

RECORD
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DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
Headquarters, 198th Infantry Brigade, Americal Division
APO San Francisco 96219

AVDF-BCC

22 April 1969

SUBJECT: Operational Report Lessons Learned of the 198th Infantry Brigade
for the Period Ending 3 April 1969. RGS CSFOR - 65 (U)

Commanding General
Americal Division
ATTN: AVDF-HL
APO SF 96374

1. (U) Reference:

- a. Americal Regulation 525-15, dated 8 April 1968.
- b. Unclassified message AVDF-GCDO 4742, dated 040302 April 1969.

2. (U) Personnel: None

3. (C) Operations:

- a. Subject: Use of Short Range Reconnaissance Patrols.

(1) Observation: An OZ that is extremely large and yet contains no large enemy force is very difficult to control. Company sweeps do not produce results as the local enemy elements assume the role of farmer at the approach of US troops. Enemy activity is resumed once the troops depart and there are never enough men available to garrison the OZ.

(2) Evaluation: Companies were required to provide three heavily armed thirteen man teams led by highly qualified NCO's. The teams were inserted by air or walked to selected OZ's as unobtrusively as possible. Once in location they directed artillery or used small arms on any VC sightings. With this method enemy movement and activity was curtailed in a large area with a minimum number of friendly forces. Teams were normally inserted for four days, but sometimes longer if intelligence warranted it.

(3) Recommendation: That friendly forces faced with similar situation or desiring reconnaissance-killer teams can form and effectively employ them using organic resources.

- b. Subject: Recovery of M113 A1 ACMV's.

(1) Observation: Wet weather and soggy ~~terrain~~ impose many problems in recovering mired track vehicles.

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(2) Evaluation: If an M113 A1 should become mired in a large, wet paddy, it may be out of reach of other M113's. Often more than one vehicle becomes stuck and if an M88 or M578 recovery vehicle cannot reach the area then recovery becomes a time consuming problem.

(3) Recommendation: If all other conventional vehicle recovery methods fail a CH47 Chinook helicopter can be used to pull the vehicles out. Using a 50-75 foot tow cable, one effective method is to hook the cable to the lifting shackle on one side of the M113, run the cable through the pintle on the Chinook, and hook the other end of the cable to the lifting shackle on the other side of the vehicle. The helicopter pulls the vehicle forward and once the initial suction holding the vehicle in the mud is broken, the helicopter has no difficulty towing the M113 to dry ground.

c. Subject: Cordon and Search of Villages.

(1) Observation: During cordon and search of villages it was determined that the guerrillas and infrastructure received enough early warning to leave the village before the cordon was established.

(2) Evaluation: To solve this problem the technique of early morning airmobile assaults was devised. This consisted of lifting a force and landing them around the village to establish a cordon to prevent VC escape. The cordon was then reinforced with additional troop lifts. A thorough search of the village includes using Vietnamese Police, Scout Dogs and Vietnamese "black Lists" to locate guerrillas and VCI.

(3) Recommendation: A reconnaissance of the target village will require to select several single aircraft landing zones as opposed to one multi-aircraft landing zone. This technique enables the troops to cordon the village immediately as they leave the aircraft. Gunships and C/C aircraft can provide additional coverage of the cordon until the remainder of the troops can be lifted into the area. This technique has proved valuable in capturing local VC and VCI thus keeping the enemy off balance. The usual safe villages are vulnerable at anytime and no longer grant the VC security and rest.

d. Subject: Perimeter Night Marking Devices.

(1) The use of 105 mm casing for marking fire support bases at night has been found to be an excellent technique.

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(2) Evaluation: Marking of fire support base perimeters at night may be accomplished in many ways. Most lighting methods are costly, time consuming and may be observed from outside the perimeter as well as from the air.

(3) Recommendation: An effective means for a fire support base at night for the purpose of controlling gunships or other types of fire support is to use 105 mm casings filled with thickened gasoline (M-4 thickner). The shell should be buried in the ground filled with thickened gasoline and covered with plastic. A trip flare placed on top of the casing can be ignited from inside a bunker and if properly installed the fuel will burn for one and one half hours. The marker is visible from the air, but not from the outside of the perimeter.

c. Subject: Powder Charge for 4.2" Mortar.

(1) Observation: Specialized use for powder chargers will help lessen problems with short or inaccurate rounds.

(2) Evaluation: It has been noted during the past few months that wet powder bags were the probable cause of several short rounds during fire missions.

(3) Recommendation: Exposing ammunition to dampness and rain particularly during the monsoon season and periods of extended humidity can drastically effect the intended range of the round. While rapid response to a call for fire is necessary, steps must be taken to keep the mortar round covered and protected against the elements prior to firing, thus helping to insure the round will be on target.

