

003942

PLAF Para Military
Organization Structure

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SUMMARY:

(C) This report contains information concerning an ideal VC force structure and explains the differences between VC Forces from a hamlet self-defense unit, through village guerrilla and district LF units, to the province MF unit. It also contains information on what could be described as the average strengths, missions, methods of operation, training, and logistics of these various units at the different levels. A description of the method of upgrading individuals from one level to another is also provided.

2/69

1. (C) Background Information:

a. Name: NGUYEN DINH TAN (NGUYEENX, DINHL TAAN), aka THANH HUE (THANH, HUEEV), aka DUYET (ZUYEET), CMIC No 2567

b. Rank: CPT (?)

c. Position and Unit of Assignment: CO of the AN NHON Dist Unit, BINH DINH Prov Unit

d. DPOB: 22 Oct 30; TRI TUONG Ham, AN TUONG Vil, HOAI AN Dist, BINH DINH Prov, RVN

(Classification and Control Markings)

e. Parents' Names: Father, NGUYEN CHAN (NGUYENHAN), deceased;
Mother, HUYNH THI THUONG (HUYNHL, THIV THUONG), deceased

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f. Circumstances of Capture. Source was captured by ARVN forces on 23 Feb 69, in NHON HUNG Vil, AN NHON Dist, BINH DINH Prov, RVN.

g. Significant Activities. In Nov 67, source was assigned as Chief of the Militia and Guerrilla Subsection, subordinate to the Political Section of the BINH DINH Prov Unit. From Jun 68 to 23 Feb 69, he was assigned as CO of the AN NHON Dist Unit which was subordinate to the BINH DINH Prov Unit. For additional information on source's background, see CMIC IR No 6 029 0345 69, paragraph 1g.

h. Additional References: CMIC Exploitation Guide, Annex A

2. (C) VC Force Structure:

a. Self-Defense Units. Every hamlet within a village had a self-defense element. The size of the hamlet usually determined the strength of the self-defense unit; however, a self-defense unit normally consisted of one squad of nine men. The mission of the hamlet self-defense unit was to protect the property and lives of the citizens of the hamlet. Self-defense units were not mobile. They were not utilized to reinforce or to aid other self-defense units within the village, if the other hamlet self-defense units came under attack.

(1) Recruiting. Both men and single women between the ages of 17 and 50 could join a hamlet self-defense unit. In BINH DINH Prov, the personnel of self-defense units were not drafted. All self-defense personnel were civilians, some of whom came from the individual hamlet Front Associations. It was the hamlet which decided when and if it needed replacements; however, volunteers were accepted at any time. When replacements were needed the village chief, together with the hamlet chief, called all of the civilians together to try to persuade some of them to join the self-defense unit. In order to effectively accomplish this, the village and hamlet chiefs had to establish the GVN as the enemy by telling the people of the destruction which occurred whenever the GVN Forces entered an area. They would then suggest that the hamlet establish some means by which it could protect itself against the atrocities of the GVN; i.e., by forming and or joining a self-defense unit. This would attract the attention of the young, who were particularly vulnerable to this type of propaganda.

(2) Training. The hamlet self-defense personnel received training for approx seven days, a few hours each day. The training consisted of assembly, disassembly, cleaning and firing of the US M-1 carbine. All new self-defense personnel were given the opportunity to fire three practice rounds to familiarize themselves with the M-1. Training was also given on the techniques of throwing grenades. Dummy grenades were used. The only tactics taught were hit and run tactics within the hamlet. Very limited training was given on the mission of the hamlet self-defense unit.

(3) Weapons. Normally, the hamlet self-defense squad had three US M-1 carbines with 25 rounds per weapon and two grenades per man. The three men who carried the M-1 carbines kept the weapons with them at all times. The hamlet chief decided which three personnel would carry these weapons. He based his decision on the loyalty and firing ability of the personnel.

(4) Upgrading. Hamlet self-defense personnel could be upgraded to village guerrillas only if they so desired. Hamlet self-defense personnel performed duties on a voluntary basis. They received no pay or compensation for their time and could leave the self-defense unit at any time.

b. Guerrilla Units. Each village within a district had a guerrilla unit subordinate to it. The village guerrilla unit usually consisted of one platoon of 30 to 35 personnel. Guerrillas were both soldiers and civilians. They were paramilitary personnel who joined together for their own protection under the central control of the village guerrilla unit. Their mission was to provide protection against GVN/Allied "aggression" for all hamlets within the village. Guerrilla units were used strictly for village and hamlet defense. They did not exist above the village echelon. The village guerrilla unit was mobile in that it could move about the hamlets within the village if needed.

