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DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
HEADQUARTERS, 28TH MILITARY HISTORY DETACHMENT
APO San Francisco 96257

File
242

AVIC-1E

31 January 1968

SUBJECT: Exit Interview

TO: Department of the Army
Attn: ACSFOR, DA
Washington D.C. 20310

1. Contained herein is an exit interview with Captain Jon D. Collins, Commander of G Troop, 11th Armored Cavalry Regiment, from 11 August 1967 to 18 January 1968.

2. I would appreciate your comments on the content of this interview since I plan to conduct a series of exit interviews with troop commanders and squadron commanders patterned along the lines of this interview.

HENRY J. LOWE
Captain, Armor
Historian

cc LTC Quigley

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28 MHD file

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SUBJECT: Exit Interview of Captain Collins

28 January 1968

GENERAL: This is a narrative interview taken by the 28th Military History Detachment from Captain Jon D. Collins, Commander of G Troop, 11th Armored Cavalry Regiment, from 11 August 1967 to 18 January 1968. During this period, the troop operated in Long Khanh, Binh Long, and Trang Binh Provinces.

1. HOW WOULD YOU EVALUATE THE TRAINING OF THE NVA SOLDIER?

In most instances, I found the NVA soldier to be very well trained. In one particular engagement, even though the situation for him was relatively hopeless, he did not retreat or surrender; he fought until killed. He seemed to be very determined in every battle I fought against him. He has a fairly well-run intelligence network and a good knowledge of the terrain. He used these against us, particularly when he has the opportunity to harass us and make use of the hours of darkness. It is almost impossible to keep in contact with him under these conditions. He will use anything at his disposal to harass a U S position, even realizing our tremendous firepower advantage.

2. HOW WOULD YOU EVALUATE THE AGGRESSIVENESS OF THE NVA SOLDIER IN PURSUIT OF HIS TACTICS AND WHAT ARE THESE TACTICS?

On one occasion when I was securing an LZ with a platoon for an extraction, he infiltrated up to the LZ. The listening posts picked up his movements and fired at him. He kept at it and finally set up an ambush on the road leading out of the LZ. He sprung his ambush a little early, and it did not work. He missed the lead vehicle with his RPG-2 weapon. Once he missed that, he did not press his ambush, which led me to believe that he was not set or it was part of his harassment. The enemy seemed to possess considerable courage or strong motivation. They would get as close as possible, sometimes crawling as close as 20 or 30 feet. This was in order to fire an RPG at us. The only way we have been able to control this is to use continuous reconnaissance by fire to force him to keep his distance. In the areas where there are a large number of the NVA, they keep a close watch on our movements and continually harass us, but they will not attack unless they have a considerable advantage or they have a well set-up trap.

3. HOW WOULD YOU EVALUATE THE NVA WEAPONS AND THE NVA SOLDIERS?

In regards to his capability with his weapons, up north of Tam Ky the forces that we were against had RPG-2's instead of RPG-7's. Facing a company of NVA, they did not use recoilless weapons at all; he used some light machine-guns, but the casualties that we sustained seemed to come from the individual rifleman with the SKS carbine or the AK-47. The AK-47 seems to be a very fine weapon. There have been men of my troop who have used it when their own weapons have jammed. It seems to be an accurate weapon, especially on full automatic. In evaluating the RPG, it does not seem to have been too effective against us. Of the rounds he has fired at us, he has hit very seldom - at a rough guess, 5% or less. Of course, what he tries to do is to wait until you

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get so close that he can not miss. He seemed to aim, in the beginning, for the center of mass of the vehicle, but later we began to get indications that he was aiming for the vehicle commander. This trait was particularly noticeable up near the Cambodian border in December 1967 as opposed to north of Tam Ky in September 1967 where he would aim at the center of mass. He becomes less effective with the RPG as the range gets greater. If you are able to harass him with artillery, he cannot become completely effective with RPG's. He usually employs this weapon with a three-man team, one man with the RPG, and the other two with small arms. They will shoot one or two rounds and then run away. They usually shoot at the lead vehicle. I have never seen them wait to shoot at vehicles farther back in the formation.

