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DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
Headquarters, 11th Infantry Brigade, Americal Division
APO San Francisco 96217

AVDF-BAOP

31 January 1970

SUBJECT: Operational Report - Lessons Learned - 11th Infantry Brigade,
Period Ending 31 January 1970, RCS CSFOR-65 (R2)

Commanding General
American Division
ATTN: AVDF-HL
APO San Francisco 96374

SECTION II - LESSONS LEARNED:
COMMANDER'S OBSERVATIONS, EVALUATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

A.	Personnel	None
B.	Intelligence	See Inclosure 1
C.	Operations	See Inclosure 2
D.	Organization	None
E.	Training	None
F.	Logistics	None
G.	Communications	None
H.	Material	See Inclosure 3
I.	Armored Cavalry	See Inclosure 4

FOR THE COMMANDER:

MELVIN B. HAYDEN
MAJ, INF
Adjutant

MELVIN B. HAYDEN
MAJ, INF
Adjutant

- 4. Incl
- 1. Intelligence
- 2. Operations
- 3. Material
- 4. Armored Cavalry

GROUP-4

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Declassified after 12 years.

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LESSONS LEARNED
COMMANDER'S OBSERVATIONS, EVALUATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

INTELLIGENCE

1. SUBJECT: Source Gap of Tactical Units

a. Observation: On many occasions tactical units are not receiving information, on a timely basis, which would directly effect their combat operations. Information in many instances is lacking in locating low level VCI, guerrillas, and local force unit dispositions in Battalion areas of operation.

b. Evaluation: The lack of essential information of this type affects the degree of security the battalion can provide the indigenous population and prevents the timely employment of combat troops in areas where enemy elements could be neutralized. To eliminate this "source gap" battalions were encouraged to work closely with leaders of local populace to gain more reliable information on enemy movements and locations. In addition battalions were encouraged to recruit agents for

development of an information net which would be responsive to the needs of the battalion. This recruitment has been partially successful and,

in several instances, such information has led to the neutralization of VCI, location of small cache sites, bunkers utilized by enemy information on a timely basis, which would directly effect their combat elements, and elimination of personnel of local force units. The initial success of this program has created enthusiasm among the units presently using such information sources and has significantly reduced the time required to react to valuable information.

c. Recommendation: Battalions should be encouraged to develop a reliable and responsive information net.

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2. SUBJECT: Utilization of Former Members of PRU

a. Observation: Recent instructions of the provincial government of Quang Ngai has caused the strength of Provincial Recon Units to be curtailed.

b. Evaluation: The release of personnel who are highly qualified in information gathering and VCI elimination effected the ability of friendly elements to locate and destroy the VC infrastructure. A means of recruitment has been implemented to continue to utilize these personnel in an intelligence gathering role. One former member of PRU, presently attending Kit Carson Scout training in Chu Lai, will be assigned to the 11th Infantry Brigade while another is currently employed as an agent by an American Counter-Intelligence team. The value of these personnel is tremendous and their placement in various roles of intelligence gathering is limited only by the imagination of the recruiter.

c. Recommendation: Highly trained and effective personnel released from Provincial Recon Units should be utilized in the gathering of intelligence in areas in which they are trained.

3. SUBJECT: PSID Employment

a. Observation: Most units employing the PSID (Patrol Seismic Intrusion Detector) in both NDP and ambush sites have reported dissatisfaction with the set due to its apparent hypersensitivity. Several units have totally discarded the set as a reliable means of early warning on the incorrect assumption that because the set generally emits continuous signals, indicating intrusion into the area under surveillance, it was therefore unreliable in its designed role.

b. Evaluation: The PSID, while fairly simple to operate, has not been a reliable Counter-Intelligence device. The value of these personnel is tremendous and their placement in various roles of intelligence gathering is limited only by the imagination of the recruiter.

