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

AVDF-RCS

1 August 1968

SUBJECT: Operational Report of 198th Infantry Brigade (LT) for the Period Ending 31 July 1968, RCS CSFOR-65. (U).

Commanding General
Americal Division
ATTN: AVDF-HL
APO 96374

SECTION 2, LESSONS LEARNED:
COMMANDERS' OBSERVATIONS, EVALUATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

A. (C) Operations.

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

(a) Observation. A successful operation can be accomplished when conducting cordon and search operations with the incorporation of PRU's (Provincial Reconnaissance Units) and NP's (National Police) into the overall ground tactical plan. PRU's should be assigned missions such as blocking forces or search teams, and the NP should be inserted to conduct interrogations after the area has been searched and the persons to be interrogated separated.

(b) Evaluation. Results of combat operations including the cordon and search of a village are considerably improved when PRU and NP are incorporated into the scheme of maneuver. After US and/or GVN troops have effectively cordoned a village, the PRU's are assigned the mission to sweep into the cordoned area and conduct a 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.

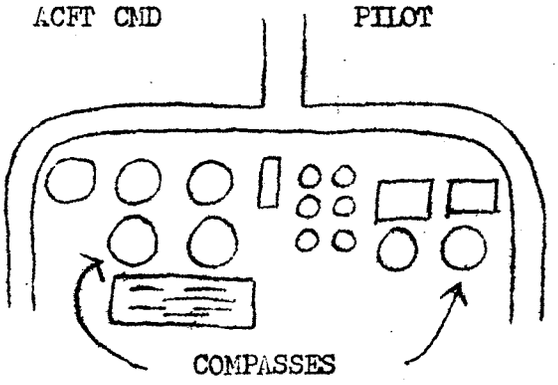
(c) Recommendation. Make maximum use of PRU's and NP in cordon and search missions especially for searching and interrogation.

2. Subject: Map Orientation.

(a) Observation. Compasses on the instrument panel of the helicopters used in a combat assault can be used to assist in orientation as the flight progresses.

(b) Evaluation. When conducting a combat assault, the PZ location is known and is what may be called the start point. Using the compasses on the helicopter instrument panel, the direction of travel is known, and the location along the direction being travelled is determined by observing the terrain below. Below is a diagram of an instrument panel showing the location of the compasses.

VIEW INSIDE A HELICOPTER



(c) Recommendation. All leaders should make use of the compasses on the instrument panel of helicopters as a navigational aid in maintaining map-ground orientation while in flight.

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3. Subject: Hasty Marking of a Suspected Mine or Known Booby Trap.

(a) Observation. Units have been required to move at night often through a known or suspected mine and booby trapped area. When speed and silence are essential it is difficult to clear the area properly and notify personnel coming up from the rear of known or suspected booby traps.

(b) Evaluation. One technique that has been employed assists in speed of movement and also servos as a marking device for known or suspected booby traps. The unit may employ a dog team in its lead element followed by several mine detector teams. As the detectors sweep the area they pick up the presence of metallic objects which may or may not be booby traps. Rather than stop and probe, pressurized shaving cream is used to mark the suspected area. An arrow can also be made with shaving cream to indicate the direction to move around the possible danger area. Troops following can easily detect the circle of shaving cream and pass by safely.

(c) Recommendation. One technique to mark suspected or known booby traps and mines while conducting a night move is to circle the area with shaving cream from a pressurized container.

4. Subject: Field Recovery Operations.

(a) Observation. The terrain in RVN is such that frequent and severe bogging of tracked vehicles will be encountered. Vehicles may become mired to such an extent that normal recovery procedures will be ineffective.

(b) Evaluation. The normal towing hooks are located so low on the M113A1's hull that in many cases they are submerged in water/mud and a

shovel must be used to dig them out before the tow cable can be secured to them. This is entirely unsatisfactory when under hostile fire. Many times even after the cable has been fastened to the vehicle sufficient power cannot be applied to break the suction created by the mud around the vehicle.

(c) Recommendation. It has been found quite effective to attach the tow cable to one of the front tow hooks on each vehicle. The free end of the tow cable can then be pulled up over the top of the APC deck and left in that position while on field operations. When the vehicle becomes stuck the free end of the cable can be attached to another vehicle quickly and the extraction may be accomplished with minimum delay. It has also proved effective to attach the free end of the cable to the assisting APC at the Lifting Eye, (FSN 5305-576-2121). This creates an upward as well as a forward thrust and will overcome the suction of the mud more easily. Even this will not be sufficient at times so that 2, 3, or more vehicles may have to be linked in a "Daisy-chain" to provide sufficient power for the recovery.

5. Subject: Riding in the ACAV Track Commander's Cupola.

(a) Observation. The track commanders of ACAV vehicles must always anticipate hostile fire when in the field. In the past weeks, two track commanders have been slightly wounded by snipers while sitting in their hatches. He cannot stand for hours in his hatch, but he must learn to recognize times for extra caution.

