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7. SOURCE: PW Interrogation 14. APPROVING AUTHORITY: W. H. BEARDSLEY LTC, USA Dir, US Elm, CMIC

15. SUMMARY:

(C) EVALUATION AND FURTHER GUIDANCE IS REQUESTED FROM USING AGENCIES. This report contains information pertaining to the communication systems used by the 36th Regt, 44th Front to include missions, activities, equipment, and personalities of the various signal organizations within the regiment; commo nets, equipment and accessory specifications, call signs, authentication procedures, frequencies, transmission times, radio team member responsibilities, and radio sites of the 15w and 2w radios; telephone and messenger communications; a comparison of systems; and maintenance and supply. Of interest is limited information concerning the Crypto Sect, Military Staff, 36th Regt, and its activities; VC/NVA monitoring of Allied communications; and Morse code training received by source in NVN.

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1. (C) Background Information:

- a. Name: DO VAN ON (DOOX, VEAN OONR), CMIC No 2796
- b. Rank: SGT
- c. Position and Unit of Assignment: Radio Operator; 7th Sqd, 3d Plat, C-18 Sig Co, 36th Regt, 44th Front
- d. DPOB: Dec 43; SAI NOHI Ham, MY DUC Vil, AN LAO Dist, HAI PHONG Prov, NVN

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e. Parents' Names: Father, DO VAN AM (DOOX, VEAN AM), deceased; Mother, DO THI HET (DOOX, THIV HESTS), living

f. Circumstances of Capture. Source was captured on 14 Sep 69, by elements of the 3d US Marine Div at XUYEN TRUONG Vil, DUY XUYEN Dist, QUANG NAM Prov, RVN, while on a rice procurement mission.

g. Significant Activities. Source attended public school at his POB from 1955 until 1963. After leaving school, source worked at his POB as a cooperative farmer. In Sep 66, source was drafted into the NVA and assigned to the 7th Sqd, 2d Plat, 7th Co, 3d Bn, 42d Regt, MR-III. He received one month of basic training with this unit at KINH MON Dist, HAI HUNG Prov, NVN. From Nov 66 to May 67, source received training in Morse code and in the operation of the 15w radio with the 93d Signal Training Bn (subordination unk) in HOANH BO Dist, QUANG NINH Prov. Upon completion of this training, source was promoted to PFC. From 15 May 67 to Jul 67, source remained at this school on casual status while awaiting reassignment. In Jul 67, source was assigned to the 7th Sqd, 3d Plat, C-18 Sig Co, 36th Regt, which was located in BAT BAT Dist, HA TAY Prov, NVN. In Jan 68, source was promoted to CPL. In Feb 68, the 36th Regt (aka 1016th Infil Op) began infiltration to the RVN, arriving in QUANG NAM Prov in mid-Mar 68. The 1016th Infil Op was redesignated the 36th Regt and made subordinate to the 44th Front. During Mar and Apr 68, personnel of the 36th Regt constructed a road approx two kilometers long and five meters wide near A DIN (Montagnard) Vil, unk District, QUANG NAM Prov. Source did not know the purpose of the road. In early May 68, the 36th Regt established a base camp in the GIOC ONG THU Area, DUY XUYEN Dist, QUANG NAM Prov. In Aug 68, the regiment built another base camp in the HON TAU Mountains, located between DUY XUYEN Dist and QUE SON Dist, QUANG NAM Prov, RVN. Source remained at this location with the C-18 Sig Co as a 15w radio operator until he was captured on 14 Sep 69.

h. Additional References: CMIC Exploitation Guide, Annex H; other report from this source is CMIC IR No 6 029 1360 69

2. (C) Communication Systems of the 36th Regt, 44th Front:

a. General. Communication within the 36th Regt was maintained through the use of three systems: radio, telephone, and runner. Communication between the 36th Regt and 44th Front was maintained by 15w radio. Organizations which supervised and operated these systems included the Signal and Crypto Sections of the Military Staff. Subordinate to the Sig Sect were the C-18 Signal Co and three signal platoons operating in support of the three battalions subordinate to the 36th Regt (See LBC on page 11.) The Sig Sect supervised all communication activities of the 36th Regt except crypto activities. The C-18 Sig Co operated communication nets between the 36th Regt and the 44th Front, and between the regiment and its subordinate battalions. The C-18 Co also provided supply and maintenance for all equipment used in the regiment. The three signal platoons provided equipment and operators to maintain communications within the three subordinate battalions. All encryption and decryption of messages was handled by the Crypto Sect. Source's duties as a 15w radio operator included communication between the 36th Regt and the 44th Front, and between the regimental headquarters and its subordinate battalions.