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2. SUBJECT: Highly trained and effective personnel released from

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received enough attention from using units concerning selective employment and careful experimentation. Like other seismic detectors, its capabilities vary in proportion to the surrounding terrain. When the soil composition tends to be soft and damp, the gain control must be adjusted to a higher sensitivity setting. Inversely, when the soil composition is hard and rocky, the gain control must be adjusted to a lower sensitivity ("1" is not too low for effective operation) to successfully detect intrusion while simultaneously rejecting false activations. False activations are all activations caused by seismic vibrations emanating from sources other than friendly or enemy personnel. Examples of false activations are helicopters flying overhead, artillery impacting up to 100 meters away, reconnaissance by fire, proximity to running water, swaying bushes, and trees in heavy wind.

c. Recommendation: The PSID is deceptively simple in both appearance and operation. If careful attention is given regarding the set's sensitivity and gain control, its performance should ultimately prove satisfactory to the user. It is recommended that each unit provide training on the set to be used, the type of soil composition likely to be found in the area, proper implantation of the geophone (for reduction of false activations), and user discernment between true and false activations. The PSID is currently being modified at its in-country arrival port to minimize false activations or be employed in critical situations.

4. SUBJECT: Treatment of Detainees in the Field

a. Observation: Detainees captured by field units occasionally reach the brigade level of interrogation harassed or mistreated. These

running water, swaying bushes, and trees in heavy wind.

c. Recommendation: The PSID is deceptively simple in both appear-

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actions against detainees are carried out by capturing personnel or those personnel assigned to transport detainees to the brigade level interrogation point.

b. Evaluation: The mistreated detainee, when interrogated at Brigade level, is afraid to reveal information which he suspects will result in his being further mistreated or killed. Therefore, the information received from the detainee is erroneous or of no tactical value. Interrogation has revealed that the local guerrillas and cadre men have warned the population of being mistreated by US or ARVN personnel if they discover that they have contact with or have been a member of a VC organization. The mistreatment of detainees in the field is the first step in fulfilling that warning.

c. Recommendation: Physical contact with the detainee in the field, aside from the required amount necessary for actual detention and search, should be kept to a minimum. This policy will facilitate interrogation and expedites the dissemination of tactically important information to the field.

5. SUBJECT: Transfer of Capture Details from the Field to the Interrogation Point

a. Observation: Detainees coming in from the field to the brigade interrogation point occasionally arrive with no capture date and, quite frequently, with no circumstances of capture.

b. Evaluation: Upon reaching the brigade level interrogation point, the detainee has had ample time to fabricate a false story concerning his capture. The interrogation team has no alternative but to take the detainee's word as being true or contact the capturing

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unit's rear element, which usually doesn't have any more information than is already known by the interrogators.

c. Recommendation: Every detainee that is sent in from the field should be accompanied by as much information concerning capture of that detainee as the tactical situation permits. Information should include (1) facts concerning any contacts in the area (2) exactly what the detainee had in his possession at the time of capture and (3) all information detainee revealed while still in the field.

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LESSONS LEARNED

COMMANDER'S OBSERVATIONS, EVALUATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

OPERATIONS

1. SUBJECT: Booby Traps

a. Observation: At 1400 hours on 29 December 1969 a platoon leader from 3-1 Inf Bn triggered a booby trap consisting of an 82mm mortar. The resulting explosion severed both his legs and one arm.

b. Evaluation: A platoon from the 3-1 Inf Bn was conducting local patrols west of Quang Ngai City in an area five miles due east of FSB 4-11. It was discovered that the area was heavily infested with punji stakes. The platoon leader instructed all members of the platoon to walk cautiously and to avoid the areas in which the punji stakes had been placed. He was by-passing a particularly heavily punji staked area when he detonated the pressure type booby trap.

c. Recommendation: Movement through and around areas involving punji stakes must be made with the utmost caution. In this case punji stakes were utilized to canalize the troops into the area of the booby trap.

2. SUBJECT: Stay-Behind Ambush

a. Observation: At 0930 hours, 21 January 1970, one reinforced squad from Co C/3-1 Inf Bn, sprung an ambush in the unit's laager position, killing two NVA and capturing one AK-47.

b. Evaluation: The stay-behind ambush has consistently proven to be effective means of catching the enemy unawares. It is a known fact that a favorite enemy tactic is to track US units to gain information and confiscate any equipment left behind. Co C/3-1 Inf Bn employed a reinforced squad stay-behind ambush in the vicinity of their night

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laager site as the remainder of the company began a reconnaissance-in-force. Less than one hour later a three man NVA reconnaissance team walked into the company's old night laager site. They immediately went to the old company CP area, indicating that they had been observing the company prior to departure. The ambush was sprung and two of the three NVA were killed.

c. Recommendation: Stay-behind patrols and ambushes should be employed in conjunction with movement out of night laager sites.

