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HEADQUARTERS  
4th Combined Action Group  
III Marine Amphibious Force  
FPO San Francisco 96602

3/HGD/hde  
5700  
2 July 1970

From: Commanding Officer  
To: Commandant of the Marine Corps (Code HD)  
Via: (1) Commanding Officer, Combined Action Force  
(2) Commanding General, III Marine Amphibious Force  
(3) Commanding General, Fleet Marine Force, Pacific

Sub j: Command Chronology for period 1 May to 31 May 1970

Ref: (a) MCO 5750.1A  
(b) FMFPacO 5750.2B  
(c) CAFO 5750.1

Encl: (1) 4th Combined Action Group Command Chronology

1. In accordance with the provisions of references (a), (b) and (c),  
enclosure (1) is submitted.

2. Downgraded at 3-year intervals, declassified after 12 years, DOD Dir  
5200.10.

W. D. LeDeboer  
W. D. LEDEBOER

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HEADQUARTERS  
4th Combined Action Group  
III Marine Amphibious Force  
FPO San Francisco 96602

COMMAND CHRONOLOGY

1 May to 31 May 1970

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## PART I

Organizational Data1. Designation

Headquarters  
 4th Combined Action Group  
 III Marine Amphibious Force  
 FPO San Francisco 96602

Commander

Major R. D. KING  
 1-31 May 1970

Subordinate Units

CACO 4-1	Capt J. T. LOFTUS	1-31 May 1970
CACO 4-2	1stLt B. D. CAZORT	1-31 May 1970
CACO 4-3	Capt A. B. HINSON	1-31 May 1970

2. Location

Headquarters	1-31 May 1970	Quang Tri Combat Base
CACO 4-1	1-31 May 1970	Dong Ha District
CACO 4-2	1-31 May 1970	Hai Lang District
CACO 4-3	1-31 May 1970	Trieu Phong District

3. Staff Officers

Executive Officer	Maj W. D. LEDEBOER	1-31 May 1970
S-1 Officer	Capt J. E. RISER	1-31 May 1970
S-3 Officer	Maj H. G. DUNCAN	1-31 May 1970
S-4 Officer	1stLt G. R. BROWN	1-31 May 1970

4. Average Monthly Strength

USMC	USN	Others
Off Enl	Off Enl	Off Enl
8 308	1 19	0 0

5. End-of-Month Unit Diary Strength

USMC	USN	Others
Off Enl	Off Enl	Off Enl
8 301	1 19	0 0

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## PART II

NARRATIVE SUMMARY

The month of May was devoted to normal operations in established Tactical Areas of Coordination.

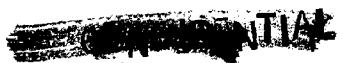
The tactical scene continues to be one of primarily night activities with ambushes being set along suspected and known avenues of approach and enemy lines of communications within the CAP TAOCS. Day activities, however, have produced the greater results in May, with a total of twelve of the enemy being killed during daylight hours, as opposed to four during the night.

Contact with the enemy took a sharp upswing during May. There were thirteen contacts, eleven of which were initiated by the CAPs. Of the thirteen, ten were at night and three during the day.

Friendly casualties compared to enemy casualties have been very light. One PF was KIA; one Marine WIA(M); and one PF was WIA(E). At the same time, sixteen of the enemy were killed by the CAPs.

Training of the PF platoons operating with the Marines has been intensified. In May a class was conducted by the 237th Medical Aviation Detachment in MedEvac procedures. Each week two CAPs spend a day and a night at CAG Headquarters being refreshed in marksmanship. This training was expanded to include the use of the M-72 LAAW and the Claymore Mine. Results of this training have been very favorable.

This CAG has been sending Marines and PFs to schools in the Danang Area. The NCO School operated by the 1st Marine Division trains both Marines and PFs. Marines have also attended the Language School at Combined Action Force Headquarters.

  
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## PART III

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SEQUENTIAL LISTING OF SIGNIFICANT EVENTS

## 1. Operations Summary

## a. Nighttime activities

(1) 5 May 1970. CAP 4-3-4, acting on an intelligence lead, set up an ambush along a road. One VC with AK-47 entered the area, and the CAP initiated SAF at a range of 125 meters. The VC was killed, and the following items taken: 1 AK-47, 3 AK-47 magazines, 2 ChiCom grenades, 1 small notebook, 1 bag of bandages, all of which items were turned over to the local police. A sweep of the area failed to produce anything further.

(2) 8 May 1970. CAP 4-1-4 observed two VC with weapons at a range of 200 meters moving in a northeasterly direction. The CAP ambush initiated contact with SAF and M-79 HE under 60mm Mortar Illumination. The VC fled northeast. The area was swept under illumination, and again at first light with negative results.

(3) 4 May 1970. PFs of CAP 4-1-4 and PSDFs reported that a VC/NVA propaganda squad entered Dong Xuan Hamlet from the north for the purpose of conducting psychological operations and visiting relatives. After distributing leaflets, the enemy left under cover of darkness. PSDFs retrieved and burned psyops material and disarmed one SFD which was a rigged ChiCom grenade under an NVA flag. A CAP patrol entered the hamlet and talked with villagers, recovering four leaflets which were sent in to 4th CAG Headquarters. All other items were destroyed by PSDFs.

(4) 11 May 1970. A CAP 4-2-5 ambush observed two VC with weapons moving from south to northwest at a range of 300 meters. The CAP initiated contact with SAF. The VC fled in an unknown direction. A sweep under illumination produced negative results.

