

SYKES REGULARS

REPORTER



1ST Battalion



20th Infantry



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DELTA CO. ROUTS VC BASECAMP

Sunday evening, Delta Co.'s 3d Platoon was moving toward its night defensive position in the 515 Valley, five miles southwest of LZ Liz and just at the base of the Nui Tam Cops. The terrain was thick with the brush and matted undergrowth of the jungle foliage.

Dusk was approaching when the platoon's Kit Carson Scout, Van Vo "Junior" Dung, spotted smoke curling up a tree in front of him. The men were on to a VC basecamp, neatly and expertly tucked away in the undergrowth. The enemy inside were caught completely unaware of the platoon's presence.

"We started tossing in frags and the VC must have thought there were mortars coming in. We fired our 16s and could see in the mud where they went slipping and sliding around corners to get out of there," explained SGT Robert Frye (Williamsburg, Pa.).

The platoon made a quick search of the basecamp, found fresh blood trails, and later withdrew to a defensive perimeter 300 meters to the east. At first light the next morning, the men moved back in and thoroughly checked out the seven hooches built of straw and cardboard, completely hidden from observation from the air. Each hooch contained a tunnel and a considerable amount of military and personal gear.

Stashes of rice, salt, and other enemy food staples were located in the bushes, in holes, and in the trees. Much of their equipment was strewn throughout the brush as they hastily vacated their camp.

The camp had apparently been there for quite a while and housed approximately 20 people, some of whom were nurses who had left most of their extensive medical supplies behind them as they fled.

Among the items found in the cluttered debris were smoke and hand grenades, helmets, canteens and canteen cups, enemy clothing and uniforms, shovels, at least a hundred batteries, water purifi-

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FROM HUNGARY TO THE US ARMY

Staff Sergeant Mihaly Toth (Budapest, Hungary), Alpha Co.'s supply sergeant, has an interesting story about how he came to be in the U.S. Army.

He had worked in a factory in Budapest as a hot metal smith for twelve years prior to the Hungarian Revolution of 1956.

"We found ourselves working more and more hours for less money. The rule of the Russians and the working conditions that kept getting worse were causes of the revolution. The pressure just got too great for me, so I escaped to Yugoslavia Jan. 25th, 1957," he related.

He was caught by the Yugoslav police, put in a detention camp, and then was transferred to an old German concentration camp in southern Yugoslavia near the town of Bayina Basta.

"The camp had families and single people living in it, about 1,800 Hungarian refugees in all. CARE and the Red Cross tried to help us, but the Yugoslavs took most of the stuff they sent us. There were absolutely no cleaning or laundry facilities, the food was miserable, and a lot of people had to be transferred out because of sickness. We didn't have any blankets, so in the winter we had to sleep under hay. For eight months, I wore the same clothes I escaped from Hungary in," he recalled.

The Yugoslavs had given the refugees an ultimatum. After twelve months in the camp, they would be sent back to Hungary unless they agreed to stay in Yugoslavia and work for the government.

A third alternative, however, presented itself to Toth after his eighth month in Bayina Basta. A U.S. Army recruiter came to the camp under the Lodge Enlistee Act of 1952, which provided that foreign personnel could enlist in the U.S. Army, and after five years of service would qualify for a U.S. citizenship.

SSG Toth opted for the enlistment, and after the recruiter bartered with the Yu-

(SSG TOTH continued on next page)

• ACTIVITY ERRATIC THIS WEEK

The tempo of activity in the SYKES' REGULARS' AO was fairly erratic this week as sporadic contact was reported by the companies in the field. In all, the battalion confirmed five VC killed, one NVA killed, 34 Vietnamese civilians detained for interrogation, and three enemy weapons captured. An 11th Brigade Warlord Team also reported killing four enemy in the battalion's AO.

Bravo Co. accounted for most of the action Jan. 5th and detained a total of 17 civilians for questioning. One of the detainees, picked up five kilometers to the northeast of Liz, was carrying a 5.56 mm steel ammo can and some clothing. Three others picked up with him were wearing what appeared to be uniforms.

The company also reported three enemy KIAs on the 5th. The 2d Platoon killed a VC evading from an area where it was receiving sniper fire. The Gorilla team also killed a sniper. The company confirmed another enemy KIA five kilometers northeast of Liz, and Sharks in the area killed one VC and wounded another. Alpha Co., working on the Gaza Strip, detained 13 Vietnamese in three separate incidents.

The AO was relatively quiet Jan 6th, but the next day, Charlie Co. uncovered three enemy tunnel complexes in the 515 Valley. One of the complexes was at least 115 meters long, parts of which were picked through solid rock, another tunnel was about 80 meters in length. The Recon Platoon found part of a basecamp, six kilometers southwest of Liz, and found a number of batteries, possibly used for igniting booby traps.

Bravo's 1st Platoon picked up a twenty year old detainee, and the 2d Platoon reported two enemy KIAs. The men killed one VC evading from an area two kilometers north of Liz, and later the night of the 7th, while enroute to their ambush site, encountered an NVA troop standing on a rice paddy dike in front of them. The enemy disregarded their command to halt and was killed as he attempted to evade. He was wearing a pack, a green uniform, and was carrying a .38 calibre pistol.

