CONFIDENTIAL

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

AVDF-BCC 31 January 1969

SUBJECT: Operational Report of the 198th Infantry Brigade (Lt) for the period ending 31 January 1969, RCS CSFOR-65 (U)

Commanding General
Americal Division
ATTN: AVDF-HL
APO 96374

1. (U) Personnel: None.

2. (C) Operations:

a. Subject: Tactical Operations During Monsoon Season.

(1) Observation: During periods of heavy rain, the NVA and VC forces follow a predictable pattern when moving from one area to another, and in protecting themselves and their equipment from the weather.

(2) Evaluation: Due to the fact that rice paddies, low land areas, stream beds, and other NVA and VC routes of movement are flooded and often impassable, the NVA and VC restrict their movements to trails and roads used by local VN people. As a further means of protecting themselves and their equipment, the NVA and VC use large sheets of plastic and ponchos. They also tend to stay in populated areas where there are structures which offer protection against the elements.

(3) Recommendations: When heavy rains restrict NVA and VC routes of movement, friendly units should operate in platoon size elements. Experience has shown that these platoon sized elements will have the most success by conducting daylight OP's and night ambushes along well traveled trails leading into and out of populated areas. In order to remain undetected while engaging the enemy, maximum use of artillery is of paramount importance.

b. Subject: Chromium Plated M-16 Rifle.

(1) Observation: It has been found that the new chromium plated M-16 rifle tends to jam when first used.

(2) Evaluation: With the new chromium plated M-16 it was found

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that a minimum of 200 rounds had to be fired through the weapon to remove burrs left on it during its manufacture. After the new weapons have fired 200 rounds they function properly. Except for the above mentioned problem the new chromium plated M-16 has proven itself far superior to the old type weapon.

(3) Recommendation: That 200 rounds be fired from each new M-16 before it is deployed.

c. Subject: Waterproof bag for M-17 Protective mask.

(1) Observation: It is not necessary to carry the M-17 Protective Mask inside the waterproof plastic bag at all times.

(2) Evaluation: Carrying the M-17 Protective Mask in the waterproof bag during hot weather will cause moisture to collect on the mask. This moisture will collect inside the lenses and limit visibility. This moisture can also cause damage to the filters.

(3) Recommendation: Do not store the M-17 Protective Mask in the waterproof bag when it is not necessary.

d. Subject: Use of Kit Carsons.

(1) Observation: In the past, the use of Kit Carsons has been increased. Their knowledge of enemy activity has proved invaluable, provided US units can effectively use them. Problems arise from the inability of the Kit Carsons to read maps, failure of US units to create a solid working relationship with the Kit Carson and failure to properly debrief them after a VR or operation.

(2) Evaluation: The Kit Carsons' knowledge of map reading has proved to be totally ineffective. Therefore, we have initiated a new policy of taking them on VRs prior to a tactical operation. Once a Kit Carson becomes oriented, he can point out areas of enemy activity, enemy base camps, weapons and supply caches. Several problems have arisen out of this new policy, the cause being that a solid, friendly relationship between the Kit Carson and the US unit has not been established. In order to solve this problem, the US unit must greet the Kit Carson in a warm, sincere manner, letting him become accustomed to US military personnel, equipment, food and tactical operations. Once the Kit Carson has overcome his fears and misgivings regarding the US military, his knowledge will be used much more effectively by all concerned.

(3) Recommendations: Every chance to use Kit Carsons should be utilized as quickly as possible. The longer the period of time before their use, the lesser the chances of capitalizing on their knowledge. Every

means must be taken to establish friendly relationships with the Kit Carson, by equipping him with the necessary equipment and supplies, introductions to unit leaders and interpreters, and taking a sincere interest in him and his knowledge. Since the Kit Carson cannot read maps, he should be taken on a VR in order that he can orient himself and make use of his information. During this VR, he must not be forced or rushed in any manner because such a new experience may confuse him and reduce his effectiveness. Finally, once the VR and/or operation has been completed, a complete debriefing must be made. Again, the Kit Carson must not be forced or rushed and the impression must be conveyed that this information is truly useful to our units. If these policies are carefully followed, the effectiveness of the Kit Carson will be increased greatly.

e. Subject: Communications problems in wet weather.

(1) Observation: Extremely wet and rainy periods during the monsoon season are causing radio communications problems in vehicular mounted radios. Some problem areas can be anticipated, and preventive measures can be taken to avoid these problems.

(2) Evaluation: When the weather is extremely wet, we have discovered that the antenna connections on our M113A1's become wet, and short out. These connections are around the base of the antenna where the antenna screws into the mount, or where the antenna base on the top deck of the track connects with the matching unit beneath the top deck. When these connections become saturated, receiving and transmitting capabilities are seriously limited.

