

Contents

HD

- 1) Letter from CG XXIV Corps to CO, CAF  
concerning CAP/CORDS Relations.
- 2) I Corps Coordinating Instructions establishing  
joint policy on CAP's
- 3) CAF Order 3300.1 Rules of Engagement.
- 4) FACT SHEET OF 31 Mar 70
- 5) III MAF Order 31.41B SOP for CAP.

*Maj. Kilday*  
*5-3*

FACT SHEET ON THE COMBINED ACTION FORCE  
III MARINE AMPHIBIOUS FORCE  
31 MARCH 1970

1. HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

a. The Combined Action Force was known as the Combined Action Program until 11 January 1970 at which time the Program was given separate command status. The Combined Action Force (CAF) was conceived and developed by the Marine Corps in Vietnam, where it has been functioning since August 1965. The CAF and its associated concepts could be considered a natural outgrowth of Marine Corps experience in the so-called banana wars fought in the Caribbean area from 1915 to 1934, when Marines advised, trained, and fought side by side with native constabulary forces in Haiti, the Dominican Republic, and Nicaragua.

b. The Combined Action Program and later the CAF has functioned under the operational control and direction of Headquarters, III Marine Amphibious Force in close coordination with Headquarters, I Corps. On 26 March 1970, operational control of the CAF passed to the Commanding General XXIV Corps. Administrative and logistics functions remained under the control of Headquarters, III Marine Amphibious Force. A diagram of the present Combined Action Force command and coordination structure and a chart of the present Combined Action Force command relationships is provided at enclosures (1) and (2).

2. Organization and Function

a. The primary purpose of the CAF is to provide security to the people in hamlets and villages by protecting them from VC/NVA incursions, influence and terror. Collaterally, the program serves to aid in local law enforcement, to engender respect for the local and National governments, and to promote general community welfare.

b. There are currently some 2000 Marines and Navy Corpsmen, along with about 3000 Popular Force (PF) soldiers participating in the Combined Action Force.

c. A unique feature of the CAF is the fact that a squad of Marines is integrated with a PF platoon to form a Combined Action Platoon (CAP) which functions under the operational control of the local District Chief. In this combination, the Marines provide advice, training, encouragement, and improved fire support. On the other hand, the PF, being local residents, provide knowledge of the area, rapport with the people, improved access to information about the enemy, and the motivation that is inherent in the defense of one's own home. Although the PF comprise the lowest paid and least trained element of the Vietnamese military, their value is not to be underestimated. Indices of effectiveness show that the PF are playing a key role in this conflict. In addition, by working with the PF and earning their respect and confidence, the Marines in the CAP are able to relate to the local people in a way that no conventional US military organization could do. The PF therefore act as a link between the Marines and the local people. In a "peoples war," it goes without saying that this link is a vital asset. A diagram of a CAP is provided at enclosure (3).

d. Enclosure (4) sets forth the formally assigned missions of the CAPs. It is emphasized that the primary mission is a combat mission, namely to help establish and extend Government authority in the CAP's assigned area by conducting aggressive patrols and ambushes in and around the CAP-protected hamlets.

e. In addition to the seven missions assigned to the CAP as a whole, the Marine element of the CAP has an important additional mission -- namely, to train the PF soldiers to an adequate level of military proficiency. When Government authority is well established and the CAP PF platoon has achieved the desired proficiency, the Marine element of the CAP relocates to a new village where Government authority is sharply contested and where the local PF are too poorly trained to deal effectively with the enemy in the area. Thus, CAP Marines are engaged in a process of perpetually working themselves out of a job, a procedure which exemplifies the concept of Vietnamization.

f. On the other hand, great care is taken to insure that the Marine element does not relocate prematurely, for to do so would be to leave the village vulnerable to VC reprisals or reversion to VC control, and would leave the PF inadequately prepared to sustain village security needs. Therefore, certain criteria must be met before the Commanding Generals of XXIV Corps and I Corps, respectively, will grant approval for the relocation of the Marine element of a CAP. That the relocation process has been executed successfully is attested to by the fact that to date, 93 relocations have been effected, of which 27 have occurred since August 1969; and in no case has a CAP-protected hamlet ever reverted to VC control after relocation of the Marine element. Enclosure (5) provides statistics on the number of PF platoons and the amount of population that have benefitted from past or present CAP association.

g. It is important to note that the method of training used by CAP Marines is almost all of the "on-the-job" variety, with very little formal instruction. The CAP Marine conceives of himself as a combat Marine, and therefore his classroom is the "bush" where the VC provide the necessary training aids. In addition to the on-the-job training offered by the CAPs, some formal instruction is conducted at the CACO and CAG levels in subjects such as night firing, artillery forward observing, and map reading.

h. There are 114 of these CAPs dispersed throughout the populated coastal lowlands of all five provinces in I Corps. Although the basic element of the CAP is the CAP, controlling and coordinating headquarters exist at the District, Province and Corps levels. The 114 CAPs are organized into 19 Combined Action Companies (CACOs) which in turn are organized into four Combined Action Groups (CAGs). Generally speaking, CACO headquarters correspond with and are co-located with District headquarters, and CAG headquarters correspond with and are located close to Province headquarters. The CACO Commander and CAG Commander are counterparts to the District and Province Chiefs, respectively. Corps level coordination is effected through close liaison between the Commanding Officer, Combined Action Force, and the Deputy Commander for Territory, I Corps, as well as between the Commanding Generals of XXIV Corps and I Corps, respectively. A map of the distribution

of CAPs, CACOs, and CAGs is shown at enclosure (6).

1. Most CAP Marines are assigned directly from the United States, although a few volunteers are obtained from other III MAF Marine Units. Regardless of the source, all men are personally screened to insure adaptability to the program. Following selection, they attend the two-week Combined Action Force School at Danang before going to their CAGs for subsequent assignment to the CAPs. Some of these Marines will come back to Danang three or four months later to receive intensive Vietnamese language training at the CAF Language School. Perhaps the effectiveness of the system for obtaining, screening, and motivating CAP Marines is best exemplified in the fact that one out of every eight CAP Marines extends his tour of duty in Vietnam for a period of three or more months.

### 3. Tactics and Techniques

a. Tactics employed by the CAPs follow three basic principles. The first of these is the principle of tactical mobility. A CAP does not defend its hamlets from behind bunkers and barricades. The idea is not to put up a wall around the hamlet, but rather to put out a screen of ambushes on the approaches to the hamlet. When coupled with stealth, mobility provides not only offensive striking power, but also the protection afforded by elusiveness. By virtue of this quality of elusive mobility, the CAP seems to be everywhere, but never predictably anywhere. The unpredictability of CAP ambushes is the basis of CAP security against surprise attack by overwhelming enemy forces. But what is more important, this same unpredictability insures that the VC will never feel safe anywhere in a CAP area of operations. A more detailed discussion of the CAP concept of mobility is attached as enclosure (7).

b. The second principle of CAP tactics is that of combining a minimum of personnel with a maximum of firepower. By being small, yet backed up by fire support and reaction force assistance, a CAP in the presence of an enemy force exposes only a small target to the enemy, yet can bring down the fire power of a Marine battalion in terms of air and artillery support.

c. The third principle of CAP tactics is that of credible permanence. It has already been indicated that the PF are recruited from the local area. Like the PF, the CAP Marines are villagers, too. They are of the village, they come to be known by the villagers, and their stay partakes of permanence in that they will remain as long as they are needed. The CAP is clearly wedded to the people, the political structure, and the land of a particular geographical locality. This quality of permanence is one of the characteristics that clearly sets the CAP apart from the regular infantry unit.

### 4. Effectiveness

a. Experience shows that the presence of a CAP serves to deny the VC his source of manpower, because he is denied a free hand in recruiting among the people. Second, the VC is normally blocked from his source of food,

since he often finds it too dangerous to run rice parties through the gauntlet of CAP ambushes. Third, the VC is limited in his opportunity to gather intelligence from the villagers, while at the same time the villagers are more apt to give intelligence to their PF and Marine protectors. And finally, the stability and credibility of the GVN is greatly enhanced when, under the CAP umbrella of protection, village and hamlet officials can safely stay at night in their homes, elections can be held, schools can be reestablished, and the people can help the GVN cause with a minimum of concern for reprisal from the VC.

b. The 2000 Marines and Navy Corpsmen in the CAF represent a US force of roughly reinforced infantry battalion size. However, while an infantry battalion has only 12 rifle platoons, the CAF fields 114 platoons, which is even greater than the number of rifle platoons in a Marine Division comprised of some 20,000 officers and men. This fact illustrates that the CAF makes more economical use of a given number of US personnel when compared to other types of US combat forces. The influence of the CAF is therefore inherently much greater than the influence of any single infantry battalion. With very small headquarters elements, and with almost 90% of its total personnel tactically deployed in the villages of I Corps 24 hours a day throughout the year, the CAF epitomizes the principle of economy of force.

c. Enclosures (8) and (9) contain statistics reflecting the combat effectiveness of the Combined Action Force. Enclosures (10) through (12) show the degree to which CAPs are more effective than the independent non-CAP PF platoons alone.

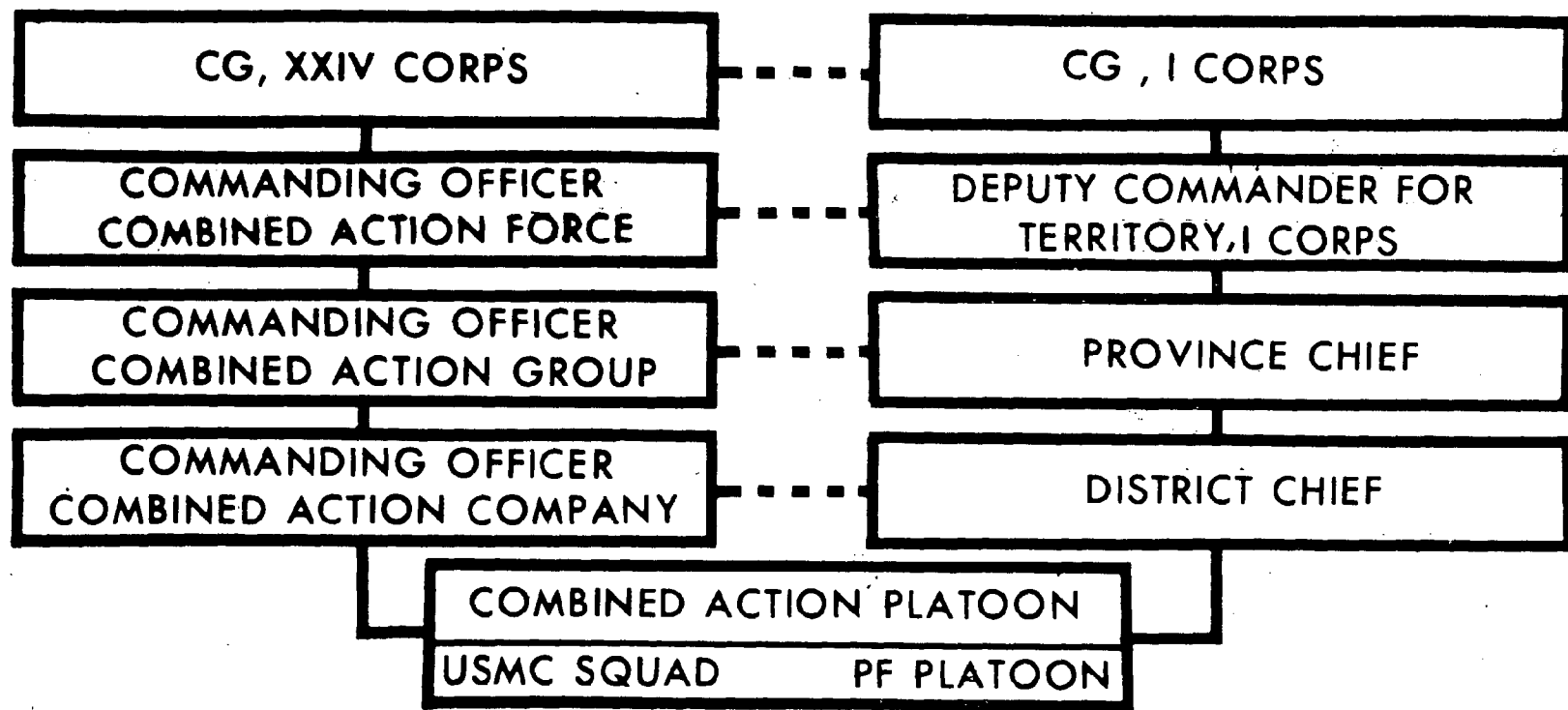
## 5. Conclusion

a. The Combined Action Force functions as part of the overall pacification effort in fulfillment of the "one war" concept.

b. By combining some psychological operations and civic action projects along with an umbrella of security and protection for the villagers, the Combined Action Force helps to win support for the GVN.

c. The primary strength of the Combined Action Force lies in the fact that, by living and operating in the villages, the CAPs are keeping the VC away from the people and the supplies. Mao Tse Tung's "fish" are thus kept out of the sustaining "sea".

