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HEADQUARTERS  
Provisional Marine Aircraft Group 39  
1st Marine Aircraft Wing, FMFPac  
FPO San Francisco, 96602

2:GGS:rlf  
5750

17 MAY 1975

SECRET (Unclassified Upon Removal of Enclosures)

From: Commanding Officer  
To: Commanding General, 9th Marine Amphibious Brigade

Subj: Command Chronology for period 1 May to 12 May 1975

Ref: (a) MCO 5750.1  
(b) FMFPacO 5750.8B  
(c) CTG 79.1 msg DTG 270622ZApr75

Encl: ✓(1) PROVMA-39 Command Chronology  
✓(2) HMM - 463 Command Chronology  
✓(3) HMM - 462 Command Chronology  
(4) HMM - 165 Command Chronology

1. (U) In accordance with the provisions of references (a), (b) and (c), enclosures (1), (3) and (4) are submitted herewith.

2. (U) Enclosure (2), HMM-463 Command Chronology, to be submitted by separate correspondence.

*F. G. McLenon*  
F. G. MCLENON

PART 2 OF A 6 PART DOCUMENT

CLASSIFIED BY: 2 CO, PROVMA-39  
SUBJECT TO GENERAL DECLASSIFICATION  
SCHEDULE OF EXECUTIVE ORDER 11652  
AUTOMATICALLY DOWNGRADED AT TWO YEAR  
INTERVALS. DECLASSIFIED ON 31 DEC 1983

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HEADQUARTERS  
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5750

COMMAND CHRONOLOGY

1 May to 12 May 1975

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ENCLOSURE (1)

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## ORGANIZATIONAL DATA

**COMMANDER**

Colonel F. G. MCLENON  
1May75 to 12May75

HMH - 463  
HMH - 462  
HMM - 165

LtCol H. FIX  
LtCol J. L. BOLTON  
LtCol J. P. KIZER

Sub-Unit #2, H&MS-36

OIC Capt PRITLE

PROVMAG-39

1May75 to 2May75  
Aboard the USS BLUE RIDGE  
on-station off the coast  
of RVN  
3May75 to 4May75  
Aboard the USS BLUE RIDGE  
enroute Subic Bay, P.I.  
5May75 to 12May75  
NAS, Cubi Point, P.I.

1May75 to 3May75  
Aboard the USS HANCOCK  
enroute Subic Bay, P.I.  
4May75 Transfer to the  
USS ENTERPRISE enroute  
Hawaii

1May75 to 12May75  
Aboard the USS OKINAWA  
enroute to and in-port  
Manila, P.I.

1May75 to 12May75  
Aboard the USS DEBUQUE  
enroute Okinawa, Japan  
with Detachments aboard  
the USS OKINAWA and  
the USS HANCOCK enroute  
to and in-port Subic Bay  
and Manila, P.I.

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Sub-Unit #2, H&amp;MS-36

1May75 to 12May75  
Aboard the USS ANCHORAGE  
enroute to Atsugi, Japan3. STAFF OFFICERS

Executive Officer

Major M. W. LUTES  
1May75 to 12May75

S-1 Officer

Major R. G. CLAPP  
1May75 to 12May75

S-2 Officer

1stLt G. G. SIMMONS  
1May75 to 12May75

S-3 Officer

Major R. F. CAPTOR  
1May75 to 12May75

S-4 Officer

Major R. M. NEBEL  
1May75 to 12May75

Communications Officer

2ndLt F. CRILLEY  
1May75 to 12May75

FORSTAT Officer

CWO-4 C. D. HAMILTON  
1May75 to 12May754. AVERAGE MONTHLY STRENGTH

<u>USMC</u>		<u>USN</u>		<u>OTHER</u>	
<u>OFF</u>	<u>ENL</u>	<u>OFF</u>	<u>ENL</u>	<u>OFF</u>	<u>ENL</u>
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(C) During the reporting period the PROVMAg remained aboard shipping in the South China Sea until the Fleet departed for the Philippines on 2 May 1975. Upon arrival at NS Subic Bay on 4 May 1975, PROVMAg Headquarters moved ashore to NAS Cubi Point. The week that followed was highlighted by administrative and After Action reports. On 9 May 1975 the Commanding Officer participated in a Joint Chiefs of Staff briefing for Operation FREQUENT WIND. PROVMAg 39 was deactivated on 12 May 1975 and personnel concerned returned to their parent units.

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ENCLOSURE (1)

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PART IIISEQUENTIAL LISTING OF SIGNIFICANT EVENTS1. (S) FMF organizations committed to combat:

## a. Combat missions assigned:

19 April 1975

Continuation of PROVMAg  
tasks assigned by 9th MAB  
Ref: 9th MAB OpOrder 2-75(S)  
(Previously submitted by  
9th MAB)

## b. Significant Operations conducted:

2 May 1975

FREQUENT WIND Situation  
Report (S)  
Ref: CTG 79.1 msg  
020306ZMay75(S)  
(Tab A to Enclosure (1))

During the period immediately following the evacuation PROVMAg helicopters were idle while men and machines rested. By 1 May 1975 the helicopters were again in the air to perform the various tasks of transferring refugees to the designated ships.

c. Casualties inflicted on the enemy: None

d. Casualties sustained: None

e. New techniques employed: None

f. Command Relations: Remained very good until the units were deactivated.

g. Equipment: Only problem occurred when the backload of helicopters were being loaded aboard the USS OKINAWA (LPH-3) for transfer to Okinawa, Japan. One UH1E developed hydraulic trouble, was unable to fly aboard the ship, and was left at NAS Cubi Point with a crew for repairs.

h. Logistics: Remained very good throughout the reporting period, no problems encountered.

i. Civic Action: Medical evacuation during the period of

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ENCLOSURE (1)

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transferring evacuees/refugees to different ships, was expedited by the use of helicopters.

j. Administration: The task organization of the PROVMAg remained constant until deactivation.

k. Personnel: Personnel problems were held to a minimum by the extremely small staff used for the operation. Upon deactivation of the PROVMAg all personnel reported to their parent units within MAG-36 and were then processed back into their units.

l. Intelligence: Although very little information was received of the true picture that existed in Saigon, the Intelligence Section continued to function on a limited basis to keep the commander informed. In addition, other areas of interest were continually watched and reported on.

m. Communications: Communications guard for PROVMAg remained aboard the USS BLUE RIDGE, while in port at Subic Bay, P.I. On the 6th of May the BLUE RIDGE sailed, at which time communications guard and the 9th MAB Staff were shifted to the USS DENVER. On the 9th of May the USS DENVER sailed and the PROVMAg communications guard was shifted to the Naval Telecommunications Center, Cubi Point and remained until PROVMAg was deactivated.

n. Weather: The weather service provided by TF 76 continued to be very reliable and timely for the duration of the operating period at sea (1-4May75).

o. Fire Support: None

p. Air Support: With the termination of air operations on 30 April, there was little need for fire power from TACAIR or gunships.

q. Activations/deactivations/redesignations:

5 May 1975

Chop of HMH-463  
Ref: CTF 79 msg 060640ZMay75 (C)  
(Tab B to Enclosure (1))

12 May 1975

Deactivation of PROVMAg-39  
Ref: CTG 79.1 msg  
100438ZMay75 (C)  
(Tab C to Enclosure (1))

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ENCLOSURE (1)

PART IV

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS

1. (U) Enclosures (2) through (4) are enclosed in this section.

2 May 1975

FREQUENT WIND After Action  
Report (C)  
Ref: CTF 76 msg  
020344ZMay75(S)  
(Tab D to Enclosure (1))

2 May 1975

FREQUENT WIND After Action  
Report (S)  
Ref: CTG 79.1 msg  
021510ZMay75(S)  
(Tab E to Enclosure (1))

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ENCLOSURE (1)



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OTISZYUW RUHGPM0185 1220306-SSSS--RUHGSUU.

ZNY SSSSS

O 020306Z MAY 75

FM CTG SEVEN NINE PT ONE

TO USSAG/7AF NAKHON PHANOM APRT TH

COMSEVENTHFLT

INFO CG FMFPAC CAMP H M SMITH HI

ZEN/CTF SEVEN SIX

CTF SEVEN NINE

BT

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FREQUENT WIND SITUATION REPORT (S)

A. COMSEVENTHFLT 300856Z APR 75 (PASEP)

B. COMSEVENTHFLT 300526Z APR 75 (PASEP)

C. CINCPAC HONOLULU HI 300325Z APR 75 (NOTAL)

D. CINCPACFLT MAKALAPA HI 010444Z MAY 75 (PASEP)

E. CINCPACFLT MAKALAPA HI 010444Z MAY 75 (NOTAL)

1. (U) THE FOLLOWING REPORT IS SUBMITTED IAW PARA2A REF A AND REF E. REF B,C, AND D REFER.

2. THIS PARAGRAPH IS KEYED TO PARA 1B(4) 1B(5) AND 1B(6) OF REF C IAW REF B.

A. NUMBER OF MARINE SORTIES FLOWN:

HELO TYPE	MISSION	DAY	NIGHT	TOTAL
CH-53	EVAC/GSF	172/25	147/22	312/47
CH-46	EVAC/OTHER	90/12	123/32	213/44
AH-1J	ESCORT	20	27	47
UH-1E	C&C	3	11	14
TOTAL		322	360	682

B. MUNITIONS EXPENDED: NONE; VERIFIED BY EACH SQUADRON.

C. CASUALTIES TO PERSONNEL OR EQUIPMENT:

(1) PERSONNEL - TWO CH46 PILOTS LOST AT SEA.

(2) EQUIPMENT - ONE CH-46

ONE AH-1J

3. (S) THE FOLLOWING INFO IS KEYED TO REF E FOR MARINE HELOS:

A. TOTAL HELO CREW HOURS - 1054.0

B. MAX CREW DAY-HOURS - 22.5

C. AVERAGE CREW DAY-HOURS - 13.0

GDS 33

BT

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O Staff

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O Ship

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SSN/L

Sect

Name

Chnl Nr

COG

Draft

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SWO

Ship

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air support.

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TAB A

ENCLOSURE (1)

MILITARY

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C		COG	_____
O Staff	<i>gold</i>	Draft	_____
L		Rel	_____
O Ship	_____		
R	_____		
SSN/LD	_____	P	_____
Sect	<i>A</i>	R	Yes _____
Name	<i>AL</i>	E	SWO _____
Chnl Nr	<i>2-210</i>	R	Ship _____
		O	Time _____
		U	
		T	
		E	

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 MTTCZYUW RUMRABAB772 1262642-CCCC--RUMGPMA.  
 LLY CCCCC

060540Z MAY 75  
 RM CTF SEVEN NINE  
 TO RUMHFAA/CG FIRST MAREDE  
 INFO RUMCHDA/CG FMFPAC  
 RUMGDA/CG SEVENTHFLT  
 AMANSA/CTG SEVEN NINE PT THREE  
 RUMGPMA/CTG SEVEN NINE PT ONE  
 RUMNCOM/USG ENTERPRISE  
 BT

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 USG ENTERPRISE FOR INFO PASS TO CG RMH 463 FOR INFO.  
 CHOP OF RMH 463(U)  
 1. (C) EFFECTIVE 050100Z MAY 75 RMH 463 CHOP TO CG FIRST  
 MAREDE.  
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TAB B

ENCLOSURE (1)

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TAB R

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PTICZGVW RUHSGGG4093 1302012-CCCC--RUMMWIA.

