

SECRET

HMAS VENDETTA (DDOS)  
at sea.

1st April, 1970.

In reply quote: S1/16/1.

The Flag Officer Commanding,  
HM Australian Fleet.

HMAS VENDETTA - REPORT OF PROCEEDINGS - MARCH 1970

Sir,

1. I have the honour to report the proceedings of Her Majesty's Australian Ship under my command for the month of March, 1970.
2. Harassment fire was directed at 20 targets between 0200 and 0300 on Sunday 1st March and an air spotted mission was commenced at 1000. The afternoon mission, again air spotted, took an unusual turn when the spotter requested that the ship engage targets on the beach line with close range weapons. Accordingly the ship was anchored in ten fathoms and M4 and G2 mountings engaged an area of trails and trees leading down to the seafront. On completion the ship weighed and proceeded to seaward to engage further targets with main armament.
3. At 0700 VENDETTA was released to rendezvous with USS RAINIER to embark ammunition and on return to Point LYNNE carried out an air spotted firing with limited G.D.A. resulting. The spotter then informed the ship that the Commander First Field Force had ordered a move to Point RAQUEL, south of PHAN RANG, and course was shaped accordingly. During passage further G.D.A. was passed for the week's firings in the form of 11 K.I.A.'s which had been discovered during a ground sweep.
4. The initial firing point for the new station was some fifteen miles north east of Point RAQUEL and at 1700 the ship was in position ready to fire. The first targets were centred in a Viet Cong village being constructed high in the mountains, in an area undisturbed by gunfire for some considerable time. Reasonable G.D.A. was obtained and the ship then fired in direct bombardment at a bunker and cave complex situated on a headland. This first direct bombardment was very impressive and spreads for line and range were minimal.
5. On completion of this mission the ship resumed a seaward racetrack until 2100 when course was shaped for a point fifteen miles to the south west where harassment and saturation fire was directed at a number of targets. Course was then shaped to return to the original firing position and between 0300 and 0400 harassment fire was directed at eight targets.
6. The air spotted mission during the forenoon of Tuesday 3rd was very short due to the difficulties being experienced by the spotter in gaining clearance for the various targets. However a lengthy afternoon mission was cleared and ship fired under the direction of two air spotters, one experienced one from PHAN THIET and the other an Army Artillery Officer from PHAN RANG on his first flight. Night harassment fire was directed at twenty targets south west of PHAN RANG between 2315 and 2359 and the same targets were engaged between 0400 and 0500 on Wednesday 5th.

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7. Only one air spotted mission was fired on Wednesday 4th, a very successful firing with three of the initial salvos requiring no spotting corrections. During the afternoon the spotters, accompanied by A.R.V.N., N.V.N. and Thai Officers and men visited the ship. Harassment fire was directed at targets between 2200 and 2300 and again between 0100 and 0200 and on completion the ship was detached to rendezvous with USS PASSUMPSIC to embark fuel and stores.
8. This unrep was a poor one and by far the worst of the deployment, great difficulty being experienced in engaging the probes and stores being passed slowly due to PASSUMPSIC's after winch being capable of only 30% power. It was capped when a load of rubber for onfreighting to HMAS PERTH was lost due to the highline slings parting between the two ships.
9. At 0440 course was shaped for rendezvous with USS VESUVIUS and on completion of ammunitioning at 1400 course was shaped for SUBIC BAY. The passage was uneventful and at 0700 on Saturday 7th VENDETTA berthed port side to at Numbers 11 and 12 Rivers Pier. Alpha and X-Ray turret barrels were removed and new barrels fitted by 1200 and I.N.O. personnel and ship's staff commenced setting to work.
10. At 1000 on Wednesday 11th I paid a farewell call on the Commander Naval Base, Subic, Vice Admiral V.G. LAMBERT and at 1315 I called upon the Commander, Cruiser-Destroyer Groups, Pacific, Rear Admiral W.H. BAGULEY, aboard his Flagship, USS HORNE.
11. At 2100 on Thursday 12th I was asked to sail one day early in order to fill a gap which had arisen in T.U. 70.8.9. due to the COLUMBIA EAGLE incident; accordingly the ship was readied for sea and at 0915 on Friday 13th cast off and proceeded for an uneventful 20 knot passage to II Corps. Recovery firings were carried out on Saturday 14th and at 2030 rendezvous was effected with USS MATTAPONI to embark fuel. At 0015 on Sunday 15th VENDETTA reported for duty to the II Corps N.G.L.O. in the vicinity of Point SASHA and there being no harassment firings available remained on a patrol line throughout the remainder of the night.
12. At 1000 on Sunday 15th an air spotted mission was fired against three targets with fair G.D.A. resulting. At 1315 ten rounds of HEVT were fired against an area where movement had been detected by a sensor. No further daylight missions were available and the ship remained on an offshore firing racetrack. At 2300, immediately prior to the scheduled time of harassment firings, I received a signal directing VENDETTA to western IIII Corps and course was shaped accordingly with the ship proceeding towards Point VIRNA at 24 knots.
13. At 1430 on Monday 16th the ship reported for duty in the vicinity of Point VIRNA and then proceeded at slow speed, with echo sounder running and hand leadline being utilised, to an anchorage in six fathoms. Despite the urgency implied in the movement signal no missions were available and the ship remained at anchor until 1100 on Tuesday 17th when the anchorage was moved some 2,000 yards closer inshore to cover a target area. The constant flurry of mud in the ship's wake did little for my peace of mind, already somewhat disturbed by my predecessor's cheerful handover message that 'MOST of the soundings are correct!'. At 1130 the ship came to starboard anchor in five fathoms of water.