b. Organizations:

(1) Signal Section, Military Staff:

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(a) General. The Sig Sect consisted of four members; Section Chief, Telephone Communications Assistant, Radio Communications Assistant, and Supply and Maintenance Assistant. The Section Chief had general supervisory responsibility over all signal activities within the regiment. He ensured that effective communications were maintained at every echelon, and that any special missions levied by the Regt CO were properly carried out. His Telephone Asst was responsible for all facets of telephone communications carried on within the regiment. He organized new telephone nets, supervised the laying of telephone wire, and directed the operation of the nets. He also requested any needed supplies and maintenance assistance. The Radio Asst supervised both 15w and 2w radio activities within the regiment. He selected radio sites and supervised their construction, organized radio nets, and ensured that all radios and accessories were in good operating order. He received monthly radio frequency and call sign schedules from the 44th Front and disseminated them to the various radio squads. The Radio Asst was also responsible for organizing and directing messenger nets between the 36th Regt and its subordinate battalions. The supply and Maintenance Asst ensured that all signal equipment and accessories used in the regiment were in good repair and of adequate quantity. He requested supplies from the 44th Front and distributed them to the various signal organizations in the regiment.

(b) Personalities:

Section Chief: Sr CPT RANG (RANGV)

Radio Asst: LT THIN (THINL)

Telephone Asst: ASP TU (TUWL)

Supply Asst: ASP THI (THIV)

(c) C-18 Signal Co:

1 Organization. The C-18 Sig Co consisted of a company headquarters (four men), a messenger platoon (20 men), a telephone platoon (20 men), and a radio platoon (30 men). The radio platoon contained two 15w radio squads (six men each) and two 2w radio squads (eight men each).

2 Mission. The mission of the C-18 Sig Co was to establish and maintain intraregimental (regimental headquarters to battalion headquarters) communication nets and to provide communications with the 44th Front. The company provided equipment and personnel to operate these nets, as well as two repairmen to perform maintenance on all signal equipment used in the regiment.

3 Quantity of Signal Equipment:

Two 102E (15w) radios

10 telephones (designation unk)

Eight K-63 (2w) radios

Eight batteries for the 2w radio

Two batteries for the 15w radio

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Two (1) Signal Support Platoons

Unknown amount of telephone wire

h Personnel:

CO: Sr LT THUENT (THUYENT)

XCO: Sr LT KHEU (KHEU)

PO: Sr LT KHUYEN (KHUYEN)

APO: LT HONG (HOONG)

(d) Signal Support Platoons. Source's knowledge of the signal platoons which supported the three subordinate battalions of the 20th Regt was very limited. Each platoon consisted of a 2w radio squad, a telephone squad, and a messenger squad. Personnel and equipment for communications within each battalion were furnished by the signal platoons. Due to the fact that communication between regimental and battalion headquarters was the responsibility of the 1st Lt, the signal support platoons were not required to provide personnel or equipment for that purpose. Maintenance support for the signal platoons was furnished by the 1st Lt Co. All other administrative matters for the signal platoons were handled by the supported battalions.

(2) Crypto Sections:

(a) General. Due to the fact that source was not directly concerned with crypto activities, he was not allowed access to the crypto bunker and had only limited contact with the members of this section. Source's limited knowledge of the Crypto Sect and its activities was obtained through conversations with other members of his radio team and from occasional contact with crypto personnel. The Crypto Sect was subordinate to the Military Staff and consisted of five personnel: a Section Chief and four assistants. These individuals handled all encryption and decryption of messages sent by 15w radio. All messages were sent in a code consisting of four-number sets. Letters were never used in these codes. Crypto personnel used two separate books for encryption and decryption of messages. These books were furnished by the 4th Front. Source stated that crypto personnel did not use a safe in order to secure classified documents and crypto materials. Each member of the section carried a cloth packet in which he kept the documents and materials for which he was responsible. The crypto bunker was located 100 meters from the 15w radio station and 40 meters from the Regt CP and Military Staff. The bunker consisted of an underground fortification over which had been constructed a wooden, thatched hut. The bunker was enclosed by a wooden fence upon which had been placed a sign indicating that the area was restricted for unauthorized personnel. Security for the bunker was provided by a 12-man security squad which guarded the entire regimental headquarters area. Under normal conditions, most encryption and decryption was performed in the thatched hut, while the underground bunker was utilized for sleeping. Messages were carried by runner from the crypto bunker to the Regt CP and the 15w radio site. In the event a transmission was received by the 15w radio team which the crypto personnel were not able to decrypt, one or two crypto personnel would go to the radio site and request a retransmission. In this manner, they were able to perform decryption of the message and isolate the error.

