

ILLUSTRATIVE JOBS BEING PERFORMED BY USOM/VIETNAM PROVINCIAL REPRESENTATIVES

General

A three-man committee, consisting of the Province Chief, the MAAG Sector Advisor and the USOM Provincial Representative, plans and controls most of the operations and commodity input into counter-insurgency within their respective provinces.

These USOM Provincial Representatives are called on to perform a whole gamut of activities, often unpredictable. These involve directly assisting in the following, among other things: outright counter-insurgency of a direct combat support nature, disaster relief, refugee relocation, medical care, simple construction, improvement of agricultural practices, the introduction of improved crops, establishment of hamlet schools, rehabilitation of Viet Cong defectors, emergency shipments of commodities, planning and demonstration of self-help projects, advising Province Chiefs on provincial pacification planning and operations, drafting of surrender appeals and other psychological warfare documents and advising on improving hamlet elections. He also makes direct disbursement of funds for a variety of functions (such as living expenses for hamlet militia in training, civic action cadre, health workers and local employees), evaluates and reports on counter-insurgency progress; and, above all, acts as a friend and informal staff assistant to the Province Chief for all counter-insurgency problems.

There are no comparable positions known in AID or, for that matter, in any other government agency with the possible exception of Army Civil Affairs officers who act as military governors in occupied areas during wartime - but even these have quite a different character.

In many of these undertakings, the Provincial Representatives have had the advice and/or short-term direct support of certain USOM technicians and administrative personnel. However, it is primarily the Provincial Representatives who have managed most of these, oftentimes working with their own hands.

Also, some of the activities mentioned below have been pioneered by personnel of the International Voluntary Services about 70 of whom are also living in the provinces, and a number of whom have been hired as USOM Provincial Representatives after their IVS contracts expired. They are particularly well acquainted with the area, its people, and its problems, and they speak Vietnamese.

We are helping the South Vietnamese Government in a war against an enemy whose strength lies in intimate contact with and appeal to the grassroots peasants, and in the employment of guerrilla tactics. It is essential that the Vietnamese Government and our advisors take counter action at this grassroots level by oftentimes living and dealing with literally aboriginal people.

Some measure of our enemy in this regard may be gained from the fact that years ago, at the time of the 1954 partition of Vietnam, numerous communist cadre were left in the South to go underground, to integrate themselves into and to live in the villages and hamlets, to marry into the local families and in a variety of ways ingratiate themselves with the peasantry. For some of those who remained behind with the Montagnard tribal peoples, this involved going so far as to file their teeth in becoming accepted members of the tribal groups.

Despite a great deal of terrorism, the Viet Cong are often much more considerate and understanding of the peasants than are GVN officials.

Specific Illustrations

Some random specific illustrations of jobs performed by USOM Provincial Representatives in a variety of provinces follow:

1. Arranging for the emergency distribution of foodstuffs, both locally procured and imported, to feed large numbers of Montagnard tribal refugees who have voluntarily left Viet Cong territory, often burning their homes and food stocks and killing their livestock behind them to deny their use to the Viet Cong.
2. Providing emergency housing for relocated Vietnamese peasants evacuated by the Vietnamese Army from indefensible positions, and for personnel who have voluntarily defected Viet Cong areas.
3. Providing for replacement of housing, for medical care, food, clothing, blankets, etc., for the survivors of strategic hamlets that have been attacked and overrun - often burned - by the Viet Cong.
4. Visiting strategic hamlets almost continuously to check on their condition, the progress being made along the new constructive lines that need to be followed, and the efficacy with which the U.S.-supplied commodities are being used.
5. Plan and develop courses of instruction for hamlet militia, elected hamlet officials and provincial Civic Action Cadre.
6. Planning and execution of aerial resupply of food and medicines to isolated and beleaguered groups of refugees in remote areas surrounded by the Viet Cong.
7. Assisting in the planning and arranging for the resupply of combat hamlets in the Delta by water transportation. In one particular instance of such an operation to resupply Father Hoa's isolated and beleaguered "Hai Yen" enclave in An Xuyen Province, about 1/3 of the sampans and barges were lost to the Viet Cong and a number of accompanying personnel were killed.
8. Support of the Viet Cong Defector (Chieu Hoi) Program ranging from drafting surrender appeals to assistance in printing leaflets as well as assisting in the planning, building, and administration

of centers for the screening and rehabilitation of Viet Cong who wish to return to useful life. Also, plan and help establish resettlement centers for ex-Viet Cong.