3. SUBJECT: Short Range Reconnaissance Patrols (SRRP)

a. Observation:

(1) The 4-3 Inf Bn organized their Reconnaissance Platoon into four (4) SRRP teams in November 1969 and arranged for all members to attend the Americal Combat Center's Reconnaissance Course. Each team consisted of seven men who were equipped to operate in the field for operations up to 72 hours.

(2) The type missions the SRRP's were prepared for are:

- (a) Trail watching
- (b) Recon patrols
- (c) Stay-behind ambushes and patrols
- (d) Flank and point security for rifle companies
- (e) POW capture

b. Evaluation:

(1) A successful mission was conducted on 14 December 1969 when a SRRP team was dispatched to check on an abandoned hamlet in the vicinity of FSB San Juan Hill. Agent reports indicated that the VC/NVA were using the area as a rest area during the hours of darkness. The SRRP

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team observed 15 VC/NVA at 2400 hours move into the area and prepared sleeping positions. The SRRP team was located 15 meters from the enemy throughout the night, providing valuable intelligence that resulted in scheduled fires program that has since denied this area to the enemy.

(2) Another SRRP team found a cache of AK-47 ammunition and home-made satchel charges 500 meters outside the perimeter of FSB San Juan Bill. Perhaps as a result of this find and other alert activities, an enemy attack was pre-empted.

c. Recommendation:

(1) A minimum of two or more SRRP teams should be formed within each maneuver battalion. These teams should be specially trained and habitually employed as a team.

(2) The Reconnaissance Platoon when used as a source of these teams, should be employed occasionally as a unit to preserve unit esprit and proficiency.

4. SUBJECT: Integrated Observation System

a. Observation: The Integrated Observation System with laser range finder is an excellent means of pinpointing and destroying the enemy.

b. Evaluation: In addition to using the IOS to adjust artillery, the 1-20 Inf Ln has used the IOS to maneuver units to specific locations. The technique used is to train the IOS on a specific target and in conjunction with PRC-25 radios and a common frequency, guide the ground unit to the exact location of a target.

c. Recommendation: The IOS has a capacity that should not be limited to firing artillery at a specific target. It can be effectively employed as a technique to guide maneuver elements to known or suspected enemy locations.

(2) The Reconnaissance Platoon should be a source of these teams.

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LESSONS LEARNED COMMANDER'S OBSERVATIONS, EVALUATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

MATERIALS

SUBJECT: Operational Readiness of the AN/PPS-5 Radar

- a. Observation:** Repair parts for the AN/PPS-5 Radar have been in critical short supply.
- b. Evaluation:** Due to the shortage of repair parts for the AN/PPS-5 Radar, a sound preventive maintenance program is of prime importance.
- c. Recommendation:** The following actions should be taken to reduce downtime of the AN/PPS-5 Radar:
 - (1) The radar set should be transported by air only.
 - (2) Each site should have the appropriate technical manuals on hand.
 - (3) When not in use, the receiver-transmitter (RT) unit should be kept mounted and covered to provide dust and water protection.
 - (4) The reflector and guide horn should be removed when the radar is not in use.
 - (5) Maintenance should be performed daily on each radar as prescribed in TM 11-5840-298-12.
 - (6) Radar set should be repaired on site whenever possible.

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- (1) The radar set should be transported by air only.
- (2) Each site should have the appropriate technical manuals on hand.
- (3) When not in use, the receiver-transmitter (RT) unit should be kept mounted and covered to provide dust and water protection.

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LESSONS LEARNED
COMMANDER'S OBSERVATIONS, EVALUATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

ARMORED CAVALRY

1. SUBJECT: Safety

a. Observation: Recently E Troop, 1st Cav, had the throttle on an M551 Sheridan stick, causing the vehicle to run over two unoccupied hoodies. A check revealed that .50 caliber brass and links had accumulated on the floor beneath the throttle causing it to jam.

b. Evaluation: Floors of M551's must be kept free of debris.

c. Recommendation: This information should be disseminated to units equipped with the M551 Sheridan.