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When a 15w radio team was attached to a subordinate battalion of the 30th Regt for long-range communication (over 25km), a two-man crypto team accompanied the radio team in order to perform the necessary encryption and decryption of messages.

(b) Personalities:

Section Chief: LT THANH (THANH)

Assistant: ASP THINH (THINH)

Assistant: ASP HUY (HUY)

Assistant: Name unk to source; this individual was assigned to the section several weeks prior to source's DOC.

c. Radio Communications:

(1) 15w Radio:

(a) Commo Nets. Communication with the 44th Front was maintained through the use of a 15w radio, which was operated from a permanent radio station located at the 30th Regt Base Camp. Also, operational necessity occasionally required that a 15w radio team be assigned to a subordinate battalion in order to maintain communications with the regimental CP. The 2w radio, which was normally used for battalion to regiment communications, had a maximum transmitting range of 25km. Operations conducted at greater distances required the use of the 15w radio. (For a sketch of the radio nets, see page 12 .)

1 Transceiver:

Name: 102E, 15w

Country of Origin: COMMUNIST CHINA

Frequency Range: 2300 to 12000 kilocycles

Number of Bands: Three for transmission and three for reception

Mode of Operation: Voice, CW (Morse)

Power Output: 15 watts

Power Source: Hand powered generator or battery pack

Antenna: Wire

Transmission Range: 1000km (sic). The 15w radios used in source's unit were several years old and had a maximum range of approx 700km (sic).

Weight: Approx 59kg

2 Antenna. The 15w radio had two inverted "L" wire antennas, which were strung up from the radio approx seven meters and out in opposite directions approx 16 meters on each side of the radio. The

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antenna wire consisted of many strands of brown metal wire covered with dark yellow plastic. The antennas were strung in a tall stand of trees affording concealment from aerial observation.

3 Power Sources. While in NVN, and for a short time after infiltrating to the RVN, personnel in source's unit used the D-81 (90 volt) battery pack to power the 15w radio receiver. This battery pack was specifically made for use with the 102E receiver. However, resupply of the D-81 battery pack became increasingly difficult in the RVN, and members of source's unit were finally forced to improvise a substitute for the pack. This was accomplished with a series of four cubes, each of which contained 13 x 1.5 volt cylindrical batteries (size unk). These four cubes of batteries were obtained from a dismantled battery pack of the type used with the 2w radio. To the four cubes were added eight 1.5 volt, size "d" flashlight batteries, which were connected in parallel for added life. These batteries could be purchased in the RVN. The total output of this pack was 79.5 volts. Source stated that while the 15w radio receiver normally operated on 90 volts of power, the improvised battery pack provided sufficient power. At least 65 volts were required to operate the 15w radio receiver. The improvised battery pack weighed approx three kilograms and had an estimated lifetime of one month. A series of nine 1.5 volt, size "d" flashlight batteries provided power to light the panel of the radio. The Chicom 65 generator, which was used to power the 15w radio transmitter, had an output of approx 650 volts. Source stated that the 15w transmitter required approx 620 volts to operate.

(c) Transmission Procedures:

1 Call Signs and Authentication. Monthly frequency and call sign schedules for the 15w and 2w radios were sent to the 36th Regt from the 44th Front by runner. The Radio Asst of the Sig Sect received these schedules and was responsible for disseminating them to the various radio teams in the regiment. Each 15w radio station was assigned daily primary and secondary call signs, a daytime receiving frequency, and a nighttime, or alternate, receiving frequency. The schedule included different call signs and frequencies for each day of the month. Call signs always consisted of three-letter groups. During transmission, a primary call sign was used to identify the transmitting station and a secondary call sign to identify the receiving station. For example, when station "A" transmitted to station "B", the primary call sign of station "A" and the secondary call sign of station "B" were used. However, when station "B" acknowledged the transmission, the primary call sign of station "B" and the secondary call sign of station "A" were used. (See chart of call signs and frequencies and explanation thereof on page 13.) This system of alternating call signs provided an effective means of radio transmission authentication. No other authentication system was used by source's unit.

