

## OPERATION BENTON

Having had little success in engaging enemy main force units in Quang Ngai Province, Task Force OREGON next ordered the 1st Brigade northward to Quang Tin Province with the mission of finding, fixing, and destroying VC/NVA forces, believed to be the 21st NVA Regiment of the 2d NVA Division, the 70th Battalion of the 1st VC Regiment, supporting units, and local security forces. Although not engaging the enemy directly, the 1st Brigade's pressure was forcing the break-up of main force enemy units, thereby blunting their offensive potential.

Operation BENTON began on the morning of 13 August with an air assault by the 2-327th, followed that afternoon by a 2-502d air assault. The 1-327th was designated as the brigade immediate reaction force. Neither the 2-327th nor the 2-502d encountered hostile fire on their landing zones, but contacts with the enemy began shortly after units moved away from the landing areas. The 2-327th tactical command post area was set ablaze by a smoke grenade, and by mid-afternoon, the blaze had roared out of control and had destroyed the artillery battery supporting the battalion. At approximately the same time, Company B of the 2-502d had pulled back to its landing zone after its platoons encountered stiff resistance. During the night, the third platoon's position was attacked by an estimated company. The 2-327th also received night attacks. There was little action on 14 August.

The following day (15 August), Company A of the 1-327th air assaulted into the 2-327th area. All three maneuver battalions continued to make sporadic contact with the enemy throughout the operation, which ended on 29 August. A familiar pattern had been repeated: initial heavy contact with the enemy followed by days of diminishing contact with local force units as the main enemy units split into small groups, and moved away from the brigade's area of operations. 676 enemy were killed, 138 weapons were captured, and 52.5 tons of rice was confiscated. With the conclusion of Operation BENTON, the 1st Brigade's fighting units were extracted from the area of operations by helicopter to Chu Lai and then transported by C-310's to Duc Pho for a standdown.