

(Morgan Gandy)

HO BO WOODS, SOUTH VIETNAM, 22200 (UPIS) American  
Infantrymen today seized--without firing a shot--a vacant  
Viet Cong regimental-sized headquarters complex during one of the  
largest operations yet staged near Saigon.

In the jungled Viet Cong base camp, situated only forty  
miles northwest of Saigon, elements of the United States Army First  
Infantry Division found Chinese Communist flags, eight thousand  
rounds of Chicom-manufactured ammunition, a medical hospital,  
two dining halls--equipped with fragile chinaware--bicycles and  
clothes.

On ~~one~~ one wall of the camp, ~~one~~ Viet Cong cadre had marked  
off the days of a calendar--up until Tuesday's date.

(More--Malloy--BD)

first add--morgan gandy--saigon

x x x tuesday's date. x x x.

Roughly ten thousand American, ~~American~~ Australian and South Vietnamese infantrymen, armored squadrons and other support troops launched "Operation Mastiff" on Monday when forty eight "slick" (unarmed) helicopters dropped them into fringes of the one-hundred square mile jungled stronghold known as Ho Bo Woods.

The "invading" troops made met little resistance except for night-time harassment of defensive perimeter perimeters, mines and sniperfire.

The Viet Cong had vanished.

(More--Malloy--BD)

second add--morgan gandy--saigon

x x x had vanished x x x.

The scattered houses--four years ago part of the Vietnamese government's famed strategic hamlet program--were empty. Only an occasional water buffalo was spotted--and one of them gave chase to an American trooper. American GGGIII'S g took up night-time defensive ~~perimeters~~ perimeters by using Viet Cong foxholes; an American company command element held lunch and seista in a Viet Cong ~~platoon command post.~~ <sup>observation</sup> ~~platoon command post.~~ ~~the~~

"It would be nice to see Charlie just once in awhile," one teenage American private moaned.

(More--Malloy--HD)

third add--morgan gandy--saigon

x x x private moaned x

The Ho Bo Woods--which one American private called "The Viet ~~Cong's~~ Dogpatch of the Viet Cong"--<sup>is</sup> ~~was~~ a parched wilderness of dry rice fields, ~~scattered~~ wild prairie grass, ~~and~~ <sup>And</sup> sporadically dense jungle. <sup>P</sup> Along the hedgerows of pineapple trees and dying shrubs, the Viet Cong had constructed four feet deep trenches, underground logcabin bunkers, <sup>And</sup> innumerable L-shaped foxholes. They had even, like ancient cliffdwellers, chipped foxholes into the sides of the red clay hills.

The American troops ~~had~~ <sup>SET FIRE TO</sup> ~~lighted~~ some of the bunkers, village houses and rice fields as they marched through the area, leaving behind ~~the~~ <sup>Z</sup> blazing, and then blackened, <sup>CHARRED</sup> ruins.

"We usually burn the houses when we go through ~~any~~ Viet Cong stronghold area," one American private explained. "Charlie can build ~~any~~ new house." The American ~~GI's~~ <sup>Z</sup> GCGIII's have dubbed their enemy "Charlie" or "Victory Charlie," the military phonetic ~~graph~~ <sup>Z</sup> alphabet for ~~the~~ <sup>Z</sup> "V. C."

(More--Malloy--BD)

fourth add--morgan gandy--

x x x for "V. C." x x x.

The Ho Bo Woods is considered to be a strategically important corridor area between two other infamous Viet Cong strongholds-- DDD-zone on the east and CCC-Zone, bordering Cambodia, on the west. All three of the Viet Cong zones have systematically been hit by BBB-52 ~~4~~ SAC raids; today's march through Ho Bo Woods showed aye number of the gapping craters ~~it~~ created by the radar-controlled air-~~raids~~.  
STRIKES

"This area is the Viet Cong alleyway to Saigon," one American officer explained today. "And that's the reason for this search and destroy operation."

(More--Malloy--ED)

This correspondent accompanied for two days a reconnaissance platoon of the First Infantry Division, which was lead by Lieut. Terry Ware, of Lockport, New York, New York. His radio call sign was "New York"; his forty-some man platoon was affectionately referred to as "Terry and His Grenadiers Grenadiers." His unit was <sup>today</sup> awakened at seven eye ayem ~~am~~ with plans to move out ~~for~~ of their blocking position at eight thirty ayem. But, ~~the~~ delay after delay ~~ended~~ followed and the unit began marching at eleven thirty just as the noonday sun was reaching its zenith. The troops moved slowly, ~~pear~~ peering carefully into the hedgerows and bunkers, but barely stopping for lunch. ~~at~~

The ninety-plus degree heat quickly produced a sweaty lather on the troops; some wrapped watersoaked ~~handkerchiefs~~ ~~handkerchiefs~~ around their ~~x~~ hands to prevent extensive sunburn; all wore their shirt sleeves down, which compounded the heat. The water in canteens and jugs became so <sup>HEATED</sup> hot that one American private decided to use it for making hot chocolate.

(More--Malloy--BD)

By four pppmmmm, the troops had covered eight kilometers and then settled down to form a circular ~~in~~ night-time defensive perimeter.

~~Massive~~ <sup>MASSIVE</sup> American firepower is used each night to protect the "frontline" positions on such a ~~an~~ offensive mission into a Viet ~~Cong~~ <sup>Cong</sup> area.

Helicopters with searchlights fluttered ~~around~~ <sup>OR APPROACH</sup> overhead to scan the rivers and other ~~avenues~~ <sup>avenues</sup> of escape for the Viet Cong. ~~These~~ American artillery in the rear is automatically

calibrated to fire just outside the American defensive positions-- sometimes as close as eight hundred meters. Throughout the nights,

American artillery rounds "sing" ~~overhead~~ <sup>PLUNG</sup> over the heads of the American troops and then, with a resounding slam, ~~pounce~~ <sup>TRANSPORT AIRCRAFT</sup> into Viet Cong territory.

American ~~flareships~~ <sup>flareships</sup> also sporadically drop ~~flares~~ <sup>flares</sup>, thirty-second flares, which brighten the skies

"like someone turned on an electric light," one American private explained. The American ground units carry ~~it~~ with them portable

mortars which can ~~trip~~ be used ~~notrptnot~~ only for securing the outer ~~of~~ <sup>of</sup> perimeters but also for launching illumination flares

to ~~be~~ search out visibly the area. Automatic trip flares are also placed outside the American defensive lines to create an

instant warning <sup>SYSTEM</sup> against any Viet Cong penetration.

Still, however, American armored squadrons sustained Viet Cong mortar fire, recoilless rifle ~~xx~~ <sup>Long-Range</sup> fire during the ~~night~~ <sup>night</sup>.

"But even with all these ~~mea~~ mechanical means, we're still always one or two days behind the Viet Cong," one American officer explained