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

AVDF-BCC

1 May 1968

SUBJECT: Operational Report of 198th Infantry Brigade (LT) for the Period
Ending 30 April 1968, RGS CSFOR-65. (U).

31 July

Commanding General
Americal Division
ATTN: AVDF-HL
APO 96374

*6615 Period
Last Submission*

A. (C) Personnel.

1. Subject: Individual Replacements.

(a) Observation. Every unit is eventually faced with replacing well-trained members due to rotational and combat losses. The replacement, though well-trained, lacks thorough knowledge of the units tactical SOF's. The replacement in a sense is a liability until he learns how to function as part of his new team.

(b) Evaluation. Rifle companies generally have insufficient time to orient new replacements because of their heavy operational activities.

(c) Recommendation. A quick and reliable method for integrating new personnel is through Ranger Training techniques. One unit finds that normal rehearsals, immediate action drills, and dry runs prior to operations allow the individual a realistic view of his job in the new unit.

2. Subject: Standardization of Equipment Carried by Emergency Replacements.

(a) Observation. On one occasion when a unit made contact with

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GP4 Downgrade at 3 year intervals, declassified after 12 years.

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a large and persistent enemy force, it was necessary to send forty (40) replacements to the unit from other units within the brigade in order to strengthen the unit in contact. The replacements arrived fully equipped and combat ready but some of the men had also come with all of their personal possessions and their records. At the time of the heavy engagement, facilities were not readily available for receiving and storing these items. In this instance nothing was lost, but under more trying conditions losses would be entirely possible.

(b) Evaluation. There is a need to standardize procedures concerning transfer of replacements where haste is of great importance.

(c) Recommendation. It is desireable to establish a policy that replacements who are transferred under emergency conditions where haste is of great importance, come equipped with only necessary combat gear and weapons. Records and personal property should remain in the trains and should be transferred at that level.

B. (C) Operations.

1. Subject: Use of Frag Grenades in Tunnels or Spider Holes.

(a) Observation. When checking tunnels or spider holes, it is a common practice of some to throw in a fragmentation grenade.

(b) Evaluation. Many injuries have been attributed to this practice due to fragments of the grenade and debris from the tunnel which strike the bystander.

(c) Recommendation. When checking tunnels or spider holes, use frag grenades only as a last resort. First call "come out" in Vietnamese

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then if no one comes out, pop a smoke grenade or CS grenade into the tunnel. Only then, if you think you have a VC still in the tunnel should one throw a frag grenade into the tunnel. Concussion grenades would be the best if they are available.

2. Subject: Protection of Radios.

(a) Observation. On several occasions radios have been damaged and made inoperative due to small arms fire and shrapnel from mortar rounds.

(b) Evaluation. Radios must be protected to insure that communication is not lost.

(c) Recommendation. RTO's should be instructed to place their radios under ground, i.e., in a hole or sand bagged area. This should be a common practice each night to protect the radio in case of a mortar attack or intense small arms fire.

3. Subject: Nullifying the Effectiveness of Mines and Booby Traps.

(a) Observation. In many areas of Vietnam the enemy makes extensive use of mines, both anti-personnel and anti-vehicular. Particular problem areas are found adjacent to old base camps which have been surrounded by friendly mine fields. Abandonment without destruction of these mine fields provides a ready supply of explosives to the enemy and places a definite hazard to the local friendly forces.

(b) Evaluation. The infantry soldier must be protected if he is to be effective in an area that is suspected to be mined.

(c) Recommendation. Armored Personnel Carriers have been success-

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fully maneuvered throughout those areas known to be infested with anti-personnel mines. The tracks can successfully trigger anti-personnel mines and booby traps without damage to the tracks. APC's must take great caution to avoid using previous routes made by earlier operations. This precaution partially assures avoidance of anti-tank mines mixed in with the anti-personnel mines.

4. Subject: Scout Dog Operations.

(a) Observation. Scout Dog Dickie was moving with the main body of a patrol in a choke chain when he alerted to the flank. Checking out the alert the infantry found fresh foot prints in the area.

(b) Evaluation. Scout Dogs will alert on personnel outside the body of a patrol even though they are not in a working harness and aren't with the point element.

(c) Recommendation. All scout dog alerts must be checked even if no apparent reason for the alert is evident.

5. Subject: Scout Dog Operations.

(a) Observation. While on a search and clear operation Scout Dog Rover alerted and refused to enter a trail through a hedgerow. The infantry checked the area and found nothing. Still the dog alerted. An M26 hand grenade was detonated in the area as a precaution. The explosion left a crater 3 feet wide and 2 feet deep.

(b) Evaluation. Even though an initial search reveals nothing, extra precautions may pay off with lives saved. Obviously there was an explosive device placed along the trail.

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(c) Recommendation. Always double check scout dog alerts if the initial search reveals nothing. Detonation of a hand grenade as in this instance or bypassing the suspect area should be carefully considered.