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14. The first firing for 48 hours commenced at 1500, with minimal G.D.A. resulting. No further mission was available and the ship was requested to remain at anchor until the afternoon of Wednesday 18th when another air spotted mission was fired. At 1730 the ship weighed and proceeded at slow speed to a new anchorage 12 miles to the north to cover a large target area where A.R.V.N. forces had been in heavy contact with a Viet Cong Regiment. At 1930 the ship came to anchor in five fathoms of water and between 2150 and 2254 300 rounds of saturation fire was directed at a U shaped target area. On completion of the ship's bombardment the same area was hit by helicopter gunships and the remainder of the night was uneventful.
15. Despite several false alarms throughout the day there were no daytime targets during Thursday 19th and the ship remained at anchor until 1700 when the anchorage was moved 23 miles to the south to cover targets for night harassment. Firings took place between 2000 and 2100 and again between 2200 and 2300. At 0100 on Friday 20th the ship weighed and proceeded to rendezvous with USS TOLOVANA and at 0600 commenced embarking fuel, with the USCGC MELLON stationed on the opposite side. The shallow water set up an unusual amount of interaction between the three ships and the unrep proved to be very interesting. Fuelling was completed at 0745 when course was directed for Point VIRNA.
16. Course was altered twice during passage as targets were passed and then cancelled. This has been the pattern of events during the short time in IIII Corps - targets being cleared and passed to the ship and then cancelled due to lack of clearance. The fighting ashore has been quite heavy with 14,000 A.R.V.N. soldiers in the field and it has been most frustrating listening to the ground and air forces in contact. Visibility for some forty miles along the coast has been poor due to the heavy bank of smoke which stretches over ten miles to seaward.
17. At 1245 VENDETTA came to starboard anchor in six fathoms of water and commenced an airspotted mission, but after fifteen minutes, fire was halted as smoke blanketed the target area. At the ship's anchorage, six and a half miles offshore, light burnt debris was falling and the smell of burning wood was most apparent.
18. At 1700 the ship weighed and proceeded south towards an anchorage position for night harassment firings. The anchorage was something of a surprise with an L.S.T., a Coast Guard Cutter and two Patrol Boats already in possession. For the next two hours low comedy prevailed as each command endeavoured to establish the raison d'etre of the other vessels and it transpired that three separate missions were in being without any cross knowledge. I discovered that my harassment targets were extremely close to the position of some friendly troops and therefore refused to fire until the situation was clarified by the IIII Corps N.G.L.O. Clarification of a kind was obtained by the cancellation of harassment firing and the ship remained at anchor.
19. Saturday 21st saw the same confused situation as regards the location of friendly troops and although the spotters tried hard to get clearances no targets were available. The ship therefore became a hired gun and fired for the Local Market Time operations and at 1300 commenced an air spotted mission. Spotting techniques were rather different to those normally encountered but the sheer joy of firing again after a prolonged period of inactivity smoothed over any difficulties. Anchorage was shifted at 1530 and another air spotted mission took place, the ship remaining at anchor for an evening Redhaze mission.

