

OPERATION SAYONARA

Having successfully screened the arrival and deployment of a divisional sized combat unit, the 1st Brigade was next given a similar mission: to secure a base of operations for the Republic of Korea Capital (Tiger) Division at An Nhon, just north of Qui Nhon. Battalions of the brigade were in position around An Nhon by 2 October. Unlike the mountainous terrain at An Khe, the coastal area at An Nhon generally consisted of low, flat rice paddy areas interspersed with a few small hills and villages. Following establishment of base camp areas in a perimeter around An Nhon, the battalions began extensive patrolling westward toward the mountains. A series of ten battalion-sized operations were conducted throughout October and into November while the Korean division was establishing itself. The operations made sporadic contact with hostile enemy groups of squad and smaller size, garnered large numbers of VC suspects, and permitted the resettlement of an estimated 9,000 refugees. All activity took place in the midst of monsoon rains. The most significant event of the operation was the discovery of 200 tons of rice by the 2-327th Infantry on 10 October. The battalion discovered the rice cached in bins, false walls, and false floors in a small village. The effort to remove the rice was dubbed Operation RICEBIN and proved to be an arduous task. Helicopters, armored personnel carriers, and VC prisoners were used to transport the grain. After five days 192 tons had been denied to the VC; the rest was left for the villagers. On 14 November, the Binh Dinh district, in which the 2-327th had been operating declared a holiday celebration for the battalion in appreciation of its work in securing areas and assisting resettlement of refugees. On 15 November, the brigade transferred defensive responsibility for the area to the Capital Division, and the last of the brigade units moved south to join the rest of the brigade at Phan Rang where a permanent base camp was to be constructed. While the Capital Division was landing at An Nhon, the 2d Marine (Dragon) Brigade arrived at Cam Ranh Bay to assume the mission of providing security there. By spearheading the introduction of additional forces wherever it went, the 1st Brigade was leaving big tracks.