The effectiveness of the RPG seems to be greatly dependant on where it hits the vehicle. I know of one instance where one ACAV was hit just below the driver, where the forward portion of the vehicle slopes up. It failed to do much damage to either the vehicle or the driver. If the RPG hits the fuel tank, there is a possibility of a fire. Although there is not as great a danger of fire with the diesel engines as there is with gasoline engines, the best place to shoot at with an RPG is the commander's cupola or the engine. As for tanks, I have seen them hit also, but unless an individual in the tank is directly behind where the round hits, he is not going to be hurt. If a round hits the ammunition, there will be considerable damage. Otherwise, I have found that a hole in the tank does not hurt much. With 57mm and 75mm recoilless rifles, I do not have much experience. The NVA do not seem to use them much. The reason seems to be that you can give a soldier an RPG and a couple of rounds of ammunition, and he can travel a great distance. It is a pretty light load. But when the NVA soldier must carry a 57mm or 75mm, there must be a crew and a greater risk of losing more people. It is going to be difficult for him to haul the recoilless rifle away in time, particularly if, as usual, he engages one of our units at a close range. As far as the effect of the 57 or 75 on the vehicles, I have had one platoon attacked by recoilless rifles. One carrier had three holes made by 57mm recoilless rifle hits. All they did was put holes in the vehicle, missing the fuel tank. There seemed to be no spalling effect at all. One ACAV was hit by a 75mm recoilless rifle and really all it did was to put a hole in the vehicle. It hit the front of the vehicle, and it wounded the driver, but it did no further damage.

4. HOW DO YOU EVALUATE THE AGGRESSIVENESS OF THE VC SOLDIER AND WHAT ARE HIS TACTICS?

The VC or guerrilla does not appear to want to stand and fight. The VC is more active at night; this is the time the VC likes to operate. If you catch the VC in the daytime, you are not going to get a fight out of him unless he's cornered. Very seldom will you see him during the day. Morale-wise, he does not seem to be as motivated as his NVA counterpart. I made this observation from the way the VC fights and the type of conditions he fights under.

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5. HOW DO YOU EVALUATE THE WEAPONS OF THE VC AND HIS EFFECTIVENESS WITH THESE WEAPONS?

The VC is not as well-equipped as his NVA counterpart. He carries an M1 rifle or an M1 or M2 carbine. I have not found a VC with a pistol or an AK-47 rifle or RPG's. One thing he seems to employ more than the NVA is mines. He has really caused me greater concern over the use of mines than anything else. Every other armor-defeating weapon he has used just has not worked, but with these mines, he will get a vehicle now and then with relatively little exposure to himself. It is a concern to us that he can do this. I do not believe that my troop suffered one casualty from VC SA or AW fire, although there have been numerous sniping incidents. Most of these incidents have been at night. The only daylight rounds have been fired from a distance and as we were leaving an area. His sniping at night, and there have been plenty of opportunities, is inaccurate. He usually shoots high. I have never seen any rounds kick up dirt around us. All rounds have been overhead. This is in spite of the fact that we were in base camps, well exposed, and he had the opportunity to pick his targets at random. He still never hit anyone.

6. HOW DO YOU EVALUATE THE VC TACTICS AND AGGRESSIVENESS?

I have never had more than perhaps a squad-sized VC force initiate actions against my unit. In one case where we were searching a village, we found more rice than the village could possibly use, and we were picking up the rice and some detainees (22, male) and questioning them and preparing them for evacuation. After we had been in the village for about 4 or 5 hours, a VC squad infiltrated back into the village and fired at us. We had two or three men dismounted from each vehicle with just enough men left on the ACAV's to fire the .50 caliber's and move the vehicles, should it be necessary. We pursued the retreating VC, after the initial ambush. This has been the main experience that I have had with the VC- nothing larger than a squad-size action.