# CONTROL AND COORDINATION COMBINED ACTION FORCE

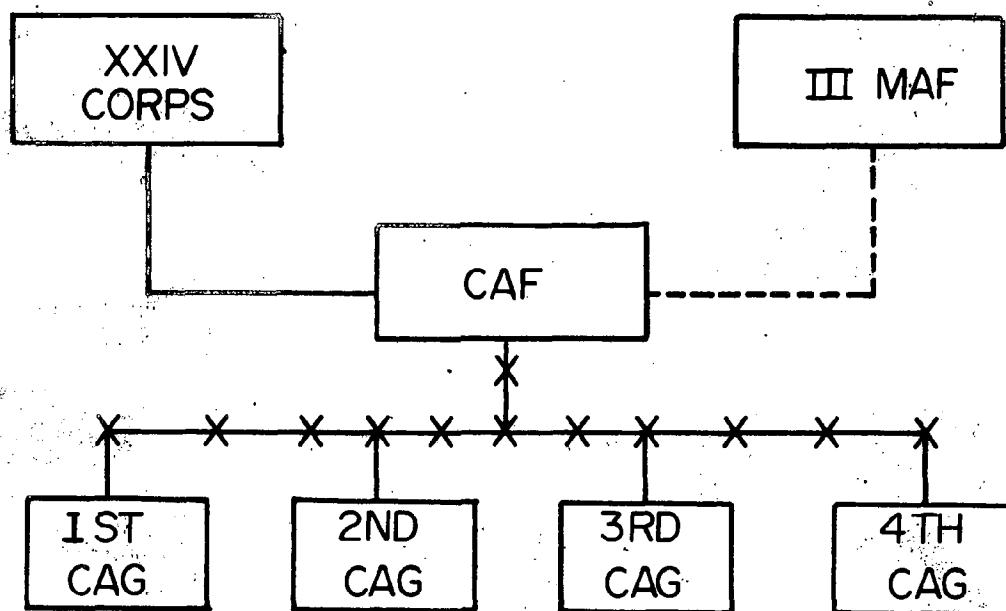


DECLASSIFIED

ENCLOSURE 1

DECLASSIFIED

## COMMAND RELATIONSHIPS CHART

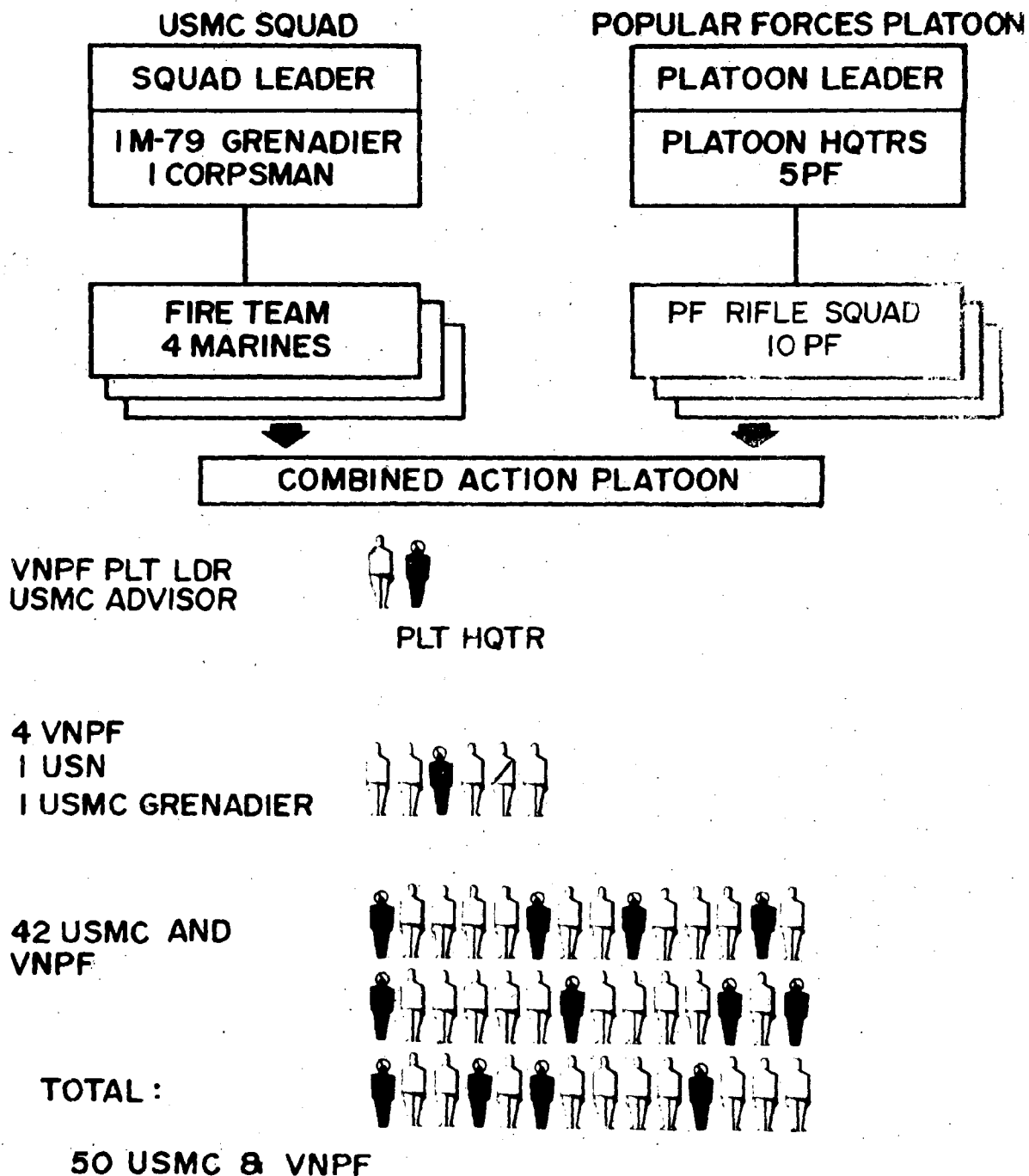
COMMAND ~~XX~~

OPCON ———

ADCON ----- (COMMAND LESS OPCON)

ENCLOSURE(2)

# COMPOSITION AND ORGANIZATION OF A COMBINED ACTION PLATOON



ENCLOSURE (3)



## MISSION OF THE COMBINED ACTION FORCE

1. DESTROY VC HAMLET-VILLAGE INFRASTRUCTURE.
2. PROVIDE PUBLIC SECURITY, HELP MAINTAIN LAW AND ORDER.
3. PROTECT FRIENDLY POLITICAL INFRASTRUCTURE.
4. PROTECT BASES AND LOC WITHIN VILLAGES AND HAMLETS.
5. CONTRIBUTE TO COMBINED OPERATIONS WITH OTHER FORCES.
6. PARTICIPATE IN CIVIC ACTION AND PSYOPS AGAINST VC.
7. ASSIST IN RD ACTIVITIES.

ENCLOSURE

# PF PLATOONS TRAINED BY CAPS

NOW BEING TRAINED 114

TRAINED BY FORMER CAPS OVER 95

TOTAL OVER 209

# HAMLETS PROTECTED BY CAPS

NOW BEING PROTECTED BY CAPS ABOUT 460

FORMERLY PROTECTED BY CAPS ABOUT 350

TOTAL ABOUT 810

# POPULATION PROTECTED BY CAPS

NOW BEING PROTECTED BY CAPS ABOUT 240,000

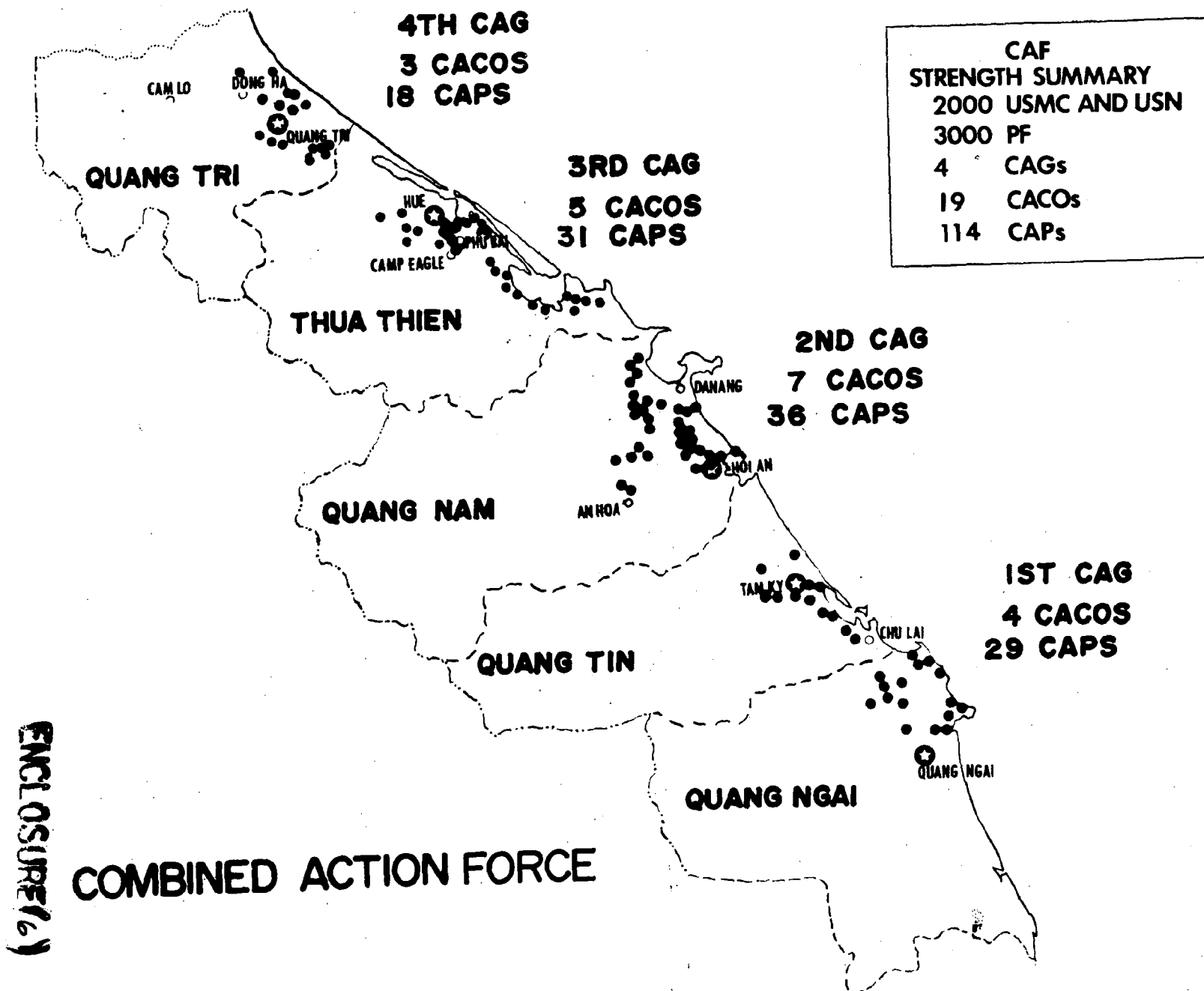
FORMERLY PROTECTED BY CAPS ABOUT 185,000

TOTAL ABOUT 425,000

DECLASSIFIED

ENCLOSURE(5)

DECLASSIFIED



ENCLOSURE (6)

## A DISCUSSION OF THE MOBILE CAP CONCEPT

In opening the discussion of the mobile CAP concept, it might be well to note that there are two kinds of mobility -- "noisy" mobility and "stealthy" mobility. Helicopters and vehicles provide noisy mobility -- they are fast but the virtue of speed is partly cancelled out by the loss of surprise through obviousness. Stealthy mobility is provided by the infantryman's feet traversing any kind of terrain at any time of day or night in any kind of weather. This is the kind of mobility the VC use -- and the CAP uses. It is a slow kind of mobility, but makes up for lack of speed by achieving surprise through stealth. To the extent that the VC have enjoyed any success in this war, it can be largely attributed to his stealthy mobility employed in a surprise attack (or ambush) against a relatively less mobile adversary.

Operating on the mobile concept, the CAP should not attempt to defend a hamlet by establishing a fortified position next to or overlooking the hamlet. Nor should the CAP attempt to put up a defensive wall or perimeter around the hamlet. Instead, the mobile CAP protects the hamlet by setting up a screen of ambushes on the approaches to the hamlet. A screen is porous, but conversely, a wall is brittle and can be broken down. The psychology of mobility is offensive; the psychology of walls, citadels, and perimeters is defensive. Operating on the mobile concept, the CAP secretly sets up several ambushes in different places on the approaches to the hamlet each night, never in the same place twice, and never according to a predictable pattern. By so doing, the CAP makes it impossible for the VC to feel safe anywhere in or near the protected hamlet. Given the advantage of surprise inherent in the ambush, the CAP has a tactical advantage over a "visiting" VC force several times larger. After a while, the VC find the price for visiting the hamlet to be too high, and contacts cease to occur.

When coupled with stealth, mobility provides not only a sword, but a shield as well. The sword symbolizes offensive striking power, and the shield symbolizes the protection afforded by elusiveness. In the defense of our fixed installations in Vietnam, we tend to rely on sheer bulk of forces and firepower alone. The habit of doing so may cause us to lose sight of the fact that if the enemy could not find and fix his target with such certainty, he could not strike a telling blow, even if he had superior forces. The CAP must never lose sight of the value of elusiveness, because the CAP, being small, cannot enjoy the luxury of relying on sheer bulk of force alone, particularly since the enemy in many CAP areas has the capability of massing superior forces against the CAP. It is the elusiveness and unpredictability of CAP ambushes that is the basis of CAP security against surprise attack by overwhelming enemy forces.

While the CAP is tactically mobile, it should not be thought of as being strategically mobile. The CAP, unlike an infantry organization, is wedded to the people and the governmental structure of a particular geographical locality. The infantry organization may pursue the enemy wherever he goes, but the CAP is concerned with only the enemy who enter or live in the CAP TAOC. The CAP's geographical locality is thus fixed, but

ENCLOSURE(7)

the CAP's position within that locality must be unpredictably mobile.

If the CAP is operating according to the mobile concept in its TAOC, it will seem to be everywhere, yet will never be predictably anywhere. The so-called "compound" or "fixed" CAP is a negation of this mobile concept. When the CAP occupies a fixed defensive position, it must tie up much of its efforts in defending that position. Soon, the preoccupation becomes that of defending the position rather than protecting the hamlets. Soon, the CAP can only afford to send out one small ambush at a time, for fear of leaving the citadel inadequately defended. Soon, we find that the VC may stay clear of the citadel, but are enjoying a free hand in the hamlets and in the countryside. But at its worst, we find that the enemy studies the citadel for weaknesses that are inherent when a defensive psychology takes over, and when he has found his opening, he launches his surprise attack. In this manner, the enemy has succeeded in destroying some of our compound CAPs. He has never destroyed a mobile CAP.

In pondering the relative merit of the compound CAP versus the mobile CAP, it might be well to reflect on how short this war would have been if the VC and NVA operated out of fixed compounds.

A few words should be addressed to the notion that a mobile CAP is unsafe in proximity to the Vietnamese population. This notion is based on the assumption that the population is infested with VC informers, and that notion may lead some individuals to believe that the protecting wall of a CAP compound is a necessary safeguard against the treachery of the villagers. It is well known that many non-CAP military organizations in Vietnam shun the population altogether, preferring to establish bases, defensive positions, patrol routes, and ambushes in uninhabited areas. By ignoring and avoiding the population, such an organization gives the VC a free hand in the hamlets. For example, a rifle company may establish an impregnable bastion on a rise of ground and set up ambushes on the approaches to its position, while the VC are left free to visit the nearby hamlets, and are even able to sleep in them with complete impunity. The men in a CAP must realize that while there may well be informers in every hamlet, the informers cannot readily obtain and transmit detailed information to the VC about an ambush position established after dark somewhere outside the hamlet. Even if worse came to worst and an informer was able to tip off the VC as to the location of an ambush, he would hardly be able to relate all of the particulars, such as the exact position of the leaders, the principal weapons, the claymores, the radio, and the fields of fire. It is well known that the VC do not like to attack without knowing all of these particulars, even when he has superior forces. In view of that, the most aggressive course of action he would be likely to pursue would be a standoff attack against the ambush site, using RPGs, small arms fire, and possibly mortars. This type of attack may inflict friendly casualties, but it also presents an opportunity for the CAP to inflict casualties, especially through the use of supporting fires. Moreover, this type of attack will never result in the destruction of a CAP or the loss of weapons, and seldom results in casualties.

If a CAP operates in its TAOC according to a mobile concept, the enemy will be denied a free hand in recruiting or proselyting among the people. He will be blocked from his source of food, since it will be too dangerous to run rice parties through the gauntlet of CAP ambushes. He will be limited in his opportunity to gather intelligence from the villagers, while at the same time, the villagers will be more apt to give intelligence to their CAP protectors. Eventually, the CAP will achieve complete tactical dominance in the TAOC. In time, the stability and credibility of the GVN will be greatly enhanced when, under the CAP umbrella of protection, village and hamlet officials can safely stay in their homes, elections can be held, schools can be established, and the people can help the GVN cause with little fear of VC reprisal.

