

1997

Excerpts from "Calendar of Events in the History of the Sapper Branch of the People's Army of Vietnam (1967-1997)"

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Summary:

Translated excerpts from an official People's Army of Vietnam (PAVN) publication which gives a timeline of events of the "Sapper Branch," the Vietnamese army's commando/special forces troops. These excerpts discuss the Sapper's training of foreign commando forces from Cuba, El Salvador and the Soviet Union.

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Vietnamese

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Translation - English

"CALENDAR OF EVENTS IN THE HISTORY OF THE SAPPER BRANCH OF THE PEOPLE'S ARMY OF VIETNAM (1967-1997)" (FOR INTERNAL DISTRIBUTION ONLY)

[Bien nien su kien lich su binh chung dac cong Quan doi nhan dan Viet Nam (1967-1997) (Luu hanh noi bo)]

Editorial direction: Sapper Command and the Sapper Command Party Current Affairs Committee;

Authors: Lt. Colonel Vu Doan Thanh and Lt. Colonel Trieu Minh Duong;

Final Editing: Senior Colonel Ha Dinh Loan,

People's Army Publishing House [Nha Xuat Ban Quan Doi Nhan Dan], Hanoi, 1997

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May 1971

The Sapper Officers School begins Sapper Cadre Class 1 for students from the Republic of Cuba (from May 1974 to September 1974). The class consisted of five students.

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October 1977

Participating in the military sports contest for socialist nations, held in Cuba, Comrade Ta Tran Quang, a trainee at the Sapper Officers School, wins second place in the three-position AK-47 firing competition, helping the Vietnamese shooting team win second place in this event.

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This was the highest achievement in marksmanship that our army had ever won. Comrade Quang was awarded the Combat Achievement Medal, Third Class.

[...]

21 October 1977

Comrade "Men-ba-in-mang-det," Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Republic of Cuba, visiting the Sapper Officers School, stated "....On behalf of the Communist Party and the Government of Cuba, I wish to express my sincere gratitude to the Sapper Officers School. Through your work as revolutionaries, you comrades have provided your valuable experience to our young Cuban warriors..."

9 December 1978

Comrade "Joh Ronam Gaz-tor-ret," Cuban Military Attache in Vietnam, visited and attended the graduation ceremony for Cuban Sapper Class 3. Comrade Gaz-tor-ret said, "In the heroic country of the Great Chairman Ho Chi Minh you developed a great many ideas and gained rich experience in this important military art. [Page 101] Your experience has helped us successfully fulfill our duty of defending our Socialist Fatherland..."

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January 1979

A delegation of representatives of the Sapper Branch, led by Colonel Nguyen Cu (alias Tu Cuong), the Deputy Commander and Chief of Staff of the Sapper Branch, visited Cuba to hold discussions with the Ministry of Defense and the Ministry of Interior of the Cuban Republic. The two sides signed an agreement for military sapper cooperation between the two countries. At the request of our Cuban allies, the first sapper specialist [advisory] group, a total of 17 personnel under the command of Lieutenant Colonel Nguyen Van Bao, Deputy Chief of Staff of the Sapper Branch, traveled to Cuba to work there for a period of eight months (January to August 1979).

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March 1979

A delegation of the Central Command of the People's Armed Forces of El Salvador visited the Sapper Branch. The delegation leader, "Veadievosean," said, "I wish to sincerely thank you comrades who have passed on to us the priceless experiences of the heroic Vietnamese people. These experiences are also a great contribution that has enriched the storehouse of experience of the international proletarian class in the struggle against our common enemy."

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March 1980

A delegation of the Central Command of the Salvadoran People's Liberation Armed Forces came to Vietnam and visited the Sapper Branch. The chief of the delegation said,

"On behalf of the Faradundo Marti Liberation Front Armed Forces of Salvador, Central America, I would like to extend to the members of the elite forces of the Vietnamese Armed Forces our most profound affection. I would like to sincerely thank you for passing along to us the benefit of the priceless experience of the heroic Vietnamese peoples. This experience is also a major contribution that has enriched the storehouse of experience of the proletarian classes of the world for the struggle against our common enemy. As for you comrades of the [Vietnamese] elite forces, we have reserved for you a special place in our thoughts, in our feelings, and in our hearts..."

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November 1988

In response to an invitation from the Cuban Ministry of Defense, a delegation of representatives of the Sapper Command led by Major General Nguyen Cu, Commander of the Sapper Branch, visited and held working discussions in Cuba. The delegation signed an agreement providing for cooperation between sapper forces of the two countries covering the period 1989-1991.

December 1988

In response to an invitation from the Ministry of Interior of the Soviet Union, Major General Nguyen Cu, Commander of the Sapper Branch and Senior Colonel Ta Xuan

Thieu, Deputy Commander of the Sapper Branch, visited and held working discussions in the Soviet Union. A number of agreements on cooperation were concluded between the two sides.

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11 November 1994

A high-level Cuban military delegation, led by Lieutenant General “Cu Ly Xac,” Politburo member and Commander of the General Staff, came to Vietnam to visit the People’s Army of Vietnam and awarded the Cuban flag to a number of our military units in a ceremony at 33 Pham Ngu Lao Street, Hanoi.

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The Sapper Command and the Sapper Officers School were among the units awarded Cuban flags. On 16 November the delegation visited the Sapper Officers School.