(5) 11 May 1970. An ambush from CAP 4-3-3 observed 1 armed VC approaching the ambush site. The CAP initiated contact with SAF at a range of one meter. At this time, a second ambush from CAP 4-3-3 reported that they observed two other VC fleeing to the north from the general vicinity of the contact. The first ambush site received one incoming M-26 grenade which exploded, doing no damage and inflicting no friendly casualties. A sweep under illumination [REDACTED]

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produced one VC KIA; 1 AK-47; 1 M-26 hand grenade; 1 AK-47 magazine; 1 sandbag filled with corn; 1 quart of fuel oil; and assorted clothing. All items were turned over to District Headquarters.

(6) 17 May 1970. An ambush from CAP 4-1-1, having heard a whistle noise, moved out to investigate. They sighted two VC in the road at a range of 150 meters. The CAP initiated contact with SAF and M-79 HE. The VC returned SAF and then fled in an unknown direction. A sweep under illumination produced one blood trail which was followed with negative results.

(7) 19 May 1970. Villagers reported to CAP 4-1-1 that during the night three VC had entered the village and dropped one small flag, one large cloth banner, and assorted English and VN Language propaganda leaflets referring to the U. S. troop withdrawal. The VC also instructed the villagers to encourage the PFs and the RFs to kill the PF Platoon Leader. The CAP swept the area with negative results. Propaganda items taken and turned in to District Headquarters.

(8) 23 May 1970. An ambush from CAP 4-1-1 observed one VC at a range of about 50 meters. PFs in the ambush initiated SAF and M-79 HE. VC returned fire with about 10 rounds of SAF and fled southeast. A sweep under illumination revealed marks which could indicate a body having been dragged away. Expended AK-47 cartridge cases were found in the contact area.

(9) 24 May 1970. An ambush from CAP 4-1-3 observed movement at about 50 meters range. A PF detonated a claymore mine. One ChiCom grenade was thrown into the ambush site. A second ambush from CAP 4-1-3 was called as a reaction force. Movement was again observed and again a ChiCom grenade was thrown into the ambush site. Both ambushes opened fire with SAF and M-79 HE at a range of about 100 meters. The area was swept by members of the CAP, during which they observed two VC carrying away what appeared to be a body. The sweep team initiated fire with SAF at a range of 100 meters. The VC fled with the body into heavy thicket and disappeared. Area again swept at first light revealing two large blood spots in the contact area.

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(10) 25 May 1970. CAP 4-2-3 heard SAF from the vicinity of the Hamlet Chief's house. A patrol was sent to investigate and found enemy propaganda leaflets apparently left by the enemy. The substance of the leaflets revealed how the enemy plans to kill the Marines if they do not leave that area and how they plan to mine the roads. Villagers were questioned at first light with negative results.

(11) 27 May 1970. CAP 4-2-1 night Patrol Base was attacked by a force of from 30 to 50 NVA using SAF, RPGs, and ChiCom grenades. The CAP returned fire with SAF and M-79 HE as well as Claymore mines, at ranges of 30 to 50 meters. Contact was broken, but resumed by the enemy a few minutes later. Contact lasted sporadically from 0125 until daylight. 81mm mortars, gunships, and flareships provided illumination and fire support. At first light, the contact was broken and allied units set up a blocking position to the east of the area of contact. A sweep of the CAP contact area produced two NVA KIA and one AK-47. Five blood trails were also found. During the contact the CAP sustained two casualties: One Marine WIA(M), and one PF WIA(E). The PF was evacuated to 18th Surgical Hospital where he later died of wounds.

(12) 29 May 1970. CAP 4-3-4 in ambush site initiated contact by SAF on two armed VC at a range of 25 meters. VC failed to return fire, and fled southeast. One VC appeared to have been wounded. A sweep was conducted under illumination revealing one heavy blood trail which was followed with negative results.

b. Daytime activities

(1) 1 May 1970. CAP 4-3-2, while on day patrol, found one unused bunker measuring 4x3x3 feet and containing 1017 rounds of ammunition for SKS and AK-47. The bunker and ammunition were destroyed.

(2) 5 May 1970. CAP 4-3-5, while on day patrol, found what appeared to be an old caved-in bunker containing 32 blocks of C-3 Explosive and one CS grenade. The items appeared to have been there for several months. All but four blocks of explosive and the CS grenade were destroyed. The salvaged items were turned over to District Headquarters.

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(3) 10 May 1970. A day patrol of CAP 4-1-2 received a heavy volume of SAF from two unnoticed bunkers at a range of about 30 meters. One PF was killed by the initial burst of enemy fire. The CAP returned fire with SAF, M-79, and M-26 hand grenades. Repeated efforts were made to persuade the enemy to surrender, but to no avail. A Huey helicopter from Province Headquarters supported the CAP with machine gun and M-79 fire. Results were five enemy KIA, three of whom turned out to be NVA from the K-8 Sapper Battalion. The other two were VC. Five AK-47 assault rifles, 37 ChiCom grenades, 1 knife, 7,000 piasters, several blasting caps, and various other items were captured and turned into District Headquarters.

(4) 22 May 1970. CAP 4-1-2, while on day patrol, discovered one empty bunker. While destroying it, two VC emerged from an unnoticed bunker nearby. The CAP initiated contact with M-26 grenades, killing both VC. The bunker was searched and revealed the following items: 3 AK-47 assault rifles; 1 U. S. Carbine; 1 AK-54 Pistol; 2 ChiCom grenades; 8 blocks of TNT; 20 blasting caps; 8 mechanical time fuses for large calibre rounds; 18 small bags of rice; 4 small bags of sugar; various propaganda documents; 2 NVA flags; 3 ponchos and 1 set of female underwear. The explosive ordnance was destroyed in place and the other items turned over to District Headquarters.

(5) 27 May 1970. CAP 4-1-1, while on day patrol, found an RD Cadreman, last name THAN, shot twice under each armpit, and once through the heart. Local villagers stated to the CAP that the RD Cadreman had been hunting birds when about 12-15 VC captured him, and presumably killed him. A sweep and search of the area was negative. The remains were brought to the Patrol Base and picked up by the Vietnamese.

