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1. COUNTRY: VS, III CTZ
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14. APPROVING AUTHORITY: W. H. BEARDSLEY
LTC, USA
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15. SUMMARY: (C) This report contains information on the A-3 Radio Intercept Cell, Y-16 MI Sect, SR-1, to include organization, subordination, techniques of CW interception, the units and frequencies monitored by the CW Intercept Subcell, and equipment. Also included is limited information on voice interception, barriers to effectiveness, unit history, and personalities and on the organization, activities, and personalities of the C.84 Signal School and the B-29 Radio Intercept Unit. Source received training in the international Morse code (reception only) at the C.84 School and in CW Interception at the B-29 Unit. Of special interest is the fact that source was with the A-3 Cell from its organization in Aug 65 until he and 11 other members of the cell were captured on 20 Dec 69.

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1. (C) Background Information:

- a. Name: NGUYEN VAN MINH (NGUYENX, VEAN MINH), CMIC 2876-70
b. Rank: None (VC)
c. Position and Unit of Assignment: Member; CW Intercept Subcell, A-3 Radio Intercept Cell, Y-16 MI Sect, SR-1
d. DPOB: AN NHON TAY Vil, CU CHI Dist, HAU NGHIA Prov, RVN

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e. Parents' Names: Father, NGUYEN VAN CU (NGUYEENX, VEAN CUW), deceased; Mother, VO THI BIEN (VOX, THIV BIEENL), living

f. Circumstances of Capture. On 20 Dec 69, source was captured by elements of the 1st Bde, 1st US Inf Div, during an armored sweep operation at (vic XT591372), TRI TAM Dist, BINH DUONG Prov, RVN. Also captured with source were 11 other members of the A-3 Cell. Equipment captured included three AN/PRC-25 radios, seven Sony and two standard radios, and documents pertaining to the activities of the A-3 Cell.

g. Significant Activities:

(1) Civilian Background. Source was born in AN NHON TAY Vil, CU CHI Dist, HAU NGHIA Prov, RVN, in 1948. He attended school at his POB, from 1956 to 1961, and then worked as a farmer at his POB until he joined the VC in Dec 63.

(2) Military Background. On 23 Dec 63, source joined the VC and was assigned to the C.84 Signal School, located in a jungle area of TAY NINH Prov, RVN. Source remained with the C.84 School from Dec 63 until Nov 64, during which time he received approx six months of training in international Morse code. On 29 Nov 64, source and approx 19 other members of his class were assigned to the B-29 Radio Intercept Unit, located near the Cambodian border in TAY NINH Prov. Source received three months of training in CW intercept techniques. In Aug 65, he and seven other members of the B-29 Unit were assigned to the A-3 Radio Intercept Cell. The A-3 Cell was organized at that time, and it consisted of a total of 11 members. (At source's DOC, the cell had increased to 17 members.) Source remained with the A-3 Cell until 12 of its members were captured on 20 Dec 69. For additional information concerning source's past activities, see CMIC IR No 6 029 0168 70.

h. Additional References: CMIC Exploitation Guide, Annexes A and H; Map: VIETNAM, AMS Series L7014, Sheet 6231 II, Edition 1, dtd 1965, Scale 1:50,000

2. (C) A-3 Radio Intercept Cell, Y-16 MI Sect, SR-1:

a. General. In Aug 65, the A-3 Radio Intercept Cell was organized and made subordinate to the Y-16 MI Sect of SR-1. Its LBN was 78.2352C. Of the original 11 members of the cell, eight were assigned to it from the B-29 Radio Intercept Unit. These were CHIN HIEU (CHIN, HIEEUS), A-3 Cell Chief and decryptor; CHOT (CHOTS), decryptor; TUNG (TUNGL), CW intercept operator; LUAN (LUAAN), CW intercept operator; NHON (NHOWN), CW intercept operator; THUC (THUWCS), CW intercept operator; BAY (BAYR), CW intercept operator; and source, CW intercept operator. The other three cell members were NAM LANH (NAM, LANHL), cook; NGON (NGON), nurse; and HOA (HOA), messenger and rice bearer. Source remained with the A-3 Cell from Aug 65 until his DOC on 20 Dec 69, during which time the A-3 Cell was located at various locations near AN PHU Vil, CU CHI Dist, HAU NGHIA Prov and THANH TUYEN Vil, BEN CAT Dist, BINH DUONG Prov. When Allied activity increased in one village area, the cell would move to the other village area and begin operating. Source could not read a map and was unable to provide the exact locations of the A-3 Cell.

