

# SYKES

# REGULARS

## REPORTER



1<sup>ST</sup> Battalion

20<sup>th</sup> Infantry

Volume 1, Number 14

LZ LIZ, VIETNAM

December 10, 1969

### THE GAZA STRIP—THE ENEMY ROUTED AND THE LAND CLEARED

On a clear and quiet day, the Gaza Strip possesses all the peaceful serenity of a calm and colorful California beach. But the people and the hot dog stands are missing—a reminder that the Strip has the slumbering potential of a major battleground.

Oct. 11, forces of the Army, Navy, and Marines began a massive land clearing operation designed to eliminate the sources of enemy activity along the South China Sea coastline north of Duc Pho. The Recon Platoon and Delta Co.'s 1st Platoon were "combat assaulted" by air onto the beach, eleven miles north of Duc Pho, after a thorough artillery prep by Shark and Dolphin teams from the 174th Helicopter Assault Co. The two infantry platoons provided the initial coordination of land, sea, and air movements and secured the beachhead area where three of the Navy's flatbottomed Landing Craft Utilities brought ashore the first load of several large land clearing vehicles—Army "Rome Plow" and Marine "Eimco" caterpillars.

Alpha Co. was moved onto the beach in a Chinook air movement from Chu Lai to assume the security for the clearing operations undertaken by the Americal Division's 39th Engineering Battalion and by the 1st Marine Division's 9th Engineering Battalion. Elements of A and E troops, 1/1 Cav., joined the operation later to assist in the land clearing and security of the men and machinery.

The Gaza Strip has long been a festering sore in the side of the agriculturally rich Quang Ngai Province. The fishermen who inhabited the Strip were constantly harassed by the obtrusive presence of the enemy and found their homes and livelihoods seriously undermined by enemy activity in the area.

Working with MACV and elements of RF, PF, and ARVN forces, the 1-20 successfully relocated the civilians from the Strip to Highway One, between the vil-

lages of Van Truong and Top An Dao. They have been provided with living quarters and an adequate supply of food. CPT Andrew Z. Lisowski, the officer in charge of the resettlement program said that the civilians are "adjusting very well to the relocation and their morale is high."

The eventual goal of the land clearing operation is to deny the enemy its supply sources, collection points, and bases of operation in the Gaza Strip and to provide the means for securing the area for the fishermen and their families, unimpeded by enemy harassment.

Tactically, the operation has proved to be successful. As the Strip was cleared to the south, the enemy's hiding places and bases of operations were destroyed, and they had to keep moving toward the mouth of the Song Tra Cau where they were eventually hemmed into a small area confined by the river to the west and south, and by the ocean to the east.

Alpha Co. took advantage of the enemy's limited mobility and in one week of sporadic contact accounted for 39 enemy dead, wounded, captured, or "Chieu Hoi'd" to the Allies.

To date, as the clearing operation moves south, past Tricoli, and out of the battalion's TAOR, the joint forces working in the Strip have accounted for 59 enemy dead, wounded, captured, or "Chieu Hoi'd." Six enemy weapons, and numerous fighting positions and bunkers have been destroyed or captured. 45,000 pounds of rice were confiscated as well as quantities of medical equipment, ammunition, and supplies.

#### HOI CHANH IN SUCCESSFUL PLUCK MISSION

Last Saturday, the battalion received information that a VC wanted to Chieu Hoi to the Allies, some four miles northwest of Duc Pho near the Red Ball. The battalion's response to the information was immediate and the extraction operation was flawless.

HDI CHANH (Continued on back page)

## SYKES' REGULARS MAINTAIN PRESSURE

The Sykes' Regulars maintained its pressure on the enemy this week and reported seven enemy either killed, captured, or wounded.

