

DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE INTELLIGENCE INFORMATION REPORT

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7. SOURCE: Returnee Interrogation	14. APPROVING AUTHORITY: <u>W.H. Beardsley</u> W. H. BEARDSLEY LTC, USA Dir, US Elm, CMIC

15. SUMMARY: (C) This report contains information concerning sapper and political training as taught by the NVA 2d Regt in LAOS. The course of instruction included training in small arms, explosives, swimming, infiltration, and political indoctrination. Information is also provided concerning the training school to include location, instructors, and training procedures.

1. (C) Background Information:

- a. Name: NGUYEN VAN TAN (NGUYEENX, VEAN TAAN), CMIC 2872-70
- b. Rank: SGT
- c. Position and Unit of Assignment: Sqd Ldr; 1st Sqd, 1st Plat, 3d Co, 2d Bn, 2d NVA Regt, TRI THIEN HUE MR
- d. DPOB: 4 Jul 49, PHU DIEN Vil, PHU VANG Dist, THUA THIEN Prov, RVN

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e. Parents: Names: Father, NGUYEN VAN HOANG (NGUYENX, VEAN HOANG), living; Mother, PHAM THI LUU (FAMV, THIV LUWUV), living

f. Circumstances of Return. Source returned to the National Police, PHU LOC Dist, THUA THIEN Prov, on 8 Dec 69, while on a reconnaissance mission on TRUOI Mt, PHU LOC Dist. Source had in his possession one AK-47 and three magazines of ammo. Source returned because he strongly feared that he would be sent to his home area where he might be forced to harm his relatives. Also, source was homesick and discouraged because religious devotion was forbidden.

g. Significant Activities. From 1949 to Feb 68, source lived at his POB with his family and worked on a farm. Source was forced to join the VC during the occupation of HUE City, on 4 Feb 68. He was sent to NAM HUA Mt, HUONG THUY Dist, THUA THIEN Prov, and was assigned to the 7th Trans Co. The mission of his company was to evacuate the wounded from HUE City. In May 68, source received basic training with the C-117 Co, PHU VANG Dist Unit, THUA THIEN HUE PR. In Nov 68, the C-117 Co was sent to THUONG LONG Mt, 1st VC Dist, THUA THIEN Prov, for purposes of rice procurement. Source was selected for sapper training in early Jun 69. From 21 Jun to 27 Oct 69, source received sapper and political training in LAOS. After the completion of the course, source was assigned as Sqd Ldr, 1st Sqd, 1st Plat, 3d Co, 2d Bn, 2d NVA Regt. In Nov 69, his unit left LAOS. The unit reached TRUOI Mt on 5 Dec. Three days later, on 8 Dec 69, source returned to the National Police.

h. Additional References: CMIC Exploitation Guide, Annex A; Map: LAOS, AMS Series L7015, Sheet 6341 IV, dtd 1965, Scale 1:50,000

2. (C), Training School of the 2d Regt:

a. General. From 21 Jun to 27 Oct 69, source received sapper and political training in a school under the jurisdiction of the 2d Regt in LAOS. The school was located at (vic XD637113), near MUANG NONG Vil. There were thirty-four men attending the school, all of whom were VC. The first two weeks and the last week of the course were devoted to political training. The rest of the time was spent on sapper training.

b. Prerequisites and Selection of Personnel. All students were selected individually; there were no volunteers. Prerequisites for being selected for the school were being in good health, being between the ages of 18 and 24, being over 45kg in weight, and being over 1.53m in height. Source did not know of any political or educational requirements. All students had undergone basic training previously and had to have an ability to think and react quickly.

c. Sapper Training. The majority of the time spent at the school was devoted to sapper training. Students trained in small arms, explosives, swimming, infiltration, and ambush tactics.

(1) Small Arms:

(a) AK-47. Source fired the AK-47 six times during training. Each firing session lasted fifteen minutes. The reason

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for such a small amount of time spent on the AK-47 was that all of the students had received previous training with the weapon.