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The A-3 Cell received additional personnel from time to time, and, in Jun 69, the cell was reorganized to include a Voice Intercept Subcell. In Jul 69, all CW intercept activities ceased, and the personnel of the CW Intercept Subcell were assigned to the Rear Service Subcell. Source transported rice and performed other details until his DOC.

b. Subordination. The A-3 Cell was subordinate to the Y-16 MI Sect, SR-1. The Y-16 MI Sect received information concerning Allied activity monitored by the A-3 Cell. Other specific activities of the Y-16 Sect were unknown to source. Personnel who belonged to the Y-16 MI Sect included:

Leader: SAU HUYNH (SAUS, HUYNHL)

Asst Ldr: SAU LE (SAUS, LEEX)

Member: NAM KHUE (NEAM, KHUEE)

Medic: PHUONG (FUOWNGV)

Messenger: NGAN (NGAAN)

c. Organization. When the A-3 Cell was organized in Aug 65, it consisted of a Decryption Subcell (two personnel), CW Intercept Subcell (six personnel), and Rear Service Subcell (three personnel). Additional personnel were assigned to the cell from time to time, and, in Jun 69, its membership totaled 17. At that time, the A-3 Cell was reorganized into a Decryption Subcell (two personnel), CW Intercept Subcell (nine personnel), Voice Intercept Subcell (three personnel), and Rear Service Subcell (three personnel). In Jul 69, all CW monitoring activities of the cell ceased, and it was reorganized into the following subcells: HQ (two personnel), ARVN Voice Intercept (two personnel), US Voice Intercept (two personnel), and Rear Service (11 personnel).

d. CW Interception:

(1) General. The CW Intercept Subcell consisted of nine personnel prior to Jul 69, when CW intercept activities ceased and the cell was reorganized. These individuals monitored from 0600 to 2400 hours daily, working in two shifts of four and five operators. The shifts were changed at 1030, 1330, 1730, and 2100 hours. Approx 10 to 15 messages were copied by each operator on an average day. Personnel from the Decryption Subcell visited the CW intercept bunker several times daily to pick up any messages which had been monitored. The decrypted messages were then sent by runner to the Y-16 Sect. All messages copied were in three-letter cipher sequences. While five-letter ciphers were used by ARVN units, these ciphers were too difficult for the Decryption Subcell to break, and they were not monitored. Source stated that no unciphered messages were ever intercepted by his subcell. To his knowledge, no US CW transmissions were ever monitored. In Jul 69, the CW Subcell was ordered by DONG (A-3 Cell Chief) to terminate all CW intercept activities, because of difficulties in obtaining food and other logistical supplies. Source was given no other reason for the termination of intercept activities, and no indication was given that they would be resumed at a later date.

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(2) Units Monitored. When the A-3 Cell was organized, its mission was to intercept the CW radio nets of several ARVN units in HAU NGHIA and BINH DUONG Provinces. These units were the 5th and 25th ARVN Divisions and the HAU NGHIA Sector. The A-3 Cell monitored both division nets; the regimental nets of the 7th Regt, 5th Div, and the 49th Regt, 25th Div; and the net between HAU NGHIA Sector and its subsectors. In the beginning of 1966, the cell ceased monitoring the 25th Div net, continuing with the 49th Regt net. The other two regiments of the 25th Div were of no interest to the A-3 Cell, due to their location. Since the 49th Regt had not reported to the 25th Div by CW radio for several weeks, the cell stopped monitoring the division net. The Intercept Cell began monitoring the BINH DUONG Sector net in the beginning of 1967. In mid-1968, the cell stopped monitoring the 5th Div net and continued with the 7th Regt net. As with the 49th Regt, the 7th Regt was the only regiment of the 5th Div that was of interest to the A-3 Cell, and it had not reported regularly to the 5th Div for several weeks prior to the change. When the cell ceased all CW intercept activities in Jul 69, it was monitoring the BINH DUONG and HAU NGHIA Sectors and the 7th and 49th Regiments.

