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RECORD

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

AVDF-BCC

2 July 1969

SUBJECT: Operational Report Lessons Learned of the 198th Infantry Brigade
for the Period Ending 15 June 1969, RGS CS for - 65 (U)

Commanding General
Americal Division
ATTN: AVDF-HL
APO 96374

1. (U) References:

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

2. (U) Personnel: None.

3. (C) Operations:

- a. Subject: Misconceptions concerning the M113A1 Armored Cavalry.

(1) Observations: In recent actions, it has been very apparent that unit commanders to which the troop is attached are not giving sufficient time for the proper crew and organizational maintenance functions on the M113A1. Major maintenance problems have developed when normal attention and servicing would have precluded such instances.

(2) Evaluation: The M113A1 ACAV requires constant crew maintenance to include daily checks of oil levels, track wear, loosening of bolts, fan belts, and so forth. Organizational checks should be run weekly so that maintenance of a more serious nature can be attended to so as to prevent major breakdown and loss of combat effectiveness.

(3) Recommendations: Commanders at all levels should be made aware of the maintenance requirements of the M113A1 Armored Cav and that proper maintenance time should be provided within the tactical scheme of maneuver. Time should be allotted during daylight hours for crew maintenance. One day a week should be allotted for organizational maintenance in a secure area when facilities and needed equipment can be utilized to provide for what maintenance is needed. Supervision at these times would help insure that crew members are well trained in spotting trouble areas before they have a chance to develop.

GROUP 4
DOWNGRADED AT 3 YEAR INTERVALS;
DECLASSIFIED AFTER 12 YEARS

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b. Subject: Use of Hunter - Killer Team Operations.

(1) Observation: During the reporting period, an attempt was made to organize, equip and train personnel of two companies into Hunter - Killer teams comprised of 12-14 men each with the mission of finding, fixing position of, and destroying enemy forces by maximum use of supporting artillery and air support.

(2) Evaluation:

(a) Initially the companies were selected to be trained, equipped and organized under the Hunter - Killer concept. Each unit was to have six (6) teams, three (3) of which were to operate in the field at all times. In view of other commitments and missions within the Brigade CZ only one unit could be organized and tested under this concept.

(b) Implementation of this concept has proven that this organization has potential for obtaining effective results. Several sightings of enemy personnel proved the concept's validity for clandestine interposition of US troops along enemy routes of movement. Initial engagements of these targets was impeded by lack of coordination between ground and artillery elements. However, it is anticipated that lessons learned from these incidents will yield more effective engagement in the future.

(c) Specific problem areas encountered in trying to implement the Hunter Killer team concept were:

1 The lack of sufficient time to properly train the teams and develop these teams into an effective force. Small unit operations require as much detailed planning and training as large size operations.

2 The lack of experienced small unit commanders, particularly personnel familiar with the employment of supporting arms.

3 Contingency operations that require company operations to meet other commitments and contingencies in Operational Zone Geneva Park.

4 A combination of the above factors makes it exceptionally difficult to effectively utilize this concept.

(3) Recommendations: That the unit be granted one week to initially train one company under this concept and the concept be more fully tested over a two month period to observe the results and develop improved methods for utilization of these teams. Prior to deploying these teams into an area, fire support clearance should be obtained to present immediate response by artillery and aviation support units.

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c. Subject: Reestablishment of Abandoned Fire Bases.

(1) Observation: Due to the rapid deployment techniques available by airmobile operations, many fire support bases are made for a temporary need, i.e. the duration of one isolated operation. These fire bases are then abandoned. The effect of this is evidenced by the many devices the enemy employs against the reuse of abandoned fire bases.

(2) Evaluation: In relatively open abandoned fire support bases, artillery has been employed favorably in clearing mines laid above the ground by the enemy. The blast of the exploding shell activates some mines triggered with trip wires and sympathetic detonation can set off others.

(3) Recommendation: If an abandoned firebase is to be reopened, presume that it has been mined by the enemy and take all the necessary precautions in planning for the reopening of the fire base. All available information about the fire base should be furnished to the occupying element to aid to the successful reopening of the fire base.

FOR THE COMMANDER:


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