ZNY CCCCC

ZOV RUHSGGG4396 REROUTE OF RUHGAYR4093 1301159

RHMGOA T CTU SEVEN NINE PT ONE PT THREE

RUMMWIA T CTU SEVEN NINE PT ONE PT FOUR

P 120438Z MAY 75

FM CTG SEVEN NINE PT ONE

TO RUHGAYR/CTU SEVEN NINE PT ONE PT ONE

RHMGOA/CTU SEVEN NINE PT ONE PT TWO

RUHGAYR/CTU SEVEN NINE PT ONE PT THREE ZOF

RUHGAYR/CTU SEVEN NINE PT ONE PT FOUR

INFO RUMRADA/CTG SEVEN NINE PT TWO

RHARSAA/CTG SEVEN NINE PT THREE

RUAQANA/VFTG SEVEN NINE PT SIX

BT

C O N F I D E N T I A L //N03120//

DEACTIVATION OF NINTH MAB (C)

A. CTF SEVEN NINE 090700Z MAY 75

B. TELECON MAJ YOUNG NINTH MAB AND COL JOHNSON CTF 79 04 10 MAY 75

C. NWIP 10-1

D. NTP-4

1. (C) JAW REFS A AND B FOR ACTION DIRECTED EFF 112400Z MAY 75:

A. NINTH MAB DEACTIVATED TO INCLUDE RCT-4, PROV MAG 39, AND B.

REESTABLISH NINTH MAB NUCLEUS SIMULTANEOUSLY.

B. FOR PROV MAG 39: CHOP IMM 165 TO CTF 79.

C. FOR ELSG: CHOP LSU 2/4 TO CTF 79.

D. COMM CO (-(RFIN)): CHOP TO CTF 79.

2. (U) PERSONNEL TO BE RETAINED IDENTIFIED BY SEP MSG.

3. (U) SUBMIT MOVREPS AND COMMSHIFTS JAW REFS C AND D.

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#4093

PROVMAG 39

Comm TEL  
Supervisor

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CG 111111  
1203342M75TAB C  
ENCLOSURE (1)



(1) UNDER THE COMMAND/OPCON OF CTF 76, RADM D.B. WHITMIRE COMMANDING:

- (A) ONE AMPHIBIOUS COMMAND SHIP (CTF 76 FLAGSHIP).
- (B) THREE AMPHIBIOUS READY GROUPS, CONSISTING OF FIFTEEN AMPHIBIOUS SHIPS, INCLUDING ONE HELICOPTER CARRIER (LPH), THREE AMPHIBIOUS SQUADRON COMMANDERS AND STAFFS.
- (C) TWO ATTACK CARRIERS, CONFIGURED AS HELO PLATFORMS (CVAH) WITH USMC AND USAF HELOS EMBARKED.
- (D) EIGHT ESCORT AND NAVAL GUNFIRE SUPPORT (NGFS) SHIPS, WITH THREE DESTROYER SQUADRON COMMANDER EMBARKED.
- (E) THE GROUND SECURITY FORCE (GSF) CONSISTING OF A MARINE AMPHIBIOUS BRIGADE, UNDER THE COMMAND OF BGEN R.E. CAREY, USMC, ONE REGIMENTAL LANDING TEAM (RLT), A PROVISIONAL MARINE AIR GROUP (PROVMAG), AND A BRIGADE LOGISTICS SUPPORT GROUP (BLSG).
- (F) SURGICAL/MEDICAL TEAMS WERE DEPLOYED ABOARD TF SHIPS.

(2) IN DIRECT SUPPORT OF THIS NEMVAC OPERATION WERE:

- (A) TWO ADDITIONAL ATTACK CARRIERS (CVAs) WITH EMBARKED AIR WINGS.
- (B) AVAILABLE MOBILE LOGISTIC SUPPORT FORCES (MLSF), INCLUDING REPLENISHMENT SHIPS AND FLEET TUGS.
- (C) CONSEVENTHFLT'S FLAGSHIP (USS OKLAHOMA CITY) WAS AVAILABLE FOR NGFS.
- (D) RECONNAISSANCE AND SURVEILLANCE AIRCRAFT.
- (E) TWO ADDITIONAL MARINE BATTALIONS, UNDER OPERATIONAL CONTROL (OPCON) OF CG III MARINE AMPHIBIOUS FORCE (MAF), WERE AVAILABLE AS A CONTINGENCY RESERVE.

D. OTHER UNITS/FORCES AVAILABLE INCLUDED:

- (1) SUPPORT PROVIDED BY MILITARY SEALIFT COMMAND (MSC) SHIPS IN RVN WATERS.
- (2) TEN USAF (CH-53/8 AND HH-53/8) HELOS WERE EMBARKED ON USS MIDWAY UNDER OPCON OF CTF 76.
- (3) COMUSSAG/7AF EXERCISED OPCON OF THE GSF AND NAVY/MARINE AIR WHILE ASHORE "FEET DRY" AND PROVIDED AIR FORCE TACTICAL AIR SUPPORT.

B. PHASE I - DEPLOYMENT: THIS PHASE ENCOMPASSED THE TIME PERIOD 18/9 APR 75 TO COMMENCEMENT OF FREQUENT WIND EXECUTION ON 290000Z APR 75. PRINCIPAL ACTIVITIES DURING THIS PERIOD WERE FINALIZATION OF EVACUATION PLANNING, LIAISON WITH US EMBASSY/USDAO-SAIGON, AND USSAG/7AF AND DEPLOYMENT OF THE TASK FORCE.

(1) ON 18/9 APR CTF 76 WAS DIRECTED TO SAIL ALL UNITS TO A HOLDING AREA OFF VUNG TAU, RVN AND AWAIT FURTHER INSTRUCTIONS. TWO OF THE THREE AMPHIBIOUS READY GROUPS (ARGs) WITH ALL THREE HELO PLATFORMS WERE ON STATION AND PROTECTED BY ESCORTS BY 21/3 APR. THE REMAINING ARG SHIPPING ARRIVED ON STATION 24/6 APR (LESS USS ANCHORAGE). THERE WERE NO SIGNIFICANT CHANGES IN AVAILABLE SHIPPING AFTER THIS POINT. TF SHIPS ALSO CONTINUED TO ASSIST MSC-SAIGON WITH REFUGEE EVACUATION SUPPORT DURING THIS PHASE OF FREQUENT WIND. DUE TO THE POTENTIAL NVN SHORE FIRE, AIR AND NAVAL THREAT TF 76 IMPLEMENTED THE FULL SPECTRUM OF PROTECTIVE MEASURES.

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(2) THE GROUND SUPPORT FORCE (GSF) COMMANDER AND KEY MEMBERS OF THE CTF 76 AND 9TH MAB STAFFS CONDUCTED DIRECT LIAISON WITH US EMBASSY AND USDAO-SAIGON, CINCPAC AND CINCPACFLT REPRESENTATIVES-SAIGON AND USSAG/7AF IN ORDER TO FINALIZE AND INSURE COMPATABILITY OF NEMVAC PLANNING. THREE PRINCIPAL LANDING ZONES AND ONE WATERBORNE EVACUATION SITE WERE IDENTIFIED AND SURVEYED. THESE INCLUDED LANDING ZONES (LZ) AT THE USDAO COMPOUND/AIR AMERICA RAMP (VICINITY TAN SON NHUT AIRFIELD), AT THE AMERICAN EMBASSY IN DOWNTOWN SAIGON, AND A COMBINATION LZ/WATERBORNE EVACUATION SITE AT THE NEWPORT PIER COMPLEX.

(3) AS DIRECTED BY HIGHER AUTHORITY, NINTH MAB PROVIDED A FORTY MAN AUGMENTATION TO THE EXISTING USMC EMBASSY SECURITY GUARD. THEY WERE FLOWN TO SAIGON VIA AIR AMERICA HELOS ON 25/7 APR 75. THESE PERSONNEL WERE POSITIONED AT THE USDAO COMPOUND.

(4) BASED ON THE PLANNING GUIDANCE RECEIVED FROM HIGHER AUTHORITY, THE FOLLOWING MEANS FOR THE NEMVAC EVACUATION OF SAIGON WERE INVESTIGATED:

(A) COURSE OF ACTION ONE: HELICOPTER EVACUATION ONLY.

(B) COURSE OF ACTION TWO: MSC SHIP AND/OR USN BOAT WATERBORNE EVACUATION ONLY.

(C) COURSES OF ACTION THREE: EMPLOY A COMBINATION OF THE EVACUATION MEANS LISTED ABOVE.

(D) WITH EACH OF THESE COURSES OF ACTION AN ADDITIONAL REQUIREMENT FOR THE GSF TO SECURE AS DIRECTED, AN EVACUATION PROCESSING AREA (VICINITY OF VUNG TAU) WAS ADDRESSED.

(5) THE EMPHASIS IN PLANNING WAS TO EMPLOY HELICOPTER EVACUATION

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FM CTF SEVEN SIX

TO COMSEVENTHFLT

INFO CTF SEVEN SEVEN

CTF SEVEN NINE

ZEN/CTG SEVEN NINE PT ONE

CTG SEVEN SIX PT THREE

CTG SEVEN SIX PT FOUR

CTG SEVEN SIX PT FIVE

CTG SEVEN SIX PT NINE

CTU SEVEN SIX PT ZERO PT ONE

CTU SEVEN SIX PT ZERO PT NINE

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AS THE PRIMARY MEANS AND SECONDARILY USE WATERBORNE MEANS. DUE TO THE UNCERTAIN MILITARY AND POLITICAL SITUATION IN SAIGON, PLANNING ADDRESSED THE WORST CASE SITUATION ON THE ASSUMPTION THAT WITH ANY LESSER THREAT IN THE OBJECTIVE AREA THE MISSION COULD BE ACCOMPLISHED WITHIN THE SCOPE OF THIS PLANNING.

(A) PLANS TO EVACUATE CAN THO BY EITHER HELO OR WATERBORNE MEANS, WERE ALSO DEVELOPED.

(B) THE REQUIREMENT TO SECURE AN EVACUEE HOLDING AREA AT VUNG TAU WAS ADDRESSED DURING INITIAL FREQUENT WIND PLANNING. DUE TO THE ENEMY THREAT, AND THE NUMBER OF REFUGEES IN THE AREA; HOWEVER, IT WAS NOT CONSIDERED A VIABLE OPTION CONSIDERING THE LIMITED USMC FORCES AVAILABLE.

(C) THE PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS ADDRESSED ABOVE WERE INCORPORATED INTO A COMPREHENSIVE CTF 76 OPLAN 5060V-1-75 WHICH WAS APPROVED BY COMSEVENTHFLT ON 20/2 APR 75. IN ADDITION TO THE EVACUATION OPTIONS DISCUSSED ABOVE THIS PLAN INCLUDED MEASURES FOR TASK FORCE SELF DEFENSE, AIRCRAFT CONTROL PROCEDURES, MEDICAL AND LOGISTIC AFFAIRS, EVACUEE CENSUS AND PROCESSING PROCEDURES.