Jan. 8th, Bravo detained a civilian attempting to evade a sweep by the 2nd Platoon. In other action during the day, the company uncovered six enemy spider holes, a metal can belonging to a VC nurse, and a small enemy tunnel, which contained a bag of medicine, four uniforms, three pistol belts, a canteen, an AK47 magazine full of ammo, a hand grenade, and an autographed photo of Ho Chi Minh.

A Warlord Team in the battalion's AO ***** BASECAMP continued cation tablets, and two miner's headlamps.

The enemy was thoroughly supplied, but according to SSG Gerald Butler (Cleveland), "The Third Herd doesn't miss a thing."

reported four VC KIAs and captured an AK-47.

Jan. 9th, Alpha Co., operating just east of the Song Cau, found two complete enemy uniforms, a bunker, and a tunnel complex. Recon and Charlie Co. also found tunnel complexes. The complex Charlie Co. found branched out in six different directions at a point 150 feet from the entrance.

That evening, Bravo Co.'s 3d Platoon, as it was moving to an ambush location, engaged two enemy moving down the Red Ball. One of the VC escaped, but the platoon found the other lying wounded in a rice paddy. The VC died, however, in spite of the platoon's efforts to save him. The men picked up an enemy carbine at the site of the contact.

No incidents were reported Jan. 10th, but the next day, Delta's 3d Platoon routed an enemy basecamp in the 515 Valley.

SGT WOOD IS NCO OF THE WEEK

SGT Robert Wood, from Levittown, N.Y., is the SYKES' REGULARS' NCO of the week for the week of Jan. 7-13. He is currently serving as platoon sergeant of Delta Co.'s 2d Platoon and has been with the company for over three months now.

A graduate of the NCO School at Ft. Benning, he completed Basic Training and AIT at Ft. Jackson, and did his OJT at Ft. Gordon.

SGT Wood attended Armstrong College in Savannah, Ga., and worked for Grumman Aircraft in Savannah installing jet engine mounts.

Upon completion of his active service, he plans to enter the University of Miami to work for a degree in marine biology.

When Alpha Co.'s clerk, SP/4 Albert Remf Novak (Ypsilanti, Mich.), was three years old he fell off a tricycle and got a scar on his knee.

"It hurt," he explained.

TOTH continued
goslavs for his release, he went to a U.S. Naval camp in Naples, Italy, for three weeks, then to Frankfurt, Germany, on to New York, and then to Ft. Jackson, S.C., where he attended a six-week English language school and did his Basic Training.

After twelve years working under a communist regime and eight months in a concentration camp, he became a private in the US Army—a rather unusual and roundabout way to become an American soldier.

Nothing IS AT LAST SACRED BUT THE INTEGRITY OF YOUR OWN MIND

- Emerson

The following is an article that appeared in the January 2, 1970, issue of the "Southern Cross," and was written by SP/4 Stephan G. Frazier:

LEADERS ARE GUIDES ALONG ROAD TO MATURITY

Enlisted leaders and Junior Officers have an important role to play in the forming of their subordinates' maturity, a role that is often compromised by inattention.

They for the most part dominate the Army's influence in a young man's search for personal authenticity and relevance in society; for they are with him through the entire course of his military obligation. This influence is sometimes underestimated.

When an individual enters military service he obviously faces radical changes in his way of life. Only too often does he pass through induction and initial training in a state of limbo, merely reacting to his environment. In some cases he never tries to understand the importance of his military service and looks upon it as a chunk of his life removed from his grasp.

This young soldier has in most cases been a high school or college student, and is unmarried. His own personal identity is unclear to him and there is an inability to express definitively what an "individual" is.

What ideas he does have about individualism, he has received through exposure to mass media or that which his peer group deems individually: impressions from his environment (i.e., characters in the cinema, or in a book, perhaps even a defiance-caricatured face on a poster will grossly romanticize the individualist conception).

Rising from the 'free-will' doctrine that captures today's youth his reaction to military discipline will be refusal to comply or the most common vocal maligning (humorous to him) of those leaders who impose it. He lives in a repressed state, doing his job on an action-reaction basis; do it or you will be punished.

He has never been pressed to make his thoughts stand up for themselves. His regard for the Army and the nation, is shadowed by their inability or non-desire to confront him, or speak on his terms other than the man's own function in the organization.

He senses a dichotomy, a difference between himself, those who are leaders and those peers who seem to be bound for leadership positions. He instead will search for a group who will confirm and reinforce his suspicions.

The leader on a squad, platoon, or company level is close enough that he is confronted with two choices, disregard or concern, in determining his relationship with his subordinates.

The role he must choose is concern, to bridge the gap; to reach the man on terms he will understand; to explain the qualities of a mature individual and soldier.

Command information can only reach a certain number of personnel and in Vietnam large CI classes are not practical. The leader must use his ingenuity to get his points across without jeopardizing the mission. Expressing what our society considers virtues in a man—courage, loyalty, endurance, honor, manliness, modesty, dignity, temperance—can be effected by example.

The military leader can enhance our society on a scale much larger than realized if the time is taken to reach and teach the young individual what he knows of maturity.

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