(6) 29 May 1970. CAP 4-1-2, after assisting RF with a MEDEVAC, swept area where an RF was wounded. The CAP came under SAF by an unknown number of enemy in bunkers at a range of about 30 meters. One of the enemy vacated a bunker and was killed by CAP SAF. The others remained in the bunker, firing at the CAP. They were killed by CAP Marines using M-26 grenades. A total of five VC were KIA in this action. A search of the bunker resulted in the following items being captured: 3 AK-47 assault rifles; 1 K-54; 1 AK-57; 1 RPG-2 launcher; 12 AK magazines; 5 K-54 magazines; 2 B-40 rockets; 25 one-quarter blocks of explosive; 400 rounds of 7.62 ammo; 300 rounds of 9mm ammo; 40 pounds of rice; various pieces of NVA web gear and VC song books. All items turned over to District Headquarters.

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REF ID: A6512

(7) 30 May 1970. CAP 4-1-2 conducted a day sweep with EOD personnel for the purpose of locating SFDs reported to be in a tree line. The sweep revealed three SFDs: 1 M-33 grenade; 1 C-Ration can filled with TNT; and 1 one-quarter pound block of plastic explosive. Each was rigged with a trip wire attached to a mechanical blasting device. The SFDs were blown in place.

(8) 30 May 1970. CAP 4-1-1, while on day patrol found the following ordnance in a crater on the side of a hill: 2 60mm Mortar HE duds; 1 90mm WP dud; 12 M-79 HE duds; 1 M-26 grenade without fuze and 1 M-33 grenade without fuze. An EOD team was sent to the site and destroyed the ordnance. A further sweep of the area was negative.

(9) 31 May 1970. CAP 4-1-2, while on day patrol, located one bunker rigged with a SFD consisting of M-26 grenades and C-4 attached to a trip wire. The SFD was disarmed, and the bunker was searched revealing the following items: 2 NVA helmets; various items of NVA web gear; 2 B-40 rockets; 25 pounds of plastic explosive; 20 tripwire firing devices; 30 blasting caps (non-electric); medical gear; assorted documents; propaganda leaflets; 4 AK-47 magazines and 400 rounds of AK-47 ammo. The bunker was destroyed and the items were turned over to District Headquarters.

c. Multi-CAP Operations - None

d. Combined Operations - None

2. Neutralization of Enemy Forces

a. NVA KIA - 5

b. VC KIA - 11

c. NVA POW - None

d. VC POW - None

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e. VCI POW - None

f. HOI CHANHS - None

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3. Battle Casualties Sustained

a. USMC KIA - None

Non-battle Casualties Sustained

a. USMC - 1 Killed  
2 NBCW(E)

b. USMC WIA(E) - None

b. USN - None

c. USMC WIA(M) - 1

c. PF - 2 NBCW(E)

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- d. USMC MIA - None
- e. USN KIA - None
- f. USN WIA(E) - None
- g. USN WIA(M) - None
- h. USN MIA - None
- i. CAP PF KIA - 1
- j. CAP PF WIA(E) - 1
- k. CAP PF WIA(M) - None
- l. CAP PF MIA - None

4. New Techniques Employed - During the month of May the "More Mobile CAP Concept" was put into operation in thirteen of the sixteen CAPs of this CAG. This concept, which does not require the maintaining of a night patrol base, puts the entire CAP on ambushes. The CAP is divided into three ambushes which take up positions after dark, and remain in position until daybreak. The ambushes are set up along approaches to hamlets, thus getting the CAP out of the occupied areas and into areas offering better and safer fields of fire. Implementation of this concept has not produced any insurmountable problems. A full discussion of the "More Mobile CAP Concept" is contained in a letter on the subject appended as a supporting document to this Command Chronology.

#### 5. Command Relationships

- a. CAPs continue to be under the operational control of the various District Chiefs. Administrative control of U. S. personnel and KCS is maintained by the 4th Combined Action Group.
- b. 4th Combined Action Group is provided limited logistical support by the 1st Brigade, 5th Infantry Division (Mech) in areas of Class I and Class V supplies, and in maintenance of motor transport and electronics. A close liaison with the Advisors on District and Province levels enhances the planning and execution of CAP operations.
- c. Significant Problem Areas - None

#### 6. Significant Accomplishments of Attachments - None

#### 7. Lessons Learned - None

#### 8. Logistics

- a. Significant events: No significant events occurred during the month of May. Continuous efforts were devoted to the improvement of the existing grounds and facilities of the 4th Combined Action Group Headquarters Compound.

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b. Supply: Activity in the Supply Section during the month of May was curtailed somewhat due to the rotation of personnel without replacements. A reconciliation of all fiscal obligations was conducted and correction notices on errors noted and were delivered to the Comptroller Section at Force Logistics Command. Fiscal records show a total obligation of \$199,331.46 with \$101,168.54 remaining in the available balance.

c. Maintenance: Nothing significant

d. Motor Transport - With the arrival of a Staff NCO Motor Transport Chief and two mechanics, the Motor Transport Section has undergone major improvements. Emphasis has been placed on defining responsibilities and training personnel in the execution of their duties, thus providing better support for the Group. Motor Transport vehicles logged 19,318 miles during the month of May.

e. Miscellaneous: Five truckloads of gravel were procured and spread in areas throughout the Headquarters to aid in erosion control during the forthcoming monsoon season.

