

SYKES

REGULARS

REPORTER



1st Battalion



20th Infantry



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LZ LIZ, VIETNAM

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CHARLIE CO. AND ARVNS POOL FORCES

The integration of American and ARVN forces seems to be past the experimental stage in this battalion's TAOR. Charlie Co. and the 2d Co., 3d Battalion, 4th ARVN Regiment worked together this week in smoothly conducted operations west of Liz that demonstrated the effectiveness and compatibility of joint, Allied forces.

The Americans and ARVNs interchanged their elements to produce an approximately 50-50 breakdown of forces. They conducted a sweep through the Highway 515 Valley, destroying enemy fortifications, eliminating enemy supply sources, and removing possible centers of enemy operations there. The two forces set up ambushes together, conducted patrols, and pulled guard together.

Tactically, the Allied operations worked out well with each outfit respecting the methods and techniques of the other. Communications were no real problem as hand and radio signals proved to be effective as well as the words and phrases common to each nationality.

The operations also turned out to be a profitable teaching exercise. The ARVNs demonstrated to the Americans the field expedient methods of cooking pigs and chickens, and how to live off what natural food sources were available. The sharing of food was a common undertaking. Also, the fact of living and working together necessarily instilled in each force an understanding of the cultural attitudes of each group.

"We've learned to respect these people. They do some things differently than we, but you wouldn't think of arguing with an ARVN Lieutenant who has been fighting this war all his life," related CPT James Donovan (South Orange, N.J.). "Mostly we've learned about the Vietnamese themselves. They're an aggressive, well-trained, and disciplined (ARVNs continued on back page)

MSG KENDALL TO LEAVE LIZ

The Sykes' Regulars will soon lose one of its most familiar faces to a stateside assignment when MSG Edward J. Kendall leaves LZ Liz to become the NCOIC of the Induction Center in Manchester, N.H.

For the past twelve months, MSG Kendall, the battalion's operations sergeant, has been responsible for coordinating the battalion's operational plans and seeing to it that every aspect and each crucial detail of the plan is accomplished. His unmistakable Bostonian accent has come cracking time and time again over the radio as his intense involvement in the welfare of the men in the field has helped the battalion hurdle the hundreds of emergencies and crises it has faced in the past year.

His presence and his embracing sense of humor in the TOC and over the radio will surely be missed.

His replacement, MSG Thomas S. Drake (Fayetteville, N.C.), in his 3d tour in Vietnam, is also a highly qualified man. With 24 years in the Army, he has served with the 5th Special Forces, near Nha Trang, working with the Montagnards there. He was also with MACV, 41st Ranger Battalion in Kien Hoa Province, south of Saigon.

MSG Drake holds the Bronze Star, the Joint Services Commendation Medal, the Army Commendation Medal, and the Purple Heart.

SSG COOK IS "NCO OF THE WEEK"

Staff Sergeant Wayne Cook (Nashville, Tenn.) is the Sykes' Regulars' "NCO of the Week" for the week of Nov. 19-25. He is currently the Squad Leader of Charlie Co.'s 3d Squad, 3d Platoon.

After only three weeks with Charlie Co., he's already made a name for himself in the battalion. On his first mission in Vietnam, Nov. 1, he led the ambush patrol that captured an NVA troop and three VC just east of LZ Liz. A week later, he (COOK continued on back page)

CHARLIE COMPANY

SYKES' REGULARS BUSY THIS WEEK

The Sykes' Regulars were involved in a number of incidents this week and reported seven enemy killed, five captured, 16 VCS detained, three automatic weapons captured, two Hoi Chanh picked up, and almost 22 tons of rice confiscated.

Bravo company reported the first action this week Nov. 17, when its Ranger Squad and an element of the 1st Platoon pursued an evading male wearing red shorts. When they caught him he had changed to a blue pair, and the men turned him in as a VCS.

Later, the Charlie-Charlie extracted a Hoi Chanh, five miles north of Duc Pho.

In the evening, Recon picked up a VCS who had walked right into them after the curfew had come into effect. Delta's 2d Platoon ambushed five to six NVA who had walked into their ambush. The men confirmed one fully equipped KIA who had dragged himself some 50 meters, grasping a hand frag, before he died.

The big news of the day, however, occurred late in the evening, two miles northeast of Duc Pho at the mouth of the Song Tra Cau. Alpha's 2d Platoon spotted a boat with eight VC/NVA in it, about 150 yards from its position. The men opened up on the enemy, who returned a burst of fire. The platoon got one KIA and believed it got another when the occupants of the boat abandoned ship. Later, Shark gunships spotted the boat drifting in the river and fired it up. So much for NVA Navy.

The next day, the platoon reported another KIA who had been carrying some rice and a pistol. He may have been a result of the platoon's ship-sinking exercise the previous night.

Later that morning, Bravo's 1st Platoon found a home-made antipersonnel mine along with some expended shells and tools. In the afternoon, Alpha's 1st and 3d platoons uncovered 1,400 pounds of rice in two separate caches.

The 19th of Nov., Bravo detained four VCS, none of whom had IDs. The men also found a tunnel and a secret passage by the Red Ball, some four miles northwest of Duc Pho.

Alpha Co. also detained four VCS, one of whom was carrying a 100-pound sack of rice.

