

FOREIGN SERVICE INSTITUTE

August 17, 1970

Mr. John P. Vann
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Dear John:

This is in reply to your letter of August 4 concerning District advisory training here at VTC. By the time you receive this, you may well have already talked to LTC Lorne Black, Chairman of the District Course, who may have explained much that we are trying to do to overcome the problems you indicate. Let me make a few more specific comments.

Regarding the currency of information from the field, we get a broad coverage but often with a lag of about sixty days. One particular difficulty has been to locate and obtain the services of recently returned DSA's. On the other hand, within the last 90 days we have added a civilian DPSA and a military DSA fresh from Viet-Nam, which should considerably alleviate our problem of staying up-to-date.

Regarding VTC graduates not being on top of HES and TFES reporting and not being sufficiently aware of the village structure in Viet-Nam, I believe our problem has been not a failure to give such instruction, but considerable slippage in assimilation. To give you some idea of what we offer, all students receive a general presentation on the HES during the Basic Course. Then, in the District Course, we have since January 1970 been providing four hours of specific instruction on both HES and TFES, almost exactly along the lines you recommend. In July, again in an attempt to improve coverage of this subject, we expanded this period into a six-hour block entitled "District Reports Management." District advisory personnel now receive instruction not only in HES and TFES, but also PSDF and VSD reports as well. We emphasize the importance of all reporting, including one-time reports, tactical reporting and internal agency reporting, but the latter are not covered in great detail as yet.

With respect to village/hamlet structure, almost the entire 12-week District Course is now devoted to a detailed study of village government, and the relation of the village to higher levels. As a part of this course, during what we call the "Village Security Exercise," each student since January 1970 has received and been required to read a copy of your "Village Planning Guide for District and Mobile Advisory Teams." May I add that IV Corps has been unique in providing all sorts of material, including material on the mobile security concept, which is reprinted and utilized as instructional material.

In the area of village instruction, we again find that there is some problem in assuring assimilation of the material offered. Our incoming military DSA trainees tend to view their role as one of District-wide tactical operations and "civic action" advisory responsibility. Their role in helping to insure GVN implementation of the various programs at the village level is not as readily accepted. We will therefore place increased emphasis in this area, and hope that you will see some improvement in our DSA graduates in the future.

In order to bring home to the DSA trainees the importance of the problems you raise, I am having the first page of your letter reproduced and distributed to each District student, so that they will know the homework they will have to do before they reach Viet-Nam, particularly those who will be assigned to IV Corps.

Your comments and critiques are much appreciated, and I hope you will continue to provide the same and thus enable us to send out better prepared people. As soon as you know your own plans, please advise me so that we may schedule you to meet with our students in August or September.

With best regards.

Sincerely,

Ogden Williams
Coordinator
Viet-Nam Training Center

cc: Mr. G. D. Jacobson
ACofS, CORDS/MACV

O/FSI/VTC:OW:d