9. Civic Action. During the month of May, 4th Combined Action Group was limited to the completion of current civic action projects and daily MedCap activities. During May, 11,951 Vietnamese were treated by CAP Corpsmen, and 9 adults and 8 children were evacuated for more intensive care to 18th Surgical and Quang Tri Provincial Hospitals. CAP Corpsmen held 23 health and sanitation classes for 108 Vietnamese. Local nurses received 6 weeks of OJT while assisting the Corpsmen during daily MEDCAP activities. CAP units also distributed approximately 1600 pounds of food, 60 pounds of clothing, and 398 pounds of soap to villagers in their TAOCs. CAP personnel also held 8 English classes for 37 Vietnamese.

Specific civic action projects completed (or assisted) during the month of May were:

<u>CAP</u>	<u>UTM COORD.</u>	<u>PROJECT</u>
4-1-5	YD 223613	CAP distributed 60 school kits to school children (Purchased with 3,000 \$VN AIK Funds).
4-1-5	YD 224614	CAP distributed 180 lbs of soap during daily MEDCAP activities and supplied a table and benches for the dispensary.
4-1-4	YD 233632	CAP distributed 120 lbs of soap during daily MEDCAP activities and repaired the roof and screening on the dispensary.
4-1-2	YD 360510	CAP 4-1-2 distributed 85 lbs of soap and 60 lbs of clothing to villagers in the CAP TAOC.
4-2-5	YD 4443	CAP gave 18 sections of culvert to the village for road repair.

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4-3-4	YD 396575	CAP painted the guardhouse, flagpole, and several tables and chairs at the Trieu Son Village Headquarters and dispensary.
CAG HQ	YD 346535	1000 lbs of cement was released to the 1st Brigade, 5th Infantry Division (Mech), S-5 for repairs at the Tri Buu Orphanage in Quang Tri City.
CAG HQ	YD 084505	HQ S-5 provided technical and geological support at Mai Loc towards developing new wells and an irrigation scheme for the Montagnard refugees in the area.

MEDCAP activities constitute the most aggressive and effective program carried on by the CAP. CAP 4-1-2 has started construction on a new MEDCAP dispensary in their TAOC under 4-1 CACO supervision and materiel support. The villagers are actively aiding in the project and quite enthusiastic. During the month, CAP units supported 10 dispensaries in an attempt to improve local health standards and training for Vietnamese health workers.

#### 10. Personnel Administration

a. Personnel Transactions. During the month of May the following personnel transactions were completed:

(1) <u>Joined</u>	USMC
	<u>Off Enl</u>
	0 34
(2) <u>Rotated CONUS</u>	USMC
	<u>Off Enl</u>
	0 36
(3) <u>Reassignment within WestPac</u>	USMC
	<u>Off Enl</u>
	0 11
(4) <u>Transferred by Service Records While Sick(Out of country hospital)</u>	USMC
	<u>Off Enl</u>
	0 9
(5) <u>Extension of WestPac Tour Effected</u>	USMC
	<u>Off Enl</u>
	0 0

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b. Promotions: During the month of May the following promotions were effected:

To PFC <u>0</u>	To SSgt <u>2</u>
To LCpl <u>9</u>	To GySgt <u>0</u>
To Cpl <u>36</u>	To 1stSgt/MSgt <u>0</u>
To Sgt <u>1</u>	To SgtMaj/MGySgt <u>0</u>

c. Legal Matters

(1) Courts held: GCM 0  
SpGM 0  
SCM 1

(2) Article 32 Investigations Completed: None

(3) NJP: 13

(4) JAG Type Investigations Completed: None

d. Award Recommendations

SSM - 0  
BSM - 0  
NCO - 3  
NAM - 2  
PH - 1

e. CONGRINTS/SPLINTS/WELREPS

CONGRINTS - 0  
SPLINTS - 0  
WELREPS - 0

f. Morale and Welfare

(1) R&R. The command has utilized the following number of quotas to the R&R areas listed.

(a) Hong Kong (4)	Japan (2)
Taipei (1)	Bangkok (10)
Hawaii (9)	Sydney (5)
Okinawa (0)	Manila (2)

(b) In Country (4)

(2) Mail. Daily average bags of mail processed:

<u>Incoming</u>	<u>Outgoing</u>
1	1

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(3) Hospital Visitations. Personnel of this Command listed as patients in the 18th Surgical Hospital are visited very frequently by officers and staff NCOs from the CAG. Upon evacuation to hospitals in the Danang area, visits are made to coincide with official visits and trips to the Danang area.

g. Career Planning

Re-enlistments: None

Extensions: None

11. Intelligence

With the rice harvest in full swing during the month of May, there was an increase in enemy activity in rice gathering missions.

With the exception of the above, enemy activity remained relatively unchanged. Mining incidents and rocket and mortar attacks throughout Quang Tri Province stayed at about the same level as in April. One significant enemy attack was made on an ARVN Battalion at Fire Support Base Tun Tavern, with heavy casualties on both sides.

Villagers continue to cooperate in turning in various types of ordnance, and in reporting some intelligence.

12. Communications

No significant changes or problems.

13. Fire Support

Fire support is available from several sources, both U. S. Army and ARVN. Response to request for fire, particularly illumination, has proven to be satisfactory.

14. Air Support

Other than helicopters used for medevacs and occasional resupply, there was only one other significant use of air support in May. The 237th Medical Detachment provided instruction and practical application in teaching MedEvac procedures to the Marines and selected PFs of the Group.

Medevacs were provided by the 237th Medical Detachment with a most satisfactory speed of response.

A helicopter attached to Province Advisory Team 19 is available and is used on occasions for resupply of operating CAPs during periods when they are operating beyond the reach of vehicles or during inclement weather.

15. Activations, Deactivations, Resignations, Relocations of CAPs

None.

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During the month of May, 4th CAG had 18 Marines complete the Combined Action Force School.

17. Combined Action Force Vietnamese Language School

During May, 6 Marines from 4th CAG completed the Vietnamese Language School.