9. Plan, develop, and advise in the execution of provincial information and psywar efforts aimed at publicizing the achievements of the GVN and winning the loyalty and support of the population. This has included in at least one province, assistance in the installation of a small local radio transmitter, assembled from military excess parts, and advice on programming.

10. Using the best crystal ball available, project future commodity requirements for USOM planning of supply and logistical support from Saigon and the U. S.

11. Introduction of improved varieties of pigs and construction of improved pig-pens, together with advice on improved hog feeding and on using their excrement to make compost for ~~use~~ fertilizer for fields.

12. Teaching the primitive Montagnard tribal people how to use water buffalo as beasts of burden rather than as sacrificial animals.

13. Experimentation, oftentimes the actual building and introduction of a variety of simple, economical, and practical devices which will improve the life of the rural people, such as simple water wheels made of bamboo and logs for lifting water from canals or creeks for irrigation, in lieu of having to do this by the time-honored hand method.

14. Introduction of wooden windmills made locally for lifting irrigation water from creeks and canals to enable second-cropping during the dry season when land otherwise lies idle for lack of more expensive and sophisticated irrigation systems.

15. Experimentation with and introduction of cheap hydro-jet well-drilling rigs for rapid and economic provision of wells for hamlets.

16. Advise local inhabitants in the construction of simple and inexpensive hamlet school buildings, and assist in establishing local PTA's to select the best educated available hamlet inhabitant as teacher, locally paid, in order to provide at least basic literacy for children otherwise denied any education.

17. Assist in the local election of hamlet officials, an unprecedented and unique experience for hamlets in Vietnam.

18. Encourage and assist newly elected hamlet leaders in their planning, selection, and mobilization of support for self-help

projects which will benefit the hamlets concerned and give them a feeling of progress and a stake in their own future, in contrast to life under the Viet Cong. Illustrative self-help projects have been wells, small irrigation systems, schools, hamlet market places, simple access roads, repair of bridges to hamlets, etc. The USOM Province Rep sees to it that the essential commodities not available locally, such as cement, reinforcing steel, corrugated roofing, lumber (where necessary), and transportation to get these commodities to the hamlet, are provided. Technical assistance of a wide variety is often called for on the part of Province Reps supporting these self-help projects.

19. Assist in the training of local personnel by short, practical courses carried out at local experimental farms in the demonstration and teaching of improved agricultural methods to the peasants. Then these teaching and demonstration teams are sent out to work among their own people. This has been a particularly effective innovation among the Montagnard tribal peoples when their own people have been sent back into their villages and hamlets to demonstrate better ways of growing more food.

20. By reports or personal trips, maintain frequent liaison with both USOM and GVN agencies in Saigon in order to circumvent the slow communications and procedural bottlenecks that persist between Saigon and the critical rural areas.

21. Constantly evaluate the counter-insurgency effort in each province and submit a variety of reports required by superior echelons all the way from USOM/Saigon to the Country Team, and to policy levels in Washington, usually written in long-hand or typed laboriously by the officer himself in the absence of clerical support.

22. In the more advanced provinces, where security has been established over a considerable area, participate with the VN Provincial staff and supporting USOM staff from Saigon in developing provincial economic development plans of a coordinated nature, in order to speed up the move from the emergency and relief stage to sound economic development leading to self-sufficiency.