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20. The Redhaze mission commenced at midnight but as difficulty was experienced in tracking the aircraft over land he was requested to switch on all lights and tracking was carried out visually from Red Director. The aircraft moved in a north south pattern, calling on tops' of campfires and smoke and on completion fire was directed at five targets. At 0530 the ship weighed and proceeded to rendezvous with USS TOLOVANA to top off with fuel and on completion course was set for Point VIRNA.
21. During the passage back to the line and during the next few days it became apparent that a high percentage of water had been received from TOLOVANA and the boilers blacked out on five separate occasions. A separate report has been rendered.
22. Again the course back to Point VIRNA was altered twice as targets were passed and cancelled and at 1430 the ship finally came to starboard anchor in six fathoms of water. Firing commenced shortly before 1800 at a known V.C. position and over two hundred rounds were directed at bunkers and structures. Firing ceased when Alpha turret failed to fully recover with a loaded round in the left gun and firehoses were played on the mounting until the round could be cleared. G.D.A. was satisfactory and included ten K.I.A's.
23. At 1830 the ship weighed and proceeded towards a northern anchorage and 2145 came to starboard anchor. Harassment fire was directed against 15 targets between 0100 and 0200 and again between 0400 and 0500 on Monday 23rd and the ship remained at anchor until 1030 when course was set to the south for an afternoon mission. However, after two thirds of the passage had been completed the ship was ordered to return to the north and anchored at 1230. Between 1400 and 1700 an airspotted mission was fired with moderate G.D.A. resulting and on completion the ship was detached and proceeded for SUBIC BAY.
24. This last period on the gunline has been a disappointing and frustrating one. The large number of ground forces in the area working for separate commands ensures chaos and the spotters' task in trying to obtain clearances is an unenviable one. In addition navigation marks are few with the northern anchorages being effected on a 'let-go' bearing of an island 19 miles away.
25. Passage to SUBIC BAY was uneventful apart from the brown trail left behind the ship as the contaminated fuel was pumped to sea. At 0800 on Thursday 26th VENDETTA secured port side to at Numbers 11 and 12 Divisadero Pier and the process of returning stores commenced.
26. At 1000 on Saturday 28th HMAS HOBART secured port side to on VENDETTA under the beaming smiles of my entire ship's company and at 1045 a general briefing was held in VENDETTA's Wardroom. Individual turnovers continued throughout the day and at 1830 that evening my Officers and I held a farewell Cocktail Party on the forecastle for 120 guests.
27. At 0930 on Sunday 29th I attended your arrival, Sir, at CUBI POINT Naval Air Station and accompanied you on your visit to HOBART and VENDETTA. At 1215, with due minimal ceremony, the weight was transferred in your presence on VENDETTA's forecastle and after having had the pleasure of entertaining you and your Staff Officers to lunch I accompanied you to CUBI POINT for your departure to the Flagship.

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28. At 1630, together with the Captain of HOBART and a large and vociferous Australian/American crowd, I had the pleasure of watching the first battle for the Seventh Fleet Rugby Championship. This match, which had received a great amount of publicity over the Armed Forces radio and television networks, provided a superb spectacle and the resulting draw was a fitting climax. At the completion of the match I presented the trophy to the HOBART team and from the American comments I feel sure that it will not be long before American ships are entering the competition.

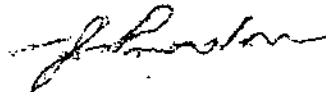
29. At 1000 on Monday 30th VENDETTA cast off and proceeded for VERDE ISLAND Passage and the voyage home. We were speeded on our way by many kind and flattering signals and while there is not a single person sorry to be going home many good friends have been left behind. After an uneventful passage through the SAN BERNADINO Straits a full power work up was successfully completed.

30. Health and Conduct have been satisfactory and morale is high. However, I am still disturbed at our complete lack of success in the fight against the incidence of Venereal Disease. Despite lectures and films in all their gory details no headway appears to have been made and the solution is a mystery to me.