# COMBINED ACTION FORCE STATISTICS

	<u>1966</u>	<u>1967</u>	<u>1968</u>	<u>1969</u>	<u>1 JAN - 31 MAR</u> <u>1970</u>
PATROLS	14,693	41,247	55,809	82,163	<u>20,464</u>
AMBUSHES	8,500	16,626	35,541	66,998	<u>17,482</u>
ENEMY KIA	154	451	2,376	1,952	<u>288</u>
POW	193	201	665	391	<u>87</u>
HOI CHANHS	UNK	UNK	129	234	<u>82</u>
WPNS CAPTURED	UNK	282	734	932	<u>172</u>
NO OF CAPS	57	79	103	114	<u>114</u>
NO OF CACOS	6	14	19	20	<u>19</u>
NO OF CAGS	0	3	4	4	<u>4</u>

ENCLOSURE(8)

DECLASSIFIED

DECLASSIFIED

# COMBINED ACTION FORCE OPERATIONS STATISTICS

1 JANUARY - 31 DECEMBER 1969

## ENEMY CASUALTIES

## FRIENDLY CASUALTIES

	ENEMY CASUALTIES				FRIENDLY CASUALTIES					
					USMC		USN		PF ●	
	KIA	POW	VCS	WPNS	KIA	WIA	KIA	WIA	KIA	WIA
1ST CAG	<u>1,166</u>	<u>187</u>	<u>520</u>	<u>370</u>	<u>47</u>	<u>264</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>15</u>	<u>101</u>	<u>309</u>
2ND CAG	<u>552</u>	<u>147</u>	<u>662</u>	<u>274</u>	<u>40</u>	<u>379</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>19</u>	<u>44</u>	<u>249</u>
3RD CAG	<u>167</u>	<u>35</u>	<u>364</u>	<u>211</u>	<u>12</u>	<u>115</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>21</u>	<u>77</u>
4TH CAG	<u>67</u>	<u>22</u>	<u>161</u>	<u>77</u>	<u>12</u>	<u>52</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>19</u>	<u>57</u> ●
TOTALS	<u>1,952</u>	<u>391</u>	<u>1,707</u>	<u>932</u>	<u>111</u>	<u>810</u>	<u>6</u>	<u>41</u>	<u>185</u>	<u>692</u>

TOTAL KIA 302

TOTAL WIA 1,543

DECLASSIFIED

ENCLOSURE(9)

DECLASSIFIED



# COMBINED ACTION FORCE OPERATIONS STATISTICS

1 JAN - 31 MAR 1970

## ENEMY LOSSES

	<u>KIA</u>	<u>POW</u>	<u>VCS</u>	<u>HOI CHANHS</u>	<u>WPNS</u>
--	------------	------------	------------	-----------------------	-------------

1ST CAG	<u>162</u>	<u>31</u>	<u>109</u>	<u>61</u>	<u>57</u>
---------	------------	-----------	------------	-----------	-----------

2ND CAG	<u>101</u>	<u>49</u>	<u>327</u>	<u>21</u>	<u>66</u>
---------	------------	-----------	------------	-----------	-----------

3RD CAG	<u>23</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>36</u>	<u>—</u>	<u>42</u>
---------	-----------	----------	-----------	----------	-----------

4TH CAG	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>15</u>	<u>—</u>	<u>7</u>
---------	----------	----------	-----------	----------	----------

TOTALS	<u>288</u>	<u>87</u>	<u>487</u>	<u>82</u>	<u>172</u>
--------	------------	-----------	------------	-----------	------------

## FRIENDLY CASUALTIES

<u>USMC</u>		<u>USN</u>		<u>PF</u>	
<u>KIA</u>	<u>WIA</u>	<u>KIA</u>	<u>WIA</u>	<u>KIA</u>	<u>WIA</u>

<u>10</u>	<u>39</u>	<u>—</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>22</u>	<u>58</u>
-----------	-----------	----------	----------	-----------	-----------

<u>8</u>	<u>101</u>	<u>—</u>	<u>8</u>	<u>19</u>	<u>48</u>
----------	------------	----------	----------	-----------	-----------

<u>2</u>	<u>20</u>	<u>—</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>12</u>
----------	-----------	----------	----------	----------	-----------

<u>2</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>—</u>	<u>—</u>	<u>—</u>	<u>4</u>
----------	----------	----------	----------	----------	----------

<u>22</u>	<u>165</u>	<u>—</u>	<u>19</u>	<u>42</u>	<u>122</u>
-----------	------------	----------	-----------	-----------	------------

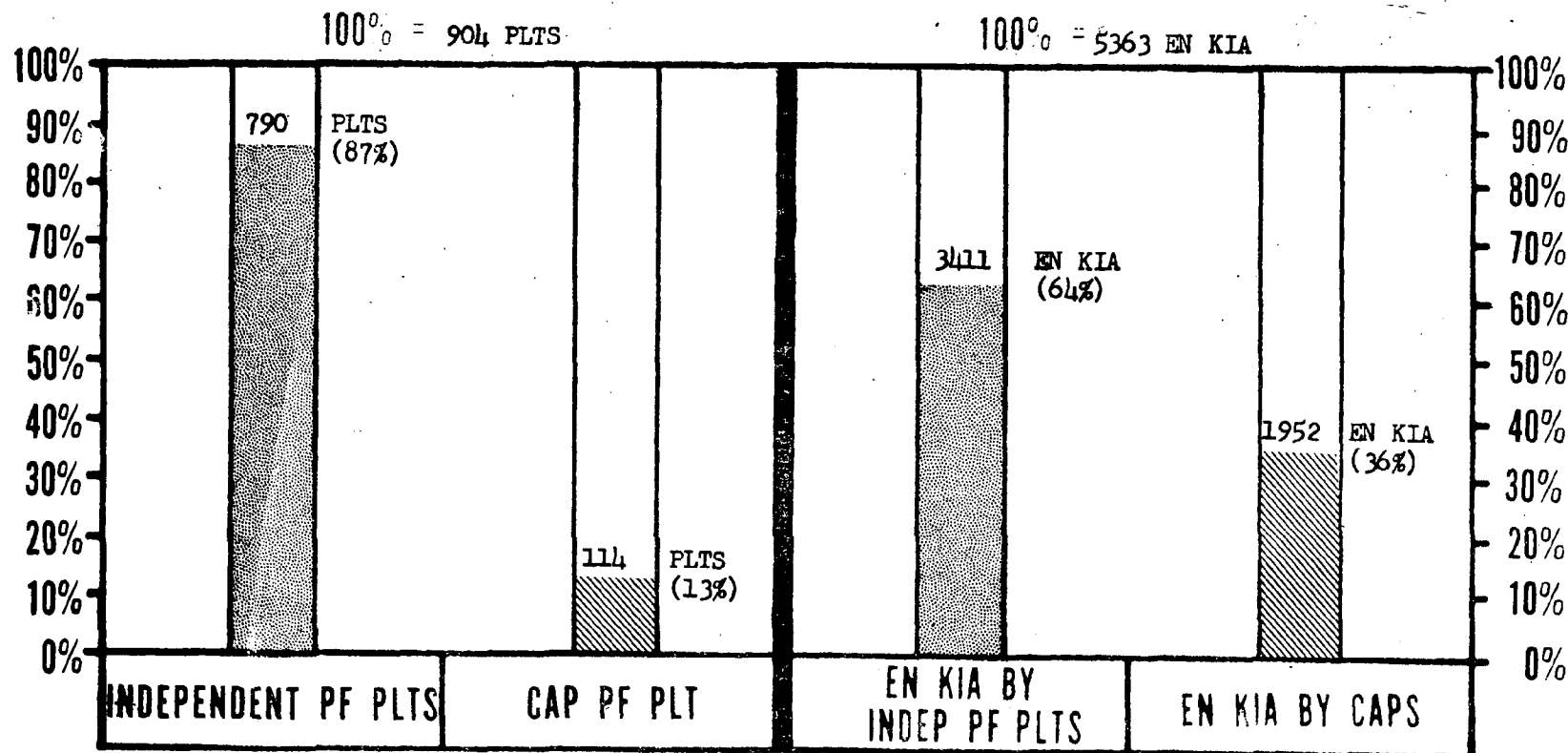
TOTAL KIA	<u>64</u>
-----------	-----------

TOTAL WIA	<u>287</u>
-----------	------------

DECLASSIFIED

ENCLOSURE (9A)

DECLASSIFIED



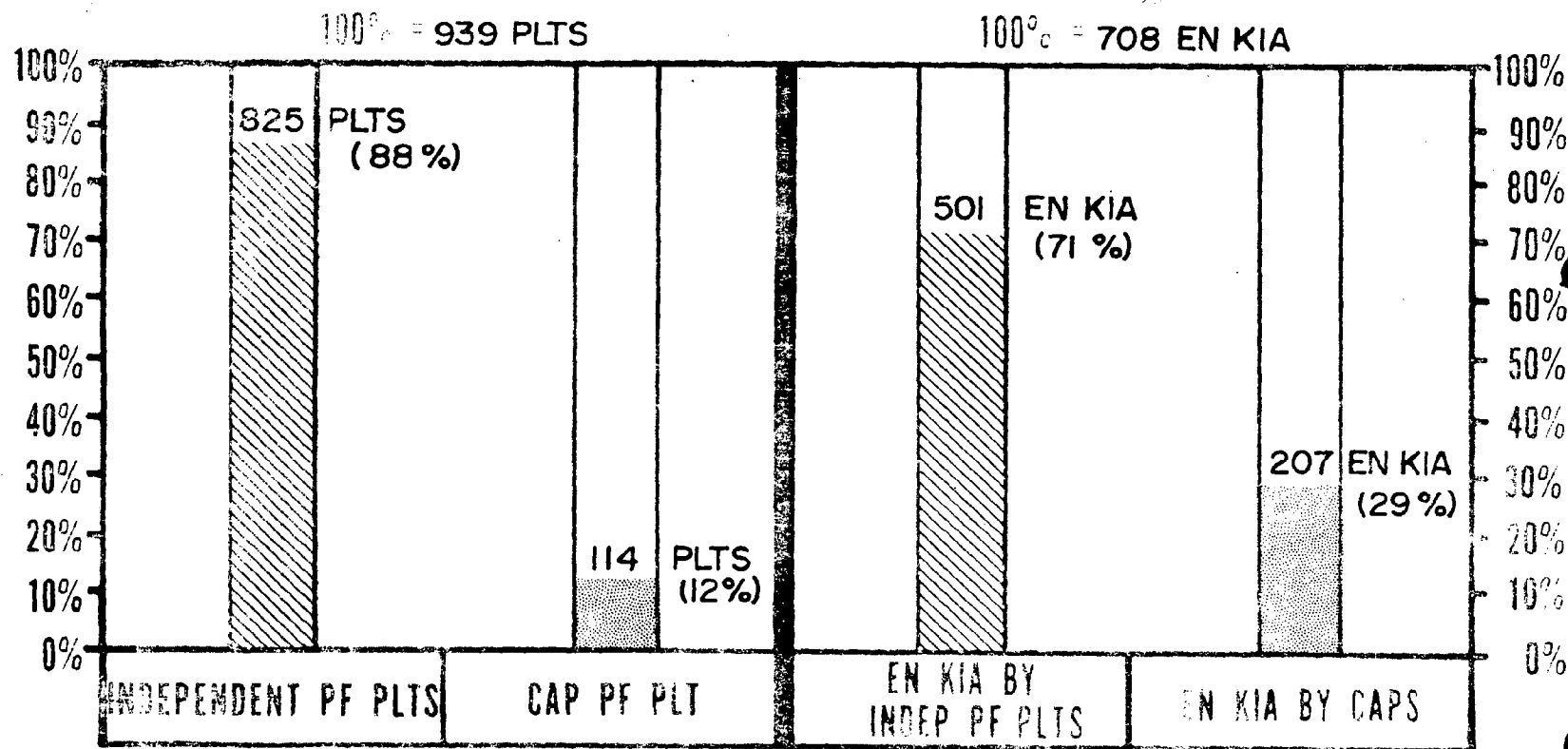
**NUMBER OF INDEPENDENT PF  
PLATOONS COMPARED TO NUMBER  
OF CAP PF PLATOONS IN ICTZ**

1 JAN - 31 DEC 69

**NUMBER OF ENEMY KIA BY  
INDEPENDENT PF PLATOONS  
COMPARED TO NUMBER OF  
ENEMY KIA BY CAPS (ICTZ)**

1 JAN - 31 DEC 69

ENCLOSURE(10)



NUMBER OF INDEPENDENT PF  
PLATOONS COMPARED TO NUMBER  
OF CAP PF PLATOONS IN ICTZ

1 JAN - 31 MAR 70

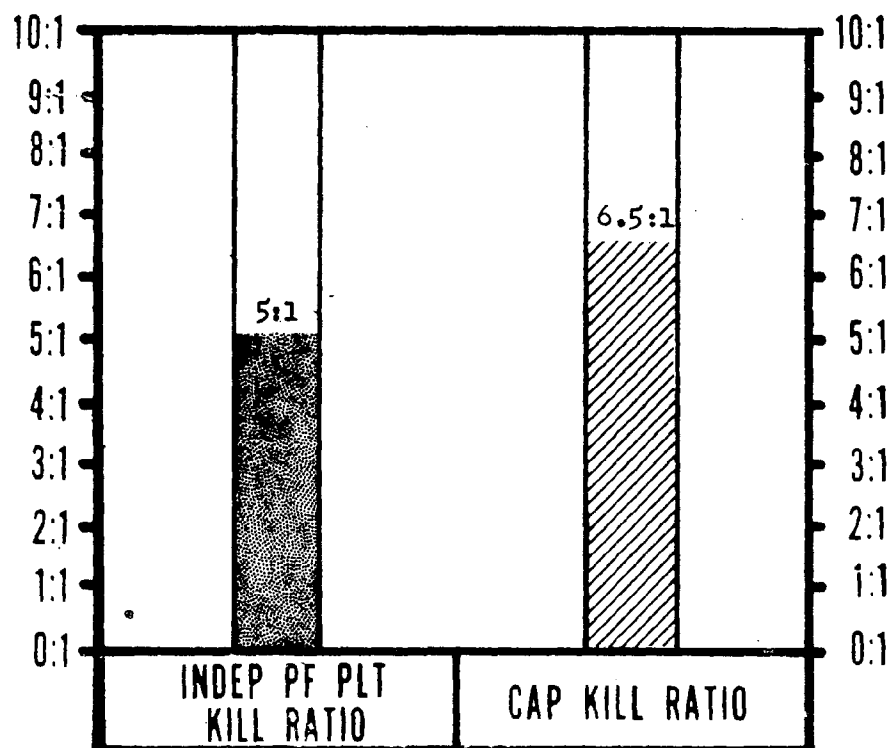
NUMBER OF ENEMY KIA BY  
INDEPENDENT PF PLATOONS  
COMPARED TO NUMBER OF  
ENEMY KIA BY CAPS (ICTZ)

1 JAN - 31 MAR 70

ENCLOSURE (104)

EN . FRD  
KIA . KIA

EN . FRD  
KIA . KIA



**INDEPENDENT PF PLATOON  
KILL RATIO COMPARED TO  
CAP KILL RATIO (ICTZ)**

1 JAN - 31 DEC 69

DECLASSIFIED

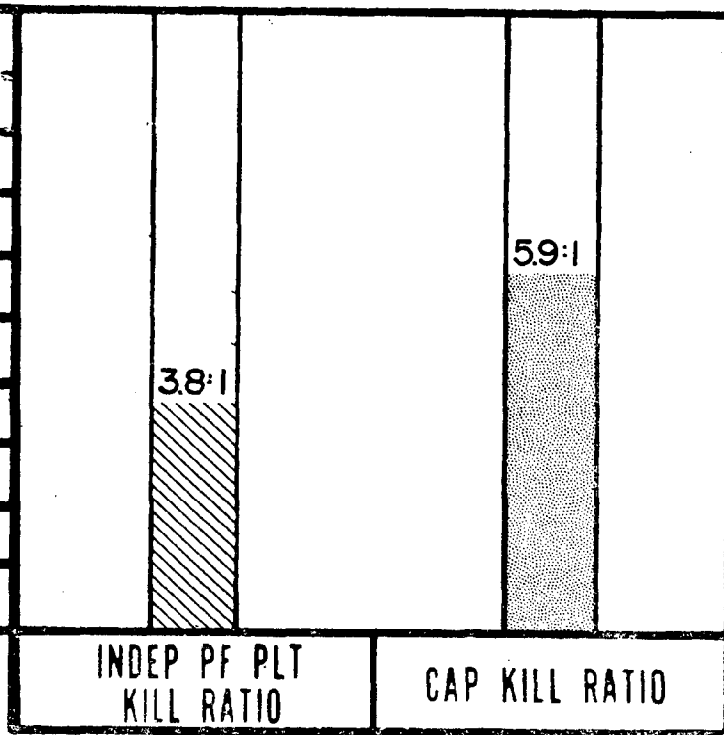
ENCLOSURE (1)

DECLASSIFIED

ENCLOSURE (107)