18. 1st Marine Division NCO Leadership School

Seven Marines and six PFs successfully completed the NCO Leadership School conducted by the 1st Marine Division.

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## PART IV

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS

1. ✓Commanding Officer's letter dated 23 Apr 1970. Subj: Fire discipline
2. ✓Commanding Officer's letter dated 11 May 1970. Subj: Plan to partially implement the More Mobile CAP Concept
3. ✓Commanding Officer's letter dated 16 May 1970. Subj: Instruction in the Rules of Engagement
4. Commanding Officer's letter, dated 14 May 1970. SUBJ: Interpreter Evaluation Report; submission of

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4th Combined Action Group  
III Marine Amphibious Force  
FPO San Francisco 96602

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1500  
23 April 1970

From: Commanding Officer  
To: All Hands

Subj: Fire discipline

1. Within the past week, there have been two instances of Marines firing their weapons at unidentified targets in violation of the rules of engagement. In the first instance, the consequence was two VN civilians seriously wounded. In the second instance, the firing led to an incident in which a Marine was seriously wounded.
2. The rules of engagement require that the shooter identify his target as an enemy with reasonable certainty before opening fire. Reasonable certainty of identification is considered achieved in the following examples:

a. Target has the appearance of a VC or NVA soldier, is in an area where friendlies are not supposed to be, and is carrying a weapon.

b. Target consists of nothing more than the sound of movement in the underbrush, but it commits a hostile act such as throwing a grenade or shooting into the friendly position.

3. In the following examples, there is no reasonable certainty in identification of the target:

a. Target has the appearance of a human being, but is apparently unarmed and is not performing or obviously preparing to perform any hostile act. Such a target must be more clearly identified before being shot. Such identification may be achieved by use of a star-light scope, illumination, or a challenge.

b. Target consists of nothing more than the sound of movement in the underbrush, may or may not be coming closer to the CAP position, and has performed no obviously hostile act.

c. Target consists only of a tripped trip flare, an activated P-Sid sensor, or other activated detection device.

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4. A Marine who hears movement within hand grenade range to his front at night will have good reason to be very apprehensive. He may envision that VC are about to attack with grenades and small arms. An undisciplined Marine will attempt to lessen his fear by putting a heavy volume of fire into the suspected target area. A disciplined Marine will control his fear and wait for a legitimate target to materialize. A disciplined Marine knows that fear is natural to such circumstances, that such fear must be controlled by disciplined, and that the risks involved are inherent in the duties of a combat Marine. The disciplined Marine also knows that VC or NVA simply do not make noise when approaching for an attack and that therefore, the noise of movement must be either a friendly wanderer, an animal, or an unsuspecting enemy who does not realize you are near. In any case, the record clearly shows that a man who fires at noises in the dark succeeds only in one or more of the following:

- a. Giving away the ambush site.
- b. Killing or wounding an innocent civilian or a member of his own unit.
- c. Killing a domestic animal.
- d. Alerting an unsuspecting enemy who otherwise might have stumbled into the ambush and been easy prey.

5. It is recognized that to ask a Marine to hold his fire when he hears what may be an enemy nearby is to ask the Marine to take a risk. But a good Marine knows that ours is a risky business. Every day Marines are asked to take risks in order to accomplish a mission, and it has always been so. Needless to say, the risk of assaulting a fortified enemy position in the jungle is far greater than the risk in holding your fire at night in a C.P. ambush position.

6. Although it is not a rule of engagement, it is CAG policy that illumination not be used to "check out an area", even if the sounds of movement have been heard. Illumination should be fired only under the following circumstances:

- a. Contact has been initiated.
- b. What appears to be a human being has been sighted, and illumination is needed to determine whether he is friendly or enemy before opening fire.

7. As with undisciplined fire, the undisciplined use of illumination is indicative of shaky troops who forget too easily about the mission and who react improperly to fear. Disciplined troops control fear, and never lose sight of the mission.

/s/ R. D. KING  
R. D. KING

HEADQUARTERS  
4th Combined Action Group  
III Marine Amphibious Force  
FPO San Francisco 96602

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3000  
11 May 1970

From: Commanding Officer  
To: Commanding Officer, CACO 4-1  
Commanding Officer, CACO 4-2  
Commanding Officer, CACO 4-3

Subj: Plan to partially implement the More Mobile CAP Concept

Ref: (a) JGS Directive #300-12 TTM/P3 of 20 Jan 69 (Subj: Mobile Defense of Hamlets)

1. By 30 May 1970, each CACO Commander in 4th CAG will coordinate with District authorities and, if agreeable to them, will cause one CAP to implement the More Mobile CAP Concept outlined herein. Until implementation is achieved, progress reports will be submitted to this Headquarters at least once a week.

2. The design of the More Mobile CAP (MM-CAP) is intended to further the following purposes:

a. To increase the density of the screen of protective ambushes placed around the hamlets in CAP AOs.

b. To make more effective and efficient combat use of available troops.

c. To increase the deception used in deploying ambushes, and to increase the elusiveness and unpredictability of CAP activities generally.