(b) B-40 and B-41 ATGLs. Two weeks were spent training on the B-40 and B-41 ATGLs. The majority of this training was in the classroom, studying the characteristics of the weapons. Only three days were actually spent firing the B-40 and B-41 ATGLs.

(2) Explosives. Three hours a day, for approximately three weeks, were spent training with explosives. The types of explosives used were C-4, AT-60, and TNT. Source said that AT-60 was a dry yellow powder containing a mixture of C-4 and other types of explosives. Ten days were spent training with C-4. For training purposes, the men used 200g of explosives at a time. The students constructed small wooden shacks to be used as targets. Six men were broken down into three groups of two men each. The first group would be used solely as lookouts. The second and third groups would approach the shack from opposite sides. One man from the second group would toss a charge of C-4 through a window. If insufficient damage was done, a member of the third group would also throw a charge from the opposite side. The men trained with AT-60 and TNT in the same manner. Mock underground bunkers, 1.50m deep, were also utilized as targets. Students also received instruction on what to do upon discovering dud munitions. If a dud bomb was encountered, the men were instructed to mix the explosive from the bomb with either C-4 or AT-60. They would then make their own explosive by putting the mixture in a nylon bag and using a No 10 fuse.

(3) Swimming. The students received one week of training in swimming. Instruction included underwater diving, how to swim keeping only the head above the surface, swimming without making noise, and swimming with a 10kg pack. Stress was placed upon swimming without making noise so as to avoid detection. Source stated that swimming training was difficult for the majority of the students.

(4) Infiltration. Students received three months of training in infiltration tactics.

(a) Equipment. During infiltration training, each man carried one AK-47 with 100 rds of ammunition, wire cutters, a bamboo stick for mine detection, and 500g of TNT.

(b) Camouflage. During infiltration training, the men wore only underwear and painted their entire bodies with various colored paints according to the types of terrain. They were taught how to use all natural camouflage such as twigs, branches, grass, etc.

(c) Affirmation and Approach. The initial phase in this area of instruction was affirmation of the target. This consisted of determining the best method of destruction, avenues of approach, and position of any obstacles and sentries. The men would approach in cells with a 3m to 5m distance between cell members. In open areas, the students were instructed to proceed in zigzag patterns, crawling and rolling as they advanced.

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(d) Negotiating Barbed Wire. Upon reaching a barbed wire obstacle, one man was given the responsibility of cutting the wire. After he had done so, he would proceed through the wire followed by his cell members. If the wire was concertina, the men would dig under it using their hands and a bamboo stick. In training, vines were used as barbed wire because there was no wire available. The students trained on a course 7m long containing five to seven wire fences and fifteen to thirty mines.

(e) Mine Detection. In training in mine detection, the students would crawl on their hands and knees probing the ground with a bamboo stick. If little cover was available, they were taught to crawl on their stomachs with their arms outstretched to the front of them. Upon detecting a mine, the men were taught to deactivate it by disarming the fuse. If a claymore mine was encountered, the detonating fuze was removed and the wire was cut. To add realism to the training, the mines contained a primer charge and if improperly deactivated, the primer charge would explode emitting smoke. This indicated to the individual that the mine had been deactivated improperly.

(f) Attack. In the attack phase of instruction the men were broken down into three teams. One team was designated as the enemy and would occupy the outpost. The remaining teams were designated as A Force and B Force. A Force was further divided into cells, each of which would advance to a predetermined point and be in position at a certain time given as H Hour. B Force was held in reserve. A signal was given by the instructor, and all cells of A Force commenced fire. The firing would last five minutes. After firing ceased, simultaneously, A Force withdrew and B Force advanced with the mission of collecting weapons and PWs, evacuating wounded, and securing the area. Blanks were used during this phase of training. The men were told that it was necessary for the attacking unit to have twice the manpower strength that the defending force had.

(g) Ambush. Concurrent with infiltration training, the students received one week of training in squad-sized ambush tactics. A squad was broken into three cells. The cells would position themselves at strategic points: one cell each to the front and rear of the ambush site, and one cell along the side. As the target came into position, the front cell would open fire first, followed with fire from the other two cells. The ambush would last ten minutes, at which time the cells would withdraw.