(D) UPON ARRIVAL OF THE TASK FORCE IN THE HOLDING AREA OFF VUNG TAU A SIX HOUR RESPONSE TIME WAS ASSUMED. THIS WAS SUBSEQUENTLY ADJUSTED AND VARIED FROM ONE TO SIX HOURS DURING THE REMAINDER OF THE DEPLOYMENT PHASE.

(E) DURING THIS PHASE NUMEROUS PRACTICE EXERCISES WERE CONDUCTED TO TEST PORTIONS OF THE EXECUTION PLAN.

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C. PHASE II - EXECUTION: (290000Z TO 300000Z APR 75) DURING THIS 24/6 HOUR PERIOD TF SEVEN SIX CONDUCTED THE LARGEST HELIBORNE EVACUATION OPERATION YET RECORDED.

(1) THE EVACUATION WAS CONDUCTED PRIMARILY AT SAIGON, WITH ONE USN AND ONE MSC SHIP TASKED TO RECEIVE WATERBORNE EVACUEES FROM CAN THO.

(2) THE EVACUATION CAN BE BEST UNDERSTOOD IF DISCUSSED IN THE FOLLOWING SEGMENTS:

(A) HELO INSERTION OF THE GSF.

(B) HELO EVACUATION FROM THE USDAO AND EMBASSY LZS.

(C) EXTRACTION OF THE GSF FROM THE USDAO LZS.

(D) FURTHER EVACUATION FROM THE EMBASSY LZS.

(E) FINAL EXTRACTION OF THE GSF FROM THE EMBASSY.

(F) OTHER EVACUATION ACTIVITIES.

(3) HELO INSERTION OF THE GSF: UPON RECEIPT OF THE EXECUTE MESSAGE FINAL PREPARATIONS AND NECESSARY TROOP TRANSFERS WERE COMPLETED. THE GSF COMMANDER, BGEN CAREY, LIFTED OFF ENROUTE TO THE USDAO LZS AT 290605Z AND CONDUCTED A RECON OF THE AREA. HE WAS FOLLOWED BY FLIGHTS OF TROOP CARRYING HELOS (ALL CH 53 OR HH 53S) FROM MIDWAY, HANCOCK AND OKINAWA.

(A) THE FIRST LIFT OF 3/3 HELOS LANDED AT THE USDAO LZ AT 290706Z. FROM THIS POINT A FLOW OF HELOS BROUGHT IN 365/9 GSF TO THE USDAO COMPOUND AND 130/4 GSF MOVED ON TO THE EMBASSY. HOSTILE FIRE WAS ENCOUNTERED ENROUTE AND IN BOTH LZ AREAS.

(B) AS THE HELOS CROSSED OVER ONTO THE LAND ENROUTE TO THE LZS "FEET DRY" OPCOM OF THE OPERATION WAS ASSUMED BY USSAG/7AF WITH LOCAL CONTROL BY THE AIRBORNE BATTLEFIELD COMMAND AND CONTROL CENTER (ABCCC). THIS PROCESS WAS REVERSED AS THE HELOS WERE OUTBOUND AND WENT "FEET WET".

(4) HELO EVACUATION FROM THE USDAO AND EMBASSY LZS: THE HELOS WHICH BROUGHT IN THE GSF ELEMENTS WERE IMMEDIATELY BACKLOADED WITH EVACUEES AND AT 290712Z THE FIRST OF ALMOST 7000/7 U.S., THIRD COUNTRY NATIONALS (TCN) AND VIETNAMESE WERE ENROUTE TO TF 76 SHIPPING.

(A) ALTHOUGH SUBJECTED TO RANDOM HOSTILE FIRE, THE FLOW OF EVACUEES OUT OF THE USDAO WAS CONTINUOUS WITH OVER 4300/2 BEING REMOVED IN A SIX HOUR PERIOD. A 40/4 MAN USMC SECURITY DETACHMENT PREVIOUSLY INSERTED TO PROCESS EVACUEES AT USDAO WAS REMOVED DURING THIS PERIOD. EVACUATION FROM THE EMBASSY WAS SLOWER DUE TO THERE BEING ONLY TWO LZS (ONE CH-46 ON THE ROOF TOP AND ONE CH-53 CAPABLE LZ IN THE PATIO AREA) AND THE CROWDED CONDITIONS AROUND THE EMBASSY GROUNDS. SOME HOSTILE FIRE WAS RECEIVED AT THIS LOCATION DURING THE DAY AND IT INCREASED IN INTENSITY DURING THE NIGHT.

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(B) AS THE OUTBOUND HELOS WENT "FEET WET" CONTROL WAS ASSUMED BY THE IF 76 HELO DIRECTION CENTER (HDC) ABOARD OKINAWA. HDC THEN DIRECTED THE FLIGHTS TO EITHER A WET-WEEL AMPHIBIOUS SHIP OR HELICOPTER CARRIER FOR DEBARKATION. THE WET WELL SHIPS WERE ARRANGED IN A LINE INSHORE OF THE CARRIERS TO FACILITATE OFF LOAD, PROCESSING AND WATERBORNE MOVEMENT OF SELECTED EVACUEES TO MSC SHIPPING. THIS PROCEDURE WAS EMPLOYED TO LIMIT THE NUMBER OF EVACUEES ON THE EXTREMELY BUSY CARRIER DECKS. THIS OPERATION RESEMBLED A RAILROAD SWITCHING YARD WITH HDC ALLOCATING HELOS TO CLEAR DECKS AND THUS SPREADING THE LOAD OF EVACUEES AS EVENLY AS POSSIBLE AMONG THE SHIPS. AS HELOS WERE OFF LOADED AND REFUELED THEY WERE DISPATCHED BY HDC BACK TO SAIGON. THIS CREATED A CONTINUOUS FLOW OF HELOS IN AND OUT OF SAIGON. THE BULK OF THE EARLY LIFTS WERE CONDUCTED BY THE LARGE CAPACITY CH AND 44 53S.

(C) EXTRACTION OF THE GSF FROM THE USDAO LZS: WITH THE LAST LIFTS OF EVACUEES OUT OF THE USDAO LZS THE BACKLOAD OF THE GSF COMMENCED. THEY WERE REMOVED WITHOUT INCIDENT AND AT 291610Z, IN A SIMULTANEOUS LIFT BY FOUR CH-53S, THE REMAINING GSF CLEARED THE USDAO COMPOUND. A TOTAL OF 395/7 U.S. AND TCN; AND 4477/2 VIETNAMESE NATIONALS PLUS 865/9 GSF WERE EXTRACTED FROM THIS AREA.

(D) FURTHER EVACUATION FROM THE EMBASSY LZS: WHEN THE GSF WAS BACKLOADED FROM THE USDAO COMPOUND THERE WERE AN ESTIMATED 700/U.S. (INCLUDING THE U.S. AMBASSADOR) AND VIETNAMESE PERSONNEL PLUS 130/4 GSF AND APPROXIMATELY 40/4 USMC EMBASSY GUARDS STILL ON THE GROUND. AT THIS POINT AAA FIRE ON THE HELO ROUTES TO SAIGON WAS HEAVY WITH MULTIPLE SA-7 FIRINGS REPORTED. ONE HELO WAS HIT BY SUSPECTED AAA AND FORCED DOWN AT THE EMBASSY, IT WAS ABLE TO MAKE ITS WAY BACK UNDER ITS OWN POWER TO IF 76 HELO PLATFORM.

A. THE FINAL DRAWDOWN OF PERSONNEL AT THE EMBASSY WAS SLOWED BY THE LACK OF LZS, MARGINAL WEATHER CONDITIONS, HOSTILE FIRE,

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MECHANICAL BREAKDOWN OF HELOS, PILOT FATIGUE (SOME HAD BEEN FLYING 18/9 HOURS AT THIS POINT) AND THE CONSTANTLY INCREASING NUMBER OF VIETNAMESE TO BE REMOVED.

B. BASED ON DIRECTION FROM HIGHER AUTHORITY THE AMBASSADOR WAS INFORMED AT 291927Z0 THAT ONLY 19/0 ADDITIONAL FLIGHTS COULD BE MADE TO THE EMBASSY AND THAT HE WOULD HAVE TO LEAVE ON THE LAST (19TH HELO) FLIGHT. AT THIS POINT THE GSF WOULD BE BACKLOADED AND THE EVACUATION TERMINATED. THE LAST HELO LOAD OF EVACUEES WITH THE U.S. AMBASSADOR ABOARD LIFTED OFF THE EMBASSY ROOF AT 292058Z6 AND THE WITHDRAWAL OF THE GSF COMMENCED.

(7) FINAL EXTRACTION OF THE GSF FROM THE EMBASSY: AS THE EVACUATION FROM THE EMBASSY CONTINUED SMALL ARMS AND AAA FIRE INCREASED IN INTENSITY. LIGHT AAA WAS RECEIVED FROM WITHIN A FEW BLOCKS OF THE EMBASSY AND ALL ALONG THE HELO ROUTES. A HIGH VOLUME OF FIRE WAS ENCOUNTERED VICINITY OF NEWPORT AND NHA BE. ATTEMPTS TO VARY THE HELO ROUTES DID NOT MATERIALLY DECREASE THE VOLUME OF AAA FIRE RECEIVED. SMALL ARMS FIRE WAS REPORTED ALL AROUND THE EMBASSY. THE FINAL ELEMENTS OF THE GSF WERE WITHDRAWN BY CH-46 HELOS FROM THE ROOF TOP. THIS PROCESS WAS SLOW BUT PROVIDED SECURITY FOR THE GSF FROM THE MILLING CROWDS AROUND THE EMBASSY. AT 292346Z6 THE LAST GSF ELEMENT WAS EXTRACTED FROM THE EMBASSY ROOF. AT THIS TIME CROWDS WERE IN CONTROL OF THE LOWER FLOORS OF THE EMBASSY. THE LAST AMERICANS WERE SAFELY OUT OF SAIGON. THE LAST HELO WENT "FEET WET" AT 300006Z9 AND TOUCHED DOWN ON SHIPPING AT 300025Z0 APR 75. THIS COMPLETED THE EXECUTION PHASE OF FREQUENT WIND. ALL GSF WERE ACCOUNTED FOR WITH NO LOSSES AS A DIRECT RESULT OF THE EVACUATION.

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**(8) OTHER EVACUATION ACTIVITIES:**

(A) CONCURRENT WITH THE EVACUATION OF SAIGON, A ONE-SHIP UNIT (USS BARBOUR COUNTY) WAS DISPATCHED TO JOIN THE SS PIONEER CONTENDER WHICH WAS LYING OFF THE MOUTH OF THE BASSAC RIVER. THEIR MISSION WAS TO PICKUP THE U.S. CONSUL GENERAL FROM CAN THO AND HIS PARTY OF U.S., TCN AND VIETNAMESE EVACUEES WHO WERE ATTEMPTING TO ESCAPE DOWN RIVER TO THE SEA IN BOATS (MIKE 8 ASSAULT CRAFT) AND JOIN BARBOUR CTY AND CONTENDER. BY 291300Z IN THE EVENING THE PARTY HAD REACHED INTERNATIONAL WATERS AND SUBSEQUENTLY AT 291700Z JOINED WITH THE CONTENDER. ALTHOUGH ENROUTE FOR ABOUT 16/7 HOURS, THE ESCAPING GROUP SUFFERED NO LOSSES; HOWEVER, THEY DID COME UNDER CONSIDERABLE SMALL ARMS AND ROCKET FIRE.

