

DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
10TH AA PLATOON, 2D CIVIL AFFAIRS COMPANY
HEADQUARTERS, 3D BRIGADE, 25TH INFANTRY DIVISION
APO San Francisco 96268

AVDCTE

25 May 1968

SUBJECT: Civic Affairs Survey for Binh Duong Province

TO: Commanding Officer
5th AA Platoon
APO 96264

1. Reference letter, your organization, subject as above, dated 6 May 1968.

2. The following information is furnished in the format prescribed in paragraph 2 of the cited reference, for the village of Dinh Thanh.

a. Health and Sanitation: Dinh Thanh has one centrally located dispensary located in Hamlet 2 near to the Elementary school and District Headquarters. The dispensary is administered by the District Medical Service Chief, Mr. Khun Van Kim, who is assisted by one nurse, one nurse's assistant, one utility helper and three Regional Forces medics. The building has recently been whitewashed and painted on the interior.

(1) There are a total of eight beds in the Dinh Thanh dispensary; used primarily for expectant mothers. The main functions of the dispensary are to dispense medicine and care for women in childbirth. Therefore patients with routine ailments are simply given medicine and released, and none are hospitalized. The health records maintained are much like the military system; a record is kept of visits, illnesses, and treatments, and these are referred to when a patient returns for additional treatment.

(2) Medical supplies come from the Province Health Chief in Phu Quong. They are flown into Dinh Thanh by the CORDS Team 491 helicopter. These medicines, along with the MEDCAP supplies of the locally based U.S. Brigade, comprise a rather thorough medicine cabinet. Only medicine authorized for use by the Province Health Chief are left at the dispensary.

(3) Attached to the dispensary are quarters for its workers, a kitchen, washroom, water tank and latrine. In order to obtain potable water, the dispensary staff must buy the water from one of two civilian firms at a cost of about 800\$VN per month. The water is stored in a concrete tank.

(4) The major illnesses in the Dinh Thanh area are the following: skin sores, diarrhea, dizziness (usually due to salt depletion), tuberculosis, and normal injuries experienced by children.

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The village dispensary effort is supplemented by MEDCAPs conducted by units of the 3d Brigade, 25th Infantry Division. Each week three such MEDCAPs are held at the dispensary itself, two are held in Hamlet 5 which is relatively isolated from the rest of Dinh Thanh, and one is held at Bao Don south of the village. All MEDCAPs are in the MEDCAP II category.

The attitude of the populace toward sanitation appears to be better than in other areas of Vietnam, perhaps as a result of the former French influence in this area. In the housing area for Michelin plantation workers there is running water and the people use either latrines or commodes. A civilian firm, using ox cart, collects refuse and trash and transports it to a dump located south of the village. For this effort, the firm is paid 3000\$VN a month from the village treasury, and in addition charges 10\$VN a month to each house from which collection is made.

Some time ago a public trash collection system was set up to help alleviate the problem of litter and trash in the streets. Cans were placed in 14 sites throughout the village, and collection was to be made once a week. The project functioned for a time. However, as a result of the disruption to all public projects during TET, 1968, the system fell into disuse. It has since not been revived, but it is a project worthy of consideration and emphasis when projects of higher priority have been completed.

Drainage throughout the village was reviewed less than a year ago and the major problems were overcome. However, much remains to be done.

Water is supplied to the people of Dinh Thanh partially through the few wells in the village, but largely from two civilian firms who purify the water and deliver it by tank truck. The current price is 40\$VN for one cubic meter (approximately 60 gallons). The following is a list of the number of wells located in each of the five hamlets of Dinh Thanh:

Hamlet 1	7
Hamlet 2	8
Hamlet 3	4
Hamlet 4	4
Hamlet 5	4

For the most part these wells are not cased. However, the water in them is fairly clear. Most of them have a pole placed on a pivot stake, the whole device acting as an aid in drawing water to the surface. In the Michelin complex, there is chlorinated water delivered throughout by a system of pipes. However the water is not potable by U.S. standards.

Footnote

The Michelin Hospital, built in 1925, covers approximately one acre of land on the outskirts of Village 6, Michelin Rubber Plantation, coordinates XT 521496. It is maintained by Michelin for treatment of rubber plantation workers and their dependents. The Michelin Hospital was at one time an efficiently operated and successful hospital. Its physical plant is adequate, and with several alterations (screening, maintenance of plumbing, provision for storage of foodstuffs and medications, and equipping the laboratory and surgery), it would be ideal for patient care. The hospital was undoubtedly, at one time, a prime influence in the French plantation operation, gaining the confidence and support of Michelin employees.

At the present time there is a severe lack of medical equipment and medications, and there are no laboratory facilities available for establishing a diagnosis. However, the greatest single deficiency is the lack of a physician to diagnose disease and direct patient care. The present system of patient evaluation by transport of the patient to Dau Tieng relies heavily on the judgment of inadequately trained personnel as to who should see the doctor. It is doubtful that the Michelin Rubber Plantation workers and their dependents are willing or able to seek medical care in the present system.