I have the honour to be,

Sir,

Your obedient Servant,



(E.E. JOHNSTON)  
COMMANDER RAN  
C A P T A I N

For Information:

- The Commander, Second Australian Destroyer Squadron.
- The Commanding Officer, HMAS HOBART.
- The Commanding Officer, HMAS PERTH.
- The Commanding Officer, HMAS BRISBANE.
- The Commanding Officer, HMAS VAMPIRE.
- The Commander, Australian Forces Vietnam.

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(APPENDIX A TO HMAS VENDETTA's letter S1/16/1 dated 1APR70)

DATE/TIME	ORDNANCE TYPE	MISSION	TARGET DESCRIPTION	Range(1000 yds)	Gun Damage Assessment
010207	40 HEDA	Harassment	20 suspected enemy locations	13	unobserved
010252					
010946	4 SMOKE	Point Target	VC water point	15	1 concrete water wall dest. 1 bunker destroyed
011006	39 HEDA	(Air Spot)			100 metres trail interdicted
011018	3 SMOKE	Area Destruct	VC bunkers	14	3 bunkers destroyed
011043	56 HEDA	(Air Spot)			2 bunkers damaged 1 secondary fire
011500	414 40/60	Area Neutralise	Suspected VC location	3	200 metres trail interdicted
011540	H.E.T.	(Direct Bombardment)			4 secondary fires
011602	3 SMOKE	Area Destruct	VC bunkers	15	100 metres trail interdicted
011618	40 HEDA	(Air Spot)			
021051	34 HEDA	Area Destruct	VC locations	15	3 bunkers destroyed 1 secondary fire
021103		(Air Spot)			200 metres trail interdicted
021111	28 HEDA	Area Destruct	Suspected VC locations	17	1 bunker destroyed 1 bunker damaged
021118		(Air Spot)			
021652	18 HEDA	Area Destruct	5 structures and heavy trail	13	2 caves heavily damaged 100 metres trail interdicted
021659		(Air Spot)			
021714	2 SMOKE	Area Destruct	3 Structures and 2 bunkers	14	4 wooden structures dest. 3 K.I.A. (Body Count)
021722	17 HEDA	(Air Spot)	Bunkers	15	100 metres trail interdicted
021725	17 HEDA	Point Target			
021736		(Air Spot)			
021754	69 HEDA	Area Destruct	Fortified trench system	13	1 structure destroyed 1 bunker destroyed
021813		(Air Spot)			2 Bunkers destroyed.
021826	1 SMOKE	Area Destruct	Fortified Bunker System	9	200 metres of fortified trench destroyed
021842	39 HEDA	Direct Bombardment			2 caves damaged 3 bunkers destroyed 3 bunkers damaged 1 secondary fire

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022247	15 HEVT	Harassment	12 suspected VC locations/ caves and bunkers	12	unobserved
022327	35 HEDA				
030316	40 HEDA	Harassment	8 suspected VC locations/ caves, bunkers and structures	14	unobserved 1 secondary explosion (sighted from ship)
030336					4 bunkers destroyed 1 bunker damaged
030843	48 HEDA	Area Destruct (Air Spot)	5 bunkers	19	2 caves destroyed
030909					7 secondary fires
030947	14 SMOKE	Area Destruct	VC caves	20	150 metres trail interdicted
031605	33 HEDA	(Air Spot)			
031619	47 HEDA	Area Destruct (Air Spot)	VC bunkers	16	2 bunkers destroyed
031639					200 metres trail interdicted
031716	18 SMOKE	Area Destruct	VC bunkers	16	1 bunker destroyed
031753	8 HEDA	(Air Spot)			8 secondary fires
	13 STAR(PD)				200 metres square of crops destroyed.
032317	80 HEDA	Harassment	40 Suspected VC locations/ caves and bunkers	13	unobserved.
034038					
040936	27 HEDA	Area Destruct (Air Spot)	7 VC bunkers	16	5 bunkers destroyed
040947					2 bunkers damaged
040958	59 HEDA	Area Destruct (Air Spot)	5 bunkers, 2 caves and heavy trail	15	1 cave collapsed
041017					3 bunkers destroyed
	49 HEDA	Area Destruct (Air Spot)	3 caves, 3 bunkers and heavy trail	16	200 metre trail interdicted
041031					1 cave collapsed
041049					2 caves damaged
	120 HEDA	Harassment	30 suspected VC Locations/ caves and bunkers	16	2 bunkers destroyed
042209					100 metres trail interdicted
040137	31 HEDA	Area Destruct (Air Spot)	Suspected VC location	17	unobserved
050959					
051010	59 HEDA	Area Destruct (Air Spot)	Suspected VC location/ observed movement	15	1 Bunker destroyed
051035					3 bunkers damaged
051048					1 VC K.I.A. (probable)
					3 bunkers damaged
					1 anti aircraft weapon position damaged.