In another contact with the VC, we set up an ambush in Chu Lai where I had two infantry platoons attached. We had some intelligence on a village that was sympathetic to the VC. These two platoons of infantry intercepted two platoons of VC coming into the village at night. We had a body count of one on this ambush plus several bloody trails. An interesting point is that the body count was a 17-year old girl with a carbine, showing how the VC are organized as opposed to the NVA.

I have noticed one thing in reference to enemy mortar fire. We were mortared at one time, and this was up at Tam Ky. The VC fired six rounds of 60mm. In the flat terrain, we had immediate fire superiority with the .50 caliber, sweeping the area within range of the 60mm mortar's. On numerous occasions, I have been in a position overnight where the enemy knew where I was. Once I was on a bald hill where I had set up with the tank company. It was surrounded by other hills which were higher. We set up before dark, and it was a perfect position to be mortared. The following day, we found 15 rounds of ammunition with the bamboo poles. He had the capability to mortar us and did not do it. I do not know whether it was because the VC considered us a hard target and too tough for the effort or if they were short on supplies. In the times that he has mortared us, it has not been very effective. In the time that I have had the troop, we have spent much time in fixed positions, and during this time, we have not received one round of

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mortar fire.

7. DID THE TRAINING THAT YOUR OFFICERS RECEIVED PRIOR TO COMING TO VIETNAM PREPARE THEM FOR LEADERSHIP IN VIETNAM?

All of my platoon leader's had either been through OCS or the basic course at Fort Knox, and they all had been through the Jungle School. I was surprised at how readily they adapted to this war, which is so much different from the experiences and training that they have had. The way we're organized is different from anything that we were instructed in back in the states. We knew what an ACAV was, but as far as the organization, and how they really worked over here, we really didn't get too much. I think that they are pretty well prepared. In the cases that I've seen, they have had a little time to get their feet on the ground and get used to the platoon before they get into an engagement. Recently a platoon leader who had been in the troop less than a month, got into a fire fight in a jungle area where he had really never had any experience and he really did quite well. He got a body count, and had no casualties in his platoon. My platoon leaders seem to be highly motivated, whether they are US, RA, or whatever their particular career desires appear to be. They take a pretty active approach to their career, and their mission, and the welfare of their people. I think that this is to their credit.

8. WHY ARE YOUR PLATOON LEADERS MOTIVATED TO DO A GOOD JOB?

This motivation is a difficult thing to nail down. I have had command of roughly 7 lieutenants. They are motivated, first, by a sense of competitiveness. Of course, there is self-preservation. It seems that once they get in command of a platoon and get into some tight situation, they realize what their responsibilities are. They consider the success or failure of their mission depends on how they react to a situation. They go at it with a pretty aggressive spirit. I had one platoon leader who was concerned about his people and the war effort, but he wasn't aggressive on the ground. That was just one case. The rest of the platoon leaders have been aggressive. Two of my officers were not armor officers - one was transportation and the other was quartermaster. The transportation officer did a pretty outstanding job the first time he got in a fight. I think it's a basic patriotism. Talking with these men on one occasion or another, I feel they are pretty proud of their country. And I think, pretty proud of their unit. They're aggressive to the point where they volunteer to take out patrols. They want to do the things that their men are faced with in combat. They take a real active interest in the war effort. I think it boils down to a personal pride in themselves. They don't want to let their people down. If you make a mistake around here it's sort of an ultimate test, either you're dead or someone around you is. I think their responsibility motivates them, they're patriotic, and when you get right down to it, I think they just like to win. They don't like to come out on the short end of anything.

9. HOW DO YOU AND YOUR OFFICERS EVALUATE YOUR WEAPONS?

One of the weapons that the officers don't like is the XM148 grenade launcher. They all feel very strongly about this. The officers want the M79. They feel and so do I, that the M79 is a tremendous weapon that is

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particularly lethal. A soldier can't throw a grenade as far as a M79. ACAV troops don't have an HE capability. The M79 is the best weapon that a soldier can use to kill an infiltrator without disclosing his position. We do need the M79, and the XM 148 should be eliminated, it's unsatisfactory, it's inaccurate, and slow to load and fire.