In the afternoon, the engineers working on the road paving operation, just south of the Southern Bridge, reported that they thought they'd been ambushed. As it turned out, they weren't bushwhacked. (ENGINEERS continued on back page)

UNCLE BEN'S ISLAND

Delta Co. drastically undermined enemy rice supply operations this week by uncovering one of the largest rice caches ever found in Quang Ngai Province. The company evacuated over 21 tons of the enemy food staple from a small hamlet, completely surrounded by flooded rice paddies, five miles north of Duc Pho.

Delta's 3d Platoon had conducted a sweep through the area and came back to the hamlet to set up a night encampment. PFC Sam Wise (Etters, Pa.) was on last guard early the morning of Nov. 14, when he noticed something odd in the floor of one of the hooches.

"There was a definite outline in the floor, and you could tell something was buried there," he explained. He borrowed an entrenching tool and started the digging that was to last more than a week.

Virtually every hooch in the hamlet contained large amounts of rice bagged, buried, and in barrels. There was rice outside under the ground, in the pathways, and submerged in the rice paddy water.

"There was even rice where they landed the choppers," said PFC Delbert Kirby (Johnstown, Colo.)

"I've never seen so much rice in my life. Every day we'd hit rice and have to order more bags. You couldn't even dig a foxhole because you'd hit rice," related PFC John Fern (Detroit).

Delta's 3d Platoon was C/Aed into the area to help remove the rice, and later Alpha Co. moved in to take over the operation. Although most of the rice was located in the small island-hamlet, the men also found a number of smaller caches to the east, just past the inundated rice paddies surrounding the hamlet.

Each hooch contained two or three large deposits of rice, most of it in 55-gallon drums or in plastic bags buried in layers under the floor. "There were holes five to six feet deep. Some of the rice was bagged, probably so the VC could move it out quickly," explained 2LT Richard Stephens (Marshallville, Ga.), Platoon Leader of the 2d Platoon.

Stephens surmised that the enemy had moved its rice caches from the Gaza Strip so the bulldozers working with Alpha Co. in the land clearing operation there wouldn't uncover it.

If that's true, then the enemy may just as well have left its 21 tons in the Strip. But apparently they didn't anticipate that Sam Wise would be kicking around in a hooch one morning and turn the isolated hamlet into "Uncle Ben's Island."

ENGINEERS continued

ed at all. A posse of National Police was firing at a bunch of bandits who had robbed a bank in Duc Pho. Last seen, they were heading north toward Black Rock.

Nov. 20, Bravo uncovered three heavily fortified bunkers by the Red Ball, and tracks working with Alpha Co. on the strip detained two VCS and uncovered some medical supplies. The engineers with Alpha later captured two VC while blowing bunkers. They wounded one of the VC and captured an automatic rifle and an M-47.

Also Nov. 20, a Brigade LRRF team, operating in the Nui Lons west of Duc Pho, confirmed two NVA KIA's when it sprung an ambush on an unknown size enemy force.

In the afternoon, Recon got two NVA KIA's when the enemy tried to evade from a nook, just east of LZ Liz. The platoon also picked up two packs, a steel pot, and detained four VCS found in the area.

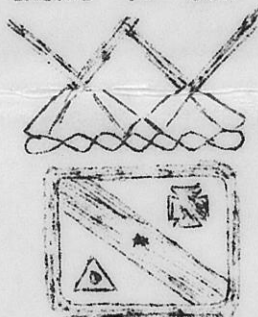
Nov. 21, the ARVNs working with Charlie Co. captured two VC POWs, two miles west of Liz, and Bravo Co. extracted a Ho Chi Thanh near the Red Ball.

The next day, the ARVNs and Charlie Co. reported having found a steel pot with a bullet hole through it. They also picked up a canton cover, a wallet, and three medical aid pouches.

Bravo Co. uncovered two six-cylinder engines used by the VC for water pumping, and Recon, working two miles west of Duc Pho, wounded an evading VC, who had VC medical supplies in his possession.

Late that night, the ARVNs and Charlie Co.'s 3d Platoon killed two VC who had tried to penetrate their position. The men also picked up a VC CIA.

TO THE LIMIT OF OUR ABILITY



ARVNs continued

group, and we're happy to be working with them," he added.

Operationally, the integrated team was a much more effective force than either unit working alone. The Americans brought to the operation the necessary artillery and air support as well as a systematic resupply. The Vietnamese proved invaluable on Psyops missions, being able to explain accurately and fully to the civilians the purposes of the pacification missions and exactly what was expected of them in the area.

The ARVNs also supplied their keen sense of detecting the enemy and their ability to ferret out VC and VCS from the civilian population.

SSG Nguyen Hoa, acting as interpreter for both forces, offered an illuminating comment on the joint operation: "We're doing everything together here and it's good to see how well everyone gets along. And everybody here is learning."

COOK continued

sweated out the tense hour west of Liz when one of his men stood on a coil of wire which was believed to be a mine, and was largely responsible for seeing that no one was hurt in the incident.

SSG Cook is married and did his Basic Training at Ft. Hamilton, Ky., AIT at Ft. Lewis, Wash., and completed NCO School and Ranger School at Ft. Benning, Ga.

Before entering the Army, he worked as a temperature control technician in Nashville. Perhaps he can be persuaded to do something about the tropical temperatures in Vietnam.

SYKES' REGULARS REPORTER

Battalion Commander LTC Robert Wilson
REPORTER OIC LIT Richard Gibson
REPORTER NCOIC SGT Jim White
Staff Correspondent PFC Toby Prodgars
Translator, B edition SSG Phan Van Tien
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