EN . FRD  
KIA . KIA

10:1  
9:1  
8:1  
7:1  
6:1  
5:1  
4:1  
3:1  
2:1  
1:1  
0:1



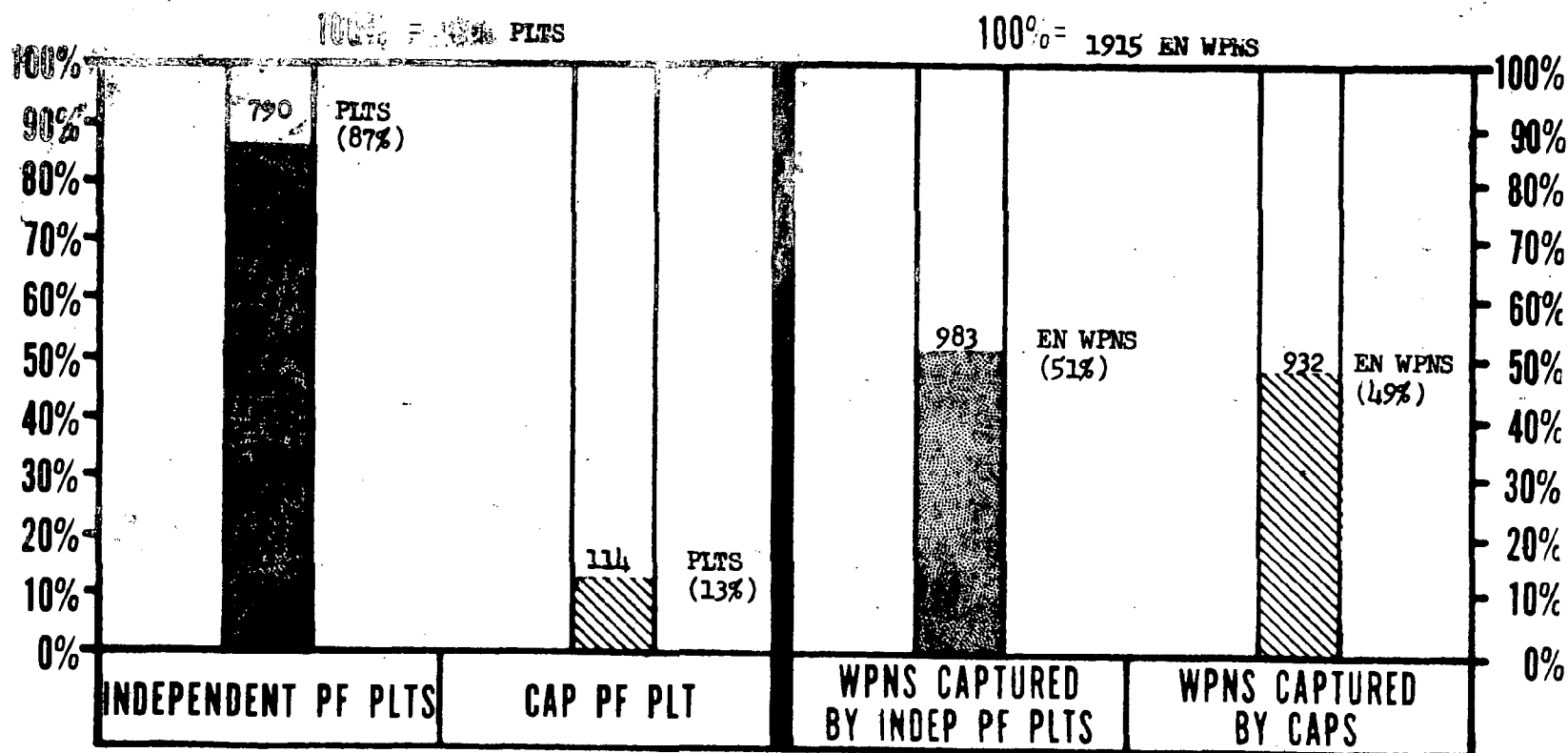
EN . FRD  
KIA . KIA

10:1  
9:1  
8:1  
7:1  
6:1  
5:1  
4:1  
3:1  
2:1  
1:1  
0:1

# INDEPENDENT PF PLATOON KILL RATIO COMPARED TO CAP KILL RATIO (ICTZ)

1 JAN - 31 MAR 70

ENCLOSURE(2)

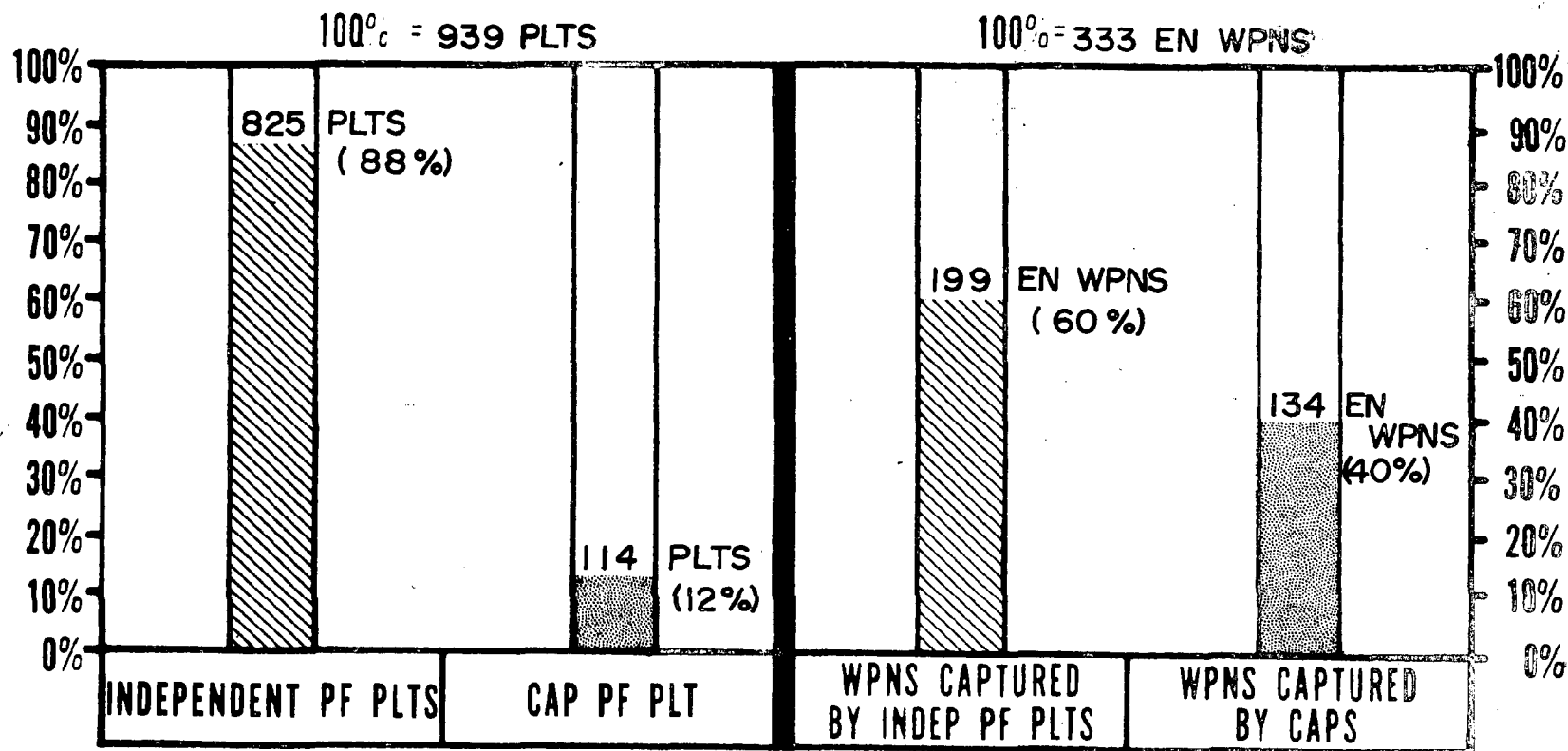


NUMBER OF INDEPENDENT PF  
PLATOONS COMPARED TO NUMBER  
OF CAP PF PLATOONS IN ICTZ

1 JAN - 31 Dec 69

NUMBER OF WEAPONS CAPTURED  
BY INDEPENDENT PF PLATOONS  
COMPARED TO NUMBER OF  
WEAPONS CAPTURED BY CAPS (ICTZ)

1 JAN - 31 Dec 69



NUMBER OF INDEPENDENT PF  
PLATOONS COMPARED TO NUMBER  
OF CAP PF PLATOONS IN ICTZ

1 JAN - 31 MAR 70

NUMBER OF WEAPONS CAPTURED  
BY INDEPENDENT PF PLATOONS  
COMPARED TO NUMBER OF  
WEAPONS CAPTURED BY CAPS (ICTZ)

1 JAN - 31 MAR 70

ENCLOSURE (12A)

Da Nang, Viet-Nam

March 14, 1970

LTC Melvin Zais  
Commanding General  
XXIV Corps

Dear General Zais:

At General Nickerson's request the Consulate and COMUS I CTZ have for the past several months been engaged in a survey of the 102 villages of I CTZ in which the 113 Combined Action Program platoons are currently assigned. American-directed 3-man Vietnamese survey teams have already surveyed public opinion in about 30 of these villages toward the military performance and conduct vis-a-vis the people of the CAP Marines; at the same time we have reviewed CAP policies and directives in the light of national pacification and development objectives and our Vietnamization policy. While the surveys are not yet completed, I believe it is now possible to report some of our findings for your consideration.

First, we found that the people are generally quite happy with the CAP Marines. They sleep better at night knowing that the Marines are helping to provide security, and they appreciate the MEDCAPS and other civic action projects the CAPs engage in. They praise the CAP Marines' general standard of conduct, and the fact that the Marines remain in the village makes it easier to resolve any unfortunate incidents between them and the villagers, who can report the Marine involved by name through the PF platoon leader to the Marine squad leader, who usually resolves the problem on the spot.

Second, we find a general consensus that the performance of PF platoons is significantly improved by their relationship with the CAP Marines. They operate more aggressively and proficiently, and their morale is improved by the Marine presence and the fact that the Marines can call in US fire support and MEDEVACs. There are, however, indications that the performance of the PF platoons tends to slide back to previous levels after the Marine elements are reassigned, which raises the question of whether the Combined Action Program is contributing as much to Vietnamization as one might hope.



-2-

Third, there are some shortcomings in the quality and numbers of Marines currently assigned to the CAP units. Several Vietnamese and American military officers told us that many of the leaders of the CAP Marine squads are in their early 20s, with a rank of E-4 or E-5 and little or no previous combat experience. While the program used to be voluntary, now all Marines are assigned and individual motivation seems lower than in the early days of the program. The Vietnamese-language training is inadequate and has seriously hampered the ability of some teams to gather intelligence and to protect themselves. Finally, although the authorized strength of each CAP team is 14 Marines and one Navy corpsman, assigned strength tends to average about 10 and present-for-duty strength perhaps a little lower. We found a consensus that present-for-duty strength should not be less than 10.

Fourth, there are some inconsistencies between the chain of command prescribed in the CAP directive (Joint I CTZ/III MAF Instruction of CAP Joint Policy) and that required by GVN and US national directives:

a. Although the Vietnamese Constitution guarantees a certain autonomy to the village government, and the 1969 and 1970 Pacification Plans and other GVN decrees provide that the village chief exercises command authority over all GVN personnel and resources assigned to his village including PF platoons, the leader of the PF element within a CAP unit is in practice responsible directly to the sub-sector and bypasses the village chief, his deputy for security, and his military assistant who normally is a senior PF platoon leader. In a few cases CAP TAGs, following natural geographical features, cross the boundaries of more than one village. This tends to weaken the unity of command at the village level.

b. Despite the emphasis on the single-manager concept throughout the CORDS structure, and despite the fact that the CAP program is now virtually exclusively a pacification program, there is a separate CAP command chain which coordinates with but is not subordinate to the CORDS chain of command. The 113 CAP leaders report to 20 Combined Action Company (CACO) Commanders, who are often equal in rank to CORDS District Senior Advisors and the CACO commanders may have CAPs in several districts. There are only four Combined Action Groups (CAG), with CAG-1 covering both Quang Tin and Quang Ngai Provinces, and CAG commanders are usually lieutenant colonels, as are most military CORDS Province Senior Advisors. At the III MAF (now XXIV Corps) level, a Marine full colonel is Assistant Chief of Staff for CAP (ACSCAP), while an Army full colonel is Chief of the Territorial Forces Division of CORDS I CTZ. While we know of no

-3-

irreconcilable disputes that have arisen between the two command structures during coordination of plans and operations for territorial security, it would seem that the arguments which justify the single-manager concept in our pacification program apply with equal force to the Combined Action Program.

c. We heard some complaints that the current requirement that shifts of CAP teams must be approved in advance by the US and Vietnamese Corps CGs is unnecessarily rigid.

I conclude that the Combined Action Program is basically sound in concept and that it makes a significant contribution to pacification and security and specifically to the improvement of the Popular Forces. It is rumored that the program will be phased out as current teams complete their present assignments, and it may be that the security situation will make this possible or that the requirements for withdrawal of US troops will make it necessary. But given a continuation of roughly the present situation in the countryside, I believe the CAP program should be continued with some changes and improvements. My specific recommendations are:

1. That the Marine CAP program be continued at basically the present level in I CTZ or that it decline only gradually, and that the US Army give serious consideration to developing a similar program.
2. That as US combat troops withdraw, a greater effort be made to assign somewhat older, higher-ranking NCOs with combat experience as CAP leaders, that the program be composed of volunteers to the extent possible, and that training of CAPs be upgraded. In particular, each CAP should have at least one member who is relatively fluent in Vietnamese; an intensive course of at least three or four months would be required to attain the desired level of fluency.
3. That the present-for-duty strength of the CAP be maintained at not less than 10. If this number were maintained, it might be possible to cut three authorized spaces from each team, reducing the over-all number of authorized spaces.
4. That the Vietnamese CAP chain of command be changed to harmonize with national policy in regards the autonomy of the village and the powers of the village chief.
5. That the American CAP chain of command be integrated into CORPS.

-4-

6. That the authority to move CAP teams be decentralized in a way consistent with the authority to deploy other territorial forces.

7. That as the withdrawal of US forces continues and ARVN improves its combat and combat-support capabilities, MACV and the GVN consider a Vietnamized CAP program in which squads of regular ARVN troops would be combined with PF platoons to provide training and other types of support now provided by the American CAP.

Sincerely,

Francis T. McManara  
American Consul and  
Political Adviser to the  
Commanding General XXIV Corps

cc: Deputy for COMUS  
AGSCAP  
III MAF  
POL/Embassy

AVII-CS

21 March 1970

S-28 March 1970

MEMORANDUM FOR: Col T. E. Metzger  
Commanding Officer  
Combined Action Force  
Da Nang, RVN

SUBJECT: CAP Employment

1. The attached letter was received by the Corps Commander and makes some interesting points.
2. General Zais requests that you furnish him comments on the recommendation contained in the letter from the American Consul. I would appreciate it if these comments could be furnished by 28 March 1970.

W. E. SHEDD  
Brigadier General, USA  
Chief of Staff

HEADQUARTERS  
Combined Action Force  
III Marine Amphibious Force  
FPO San Francisco 96602

3/rwj

24 MAR 1970

From: Commanding Officer  
To: Commanding General, XXIV Corps  
Via: Chief of Staff, XXIV Corps

Subj: Consulate - CORDS Survey of CAP Villages; comments concerning

Ref: (a) Consul's ltr of 14 Mar 70 to CG, XXIV Corps  
(b) C/S Memo of 21 Mar 70

1. Reference (a) has been reviewed. As requested by reference (b), the following comments are offered:

a. Comments in 3rd paragraph, page one, regarding CAP efforts in Vietnamization:

It is true that some PF platoons revert to old habits and patterns when the Marine elements are relocated. This is frequently due to village pressure to keep the PFs close in to afford maximum personal security for the village and hamlet officials. This use of PF runs counter to stated JGS and MACV policy which directs PF to be mobile and to patrol and ambush outside hamlets. When this non-aggressive pattern of activity occurs, U.S. advisory personnel as well as district officials should be alert to take corrective measures. As a general response to this comment, however, I would like to point out that in no case has a former CAP TAOC reverted to VC control.

b. Comments in 1st paragraph, page two, regarding CAP personnel selection, experience, motivation and unit strengths:

(1) It is true that CAP Marines in the ranks of PFC through LCPL are largely combat inexperienced when received. However, the majority of the CPL - SGT CAP leaders have served previous tours in RVN, many in line infantry units. It is also true the majority are in their late teens or early 20s.