A weapon that the officers like is the AR 15 Commando. The officers in my troop that are fortunate enough to have one wouldn't part with it. It is a dependable, accurate weapon, I've seen it outperform the M16 rifle, even though the M16 is a little heavier, has a little longer barrel, and should be more accurate. We've found that the men in an armored vehicle need a weapon with the versatility of this weapon. The CAR 15 can be kept in the cupola with the TC, and readily used. Many times you can't get a .50 Caliber machinegun around on a target quick enough and you must depend on the CAR 15 to handle the situation. The .50 Caliber we like. If it were taken off the ACAV, I don't think that an officer would ride in the ACAV. The .50 Caliber will do a job in jungle, in brush, and against bunkers, that an M60 machinegun cannot do. I've felt this and again that without .50 Caliber machineguns, we'd have had a considerably tougher fight on our hands and lost more men.

I have found the M60 machinegun to be highly reliable. With a little care it will provide dependable fire, without stoppages. It is a good thing that we carry .45 Caliber pistols. I have had occasion to use one. Nothing else could be as fast or as handy. We have had problems in accuracy with the .45 Caliber pistol. It is something that we need to keep. The officer needs a rifle or a pistol, preferably both, and the rifle should be the AR 15. The M16 is not manageable in the turret. We use fragmentation grenades quite a bit. These are particularly handy when you get into an area where there are bunkers and fortifications. I've nothing better to clear bunkers, both of personnel and booby traps. We use fragmentation grenades quite often, we carry a large quantity, and re-supply often. We haven't used White Phosphorus too often. One reason for this is that the only place to use this grenade is where we want to burn something down. We use white phosphorous grenades to clear out a suspected area of brush. We use smoke grenades quite often, to mark our positions. Every vehicle carries a dozen or so of these, to mark a position for navigation, dustoff, airstrikes, or any number of things. The only problem that we have had is getting the smoke up through the trees in heavy jungle. Sometimes we must throw three or four grenades to get something that finally goes up through the canopy.

10. WOULD YOU REMARK ON THE QUALITY OF YOUR NCO, THEIR AGGRESSIVENESS, AND SPIRIT?

The E7's that I had came to me with considerable experience, not combat experience, but experience in their MOS and leading people. They are noticeably motivated, I think that an E7 is the best professional soldier. They accomplish their business with a real professional attitude. In a lot of cases the breaking in of a platoon leader falls on their shoulders. I've seen some outstanding results in this area. The platoon sergeant will coach his platoon leader until he comes to the point where the platoon sergeant feels that the platoon leader has gained enough experience that the total command should fall on the platoon leader. The platoon sergeants seem to

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know what they're doing. Most of the E6's that come over here as E6's are the same way. There was only one that I felt was unqualified to lead in combat. I believe he was unqualified even to wear the stripes. He was not motivated, he didn't know the basic leadership principles, he wasn't concerned with the welfare of his men, he didn't take an active interest in them. Of course it showed, the crew on the vehicle wasn't a crew at all, just five individuals. He didn't like being in the "line" at all, his experience hadn't been in the line. His experience was in the intelligence field, and instead of getting with the program, he continues to fight the problem. This is in contrast to several 11E20's that I have had. They are tankers at heart, they'd rather ride in a tank, but they get right in there. Soon they are either a scout section leader or a scout squad leader, and they do an outstanding job. The tankers probably still don't consider themselves cavalrymen, but they apply what they've learned as tankers, and it carries them through.