2 Frequencies and Transmission Times. The 15w radio had three bands; 2800 to 3200 kilocycles, 3200 to 5200 kilocycles, and 5200 to 12000 kilocycles. Transmissions conducted by the 36th Regt were normally included in the range of 4000 to 7000 kilocycles. Both the daytime (0700 to 1900 hours) and the nighttime frequencies were changed daily as specified by the 44th Front in the monthly schedule. If interference was detected during a transmission, the alternate frequency was used. If interference was again detected on the alternate frequency, the 44th Front operator transmitted a new frequency to the 36th Regt by code, broke contact and reopened the net on the new frequency. Communication times between the

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44th Front and the 36th Regt varied daily, but normally were from 0800 to 1200 hours.

(d) Personnel. A 15w radio team consisted of six personnel: three generator operators; two radio operators; and a station chief, who was the senior operator. The station chief was normally a senior NCO and the most proficient operator on the team. Source stated that he was the least skillful operator on his team, averaging approx 90 words (sic) per minute with a manual key. The best operator on his team was the team chief, who averaged approx 130 words (sic) per minute. All radio operators had received training in NVN similar in length and content to the training received by source. However, he was unable to provide further details pertaining to the training of the other operators. Generator operators were infantry personnel without signal training of any type. One radio operator and one generator operator were sufficient to operate the station at one time.

(e) Radio Site. In Aug 68, the 36th Regt established a base camp in the HON TAU Mountains, between DUY XUYEN Dist and QUE SON Dist, QUANG NAM Prov (exact location unk). A site inside the regimental base camp for the 15w radio station was selected by the Chief of Sig Sect, Military Staff. The station was located approx 100 meters from the Military Staff and Regt HQ bunkers. The area surrounding the station was covered with tall trees, which were necessary for concealment from the air and for stringing the antennas. The station bunker consisted of an underground room (3m x 2m x 1.5m) covered with two layers of logs (20cm each) and approx 100cm of dirt. A wooden, thatched hut (5m x 3m x 3m) was constructed on top of the bunker. The radio was located underground for protection from air strikes. The wooden hut above ground was utilized by the six members of the team for sleeping and other purposes, when they were not on duty. There were no fences or barbed wire around the bunker, although the area was considered restricted. The bunker was guarded by the regimental headquarters' security squad.

(2) 2w Radio:

(a) Commo Nets. Source's experience as a radio operator was limited to the 15w radio, and he therefore was not able to provide detailed information pertaining to the 2w radio and its use. Intraregimental communication was maintained primarily through the use of the K-63 radio. A 2w radio station located near the regimental CP served as net control, with each battalion CP adding another station to the net. A 2w radio team from the C-18 Sig Co was attached to each battalion in order to maintain this communication. Intrabattalion communication was the responsibility of each signal support platoon. When bivouacked or in a base camp, telephones and runners provided company to battalion communication. During offensive operations, a 2w radio team from the signal support platoon was assigned to each subordinate company CP in order to maintain radio contact with the battalion headquarters. Details pertaining to these radio nets were unknown to source. (For sketch of the radio nets, see page 14.)

(b) Equipment:

1 Transceiver:

Name: K-63, 2w

Country of Origin: Unk

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Frequency Range: Unk

Number of Bands: One for receiving and one for transmitting

Mode of Operation: Voice, CW (Morse)

Power Output: Two watts

Power Source: Battery pack

Antenna: Wire and sectional whip

Transmission Range: Approx 10km with whip antenna; 25km with wire antenna

Weight: Approx 21kg

2 Antennas. This radio was used with either a wire or sectional whip antenna. The wire antenna consisted of one wire approx 20 meters long which was strung between two tall trees approx 15 meters above the ground. The wire was concealed by the thick vegetation of the area in which it was strung. The wire was slightly smaller in diameter than that used with the 15w radio and was of the same color. The sectional whip antenna consisted of five sections with five pieces of metal flared out at the top. The antenna reached a length of 1.5 meters when fully extended. It was approx two centimeters in diameter at the base and was tapered toward the top. This antenna was not modified in any way and there was no attempt made to camouflage it.

3 Power Source. This set utilized a replaceable, dry cell battery pack which could be obtained only in NVN. The country of manufacture was unk to source. The battery pack consisted of three series, each of which was composed of a different type of battery. Series "A" consisted of six cubes, in each of which were 13 x 1.5 volt, cylindrical batteries. Series "B" consisted of 12 x 1.5 volt, rectangular batteries. Series "C" consisted of three 1.5 volt, cylindrical batteries, which were a different type than those used in series "A". Source was unable to accurately describe the exact size of these different types of batteries. Source did not know why this specific configuration of batteries was used. The total output of this battery pack was approx 140 volts. The pack measured approx (22cm x 15cm x 5cm) and weighed approx four kilograms. The estimated lifetime of the pack was three months.