(2) It is not true that the CAP Marines were all volunteers in the early stages of the program. Some were, as some are today, being received from in-country units. However, before the CAF received a formal T/O, many CAP personnel selected by the unit commanders for this duty were not generally those held in highest esteem. A 1968 RAND study of CAP points out that the quality of CAP personnel, while this system was in use, was one of the CAP's most serious problems. A second, and equally significant problem, was generated by this practice. Marines coming to CAP from line infantry units had little or no motivation for working with, or safe-guarding, Vietnamese villagers. The present system of direct CONUS personnel input has definitely

HEADQUARTERS  
 Combined Action Force  
 III Marine Amphibious Force  
 FPO San Francisco 96602

3/rwj

24 MAR 1970

From: Commanding Officer  
 To: Commanding General, XXIV Corps  
 Via: Chief of Staff, XXIV Corps

Subj: Consulate - CORDS Survey of CAP Villages; comments concerning

Ref: (a) Consul's ltr of 14 Mar 70 to CG, XXIV Corps  
 (b) C/S Memo of 21 Mar 70

1. Reference (a) has been reviewed. As requested by reference (b), the following comments are offered:

a. Comments in 3rd paragraph, page one, regarding CAP efforts in Vietnamization:

It is true that some PF platoons revert to old habits and patterns when the Marine elements are relocated. This is frequently due to village pressure to keep the PFs close in to afford maximum personal security for the village and hamlet officials. This use of PF runs counter to stated JGS and MACV policy which directs PF to be mobile and to patrol and ambush outside hamlets. When this non-aggressive pattern of activity occurs, U.S. advisory personnel as well as district officials should be alert to take corrective measures. As a general response to this comment, however, I would like to point out that in no case has a former CAP TAOC reverted to VC control.

b. Comments in 1st paragraph, page two, regarding CAP personnel selection, experience, motivation and unit strengths:

(1) It is true that CAP Marines in the ranks of PFC through LCPL are largely combat inexperienced when received. However, the majority of the CPL - SGT CAP leaders have served previous tours in RVN, many in line infantry units. It is also true the majority are in their late teens or early 20s.

(2) It is not true that the CAP Marines were all volunteers in the early stages of the program. Some were, as some are today, being received from in-country units. However, before the CAF received a formal I/O, many CAP personnel selected by the unit commanders for this duty were not generally those held in highest esteem. A 1968 RAND study of CAP points out that the quality of CAP personnel, while this system was in use, was one of the CAP's most serious problems. A second, and equally significant problem, was generated by this practice. Marines coming to CAP from line infantry units had little or no motivation for working with, or safe-guarding, Vietnamese villagers. The present system of direct CONUS personnel input had definitely

upgraded personnel quality and reduced the problems of CAP-PF/Villager relationships.

(3) The statement that CAP motivation "seems lower" is therefore based on a false premise. Actually, CAP Marines generally, in completing their post-tour critiques, comment that in their opinion CAP morale is higher than that of other units. These critiques are uniformly prepared in an honest and objective manner. It is certainly my impression that CAP morale is excellent and this is an impression shared by many senior visitors to the CAPs as well as by the CAP Officers and NCOs.

(4) It is true that too few CAP Marines, both officer and enlisted, are Vietnamese Language trained. This problem was partially relieved by activation of the CAF Vietnamese Language School some four years ago. However, this school can only provide a 28-day syllabus to limited numbers of CAP Marines due to the adverse impact that a longer course and larger classes would have on personnel availability. The school does provide a 500-700 word vocabulary base of largely military orientation on which the CAP Marine can build a more fluent language capability. To the casual observer, the language problem may appear more severe than it is in actuality. This is not to discount the problem, but it is true that many PF speak some English and that many Marines do develop a limited conversational ability in Vietnamese. However, language problems are not unique to CAP. They exist in every agency required to work closely with the Vietnamese.

(5) Presently, CAP strengths average ten Marines, a minimally acceptable level. In September, this figure was about nine with some CAPs having only seven or eight Marines available for duty. Personnel strengths then improved to a 12.5 average about 1 January. Present personnel strengths are largely the product of Keystone Bluejay early rotation and the requirement levied on the CAF to transfer 134 O311s to the 3rd MarDiv. As in any line infantry unit, CAP personnel strengths will never equal I/O authorizations without a disproportionately high personnel overhead. The transfer of the 134 O311s did provide an opportunity to reassign Marines who had difficulty adjusting to living and working with the Vietnamese and thus had a bonus effect.

(6) As of 21 Mar 70, 70 CAPs were led by SGTs, the remainder by CPLs, in some cases LCPLs. Again, unless HQMC and FMFPac take direct action to provide selected, highly qualified SGTs for duty with CAF in a quantity which would overcome all anticipated losses, the problem of maintaining SGTs only in CAP leader billets will continue. At this point in time, I question the desirability of such an effort because of the effect on other infantry units and on Marine Corps requirements generally for top quality O311 SGTs.

c. Comments in paragraph a, page two regarding village authority over PF platoons:

The CAPs were caught in the middle in this delegation of authority from district level to the village chief. Although initially viewed with concern, problems have seldom arisen because the village chiefs largely are reluctant to exercise the authority. It has been my policy to stimulate village level direction of the PFs, but until major changes occur in Vietnamese military-civilian relationships and in senior-junior (or class) relationships, little progress will be made in this regard. It is true that some CAP TAOs cross village boundaries. When necessary, these TAOs can be easily adjusted.

d. Comments in paragraph b, page two and continued on page three regarding CORDS control of the CAF:

This recommendation postulates that CORDS has a monopoly interest in pacification and therefore should control the CAF in the interest of single-manager effectiveness. First, every agency and major unit in I Corps is contributing to the pacification effort. Secondly, a single-manager for pacification has long been established under the authority granted the Senior U.S. Commander in I Corps. Further, the CAF is a tactical military unit assigned a security mission which at this stage of the war can only be met by the use of standard, small-unit tactics. In this respect, CAP operations are today comparable to those of major infantry units located in the populated lowlands. Here, the point is simply that CORDS possesses no capability to direct or support military operations. As a corollary, consideration is now being given to transferring U.S. Advisory responsibility to the I Corps territorial forces from CORDS to the Deputy Senior Advisor, I Corps. This action would produce several advantages, but primarily in stimulating ARVN interest in, and, support for, the RFs and PFs under a single-manager military advisory effort.

e. Comments in paragraph c, page three regarding present procedures required to obtain authorization for CAP relocations:

This comment is correct. The rigidity and inflexibility of response to changing conditions created by this situation have only been overcome by the unofficial method of authorizing temporary relocations pending final approval for permanent relocations. Temporary relocations have been effected between myself and Colonel VINH, Deputy for Territorial Forces, ICTZ. Final approval by the respective senior U.S. and Vietnamese commanders occasionally requires up to thirty days. In addition, the documentation required is overly complicated and difficult for inexperienced personnel to process. I firmly believe that routine relocations should be proposed by the Province Chiefs and CAG Commanders to Colonel VINH and myself, respectively, for approval. Information copies would then be submitted to our respective commanders. The present system derives from General LAM's desire to retain close, positive control of the CAPs. I certainly sympathize with his concern, but the system has produced a certain stagnation. For example, a large number of 3rd CAG CAPs



and all of 4th CAG should have been relocated several months ago to the southern three provinces at considerable profit to the pacification effort. I had discussed this problem on several occasions with General NICKERSON and he was well aware of its implications. However, he felt at the time the threat of TET militated against major relocations and concurred with General LAM that these be held in abeyance until the threat dwindled. In view of pending developments affecting the CAF, this problem will probably soon be overtaken by other events.

2. With the exception of the recommendation regarding CORDS control of the CAF, the subject analysis has uncovered no new problems nor has it provided new solutions. It is certainly healthy for the CAF to receive the close and continuous scrutiny which it does from such a wide range of units and agencies. It is therefore particularly significant that these surveys of CAF efforts often conclude as does Mr. McNAMARA: "I conclude that the Combined Action Program is basically sound in concept and that it makes a significant contribution to pacification and security and specifically to the improvement of the Popular Forces."

T. E. METZGER

Copy to:  
Deputy Cadr, XXIV Corps

HEADQUARTERS  
Combined Action Force  
III Marine Amphibious Force  
FPO San Francisco 96602

CAFO 3300.1  
6/tai  
17 May 1970

COMBINED ACTION FORCE ORDER 3300.1

From: Commanding Officer  
To: Distribution List

Subj: The Rules of Engagement and Standards of Conduct for Members of the Combined Action Force

Ref: (a) ICCI 5370.1A  
(b) ICCI 5830.2A  
(c) CAFO 5830.1  
(d) FMFPacO 1610.2A  
(e) FMFPacO 1500.3

1. Purpose

a. To state the Combined Action Force policy concerning compliance with the Rules of Engagement and maintenance of standards of conduct traditionally associated with Marines.

b. To prescribe Rules of Engagement and certain standards of troop conduct for the Combined Action Force and to set forth associated training, reporting, and supervisory instructions.

2. General

a. CAP Marines have been noted for their adherence to the high standards of personal conduct traditionally associated with Marines and for their restraint in initiating fire when the identity of the target is in doubt or when noncombatant personnel would be placed in jeopardy. However, recent incidents involving CAP Marines point up the necessity for greater stress in assuring knowledge of and compliance with the Rules of Engagement, standards of personal conduct, and leadership responsibilities.

b. The nature of Combined Action Force operations places a high premium on small unit leadership and responsibility. Consequently, any failure in command supervision of these small unit activities can result in highly unfavorable and tragic consequences. Premature engagement by fire on one or two Vietnamese who are believed to be hostile may well be an overreaction to a presumed threat.

c. Members of the Combined Action Force continually conduct operations with other organizations whose standards of conduct and/or Rules of Engagement may be less restrictive; however, this is no license for relaxation of CAF standards. The senior CAF Marine present will continue to be responsible

CAFO 3300.1  
17 May 1970

for the actions and conduct of the CAF element.

d. Because CAF Marines operate within Vietnamese hamlets and villages, disregard for life and property of civilians through abusive, inconsiderate, thoughtless, or careless acts may jeopardize the Marines' mission and their lives while furthering the cause of the enemy.

e. All incidents which are unfavorable, harmful, or detrimental to members of the Combined Action Force or their mission, or which may possibly become discreditable to CAF or III MAF in any way, must be promptly, accurately, and completely reported.

3. Policy. It is the policy of the Combined Action Force that:

a. Strict compliance with the Rules of Engagement will be observed by all members of the Combined Action Force.

b. High standards of personal conduct will be met by all members of the Combined Action Force in order to avoid acts that may endanger the lives and property of innocent civilians or may tend to alienate them.

c. An active, aggressive indoctrination program will be pursued in order to insure that all CAF Marines are thoroughly trained in the Rules of Engagement and the standards of personal conduct.

d. Command supervision of the execution of this policy will be accomplished at the CAF, CAG and CAGO level.

4. Instructions

a. The following Rules of Engagement will apply to all members of the Combined Action Force:

(1) Fire may be directed against VC/NVA forces in contact without obtaining political clearance.

(2) Fire may be directed against VC/NVA forces engaged in clearly hostile acts without obtaining political clearance.

(3) Observed fire from supporting units may be directed at targets of opportunity which are clearly identified as hostile without obtaining political clearance.

(4) Targets of opportunity that cannot be clearly observed as hostile, intelligence type targets to include H&I missions based on information received from CAF PF or local villagers, require political clearance.

(5) Vietnamese in violation of curfew may be apprehended, preferably by a PF member of the CAF. However, these curfew violators do not warrant further

response unless the violator is clearly engaged in a hostile act or is otherwise identified as the enemy.

b. Regardless of orders or instructions emanating from other local US Forces or from Vietnamese sources to include District Chiefs, there are no "Free Fire" zones in CAP TAOCs.

c. Livestock and family living areas, even abandoned houses, are specifically exempt from destruction. In no case will Vietnamese homes, either occupied or abandoned, be destroyed by burning.

d. Indiscriminate reconnaissance by fire is prohibited.

e. "Fam-firing" of weapons will be accomplished only under proper supervision and at such times as designated by competent authority.

f. All CAP Marines shall respect the law, property, institutions, traditions, and customs of Vietnam and shall conform to the standards of conduct prescribed by reference (a).

## 5. Action

a. CAG Commanders shall:

(1) Ensure that the contents of this order are made known to, and understood by, each Marine and Navy Corpsman of the command.

(2) Promptly report all adverse incidents in accordance with references (b) and (c).

(3) Take prompt disciplinary action according to the facts and applicable law in each case in which an offense has been committed.

(4) Review references (d) and (e) and ensure that CAG training directives and policies are in strict compliance with their provisions.

b. The CAF S-3 shall prepare and present to each session of CAF School instruction on the Rules of Engagement and standards of conduct.

*TE Metzer*  
T. E. METZER

DISTRIBUTION: "B"

HEADQUARTERS  
Combined Action Force  
III Marine Amphibious Force  
FPO San Francisco 96602

CAFO 3300.1  
6/tai  
17 May 1970

COMBINED ACTION FORCE ORDER 3300.1

From: Commanding Officer  
To: Distribution List

Subj: The Rules of Engagement and Standards of Conduct for Members of the Combined Action Force

Ref: (a) ICCI 5370.1A  
(b) ICCI 5830.2A  
(c) CAFO 5830.1  
(d) FMFPacO 1610.2A  
(e) FMFPacO 1500.3

1. Purpose

- a. To state the Combined Action Force policy concerning compliance with the Rules of Engagement and maintenance of standards of conduct traditionally associated with Marines.
- b. To prescribe Rules of Engagement and certain standards of troop conduct for the Combined Action Force and to set forth associated training, reporting, and supervisory instructions.

2. General

- a. CAF Marines have been noted for their adherence to the high standards of personal conduct traditionally associated with Marines and for their restraint in initiating fire when the identity of the target is in doubt or when noncombatant personnel would be placed in jeopardy. However, recent incidents involving CAF Marines point up the necessity for greater stress in assuring knowledge of and compliance with the Rules of Engagement, standards of personal conduct, and leadership responsibilities.
- b. The nature of Combined Action Force operations places a high premium on small unit leadership and responsibility. Consequently, any failure in command supervision of these small unit activities can result in highly unfavorable and tragic consequences. Premature engagement by fire on one or two Vietnamese who are believed to be hostile may well be an overreaction to a presumed threat.
- c. Members of the Combined Action Force continually conduct operations with other organizations whose standards of conduct and/or Rules of Engagement may be less restrictive; however, this is no license for relaxation of CAF standards. The senior CAF Marine present will continue to be responsible

CAFO 3300.1  
17 May 1970

for the actions and conduct of the CAF element.

d. Because CAF Marines operate within Vietnamese hamlets and villages, disregard for life and property of civilians through abusive, inconsiderate, thoughtless, or careless acts may jeopardize the Marines' mission and their lives while furthering the cause of the enemy.

e. All incidents which are unfavorable, harmful, or detrimental to members of the Combined Action Force or their mission, or which may possibly become discreditable to CAF or III MAF in any way, must be promptly, accurately, and completely reported.

3. Policy. It is the policy of the Combined Action Force that:

a. Strict compliance with the Rules of Engagement will be observed by all members of the Combined Action Force.

b. High standards of personal conduct will be met by all members of the Combined Action Force in order to avoid acts that may endanger the lives and property of innocent civilians or may tend to alienate them.

c. An active, aggressive indoctrination program will be pursued in order to insure that all CAF Marines are thoroughly trained in the Rules of Engagement and the standards of personal conduct.

d. Command supervision of the execution of this policy will be accomplished at the CAF, CAG and CACO level.

4. Instructions

a. The following Rules of Engagement will apply to all members of the Combined Action Force:

(1) Fire may be directed against VC/NVA forces in contact without obtaining political clearance.

(2) Fire may be directed against VC/NVA forces engaged in clearly hostile acts without obtaining political clearance.

(3) Observed fire from supporting units may be directed at targets of opportunity which are clearly identified as hostile without obtaining political clearance.

(4) Targets of opportunity that cannot be clearly observed as hostile, intelligence type targets to include H&I missions based on information received from CAP PF or local villagers, require political clearance.

(5) Vietnamese in violation of curfew may be apprehended, preferably by a PF member of the CAP. However, these curfew violators do not warrant further

response unless the violator is clearly engaged in a hostile act or is otherwise identified as the enemy.

b. Regardless of orders or instructions emanating from other local US Forces or from Vietnamese sources to include District Chiefs, there are no "Free Fire" zones in CAP TAOs.

c. Livestock and family living areas, even abandoned houses, are specifically exempt from destruction. In no case will Vietnamese homes, either occupied or abandoned, be destroyed by burning.

d. Indiscriminate reconnaissance by fire is prohibited.

e. "Fam-firing" of weapons will be accomplished only under proper supervision and at such times as designated by competent authority.

f. All CAP Marines shall respect the law, property, institutions, traditions, and customs of Vietnam and shall conform to the standards of conduct prescribed by reference (a).