(3) Recommendations: Crew members should continuously check the antenna mast base bolts to insure tightness, and insure that the mast itself is screwed down tight on the base. If these connections should become wet, they should be disconnected and dried out with a dry cloth. The gasket between the mast base and the top deck of the vehicle should be periodically checked and replaced if necessary. If these procedures are observed, many communications problems of vehicular mounted radios in wet weather can be avoided.

f. Subject: Coordination of FWMAF Operations.

(1) Observation: Due to the nature of the conflict and the distribution of the population the situation frequently arises where various FWMAF operate concurrently in the same AO without any one unit having complete authority over the area. In the past incidents have arisen due to this situation which have caused the loss of life.

(2) Evaluation: Operations within the Oregon AO have proceeded without serious incident only because the excellent rapport developed between the 1-52 Inf, the ARVN advisors, the Sector Advisors and Special Forces personnel at Tien Phuoc. In conduct of normal operations within the 1-52 AO

there is a constant requirement for close direct coordination with both elements. The movement of maneuver elements and the use of supporting fires must be closely supervised to prevent friendly contact. Various techniques are being utilized to facilitate coordination and control. A liaison has been co-located with ARVN battalion advisor and radio contact is maintained with Special Forces as required. The frequent interchange of locations and plans between all elements and the establishment of the informal sub-areas of operation facilitate coordination and control. Frequent use is also made of AO extensions when operations require boundary changes. Although emphasis is constantly placed on complete coordination and all possible measures are taken to avoid potential friendly contacts problem continue to exist. Small units without Americal Advisors are unable to effect direct coordination with US units and the use of artillery and mortar fire is frequently not properly coordinated.

(3) Recommendations: The ideal solution would be the creation of exclusive AO's for each element operating within the area. A buffer zone of least 1 km should also be established along the boundary. All non US units requesting to operate within the US AO should be required to have an American advisor with each element in order to ensure adequate coordination. Finally all artillery and mortar fire within the US AO should be passed with complete air clearance data prior to the granting of military clearance. If these additional procedures are followed and close coordination maintained, the portential for tragic accidents can be greatly reduced.

g. Subject: Defense of the Artillery battery on a permanent fire base.

(1) Observation: Any permanent position allows the enemy as much time as he wants to plan any and all types of attacks. Active defensive personnel from infantry and cavalry units are transient and their availability cannot be counted on due to the tactical and operational situation. Consequently, it is the responsibility of the battery commander to develope and maintain a strong defense of his position. This must be accomplished with minimum personnel to allow continuance of full capabilities to perform the artillery mission. A sound defense plan will organize the defense with only battery and will include provisions to smoothly and effectively incorporate any infantry or cavalry support that is provided.

(2) Evaluation: A strong defense is the key to such a plan. Wire, warning devices, illumination and command detonated mines are all very important and should be employed in great quantity. Perimeter lights are a big asset to any defense and should be employed whenever possible. All command detonated devices, claymore mines, E-8 gas launchers and airplane flares should be ready to be fired and the wires should be right in front of the observer. This will give a formidable defensive capability and will buy time for the unit reaction force to organize and proceed to his location. Two other items that should be mentioned concern perimeter wire and fragmentation grenades. Perimeter wire must be inspected daily for cuts, beaten down vegetation and markings. An artillery battery can and must be prepared.

to defend itself entirely when on a permanent fire base. On a sound and flexible defense plan will effectively accomplish this with the proper economy of force.

(3) Recommendations: The above be initiated for fire base defense.

3. (U) Training: None.

4. (U) Intelligence: None.

5. (C) Logistics:

a. Subject: Collapsible intrenching tool.

(1) Observation: The new collapsible intrenching tool has proven to be inferior to its forerunner. It is easier to carry but is inadequate for digging in rocky soil. The men using the new intrenching tool tire more rapidly due to the extra digging effort exerted.

(2) Evaluation: If the new intrenching tool could maintain its present design but use a heavier metal in the blade it would prove to be an advantage in the rocky terrain. The addition of a pick to the intrenching tool would be an advantage to the personnel using it, enabling them to soften the ground to be dug.

(3) Recommendation: The new collapsible intrenching tool be modified to dig in rocky ground.

b. Subject: Lensatic instrument protection.

(1) Observation: Due to the amount of rainfall during the monsoon period, lensatic instruments have the tendency to collect moisture between the lenses. This moisture, especially noted on the boresight of the 4.2 inch mortars, render them ineffective.

(2) Evaluation: It has been found that this condensation can be almost completely prevented by putting desicant packets, the type found in the shipping cases of 4.2 fuses, into the instrument case when it is not in use.

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(3) Recommendation: Because the lensatic instruments typical to the 4.2 inch mortars are frequently subjected to jarring and concussion, the use of desicant packets is necessary to supplement the seal of the instrument.

FOR THE COMMANDER:

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