(c) Transmission Procedures. Transmission procedures for the 2w radio were similar to those of the 15w radio in that the same system of alternating primary and secondary call signs was used to authenticate radio transmissions. However, call signs used with the 2w radio consisted of the names of large cities in NORTH and SOUTH VIETNAM. All stations in a net transmitted and received on the same frequency. A nighttime, or alternate frequency, was used at night, or in case interference was detected during transmission. These call signs and frequencies were disseminated by the 44th Front in a monthly schedule which designated different call signs and frequencies for each day of the month. The 2w radio transmissions were always voice and were never coded.

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(d) Miscellaneous. A 2w radio team consisted of two personnel; one who carried and operated the radio, and one who carried the battery pack. Both individuals were trained in the use of the K-63 radio. The 2w radio station was located approx 100 meters from the 36th Regt CP and Military Staff bunkers. It consisted of the same type of underground bunker and wooden hut as the 15w radio station. Only two individuals were required to operate this station at one time. While on operations, the 2w radio was normally located in the echelon command post.

d. Telephone and Messenger Communications. Telephone lines were maintained permanently in the regimental base camp from the Military Staff bunkers to the Rear Service and Political Staff bunkers. Telephones were utilized between the 36th Regt CP and subordinate battalions only if the battalions were located closer than five kilometers. A Chicom switchboard (designation unk) was used for a short time after the regiment arrived in the RVN. However, it was destroyed during an engagement. Thereafter, each line was monitored by a separate telephone at the Military Staff. No codes or call signs were used for telephone communications. (For a sketch of the telephone nets, see page 14.) Messages carried by runners were never coded. Each message was assigned a classification; however, source could not provide details pertaining to these classifications. Source knew of no special training given to messengers, who usually were regular infantry personnel selected as runners.

e. Comparisons. Source emphasized that his experience with telephone, messenger, and 2w radio communications was too limited to allow an authoritative and completely accurate comparison of the different systems. The 15w radio was capable of transmitting information very quickly over great distances, and the use of codes made it difficult for Allied personnel to obtain usable information from VC/NVA transmissions. Disadvantages of the 15w radio included its susceptibility to jamming and interception, and the fact that its semi-permanent location made it easy to be pinpointed by Allied radio detection equipment. Source had only heard that such equipment existed and was unable to provide further details. Both telephones and messengers were very secure means of communication. However, laying telephone lines was difficult and time consuming, and messengers were extremely slow if great distances had to be covered.

f. Maintenance and Supply. Two maintenance personnel were assigned to the C-18 Sig Co HQ. These repairmen were well-trained (details of training unk) and were able to maintain all of the regiment's signal equipment in operating order. Supplies and spare parts were requested from the 44th Front by radio and delivered by runner normally within three or four days. All signal supplies were easily obtained and of adequate quantity. Radio operators never performed maintenance on their equipment other than to clean exterior surfaces.

3. (C) Additional Information:

a. Signal Training. From Nov 66 to May 67, source received training in Morse Code and in the operation of the 15w radio with the 93d Signal Training Bn (subordination unk), in HOANH BO Dist, QUANG NINH Prov, NVN. During each six-month cycle, a total of approx 200 trainees divided into classes of 30 individuals each received this training. Trainees learned how to operate the 15w radio during the first month. The remaining five months were used to practice sending and receiving messages in Morse Code. Each classroom consisted of individual desks with manual practice keys which

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were connected to a central control desk or switchboard. Instructors were able to monitor each individual desk and thereby assess the trainees' progress. On several different occasions, the trainees were given the opportunity to transmit and receive practice messages on the 15w radio. Instructors at the signal school were all North Vietnamese. Source was unable to recall the names of his instructors or other members of his training cycle, and their present situation was unknown to him. Personnel in source's class were told by the instructors that upon completion of the course they would be sent to various units in both NORTH and SOUTH VIETNAM. They were also told that the training they received would enable them to operate not only the 15w radio, but also the 50w, 100w, and 150w radios. Further details pertaining to these radios were unk to source. Source had never heard of any specific signal schools or courses other than the one he attended.