##### 5. Action

a. CAG Commanders shall:

(1) Ensure that the contents of this order are made known to, and understood by, each Marine and Navy Corpsman of the command.

(2) Promptly report all adverse incidents in accordance with references (b) and (c).

(3) Take prompt disciplinary action according to the facts and applicable law in each case in which an offense has been committed.

(4) Review references (d) and (e) and ensure that CAG training directives and policies are in strict compliance with their provisions.

b. The CAF S-3 shall prepare and present to each session of CAF School instruction on the Rules of Engagement and standards of conduct.

*T. E. METZGER*  
T. E. METZGER

DISTRIBUTION: "B"

Return to S-3

HEADQUARTERS  
III Marine Amphibious Force  
Military Assistance Command, Vietnam  
c/o FPO, San Francisco, California 96602

ForO 3121.4B  
14/drb  
22 JUN 1968

FORCE ORDER 3121.4B

From: Commanding General  
To: Distribution List

Subj: Standing Operating Procedure for the Combined Action Program

Ref: (a) T/O P-4912  
(b) T/O P-4911  
(c) T/O P-4910  
(d) ForO P02000.1B  
(e) ICCI 5080.4B  
(f) ForO P4000.5A  
(g) HqO 3121.1  
(h) HqO 5000.5

Reports Required: I. Liaison with PFs in Former CAP Locations (par 13.b.)  
II. Report of Activation and Relocation of CAP (par 14)  
III. Report of Transfer of PF Platoon from CAP (par 14)  
IV. Monthly Report Strength and Activities (par 20.a.)  
V. Weekly Summary of CAG Activities (par 20.c.)  
VI. After Action Report (par 18.b.)  
VII. Civic Action and Revolutionary Development (par 17.d. and 20.c.(5))

1. Purpose. To provide instructions for the operation of the Combined Action Program within III Marine Amphibious Force.

2. Cancellation. Force Order 3121.4A.

3. Background. By mutual agreement between the Commanding General, III Marine Amphibious Force and the Commanding General, I Corps Tactical Zone, Marine units have been integrated with Popular Force units within certain villages and hamlets to assist in providing security and pacification measures.

4. General. The Combined Action Program has been organized to provide military security to selected villages and hamlets in the ICTZ. In addition, the forces of the Combined Action Program will support, where



ForO 3121.4B  
22 JUN 1968

feasible, the Revolutionary Development Campaign Plan in ICTZ. It has been found that Popular Force units native to the area, assisted by U. S. Marines, form a unit ideally suited to the task of providing security to hamlets and villages in cleared or semi cleared areas. Combined Action units are operationally supported by U.S., FVMAF and ARVN units in the accomplishment of their mission.

5. Organization of the Combined Action Program. The Combined Action Program includes: Combined Action Group (CAG) Headquarters, reference (a); Combined Action Company (CACO) Headquarters, reference (b); and Combined Action Platoons (CAPs), reference (c). The III MAF Combined Action Program is under the staff cognizance of the Director, Combined Action Program who is located at III MAF Headquarters. CAG Headquarters will be located to facilitate coordination with the local Province Chief and major U.S. commands as determined by CG III MAF. The CAG Headquarters will command the U.S. element, and administer and supervise the operations, of CACOs and CAPs within assigned sectors of responsibility. The CACO Headquarters will be located at the headquarters of the district in which its subordinate CAPs are deployed. The CACO will command the U.S. element, and administer and supervise the operations of its subordinate CAPs. See paragraph 7 below for description of CACO/Sub-Sector Commander coordination and functional relationships. The basic unit of the Combined Action Program is the CAP, consisting of PF and USMC elements, integrated into a single operational entity. Organization follows the PF organization in which the platoon is the largest tactical unit. The Marine element of a CAP consists of 14 Marines and 1 U.S. Navy Corpsman, for a total of 15 men. The PF Platoon has an authorized strength of 35 soldiers. CG I Corps has pledged to keep platoons at a minimum of 30.

6. Command. Command of the Combined Action Program's U.S. Marine elements is retained by the Commanding General, III MAF. This responsibility will be discharged through the Combined Action Program Director (who will function under the general staff cognizance of the Assistant Chief of Staff, G-3); Commanding Officers, Combined Action Group Headquarters; Commanding Officers, Combined Action Companies and Marine squad leaders of CAPs. Command relationships within the CAPs are on a coordination and cooperation basis. The USMC squad leader does not command the PF element of the platoon, nor does the PF platoon leader command the Marines. Neither has authority to discipline members of the other component. Offenses by Marines will be handled through the command channels stated above and incidents involving PF soldiers will be reported to the district chief.

7. Combined Action Company Coordination Responsibilities. One or more CACO headquarters will be located at headquarters of the districts in which CAPs are located. If two or more CACOs are located in one district headquarters the senior officer will be designated as OIC of the

ForO 3121.4B  
22 JUN 1968

appropriate liaison personnel to insure effective fire support to CAPs, PF platoons and RD teams in the district's area of responsibility. The CACO will serve in the operations center/fire support direction center of the sub-sector to assist the district chief in his execution of the RD Campaign Plan and providing meaningful military security to the Vietnamese population in the district. The CACO will effect, with the nearest U.S., FVMAF or ARVN battalion commander, the necessary coordination of fire support, reaction forces, medevac procedures, patrol activities, ambushes, etc., and combined operations involving the CAPs in the district.

#### 8. Missions and Tasks

a. The stated missions of the Popular Forces is as follows:

(1) Destroy the VC infrastructure within the village or hamlet area of responsibility.

(2) Provide public security and help maintain law and order.

(3) Protect the friendly political structure.

(4) Protect bases and communication axis within the villages and hamlets.

(5) Organize local intelligence nets.

(6) Participate in civic action and conduct propaganda against the VC.

b. The mission of the Marine element of the Combined Action Program is to support Popular Force Platoons, through integrated operations, in carrying out the Popular Force missions and to train the Popular Force soldiers so that they can carry out their missions unaided.

c. Tasks. Appropriate tasks in support of these missions include but are not limited to the following:

(1) Motivate, instill pride, patriotism and aggressiveness in the PF soldier.

(2) Conduct combined/coordinated day and night patrols and ambushes in assigned areas.

(3) Conduct training in general military subjects, leadership and language for all personnel of the CAP to increase the proficiency of PF elements so that Marine elements may ultimately be withdrawn and PF elements will continue to perform in an effective manner.

ForO 3121.4B  
22 JUN 1968

(4) Conduct combined/coordinated operations with U.S., ARVN and FVMAF units in coordination with district chief within the CAP area of responsibility.

(5) Marine squad leaders in individual CAPs will function as U.S. Revolutionary Development representatives for the hamlet in which they serve.

(6) Insure that information gathered is made available promptly and on a regular basis to the intelligence center at district level as well as to nearby U.S. and FVMAF units.

(7) Participate in the rewards program for collection of enemy information and material.

#### 9. Concept of Operations of Combined Action Platoons

a. CAPs are to be located to provide village and hamlet security, to support the RD Campaign Plan and to provide training for Popular Forces. The CAPs will be provided the capability to call for and adjust supporting arms, to request reaction forces and request medevac assistance. The peculiar nature of the war against the VC guerrilla requires the CAP to operate in a flexible but specific manner. The CAP must of necessity conduct active and aggressive operations in the hamlet area to prevent VC incursions and attacks directed against hamlet residents and officials. The basic mission of village and hamlet security cannot be accomplished solely through the successful defense of the CAP compound. CAP operations function as a part of the overall pacification effort and as such will be conducted to contribute to this larger goal.

b. For coordination purposes, CAPs will be assigned operating areas (AO's) in coordination with the sub-sector commander and the commander of the U.S., FVMAF or ARVN force in whose area the platoon is located. CAPs should be left free to conduct operations within this assigned AO, however, the proximate battalion commander will be kept informed of all patrols, ambushes and other planned combat operations. The proximate battalion will be prepared to provide responsive reaction forces and fire support for each CAP in his area. Proximate unit operations within the CAP AO are permissible when required but must be closely coordinated with the CAP, sub-sector and CACO commanders.

c. Employment of CAPs outside their village or hamlet and in conjunction with other U.S., FVMAF or ARVN forces may be planned and conducted. When this occurs, full coordination among sub-sector, CACO, and proximate battalion commanders must be effected and full agreement on employment reached. In no case will the location or length of such

ForO 3121.4B  
22 JUN 1968

an operation be detrimental to the primary mission of the CAP.

d. CAPs operate under the operational direction of the district chief (sub-sector commander). Normally prisoners and detainees will be expeditiously released to the district chief, his authorized representative or District Operations and Intelligence Coordination Center (DOICC), and the proximate battalion commander notified. However when participating in joint operations all prisoners and detainees will be released to the senior commander in the operation.

e. The role of the Marines in the CAP is that of an advisor and assistant to the Popular Force soldier. The district chief controls the PFs and their activities, therefore all activities of the CAP should be mutually planned and executed. On all operations the Marines should maintain their advisory role whenever possible, and maximum PF participation should be encouraged.

f. The CAP must be aware of everything that takes place in its area of operation and be able to control this area within the capabilities of its own resources or with assistance from adjacent and/or supporting units. CAP patrols must be seen throughout their areas of operation so as to impress the people that they represent a visible Vietnamese government. The CAP can only accomplish its mission by aggressive, continuous patrolling.

(1) CAP patrols should be composed of Marines and PFs. PF participation should always be emphasized and the ratio of PFs to Marines should be at least 2 to 1.

(2) Patrol overlays must be submitted to the CACO and the proximate battalion a minimum of three days prior to the scheduled patrol to assure proper support and coordination. The patrol overlay will include patrol routes, check points, time of departure and return, and number of Marines and PFs on the patrol. Patrol changes will be submitted as required. The CACO must be informed by the most rapid secure method, of any quick reacting patrols to be made as a result of "hot" intelligence. Changes will be shackled or reference a thrust point and contain the reason for the change. Strict security will be maintained over the overlay in order to prevent compromise.

(3) Single CAPs will have a minimum of one daylight patrol and two night patrols and/or ambushes daily. Double CAPs will have a minimum of two daylight patrols and three night patrols and/or ambushes.

g. All CAP compounds will be located within or immediately adjacent to the village. The CAP compound is to be an administrative and logistical headquarters for the platoon and is not meant to be a citadel. Construction will be limited to trenches, covered fighting

For 3121.4B  
22 JUN 1968

holes, obstacles and SEA huts.

10. Location of Combined Action Platoons. The activation of a CAP in a selected hamlet area will be determined by mutual agreement between CG III MAF and CG ICTZ based on recommendations submitted through the parallel chain of command. The decision to locate a CAP in a particular area will be based on the following criteria:

- a. Have adequate real estate belonging to the GVN in or immediately adjacent to the village. The site should be readily accessible by road to facilitate resupply.
- b. Have supporting arms and reaction forces available.
- c. Be in an area free from imminent attack from main force VC units but has inadequate local security forces.
- d. Be located so as to contribute significantly to the security of the area and to the overall pacification program.
- e. Be capable of supporting the RD Campaign Plan or provide follow-up for the RD program.
- f. Have a PF platoon available from the subject village or immediate area.

11. Combined Action Platoon Plan. Prior to installation of a new CAP, the Commanding Officer, Combined Action Group will prepare, in coordination with the appropriate district chief and supporting unit commander, a plan for installation and operation of the new CAP. The plan should make provisions for, but not be limited to the following:

- a. Site Selection. In or proximate to a hamlet so as to involve hamlet residents. Tactical considerations relative to defense. Provision of land by GVN.
- b. Defensive Position Plan. Location of tactical wire, trenches, covered fighting holes and outpost positions, if any, relative to terrain and situation.
- c. Preparation of Hamlet Residents. Psychological campaign. Use of Vietnamese Armed Propaganda Team (APT) and Provincial Reconnaissance Unit (PRU). Identification of Census Grievance Cadre (CGC) in a manner which will not compromise his role. Cultivate friendship of village and hamlet chiefs and village elders.
- d. Site Preparation. Procurement of materials, engineer support

ForO 3121.4B

22 JUN 1968

and reinforcement security during construction.

e. Defense Support Plan. Reaction force plan to be prepared and rehearsed by proximate supporting unit in whose TACR the CAP is located. Reaction plan rehearsal may be conducted on similar terrain which is similar distance from reaction force base so as not to compromise actual routes of approach to the CAP. Fire support plan will be prepared and battery registered.

f. PF Training. Scheduling and records to assure all members of the platoon receive training.

g. Hamlet Security. Patrols, ambushes, check points, listening posts and rally points to react to attack on the CAP village or hamlet.

h. Intelligence Network. Use of Census Grievance information provided by district chief. Information from PRU and use of PF families. Recruitment of agents. Payment of rewards. Secret signals.

i. Civic Action. Short range construction, high impact, long range use with hamlet residents doing work. Motivation of PFs towards expanding loyalties beyond family to community.

12. Withdrawal of the U.S. Marine Element of the CAP. Withdrawal of the U.S. Marine element of a CAP will be by mutual agreement between CG III MAF and CG ICTZ. Recommendations for relocation or deactivation will be submitted in the same manner as recommendations for activations are submitted. Factors to be considered when recommending relocation of the Marine element are:

- a. Military necessity of the position.
- b. Enemy threat during the past three months and the projected threat.
- c. Combat effectiveness of the PF element of the CAP to include their motivation, loyalty, and willingness to support the GVN.
- d. Level of pacification within the village/hamlet area.
- e. Status of the VC infrastructure within the CAP village or hamlet.
- f. The PF platoon has:
  - (1) Been trained and demonstrated its military effectiveness.

ForO 3121.4B  
22 JUN 1968

(2) Been recruited from the local populace or their families now live in the CAP village or hamlet.

(3) Adequate arms and equipment in good condition.

(4) A trained PF Corpsman.

(5) An organized chain of command.

g. The PF Platoon Leader and Assistant Platoon Leader should:

(1) Be able to plan and execute patrols and ambushes.

(2) Be able to request and adjust artillery fires.

(3) Be able to use the AN/PRC-10 radio.

(4) Be able to assemble, disassemble, and employ all platoon weapons.

(5) Be able to read a map and use a compass.

(6) Have a working knowledge of the tasks, mission and activities of the RD, PRU, APT, sub-sector intelligence cadre, adjacent RF, ARVN, U.S., and FVMAF units in his area.

(7) Be able to plan and execute the defense of the village or hamlet.

(8) Have a working knowledge of intelligence to include collection, importance and use.

(9) Have established mutual trust and confidence with village/hamlet officials.

h. Platoon members must be trained in:

(1) Marksmanship.

(2) Defensive and offensive combat.

(3) Buddy aid and hygiene.

(4) All platoon weapons.

(5) Mines and booby-traps.

(6) Construction of wire obstacles.

ForO 3121.4B

22 JUN 1968

(7) Patrols and ambushes.

(8) RVN government, history, and patriotism.

**13. Liaison with PFs in former CAP locations**

a. CAG commanders will assure that frequent visits are made and close liaison is maintained with the PFs in former CAP locations. The CAG commander will establish and maintain a working relationship in order to monitor the effectiveness of the PF platoon, to reassure the PFs of our continued interest in their welfare and to provide encouragement and motivation.

b. CAGs will submit a monthly report, not later than the 15th of the month, to the Director, Combined Action Program on each former CAP site using the following format:

<u>Previous CAP # and PF Platoon #</u>	<u>Original Location (Coordinates)</u>
1. Status of compound	(To include state of compound maintenance, defense and security)
2. Patrol and ambush activity	(Frequency of patrols and ambushes. Daylight/Night)
3. Enemy activity during period	(Description to include casualties, weapons captured, etc.)
4. Civic Action	(Progress on projects started but not finished when CAP relocated. New projects begun)
5. Problem areas	
6. Commendable areas	
7. General evaluation	

**14. Report of Activation and Relocation of CAP Elements.** The Commanding Officer, CAG will report immediately to CG III MAF and the CG of the Divisional TAOR in which the CAP is located the activation and relocation of the U.S. Marine element of a CAP. Because the PFs are more effective when stationed near their home, movement of individual PFs and rotation of PF platoons or their subordinate squads from a CAP should be made by the sub-sector commander only on a basis of strict



ForO 3121.4B  
22 JUN 1968

military necessity. Sub-sector commanders should be discouraged from moving PF elements. Assistance from ARVN and FVMAF should be sought to minimize the need to move the PFs from a CAP prior to completion of the below described training objective. The Commanding Officer, CAG will report to CG III MAF any relocation of the PF element of the CAP.