(1) Recruiting. The village chief called together all of the youths from all of the hamlets within the village to talk to them. He discussed the hard life that the war had brought to all the people of SVN. He further told the youth that they had an obligation to their village to help liberate and protect it against aggression. Both male and female youths between the ages of 18 and 30 could join the village guerrilla unit. Youth were not drafted into guerrilla units within the villages of BINH DINH Prov. Women performed the same duties as men in guerrilla units. If the village was in a liberated area, as much as one-third of the guerrilla unit could be composed of Youth Association members. A Youth Association member did not lose his membership within the association when he became a village guerrilla.

(2) Training. Village guerrillas received two months of military training. This training was unscheduled and at irregular intervals because guerrillas could train only during their free time. They received all of their training in the village if it was secure. If the village was not secure, a secluded jungle area was used as a training area. Guerrillas trained with the CKC, AK-47, and US .30 cal MG. Guerrillas were taught three types of tactics: individual, cell, and squad. The only difference between the three types of tactics was the number of men employed. All guerrillas were taught how to coordinate with each other in the cell and how cells had to work in conjunction with each other in the squad-size operation. Guerrillas learned how to throw dummy grenades. Although the village unit was authorized one medic, all of the guerrillas were taught basic first aid, which included the application of a bandage to a wound. All medical supplies were purchased from the local economy. Guerrillas were also taught how to make trip mines from empty artillery shells, TNT, and an unknown type of pressure detonator. Finally, guerrillas were taught how to make and set punji stakes on the side of the road. They were not told to use human or animal waste material on the punji stakes.

(3) Morale. If guerrilla units had never engaged ARVN/FWMAF forces, they had average morale. However, in a village unit which had had a large number of engagements, the morale of the guerrillas was low because of their fear of death.

(4) Upgrading. A guerrilla was upgraded to an LF unit only if he so desired. Guerrillas could never be automatically upgraded to sappers. If a guerrilla desired to be a sapper, he had to be given sapper training.

(5) Pay Scale. A village guerrilla received 600 grams of rice or 10 piasters per day.

c. LF Units. Each district within the province had an LF company composed of approx 120 personnel. The district unit controlled the LF unit. The LF unit could be utilized to engage the enemy anywhere within the district or to supplement village guerrilla units within the district.

(1) Recruiting. Only males between the ages of 18 and 30 years could join an LF unit. In BINH DINH Prov, LF personnel were not drafted.

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Women were not utilized in LF units because they were too difficult to discipline. It was easier to recruit for guerrilla units than it was for LF units, because a guerrilla could join in the Revolution, yet still remain at home. Also, if the enemy got too close, a guerrilla could hide his weapon and claim to be an innocent civilian. LF soldiers had to be adventure lovers who enjoyed moving around.

(2) Training. Since LF soldiers normally were once guerrillas, they had received a basic introduction to soldiering. In addition to this, the LF soldier received training in platoon and company level tactics. They also received training on the care, cleaning, and firing of the 60mm mortar, B-40 ATGL, and the US 50 cal MG.

(3) Pay Scale. An LF soldier received 1200 piasters per month. LF platoon cadre received 1300 piasters per month. LF company cadre received 1500 piasters per month.

d. MF Units. Usually, each province had one MF battalion. However, the size of the province MF unit depended upon three variables: the geographical size of the province, the funds available to the respective province unit, and the social composition and size of the population. Although source did not know exactly how these three variables determined the size of the MF Unit, he believed them to be the major points taken into consideration when establishing an MF Unit.

(C) COMMENTS: Source was intelligent and cooperative. However, some of the information provided by this source concerning the VCI of AN NHON Dist (see IR 6 029 0366 69) became suspect and he was reinterrogated in order to determine his reliability. Source proved reliable concerning specific names, dates and places; however, he was less positive concerning generalizations about the infrastructure of AN NHON Dist. Source was Chief of the Militia and Guerrilla Subsection, subordinate to the Political Sect of the BINH DINH Prov Unit from Nov 67 to Jun 68. Consequently, the interrogator believes that the information contained in this IR is accurate and reliable. This IR partially satisfies the requirements of U-UPE-U1507. Collection action continues.

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