



DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY  
HEADQUARTERS 1ST CAVALRY DIVISION (AIRMOBILE)  
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AVDACG

28 September 1969

Major General Richard T. Knowles  
Assistant Deputy Chief of Staff  
for Military Operations  
Washington, DC 20310

Dear Dick,

I have reviewed your reply to Mrs. Bowman and find it to be most accurate.

Between 1 January 1967 and 30 September 1967, 40 soldiers were killed and 235 wounded in USARV due to accidents attributable to the improper handling of fire arms. Although somewhat dated, this vividly points out the problem at hand. In the 1st Cav, instructions concerning the storing of ammunition and weapons were issued in May following several unfortunate accidental shootings.

My inspector general has interviewed Peterson and the facts obtained therefrom may be of some interest. Peterson's quarters are about 10 yards away from where the weapons are stored. The weapons are not locked but are under surveillance by the unit charge of quarters so as to be readily available to the men should the need arise. This arrangement is required so as to reduce the possibility of weapons accidents in the troop billets and to prevent weapons from being stolen while the owners sleep. When an individual is outside his assigned company/platoon area he is required to have his weapon with him; however, as previously mentioned, when he is in his assigned area his weapon is centrally stored.

When interviewed by my inspector general, Peterson stated that he wrote the Orlando article while under emotional stress and plans to write Congressman Frey a letter retracting what was written. With no pressure at all as I have kept this in IG channels, Peterson regrets his actions. He was new in country at the time and did not fully understand the

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reasoning behind the requirement to centrally store weapons. I know you are well acquainted with this problem from An Khe in 1965. Unfortunatley, this aspect of it hasn't changed much for we are still having too many weapons accidents in billet areas. Control of these accidents remains one of my foremost problems. I trust this letter provides the information you need regarding this matter.

Warm regards and best wishes for continued success.

Most sincerely,



E. B. ROBERTS  
Major General, USA  
Commanding