15. Training. The training objective of the CAP is to enhance the combat effectiveness of the PF platoon as soon as feasible in order to relocate the USMC squad in another hamlet/village area. All members of PF platoons assigned for duty in a CAP will have completed basic military training. Additional training will be conducted by the Marine squad leader, operating in coordination with the VNPF platoon leader. Marine/Navy personnel assigned to the Combined Action Program as replacements or to form new CAPs will attend the Combined Action School in Danang or Phu Bai prior to such assignment.

16. Communications

a. See reference (d), III MAF Comm Plan III.

b. Nets

(1) CAP Common. This is the CACO's tactical net and is monitored by all CAPs. All CAP patrols will operate on this net. The CAP will request all fire support and medevacs over this net.

(2) Supporting Unit's Tactical Net. The CACO will monitor the supporting unit's tactical net and will forward all requests for fire support, medevac and reaction forces over this net. Each CAP will be directed to come up on this net to adjust fire support and medevac and to coordinate with reaction forces.

(3) Where location and situation dictates, the procedures in paragraph 16.b(1) and (2) may be modified if approved by supporting unit and CAG.

c. The CACO and each CAP must know all call signs and frequencies of medevac, gunship, and fire support units in the event they are directed by the proximate battalion to coordinate directly.

17. Military Civic Action

a. CO CAG is responsible for military civic action performed by all CAPs. Those activities of mutual concern will be coordinated with the major commands.

b. Each CAP will engage in a vigorous military civic action program

ForO 3121.4B

22 JUN 1968

which will stress "self-help" by the villagers. Projects should be short term, high impact and low cost. All such projects will be coordinated with the village chief to insure maximum utility and benefit from the project and with the District Chief when approval is required in order to obtain materials from GVN.

c. Each CAP will prepare a semi annual Civic Action Plan to include all proposed projects. This plan will serve as a basis for requisitioning materials and as a measure of progress. The plan will cover the period January - June and July - December. The plan will be submitted by 1 December and 1 June respectively.

d. Civic Action Reports. See reference (e).

18. Administration and Logistics. See references (f) and (g). The Marine element of the CAP is administered and supported through the Combined Action chain of command and control. In a like manner the Popular Forces element of the CAP will be administered and supported through the sub-sector commander who is responsible for all classes of supply. The GVN supply system will not be circumvented as this will cause undue hardships on the PFs when the U.S. Marine element is relocated.

a. Requisitioning and supply of all Class II type 1, Class II type 2 and Class IV items for all Marine elements of the CAG will be the responsibility of the CAG. Routine resupply of class I, III and V for CAPs and CACOs will be the responsibility of the U.S. battalion in whose TAOR the CAP is located. The commanding officer of the proximate U.S. battalion will assure that each CAP in his area receives maximum "A" rations per day commensurate with the tactical situation and availability. For those CAPs not located in a U.S. unit's area the CAG will make arrangements for routine resupply with the nearest U.S. unit or the CAG will accomplish resupply as appropriate to the situation.

b. Second echelon maintenance of motor transport will be performed by the CAG where possible. Where extreme distances or other factors exist, and this is not feasible, proximate U.S. units with the capability will perform the required maintenance. Second echelon maintenance of electronics will be performed by the nearest U.S. unit with the capability. Third echelon maintenance will be performed by the appropriate organization of the Force Logistics Command.

19. Personnel. Because of the isolated positions and the high degree of individual responsibility required of each member of a CAP, it is mandatory that personnel assigned to CAPs meet the following criteria:

a. Lance Corporals and below:

ForO 3121.4B  
22 JUN 1968

- (1) Have been in country for at least two months if on first tour or have served a previous tour.
- (2) Have a minimum of six months remaining on current tour or agree to extend to meet this requirement.
- (3) Be a volunteer and motivated to live and work with the Vietnamese people.
- (4) Be a mature, motivated Marine and recommended by his commanding officer.
- (5) Had no non-judicial punishment within past three months, not more than one non-judicial punishment and no courts-martial within the past year.
- (6) Have an average 4.0 mark in conduct and proficiency with last marks at least 4.0.
- (7) Have not received more than one purple heart award on current tour.
- (8) Preferably be a high school graduate.
- (9) Be from 03 occupational field for assignment to a CAP. Other occupational fields may apply on AA Form with agreement to extend their tour for six months and receive approval or disapproval on an individual basis from CG FMFPac.
- (10) Be from occupational fields listed in references (a) and (b) for assignment to CACOs and CAGs.
- (11) Waivers may be requested for personnel who do not meet the above criteria provided they are highly motivated and are recommended with enthusiasm by their commanding officer. Personnel nominated who require a waiver will appear before the Combined Action Program screening board for interview.

b. Noncommissioned officers assigned to the program will, in addition to the above:

- (1) Have combat experience in their MOS.
- (2) Have demonstrated a high quality of leadership.
- (3) Be considered highly qualified for promotion.

c. Unit commanders will establish and maintain current rosters of personnel who meet the above criteria. When quotas are assigned they

FORO 3121.4B  
22 JUN 1968

will be filled from this roster.

d. Upon rotation, the following entry will be made on page 11 of the SRB and page 3 of the OQR:

"Participated in the Combined Action Program in Vietnam from \_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_. This assignment entailed close and continuous contact with Vietnamese civilians and Popular Force soldiers."

e. Personnel Reports. See reference (h).

## 20. Reports

a. The Commanding Officers of CAGs will submit a monthly letter report to reach this Headquarters not later than the third day of each month (Attention: Director, Combined Action Program), in the following format:

(1) Designation/effective strengths, USMC/USN/PF (as of the last day of the month) and location of the CAG, each CACO and CAP operational during the month. Include the designation of the PF platoon at each CAP. Include changes in location/strength of CACOs/CAPs during the month with an asterisk (\*).

(2) Type and number of operations conducted: Night patrols, day patrols, ambushes, listening posts, check points, and sweeps.

(3) Number of VC/NVA KIA, WIA, PW, weapons captured, Hoi Chanhs, detainees (not confirmed as infrastructive), VC infrastructure cadre confirmed, ordnance turn in incidents and incidents of civilians providing information on enemy.

(4) Friendly casualties, including number requiring medevac.

(5) Noteworthy Contacts. Give brief description of each major contact with the enemy and actions where there are friendly KIA and WIA.

b. After Action Reports. The CO CAG will submit an after action report (Attention: Director, Combined Action Program) on all major contacts and on any incident which is noteworthy with respect to lessons learned.

c. A weekly letter summary of CAG activities will be submitted (Attention: Director, Combined Action Program) each Monday and will include information on the following:

(1) CAP Inspections.

ForO 3121.4B  
22 JUN 1968

(a) Results of inspections (significant problem areas and remedial action taken).

(b) List CAPs not inspected by an officer and reason.

(2) Critical supply shortages and action taken. The last report of the month will include equipment status report (enclosure (1) to reference (g)).

(3) Training

(a) Subject and hours taught.

(b) USMC student man hours.

(c) PF student man hours.

(d) Training goals met.

(4) Progress Report

(a) Cantonment construction and repair.

(b) CAP activation, deactivation, relocation or change in designation.

(5) Civic Action. Enclose copy of Weekly Civic Action Activity and Revolutionary Development Report required by reference (a).

(6) General. Any other reportable items of interest.

DISTRIBUTION:

Case 1

Case 2

Case 3



E. E. ANDERSON  
CHIEF OF STAFF

HEADQUARTERS  
III Marine Amphibious Force  
Military Assistance Command, Vietnam  
FPO San Francisco 96602

ICCI 5401.2A  
14:abb  
11 AUG 1969

I CORPS COORDINATOR INSTRUCTION 5401.2A

From: Commanding General, III MAF/Area Coordinator  
ICTZ

To: Distribution List

Subj: I Corps/III MAF Combined Action Program  
Joint Policy

Encl: (1) Command and Coordination Diagram

1. Purpose. To provide information and policy concerning the subject program.

2. Cancellation. ICCI 5401.2

3. Background. The Combined Action Program, bringing together Marine and Vietnamese Popular Forces in wholly integrated units of platoon size, was initiated in August 1965. From a modest beginning of one Combined Action Platoon (CAP) at Phu Bai in August 1965, the program has grown to 114 platoons, 20 Combined Action Companies (CACOs), and four Combined Action Groups (CAGs). The program exhibited strength and promise from the start. Villages with a CAP have moved rapidly toward a condition of peace and stability. A clear evidence of a CAP's effectiveness is the fact that the Viet Cong have never been able to reestablish control over a village protected by a CAP. In order to provide for effective operations and the orderly expansion of the Combined Action Program and to assist in the execution of the Revolutionary Development Campaign Plan, the following items of joint policy have been agreed upon by I Corps and III MAF.

4. Mission/Tasks of the Combined Action Platoons

a. Both the Popular Force and U. S. Marine elements of the Combined Action Platoon have the following mission:

(1) Destroy the VC infrastructure within the village or hamlet area of responsibility.

(2) Provide military security and help maintain law and order.

BỘ TƯ-LỆNH  
QUÂN-ĐOÀN I, VÙNG I CHIẾN-THUẬT  
- KBC. 4109 -

HUẤN-THỊ ĐIỂN-HÀNH QĐI 54.01.2A

Nơi gửi : Trung-Tướng Tư-Lệnh/QĐI/TLPH Vùng  
Nơi nhận : ( danh sách phân phối )

Trích yếu: Chương trình hoạt-động hỗn hợp của  
Quân Đoàn I và lực lượng III Thủy-bộ.

Đính kèm : Lược đồ phối hợp và chỉ huy.

1. Mục đích: Cung cấp tin tức và thể thức hoạt-động thuộc chương trình.

2. Hủy bỏ : ICCI 5401.2

3. Đại cương: Chương trình hoạt động hỗn hợp giữa Thủy quân Lục Chiến Hoa-Kỳ và các đơn vị NQ từ cấp trung đội trở lên đã bắt đầu hoạt động từ tháng 8 năm 1965. Một trung đội kiểu mau đã bắt đầu hoạt động tại Phú Bài vào - tháng 8 năm 65, và từ đó đã tăng lên 114 trung đội, 20 đại đội và 4 liên đoàn đã cùng nhau hoạt động.

Ngay từ ban đầu, chương trình này đã biểu dương được sức mạnh của nó và trong tương lai còn thêm nhiều hứa hẹn.

Tại cấp thôn xã, trung đội hỗn hợp đã hoạt động một cách nhanh chóng và đạt được kết quả về công tác bình-dịnh cũng như ổn định được tình hình và trật tự tại địa phương. Một bằng chứng hiển nhiên là VC không thể tái kiểm soát được các thôn xã mà trung đội đã và đang hoạt động.

Để giúp đỡ và hỗ trợ cho các cuộc hành-quân bình định có kết quả và cũng như phát-triển chương trình này trong vòng trật tự hầu để thi hành được kế hoạch xây dựng nông-thôn, QĐI và Lực lượng III Thủy Bộ đã đồng ý hợp tác với nhau theo những nguyên tắc sau đây:

I CORPS/ICCI 5401.2A

11 AUG 1959

(3) Protect the friendly political infrastructure.

(4) Protect bases and lines of communications within the village and hamlets in which they are located by conducting day and night patrols and ambushes in their assigned area.

(5) Contribute to combined operations with RF, ARVN, FWMF, and other PF units in their area.

(6) Participate in civic action and conduct psychological operations against the Viet Cong.

(7) Participate and assist in RD activities to the maximum extent possible, consistent with the accomplishment of the foregoing mission/tasks.

b. The U. S. Marine element has the additional mission of providing further military training to the Popular Force soldiers in order to prepare them to more effectively perform the tasks cited above when the Marine element is relocated to another area.

5. Organization. The basic Combined Action unit is the Combined Action Platoon (CAP) composed of one PF platoon equipped according to the T/C and T/E with a combat strength of 35 PF soldiers, and a Marine rifle squad of 14 Marines plus one U. S. Navy Corpsman. The PF platoon retains its basic organization, while the Marines become advisors to the entire platoon, with the Marine squad leader serving as the advisor to the Vietnamese platoon leader. Within the CAP, command relationships are on a coordination and cooperation basis between the PF platoon leader and the Marine squad leader. The Marine squad leader does not command the PF element of the CAP, nor does the PF platoon leader command the Marine squad.

6. Command and Control of the Combined Action Platoons. Command and control will be exercised as depicted on enclosure (1) and as amplified in the following subparagraphs:

a. Command of the Combined Action Program's U. S. element is retained by the Commanding General, III Marine Amphibious Force. This responsibility will be discharged through the Assistant Chief of Staff, Combined Action Program, Commanding Officers of Combined Action Groups, Commanding Officers of

#### 4. Nhiệm-vụ và công tác chung của các Trung-đội hỗn hợp :

a. Cả hai NQ và Thủy-quân Lục-chiến Hoa-kỳ, thuộc Trung-đội hỗn hợp có những nhiệm vụ sau đây:

(1) Huy diệt hạ tầng cơ sở của VC tại các khu vực trách nhiệm ở thôn xã.

(2) Giúp đỡ chính quyền trong vấn đề duy trì an-ninh trật tự cho dân chúng.

(3) Bảo vệ hạ tầng cơ sở chính trị thuộc chính quyền QLVN.

(4) Bảo vệ các căn cứ cũng như các trục giao thông tại thôn xã bằng cách tổ chức các cuộc tuần tiêu và phục kích ngày cũng như đêm.

(5) Tham dự các cuộc hành quân do các lực lượng chính quy ĐPQ & NQ và Đồng-Minh tổ chức trong khu vực trách nhiệm.

(6) Tham gia công tác Dân-sự-vụ và các hoạt động Tâm-lý-chiến nhằm mục đích chống lại âm mưu tuyên truyền của Việt-Cộng.

(7) Góp phần và trợ giúp cho các hoạt động XDNT hầu phát triển tối đa năng lực để hoàn thành các nhiệm vụ công tác đã nêu trên.

b, Ngoài công tác trên, đơn vị Thủy-quân Lục chiến Hoa-Kỳ còn đảm nhận công tác huấn luyện quân-sự cho NQ để tạo cho họ có khả năng để đảm nhận những công tác nói trên khi đơn vị Thủy-quân Lục-chiến Hoa-kỳ cần đi đến một khu vực khác.

5. TỔ-CHỨC : Đơn vị căn bản của Lực lượng hỗn-hợp là Trung-đội "CAP" gồm một Trung đội NQ, việc trang bị phải theo bản cấp số và quân dụng của một Trung-đội tác chiến thường, quân số 35 người và bên cạnh có 1 tiểu-đội khinh-binh của Thủy-quân Lục-chiến Hoa-kỳ gồm 14 người và 1 Y-tá Hải-quân. Cách tổ-chức căn bản của 1 Trung-đội NQ vẫn được áp dụng, trong khi đó các binh-sĩ Hoa-kỳ bên cạnh họ, đóng vai trò Cố-vấn, và người Tiểu-đội-Trưởng bên Hoa-kỳ sẽ là vị Cố-vấn của người Trung-Đội-Trưởng bên Việt-Nam. Sự liên hệ trong vấn đề chỉ-huy của Trung-đội hỗn hợp là sự hợp tác chặt chẽ giữa người Trung-đội-Trưởng NQ và Tiểu-đội-Trưởng TQLC.

Người Tiểu-đội-trưởng TQLC không có quyền chỉ-huy Trung-đội NQ và ngược lại người Trung-

I CORPS/ICCI 5401.2A  
11 AUG 1969

Combined Action Companies, and the Marine squad leaders of the Combined Action Platoons.

b. Command of the Combined Action Program's Vietnamese Popular Force element is retained by the Commanding General, I Corps. This responsibility will be discharged through the Deputy Commander, Territorial, Regional and Popular Forces, Sector Commanders, Sub-Sector Commanders, and the Popular Force Platoon Leaders of the Combined Action Platoons.

c. Combined Action Platoons are under the operational control of the sub-sector commander in whose sub-sector the CAP is located. This duty is discharged through the sub-sector S-3 who will plan and coordinate all combatant activities of the CAPs in conjunction with the senior CACO Commander in the sub-sector.