(b) Evaluation. Most APC track commanders place a board over their cupola hatch on which to sit while operating in the field. Since

long hours and days of riding are necessary, the track commander cannot be expected to stand for such periods of time without becoming unduly fatigued. However, when passing through suspicious terrain, the track commander should remove whatever he may be sitting on and stand in his hatch. It has been experienced that under hostile fire, especially sniping, the track commander cannot react sufficiently and swiftly enough to avoid undue exposure while he removes his seat and employs his protective shield.

(c) Recommendation. When passing through suspicious terrain, the track commander should remove whatever he may be sitting on and stand in his hatch.

6. Subject: Control of Army Aircraft Entering Airspace Through Which Artillery is Being Fired.

(a) Observation. Artillery check fires for aircraft could be accomplished more effectively by direct coordination between the aircraft commander and the artillery LNO at the infantry battalion TOC.

(b) Evaluation. Artillery support in the recent past has been hampered by untimely check fires by various control elements when aircraft are in the general area of firing artillery. The present air advisory system allows aviators to determine the maximum ordinate and direction of fire, the grid fired and the grid of impact of firing artillery. This data is deemed adequate to allow aircraft commanders to circumnavigate artillery fire. The problem of untimely check fires occurs when aircraft must proceed through air space through which artillery is being fired. (Example - dust off or resupply). At the present time there is no stated procedure

to check those fires on a timely basis. Too often artillery is check fired long before the aircraft enters air space where an artillery round could be detonated by the aircraft.

(c) Recommendation.

(1) Recommend that aircraft commanders coordinate check fires with the artillery liaison officer to the infantry battalion.

(2) That such procedures do not preclude any individual from calling check fire if in his best judgement a hazard does exist.

B. (C) Logistics.

1. Subject: Autoclave for the Medical Support Company.

(a) Observation. The medical support company could operate more effectively with a gasoline autoclave instead of the present electrical autoclave.

(b) Evaluation. The medical support company TOE 8-197T authorizes an electrical autoclave which requires a 15KW generator for effective operation. However, a 15KW generator is not currently authorized under the above TOE. Transportation and maintenance would be an additional problem encountered with the generator. Based on the experience of this unit, it is felt that a gasoline operated autoclave (FSN 6530-708-4490) would be more suitable for a unit of this type.

(c) Recommendation. It is recommended that the gasoline operated autoclave (FSN 6530-708-4490) replace the electrical autoclave in the medical support company of the support battalion.

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2. Subject: Screws Used to Secure the VRC-12 Series Radio Antenna Mounts.

(a) Observation. Hexagonal head screws can be used to secure VRC-12 series radio antenna mounts to vehicles better than the counter sunk machine screws.

(b) Evaluation. Currently four counter sunk screws (FSN 5305-042-0688) are utilized to secure antenna mount (SC-D-446058) for VRC-12 series radios, to military vehicles. Recommend these counter sunk screws be replaced with normal hexagon head screws (FSN 5306-225-9091). The hexagon head screws provide more surface area and can be removed without damage to the vehicle surface. The counter sunk screws currently used rust, freeze, etc. and are impossible to remove without tearing the surface to which they are attached. This presents a special problem when antenna mounts are changed frequently from one vehicle to another.

(c) Recommendation. It is recommended that the counter sunk screws be replaced by hexagon head screws mentioned above to secure antenna mounts for the VRC-12 series radios.

C. (C) Others (Maintenance).

1. Subject: Proper Storage of Khaki's and Low Quarters.

(a) Observation. When men arrive in RVN, many put their uniform into duffle bags where they mold.

(b) Evaluation. When the 198th LIB arrived in RVN there was no longer use for khaki's and low quarters. Most of the 5000 men wadded up the khaki's and stuffed them along with low quarters into a duffle bag to

mildew during the monsoons. When the R&R or DEROS dates arrive, men find that dress uniforms are in unusuable condition.

(c) Recommendation. When personnel arrive in the RVN, khaki uniforms should immediately be laundered. Then the uniforms should be tagged for identification and stored by the supply sergeant in some dry place. Low quarters should be polished frequently and stored in a plastic bag.

2. Subject: Lubrication Intervals.

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

(b) 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 checked 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.

(c) Recommendation. Equipment should be lubricated in accordance with the periods mentioned above in the evaluation.

3. Subject: M35A2 Front Engine Mounting Bolts.

(a) 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.

(b) Evaluation. A common discrepancy with the M35A2, LDS 465-1 Engine, is a frequent loosening of the front engine mount bolts. These

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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. Further, if the bolts drop out, the engine drops down on the front out put flange of the differential causing the replacement of the engine.

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

FOR THE COMMANDER:

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