Because of the enemy situation, the roads between Dau Tieng and Village 6 require large security forces for US personnel. At the present time, Vietnamese personnel are able to travel the road without incident.

b. Agriculture

Agriculture centers around individual garden plots in Dinh Thanh, where it is raised for immediate consumption or sale on the local market. Very little rice is grown locally, certainly not enough to feed the population adequately. Consequently rice and vegetables are brought from south of the village and from Tay Ninh Province across the Saigon River.

Animals are also raised in small family holdings. There are chickens, pigs, and cattle, although they are not raised in very large numbers as is true of other parts of Vietnam. Water buffalo and oxen are the main work animals, and they are used for plowing and pulling carts.

The few small fish sold at the village market are caught in the Saigon River and in the two streams that run through XT 4945.

c. Refugees and Welfare

Officially there are no refugees in the Dinh Thanh area. However, there are many families who have been displaced because of damage or destruction to their homes. There are approximately 68 families in this area in this latter category. There are also over 400 families (over 2000 persons) who are classified by the Census Bureau as "poor".

Assistance to this element of the population has been a matter of high priority to the 3-5, 3d Brigade, 25th Infantry Division, and to Civil Affairs personnel. Through May 1968, lumber, tarpaper, and various other materials have been supplied to the Census Bureau, which in turn administers the Public Works program which has concurrently built houses for those whose homes have been recently destroyed.

Help has also been given in captured rice, excess canned foods from Camp Saintier mess halls, and food from the Catholic Relief Service. This help is tendered where possible immediately after a loss occurs, and also to those who are very poor on a fairly regular basis.

d. Commercial Development: Commerce in the Binh Thanh area centers around the Michelin plantation. Established in 1925, the plantation presently employs 1600 to 1700 workers, of whom 1300 work in the actual plantation away from the village. At present, this industry is operating at about 20% of its maximum capacity and no new rubber trees have been set out in the last seven years.

When the rubber is collected from the trees it is brought into the factory by truck and processed into blocks of raw rubber. The raw rubber is then shipped to Saigon by boat, and from there it is exported to France and other European countries. The only products currently made from Michelin rubber in Vietnam are small tires for bicycles and motorcycles.

A marketplace is located in two tile roofed buildings at XT436463 near the center of the village. Each of these buildings is approximately 40 by 60 feet in size. The market place is owned by the village and leased to Mr. Ly Binh on a contract basis. Mr. Ly Binh then charges rent to the villagers who set up stalls in the buildings. The buildings are in good condition due to the repair and addition to the facility in late 1967.

The village slaughterhouse, built in 1933 is also leased by the village to Mr. Ly Binh. By the terms of the leasing arrangement, Mr. Binh must pay the village 1000\$VN daily for the building. On the average, about 25 pigs and one ox are slaughtered weekly. Mr. Binh buys pigs from the villagers and sells the meat on the market.

Located at XT436459, the village ice plant seems to be a profitable industry. The plant has the capacity of producing eighty 30-kilogram ice blocks daily. These blocks sell for 200\$VN each. The water used at the ice plant is brought by one of the two civilian firms hauling water for the village.

Two charcoal ovens located at XT436462 produce the charcoal sold at the local market. Small pieces of wood are bought and roasted in the airtight ovens for fifteen days in order to complete the process. One bag of charcoal (about $\frac{1}{4}$ of a cubic meter) sells for 400\$VN.

e. Transportation: Binh Thanh is the northernmost part of the Saigon River on which boats are permitted to travel. Convoys from Phu Quong and other cities along the river are organized almost every month, with three

AVOCTAL

25 May 1968

SUBJECT: Civic Action Survey for Binh Duong Province

boats to a survey. These convoys bring food and other supplies into Binh Thanh and normally carry wood on their return trips. Only private motor cycles and Lambrettas travel to Binh Thanh these days. The primary route is through Tay Ninh and Ca Chi for the more direct routes to the south are not considered secure.

C. Self-Help Projects: Through 1967 and 1968 the following self-help projects have been initiated: the market place, renovation of the Census Bureau Office, renovation of the VIO office, building of a Public High School, repair to the village dispensary, rebuilding of a VIO showroom and construction of Popular Forces dependent housing units.

It is only fair to add that the majority of this is not literally self-help. The work is performed by the Public Works Program who in turn are paid in captured or donated commodities. This system has worked exceptionally well for us, as it provides a ready source of labor for civic action projects, a job for about 75 individuals in the village, and it involves not only the Vietnamese, but in projects of interest to the Vietnamese themselves.

D. See attached Market Surveys.

E. Effectiveness of Civic Action Programs in this area: The civic action program in this area has been consistently strong and well received. As mentioned previously, the Public Works program supplies labor and utilizes Vietnamese. This is very favorable, for a Vietnamese worker will understand the idiosyncrasies of another Vietnamese much more readily than he will understand those of an American Soldier.

There has been a recent increase in the number of people attending MEDCAPs in the village and those receiving treatment have been more trusting toward the medical staff which conducts the MEDCAP. Other than small signs such as this, it is hard to determine the relative effectiveness of a civic action program. One can only assume that if the people desire a certain thing and are willing to exert their effort in its behalf, then its adoption as a civic action project should prove effective. Most of the projects attempted in this area are of this variety. Many of the projects are proposed and discussed during the monthly Friendship Council meeting, and each one is at least reviewed and supported by either the District Chief or the Census Bureau Chief.

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