(3) Frequencies Monitored:

(a) 5th ARVN Div. During the period of Aug 65 to mid-1968, the 5th Div transmitted on four frequencies, which were 4800, 5600, 3400, and 3700kc. These were monitored by source and THANH (THANHL) on a Sony radio. The division used one frequency for six to eight months and then changed to a different one. When the A-3 Cell stopped monitoring the 5th Div in mid-1968, the frequency of 3700kc was being used. At that time, source began monitoring the HAU NGHIA Sector, and HOANG and HUNG intercepted the 7th Regt using a Sony radio. Frequencies used by the 7th Regt were unknown to source.

(b) HAU NGHIA Sector. The HAU NGHIA Sector transmitted on the frequency of 2800kc, which was monitored by LIEM and NGHIA using a standard radio. The sector net included the CU CHI, TRANG BANG, DUC HUE, and DUC HOA Subsectors. In mid-1968, LIEM was assigned to the Rear Service Subcell, and source took his place.

(c) BINH DUONG Sector. YEN and NHON utilized a Standard radio to monitor the BINH DUONG Sector net, which transmitted on the frequencies of 2600 and 5100kc. Included in this net were the BEN CAT, TRI TAM, and PHU HOA DONG Subsectors.

(d) 25th ARVN Div. THUC and LUAN used a standard radio to monitor the 25th Div net (unknown frequency). The same two operators continued monitoring the 49th Regt net when the 25th Div was dropped in early 1966. Frequencies used by the 49th Regt were unknown to source.

(4) Equipment. All radios used by the CW Intercept Subcell were either three-band Sony or four-band standard commercial radios. Modifications and maintenance on these radios were performed by the Y-16 MI Sect before the A-3 Cell received them. When the cell was organized in Aug 65, three Sony radios and one standard radio were brought from the B-29 Unit. All other radios obtained by the cell

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were furnished by the Y-16 MI Sect. In mid-1966, the cell received one new Sony and one new standard. Three new Sony radios were given to the cell in Mar or Apr 67. At the time of capture, the cell had seven Sony and two standard radios, of which five were in good condition, two were in poor but operable condition, and two were inoperable.

e. Voice Interception. In Mar 69, THUC, who had monitored ARVN CW transmissions prior to that time, was sent to an unknown school for training in the interception of voice radio transmissions. In Jun 69, he returned to the cell with THANH (THANH), and UONG (UONG), who had also been trained in voice transmission interception. The three operators brought with them two US AN/PRC-25 radios, which they used to intercept transmissions of ARVN units in the area. Source heard that they were monitoring the 8th Regt, 5th ARVN Div. In Jul or Aug 69, UONG was killed by an unknown ARVN armored unit, leaving only THUC and THANH in the subcell. In Sep 69, TRUC and QUE arrived at the A-3 Cell with one additional AN/PRC-25 radio. These two operators were trained in the English language and were able to monitor transmissions of US units in the area. Details pertaining to either the ARVN or US Voice Intercept Subcells were unknown to source.

f. Barriers to Effectiveness. Frequent sweep operations by US and ARVN troops in the cell's area disrupted its activities and caused it to move to a new location. Other barriers included the use of five-letter ciphers, which the Decryption Subcell could not decipher, and the changing of transmitting frequencies. Source stated that as much as two days were required to locate a new frequency.

g. Personalities:

Chief: DONG (DOONGL); received training with the B-29 Unit, was made CW intercept operator and Asst Cell Chief when he arrived at A-3 in late 1967, became A-3 Cell Chief when CHIN HIEU was killed in early 1968, captured with source

Asst Chief: THANH (THANHL), aka LA (LAS); arrived at A-3 in Oct or Nov 65, was CW intercept operator until early 1968 when he was made Asst Cell Chief, captured with source

Voice Intercept Operators:

THUC (THUCS); arrived at A-3 with source in Aug 65, was CW intercept operator until Mar 69, received voice intercept training from Mar to Jun 69, operated an AN/PRC-25 radio until Dec 69, was killed when the other members of the cell were captured

THANH (THANH); arrived at A-3 in Jun 69, captured with source

QUE (QUEES); arrived at A-3 in Sep 69, spoke English, captured with source

TRUC (TRUCV); arrived at A-3 in Sep 69, spoke English, captured with source

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UONG (UOONG); arrived at A-3 in Jun 69, was killed in Jul or Aug 69 by an unknown ARVN armored unit