(B) AS THE HELO LIFT WAS INITIATED, ALL REMAINING MSC SHIPPING IN SAIGON (ONE LST, TUGS AND BARGES) WERE ORDERED TO SEA. BY DAYBREAK 30/3 APR ALL SHIPS/BOATS HAD TRANSITED THE SHIPPING CHANNEL AND WERE SAFE IN THE HARBOR OFF VUNG TAU.

(C) A NUMBER OF HELOS WERE LAUNCHED ON SPECIAL PURPOSE MISSIONS IN SUPPORT OF THE HELO EVACUATION, SEARCH AND RESCUE (SAR), QUICK REACTION USMC GROUND FORCES (SPARROW HAWK) AND HELO GUNSHIPS. THERE WERE ONLY TWO HELO LOSSES, BOTH OF WHICH CRASHED AT SEA, AND WERE NOT DUE TO HOSTILE FIRE. A CH 46 SAR HELO CRASHED VICINITY OF THE USS HANCOCK WITH FOUR ABOARD (TWO RECOVERED, TWO LOST). A AH-1J HELO GUNSHIP ALSO WAS FORCED TO DITCH IN THE WATER, BOTH PILOTS RECOVERED SAFELY. THERE WERE NO PERSONNEL OR SIGNIFICANT EQUIPMENT LOSSES TO THE GSF WHILE "FEET DRY". THERE WERE TWO USMC KIA AT THE USDAO AS A RESULT OF ARTILLERY FIRE. THIS OCCURED PRIOR TO EXECUTION OF FREQUENT WIND. THESE MARINES WERE MEMBERS OF THE EMBASSY'S USMC GUARD DETACHMENT.

(D) AIR AMERICA (AA) ASSISTED IN PLANNING FOR THE EVACUATION OPERATION AND MATERIALLY ASSISTED IN GETTING U.S. CITIZENS TO THE USDAO COMPOUND BY LIFTING THEM OFF ROOFTOPS THROUGHOUT SAIGON AND BRINGING THEM TO THE USDAO COMPOUND. IN ADDITION, AA LIFTED PERSONNEL OUT TO TF 76 SHIPPING AND ON THEIR LAST LIFTS BROUGHT OUT THEIR FLYABLE HELOS TO NAVY DECKS.

(E) ON THE MORNING OF 29/1 APR A NUMBER OF VNAF HELOS BEGAN TO ESCAPE THE SAIGON AREA AND ATTEMPTED TO FLY OUT TO AND LAND ON USN HELO DECKS. THIS ACTIVITY STARTED IN EARNEST JUST AS THE FREQUENT WIND EXECUTE ORDER WAS BEING RECEIVED. IT RESULTED IN A VERITABLE "DEMOLITION DERBY" AROUND AND ABOARD USN HELO DECKS. ONLY SKILLFUL FLYING BY USMC PILOTS AND QUICK ACTIONS BY DECK CREWS PREVENTED SERIOUS LOSS OF PERSONNEL AND EQUIPMENT. INCOMING VNAF HELOS CUT OFF USMC HELOS ON THEIR FINAL APPROACHES, AND REFUSED TO BE WAVED OFF. IT WAS NOT UNCOMMON TO HAVE TWO OR THREE VNAF HELOS ALL TRYING TO LAND AT ONE TIME. DUE TO THE LACK OF STORAGE SPACE, IMMINENCE OF FREQUENT WIND HELO LAUNCH AND THE NUMBERS OF VNAF AIRCRAFT ATTEMPTING TO LAND MANY OF THEM HAD TO BE JETTISONED. OTHER VNAF HELOS DITCHED ALONG SIDE USN SHIPS AND THE CREWS WERE RESCUED BY SMALL CRAFT. FOR EXAMPLE, THE BLUE RIDGE HAD 15/6 ATTEMPTED VNAF HELO LANDING WITHING A FEW HOURS WITH TWO CRASHES, ONE ON THE FLIGHT DECK AND ONE AGAINST THE SPONSON DECK. THIS ACTIVITY, LESS THE CRASHES, WAS TYPICAL OF THE SITUATION THROUGHOUT THE TASK FORCE.

(F) PROVISIONS HAD BEEN MADE TO TRANSFER VN NATIONALS, WHO WERE HELD EVACUATED FROM SAIGON FROM USN WET-WEEL SHIPS TO MSC DEEP DRAFT SHIPS VIA MIKE 8 BOATING. TO FACILITATE THIS TRANSFER FENDERED CAUSEWAY SECTIONS WERE LAUNCHED AND SECURED TO MSC SHIPS. WHILE THIS ASSISTED IN EXPEDITIOUS LOADING, IT SERVED AS A MAGNET FOR REFUGEES IN SMALL BOATS WHO SOON CLOGGED THE APPROACHES TO THE CAUSEWAY WITH THEIR CRAFT. THE ONLY SOLUTION WAS TO MOVE THE MSC SHIPS FURTHER TO SEA OUT OF REACH OF THE SMALL CRAFT.

3. (S) PART II - MISSION ACCOMPLISHMENT:

A. THE MISSION OF CTF 76 WAS TO EVACUATE ALL KNOWN U.S. CITIZENS AND DESIGNATED ALIENS FROM SAIGON AND RECOVER THE GROUP ESCAPING FROM CAN THO.

(1) THIS WAS FULLY ACCOMPLISHED WITH APPROXIMATELY 1373/4 U.S. AND TCNS EXTRACTED AND 5597/6 VIETNAMESE HELD EVACUATED TO USN SHIPPING WITHOUT LOSS OR SERIOUS INJURY TO THE EVACUEES OR THE FORCES ASHORE.

(2) THIS EVACUATION WAS SUCCESSFULLY CARRIED OUT AT CONSIDERABLE RISK TO THE MARINE FORCES INVOLVED CONSIDERING THE HOSTILE THREAT, MARGINAL WEATHER CONDITIONS, AND PROLONGED AND INTENSIVE NIGHT HELD OPERATIONS.

B. THE FUTURE MISSION OF THE TASK FORCE IS TO PROVIDE ONWARD TRANSPORTATION OF THE EVACUEES IN ACCORDANCE WITH DIRECTION FROM HIGHER AUTHORITY. THIS OPERATION IS NOW IN PROGRESS.

4. (U) PART III LESSONS LEARNED: TO BE FORWARDED ASAP BY SEPARATE MESSAGE.

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AFTER ACTION REPORT FREQUENT WIND (S)

A. COMSEVENTHFLT 300336Z APR 75

B. COMSEVENTHFLT 020032Z MAY 75.

1. (U) IN ACCORDANCE WITH REFERENCES A AND B THE FOLLOWING AFTER ACTION REPORT INCLUDING LESSONS LEARNED IS SUBMITTED FOR NINTH MARINE AMPHIBIOUS BRIGADE.

2. (S) SUMMARY OF SIGNIFICANT EVENTS

A. COMMAND SUMMARY. ON 26 MARCH 1975, THE 9TH MARINE AMPHIBIOUS BRIGADE, COMMANDED BY BGEN R.E. CAREY, WAS ACTIVATED FOR PLANNING CONTINGENCY OPERATIONS, AS DIRECTED. INITIALLY, THE 9TH MAB CONSISTED OF THE 33RD AND 35TH MARINE AMPHIBIOUS UNITS. ON 11 APRIL 1975, THE MAB REPORTED TO CTF 76 FOR PLANNING OPERATION TALON VISE (SUBSEQUENTLY RENAMED OPERATION FREQUENT WIND). ON 13 APRIL 1975, THE 31ST MAU WAS CHOPPED FOR PLANNING TO THE BRIGADE. ON 18 APRIL 1975, THE 9TH MAB, NOW CONSISTING OF THREE MAU'S, THE 31ST, 33RD AND 35TH WAS REORGANIZED INTO A DOCTRINALLY STRUCTURED MARINE AMPHIBIOUS BRIGADE CONSISTING OF A HEADQUARTERS, RLT-4, PROVMA3-39, A BLSG, AND, ADDITIONALLY, A SECURITY DETACHMENT FORCE SUBSEQUENTLY CALLED THE AMPHIBIOUS EVACUATION SECURITY FORCE (AESF). THIS WAS THE ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE WHICH REPORTED TO CTF 76 FOR OPERATIONS ON 20 APRIL 1975. COMMENCING WITH ITS ACTIVATION AND CONTINUING THROUGH EXECUTION, CONCURRENT AND DETAILED PLANNING WAS CONDUCTED WITH CTF 76.

(1) GROUND SECURITY FORCE (GSF) ADVANCE PARTY. ON 20 APRIL 1975, BASED ON AUTHORITY RECEIVED FROM THE JCS, A FIVE MAN GSF ADVANCE COMMAND ELEMENT ARRIVED IN SAIGON TO ASSIST IN PLANNING AND CONDUCT OF OPERATION "FREQUENT WIND". THE GROUP WAS COMPOSED OF THE DEPUTY BRIGADE COMMANDER, (COL W.W. TAYLOR, JR.) A FIELD GRADE COMMUNICATIONS-ELECTRONICS OFFICER, FIELD GRADE NAVAL AVIATOR, AND EXPLOSIVE ORDNANCE DISPOSAL SPECIALISTS.

(A) EARLY EMPLOYMENT INCLUDED BRIEFINGS BY THE COMMANDER AND HIS STAFF AT COMUSSAS/7AF, NKP, THAILAND AND THE EMBASSY AND DAO OFFICIALS AT SAIGON. AUGMENTATION WAS PROVIDED FROM 9THMAB ASSETS

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ENCLOSURE (1)

TO FORM AND TRAIN THREE MLZ CONTROL TEAMS AND PROVIDE SUFFICIENT COMMUNICATORS TO SUPPORT THE GSF COMMANDER ON ARRIVAL AT THE DAO COMPOUND.

(B) CONTINUOUS LIAISON WAS MAINTAINED WITH THE EMBASSY, DAO EMERGENCY CONTROL CENTER, OIC EVACUATION CONTROL TEAM, OIC MARSHALLING TEAMS, CEO AND AIR AMERICA IN FURTHERANCE OF INSTRUCTIONS PROVIDED BY CG, 9TH MAB.

(C) GROUND SECURITY FORCE OPERATIONS SUMMARY:

(1) AT 291215H APRIL 1975, THE GSF RECEIVED THE ORDER TO EXECUTE OPERATION "FREQUENT WIND". AN ADVANCE PARTY ON THE SCENE AT THE DAO COMPOUND PRIOR TO L-HOUR PROVED TO BE ADVANTAGEOUS SINCE THE PLAN AS ENVISIONED BY THE GROUND SECURITY FORCES WAS FULLY COORDINATED AND, IN FACT, INTEGRATED WITH THE DAO PLANS FOR THE PROCESSING AND MARSHALLING OF U.S. CITIZENS, THIRD COUNTRY NATIONALS AND DESIGNATED VIETNAMESE REFUGEES.