2. SUBJECT: Coaxial Machine Gun Ammunition

a. Observation: The ammunition for aircraft mini-guns comes in a box of 2500 rounds, linked. This box fits beneath the M73 coax in the turret of an M551 and properly feeds into the weapon. A can of mini-gun ammunition carried on the M551 Sheridan and used in conjunction with the rack already provided will provide 1500 rounds of coax ammunition.

This amount will last through the average contact and the loader need not expose himself to enemy fire to get additional ammunition.

b. Evaluation: This expedient method is convenient and also saves unnecessary exposure of the loader.

c. Recommendation: This expedient should be disseminated to other units which are equipped with the M551 Sheridan.

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DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
Headquarters, 11th Infantry Brigade, Americal Division
APO San Francisco 96217

AVDF-BAIN

21 January 1970

SUBJECT: Quarterly Report - Lessons Learned

1. Subject: Source Gap of Tactical Units

a. Observation: On many occasions tactical units were not receiving information, on a timely basis, which would directly effect their combat operations. Information was particularly lacking on location of low level VCI, guerrillas, and local force unit dispositions in Battalion areas of operations.

b. Evaluation: The lack of usable information of this type affected the degree of security the Battalion could afford the indigenous population, and prevented the timely employment of combat troops in areas where enemy elements could be neutralized.

c. Recommendation: Each Battalion was urged to work closely with leaders of the local populace to gain more reliable information on enemy movements and locations. In addition, each Battalion was urged to recruit agents for development of an information net which would be responsive to the needs of the Battalion. This recruitment has been partially successful and, in several instances, such information has led to the neutralization of VCI, location of small cache sites, bunkers utilized by enemy elements, and elimination of personnel of local force units. The initial success of this program has created enthusiasm among all units presently utilizing the information sources and has significantly reduced the time required to react to valuable information.

2. Subject: Utilization of Former Members of PRU

a. Observation: Recent instructions of the provincial government of Quang Ngai (1) has caused the strength of Provincial Recon Units to be drastically curtailed.

b. Evaluation: The release of personnel who are highly qualified in information gathering and VCI elimination effected the ability of friendly elements to locate and destroy the VC infrastructure. A means of recruitment was devised to utilize these men in the best way possible.

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c. Recommendation: That highly trained and effective personnel released from Provincial Recon Units be utilized in the gathering of intelligence in areas in which they are trained. One former member of PRU, presently attending training in Chu Lai, is to eventually become a Kit Carson Scout in the 11th Infantry Brigade. Another is currently employed as an agent by an American Counter-Intelligence team. The value of these personnel is tremendous and their placement in various roles of intelligence gathering is limited only by the imagination of the recruiter.

3. Subject: PSID Employment

a. Observation: Most units employing the PSID (Patrol Seismic Intrusion Detector), in both NDP and ambush circumstances, have reported dissatisfaction with the set due to its apparent hypersensitivity. Several units have totally discarded the set as a reliable means of early warning on the incorrect assumption that because the set generally emitted continuous signals, indicating intrusion into the area under surveillance, it was therefore unreliable in its designed role.

b. Evaluation: The PSID, while fairly simple to operate, has not received enough attention from using units concerning selective employment and careful experimentation. Like other seismic detectors, its capabilities vary in proportion to the surrounding terrain. When the soil composition tends to be soft and damp, the gain control must be adjusted to a higher sensitivity setting. Inversely, when the soil composition is hard and rocky, the gain control must be adjusted to a lower sensitivity ("1" is not too low for effective operation) to successfully detect intrusion while simultaneously rejecting false activations. False activations are all activations caused by seismic vibrations emanating from sources other than friendly or enemy personnel. Examples of false activations are helicopters flying overhead, artillery impacting up to 1000 meters away, reconnaissance by fire, proximity to running water, swaying bushes, and trees in heavy wind.

c. Recommendation: Bearing a striking resemblance to various traits indigenous to the female "homo sapiens", the PSID is deceptively simple in both appearance and operation. If careful attention, however, is given regarding the set's sensitivity and gain control, its performance should ultimately prove satisfactory to the user. It is suggested that each unit provide training on the set with emphasis placed on personal familiarization with each set to be used, the type of soil composition likely to be found in the area, proper implantation of the geophone (for reduction of false activations), and user discernment between true and false activations.