CW Intercept Operators:

HOANG (HOANGL); arrived at A-3 in late 1966, captured with source

HUONG (HUOWNG); female, arrived at A-3 in mid-1966, also operated as a cook, captured with source

NGHIA (NGHIAR); female, arrived at A-3 one month after HUONG, also operated as a cook, captured with source

LIEM (LIEEM); arrived at A-3 in Jun 66, was on a rice-procurement mission when source was captured

NHON (NHOWN); arrived at A-3 with source in Aug 65, was on a rice-procurement mission when source was captured

HUNG (HUNGL); arrived at A-3 in mid-1966, was on a rice-procurement mission when source was captured

TUNG (TUNGS); arrived at A-3 with source in Aug 65, became ill and was sent to an unknown hospital in 1966 or 1967

LUAN (LUAAN); arrived at A-3 with source in Aug 65, transferred to an unk unit in late 1968

BAY (BAYR); arrived at A-3 with source in Aug 65, became ill and was sent back to the B-29 Unit in Sep 65

Decryption Personnel:

TRANG (TRANGL); arrived at A-3 in mid-1966, captured with source

LAM CHUNG (LAAM, CHUNG); arrived at A-3 in Dec 65, received training with the Decryption Subcell and later operated as a decryptor, captured with source

CHIN HIEU (CHINS, HIEEUS); arrived at A-3 with source in Aug 65, was a decryptor as well as A-3 Cell Chief, killed in early 1968

CHOT (CHOTS); arrived at A-3 with source in Aug 65, was sent to an unknown mental hospital in late 1968

Nurses:

NGON (NGON); female, arrived at A-3 with source in Aug 65, deserted in early 1966

LOAN (LOAN); female, arrived at A-3 in Mar or Apr 68, captured with source

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Messengers:

HOA (HOA); arrived at A-3 with source in Aug 65, transferred to an unk unit in early 1969

TUAN (TUAANS); arrived at A-3 in Aug 69, captured with source

TANH (TANHx); arrived at A-3 in Aug 69, captured with source

Cook:

NAM LANH (NAM, LANHL); female, arrived at A-3 with source in Aug 65, transferred to an unknown unit in Aug 69

3. (C) C.84 Signal School:

a. General. On 23 Dec 63, source joined the VC and was assigned to the C.84 Signal School (unknown subordination), located in a jungle area of TAY NINH Prov, RVN. All of the trainees in source's group (70) arrived at the school in late Dec 63 and early Jan 64. They spent the first five months constructing buildings in the base camp and transporting rice. Source's class (30 trainees) trained, from Jun to Nov 64, in the receiving and recording of Morse code transmissions. A second class (40 trainees) received instruction in both sending and receiving Morse code transmissions. This class began training in Jun 64 and terminated at an unknown date after source's class had left the school. Source heard that his group was the third to receive training at the C.84 School. On 29 Nov 64, source and approx 19 other members of his class were assigned to the B-29 Radio Intercept Unit for additional training.

b. Organization. The C.84 Signal School consisted of a HQ Section (three cadre and six or seven instructors), Administrative Section (over 20 medical, security, rear service, and other support personnel), Class No 1 (30 trainees), and Class No 2 (40 trainees). To source's knowledge, all personnel at the school were VC or regroupees. There were no foreign advisors at the school.

c. Signal Training:

(1) Class No 1. Source received training in the receiving and copying of Morse code transmissions. This instruction did not include transmitting or decrypting methods, and the trainees did not practice monitoring ARVN radio transmissions. Source was required to memorize and practice writing the international Morse code. His two instructors, CHI (CHI) and AN (AANS), utilized a Morse key connected to an unknown brand of commercial radio to transmit practice messages to the students. The trainees copied the messages as transmitted by the instructors. The radio was used only as a speaker for the practice key; source never saw it used by the instructors for receiving broadcasts of any kind. Upon completion of his training, source was able to record approx 85 characters per minute. He did not know if there was a minimum level of proficiency required of the trainees; however, all students successfully completed the course. All trainees were capable of receiving at least 75 characters per minute.