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Reference Number	10 HEVT	Harassment	VC Location	19	unobserved
171337 171339			VC Location	19	
171459 171512	2 SMOKE 26 HEDA	Area Destruct (Air Spot)	VC Positions	11	1 wooden structure destroyed 1 wooden structure damaged 2 bunkers destroyed
171520 171559	42 HEDA	Area Destruct (Air Spot)	VC Positions	11	2 wooden structures damaged 1 fish trap damaged
171504 171612	11 HEDA	Area Destruct (Air Spot)	VC Position	10	No GDA due poor visibility caused by heavy smoke
171618 171621	6 SMOKE	Area Destruct (Air Spot)	Tree Line	14	1 secondary fire
171511 171532	22 HEDA	Area Destruct (Air Spot)	VC position	19	2 wooden structures destroyed 1 bunker damaged 1 structure damaged
171541 171555	20 HEDA	Area Destruct (Air Spot)	VC Position	18	2 structures damaged
171558 171616	3 SMOKE 24 HEDA	Area Destruct (Air Spot)	VC Positions	18	1 structure destroyed 1 bunker damaged
172212 172316	300 HEDA	Harassment	15 VC locations	18	unobserved
172017 172211	45 HEDA	Harassment	15 VC locations	16	unobserved - subsequent ground sweep revealed: 1 VC K.I.A. (Body Count) 23 structures destroyed 15 sampans destroyed.
1701450 1701503	24 HEDA	Area Destruct (Air Spot)	VC Positions/structures	15	1 wooden structure damaged
1701516 1701518	6 HEDA	Area Destruct (Air Spot)	VC Structures	17	No GDA due to heavy smoke in target area.
1711304 1711330	4 SMOKE 95 HEDA	Area Destruct (Air Spot) Prep. firing for airborne assault.	Suspected VC position	20	2 wooden structures destroyed 4 wooden structures damaged 3 bunkers destroyed 1 bunker damaged 2 secondary explosion. 7 VC KIA (Body Count) .../..

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211613	9 SMOKE	Area Destruct	4.	Sampans, Structures and bunkers	13	1 wooden structure destroyed
211642	71 HEDA	(Air Spot)				1 wooden structure destroyed
						1 sampan destroyed
						1 sampan damaged
						1 bunker damaged
						unobserved
20100	18 HEDA	Harassment	14	6 VC positions		
20107		(Red Haze)				
21737	230 HEDA	Area Destruct	14	10 VC in open		
21815		(Air Spot)				
30107	60 HEDA	Harassment	19	30 suspected VC positions		
30418						
31417	3 SMOKE	Area Destruct	17	VC Positions		
31446	66 HEDA	(Air Spot)				
31456	2 SMOKE	Area Destruct	18	VC Positions		
31523	40 HEDA	(Air Spot)				
31532	6 SMOKE	Area Destruct	18	VC Positions		
31552	24 HEDA	(Air Spot)				
31604	6 SMOKE	Area Destruct.	20	VC position		
31632	28 HEDA	(Air Spot)				

2 VC K.I.A. (Body count)  
 8 VC K.I.A. (probable)  
 2 structures destroyed  
 8 structures damaged  
 1 bunker destroyed.  
 unobserved

1 bunker destroyed  
 2 structures damaged  
 1 bunker damaged  
 2 fish traps damaged  
 3 secondary fires  
 2 structures damaged  
 1 fish trap damaged  
 1 structure destroyed  
 1 structure damaged  
 1 secondary explosion  
 2 secondary fires  
 4 structures damaged  
 1 sampan damaged  
 4 secondary explosions

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SUMMARY  
TYPE OF MISSION      NUMBER OF TARGETS