3. Currently in 4th CAG, the concept of CAP night operations entails the deployment of a patrol base (often referred to as a CP) and two or more ambushes. Typically, the ambushes are deployed one after the other, each for about half the night, with up to an hour of overlap between the two. In some cases, both ambushes are deployed for the entire night, with a period of less than 100% alert designated for part of the night. This "patrol base concept" is an outgrowth of the old and discarded "Compound CAP" Concept, and entails the following principal disadvantages:

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a. The CAP tends to subordinate secrecy, mobility, and other tactical considerations to the logistical considerations involved in the nightly displacement of the patrol base. Typically, the patrol base moves at dusk from the day site (normally located near a good road and among the population) to the night site (also normally located among the population). Normally, only after setting up the new patrol base do any ambushes go out. The reason for this is that all Marines are needed to carry the heavy loads of gear and equipment from the old site to the new site. Because the troops are heavily laden, they typically travel in a straight line to the new site, a procedure which is not very deceptive. When the ambushes do go out, they move out through the population from the patrol base, which is a known and readily observable point of origin. This is also a procedure which is ~~not~~ very deceptive.

b. The patrol base concept ties up the bulk of the CAP strength in an activity which does not contribute significantly to the CAP mission. Typically, more than two-thirds of the CAP strength is tied up at any one time in the patrol base perimeter. Since a CAP patrol base by its very nature is too obvious to serve as an ambush, it is most unlikely to have any contact unless the enemy seeks such contact on his own terms. Thus, the bulk of the CAP is tied up performing a function no more productive than to guard the CAP Headquarters element, the CAP mortar, and the pile of CAP gear.

4. The More Mobile CAP Concept entails the following features:

a. There is no night patrol base, although there is a day patrol base. At or shortly before dusk, the CAP splits up into two or more elements, roughly equal in size, and moves by devious routes to set up a corresponding number of ambushes. All CAP gear is carried to the respective ambush sites or, if practical, some gear may be stowed in a secure place, such as in a non-CAP compound, a guarded Village Chief's headquarters, or the like.

b. The 60mm mortar is discarded as an impractical weapon for the MM-CAP. As a substitute for 60mm mortar illumination, the CAP uses pop-up flares, M-79 illumination rounds, and on-call artillery illumination. As a substitute for 60mm HE rounds, each CAP element is equipped with an M-79 grenade launcher and possibly several M-72 LAWs.

c. Under the MM-CAP Concept, troops must be less heavily burdened than at present. This may be achieved through a combination of the following:

- (1) Lessen the amount of gear kept in the field.
- (2) Locate the day patrol bases near secure places where CAP gear may be left overnight with reasonable safety.

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d. All ambushes are located on likely approaches to hamlets, rather than within the hamlets themselves. Final movement into an ambush site is along an uninhabited, unobserved route, after dark.

e. Since all troops must ordinarily get some sleep each night, each ambush remains on 100% alert only during those parts of the night which are most likely to produce contact. For other parts of the night, a reduced level of alertness is set.

f. If desired, a small "killer" patrol may originate from one or more of the ambush sites. However, it should be noted that under the MM-CAP Concept, it is impractical for an entire CAP element to do extensive patrolling, since the troops are carrying too much gear with them.

5. It is recognized that the MM-CAP Concept must gain the acceptance and confidence of Vietnamese authorities, PF soldiers, and CAP Marines in order to be successfully implemented. Therefore, only a pilot program of implementation is envisioned at present. Based on the experience gained in the three CAPs designated to implement the concept, modifications may be made, the concept may be implemented generally, or it may prove necessary to abandon it. The strength of the highly successful Combined Action Program is that it is by its very nature innovative and adaptive. To keep that success alive, we must continue to adapt, innovate and improve.

6. The MM-CAP Concept is in keeping with reference (a), which is directive in nature and pertains to the use by PF of mobile techniques in the defense of hamlets.

7. By copy hereof, the plan for partial implementation of the MM-CAP Concept as outlined herein is submitted to the Quang Tri Sector Commander for his approval. If approved, it is respectfully requested that the Sub-Sector Commanders of the following Districts be notified accordingly: Dong Ha District, Trieu Phong District, Mai Linh District, and Hai Lang District.

R.D. King  
R. D. KING

Copy to: CO, CAF

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## HEADQUARTERS

4th Combined Action Group  
III Marine Amphibious Force  
FPO San Francisco 966026/RDK/hde  
1500  
16 May 1970From: Commanding Officer  
To: Distribution List

Subj: Instruction in the Rules of Engagement

Ref: (a) CO 4th CAG ltr 6/RDK/hde 1500 of 23 Apr 70 (Subj: Fire discipline)

Enclosure: (1) Rules of Engagement Quiz

1. Enclosure (1) contains a list of question-answer items pertaining to the rules of engagement as they apply to CAPs. The question-answer form was chosen to facilitate instruction of troops in the rules of engagement. The concepts contained in the question-answer items are not merely for guidance, but are directive in nature.

2. In conjunction with reference (a), enclosure (1) will be used as a basis for instructing all CAP Marines and corpsmen in the rules of engagement. Instruction will be supervised closely by CACO Commanders, and will be held in such a manner as to positively insure that each man is fully knowledgeable of the rules of engagement. New men joining the CAPs must be instructed within 48 hours after arriving in the field. Records will be kept at the CAP and CACO levels, listing the names of all men who have been so instructed. These records will be kept in such a manner that no uninstructed CAP Marine or corpsman will be overlooked for more than 48 hours.

3. Initial instruction of all CAP Marines and corpsmen will be completed and such fact reported to this Headquarters by 21 May 1970.

4. Knowledge of rules of engagement will be checked routinely during the course of CACO inspections and formal CAC visits.

5. Personnel not regularly assigned to a CAP may occasionally participate in CAP activities. No such person will participate in a CAP combat activity of any sort without first having been instructed in the rules of engagement. Responsibility for conducting the instruction will rest with the officer authorizing such participation.

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6. Troop instruction in the rules of engagement is to be considered a matter of the highest importance.

R. D. King  
R. D. KING

DISTRIBUTION:

CO, CACO 4-1 (2)  
CO, CACO 4-2 (2)  
CO, CACO 4-3 (2)  
Each CAP Sqd Ldr (1)

S-1

S-3

S-4

Med

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~~CONFIDENTIAL~~**UNCLASSIFIED**RULES OF ENGAGEMENT QUIZ

1. Q: While in ambush position, you hear movement in the underbrush 50 meters to your front. Should you fire at the movement?

