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DAIM-FAR-RR #

19-*enm* DATE: 17 June 1987

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HEADQUARTERS
1ST AVIATION BRIGADE
APO 96384

AVBA

25 September 1967

COMMANDER'S NOTES

NUMBER

16

1. GENERAL. The following matters of information, guidance, command interest and policy are published for appropriate action of those concerned. Most of the items were covered at the USARV Aviation Coordination Conference on 15 September 1967.

2. PERSONNEL AND ADMINISTRATION.

a. Personnel Requisitions: Requisitions received by this headquarters are not always accurate nor are they submitted on time. I want battalion commanders to put the heat on proper personnel requisitioning. There is nothing more important than making sure that your people are properly requisitioned. If you don't do it correctly -- you won't know about it for six months and then it's too late. I know you can't get in and examine the records personally but I want you to insure your personnel people are on top of this problem. In the months to come, we are going to lose any overstrength we now enjoy so proper personnel requisitioning will become even more important.

b. Personnel Actions: We are still receiving requests for in-country reassignments from units with units recommending approval in MOS's that they are short. We've said this before and I'll say it again -- don't be a good guy in recommending approval on these requests to the extent that it will hurt you. A lot of MOS's are tight and will get tighter in the future.

c. Supervision of Open Messes: Over the past year and a half we have had four or five incidents of officers and NCO's messes, primarily officers, that have gotten horribly in the hole. This problem is serious enough to put your executive officer on it from time to time. USARV has a good checklist out in Regulation 230-60. Remember, financial deficits in the open messes can have a serious morale effect on your command. Give it the command attention it needs.

d. Group Awards: I want to reiterate once again -- when you submit group awards (except as a spot award) they must come in a bundle but each must be individually written. If your people don't do this we can't act and well-deserving people do not receive their award. So be sure your guys are writing the awards well, then tying them together in a neat bundle and getting them in to my awards personnel.

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e. Late OER's. We're still getting late OER's and I say again -- we are hurting the hell out of people by submitting late OER's. Shape up the administrative handling of OER's. We have brought this up several times and now is the time for ACTION. Hereafter, I want all late OER's accompanied with a letter and indorsed from company level on up. I will personally review these "excuses" and if they don't satisfy me or are repetitious I will expect a personal explanation starting from the group commander down. I want late submissions STOPPED and NOW!!!!

3. OPERATIONS:

a. Penepime Distributor. The expedient penepime distributor that was demonstrated to you during the March commander's conference should be in the hands of units about the time the dry season begins in III Corps. We want to make sure that as soon as these items become available they get to the units as fast as possible. We need to attack the dust problem at the earliest possible date. In the meantime, you people who already are in need of penepime be sure to inform your nearest Engineer Direct Support people and make them aware of your immediate requirements. Make sure to inform my staff of any problem areas that you run into. I want you to get on with this dust palliation early in the game. Don't wait until it's too late.

b. Hoists and Dust Off Frequencies. There has been a change in frequency assignment. The new assigned frequencies for Dust Off assistance (Med Evac and Hoists) are as follows:

(1) II Corps Sector - 46.9 (alternate 45.7).

(2) III and IV Corps Sectors 45.7 (alternate 46.9).

Be sure all of your people are made aware of this change. This will be followed up by a written message to all units.

c. Revetment Program. The revetting is coming along in pretty good shape in most places I have visited. The deadline was 1 September for completion. It was not met in all instances but, by and large, our birds are adequately protected. I want to remind you that new units coming in are supposed to have revetments built for them before their birds arrive. I want to insure that sponsoring units take care of this requirement. Get what available engineer assistance you can and get the revetments built before the units get here.

d. Dropped Loads. During the period 1 July - 31 August 1967 the Brigade received reports of 17 loads dropped by CH-47 aircraft. This is a considerable improvement over the initial reporting period in May and June. All units are to be commended for the progress they have made; however, our goal is "zero" dropped loads. One of the most effective methods used to improve the situation apparently has been the use of the

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Mobile Training Teams. With the rapid turnover of personnel, it is imperative that the Mobile Training Teams be continued indefinitely. By conducting this training, units not only help out the ground units but also gain valuable training themselves and have the opportunity to learn the supported unit's problems. This feedback should be relayed to all crewmembers of the CH-47 unit. The aircraft commander, liaison officer, or pathfinder should refuse loads which are rigged improperly. Only in tactical emergencies, and with the cognizance of the ground commander, will a load be moved which is considered to be unsafe. Most of the drops are caused by faulty slings and faulty rigging by ground troops. The Mobile Training Team should take a look at the equipment the ground units have and insure that they are ahead on requisitioning sufficient sling equipment. Remember, we're the guys who get blamed for it even if it's the fault of others. Again keep up the good work and let's try to "zero" dropped loads.

e. MTOE Team. In December, the Department of the Army MTOE Team is coming back over here. This time they are going to work over our units. Theoretically, these guys have the authority to approve MTOE's on the spot. At this time, we hope to standardize the MTOE's throughout the Brigade units. Primarily, the ball will be carried by Brigade headquarters, consolidating, standardizing, etc. But your people should be thinking about it and getting ready to make their input now. Don't forget the business of taking some of the unnecessary equipment out as well as insuring you include all required equipment.

f. 1st Aviation Brigade Operations Manual Briefing Team. The Brigade briefing team has completed its in-country briefing of supported major ground units. As you know, the purpose of the briefing was to acquaint our ground commanders with the Brigade manual, stressing capabilities and limitations of supporting aviation units. Distribution of the manual was made concurrently with the briefing.

