopter had to emergency land and division commander General Mearn's who flew in while the fight was building up had to stand off, and fly high to avoid getting hit.

I landed at dusk with two companies to reinforce Company B and take the initiative. We fought our way to B Company and then turned on the VC. We had a terrible time getting the wounded out by medivac helicopters while the landing zone was under both direct and mortar fire. A soldier using a strobe light to guide the choppers after dark was shot.

The fighting went on until 2AM, by which time we were beginning to envelope the VC to wipe them out before they started escaping into Cambodia.

Vietnam War (5)

Category: Vietnam 1967-1968

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This was the first big test for Captain Wroblewski, B Company Commander.

Wroblewski was an Annapolis graduate who wanted to be an Army officer so bad he was willing to serve on ship board off the Vietnamese Coast for two years before his transfer to the Army was approved. I had offered him the command of a Rifle Company in the 1/27th while he was still in the 1st Brigade. So he became B Company commander, already a good company after its commander rotated back to the states.

In the battle that day and night we killed 21 Viet Cong, but took 3 dead and 23 wounded. Captain Wroblewski and a Sergeant from my Reconnaissance platoon were so outstanding under the fire of 12.7mm machine guns while they criss-crossed wide open areas that I recommended them both for spot Silver Star Awards by the Division Commander General Mearns who had the authority to do that. He agreed, and General Abrams who was visiting Cu Chi pinned it on them both 2 days after the battle.

Rare photo of 4 Star General Abrams, Armored Battalion Commander under George Patton who relieved the bottled up 'Nuts' Airborne Unit at Bastogne in WWII. He was doing the rounds of Vietnam Units before taking over from Westmoreland when 2 days after the battle he was at Cu Chi and did the honor pinning on the Silver Star I recommended for both Wroblowski and a Recon Sergeant

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I had submitted Wroblewski for the Distinguished Service Cross - DSC - superceding the Silver Star which he later got when at Fort Benning (learning how to be a company grade infantry officer - ha ha) And I do not pass out high awards easily. He became a great company commander.

All this was during a buildup time for the Viet Cong. They virtually surrounded the Trung Lap Vietnamese Ranger Training center - which the 1st Brigade was supposed to keep clear of Viet Cong - but they caught few Viet Cong all around them. We came in and immediately found and hit building-up Viet Cong. We even liberated two South Vietnamese agents who were captured at the Trang Bang Special Forces camp. They were shackled and were being led away to be shot when we surprised the 8 VC at 4AM, killing four of them.

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About that time I tried another new tactic against Viet Cong who would crawl up at night in jungle areas and try to harrass the encampment or gather intelligence. I had a 105mm howitzer flown in with crew by heavy lift Chinook every night where we were encamped.

I had them lower their gun to almost level with the ground and set 105mm howitzers rounds with their timed fuzes, so that if we were getting harrassing night fire, we would fire that artillery piece at the

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sound of the VC over the heads of our men, so that the shell, with its very large blast radius exploded a few feet off the ground outside our perimeter.

Then in the morning we would fly it back to Cu Chi until the next night.