BECAUSE OF THE PREPOSITIONING OF RADIO OPERATORS WITHIN THE DAO COMPOUND, ALL COMMUNICATIONS LINKS WERE ESTABLISHED IMMEDIATELY UPON THE ORDER TO EXECUTE, THUS ELIMINATING ANY INITIAL CONFUSION UPON ARRIVAL OF THE MAIN ELEMENTS OF THE GROUND SECURITY FORCES.

(2) AT 291315H CG NINTH MAB DEPARTED USS BLUE RIDGE FOR THE DAO COMPOUND ARRIVING AT 291350H. THE GSF COMMENCED LOADING ABOARD CH-53 HELICOPTERS FROM MMH-462 AND MMH-463 AND INITIAL ELEMENTS TOUCHED DOWN IN THE DAO COMPOUND AT 291506H TO THE CHEERS OF AWAITING EVACUEES ALMOST ALL OF WHOM WERE OVERCOME BY EMOTION AT THE SIGHT OF THE ORGANIZED AND WELL DISCIPLINED MARINES. THE SIGHT OF THESE MARINES SIGNIFIED TO THE EVACUEES THAT THERE WOULD BE A TOMORROW. THE EXTRACTION OF EVACUEES COMMENCED IMMEDIATELY IN A SMOOTH AND ORDERLY FASHION.

(3) THE FORCES OF BLT 2/4 UNDER THE COMMAND OF LTCOL G.P. SLADE DEPLOYED TO THEIR ASSIGNED SECURITY AREAS. THE PLANNING FOR THIS OPERATION PROVED TO BE COMPLETELY COORDINATED AND UNDERSTOOD DOWN TO THE FIRE TEAM LEVEL. THIS STERLING EXECUTION CAN BE ATTRIBUTED TO THE EXCELLENT SMALL UNIT LEADERSHIP AND NUMEROUS BRIEFINGS THAT HAD BEEN CONDUCTED UNDER THE CONTINUING DIRECTION OF THE COMMANDING OFFICER OF RLT-4, COLONEL A.M. GRAY. THE BLT 2/4 FORCES WERE AUGMENTED BY THE 3RD PLATOON, COMPANY C, BLT 1/9 UNDER THE ABLE LEADERSHIP OF FIRST LIEUTENANT THOMPSON-BOWERS. THIS PLATOON OPERATING UNDER THE MOST TRYING OF CIRCUMSTANCES FROM 261100H, HAD BEEN SUBJECTED TO INCOMING ARTILLERY AND ROCKET FIRE UNTIL RELIEVED ABOUT 291600H.

(4) COINCIDENT WITH THE INSERTION OF 865 MARINES FROM BLT 2/4, A READY REACTION SPARROW HAWK PLATOON FROM COMPANY A, BLT 1/9 WAS LAUNCHED ABOARD TWO CH-46 AIRCRAFT. THE HIGH STATE OF READINESS OF BOTH BLT 1/9 AND BLT 3/9 WAS APPARENT AS EACH WAS POISED WITH SPARROW HAWK TEAMS AND A COMMAND GROUP WITH TWO COMPANIES FOR THE CALL TO LAUNCH IF REQUIRED.

(5) AS THE EVACUATION PROCESS AT THE DAO COMPOUND CONTINUED THE SITUATION AT THE AMERICAN EMBASSY BEGAN TO UNFOLD. THE NUMBER OF EVACUEES PRESENT FAR EXCEEDED THAT PLANNED FOR BY THE GROUND SECURITY FORCE. THE SECURITY PROVIDED BY THE SMALL MARINE SECURITY GUARD DETACHMENT AT THE EMBASSY PROVED TO BE INSUFFICIENT TO CONTROL THE LARGE CROWDS. THREE PLATOONS (130 MARINES) FROM BLT 2/4 WERE HELO LIFTED FROM THE DAO COMPOUND TO THE AMERICAN EMBASSY BETWEEN 291700H AND 292100H. THE TOTAL FORCE OF 171 MARINES PROVED TO BE A SAVING FACTOR FOR THE CONTINUED ORDERLY EVACUATION AT THE EMBASSY. A TOTAL NOT TO EXCEED 100 EVACUEES HAD BEEN ANTICIPATED FROM THE EMBASSY. THIS EXTRACTION TO BE

ACCOMPLISHED BY AIR AMERICA. HOWEVER, WHEN THE EVACUATION TERMINATED, A TOTAL OF 978 U.S. CITIZENS AND 1,120 THIRD COUNTRY NATIONALS AND VIETNAMESE REFUGEES HAD BEEN EVACUATED FROM THAT LOCATION BY MARINE FORCES.

(6) AT THE DAO COMPOUND, A TOTAL OF 395 U.S. CITIZENS AND 4,475 REFUGEES WERE EVACUATED IN AN ORDERLY MANNER. THE GROUND SECURITY FORCES BEGAN TO WITHDRAW AT 292230H FROM THE DAO ANNEX WITHOUT ANY SIGNIFICANT PROBLEMS. THE FIRST ELEMENTS OF BLT 2/4 WERE EXTRACTED FROM THE DAO COMPOUND AT 292230H TO RETURN TO AMPHIBIOUS SHIPPING. AT ABOUT 292230H, BGEN CAREY, THE GROUND SECURITY

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FORCE COMMANDER, DEPARTED THE DAO COMPOUND FOR RETURN TO USS BLUE HORT VIA USS MIDWAY PASSING CONTROL ASHORE TO COLONEL A. M. GRAY, COMMANDING OFFICER, RL-4. THIS TRANSITION WAS SMOOTH SINCE THE AMBUSTE STAFF WHICH HAD FUNCTIONED DURING THE INITIAL PHASE OF THE OPERATION UNDER THE DIRECTION OF BGEN CAREY CONTINUED UNDER COLONEL GRAY. AT 300012H THE LAST GROUND SECURITY FORCE ELEMENTS FROM THE DAO COMPOUND CONDUCTED A SUCCESSFUL EXTRACTION AS THE NOISE OF TANK FIRING BEGAN TO DRAW EVER CLOSER TO THE DAO COMPOUND. AS THE LAST TWO CH-53 HELICOPTERS LIFTED OFF, SMOKE AND FLAMES SPREAD IN THE COMPOUND AS A RESULT OF THE ACTIVATION OF PREVIOUSLY POSITIONED THERMITE GRENADES.

(7) THE EVACUATION AT THE EMBASSY CONTINUED THROUGHOUT THE EARLY MORNING HOURS. THE EVACUATION OF GROUND SECURITY FORCES FROM THIS LOCATION BEGAN AT ABOUT 300400H AND CONTINUED UNTIL THE LAST CH-46 LIFTED OFF THE EMBASSY ROOFTOP AT 300733H WITH 11 MARINES ABOARD. THE PERFORMANCE OF THE MARINES AT THE EMBASSY WAS EXCELLENT. THEY MAINTAINED A COOL AND TRULY PROFESSIONAL ATTITUDE THROUGHOUT. DESPITE RECEIVING SMALL ARMS FIRE FROM NEARBY BUILDINGS. NO COMBAT CASUALTIES OCCURRED WITHIN THE GROUND SECURITY FORCE. ONLY THREE NON-SERIOUS, NON-COMBAT CASUALTIES OCCURRED AMONG GROUND SECURITY FORCES THROUGHOUT THE OPERATION.

#### C. AIR OPERATIONS SUMMARY

(1) SYNOPSIS PROVNAQ-39 UNDER THE COMMAND OF COL F.G. MCLENNON WAS ORDERED TO EXECUTE OPERATION "FREQUENT WIND", OPTION IV AT 1215H 29 APRIL 1975 WITH AN ESTABLISHED L-HOUR OF 1230H 29 APRIL 1975. TO PROPERLY POSITION GSF, GET THE REQUIRED NUMBER OF HELOS AIRBORNE AND ASSEMBLE THE PROPER WAVES OF AIRCRAFT REQUIRED, A TWO HOUR LEAD TIME, AS SPECIFIED IN AIR OPERATIONS PLANNING WAS REQUIRED. A TWO HOUR LEAD TIME, AS SPECIFIED IN AIR OPERATIONS PLANNING WAS REQUIRED. AFTER THESE FACTORS WERE CONSIDERED A NEW L-HOUR WAS ESTABLISHED BY CTF 76 AS 1300H 29 APRIL 1975. HELICOPTERS WERE CROSS-DECKED TO LOAD THE ASSIGNED TROOPS ON VARIOUS CTF 76 AMPHIBIOUS SHIPS TO ACHIEVE THE L-HOUR ESTABLISHED. THE FIRST FLIGHT OF HELICOPTERS WAS DISPATCHED FOR THE DAO COMPOUND, SAIGON, AT 1430H WITH GSF PERSONNEL EMBARKED. AH-1J HELO ESCORT AIRCRAFT WERE LAUNCHED AND ESCORTED THE FLIGHTS INTO THE SAIGON AREA. TWO CH-46 SAR AND TWO MEDEVAC-HELOS WERE PRE-LAUNCHED AND ON STATION AT PRE-DESIGNATED POSITIONS IN SUPPORT OF GSF INSERTION AND EVACUEE EXTRACTIONS. A QUICK REACTION FORCE (SPARROW HAWK) OF MARINES WAS AIRBORNE ALSO IN TWO CH-46 AIRCRAFT TO SUPPORT ANY EMERGENCY REINFORCEMENT REQUIREMENT OR TO ASSIST IN RECOVERING DOWNED AIRCRAFT AND PERSONNEL. THE FIRST FLIGHT OF SIX AIRCRAFT TOUCHED DOWN IN THE DAO COMPOUND AT 1506H. UNLOADED THEIR GSF. AND