ILLUSTRATIVE CONDITIONS OF OPERATIONS OF
USOM PROVINCIAL REPRESENTATIVES IN VIETNAM

GENERAL

USOM Provincial Representatives are responsible for maintaining close liaison with Provincial Chiefs and for traveling extensively throughout their provinces to insure that the counter-insurgency operations which we are supporting are being adequately administered and that our supply and support is being properly applied. This involves liaison not only at the province capitol level but with district officials, and visiting strategic hamlets. In some provinces, there are as many as five to six hundred strategic hamlets which are already constructed and occupied. Many of these are "combat hamlets" which are small enclaves in Viet Cong territory and regularly under attack.

In order to do their jobs properly, these USOM provincial advisors as well as MAAG Sector advisors, must visit as many of these as possible for these are the very ones which are of most concern to the U.S. in the war effort. Vietnamese security escorts are usually provided for trips into the most dangerous territory. However, the location of what is "dangerous territory" cannot always be foreseen. Often times, the security guards are inadequate or poorly trained. On other occasions, because of the urgency of following up on certain work, our provincial advisors take risks by proceeding without the adequate security guard in order to accomplish urgent tasks.

This matter of providing security guards for U.S. officials has another difficult aspect. In order to provide proper security as compared to the known Viet Cong threat, security escorts would have to be very large, company or battalion strengths, in many areas. We cannot afford in most instances to permit the Vietnamese Government to divert this many troops from much needed combat exercises in order to protect fully our officials.

In some areas to which USOM personnel have had to travel, particularly in connection with the installation and maintenance of village-hamlet radios in embattled combat hamlets, security escorts of battalion size have been provided and these forces have had to literally fight their way into the hamlet and then fight their way out again in order to accomplish the USOM task. The many security problems, casualties and narrow escapes of these Public Safety village-hamlet radio installation teams are omitted from this paper which is devoted to Rural Affairs personnel. However, it should be noted that much of their work has been equally if not more hazardous than that described below.

USOM officials concerned with rural work oftentimes have to ride in Vietnamese or American combat helicopters or military aircraft because of the insecurity of road and rail travel. Railroad sabotage averages about one sabotage incident per day - often accompanied by personnel casualties as well as loss of USOM material and supplies.

As has been frequently noted in newspapers, riding in these military aircraft, literally under combat conditions, is a hazard within itself and a great many American personnel, and even more Vietnamese personnel, have been lost while on business or administrative travel not intended to be combat missions. Merely landing on many of the up-country airstrips which our personnel frequently visit, places them within range of Viet Cong fire as they are landing and taking off. In fact, a Pan American 707 landing at the Saigon Airport recently had one of its jet engines shot out by rifle fire.

Much of the flying over Vietnam involves operation over Viet Cong territory, oftentimes over Viet Cong strongholds and war zones. The Viet Cong are becoming increasingly well equipped with anti-aircraft weapons. Even without these anti-aircraft weapons, aircraft operating on routine administrative missions often have to hedge-hop at extremely low altitudes, or rapidly gain a great deal of altitude, so as to be out of range of small arms fire.

Two years ago, when A.I.D. undertook to join the direct counter-insurgency war effort in Vietnam, at the direction of the President, USOM personnel had virtually ceased any operation or travel in the countryside because of the dangerous security conditions. Within the past two years, the USOM Mission has been drastically recast and the necessity emphasized of extensive operation in the rural areas if we are to accomplish our assigned mission which is equally vital to that of the U.S. military, by testimony of high military officials themselves as well as U.S. policy from Washington.

SPECIFIC ILLUSTRATIONS OF OPERATING CONDITIONS

A few illustrative examples of the operating conditions of some of our USOM Provincial Representatives follow.

Earl Young, Provincial Representative for Long An Province, immediately adjacent to Saigon, reported that in visiting three strategic hamlets in his area of responsibility in one morning, that his helicopter was fired on by Viet Cong each time that it took off.