TYPE OF MISSION	NUMBER OF TARGETS	AMMUNITION				RANGE		
		HEDA	SMOKE	HEVT	STAR	40/60 HET	NORMAL	EXTENDED
Point Target	2	56	4	-	-	-	2	-
Area Target	34	1391	79	-	13	414	25	9
Harassment	177	738	-	25	-	-	-	-
	213	2185	83	25	13	414	144	33
		2306	4.5 inch	414	40 mm HET	414	171	42

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(Appendix B to HMAS VENDETTA's letter S/1/16/1 dated 1 APR 1951)

Steaming Figures, Movements and Movement Forecast

Distance Steamed during month:	5,538.8 miles
Distance steamed since commissioning:	429,739.5 miles
Hours underway during month:	290.0 hours
Hours underway since commissioning:	30,169.7 hours

Movements

1 - 4 Mar	II CTZ NGFS
5 - 6	Enroute Subic
7 - 12	Inport Subic
13 - 14	Enroute 70.8.9
15 - 16	II CTZ NGFS
17 - 23	IIII CTZ NGFS
24 - 25	Enroute Subic
26 - 29	Inport Subic
30 - 31	Enroute Manus

Forecast

1 - 3 Apr	Enroute Manus
4	Inport Manus
5 - 10	Enroute Sydney
11 - 30	Inport Sydney

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RECORD OF UNDERWAY REPLENISHMENT

<u>DATE</u>	<u>TIME</u>	<u>SHIP</u>	<u>MATERIAL TRANSFERRED</u>
02 Mar	0803 - 0926	USS RANIER (AE-5)	1008 Shell 936 Cartridge
05 Mar	0313 - 0454	USS PASSUMPSIC(AO107)	267.6 tons NSFO 200 lbs vict stores
05 Mar	1248- 1355	USS VESUVIUS(AE-15)	864 shell 566 cartridge
14 Mar	2030 - 2115	USS MATTAPONI(AO41)	154 tons NSFO 240 lbs vict stores
20 Mar	0617 - 0736	USS TOLOVANA(AO-64)	249 tons NSFO 660 lbs vict stores
22 Mar	0933 - 1005	USS TOLOVANA(AO-64)	64 tons NSFO

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(Appendix D to HMAS VENDETTA's letter S1/16/1 dated 1 APR 70)

SPORT

<u>Date</u>	<u>Sport</u>	<u>Competitors</u>	<u>Result</u>	<u>Reps</u>
15MAR70	Rugby	Big 'E' v Cox'ns Grims	Cox'n Grims 14-3	40
29MAR	Rugby	VENDETTA v HOBART	6-5	17

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HMAS VENDETTA NGFS STATISTICS ON COMPLETION OF SERVICE WITH  
US SEVENTH FLEET

<u>ITEM</u>	<u>DESTROYED</u>	<u>DAMAGED</u>
VC KIA (Body Count)	52	
VC KIA (Probable)	20	
VC WIA		
MASONARY STRUCTURES	22	1
OTHER STRUCTURES		26
CAVES	108	102
BUNKERS	44	50
FIGHTING HOLES	239	223
TUNNELS	13	37
TRENCHES	1	2
BRIDGES	4	19
SAMPANS	1	1
FOOD CACHES	18	1
WEAPON POSITIONS	7	
CONCRETE WATER WELLS	11	
ENEMY OBSERVATION POSTS	1	1
BASE CAMPS	1	
PACK ANIMALS KILLED	1	
CATTLE KILLED	2	
OX CART	27	
FISH TRAPS	1	
MORTARS	1	3
SECONDARY EXPLOSIONS	2	
SECONDARY FIRES	34	
TRAIL INTERDICTED	107	
TREE LINE	8500 metres	
CULTIVATED FIELD	220 metres	
	120 acres	

Items recovered by friendly forces as direct result of VENDETTA's  
NGFS:

LARGE AMMUNITION CACHES	2
FIELD RADIOS	25
MEDICAL SUPPLY CACHES	2
AUTOMATIC WEAPONS	39
ROCKET PROPELLED GRENADES	28
LARGE FOOD CACHE	1
CACHE OF ENEMY DOCUMENTS	1
CACHE OF ENEMY COMBAT EQUIP	1

General Statistics:

Days spent on Gunline	93
Missions fired	192
Total Number of T rgets	1837
Total rounds fired	13295 x 4.5 irch
Total rounds fired	414 x 40 mm

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