b. Monitoring Allied Communications. Source had heard from other members of his team that two English linguists equipped with US PRC-10 radios were assigned to the Military Proselyting Section of the Political Staff, 36th Regt. These individuals monitored US and ARVN radio transmissions in order to obtain tactical information pertaining to Allied operations. Source was unaware of the results of the operations of these personnel. On two occasions, the 36th Regt received prior warning of Allied operations from the 44th Front. The method used by the 44th Front to obtain this information was unk to source. The warnings were communicated to the 36th Regt by 15w radio several days prior to the Allied operation. In May 69, the 36th Regt HQ had temporarily moved from its base camp to DIEN TAN Vil, DIEN BAN Dist, QUANG NAM Prov in preparation for an operation in that area. The regiment was informed by the 44th Front that four battalions of US and ARVN troops were planning to conduct a counter-operation against the 36th Regt within seven days. The regiment withdrew to its base camp area and successfully avoided the Allied Forces. In Jul 69, source's radio team was assigned to the 3d Bn in order to maintain radio communication with the 36th Regt HQ during an operation conducted by the battalion. While with the battalion, source learned that the regimental base camp had been attacked and partially destroyed by Allied Forces in early Aug 69. However, the 36th Regt HQ had avoided the attack due to prior warning it received from the 44th Front. The regimental headquarters withdrew to an unk location in the HON TAU Mountains until the attack was over; afterwhich the regiment returned and rebuilt the base camp.

(C) COMMENTS: Source demonstrated attentiveness and sincerity throughout the interrogation. Several minor discrepancies were uncovered through control questioning which source attributed to his lack of knowledge and experience in that particular area. Source's knowledge of 15w radio operations was fairly detailed; however, he was considerably limited in information pertaining to the other aspects of signal communications.