11. HOW WOULD YOU EVALUATE YOUR EM? WHAT MOTIVATES THEM IN COMBAT?

There is one case that stands out in my mind. We were passing through An Loc, on our way to Lai Khe. As we were passing through the squadron trains area, I picked up 4 replacements. It was unique to pick up replacements on the move. We closed into our area after dark, and these replacements were still on my track. We got perimeter defenses set up, and then I took some time to talk to them. I couldn't see them in the dark. I suppose the fact that they couldn't see me kind of loosened their tongues a little. One of them said "Do you really think that we're winning the war?". I told him, "That's Affirm", and if you don't believe me, just check the records of the kill ratio that we've had and the VC playgrounds that we've disrupted. We certainly are". He accepted the answer and said that he was glad to hear that, because he had gotten the impression back home that maybe we weren't winning. That disrupted my thoughts somewhat, but perhaps I really wasn't surprised so much after what I read in the paper. I was particularly amazed at these 4 replacements. We were setting up a perimeter guard at that time, and they wanted to be a part of it. They wanted to do their part. I don't think they had even had an opportunity to see if their weapons worked yet. They said that they were pretty glad to be in a Cav unit. It seemed that they were well motivated.

I have had only one instance where I have felt a man was a 100% coward. I have found that my men care about their buddies. They might not care if their platoon leader or CO gets plugged, but they are concerned about the guys on their track. I've seen them under fire protect each other. I don't know whether they were protecting each other or just trying to kill VC, but the end result is the same. This one particular individual was the complete opposite. He didn't seem to care about anyone but himself. This was the big thing that separated him from the others. I know my young troops, and I can see on their faces that they have been scared. We've all been scared. I've had only one man that I felt let it get to him to the point that he was avoiding his duty. That man is AWOL at the present time. The troops do their job under fire. This is what counts. They seem to be

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pretty well motivated. I've never had anyone play the anti-war bit. It's pretty basic down at this level. It's a life and death thing at this level, not a political matter. I've seen a man report into the troop and the same night go out on Ambush Patrol or LP. Initially, they're pretty sceptical. One of the big factors that contributes to the way they fight is their belief in the support that they have and their confidence in the ability of their unit to get them out of a tight spot. This has a considerable affect on the way they fight. A track can be hit, and they pull back to evacuate the wounded. Then they return to the line, and begin pouring lead again. I've had several individuals, relatively new people, on a track that hit a mine dusted off with various injuries. Their buddies were taken to Japan, while they, not being too seriously wounded, are returned to duty again. I have people with two or three purple hearts, that have had this kind of experience. I really feel, if they had had the choice, they would have come back anyway. I had a man on my vehicle who had I believe three purple hearts. He just liked being where he was and wanted to stay up in the line.

12. HOW WOULD YOU CHARACTERIZE THEIR FIRE DISCIPLINE AND FIRE DISTRIBUTION?

I have had several people join the unit from units in Germany, or who had their basic military experience there. As regards to fire control, it doesn't seem that their experience in Germany has had much effect on their fire discipline. It's one of the things that I am concerned with and tried to emphasize as commander. Under fire, they don't know much about fire control, it seems to be the tendency to fire all that they can from the direction that the hostile fire is coming. The business of the 20 - 25 round burst I think is a pretty good doctrine. If you don't use a 20 - 25 round burst you'll burn out your barrel and use up your ammo too fast. I haven't seen any fire discipline or fire control. This is one of the reasons I like to use recon by fire. It is a good method of training my people and keep the enemy off my back. One of the things I have never seen is a TC on a track turn around to his gunners who are doing a majority of the firing, and control them. This is pretty difficult. The TC must have his people trained before they roll out the front gate. By the time you get out in the jungles and the machineguns are firing, no one can hear what's going on. The individual has to be trained in fire discipline. He has to learn to use short bursts, instead of just indiscriminately firing. I've noticed the tendency to fire high. I had the necessity to emphasize to them to fire low, and air the weapons. We definitely need some training in fire discipline and distribution. We need it here. The troops don't get it stateside or in Europe. They don't have ACAV there. We need an active course. We had one in the squadron, but the troops need to run this all the time. Perhaps in the replacement training school, fire control could be taught.