DEPARTED WITH EVACUEES LOADED AT 1312H. THE SUBSEQUENT WAVES ARRIVED AND A SMOOTH ORDERLY FLOW OF SUCCESSIVE GSF INSERTIONS AND EVACUEE EXTRACTION WAS ESTABLISHED. THE HELICOPTERS WORKED IN A CONTINUOUS ENVIRONMENT OF SMALL ARMS FIRE, AAA, SA-7 MISSILES AND INCOMING ROUNDS OF ARTILLERY DURING THE ENTIRE OPERATION. CLOSE COVER ESCORT WAS PROVIDED ALONG THE HELO ROUTES AND IN THE LANDING ZONES BY AH-1J COBRAS. THE SAR, MEDEVAC, QUICK REACTION FORCE (SPARROW HAWK) AND A SPECIAL FLIGHT OF AIRCRAFT TO EXTRACT THE AMBASSADOR WERE ALL ON STATION DURING THE OPERATION. AS THE OPERATION PROGRESSED INTO THE HOURS OF DARKNESS, WEATHER STARTED TO DETERIORATE, FURTHER INCREASING THE DIFFICULTY OF THE ENORMOUS TASK AHEAD OF THE AIR CREWS. UPON COMPLETION OF EVACUATION OPERATIONS FROM THE DAO COMPOUND, THE GSF EXTRACTION COMMENCED AT 2250H AND COMPLETED AT 0012H 30 APR 79. AFTER LANDING AT DAO THE GSF WAS INFORMED OF THE REQUIREMENT TO EXTRACT FROM EMBASSY AND THE FACT THAT SOME 2000 PEOPLE HAD TO BE EVACUATED. IT WAS NECESSARY TO PROVIDE IMMEDIATE REINFORCEMENT TO SECURITY MARINES AT THE EMBASSY BEFORE EVACUATION COULD BE COMMENCED. A SPARROW HAWK WAS INSERTED AND AFTER ZONES WERE CLEARED OF PEOPLE EVACUATION WAS INITIATED. THIS REQUIREMENT CONSUMED VALUABLE DAYLIGHT HOURS AS FULL SCALE EVACUATIONS WITH CH53'S AND CH46'S COULD NOT COMMENCE UNTIL FULLY READY AT 1740. CH-46'S WERE LANDED ON THE ROOF TOP PAD AND CH-53'S WERE UTILIZED IN THE PARKING LOT AT THE BASE OF THE EMBASSY BUILDING. AIR CREWS FLEW ANYWHERE FROM 12 TO 17 HOURS IN BAD WEATHER IN SUCH A HOSTILE ENVIRONMENT. THEY WERE TASKED TO LIMITS WHICH COULD NEVER HAVE BEEN ANTICIPATED, AND PERFORMED SUPERBLY. AIR CREW DISCIPLINE IN CONFORMING TO ESTABLISHED RULES OF ENGAGEMENT WAS OUTSTANDING AND NOT A ROUND WAS FIRED BY THE MARINE HELOS DURING THE EVACUATION. THE MISSION WAS COMPLETED AT 0035H 30 APRIL 1975 WITH EXTRACTION AND RETURN OF THE LAST GSF PERSONNEL LANDED ABOARD CTF 76 SHIPS. AIR CREW LOSSES SUSTAINED DURING THIS TRYING MISSION WERE TWO CH-46 PILOTS WHO WERE LOST AT SEA AFTER CONTACTING THE WATER DURING A CARRIER APPROACH. ONE ADDITIONAL AIRCRAFT, AN AH-1J, WAS LOST WHEN IT DITCHED AT SEA DUE TO FUEL EXHAUSTION. BOTH AH-1J PILOTS WERE RECOVERED WITH NO INJURIES.

(2) SIGNIFICANT EVENTS

- (A) 291200 EXECUTE FREQUENT WIND RECEIVED L HOUR 1230  
 (B) 291230 FIRST HELOS LAUNCHED FOR PRE L HOUR MULTI-DECK OPERATIONS  
 (C) 291245 AUTHORITY TO ADJUST L HOUR.  
 (D) 291306 L HOUR SET 1400  
 (E) 291346 L HOUR SET 1500  
 (F) 291500H APR FIRST FLIGHT OF AIRCRAFT ON DECK AT DAO COMPOUND.  
 (G) 291512H APR FIRST FLIGHT OF AIRCRAFT OUT OF ZONE WITH EVACUEES.  
 (H) 291700H APR EMBASSY NOTIFIES THAT APPROXIMATELY 2000 EVACUEES ARE LOCATED THERE. SPARROW HAWK LAUNCHED TO EMBASSY  
 (I) 291900H APR ELEMENTS OF GSF HELO LIFTED FROM DAO TO EMBASSY TO INCREASE SUPPORT.  
 (J) 292107H APR CH-46 CRASHES AT SEA. TWO PILOTS LOST AT SEA, TWO CREW MEMBERS RECOVERED.  
 (K) 300012H APR LAST OF GSF EXTRACTED FROM DAO COMPOUND.  
 (L) 300010H APR AH-1J DITCHED AT SEA DUE TO FUEL EXHAUSTION. BOTH CREW MEMBERS RECOVERED.  
 (M) 300458H APR AMBASSADOR LIFTED FROM EMBASSY ROOF.  
 (N) 300753H APR LAST GSF LIFTED OFF EMBASSY ROOF.  
 (O) 300839H APR LA GSF ELEMENTS ON DECK CTF SHIPS. FREQUENT

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SECRET //NOB120// SECTION THREE OF FIVE  
WIND AIR OPERATIONS COMPLETED.

(3) COMMAND AND CONTROL. THE HELICOPTER ASSETS WERE CONTROLLED BY THE PROVNAV COMMANDING OFFICER FROM THE COMMAND SHIP, USS BLUE RIDGE UTILIZING TACC AFLOAT CAPABILITIES. HMC GAVE RADAR COVERAGE TO EACH FLIGHT TO THEIR "FEET DRY" ENTRY POINTS AND TURNED OVER CONTROL TO THE AIRBORNE BATTLEFIELD COMMAND AND CONTROL CENTER (ABCCC) IN AN EC-130. A MARINE G-130 AIRBORNE DASC WAS ON STATION STANDING BY IN CASE THE ABCCC HAD TO ABORT. FLIGHTS AND WAVES OF AIRCRAFT WERE PROGRAMMED IN AN ORDERLY FLOW BASED ON DESIRED GSF INSERTION BUILDUP REQUIREMENTS OF THE GSF COMMANDER. THIS HELO FLOW PLAN, DRAFTED BY PROVNAV, WAS INCORPORATED INTO CTF 76 AND CTG 79.1 OPLANS TO COVER THE HELICOPTER EVACUATION OF DESIGNATED PERSONNEL AND INSERTION AND EXTRACTION OF GSF ELEMENTS. NO REQUIREMENTS FOR EXTRACTION OF EVACUEES FROM THE EMBASSY OTHER THAN THE AMBASSADOR AND THE EMBASSY MARINES PLUS A SMALL NUMBER OF AMERICAN CITIZENS WAS ADDRESSED IN PLANNING INFORMATION FROM HIGHER HEADQUARTERS. WHEN THE MISSION REQUIRED THE ADDITIONAL TASK OF LIFTING OUT SUCH A LARGE NUMBER OF EVACUEES, THE INTEGRITY OF FLIGHTS WAS BROKEN DOWN DUE TO A ONE PLANE LANDING ZONE. THIS CAUSED A CHANGE IN HELO FLOW. THE "DAISY CHAIN" OR CONTINUOUS STREAM OF SINGLE, CH33 AND CH46 RESULTED. WITH DARKNESS AND BAD WEATHER AND AAA THE DAISY CHAIN WAS USED FOR ALL ZONES.

	CH-53	CH-46	AH-1J	UH-1E	TOTAL
(4) STATISTICS					
(A) TOTAL FLIGHT HOURS	313.4	206.1	34.1	6.1	560.0
(B) TOTAL DAY SORTIES EVAC/GSF	172/25	90/12	20	3	322
(C) TOTAL NIGHT SORTIES EVAC/GSF	140/22	128/32	27	11	360
(D) TOTAL SORTIES 29-30 APRIL EVAC/312/47 218/44 GSF			47	14	682
(E) AMMO EXPENDED	0	0	0	0	0
(F) ALE 29 FLARES EXPENDED	50	4	0	0	54
(G) TOTAL GSF INSERTED	865	0	0	0	865
(H) TOTAL GSF EXTRACTED BY PROVNAV	618	171	0	0	789
(I) TOTAL GSF EXTRACTED BY USAF	76	0	0	0	76
(J) TOTAL AMBIS/TCN/UN EVACUATED	4788	2180	0	0	6968
(K) SORTIES BY TYPE MISSION					
(1) GSF INSERT/EXTRACT	47	7	0	0	54
(2) EVAC	312	218	0	0	530
(3) MEDEVAC	0	18	0	0	18
(4) SAR	0	18	0	0	18
(5) HELO ESCORT	0	0	47	0	47
(6) COMMAND AND CONTROL	0	0	0	14	14
(7) SPARROW HAWK	0	8	0	0	8
(L) SIGNIFICANT FLYING HOUR STATISTICS FOR OPERATION "FREQUENT WIND"					
(1) TOTAL HELO CREW HOURS	1054.0				1054.0
(2) MAX CREW DAY (CH-46) IN HOURS	22.5				22.5
(3) AVERAGE CREW DAY IN HOURS	13.0				13.0

#### D. LOGISTICS SUMMARY

(1) THE BRIGADE LOGISTIC SUPPORT GROUP PROVIDED SUPPORT TO THE GROUND SECURITY FORCE, THE AVIATION ELEMENT, AMPHIBIOUS EVACUATION SECURITY

FORCE, AND TO THE MSC SHIPS FOR AIDING THE EVACUEES.

(2) PRIOR TO EXECUTION, THE BLSG PROVIDED GLOVES AND HAMMERS TO THE GSF ADVANCE PARTY FOR IMPROVING PERIMETER DEFENSE AT THE DAO COMPOUND. ELECTRIC BLASTING CAPS, ELECTRIC SQUIBS, GALVANOMETERS, THERMITE GRENADES AND C-4 CHARGES WERE FURNISHED THE BLSG EOD TEAM WHO WERE PREPARING THE DAO COMPOUND AND GENERAL WESTMORELAND'S HOUSE FOR DESTRUCTION.

(3) DURING THE OPERATION, RIOT CONTROL AGENTS WERE PROVIDED TO RL1-4 FOR USE DURING THE EXTRACTION OF EVACUEES, IF NECESSARY. ILLUMINATING FLARES WERE PROVIDED THE PROVAG-39 IN ORDER TO ENSURE ADEQUATE LIGHTING IN THE LANDING ZONES AT THE DAO COMPOUND AND THE AMERICAN EMBASSY DURING NIGHT OPERATIONS.

(4) THE BLSG PROVIDED THE MSC SHIPS SECURITY DETACHMENT (AESF) WITH MCI'S HEAT TABLETS, AND MEDICAL ITEMS TO SUSTAIN THE DETACHMENT AND REFUGEES DURING EXTENDED PERIODS FROM REFUGEE RECEPTION UNTIL ARRIVAL AT SAFE HAVENS.

(5) AFTER THE OPERATION, MILITARY CLOTHING WAS FURNISHED TO MARINES WHO WERE FORCED TO LEAVE THEIR UNIFORMS IN SAIGON. (EMBASSY MARINES)

(6) IN THE EVENT THAT THE OPERATION EXTENDED BEYOND THE PLANNED TIME FRAME, SAFETY STOCKS OF WATER, FOOD, AMMUNITION, BATTERIES AND CONCERTINA WERE TO BE FORMED AND STAGED IN COMPANY AND BATTALION SIZE BLOCKS BY THE BLSG.

E. AMPHIBIOUS EVACUATION SECURITY FORCES OPERATIONS SUMMARY. EIGHT 54-MAN EVACUEE CONTROL AND SHIP'S SECURITY DETACHMENTS HAVE BEEN POSTED TO MSC SHIPS TO DATE. THESE DETACHMENTS WILL ACCOMPANY REFUGEES TO SAFE HAVENS AND RETURN TO PARENT COMMANDS UPON TERMINATION OF DUTIES AND UPON RELEASE FROM TF76 TO WHOM THEY HAVE BEEN CHOPPED OFF. SIX 54 MAN DETACHMENT REMAIN AVAILABLE FOR POSTING AS REQUIRED.