A: No. The target must first be clearly identified as an enemy. Get your weapon ready, take good cover, silently alert the men adjacent, and wait for the target to become identifiable. Do not fire illumination. If it is an enemy, he does not know you are near, otherwise he would make no noise. You have every advantage in this situation.

2. Q: While in ambush position, you hear movement in the underbrush to your front. While you are thinking about that, an incoming grenade lands and explodes 10 meters to your right. Should you fire at the movement?

A: Yes. Even though you can't see it, the target has identified itself as enemy by performing a hostile act.

3. Q: While in ambush position, you see a human figure at 200 meters moving toward you. The figure appears to be armed, but cannot be further identified. Should you shoot?

A: No. Wait for the target to get closer, and make use of the starlight scope to identify the target. Only when you are reasonably certain the target is enemy may you shoot. If need be, when the target is at its closest point, use a challenge or illumination in an effort to identify the target.

4. Q: While in an ambush position, an unarmed person wearing civilian clothes walks into the killing zone. Should you shoot him?

A: No. This is probably just a curfew violator. Curfew violators do not rate being shot. Curfew violators should be halted by a challenge and apprehended, preferably by a PF.

5. Q: A curfew violator runs away when challenged. Should you shoot him?

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A: No. Do not even fire warning shots, as it may trigger the full killing power of the ambush. Move the ambush to a new site.

6. Q: An apparently unarmed person dressed in khaki shorts, khaki shirt, bush hat, wearing some sort of web gear around his waist, and carrying a sack over his shoulder walks into your ambush killing zone. Should you shoot?

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ENCLOSURE (1)

**UNCLASSIFIED**

A: By all means, this is an enemy soldier. He may be carrying unseen grenade or a pistol. If practical, especially if he has no cover to jump into, order him to halt in hopes of taking him alive. If he runs, shoot to kill.

7. Q: While in an ambush position, through your starlight scope, you observe two unarmed persons in civilian clothes planting what appears to be a mine in a trail. The range is 150 meters. Should you shoot?

A: By all means. These persons are identified as enemy by the fact they are performing a hostile act.

8. Q: While in an ambush position, one of your trip flares ignites 50 meters to your front. You see nothing. Should you put fire into the area of the flare?

A: No. You do not have a clearly identifiable target. The target may be a dog, a curfew violator, or a friendly. Stay alert, insure you have good cover, and wait for further developments.

9. Q: Two armed enemy soldiers are spotted talking to some civilians next to some inhabited hooches. The range is 150 meters. Should you shoot?

A: You may not shoot until the enemy move so that the civilians are out of the line of fire. If you are lucky, this will happen and you will get your kill. In terms of winning the war in your area, it is better to let some VC get away than it is to kill some civilians along with them.

10. Q: While in an ambush position, you receive small arms and RPG fire from an enemy force. There are several inhabited hooches in your line of fire. Should you return the enemy fire?

A: No. The requirement to defend yourself against attack applies in this case. Use proper care, but if you do happen to injure some civilians, you will not be held at fault.

11. Q: You observe a squad of enemy armed with AK-47s and RPGs across a small stream which marks the limit of your AO. The range is 200 meters. May you open fire on them?

A: Not until you have received clearance from your District Chief (via CACO), as the target is out of your AO. But see #12, below.

12. Q: An enemy force located 100 meters outside your AO initiates fire on your ambush position. Should you return fire without waiting for District clearance?

A: Yes. The rule of defense against attack applies. Notify CACO in these circumstances.

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ENCLOSURE (1)

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13. Q: You spot an enemy force through your starlight scope in your AO at a range of 300 meters. The enemy is moving away, so you cannot get closer. May you engage the target with your 60mm mortar?

A: Only after getting CAGO clearance for use of 60mm HE. You must insure that your fire will not harm civilians, for if it will, you must hold your fire.

14. Q: CAP PF report to you that the villagers say there are 50 VC located in an assembly area at certain coordinates. The target is within 60mm range and is in your AO. May you fire on the grid?

A: Not without District Chief's clearance. Unobserved fires on a suspected target require District Chief's clearance. H&L fires fall under this category, too.

15. Q: Your weapon needs to be test fired for zero or for a check of mechanical functioning. What procedure must you follow?

A: You must get the CAP Squad Leader's personal permission, and he must supervise personally. The impact area must be carefully chosen, with absolute assurance that it is cleared of people and livestock, and it must be the kind of area that can be easily kept under surveillance, such as a sandy plain. There is no possible excuse for injuring civilians or livestock while test firing or FAM firing weapons.

16. Q: While you are in an ambush position without a starlight scope, a human figure is seen moving across your front at a distance of 100 meters. He looks like he may be carrying a weapon, but you are not sure. You cannot see what kind of clothes he is wearing, and you cannot tell if he is carrying or wearing equipment. May you shoot him?

A: No. Your identification is not adequate. If you cannot intercept him with a killer patrol and make a reasonably certain identification, you must let this one go.

17. Q: What is a "free fire zone?"

A: There is no such thing in I Corps. There is no such thing as an area in which "anything that moves" is "fair game." The target must always be identified as enemy.

18. Q: While on daylight patrol, you observe an NVA battalion occupying one of the hamlets in your AO. You have several M-72 LAW's, two N-79's, and the CAP 60mm Mortar in support. May you blast away at the NVA?

A: Not until you have gotten District Chief's clearance through CAGO. Only with such clearance may you initiate fire on a populated area. Once clearance is obtained, make every effort to avoid being...

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ENCLOSURE (1)

19. Q: While in a night ambush position, you see a fishing boat without lights moving down a river in violation of curfew. The river is in your AO and the range is 200 meters. May you fire on the boat?