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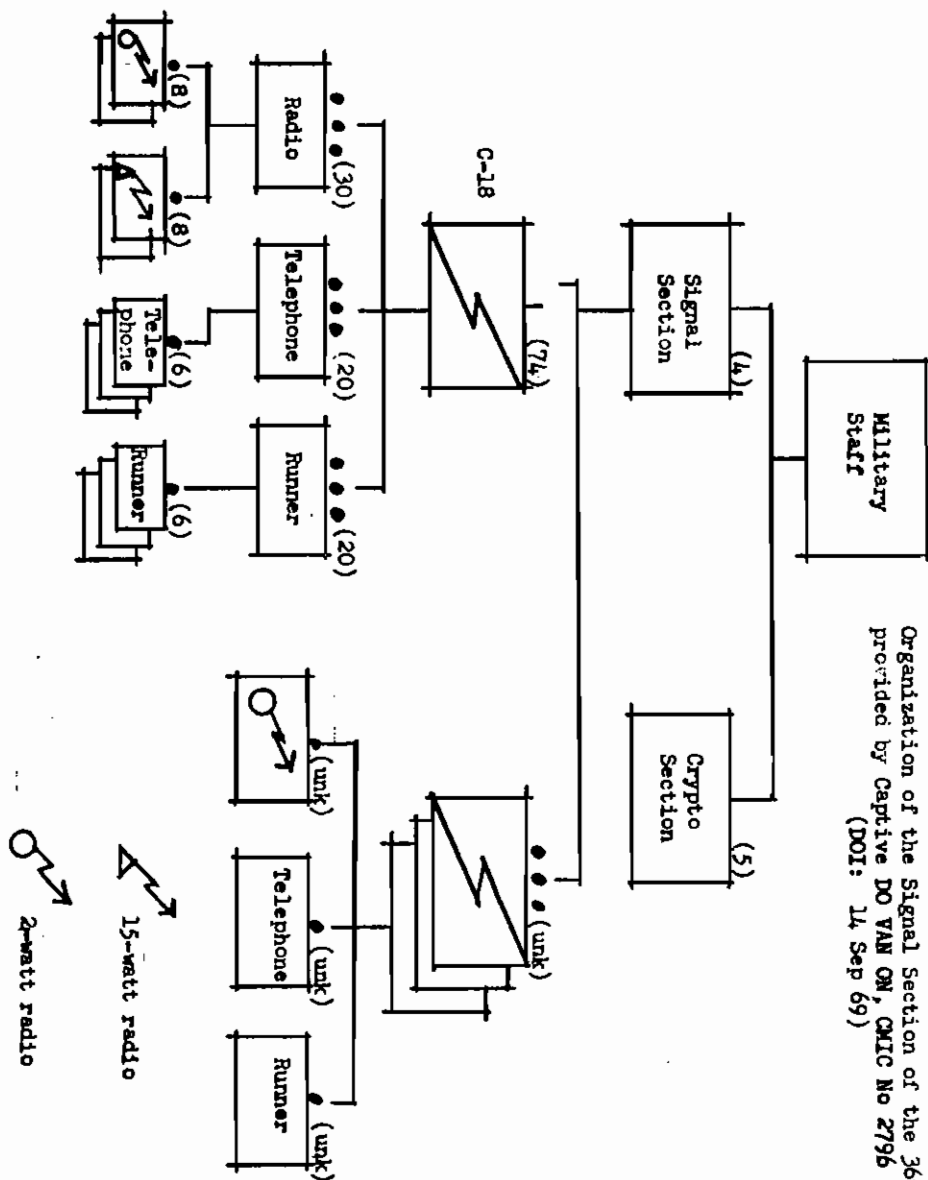
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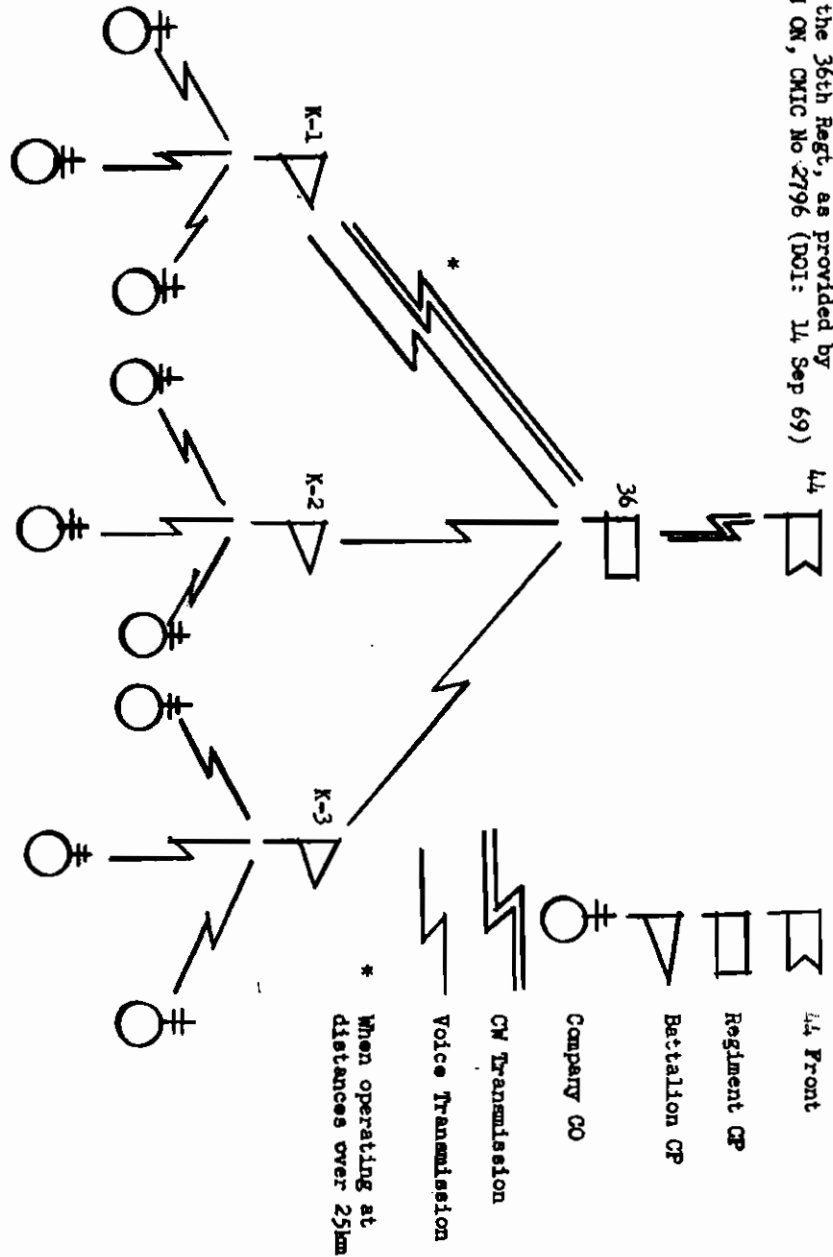
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Example of the monthly call sign frequency schedules (15w radio) used by the 44th Front and the 36th Regt, provided by the interrogator to illustrate the information furnished by Captive DO VAN ON, CMIC No 2796 (DOI: 14 Sep 69)