#### 7. Activation and Relocation of Combined Action Platoons

##### a. Definitions

(1) "Activation" describes the formation of a new CAP. Activations occur when resources become available to the program and additional CAPs are formed, or when a CAP is deactivated in one province and activated in another.

(2) "Relocation" describes the movement of a CAP, or the Marine element thereof, from one geographical location to another within the same province. Relocations are made when the PF platoon is trained to the degree that the presence of the Marine element is no longer required or when the Marine element is moved from a pacified area to a more contested area in support of the Pacification Plan or the Revolutionary Development Program. A significant change in the AOC of a CAP constitutes a geographical relocation and as such is considered to be a CAP relocation.

##### b. Authority to effect Activations and Relocations

(1) Activations. The activation of a CAP will be mutually determined by the Commanding General, I Corps and the Commanding General, III Marine Amphibious Force based upon recommendations made by sub-sector and sector commanders forwarded through the Government of Vietnam channels, and similar recommendations of Combined Action Group

đội-trưởng bên NQ cũng không có quyền chỉ-huy binh sĩ trong Tiểu-đội TQLC.

#### 6. Vấn đề chỉ-huy và kiểm soát trong Trung-đội hỗn hợp :

Việc chỉ-huy và kiểm soát sẽ được thi hành như được mô tả ở mục 1 và nói thêm trong các chương phụ sau đây :

a. Về việc chỉ-huy binh-sĩ Hoa-Kỳ thuộc các đơn vị nằm trong chương trình này đều đặt dưới sự quản-trị của Tướng Tư-Lệnh Lực lượng III của Thủy-quân Lục-chiến Hoa-kỳ. Trách nhiệm này được giao phó cho Phụ-tá Tham-mưu-Trưởng đặc trách về chương trình hoạt động hỗn hợp và dưới là các vị sĩ-quan chỉ-huy các Liên-đoàn, Đại-đội và các Tiểu-đội-trưởng của các Tiểu-đội TQLC thuộc thành phần các Trung-đội hỗn hợp thi hành.

b. Vấn đề chỉ-huy các đơn vị NQ thuộc chương trình hoạt-động hỗn hợp được quản trị tổng quát do Tướng Tư-Lệnh của QĐI. Trách nhiệm này cũng được giao cho vị Tư-Lệnh Phó Lãnh thổ kiêm chỉ huy-Trưởng DPQ + NQ, dưới là các vị Tiểu-khu-trưởng TK, Chi-khu và các Trung-đội-Trưởng NQ thuộc các Trung-đội hỗn hợp thi hành.

c. Các Trung-đội hỗn hợp đặt dưới sự kiểm soát của các Chi-khu-Trưởng tại những khu vực có Trung đội trú đóng. Công tác này được ủy-nhiệm cho Phòng 3 thuộc Chi-khu đảm trách. Họ sẽ vạch kế hoạch và ấn định tất cả mọi hoạt-động của binh sĩ thuộc Trung-đội hỗn hợp và mọi vấn đề đều phải liên hệ qua Chi-khu-Trưởng tại địa phương.

#### 7. Vấn đề phát triển và di chuyển các Trung-đội hỗn hợp.

##### a. Định nghĩa :

(1) "Thành lập" Việc thành lập các đơn-vị CAP mới chỉ được thi hành khi mọi công tác trong chương trình quá nhiều hay là khi một Trung-đội hỗn hợp hoạt động không mang lại kết quả tốt đẹp trong Tỉnh này nhưng có thể phát triển khả năng ở một vài Tỉnh khác, như thế các Trung-đội -



I CORPS/ICCI 5401.2A

11 AUG 1969

Commanders within those provinces. CAP locations will be selected to contribute directly to the accomplishment of the RD Program or Pacification Plan, to provide defense of lines of communication, and to solve particular security problems unique to a given district such as those caused by the influx of refugees.

(2) Relocations. Relocations will be effected by and with the mutual concurrence of CG, III MAF and CG, ICTZ upon the recommendations of the Deputy Commander, Territory, Regional and Popular Forces, ICTZ and the Assistant Chief of Staff, Combined Action Program, III MAF.

8. Training. The training objective of the CAP is to enhance combat effectiveness of the PF platoon in order to relocate the Marine squad in another hamlet/village area. Sub-sector commanders will, insofar as practical, attempt to keep the PF platoons in the same hamlet for a sufficient period of time to accomplish this training objective. Movement of individual PFs and rotation of the PF platoons or their subordinate squads from a CAP will only be made on a basis of strict military necessity. Assistance from ARVN and FWMAF should be sought to minimize the need to move the PFs from a CAP prior to completion of the training objective. All members of PF platoons assigned for duty in a CAP will have completed basic military training. Additional on-the-job training will be conducted by the Marine squad leader operating in coordination with the PF platoon leader. Additional training guidance will be provided from time to time to the elements of the CAP through the I Corps and III MAF Combined Action Program channels. Marine and Navy enlisted personnel assigned to the Combined Action Platoons will attend the Combined Action Program School in Danang prior to such assignment.

9. Administration and Logistics. Administration and logistics will follow current procedures to support the respective Vietnamese and U. S. elements of the CAP.

10. Visits and Inspections. Frequent visits and inspections will be made by sub-sector commanders and CACO Commanders, and by sector and CAG Commanders, in order to correct deficiencies and to ensure the maximum effectiveness of the Combined Action

hôn hợp mới được thành lập thêm.

(2) Di chuyển : Việc di chuyển 1 Trung-đội hôn hợp hay thành phần của Tiểu-đội TQLC từ vùng này đến vùng khác trong 1 Tỉnh, công việc này chỉ được thi hành khi 1 TD/NQ đã được huấn luyện đến một trình độ có đủ khả năng thay thế cho đơn vị TQLC trong khu vực trách nhiệm của họ, hay là khi đơn vị của TQLC cần di chuyển từ một vùng đã được bình định đến một vùng xôi đậu để yểm trợ cho các công-tác bình định hay chương trình XDNT.

Sự thay đổi vị trí CAP trong khu vực kiểm soát hành quân cũng có nghĩa là một sự thay đổi địa thế đóng quân.

b. Thẩm quyền thành lập và di chuyển các Trung-đội hoạt động hôn hợp :

(1) Thành lập : Việc thành lập 1 Trung-đội hôn hợp sẽ được quyết định do Tướng Tư-Lệnh QĐI và Tướng Tư-Lệnh thuộc Lực lượng III của TQLC Hoa-kỳ, căn cứ vào sự thỉnh cầu của các Tiểu-khu Trưởng và Chi-khu-Trưởng đệ trình theo hệ thống quân giai và những sự thỉnh cầu tương tự của các Liên-Đoàn-Trưởng hôn hợp tại các Tỉnh thuộc khu vực trách nhiệm của họ.

Vị trí đóng quân của các TD hôn hợp sẽ được lựa chọn để góp phần hữu hiệu vào việc hoàn thành chương trình XDNT hay kế hoạch bình định trong khu vực hoạt động để bảo vệ các trục giao thông và giải quyết các vấn đề an-ninh tại Quận-ly đã chỉ định như vấn đề tiếp nhận đồng bào tỵ nạn CS v.v...

(2) Di chuyển : Việc phối trí lại được quyết định bởi Trung-Tướng Tư-Lệnh QĐI và Trung-Tướng Tư-Lệnh Lực lượng III Thủy-bộ qua sự đề nghị của TLP/LT kiêm CHT/ĐPQ+NQ và Phụ-tá TMT/LL/III/TB đặc trách về CAP.

8. Công tác huấn luyện : Mục đích huấn-luyện cho Trung-đội hôn hợp là để gia tăng tiềm năng chiến đấu của Trung-đội NQ cốt để thay thế cho Tiểu-đội

I CORPS/ICCI 5401.2A  
11 AUG 1969

Program in the over all conduct of the Revolutionary Development campaign effort.

*H. Nickerson, Jr.*  
H. NICKERSON, JR.

DISTRIBUTION:

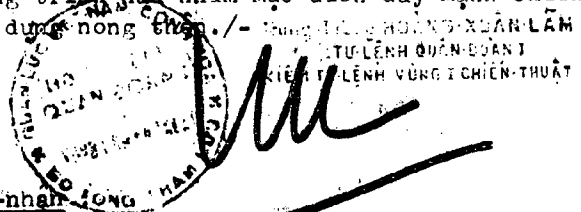
- Case 1
- Case 2
- Case 3

Hoa-Kỳ cần di chuyển đến một khu vực khác. Các Tiểu khu, Chi-Khu Trưởng nên luôn luôn cố gắng để duy trì các trung đội NQ trong cùng một thôn ấp để có đủ thời gian hoàn thành việc huấn luyện. Việc chuyển và thay thế binh sĩ thuộc TD/NQ hay binh sĩ HK chỉ thực hiện theo nhu cầu quân sự cần thiết. Việc hỗ trợ của QLVNCH và Đồng Minh sẽ được yêu cầu tối thiểu để giúp đỡ cho đến khi Tr-D/NQ đã hoàn thành công tác huấn luyện. Tất cả các binh sĩ thuộc tr-d/NQ phải hoàn thành việc huấn luyện quân sự trước khi được bổ nhiệm đến đơn vị hỗn hợp để hoạt động. Thêm vào việc thực tập và huấn luyện họ còn được hướng dẫn công tác bởi tiểu đội trưởng TQLC/HK cùng với sự hợp tác của tr-đội trưởng NQ.

Công tác huấn luyện bổ túc cho các thành phần thuộc trung đội hỗn hợp theo thời gian do BTM/QDI và lực lượng III TQLCHK ấn định. các binh sĩ TQLC/HK được phái đến công tác với trung đội NQ thuộc chương trình hoạt động hỗn hợp phải trải qua một khóa huấn luyện bổ túc tại Đà Nẵng trước khi được bổ nhiệm.

9. Vấn đề quản trị và tiếp vận: vấn đề quản trị và tiếp vận vận theo các thủ tục thông thường và yểm trợ riêng cho các thành phần Hoa-Kỳ và Việt-Nam thuộc trung đội hỗn hợp tại mỗi địa phương.

10. Thăm viếng và thanh tra: Các cuộc thăm viếng và thanh tra thường xuyên sẽ được thực hiện do các chi khu trưởng, đại đội trưởng, Tiểu khu trưởng và Liên đại đội trưởng đảm nhiệm, cốt để sửa đổi những khuyết điểm và bảo đảm cho sự thành công tối đa cho chương trình này nhằm mục đích đẩy mạnh chiến dịch xây dựng nông thôn. /-



Nơi-nhận (ong HAM

- BTM/VP/TTMP/TL/ĐPQ.NQ
- BTM/P3
- BTL/BK/Quảng Đà (
- Tiểu khu Quang Trị (
- " Thừa Thiên (
- " Quảng Nam (

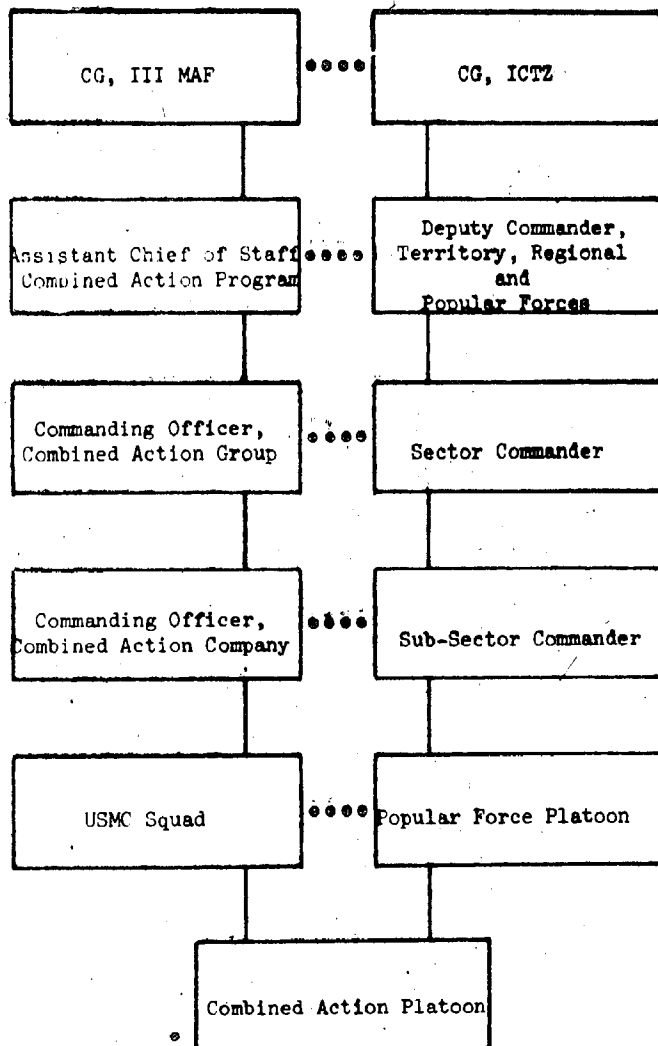
Kính-trường

Để thi hành

- Tiêu Khu Quảng Tín {  
- Tiêu Khu Quảng Ngãi { Để thi hành

I CORPS/ICCI 5401.2A  
11 AUG 1989

COMMAND AND COORDINATION DIAGRAM

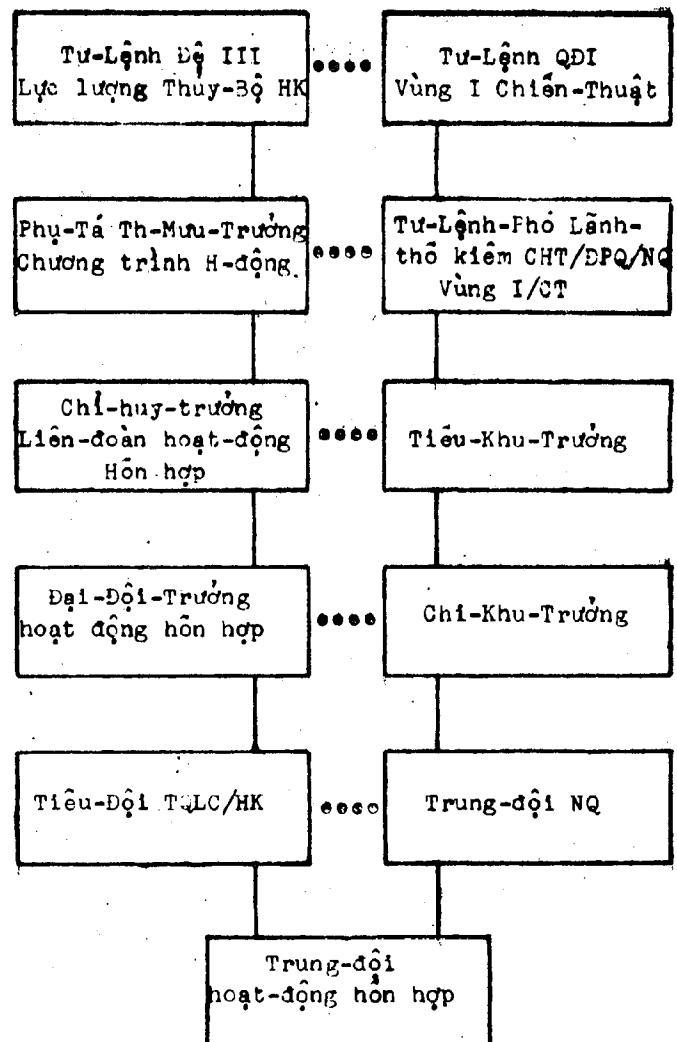


Command \_\_\_\_\_  
Coordination ●●●●●●●●●●

ENCLOSURE (1)

1

SƠ ĐỒ CHỈ-HUY VÀ PHỐI HỢP



Chỉ-huy \_\_\_\_\_  
Điều hành phối hợp ●●●● ●●●●