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(2) Class No 2. Source had little contact with personnel of the other class, and therefore, he knew little of their activities. Class No 2 learned how to transmit and receive Morse code messages. Source was unaware of the type of equipment used by these trainees in their instruction. Four or five instructors taught the personnel of Class No 2.

d. Personalities:

CO: DOAN THANH DIEP (DOANL, THANH ZIEEPV); regroupee

PO: THUONG (THUOWNGV); regroupee

XO: DINH (DINH); regroupee

Instructor: CHI (CHI); regroupee

Instructor: AN (AANS); regroupee

4. (C) B-29 Radio Intercept Unit:

a. General. On 29 Nov 64, source, along with approx 19 other members of his class at the C.84 School, was assigned to the B-29 Radio Intercept Unit (unknown subordination), located near the Cambodian border in TAY NINH Prov. They constructed buildings and transported rice for two months, after which approx 15 personnel arrived at the B-29 Unit from NVN. At that time, the unit moved to a location near CA TUM Ham, unk village, unk district, TAY NINH Prov. Fifteen members of source's group and 10 of the NVA personnel were assigned to the 3d Co, B-29 Unit for QJT in the use of commercial radios for monitoring ARVN CW transmissions. The other five members of source's group and five NVA personnel were assigned to the 2d Co for training in methods of decryption. Details of their training were unknown to source. Source received training from Jun through Aug 65, when he was assigned to the A-3 Cell.

b. Organization. Source stated that the B-29 Unit was a battalion-level unit which consisted of a HQ Element and four subordinate companies. He also stated that the unit was understrength because it had only recently been organized. He did not know if the unit was ever brought up to strength. The HQ Element consisted of three cadre and two instructors and was responsible for supervising all activities of the unit. The 1st Co consisted of four personnel who decrypted five-letter ciphers used in ARVN CW transmissions. The 2d Co, which consisted of approx 20 personnel, was responsible for decrypting all transmissions monitored which were in three-letter codes. The 3d Co consisted of nine squads, organized into three platoons, and a total of approx 60 personnel. The 3d Co utilized Sony and standard radios to monitor ARVN CW transmissions. The 4th Co consisted of 24 personnel and was responsible for all food, supplies, and other rear service needs of the unit.

c. Mission and Activities:

(1) Morse Intercept. The B-29 Unit intercepted CW transmissions

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of several ARVN units operating in northern TAY NINH Prov. Source could not recall which units were monitored. Monitoring activities were conducted in two thatched huts located approx 50 meters from the B-29 Unit HQ. These huts (5m x 3m x 1.5m) were each equipped with tables, chairs, paper, pencils, and 10 Sony and standard radios. Intercept personnel worked in three-hour shifts from 0600 to 2400 hours daily. They only recorded transmissions which were in three and five-letter codes. The messages were then carried by runner to one of the two decryption elements, which were located in two separate restricted areas. Source was unaware of what happened to the copied transmissions after they were taken from the CW intercept huts. The B-29 Unit was not equipped with any type of radio which could be used to transmit the decrypted messages to higher organizations.

(2) Morse Intercept Training. For the first few days of training, source's two instructors, CHI (CHI) and THANG (THEANGS), explained how to use the radios, how to locate the frequencies being used by the transmitting station, the frequencies normally used by the units monitored by the B-29 Unit, and the format of ARVN CW transmissions. The trainees were then allowed to enter the Morse intercept huts and observe the activities of the intercept teams. The trainees spent seven hours a day for the remaining three months of training in the huts, observing intercept activities, and occasionally monitoring transmissions. Messages monitored by a trainee were decrypted, and the trainee was then critiqued on any errors he had made. If a trainee attained sufficient proficiency, he was allowed to operate a radio regularly with the intercept teams.

d. Personalities:

CO: DUY TIEN (ZUY, TIEENS); VC

PO: LAM (LAM); VC

CO of the 1st Co: LINH (LINH); NVA

CO of the 3d Co: YEN (YEEN); VC

PO of the 3d Co: LIEM (LIEEM); VC

Instructor: CHI (CHI); VC, was source's instructor at the C.84 Signal School

Instructor: THANG (THEANGS); VC

(C) COMMENTS: Source was attentive throughout the interrogation, and he appeared to be sincere and truthful in his responses to questions asked of him. Although control questioning was used by the interrogator throughout the interrogation, no discrepancies were found in source's answers. The information provided by source was generally consistent with that furnished by the other members of the A-3 Cell. Source was of average intelligence and in good health, although, at the time of his capture, he was suffering from malaria.

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