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The PSID is currently being modified at its in-country arrival port to minimize false activations once employed in critical situations.

4. Subject: Treatment of Detainees in the Field

a. Observation: Detainees captured by field units occasionally reach the brigade level of interrogation harassed or even beaten. These actions against detainees are carried out by capturing personnel or those personnel assigned to transport detainees to the brigade level interrogation point.

b. Evaluation: The mistreated detainee, when interrogated at brigade level, is afraid to reveal information which he suspects will result in his being further mistreated or killed. Therefore, the information received from the detainee is erroneous or of no tactical value.

Interrogation by ~~this office~~ has revealed that the local guerrillas and cadre men have warned the population of what will happen to them if US or ARVN personnel discover that they have contact with, or have been a member of, any VC organization. The mistreatment of detainees in the field is the first step in fulfilling that warning of mistreatment. Interrogation of the PW/NVA has shown that this individual is usually glad to have been captured due to the fact that conditions in our PW compounds are much better than those in his base area. He is therefore very cooperative in answering ~~our~~ questions. Mistreatment of the NVA captive proves to him that what his political officers told him in the propaganda lectures about being shot very soon after capture will probably come true. A tactic of the VC cadre who want to meet their production quotas is to take the ID cards away from the civilians in their areas. Without those ID cards the civilians cannot travel about for fear of attracting attention as strangers, being caught without ID cards, and put in jail. Thus the civilian must stay in his area and work his land, and the VC cadre can collect a good tax. Upon capture, though, these people without ID cards are immediately suspected of being VC. This suspicion causes mistreatment and valuable information is lost, whereas, if treated well, the detainee would be more inclined to give information on the VC to rid his area of them.

c. Recommendation: *It is recommended* ~~This office recommends, therefore, that the physical contact with the detainee in the field, aside from the required amount necessary for actual detention and search, be kept to a minimum. This will greatly facilitate interrogation and allow for faster return of tactically important information to the field.~~

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5. ✓ Subject: Transfer of Capture Details from the Field to the Point of Brigade Level Interrogation

a. Observation: Detainees coming in from the field to the brigade interrogation point occasionally arrive with no capture data and, quite frequently, with no circumstances of capture.

b. Evaluation: Upon reaching the brigade level interrogation point, the detainee has had ample time to fabricate a false story concerning his capture. The interrogation team has no alternative but to take the detainee's word as being true or contact the capturing unit's rear element, which usually doesn't have any more information than is already known by the interrogators.

c. Recommendation: Every detainee that is sent in from the field should be accompanied by as much information concerning capture of that detainee as the tactical situation permits. Information should include facts concerning any contacts in the area, exactly what the detainee had in his possession at the time of capture, and all information detainee revealed while still in the field.


STUART L. PERKINS
Major, Infantry
S-2

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DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
Headquarters, 4th Battalion, 3d Infantry
Americana Division
APO San Francisco 96217

AVDF-BARK

23 January 1970

SUBJECT: Operational Report - Lessons Learned (ORLL) (U)

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

I. (C) OPERATION OF A FIRE SUPPORT BASE DURING MONSOON SEASON:

This battalion's Fire Support Base is located on top of a high hill at 400 meters elevation in a remote area and is totally dependent upon helicopters for resupply. During the monsoon months when movement by air was curtailed by weather shortages of ammunition, water, POL and food occurred. In December 1969 when the weather precluded resupply for a period of eight days the logistical status approached a crisis condition.

A. OBSERVATIONS:

1. Ammunition stockage became critical after five days. The companies used more 105mm and 4.2 inch ammunition, especially illumination rounds. When a unit had a significant enemy contact during poor weather more artillery and mortar was used than would have been used in good weather because helicopter gun ships, Spooky and Shadow aircraft, and high performance aircraft would not be able to provide support.

2. Since all water for the FSB is flown in by CH-47 helicopters potable water shortages occurred. Precipitation often consisted of only a fine mist with heavy ground fog and, therefore, very little water could be obtained by catching rain water. It became necessary to ration water after five days.

3. POL is necessary to provide fuel for the generators, mess operation and sanitation facilities. During periods of inclement weather, when it is anticipated that resupply will be impossible, fuel had to be conserved by turning off the generators for eight hours per day. This caused the shutting down of the VHF radio.