Near this same area, one of our Chinese contract technicians was killed in a VC ambush on a main road near Saigon which is frequently used by our personnel. Supposedly friendly local inhabitants in a nearby strategic hamlet turned hostile on the survivors of the same party when they sought refuge there.

Hatcher James in Dinh Tuong Province is so surrounded by Viet Cong that he generally has to accompany Vietnamese Army combat operations in order to visit the hamlets for which he is particularly responsible.

The Provincial Representative in An Xuyen province operates in an area which is dominated almost completely day and night by the Viet Cong. He lives in the provincial capitol of Camau where last month the Viet Cong mortars were set up so close to the city that they occasionally blasted the screens out of the MAAG Sector Advisor's house and hit the Province Chief's house.

In many of these provinces, most roads are mined regularly by the Viet Cong. A number of our personnel have already narrowly escaped being killed by mines. Ed Navarro, Tay Ninh Province Provincial Representative, George Melvin, Regional Supervisor for the Delta, and myself were only 30 seconds and one vehicle away from a vehicle which was blown up by a Viet Cong mine, killing the three occupants on a road 100 yards from the city limits of the province capitol. Had we been riding in the second vehicle, as is conventional with officials, rather than the first vehicle, we would have been killed. This is the second time in recent weeks when Navarro has been only one vehicle away from a mine explosion.

Immediately after the second instance where Navarro narrowly missed being killed by a mine, the Province Chief offered for future trips of all nature to send a large contingent of Civil Guard to patrol each side of the road at some depth into the fields and forests whenever Navarro traveled. George Melvin, the USOM Regional Supervisor, who had been riding with Navarro, asked the Province Chief not to do this, saying that this would tie down too many troops which are needed badly in combat, and that our USOM people were there, prepared to take the same chances as the Vietnamese Provincial officials.

Navarro frequently travels into War Zone-C to visit combat hamlets which we are supporting and to assist in the evacuation of personnel from Viet Cong area. In order to gain maximum impact with the "civic action," which he helps support, he must operate in very close support of these operations which are generally associated with close combat.

In Vinh Binh Province, representatives of a hamlet in a Viet Cong area made representations to the Province Chief that they would like to join the GVN and have a strategic hamlet provided for their protection. Because most of the Province Chief's meager military forces were tied down in combat operations, he took only one platoon of Civil Guard and accompanied by the USOM Provincial Representative, Mr. Robert Warne, visited the hamlet to initiate preparations for establishing a strategic hamlet there. Just outside the hamlet they were ambushed and fired on by Viet Cong forces. The Province Chief immediately took command of the platoon and initiated counter-offensive action, moving out in flanking action, and leaving Mr. Warne unarmed and unprotected in the middle of an exposed rice paddy throughout the fire fight.

Accompanied by the Province Chief and a company of Civil Guard, Mr. Dwight Davis, Provincial Representative to Kontum Province, set out on a mission to provide emergency food and other supplies to a Montagnard strategic hamlet occupied by refugees who had recently voluntarily left Viet Cong territory. As they neared the hamlet, the Province Chief received a radio call from a nearby hamlet (strategic) that had been attacked and overrun by the Viet Cong. He immediately changed course to proceed to relieve the overrun hamlet. Within about two kilometers of the overrun hamlet, the

troops had to leave their vehicles on the road and proceed by foot cross-country. Mr. Davis could either stay unprotected in the vacant vehicles or accompany the troops. He readily chose to accompany the troops, soon acquired a carbine from a casualty and moved with the troops during their fire fight which routed the Viet Cong from the hamlet. Then utilizing his extensive first aid experience (with Dr. Dooley in Laos) he set about treating the numerous casualties in the hamlet.

Bob Burns, Provincial Representative in Phu Yen Province, and the Province Chief were on a trip to visit a strategic hamlet in two jeeps at the time they were ambushed by Viet Cong equipped with automatic weapons. Both vehicles were hit and crashed into a roadside ditch.

In Quang Tin Province, Mr. Zollers reports that every night there is small arms fire on the edge of the provincial capitol where he lives, and that the small guard contingent assigned to his house is of such a poor quality that he finds them sleeping most of the time at night.