FOR THE COMMANDER:

Robert B. Michael
ROBERT B. MICHAEL
1LT, INF
Asst Adjutant

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DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
Headquarters, 4th Battalion, 21st Infantry
Americal Division
APO San Francisco 96217

AVDF-BA-TH-OP

24 January 1970

SUBJECT: Quarterly Report - Lessons Learned

Commanding Officer
11th Infantry Brigade
ATTN: AVDF-BAOP
APO San Francisco 96217

1. Reference: Ltr, HQ 11th Inf Bde, subject as above, dtd 9 Jan 70.

2. Operations.

a. Observation: Joint operations with Regional and Popular Forces.

b. Evaluation: It has been found that while working with Regional and Popular Forces, one successful technique has been to set examples for these soldiers by working closer with them in such a way that these soldiers will identify with our soldiers and develop their techniques for such things as proper techniques of fire and movement, dispersion, and light and noise discipline at night. This has been accomplished successfully by intermingling these soldiers with U. S. Forces. For example, a squad would be made up of five (5) US soldiers and five (5) RF or PF soldiers working close together as a squad.

c. Recommendation: When working with Regional or Popular Forces, it is ~~essential~~ to work them into a unit and work as one team for the success of a joint operation. For the success of future joint operations and the smoothness with which they are executed, intermingling of these soldiers with US soldiers whenever possible, enabling them to develop our techniques, should be practiced.

d. Observation: Marking bunkers and fighting positions on a firebase while gunships are in close support at night.

e. Evaluation: Gunships, while working close support for a firebase under attack, are often needed to provide suppressive fire right up to the edge of the bunker line and in some cases in between bunkers. Even while

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AVDF-BA-TH-OP

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working under constant illumination, it has been found that it is still often difficult for the gunships to detect the exact bunker line and fighting positions. By using strobe lights or throwing trip flares or smoke in front of each bunker and fighting position, gunships have been able to identify these means of marking positions in a hurry and immediately determine the location of all friendlies.

f. Recommendations: The marking of friendly locations when using close gunship support is imperative and obvious. However, the speed with which a unit reacts and the standardization of this marking system will greatly enable support to begin that much faster and in the most critical areas without unnecessary delay due to lack of coordination between the commander and the supporting gunships. All firebases should have a standard marking system, and supporting aircraft should also be knowledgeable of marking systems used and be familiar with the configuration of the fire-base they are supporting if possible. This will insure even faster and closer support to a firebase in contact.

3. Communications, Training.

a. Observation: Mounting of radio set AN/PRC-25 on a ruck sack.

b. Evaluation: It has been experienced that unless the radio is mounted on the rucksack frame with the antenna facing out or away from the operator, the antenna will, after extensive vibration of the radio on the frame, begin striking the frame. This causes transmission and reception difficulties by shorting out the radio. In addition, the auxiliary speaker LS-166 will also short out the radio by striking the antenna unless it is mounted on the side of the radio opposite the antenna.

c. Recommendations: Most radio operators in a rifle company are infantrymen who have just had classes on AN/PRC-25 and familiarization with it and other radio equipment as part of their Advanced Individual Training. Since any infantryman is a potential radio operator, it is suggested that classes pertaining to radios be especially oriented toward their use in a combat environment and the proper way to carry the AN/PRC-25 and its accessories. Emphasis should also be placed on proper care of the radio at this level. An appropriate time for the teaching of this useful information would be during the orientation and instruction phase when a man comes in country or possibly at battalion level. Since the average radio operator is not school trained as one, simple instruction on something like the proper way to mount a radio would greatly reduce radio transmission and reception difficulties.

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AVDF-BA-TH-OP

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4. Communications.

a. Observation: Use of approved codes for sending classified information over a radio.

b. Evaluation: The only means now available for a battalion commander to pass classified information to a subordinate unit is through use of the T SEC/KY-38 Secure Radio. Often, this secure means of communication fails due to mechanical difficulties of the radio setup. In a timely situation it is critical not to have to wait while the existing problem is found and corrected. As a backup to the secure radio, this battalion uses the "Commander's Code" (PY) KAC Code Confidential CRYPTO down to company and separate combat platoon level.

c. Recommendations: The "Commander's Code" backup for sending classified information over the radio should be employed by every unit as a timely and readily available means of security. Each unit should keep up to date on the proper codes and insure that each subordinate unit is up to date with the same codes and is aware of their proper use and the advantage it can have.

FOR THE COMMANDER:



ROBERT L. HAGELBERGER
Captain, Infantry
Adjutant

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