Dec. 4, Bravo Co.'s 1st Platoon reacted to information concerning an enemy bunker near the Red Ball. The men moved in and wounded a VC/NVA in the bunker. Found with him were various items of NVA equipment and 800 pounds of rice. That afternoon, Charlie Co. detained a Vietnamese civilian who tried to evade a group of engineers from the 26th Eng. Bn. when they entered a ville, north of Duc Pho. The detainee was carrying a substantial quantity of medical gear.

The next day, the 216th PF Platoon detained eight Vietnamese civilians whose activities in the hamlets along the Red Ball were suspicious. That night, a squad from Charlie Co. was moving to its ambush location when the men heard voices. In the contact that followed, the squad killed two NVA and fired on eight others wearing complete green uniforms who evaded with their weapons.

The next evening, Bravo Co. reported having found a bomb near one of its positions. It was contained in a gallon can, and one of the blasting caps had been detonated, but the bomb itself did not go off. Later, Charlie Co.'s 2d Platoon destroyed three enemy fighting positions and two tunnels.

Dec. 7, Charlie Co. uncovered 1400 pounds of rice, three miles northeast of Duc Pho. The company's 1st Platoon reported having exchanged fire with a group of enemy troops, seven miles north of Duc Pho. The men checked the area and found an AK-47 stripper clip with two rounds.

Later during the day, Bravo's 1st Platoon destroyed an enemy fighting position, west of the Red Ball, some three miles northwest of Duc Pho.

Charlie Co. then detained five Vietnamese civilians crossing the Song Cau River. None of them had IDs, and one had made a quick change of clothes on the other side of the river.

### SYKES' REGULARS REPORTER

|                     |                    |
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The REPORTER is published weekly under the supervision of the Administrative Section, HHC, 1st Battalion, 20th Infantry, 11th Infantry Brigade, APO 96217 as an authorized publication. Opinions expressed herein do not necessarily reflect those of the Department of the Army.

## SGT JONES IS "NCO OF THE WEEK"

SGT Alphonza Jones (Bogota, N.J.) is the Sykes' Regulars "NCO of the Week" for the week of Dec. 3-9. A product of Ft. Benning's NCO school, he has served with the 4.2" Mortar Platoon for four months, and is currently the Platoon's Section Chief.

He holds a B.A. degree in education from Montclair State College in Upper Montclair, N.J., and before entering the Army taught 4th grade for four years in the Newark city school system.

SGT Jones plans to continue work in education upon completion of his active service.

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### ROBERT E. LEE RIDES AGAIN

The name Gen. Robert E. Lee is most often associated with the Civil War and brings to mind the image of the stately and brilliant military tactician of a hundred years ago, fighting in the turbulent hills of Virginia. There is another Robert E. Lee, however, within the ranks of the Sykes' Regulars--this one a Lieutenant and a great-great nephew of the famous General.

LT Lee has never been to Virginia, though, and didn't find out he was related to the General until he was in the 8th grade in Chicago. He usually introduces himself as Bob, and when someone catches on to his full name, he often encounters the retort, "Well, just call me Abraham Lincoln."

Not only does LT Lee have a famous name, but during his school days in Chicago, he had a number of other friends with well known names. He was once in a group photograph with James F. Monroe, Marilyn Monroe, Gene Kruppa, Gene Autrey, Robert Fulton, and Patti Page.

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### HOI CHANH continued

Bravo Co.'s 1st Platoon was dispatched from the Red Ball to set up a blocking force opposite the blocking position set up by Alpha's 1st Platoon, which had moved quickly into the area from Liz.

Meanwhile, a LOH took off from Liz with the Battalion Commander and his PTO. The LOH picked up an NP from the Red Ball and inserted another group of NPs and MACV advisors, and the small band of Allies moved toward the Hoi Chanh's location.

Minutes later, the LOH spotted the Hoi Chanh standing near a hooch. The extraction party moved in, made the pick-up, and flew back to Liz.

The entire operation lasted no more than fifteen minutes--an effective demonstration of the battalion's swift mobility and genuine concern for the enemy who wishes to Chieu Hoi to the Allies.