A: Not until you have first done the following:

- (a) Shout for the boat to halt (in VN), and if feasible, signal the boat with 3 long flashes with a flashlight;
- (b) If that doesn't work, fire 3 shots in the air and repeat step (a), above;
- (c) If that doesn't work, fire 3 shots into the water ahead of the boat; and
- (d) While accomplishing the above, notify CACO and request permission to fire if the boat does not respond. If the boat fails to respond or tries to escape, with CACO permission, you may blast it. If the boat crew commits a hostile act (shoots at you) you may blast it in any case.

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THE CONCEPTS CONTAINED IN THE ABOVE QUESTION-ANSWER ITEMS ARE NOT MERELY FOR GUIDANCE. THEY ARE DIRECTIVE IN NATURE AND MUST BE COMPLIED WITH.

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ENCLOSURE (1)

HEADQUARTERS  
4th Combined Action Group  
III Marine Amphibious Force  
FPO San Francisco 96602

3/HGD/hde  
5312  
14 May 1970

From: Commanding Officer  
To: Commanding Officer, Combined Action Force  
  
Subj: Interpreter Evaluation Report; submission of  
  
Ref: (a) ForO 5312.8A  
      (b) AC/S Ltr 14/jib/5312 dtd 20 Jan 69  
  
Encl: (1) Interpreter Evaluation Report  
  
1. In accordance with reference (a) and (b), enclosure (1) is submitted.

*H. G. Duncan*  
H. G. DUNCAN  
By direction

INTERPRETER EVALUATION REPORT1. NAME Thieu Quang Thinh RANK Sgt SN 70/5099292. Unit assigned to for duty: 4th Combined Action Group3. a. Enlistment date: 28 May 1968

b. Discharge date: \_\_\_\_\_

c. Total No. of Months active duty: 23 months4. Period of Report: 15 April - 15 May 1970

5. Language Proficiency:

Spoken: GoodComprehension: GoodReading: GoodWritten: Good6. Character: ExcellentEfficiency: Excellent

7. Remarks: Sgt Thinh continues to demonstrate loyalty and purpose. He improves his language capability through study, as well as close association with the men of Headquarters, CACO 4-3. Sgt Thinh is extremely cooperative and is deemed a valuable member of this Command.

(Signature of Rater)  
H. R. DUNCAN  
(Printed Name & Title)4th Combined Action Group  
(Unit)14 May 1970  
(Date)

Instructions: Language proficiency should be listed as Good, Fair or Poor. Character and Efficiency should be listed as outstanding, excellent, satisfactory or unsatisfactory.

INTERPRETER EVALUATION REPORT1. NAME Vo Van Lei RANK S/Sgt SN 69/1427582. Unit assigned to for duty: 4th Combined Action Group3. a. Enlistment date: 23 Feb 1967

b. Discharge date: \_\_\_\_\_

c. Total No. of Months active duty: 38 months4. Period of Report: 15 April - 15 May 1970

5. Language Proficiency:

Spoken: GoodComprehension: GoodReading: GoodWritten: Good6. Character: OutstandingEfficiency: Excellent

7. Remarks: S/Sgt Loi continues to be an asset to this Command. He has proven himself to be a very trustworthy, competent and reliable interpreter. S/Sgt Loi continues to improve his ability to speak, write and comprehend the English language by spending many of his off-duty hours studying.

(Signature of Rater)  
H.G. DUNCAN  
(Printed Name & Title)4th Combined Action Group  
(Unit)14 May 1970  
(Date)

Instructions: Language proficiency should be listed as Good, Fair or Poor. Character and Efficiency should be listed as outstanding, excellent, satisfactory or unsatisfactory.

INTERPRETER EVALUATION REPORT1. NAME Huynh Trong Nhan RANK S/Sgt SN 69/1424322. Unit assigned to for duty: 4th Combined Action Group3. a. Enlistment date: 13 Dec 1967

b. Discharge date: \_\_\_\_\_

c. Total No. of Montas active duty: 28 months4. Period of Report: 15 April - 15 May 1970

5. Language Proficiency:

Spoken: GoodComprehension: GoodReading: GoodWritten: Good6. Character: ExcellentEfficiency: Excellent

7. Remarks: S/Sgt Nhan has been with the Headquarters Group less than a month and has shown a great deal of promise. His attention to duty, cooperation, initiative and leadership ability are all his foremost advantages. S/Sgt Nhan spends a great many hours studying in order to improve his education and understanding of Americans.

(Signature of Rater)  
H.G. DUNCAN  
(Printed Name & Title)4th Combined Action Group  
(Unit)

14 May 1970

(Date)

Instructions: Language proficiency should be listed as Good, Fair or Poor. Character and Efficiency should be listed as outstanding, excellent, satisfactory or unsatisfactory.

INTERPRETER EVALUATION REPORT1. NAME Phan Van Chau RANK S/Sgt SM 66/2079242. Unit assigned to for duty: 4th Combined Action Group

3. a. Enlistment date: \_\_\_\_\_

b. Discharge date: \_\_\_\_\_

c. Total No. of Months active duty: \_\_\_\_\_

4. Period of Report: 15 April - 15 May 1970

5. Language Proficiency:

Spoken: GoodComprehension: GoodReading: GoodWritten: Fair6. Character: Unsatisfactory Efficiency: Unsatisfactory

7. Remarks: During the past two months S/Sgt Chau's efficiency has greatly been reduced. His attitude toward the Command and his job assignment have a great deal to be desired. S/Sgt Chau, has in the past, been an asset to the Command.

(Signature of Rater)(Printed Name & Title)14 May 1970(Date)4th Combined Action Group(Unit)

Instructions: Language proficiency should be listed as Good, Fair or Poor. Character and Efficiency should be listed as outstanding, excellent, satisfactory or unsatisfactory.