(h) Bridges. There was one week of classroom instruction on destroying bridges. All of the instruction was in the classroom, but emphasis was placed on this subject by the instructors. The men were taught to swim close to the bank, making as little noise as possible. Upon reaching the bridge, the men would disperse, and each man would affix a charge of C-4 to a bridge support. Although source was unable to recall a set formula, he did state that the size of the charge was dependent on the size of the bridge. The students were told that when leaving a target, they were always to proceed with the water current.

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d. Political Training. The men received seven hours of political training every day for the first two weeks and for one week following sapper training. The classes were conducted by CPT HOC (HOCV) and sometimes by the PO of the 3d Co, CPT HIEN (HIEENL). Subjects taught during the first two weeks included Communist Policies, Marxism and Leninism, NVN Labor Party Policies, the Life of HO CHI MINH, Affirming Communist Ideology, and Comparing the Provisory Revolutionary Government with the GVN. During the final week, the men held discussion groups and received lectures by the PO on self-confidence and faith.

e. Training Schedule. While receiving sapper training, the men trained seven days a week with no days off. The following is a schedule of a typical sapper training day:

0600 - 0700	Reveille and exercises
0700 - 0720	Personal hygiene
0720 - 0800	Preparation for training
0800 - 1200	Training
1200 - 1230	Lunch
1230 - 1400	Rest
1400 - 1700	Training
1700 - 1800	Rest
1800 - 1830	Supper
1830 - 2200	Training and review
2200 - 0600	Sleep

f. Training Facilities. In the classroom, two instruction manuals were provided to each student. Book No 10 dealt with armaments, specifically information concerning the characteristics and use of the AK-47, B-40, and B-41. Book No 32 involved infiltration and included material on cover and concealment, negotiating barbed wire, mines, and attack tactics. The students spent a greater amount of time with Book No 32. Before training in a certain subject, equipment would be issued which had to be returned upon completion of the training day. At the end of the training course, each man was allowed to keep the AK-47 that he had been using during training.

g. Instructors. There were three main instructors at the school; LT NIEN (NIEENS) and LT TRUC (TRUCV) conducted the sapper training, and CPT HOC conducted the political training classes. The students had the most contact with LT NIEN. Source stated that NIEN had previous experience, but did not know how much nor where he had obtained it. Also, source stated that NIEN was the most knowledgeable of the instructors. All of the instructors were NVA and had a cadre member as an assistant.

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h. Training Procedures. The students received a fifteen-minute briefing before training in a new subject area. The briefing was usually presented by LT NIEN. After training in a certain subject, oral and practical tests were administered. If an individual failed, he was given more training in that subject. There was a final test in which students were tested on all material covered during sapper training. If an individual failed the final test, he was given a second chance to pass. If he failed a second time, he was transferred to a different unit. There was no testing on political subjects. Political training consisted of discussions held by the students and directed by the political instructor, CPT HOG.

i. Training Site. Source identified (vic XD637113) as the training site. (Interrogator's Note: Source was hesitant in identifying the location and stated that he was inexperienced in map reading.) Source did not know of any other schools in this area. To the extent of source's knowledge, the 2d Regt is still located in this area. The 3d Co was the only unit to move to TRUOI Mt.

j. Opinion of Training. Source stated that the course was difficult and strenuous, but the level of training and instruction was high. He gave much credit to the instructors, particularly LT NIEN. Source further stated that training was thorough, and each subject area was covered completely. His only complaint with the school was that he felt much of the time spent on political training should have been spent on training in the field.

k. Barriers to Effectiveness. Source could not give any particular barriers to effectiveness. Morale was high; there was adequate food and ample rest. There was no major threat of air strikes or ground attacks.

(C) COMMENTS: Source was cooperative throughout the interrogation and at times volunteered information. He appeared to be of average intelligence and was in good health. This report partially satisfies the requirements of SICR U-UPE-U1657. Collection action continues.

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