At one of the more secure provinces, Darlac, the end of the secure zone, where one can travel without security escort, ends at what might be called the urban area of Banmethuot, with the exception of two roads that go about five kilometers to large strategic hamlets.

While on a trip to an area in need of assistance in Kien Giang Province near the Cambodian border, Mr. Burt Fraleigh, Deputy Assistant Director for Rural Affairs, traveling in a military helicopter encountered a combat operation underway and was ordered by radio to land short of his objective. He spent the rest of the day at the field post observing the fire fight while his aircraft stood by for use for transporting troops and evacuating casualties.

Mr. Rufus Phillips, Assistant Director for Rural Affairs, accompanied by a MAAG officer, a Vietnamese officer and myself, flew in an army aircraft, hedge-hopping at tree top level to avoid ground fire over the more heavily infested Viet Cong territory, to Camau, the capitol of An Xuyen Province, to review with the provincial staff the provincial pacification plan which USOM, together with the MAAG, was supporting. The review was held at the edge of a small sod airstrip in one end of a building, the other end of which was the command post for an active combat operation which was currently being conducted from this airstrip against the Viet Cong in a nearby area. The airstrip was crowded with helicopters lifting troops to the nearby combat area and evacuating casualties, and with other aircraft. At the time of our take off from the crowded airstrip, a slight cross wind caused our aircraft to collide with three successive helicopter rotars and crash from an altitude of about 50 feet into a swampy area just beyond the end of the airstrip. Despite extensive damage and much spilled gasoline, there were no fire or casualties. However, the security problem surrounding Camau, the provincial capitol city, and its airstrip was so serious that our aircraft was considered to then be in Viet Cong territory and

a military guard was immediately sent to surround it. Our party then proceeded to hitch-hike aboard one of the combat helicopters returning to the nearby Soc Trang air base where part of the party had to remain overnight while the remainder hitch-hiked another ride to Saigon on an Army liaison aircraft.

Inspection trips of this nature are carried out quite frequently by USOM and MAAG staff in order to insure closer coordination, more realistic planning and the best possible support of AID-MAP-supported provincial pacification operations. It is not at all uncommon for such "administrative" trips to encounter active combat operations. Even more frequently, they encounter hazardous flying conditions, crowded combat airstrips - and almost always fly over Viet Cong territory.

In an effort to expedite a critical rural well-drilling project, Mr. Dunn of USOM Rural Affairs spent 50,000 piasters of his own funds several months ago to buy (in one day) essential materials on which there has been long delays in regular USOM procurement. As of December, 1963, it was not certain whether he would be able to recover these funds by reimbursement from AID.

The same applied to Burt Fraleigh's \$300 which he personally paid for a commercial shipment of seed needed for rural improvement work, after AID/W and USDA had failed to provide adequate quantities in response to months' old requests.

Dwight Davis scheduled a flight to return to his Kontum Province from Saigon, because of his concern with getting an air shipment of essential equipment into his province, even though he was ill with an intestinal ailment. While suffering from amoebic dysentery, intestinal worms and perhaps other ailments, he was returning to his province, taking along medications to doctor himself.

Mr. Harwood a provincial representative, contracted a serious case of tuberculosis while working upcountry in his province, necessitating prolonged hospitalization in Tripler Hospital, Honolulu. It is felt by his Supervisor that his illness (a recurrence) resulted from exhaustion from overwork in the provinces.

Most of these provincial representatives live and eat under hazardous health and security conditions in primitive and remote provincial towns in which most Americans, including many stationed in Saigon, hardly deign to remain overnight.

Most of these men have families from whom they are separated most of the time. These families generally live in Saigon as there is only one or two cases where it has been arranged that families can live in the provincial capitols. In addition to the normal difficulties incident to family separation it's not terribly comforting to either these men nor their families to be separated during times such as the recent major coup in Saigon.