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Declassified after 12 years
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4. After two days, class A rations were depleted, and after five days class B and C rations were in short supply. Paper plates also were in short supply after five days.

B. EVALUATION:

1. Prior planning and the stock piling of essential items prior to the onset of the monsoon season would have precluded the problems encountered. Stockage should be based upon the maximum probable period of continuous inclement weather that will ground helicopter movement. During the height of the monsoon season the expected maximum of unflyable weather is ten days.

2. The following quantities of supplies are necessary to be stock piled to preclude a loss of combat effectiveness during a ten day bad weather seige:

a. Ammunition:

(1) Artillery for one 105 battery of 6 guns:

- (a) 3000 rounds HE to include 1000 rounds of registered lot.
- (b) 500 rounds of illumination.

(2) 4.2 Mortar for one platoon of 4 mortars:

- (a) 1000 rounds HE.
- (b) 300 rounds illumination.

(3) 81 Mortar for one platoon of 3 mortars:

- (a) 550 rounds HE.
- (b) 350 rounds illumination.

(4) Small arm ammunition basic load for a rifle company is insufficient for FSB perimeter defense for a ten day period. Four basic loads should be stored on the FSB under battalion control.

b. Water: 500 gallons should be maintained as emergency stock and used only for medical and mess operations when needed.

c. POL: A ten day supply of POL should be maintained:

- (1) 500 gallons diesel fuel.
- (2) 300 gallons gasoline.

d. Rations: Two days supply of A rations, three days of B rations and five days of LRRP and C rations. Four days supply of C/LRRP rations should also be kept on hand in the event carrying parties need to be sent to a rifle company that has run out of food and cannot be resupplied by air.

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C. RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. That a minimum of ten days supply of ammunition, water, POL and rations be stored on FSB, dependent upon air resupply, prior to the monsoon season.

2. That resupply of remote FSB should be given priority whenever there is a temporary improvement in the weather and minimum safe flying conditions exist so the supplies can be brought back up to a ten-day stockage.

3. That utilization of ammunition for scheduled fires, "mad minutes," and attack of intelligence targets be kept to a minimum in order to conserve supplies.

✓ II. (C) SHORT RANGE RECONNAISSANCE PATROLS (SRRP):

A. OBSERVATIONS:

1. This battalion organized the Reconnaissance Platoon into four SRRP teams in November 1969 and arranged for all members to attend the Americal Division Recondo School. Each team consisted of seven men and equipped to operate in the field for operations up to 72 hours.

2. The type missions the SRRP's were prepared for are: trail watching, recon patrols, stay-behind patrols, flank and point security for rifle companies, and POW capture.

B. EVALUATION:

1. A successful mission was conducted on 14 December 1969 when a SRRP team was dispatched to check on an abandoned hamlet in the vicinity of the Battalion FSB. Agent reports indicated that the VC/NVA were using the area as a rest area during the hours of darkness. The SRRP team observed 15 VC/NVA at 2400 hours move into the area and prepare sleeping positions. At 0530 the enemy soldiers left the area. The SRRP team was located 15 meters from the enemy throughout the night. This valuable intelligence has resulted in a scheduled fires program which has denied this area to the enemy.

2. Another SRRP team found a cache of AK-47 ammunition and home-made satchel charges 500 meters outside the perimeter of the FSB. Perhaps as a result of this find and other alert activities no subsequent attack took place.

3. The success of SRRP patrols on many missions is measured in positive and negative intelligence gathered, which, in turn, are primary considerations affecting decisions of where to commit and where not to commit maneuver rifle companies.

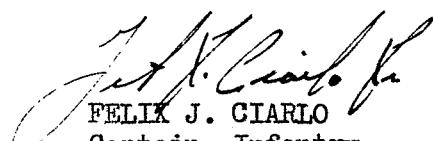
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C. RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. That two or more SRRP teams be formed in each maneuver battalion. These teams should be specially trained and habitually utilized as a team.
2. If the Reconnaissance Platoon is used as a source of these teams, the Platoon should be employed occasionally as a unit to preserve unit esprit and cohesiveness.

FOR THE COMMANDER:



FELIX J. CIARLO
Captain, Infantry
Adjutant

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