

"The Mighty Ninth"

The 2nd Battalion 9th Artillery

The 2nd Battalion 9th Artillery was formed at Schofield Barracks, Hawaii, in 1916. The battalion was stationed in the United States until the outbreak of World War II.

In World War II, the battalion saw action in the Northern African campaign, and the invasion of Sicily and Italy, where they were an important part of the battles at Naples, Cassino and Anzio.

During the Korean War, the unit was assigned to the 1st Cavalry Division. It was later transferred to the 3rd Infantry Division at Fort Benning, and, in 1960, was reactivated as a part of the 25th Infantry Division.

In 1965, the battalion left Hawaii with the 25th Division for Vietnam. The men of the Mighty Ninth have supported the 25th Division, the 1st Cavalry Division (Airmobile), the 4th Infantry Division, the 101st Division (Airmobile), the 196th Light Infantry Brigade, and Task Force Oregon (later the Americal Division). The 2/9th undoubtedly is the most traveled artillery unit in the 4th Division and has seen action with more units than any artillery unit in the 4th Division.

Supporting the 3rd Brigade Task Force of the 25th Division was no easy task with the varied terrain and the extremely large area which the Brigade was to cover. The main part of the division was positioned north and northwest of Saigon and the logistics problems encountered by the 3rd Brigade were immense.

With the advent of the 4th Division to Vietnam in late 1966, the supply problem became less acute. Not until August 22, 1967 did the 3rd Brigade Task Force of the 25th Division become the 3rd Brigade of the 4th Division, and later

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the 3rd Brigade of the 25th Division. This solved the logistics problem, but the unit was still separated from the rest of the division. Even so, the 3rd Brigade and the 2/9th Artillery had found a new home.

During 1967, members of this battalion saw action daily in and around Pleiku, Kontum, Binh Dinh and Quang Ngai Provinces while supporting Operations Sam Houston, Thayer II, Pershing Baker, Benton, Wheeler and Wallowa. Across the Central Highlands, from Cambodia to the sea, over 50 tactical moves were made by air, road, and sea. The 300,000 rounds fired by the 2/9th Artillery played an inestimable part in the 4th Division's success during 1967.

From January to April, the 3rd Brigade was under operational control of the 1st Cavalry Division, and from April until the end of the year, the 3rd Brigade was under operational control of Task Force Oregon (soon to be Americal Division). The operation with Task Force Oregon lasted beyond the time when the 4th Division assumed control of the 3rd Brigade.

One rather unique policy of the 2/9th Artillery was that every lieutenant, regardless of time in country or experience, begins his tour of duty with the battalion as a forward observer, and at the same time each enlisted man in the firing battery spends several days on operations with an infantry company as a member of the forward observer party. This program successfully orients the basic artilleryman and artillery officer with the problems encountered by their infantry comrades.

With the opening of 1967, the 2/9th Artillery continued its mission of direct support of the 3rd Brigade Task Force, 25th Infantry Division. At this time the 3rd Brigade Task Force was under operational control of the 1st Cavalry Division (Airmobile) and was located in the northern Soi Ca Valley of the Binh Dinh

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Province conducting Operation Thayer II. During the operation, there was one major battle and countless small skirmishes. The combined artillery-infantry kills for the operation totaled 254 NVA and VC killed.

On February 12th, with the start of Operation Pershing, the area of operations shifted to the Nui Mieu Mountains. The new operation required no major moves except for Battery A which moved from LZ Tip to LZ Uplift. The only problem, one of providing fire support in a remote valley, was solved by the creation of Battery D for this operation.

The 1st Battalion 35th Infantry was in one of the major contacts of this operation. Battery A at LZ Anchor fired blocking fires to contain the NVA and when the area was cleared, 84 NVA bodies were counted.

After Operation Pershing ended on April 15th, Battery B along with the 1st Battalion 14th Infantry went to Chu Lai OPCON to the 196th Light Infantry Brigade. Battery C and the 2nd Battalion 35th Infantry were flown into the Duc Pho area of southern Quang Ngai Province. The rest of the Brigade followed soon, with Battery A being lifted into its new location at LZ OD. It was at this time that the 3rd Brigade relieved the 1st Cavalry Division in Operation Le June.

After 4 days the 3rd Brigade was under operation control (OPCON) to Task Force Oregon and a base camp was established at LZ Bronco to supervise the fighting on the coast. The summer enemy offensive ended tragically, for them, and most of the remaining fighting consisted of mop-up operations against small units. By the end of July over 1300 enemy had died. The 2/9th Artillery expended over 41,000 rounds in the operation.

Rejoining B Battery with the 1st Battalion 14th Infantry in the Chu Lai area and attached to the 196th Light Infantry Brigade, we encounter Operation

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Benton. The highpoint of this operation was an artillery raid near the Le Thanh Special Forces Camp. During the nine day period of April 20-29, more than 10,000 rounds of ammunition were expended with 65 confirmed enemy killed.

The 2/9th Artillery was still split up and on September 13th, the "B" Battery joined Operation Wheeler under the control of the 3rd Brigade 101st Division. The 2/9th Artillery was together for 10 days until October 4th, when "A" Battery joined Operation Wheeler with the 1/35th Infantry.

The remainder of the 2/9th continued operations in the Duc Pho area. Each day saw numerous combat assaults preceded by intensive artillery preparations. As the year ended, elements of the 22nd NVA Regiment were being chased south from Quang Ngai Province. The coastal plain was nearly pacified and Highway 1 was open for traffic.

The year 1968 found the Mighty Ninth once again providing fire support for the 3rd Brigade around Dak To and around Kontum. Wherever the 3rd Brigade traveled, the 2nd Battalion 9th Artillery was right there providing the indirect fires. The next reports of major activity for the 2/9th come from early May when during a morning of close-in fighting between a Fourth Division company and a multi-battalion force of NVA, 46 enemy died. The battle ended when two artillery shells, fired by the 2/9th Artillery, landed in the middle of a re-grouped Communist force.

Another function of the 2/9th Artillery was to provide defenses against the enemy's mortar attacks. Sitting atop a landing zone near Kontum is quartered "The Big Eye," a counter-mortar radar team. It guards most of the brigade's firebases against mortar and rocket attacks. Basically, the radar spots and plots the origin of incoming rounds, giving the coordinates to their artillery, which responds by firing to that location.

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Wherever the 2/9th Artillery went, records fell. As example, "B" Battery, in a 45-day period, during September and October 1968, fired over 10,000 rounds and accounted for 169 confirmed enemy kills.

Through the use of every weapon in their vast arsenal, units located at the Oasis grouped a successful counterattack against an enemy force which had attacked the base one night earlier. The enemy force, estimated to be an NVA battalion working with a sapper company, had attacked the headquarters of the 3rd Brigade at approximately 2 a.m. during the last week of May 1969.

The first sighting of the retreating enemy came at 1:30 p.m. when a Delta Troop Light Observation Helicopter (LOH) spotted a bunker complex containing an estimated 40 NVA soldiers. Airstrikes were called in, gunships expended on the confirmed enemy location and artillery was also employed to complete the coordinated display of massed firepower. The guns of the Ninth responded to the contact from their location at the Oasis and fired the deadly 105mm rounds into the enemy location. The enemy, unsuccessful in his attack on the Oasis, had now gambled and lost in two days. His retreat damaged him even more than his attack.

The 2/9th Artillery has done its job well, and the men can be quite proud of their efforts--efforts for which they have been recognized, and efforts for which the 2/9th Artillery has been chosen as part of the Phase III withdrawal.