DATE	UNIT	PRIMARY CALL SIGN	SECONDARY CALL SIGN	DAYTIME FREQUENCY	*NIGHTTIME FREQUENCY
1 Jan 1970	44th Front	BXN	PEM	4070	9218
	36th Regt	HLW	XPS	4473	9018
2 Jan 1970	44th Front	SRP	HWX	5739	7490
	36th Regt	RXW	ACT	6015	7014

EXAMPLE:

During daytime hours on 1 Jan 70, the 44th Front transmits to the 36th Regt on the frequency of 4473 megacycles in the following manner. "XPS, this is BXN" (this transmission is in CW, not voice). The 36th Regt returns the call, transmitting on the frequency of 4070 in the following manner. "PEM, this is HLW."

* At night, or in case interference is encountered on the daytime frequency, the nighttime frequency is used. If further interference is encountered on the alternate frequency, the 44th Front operator designates a different frequency in code, breaks contact, and reopens the net on the new frequency. (Interrogator's Note: This chart was not provided by source as a representation of the charts used by the 36th Regt. The chart is provided by the interrogator as an aid in understanding the method of alternating call signs and frequencies used by the 36th Regt.)

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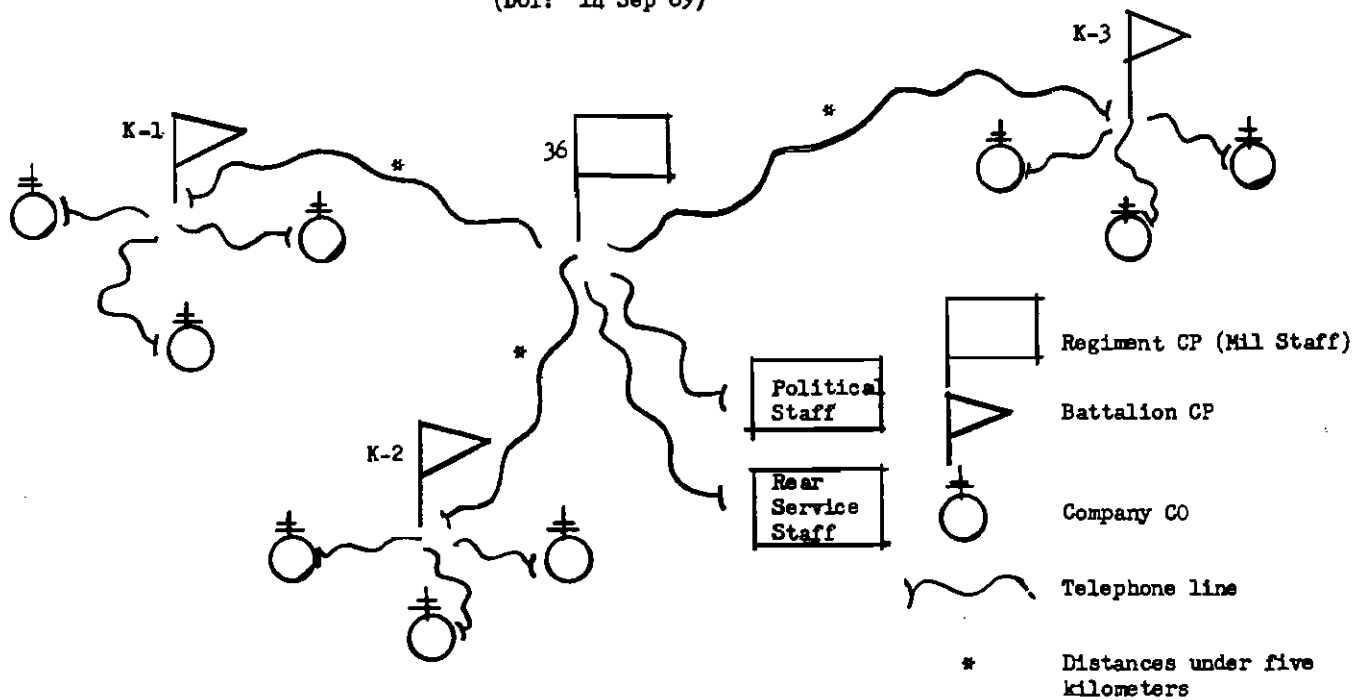
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Base camp telephone net of the 36th Regt, as provided by Captive DO VAN ON, CMIC No 2796
(DOI: 14 Sep 69)



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