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

AVDF-BCC

31 October 1968

SUBJECT: Operational Report of the 198th Infantry Brigade (Lt) for the Period Ending 31 October 1968, RGS CSFOR-65 (U)

See Distribution

1. (C) Personnel: None.

2. (C) Operations:

a. Subject: Marking Night Positions when Strobe Lights are not Available.

(1) Observation: It is difficult to effectively mark a night location when strobe lights are not available.

(2) Evaluation: It has been found that the placing of a heat tablet surrounded by a small mound of dirt will provide the necessary marking lights for aircraft trying to locate your position at night.

(3) Recommendations: Since strobe lights are not always available it is recommended that each time a night laager is established and positions prepared, a heat tablet be placed by each position to serve as a night device for the marking of these positions.

b. Subject: Compromise of Radio Frequencies.

(1) Observation: During combat operations radio frequencies may be compromised by a VN civilian looking at the frequency on the AN/FRT 25 radio when a unit is conducting operations in a heavily populated area.

(2) Evaluation: Unit SOP's should include keeping VN children and peddlers out of day laager sites, however; there is an occasional and

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valid reason for units to operate near civilians during which time a radio frequency can inadvertently compromised.

(3) Recommendations: To preclude possible compromise it is recommended that the frequency dial window be covered with a strip of rubber inner tube at least 2 inches wide and long enough to reach around the radio. Using rubber, the cover can be pulled up at anytime for frequency changes and will not present the problems that tape or some other sticky substance would cause.

3. (C) Training: None.

4. (C) Intelligence:

a. Subject: Utilization of Provincial Reconnaissance Units and National Police.

(1) Observation: A successful operation can be accomplished by conducting cordon and search operations with the incorporation of PRU's and NP into overall tactical plan.

(2) Evaluation: Results of combat operations, including the cordon and search of a village, are considerably improved when Provincial Reconnaissance units (PRU) and National Police (NP) are incorporated into the scheme of maneuver. After US and/or GVN troops have effectively cordoned a village, the PRU's should be assigned the mission of sweeping into the cordoned area and conducting methodical search. The NP are then inserted to conduct the interrogation and separate those who require further questioning. The added presence of an IPW Team reinforces the intelligence gathering operation.

(3) Recommendation: Make maximum use of PRU's and NP in cordon and search missions especially for searches and interrogation.

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5. (c) Logistics:

a. Subject: Squad Radio Sets AN/PRT-4 and AN/PRR-9.

(1) Observation: Squad radio sets AN/PRT-4 and AN/PRR-9 do not have sufficient range for communications required from platoon to squad in the counter-insurgency environment. Squad sized patrols and night ambushes are normally deployed beyond the 1000 meter range of these sets. In addition, it has been found that thick vegetation will reduce the effective range of the radio sets down to 200 to 300 meters. Maintenance problems have been encountered in the use of the squad radio sets due to the high susceptibility of the AN/PRT-4 transmitter elements and the AN/PRR-9 receiver elements to water and moisture damage. The antennas of both radio sets are easily broken when operating in thick foliage. AN/PRR-9 speaker horn assemblies are not of sturdy enough construction to withstand normal tactical use. There are not sufficient spare parts in the supply and maintenance system at present to maintain the squad radio sets properly; this is particularly true of antennas, speaker horns and lanyards.

(2) Evaluation: The squad radio sets AN/PRT-4 and AN/PRR-9 are unsatisfactory for employment in the counter-insurgency environment due to the limited range of the radio sets, multiple maintenance problems inherent in the design of the radio sets, and lack of spare parts to maintain the radio sets.

(3) Recommendation: That a radio set of greater range and durability be authorized the infantry squad in the counter-insurgency environment. That sufficient spare parts be maintained in supply and maintenance channels for the presently authorized squad radio sets. That redesign of the present squad radio sets be considered to increase durability and decrease susceptibility to water and moisture damage.

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b. Subject: Plasticware Supply Economy.

(1) Observation: Experience has shown that a Brigade uses 6,000 sets of plasticware daily. Individuals use plasticware for only one meal before disposing of it which results in these individuals using 3 sets daily. Plasticware is a critical item in the Americal Division.

