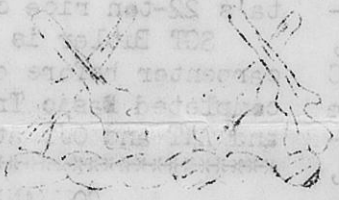


SYRIS REWARDS

REPORTER



1ST BATTALION



20th INFANTRY

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FIGHTER LOTS RECON THE BATTALION FROM PFC TO SGT IN A MONTH

The grunt is bound by his pack and -16 to the grinding job of war on the ground--rice paddies, jungle, mountains, and VC. He looks up and sees a jet, silver and streaking, bringing fire on the enemy and then is gone. To the grunt, the fighter plane is a fleeting thunder machine, unrestricted by the ominous presence of the enemy.

Three Air Force pilots visited the battalion this week to see what it's all about on the ground. LTC Chester Rodgers, LTC Aloysius Casey, and LT William Cole, all assigned to the 18th Special Operations Squadron at Phan Rang had a foot-soldier's view of the Red Ball, Liz, and the 515 Valley.

LT Cole grabbed a pack and spent a night with Charlie Co. and the ARVNs operating in the 515 Valley. LTC Rodgers and LTC Casey spent a day with Bravo Co. on the Red Ball to observe the infantry in its own element and to witness the planning and coordination of American, RF, and IF operations.

"We really don't get the feel of this aspect of the war because we're either on base or flying. Our visit here has made the war and the cooperation with the Vietnamese a lot clearer," related Casey. "We were very favorably impressed with the leadership on the ground, and we certainly gained a new perspective of the business of living and operating in the cold and wet," he added.

Up to now, the three pilots have experienced only glimpses of the infantry. LT Cole flashes by in his Shadow (AC119G) with four miniguns, while LTCs Casey and Rodgers do their flying in the Stinger (AC119K) with four miniguns and two Comm guns mounted. That's quite an arsenal and undoubtedly gives heart to the man on the ground.

If a man has enough motivation and a desire to improve his lot, he can go a long way in this man's Army. SGT Carter Michael (Thurman, Ohio) is an outstanding example of what a little determination can do.

Not quite four weeks ago, he was a PFC with Alpha Company. Nov. 9, he was promoted to E-4 and a week later went to the Division's Combat Leadership School in Chu Lai. He graduated in the top three of his class this week, an achievement that qualified him for an additional advance in grade.

His three weeks of effort in Chu Lai not only made him a better soldier and a leader, but earned him three hard stripes as well.

VC GOES ON SICK CALL

Sick call can often be an unhappy experience for an Army-type, especially if all he needs is a shot of good sham time. The worst that can happen, though, is a boot in the pants and an order to get back to work.

For a VC troop this week, however, sick call proved to be disastrous. He was heading toward Duc Pho, sick slip in hand, when he walked up to Recon's perimeter, four clicks south of Liz. Apparently, the platoon's day laager didn't resemble the aid station he was looking for, so he turned tail with 1LT Tom Flake (Columbia, S.C.) and 3/4 David Patton (Dallas, Tex.) on his heels.

Patton wounded him in the leg, and the VC got to see the Doc after all--at the 23d Med.

 TO THE
 LIMIT OF
 OUR ABILITY

The Sykes' Regulars continued this week to frustrate enemy activity in the Battalion's TAOR by reporting one VC KIA, five VC CIA, 14 VCS detained, one Hoi Chanh extracted, and four automatic rifles captured.

Nov. 24, Bravo's Ranger Squad detained three VCS in the only significant action of the day. Early the next morning, Charlie Co. and the ARVs captured a VC in the Highway 515 Valley. Later in the day, Bravo's 3d Platoon uncovered a mortar round and an antipersonnel mine, which the men blew. In the afternoon, four miles north of Duc Pho, Bravo's 1st platoon pursued two evading VC with weapons. As a result of the contact, the platoon also picked up two VCS in the area.

Nov. 26, a track from A Troop, 1/1 Cav., captured two VC hiding in a tunnel in the Gaza Strip. Both the enemy had automatic weapons, one of them an AK-47. A check of the area revealed a 50-foot tunnel with one large, 30'x20'x6' room. The men found fresh foot prints, cooking utensils, and some rice.

The next day, Bravo's 3d Platoon blew a 200-pound bomb, found a mile north of Duc Pho.

The 28th of Nov., Charlie Co.'s 3d Platoon detained a male VCS clad in green fatigues. In the afternoon, Recon uncovered what was possibly a VC/NVA base camp constructed with fresh wood. The platoon found a large tunnel complex and a number of canteens, ponchos, helmets, and other equipment. Later, Bravo Co. extracted a Hoi Chanh, and Charlie Co.'s 1st Platoon captured a VC.

Nov. 29, Bravo's 3d Platoon destroyed a booby trap composed of a trip wire leading to a grenade. That afternoon, the 1st Platoon found two M16 ChiCom assault rifles during a search of suspected enemy bunkers. Later, Alpha Co. on the Strip picked up a VCS.

The next day, Bravo's 2d Platoon detained a VCS while the 1st Platoon was busy, four miles northwest of Duc Pho, digging up a Russian flag and a picture of Ho Chi Minh buried outside a hooch. The men turned in six VCS found in the area.

The Sykes' Regulars' "NCO of the Week" for the week of Nov. 26-Dec. 2 is SGT Gerald T. Butler (Cleveland, Ohio), Squad Leader of Delta Co.'s 1st Squad, 3d Platoon. A graduate of Ft. Benning's NCO school, he has been in-country now for five months and was instrumental in Delta's 22-ton rice cache last week.

SGT Butler is married and worked as a carpenter before entering the Army. He completed Basic Training at Ft. Knox, Ky., and AIT and OJT at Ft. Polk, La.

COMMAND INFORMATION

Americal Division Headquarters has defined the free mailing service as follows:

- a.) The service is limited to personal letter mail, post cards in the usual and generally accepted form and sound recorded communications having the character of personal correspondence. Inclosures such as pictures and clippings, which are incidental to the communication, may be inclosed.
- b.) Merchandise, printed matter, newspapers, magazines, and advertising will not be inclosed.
- c.) Personal letter mail, post cards, and sound recorded communications posted under the free mailing privilege will not be registered, insured or certified. Special delivery is authorized upon payment of the required fee.

SYKES' REGULARS REPORTER

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