### 3. LESSONS LEARNED

#### A. ITEM: LIAISON AND COORDINATION BETWEEN AIR FORCE AND NAVY/MARINE CORPS

(1) DISCUSSION. DURING THE PLANNING PHASE, MANY PROBLEMS SURFACED IN MATTERS OF PROCEDURES, ORDNANCE, MISSION CLEARANCE AND CONTROL AND COMMUNICATIONS. OBTAINING TIMELY SOLUTIONS WAS A DIFFICULT TASK.

(2) RECOMMENDATION. THAT ON FUTURE JOINT OPERATION A LIAISON OFFICER OR TEAM FROM OTHER SERVICES BE ADDED TO THE MAB/GSF HEAD-QUARTERS TO ASSIST IN COORDINATION BETWEEN THE SERVICES INVOLVED.

#### B. ITEM: COMMAND POST (FORWARD)

(1) DISCUSSION. BASED ON AUTHORITY FROM JCS, A FIVE MAN GSF ADVANCE COMMAND ELEMENT WAS POSTED TO SAIGON TO ASSIST IN THE PLANNING AND CONDUCT OF OPERATION "FREQUENT WIND". THE GROUP WAS COMPRISED OF THE DEPUTY COMMANDER, A COMMUNICATIONS-ELECTRONICS OFFICER, NAVAL AVIATOR AND EXPLOSIVE ORDNANCE DISPOSAL PERSONNEL. THIS ELEMENT GREW PRIOR TO OPERATION EXECUTION, TO INCLUDE ADDITIONAL NAVAL AVIATORS, WLZ CONTROL TEAMS, AND COMMUNICATORS. THIS FACILITATED LIAISON WITH THE EMBASSY, DAO, EMERGENCY CONTROL CENTER, MARSHALLING TEAMS, AIR AMERICA AND SIGNIFICANTLY ENHANCED THE PROBABILITIES FOR A SUCCESSFUL OPERATION. SOME MAJOR AREAS OF COORDINATION WERE:

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S E C R E T //NF3120// SECTION FOUR OF FIVE

(A) RECOMMENDATION AND PREPARATION OF HELICOPTER LANDING ZONES AND SITES, (B) SELECTION, INSTALLATION AND TESTING OF COMMUNICATIONS EQUIPMENT, (C) EOD EFFORTS IN SUPPORT OF DAO (NO CAPABILITY PREVIOUSLY EXISTED), (D) LIAISON VISITS TO CG, 9TH MAB AND STAFF ABOARD USS BLUE RIDGE, (E) BRIEFINGS FOR EMBASSY AND DAO PERSONNEL, (F) LOGISTICS AND ADMIN SUPPORT OF 9TH MAB AUGMENTATION TO EMBASSY SECURITY ELEMENT, (G) ENSURING A COMPLEMENTARY ROLE WITH EMBASSY AND DAO PERSONNEL SLATED FOR A ROLE IN NEMVAC OPERATIONS, (H) DISPOSITION OF AN/TSC 54 EMPLACED AT DAO, (I) ESTABLISHING A MOBILE COMMAND POST, (J) MOVEMENT OF VEHICLES OUT OF DAO COMPOUND FOLLOWING IMPLEMENTATION ORDER, (K) MAINTAINING STATUS OF HELO EVACUEES (AMERICAN AND OTHER NATIONALS), (L) ATTEMPTS TO IMPROVE COMMUNICATIONS BETWEEN SAIGON AND USS BLUE RIDGE, (M) BEING ADVISED ON SECURITY MEASURES REQUIRED FOLLOWING ORDERS TO IMPLEMENT AND PRIOR TO ARRIVAL OF GSF (MAXIMUM SECURITY DANGER PERIOD) (N) PREPARATION OF SLIDES, PHOTOS AND DIAGRAMS OF INGRESS TO AND EGRESS FROM DAO COMPOUND, SAIGON FOR USE BY 9TH MAB AVIATION ELEMENTS, (O) LATERAL PLANNING AND SURVEY OF LZ'S AND APPROACH ROUTES TO NEWPORT AND U.S. EMBASSY.

B. RECOMMENDATION. IN FUTURE EVACUATION OPERATIONS, PROVIDE SIMILAR ADVANCE, ON SITE, REPRESENTATION BY THE COMMAND TO EXECUTE PLANS.

C. ITEM: EVACUEE PLANNING

(1) DISCUSSION. THE MAJOR PROBLEM AREA ENCOUNTERED BY THE ADVANCE COMMAND ELEMENT WAS COORDINATION WITH THE EMBASSY IN ASCERTAINING BOTH NUMBERS OF AMERICANS AND NUMBERS OF VIETNAMESE TO BE EVACUATED. THE ESTIMATED NUMBER OF AMERICANS VARIED WIDELY (1,500-5,000) AND VIETNAMESE FIGURES WERE CONSISTENTLY LESS PRECISE. ADDITIONALLY, NO REALLY VIABLE NOTIFICATION PLAN TO EVACUEES OR SCHEME TO MOVE THEM TO DAO WAS UNDERTAKEN UNTIL THE LAST POSSIBLE MOMENT. IT SHOULD BE NOTED THAT DAO TOOK WHATEVER ACTION WAS WITHIN THEIR MEANS TO OFFSET THE LATTER DEFICIENCY, AND THAT THEY WERE SUCCESSFUL TO THE MAXIMUM POSSIBLE DEGREE. THE FINAL UPSHOT OF THIS PLANNING SHORTFALL WAS THE HUGE, UNEXPECTED, AND EVER SWELLING NUMBER OF EVACUEES AT THE EMBASSY, AS OPPOSED TO DAO WHERE ORDERLY PROCESSING AND EVACUATION WAS POSSIBLE.

(2) RECOMMENDATION. IN OPERATIONS OF THIS SCOPE GIVE RESPONSIBLE MILITARY PERSONNEL AUTHORITY TO PARTICIPATE IN PLANNING AND EXECUTION.

D. ITEM: PRE-EXECUTION ENVIRONMENT

(1) DISCUSSION. THE "BUSINESS AS USUAL" ATTITUDE AT THE DAO WAS AN AREA OF CONCERN. IT WAS DIFFICULT TO OBTAIN PERMISSION TO ACCOMPLISH SUCH MUNDANE THINGS AS DISMANTLING TENNIS COURT, FENCES AND DESTROYING BUILDINGS WHICH WERE IMPEDIMENTS TO PLANNED HLZ'S. THE DAO SIMPLY HAD NO COMMAND STRUCTURE DESIGNED TO PERMIT ORDERLY PLANNING AND EXECUTION OF ANY SUCH OPERATION AS "FREQUENT WIND". AS AN EXAMPLE, INDIVIDUALS IDENTIFIED AS CRITICAL TO THE CONDUCT OF NEMVAC OPERATIONS WERE CONSISTENTLY PLACED ON FLIGHTS OUT OF SOUTH VIETNAM, DAYS PRIOR TO THE 29TH. THESE INCLUDED BUS DRIVERS, CRITICAL ENGINEERING PERSONNEL, AND THE LIKE. ONCE THE FIXED WING VIETNAM EVACUATION RES-

POSSIBILITY WAS THRUST UPON THE DAO, ORGANIZATION BECAME VIRTUALLY PARALYZED, AND WITHOUT THE EXTRACURRICULAR EFFORTS OF A SMALL NUMBER OF OFFICERS, COULD NOT HAVE CARRIED OUT THERE NEMVAC RESPONSIBILITIES. THE FACT THAT THEY DID IS A DISTINCT CREDIT TO THOSE CONCERNED.

(2) RECOMMENDATIONS. PROVIDED SUCH A REQUIREMENT SHOULD RE-OCCUR, A STAFF DESIGNED TO SUPPORT AND CARRY OUT NEMVAC OPERATIONS SHOULD BE FORMED AND EXERCISED REGULARLY IN ALL PHASES OF SUCH OPERATIONS.

E. ITEM: INTEGRATION OF COMMAND AND CONTROL (INTERNAL)

(1) DISCUSSION. DURING OPERATION "FREQUENT WIND", THE CLOSE INTEGRATION OF COMMAND AND CONTROL ON SCENE AT BOTH THE MAB AND RLT LEVELS WITH ONLY A SMALL STAFF ON SCENE WHICH WAS TOTALLY OPERATIONALLY DOMINATED PROVED TO BE A VALUABLE ASSET. NORMAL STAFFING PROCEDURES WERE NOT EMPLOYED SINCE AIR SUPPORT, EVACUATION PROCESSING AND CONTROL AND THE SECURITY PLAN HAD TO BE IMMEDIATELY RESPONSIVE AND VERY CLOSELY INTEGRATED DUE TO THE FLUID SITUATION IN THE EVACUATION OBJECTIVE AREA (EOR). AGAIN, DURING THE TRANSITION OF COMMAND AND CONTROL ASHORE FROM THE MAB TO THE RLT, THIS REINFORCED THE AFOREMENTIONED OBSERVATION AND NO SIGNIFICANT PROBLEMS OCCURRED.

(2) RECOMMENDATIONS. THAT IN FUTURE EVACUATION OPERATIONS:

(A) ONLY ESSENTIAL STAFF MEMBERS BE INTRODUCED INTO AN OPERATION OF THIS TYPE, AND

(B) COMMAND AND CONTROL OF ALL HEADQUARTERS BE CLOSELY INTEGRATED TO PRECLUDE PROBLEMS OCCURRING DURING TRANSITION FROM SENIOR TO SUBORDINATE HEADQUARTERS.

F. ITEM: OPERATIONAL CONTROL OF AIR FORCE HELICOPTERS.

(1) DISCUSSION. IN A FAST MOVING, FLUID SITUATION, ALL HELOS INVOLVED MUST COME UNDER THE SENIOR AVIATION UNIT SO THAT EFFECTIVE SCHEDULING AND PROPER UTILIZATION OF ASSETS CAN BE PROGRAMMED. IN FREQUENT WIND, THE AIR FORCE HELOS WERE NOT ASSIGNED TO THE OPERATIONAL CONTROL OF PROV MAG-39. SPECIFICALLY, THE AIR FORCE UNIT ASSIGNED WAS STATIONED ABOARD A CVA WHICH WAS TEMPORARILY ASSIGNED TO TASK FORCE 76. THE AIR FORCE UNIT REMAINED OPCON TO THE AIR FORCE. CONSEQUENTLY, QUESTIONS AND RECOMMENDED CHANGES WERE SUBMITTED BY THE AIR FORCE UNIT DIRECTLY TO COMMUSAG/7AF; THESE QUERIES THEN WERE PASSED TO CTF-76 WHO IN TURN RE-DIRECTED THEM TO CTG 79.1 AND PROV MAG-39 FOR RESOLUTION. THIS TIME CONSUMING AND INDIRECT ROUTE CREATED CONSIDERABLE CONFUSION RIGHT DOWN TO THE LAST MINUTE.

(2) RECOMMENDATION. THAT ALL HELO UNITS ASSIGNED BE UNDER THE OPERATIONAL CONTROL OF THE SENIOR AVIATION UNIT WHOM THEY ARE TASKED TO ASSIST. (PROV MAG-39, IN THE CASE OF "FREQUENT WIND").