(2) Evaluation: Company Commanders should employ a system to insure that each individual is issued one (1) set of plasticware daily. Following the Breakfast and Dinner meal, the plasticware is wiped clean with a napkin, rolled in a clean napkin and stored in the shirt pocket. At the end of the day the plasticware should be disposed of for sanitary reasons. Through use of the above procedure the requirement for plasticware may be reduced by 2/3rds and proper supply economy established.

(3) Recommendation: That the above system be employed to reduce usage of plasticware.

c. Subject: Loss of Tank Mounting Bolts on New Type Water Trailers.

(1) Observation: Due to constant airlifting and rough road travel of water trailers in Vietnam, it was found that the new type water trailers were losing the tank mounting bolts at a high rate.

(2) Evaluation: Increased emphasis was placed on units checking these bolts for tightness. The method of applying sealant compound to the bolts, as specified in the EIR Digest, did not help. The only workable solution we found was to drill a hole through the head to the bolt and fasten it with wire to the frame or adjacent stationary item to preclude turning and subsequent loss.

(3) Recommendation: That tank mounting bolts on new type water trailers be modified as described above and wired to prevent loosening of the bolts.

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d. Subject: Lubrication Intervals.

(1) Observation: Lubrication by LO (Lubrication Order) has proven to be inadequate causing excessive wear and damage.

(2) Evaluation: The appropriate LO is not adequate in Vietnam, no matter what the item of equipment may be. Vehicles should be completely lubricated every 300 miles or 30 days, whichever comes first. Generators should be watched on a day to day basis, and an oil change performed weekly. Filters should be changed with every crankcase change. Refrigeration units should also be lubricated on a weekly basis.

(3) Recommendation: That equipment be lubricated in accordance with the period mentioned above in the evaluation.

e. Subject: M35A2 Front Engine Mounting Bolts.

(1) Observation: Loosening of M35A2 front engine mounting bolts by road vibration has caused damage to front-cross members and has caused the entire engine to be replaced.

(2) Evaluation: A common discrepancy with the M35A2, LDS 465-1 Engine, is a frequent loosening of the front engine mount bolts. These should be checked daily and even more frequently if possible, because road conditions quickly loosen them. Engine torque, if the bolts become loose, will invariably cause the front cross-member to crack on the left side, hence a wash-out. Further, if the bolts drop out, the engine drops down on the front output flange of the differential causing the necessity to replace the engine.

(3) Recommendation: The M35A2 front engine mounting bolts should be checked at least once daily.

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6. (c) Others:

a. Subject: 106mm Recoiless Rifle, Track Mounted.

(1) Observation: Each of the "LIGHT" infantry brigades in the Republic of Vietnam, has been organized to obtain a high degree of mobility permitting rapid movement to exploit the tactical situation. Most of these brigades have a separate Cavalry Troop attached. In keeping with the light concept the cavalry troops do not have the tank section normally organic to Armored Section. The deletion of the tank section robs the cavalrymen of much of their fire power, and in an effort to regain the large bore fire-power the use of track mounted 106mm recoiless rifle has become quite common.

(2) Evaluation: The use of the 106mm recoiless rifle allows the armored cavalry to assume a more aggressive posture in many difficult situations.

(3) Recommendations: The adaptation of the 106mm recoiless rifle to the M106A1 mortar carrier is fairly simple and requires only the addition of two (2) bolt holes in the top deck of the track. The M106A1 mortar carrier was chosen for two (2) reasons. The cargo hatch is much larger than that of the M113A1 and this allows the loader the necessary room to maneuver the large 106mm round during loading. Second the interior of this vehicle lends itself well to the storage of the 106mm ammunition.

The weapon itself needs only slight alteration to its normal mount to allow it to be fitted to the M106A1. All of the alteration necessary can be accomplished at the direct support maintenance level and any items necessary to effect the adaptation can be fabricated at that level.

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The employment of this weapon is limited by several factors.

First, the vehicle is only lightly armored and is easily penetrated by any weapon larger than small arms. Secondly, this vehicle is a prime target and should be employed as a support element rather than as an assault vehicle. When advancing the enemy the vehicle should be held in reserve or just behind the advancing APC's. This gives a degree of protection to the vehicle and permits maximum delivery of firepower. Due to the added weight of the ammunition and weapon the track is vulnerable to mines which might not effect the other lighter vehicles.

FOR THE COMMANDER:

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