Response to the manual was generally favorable, although there was evidence of skepticism in a couple of instances. The burden of having the manual fulfill its purpose rests with you commanders. Use the manual and get your supported commanders to use it. It will pay dividends in planning and executing air-mobile operations. From here it's basically up to you battalion commanders and your staffs to keep on working with the people you support to try to educate them in good standardized procedures. Remember you are the gents who have to peddle this business with the people you work with on a daily basis. So the team may have helped out to some small extent -- but from here on it's up to you to train the people in the field.

g. AH-1G, Cobra NET Training. The Cobra NET Training began 18 September at Bien Hoa. I know that we are going to suffer some loss of capability in our gun platoons during the time they are being trained and filled with AH-1G's. I think this can be minimized if we plan ahead. The NETT courses will cover all systems of the Cobra to include the

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armament system. Now it's important to remember that you don't have enough armorers in your companies at the present time to fill the quotas or the numbers you will need when you get this bird going. The Cobra's weapons systems are sophisticated and rather delicate -- they have to be properly cared for and you are going to need more than your normal allotment of people, so I suggest you pick out some of your better door gunners and send them in to take this training.

h. Rules of Engagement. We must continually work on our people concerning rules of engagement. We are still having instances of ships firing into friendly positions. On our card, there is one point that isn't completely clear and we should revise our document on that account. It does not say specifically in the "Rules of Engagement" card that in case of any doubt the pilot is supposed to get clearance from the ground commander before he fires. This ought to be in -- we will put it in. In the meantime, we want to make sure our gun crews up and down the line do understand this -- nothing hurts our reputation more!

i. Statement of Policy. The standard policy of the Brigade that I want to reiterate here for the new battalion commanders is the question of what a guy does or should do when he feels he has to turn down a mission or the mission is too difficult. Now this comes up under different guises. The weather can be deteriorating -- the question of too much fire in an area, too hot an LZ, etc. The basic principle throughout is that the ground commander is the boss and let's not forget it or let our people forget it! If ground commanders want our people to do something, we do it! Now this is not to say we can't remonstrate, that we can't point out the weather is too bad to attempt to continue, but if the ground commander still insists, the aviation battalion commander does the best he can to carry through the mission. The implications or consequences of not doing it are sometimes worse than losing a bird. If the aviation commander feels the decision the ground commander makes is incorrect, he can appeal it through aviation channels. You've got to recognize here that sometimes there will be insufficient time to follow this procedure. If there is not time to appeal through aviation channels, go ahead and carry out the mission. You can accomplish much more by having a proper understanding with people along the line. I need not tell you this. The best way to avoid a fracas of this sort is to have complete understanding with the people you support and a good enough personal relationship to avoid anything approaching an argument in this direction. The ground commander ought to take the advice of his aviation support commander. If he doesn't, this is his shortcoming and something that must be sorted out. Things of this nature are things that cannot be sorted out in the heat of battle. Your relationship with him should be good enough that he will accept your advice and try to find a way of performing the missions as required.

j. Weather. The weather is getting good in the South and it will start getting real stinking along the Northeast Coast before very

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long. So commanders in that area -- intensify your instrument training program. Try to get the new guys an opportunity to dip their noses into clouds a little bit when the consequences are not going to be great. Do all you can to keep them sufficiently current to get them out of trouble along the East Coast when the weather starts down. Along these same lines -- we've mentioned this many times before -- but it's worth mentioning again -- try to get your people to exercise the GCA operators. Start now, particularly in the northeast so that when bad weather comes along the GCA operator will be sufficiently proficient to bring our people down in good shape.

k. First Aid Training. Another thing that has been emphasized before but I want to emphasize again -- be sure your air crews are properly schooled in first aid. They should know how to use all the stuff they've got in the aircraft to take care of their crewmembers or doughboys they might have to pick up and evacuate. While we were talking about Dust Off earlier, I think it is worth pointing out that actually about half of the battle evacuations are made by our people. The ground units just can't wait long enough to get Dust Off in all instances. Our people are there; they know the situation. They have just put the people on the ground -- so they go back in and get them out. Now, the disadvantage is that our crews don't have all the training or equipment that Dust Off personnel get to take care of people enroute to the hospital. We are authorized to carry morphine but it has to be carefully controlled. We have the basic equipment aboard the bird that we need to keep people alive unless they have severe internal bleeding or something along these lines. But our people are not going to be good at this sort of thing if we don't school them in it. A reminder -- keep your schooling going on this!

4. LOGISTICS:

Body Armor. Conduct a survey of what you've got in the way of body armor. We've got to do a bit of redistributing within the Brigade to make sure we've got enough for all air crews we're likely to have up at any one time.

5. SAFETY:

a. Individual Survival Kits. We've already gotten indications that some individual survival kits are leaking out of country. They are organizational property and they are to be kept here simply because we are not going to get anymore. There are a lot of attractive items in these kits and there will be a strong tendency on the part of some people to get part or all of this kit. Don't let them do it. Develop a positive method of checking on these kits.

b. Modifications. We lost a bird the other day and we think it was from a door coming off and tangling with the main rotor in flight while the aircraft was on descent on final approach for landing. The door was not modified in compliance with current modification kits in use. A word to the wise -- keep mod's current on all aircraft.

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6. SIGNAL:

Radio Security. We've raised the roof about radio security in the past. It still smells. "Charlie" is listening to many of our nets -- there's no question about it, and he can listen to nets in this Brigade or any other outfit and get full-blown, full-scale accounts of what's going on. Enough said!! Bear down and straighten this out.

7. INFORMATION:

Hawk Statuettes. Regarding the little Hawk showed you the last time -- we've got in the results from the companies and most people have asked for a sample so they can show it around for ordering purposes. Order sheets are now available from the IO.

FOR THE COMMANDER:



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