G. ITEM: RADIO NETS

(1) DISCUSSION. IN ORDER TO COORDINATE GSF AND HELO REQUIREMENTS BETWEEN THE GSF COMMANDER AND HIS REAR ECHELON, A RELIABLE, SECURE RADIO NET IS REQUIRED FROM THE FLAGSHIP TO EACH LZ CONTROL (IN THIS CASE DAO COMPOUND, ANNEX, AND EMBASSY LZ). IN OPERATION "FREQUENT WIND", THESE NETS WERE AVAILABLE THROUGH RADIO RELAY FROM THE AIRBORNE BATTLEFIELD COMMAND AND CONTROL CENTER (ABCCC). EACH TIME THESE NETS WERE USED BY THE MARINE COMMAND CENTER REAR ECHELON, AN ORDER TO STAY OFF THE NET WAS RECEIVED FROM HIGHER HEADQUARTERS.

(2) RECOMMENDATION. THAT A HF RADIO NET (PREFERABLY SECURE) BE DEDICATED TO THE CONTROL OF THE GSF COMMANDER AND HIS REAR ECHELON.

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SECRET //03120// FINAL SECTION OF FIVE

H. ITEM: DIFFICULTY IN COMMUNICATIONS TO AND FROM USS BLUE RIDGE (LCC-19)

(1) DISCUSSION. COMMUNICATION CIRCUITS ALLOCATED FOR USE BY EMBARKED MARINE COMMAND GROUPS WERE UNRELIABLE, BOTH BEFORE AND DURING THE OPERATION. THE COORDINATION CIRCUIT (VOICE) LINKING SHIPS WITH EMBARKED MARINES WAS DESPERATELY NEEDED, BUT REMAINED INOPERATIVE AN ESTIMATED 70 PERCENT OF THE TIME. THIS RESULTED IN INTRODUCING WRITTEN MESSAGES INTO AN ALREADY OVERBURDENED COMMUNICATIONS CENTER. IN MANY CASES, MARINE PORTABLE EQUIPMENT WAS MORE EFFECTIVE THAN USS BLUE RIDGE INSTALLED EQUIPMENT.

(2) RECOMMENDATIONS

(A) THAT ALL TROOP COMMUNICATIONS SYSTEMS BE THOROUGHLY CHECKED BY QUALIFIED PERSONNEL AND FAULTS BE CORRECTED.

(B) THAT RADIO TRANSMITTERS (UHF, FM) BE PROPERLY TUNED TO PERMIT MAXIMUM WATTAGE OUTPUT.

(C) THAT EMBARKED TROOP COMMUNICATION REQUIREMENTS BE CONSIDERED ON AN EQUAL BASIS WITH SHIP REQUIREMENTS.

I. ITEM: MOTOROLA RADIO SETS, PT-300

(1) DISCUSSION. THE SMALL HAND CARRIED PT-300 PROVED TO BE A RELIABLE PIECE OF COMMUNICATIONS EQUIPMENT. ALTHOUGH NOT AVAILABLE AS MARINE ORGANIZ EQUIPMENT, THEY WERE AVAILABLE IN QUANTITY WITHIN THE DAO COMPOUND. MOST WERE CAPABLE OF OPERATING ON FOUR DIFFERENT NETS. THEY WERE USED O LINK SECURITY POST TO GUARD OFFICE AND KEY PERSONNEL, FOR LANDING ZONE CONTROLLERS TO MARSHALLING AREAS, COMMANDERS TO THE COMMAND CENTER, ETC. TRANSMISSION RANGE WAS GREAT. AND AT ONE POINT, THE PT-300 WAS THE ONLY PORTABLE RADIO LINK TO THE EMBASSY, SOME THREE MILES DISTANT. EQUIPPED WITH A RECHARGEABLE BATTERY AND BUILT IN CHARGER, THE SET IS VERY ECONOMICAL TO OPERATE.

(2) RECOMMENDATION. THAT THE MARINE CORPS CONSIDER PURCHASING PT-300'S AND HOLD THEM AT THE PROPER LEVEL FOR SIMILAR OPERATIONS (RIOTS, DEMONSTRATIONS, ETC).

J. ITEM: LF/ADF HOMERS

(1) DISCUSSION. MARINE HELICOPTERS HAVE LF/ADF COMM-NAV RADIO EQUIPMENT WHICH IS MORE RELIABLE FOR LOW LEVEL HELO NAVIGATION THAN UHF/ADF. IT IS UNDERSTOOD THAT LF/ADF IS BEING REMOVED FROM MOST AVIATION SHIPS AND BEING REPLACED WITH UHF/ADF HOMING EQUIPMENT.

(2) RECOMMENDATION. THAT ALL AVIATION AND NON-AVIATION SHIPS THAT HAVE HELO DECKS MAINTAIN LF/ADF HOMERS FOR USE IN AMPHIBIOUS OPERATIONS.

K. ITEM: HELO ESCORT

(1) DISCUSSION. THERE WE

ENO FIXED WING AIRCRAFT DEDICATED TO HELICOPTER ESCORT ALONG THE 40NM APPROACH AND RETIREMENT ROUTES. AH-1J (COBRA GUNSHIPS) ESCORTED THE HELO FLIGHTS ALONG THESE ROUTES AND WERE CAPABLE OF PROVIDING FIRE SUPPRESSION WITH ONLY 20MM GUNS AND MARKING OF TARGETS WITH 2.75 WHITE PHOSPHOROUS ROCKETS.

(2) RECOMMENDATION. THAT SIXED WING AIRCRAFT LOADED WITH PIN-POINT FIRING WEAPONS/MUNITIONS BE DEDICATED TO HELO ESCOR IN FUTURE OPERATIONS OF THIS NATURE.

L. ITEM: CONTROL OF HELICOPTER ASSETS

(1) DISCUSSION. THE BRIGADE AVIATION ELEMENT (PROVMAG-39) HELICOPTERS WERE EMBARKED IN FIVE SEPARATE SHIPS DURING THIS OPERATION. TO COORDINATE DAILY SUPPORT REQUIREMENTS FROM ONE POINT REQUIRES AN EFFECTIVE SYSTEM OF VOICE COMMUNICATION WHICH DUE TO LIMITED CIRCUITS ON RESPECTIVE SHIPS WAS NOT ESTABLISHED. A UHF FREQUENCY WAS ASSIGNED; HOWEVER, DISTANCE BETWEEN SHIPS OFTEN PRECLUDED THIS FROM BEING A RELIABLE MEANS OF CONTACT. THE ALTERNATE METHOD WAS TO UTILIZE TELETYPE CIRCUITS; HOWEVER, AS THE ALERT CONDITIONS ESCALATED, MESSAGE TRAFFIC BOGGED DOWN TO THE POINT THAT SOME OPERATIONAL IMMEDIATE TRAFFIC REQUIRED EIGHT HOURS FROM RELEASE TO RECEIPT BY TASKED UNITS. THIS TIME LAG FREQUENTLY DID NOT ALLOW AIR GROUPS TO RESPOND TO CHANGES IN AIRCRAFT FRAGS OR SUFFICIENTLY REACT TO URGENT NEW REQUESTS.

(2) RECOMMENDATION. UPON EMBARKATION OF HELICOPTER ASSETS ON SEVERAL SHIPS, ALLOCATE A LONG RANGE VOICE COMMUNICATIONS CAPABILITY FOR USE BY THE SENIOR AVIATION COMMAND FOR PURPOSES OF CONTROLLING HIS ASSETS AND THEREBY RENDERING MORE EXPEDITIOUS SUPPORT.

M. ITEM: CONTINUOUS OPERATION OF HELOS FROM NON-AVIATION SHIPS

(1) DISCUSSION. THERE IS A PROPENSITY TO OPERATE HELOS FROM NON-AVIATION SHIPS FOR PROLONGED PERIODS. OPERATION FREQUENT WIND WAS NO EXCEPTION TO THIS GENERAL OBSERVATION. SUCH SHIPS LACK THE NECESSARY FACILITIES REQUIRED TO SUPPORT HELO OPERATIONS; THEY LACK SHIP SPACE, GROUND SUPPORT EQUIPMENT, AVCAL, AND SOME AVIATION COMMUNICATIONS PROCEDURES AND EQUIPMENT, ALL OF WHICH IMPACTS SEVERELY ON THE SAFETY AND MAINTENANCE ASPECTS OF OPERATIONAL FLYING.

(2) RECOMMENDATION. DO NOT OPERATE AIRCRAFT FROM NON-AVIATION SHIPS FOR PROLONGED PERIODS.

N. ITEM: TACTICAL SPREAD LOADING OF UNITS IN TASK FORCE SHIPPING

(1) DISCUSSION. AVAILABLE TASK FORCE SHIPPING WAS ASSIGNED HASTILY AS A RESULT OF THE RAPIDLY ESCALATING CONTINGENCY IN SOUTH VIETNAM. AS A RESULT, TROOPS AND EQUIPMENT WERE EMBARKED ON SHIPS WHERE AND WHEN AVAILABLE THUS PRECLUDING DESIRABLE EMBARKATION PLANNING. TO ADJUST FROM THIS POSTURE TO ONE IN WHICH OPTIMUM UNIT INTEGRITY MIGHT BE GAINED, PRIOR TO COMMITMENT TO COMBAT, A SERIES OF CROSS-DECKING MOVES OF PERSONNEL WAS REQUIRED PRIOR TO L-HOUR; HOWEVER, IT COULD NOT BE DONE IN ADVANCE OF D-DAY DUE TO BERTHING/EQUIPMENT STOWAGE LIMITATIONS ABOARD SHIPS. THIS PROMPTED A NEED FOR PRE L-HOUR HELO-LIFTS AS AN INTEGRAL PART OF ACTIONS TO BE ACCOMPLISHED AFTER RECEIPT OF AN EXECUTE MESSAGE AND PRIOR TO L-HOUR MINUS TIME OF FLIGHT TO THE EVACUATION OBJECTIVE AREA.

(2) RECOMMENDATION. THAT IN CONTINGENCIES WHERE PROPER SPREAD LOADING OF UNITS HAS NOT BEEN POSSIBLE, L-HOUR BE ANNOUNCED AS FAR IN ADVANCE AS POSSIBLE AND NOT LATER THAN AN AMOUNT OF TIME BEFORE L-HOUR EQUAL TO THE TIME OF FLIGHT TO THE OBJECTIVE AREA PLUS THE TIME REQUIRED TO CONDUCT PERSONNEL/EQUIPMENT REDISTRIBUTION AND AIRCRAFT PREPARATION.

O. ITEM: INTELLIGENCE SUPPORT

(1) DISCUSSION. ALTHOUGH INTELLIGENCE SUPPORT IN RESPONSE TO EEI'S WAS FAIRLY RESPONSIVE DURING THE LATTER DAYS OF THE OPERATION, THE EARLIER STAGES OF THE OPERATION WERE PLAGUED WITH UNANSWERED REQUESTS FOR PHOTO COVERAGE, IMMEDIATE PHOTO INTERPRETATION REPORTS (PIR'S) REQUESTED FROM COMSEVENTHFLT.

(2) RECOMMENDATION. THAT A GREATER EFFORT BE MADE TO PROVIDE MORE RESPONSIBLE SUPPORT TO COMMITTED FORCES.

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