6. Subject: Scout Dog Operations.

(a) Observation. When using dog teams while searching of dwelling or on point, the dogs must be used to the best tactical advantage. If searching dwellings, the dog and handler with ample security should be allowed to enter the dwelling first. On point, the dog and handler with ample security should lead, primarily in those areas infested with spider holes and tunnels. Dogs should be rotated on point if used in this manner. The dogs should be given ample time to rest.

(b) Evaluation. On numerous occasions dogs have been able to pick up a scent while on point even though not in the initial direction of travel. Dogs have alerted to scents in and around dwellings which may not be visible to the observer.

(c) Recommendation. Scout Dogs should be used where tactically possible. The acuity of their senses is a great benefit to the infantry platoon or company.

7. Subject: The Use of CS Riot Agent Grenades in the Night Defensive Perimeter.

(a) Observation. During a recent operation, the patrol base from which a company was operating was subjected to a ground attack by an estimated company size force of Viet Cong. The terrain was mountainous, the foliage thick and visibility was near zero because of rain clouds.

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Each man in the company was armed with a minimum of four fragmentation grenades and one CS grenade in addition to individual and crew served weapons. Because of low visibility and thick vegetation it was difficult to locate targets by means other than sound; the heavy foliage prevented accurate throwing of hand grenades even at targets which were observed.

(b) **Evaluation.** During the heaviest period of the attack, CS grenades were employed. Since all individuals in the unit had protective masks there was no danger to any friendly elements. The employment of CS not only broke the attack by forcing the enemy to withdraw but also the effects of the non-toxic agent caused many of the enemy soldiers to give away their positions so that small arms fire was effective.

(c) **Recommendation.** The principal advantage of CS in this circumstance is that it is an area weapon whose effects were not hindered but enhanced by the same weather conditions which limited the effects of fragmentation grenades. The use of CS was even more effective because it affected only those personnel who did not have protective masks, i.e., the enemy.

8. **Subject:** Conducting Medevacs After Dark.

(a) **Observation.** In several incidents involving medical evacuation of wounded personnel at night, these efforts have been hampered and unnecessary delay caused by failure to properly light LZ's.

(b) **Evaluation.** Flashlights often do not provide enough light for helicopter pilots to see from the air.

(c) **Recommendation.** It is necessary to assign small unit leaders

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the responsibility of carrying hand held pyrotechnics. Hand flares and trip flares carried organic down to squad level enable rapid location and evacuation of wounded personnel. Each individual should carry one (1) trip flare. Strobe lights are also highly recommended for small unit leaders. These generally can be obtained through the supply chain as Light, Marker, Distress, SDU-5E, FSN 6230-067-5209. Aircraft marking lights, commonly referred to as bean bag lights, which come with red, green, and clear plastic dome lights are also available and light in weight. If they are placed in a hole in the ground they can be observed from the air but not by the enemy in the area. USMC Day-Night signal flares which are small cylindrical tubes with smoke on one end and a flare on the other may also be used but those are generally quite hard to obtain as they are not within the Army supply channels. Marine illumination grenades may also be used if they are available.

9. Subject: Procedure for Indicating PZ's.

(a) Observation. During a recent operation, a rice paddy was used for a pick up zone. Smoke was used to indicate the position of the lead and rear helicopters. The man who was to throw a smoke grenade to indicate the lead ship's position threw his smoke grenade in the water, causing it to work improperly. However, the smoke for the rear ship did function properly, causing confusion among the pilots and troops who were to be lifted out.

(b) Evaluation. In damp areas extreme caution must be taken to insure that smoke grenades do not become wet or submerged in water so that

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they work properly.

(c) Recommendation. When using a rice paddy for a PZ be sure to keep smoke grenades out of the water. The problem can be eliminated by removing the pin and placing the smoke grenade on a dike before releasing the safety lever. Perhaps a floating smoke grenade would be a good item to manufacture.

10. Subject: Detainees.

(a) Observation. Past experience with detainees seized in the field have led to the conclusion that those detainees who are interrogated immediately after capture provide the most information. The field commander and his interrogator have the advantage over the military intelligence teams by their being present in the environment of the detainee when he is captured. The detainee, if he has committed a suspicious act, knows that his captors were witness, and that point in the interrogation is understood by both parties; therefore, establishment of such an act in the questioning is unnecessary and time is saved. Any information given by the detainee is usually easily described and understood as both parties are located in the area of concern. Reaction to useful information is immediate and the normal 12-24 hours "read out" waiting time is avoided. The administrative and travel time involved in processing detainees is bypassed by immediate interrogation and the effect of the detainee still being in the shock of capture is an aid to the interrogator.

(b) Evaluation. Immediate interrogation is best accomplished by trained interrogators. This can be done by having trained intelligence

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teams make frequent trips to the field, especially when intelligence on a locale indicates that the inhabitants are involved in enemy activities or may provide information. An alternate proposal would have selected individuals from battalion sized units trained in interrogative techniques.

(c) Recommendations. More information is gleaned from a detainee when he is interrogated immediately after capture. Standing plans should be in effect to provide units with interrogator-interpreters or to send an interrogator in upon request. It is also suggested that RVN interpreters now assigned to subordinate units be given training in the techniques of proper interrogation.

FOR THE COMMANDER:

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