13. DID YOU HAVE ANY PROBLEMS IN LOGISTICS?

One of the things that has been particularly bad is communications support. We had 5 excess AN/GRC 46's. With those 5 Excess 46's, we still didn't have enough operational radios to put one in every vehicle. I had a shop tag on one VRC12 dated 6 July 67. (Interview taken 18 Jan 68) At one point, if I had a radio break down, I would have had nothing to replace the radio with. I have three jeeps, and no radio for them. If I wanted to use my jeep, I had to pull the radio from my command track. When you have to move out at a moment's notice you can't be fooling around mounting radio's. We turn the radios in and they come back with the same thing wrong or some new deficiency. Sometimes the radios don't come back at all or there is such a lapse in time

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that it is the same as if they didn't come back. I have had the same trouble with antennas. I'm getting the same problem with antenna matching units. There are a couple of little crystals in the matching unit that go out, and when they go out you lose the capability of the matched antenna. What really makes it so difficult is that no matter how well you take care of antennas, you're either going to get one shot off or broken going through the jungle. The radios take a considerable beating inside the vehicles. I try to emphasize to my people, and I think that it could be emphasized more in basic training and other training, exactly what they can do with these radios. I found people who didn't even know how to change a frequency. Up until recently, I didn't have enough CVC helmets for every track commander and driver. This is a serious problem. I lost a platoon leader because he had to expose himself over the cupola of his vehicle to shout to his driver and tell the driver to turn to attack a particular gun position. He was hit in the face with shrapnel and put out of action. If he had had comms with his people, there would have been no problem. I wouldn't have lost an officer when I needed him. We were resupplied with some CVC helmets, but they were all small. I have very few men who can use a small helmet, we take medium or large CVC helmets. If you get one too big, you can tighten them and pad them so they fit. We had to rip the guts out of the new helmets and put them into the old ones that we had for turn-in as unserviceable. This was probably not a very good way to solve the problem, but I needed CVC helmets. Our big problem has been in the communications area.

I feel that the requisitions system needs to have command emphasis, probably at the direct support level. We need panoramic sights for our mortars. They have been on a priority requisition for several weeks. But we're just not getting them. When the issue priority system is not being upheld and not being supervised, the situation is unrealistic. We do our part, not assigning priorities unless they are real, and being careful to authenticate even with the lower priorities, so as to even the distribution load. Something that really hurts the system, is when a load of parts comes in and does not go to the unit that requisitions them. The parts might all be sent to one unit. This destroys the system. If I have a requisition date with a priority that shows a greater need, I should get the parts first. Sometimes it's a case of either feast or famine. We couldn't get road wheels at Tam Khe. We got down here (Blackhorse), and we had pallets of them. We could get great quantities of track up there, but practically none here. So far, our tracked vehicles are holding up well, but as they get old, I expect a resupply problem. As far as resupply and combat resupply in the field, I feel that it's been real effective. We have a definite need for aerial resupply, without the Chinook, I know of several instances where we would have been in trouble. It wasn't too critical at the time, because of the enormous basic loads of water, food, and ammo that are carried by the cavalry. But the cavalry still needs diesel, and the only way to get it in some cases is by air. The cavalry needs that air support.

14. HOW WOULD YOU CHARACTERIZE THE ARTILLERY AND AIR SUPPORT THAT YOU HAVE RECEIVED?

Artillery support has been real effective. The big reasons are the White Phosphorus marking capability at 400m height of burst with 155mm rounds. You don't really have this capability with the 4.2 inch mortars,

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so you can't bring them in on the first round as close as you want to. I feel that artillery support has been excellent. They have done a very effective job. The NVA or VC soldiers are getting wise to us now. I have found bunkers with as much as 2 feet overhead cover. They just stay in their holes and wait for the artillery to stop. You roll up there and they are waiting. The best thing to do is to keep the artillery firing until you get there, stop it just as you go in, and you get better results. For troops in the open or in less well prepared positions, the artillery fire is very effective. One of the biggest things that we use artillery fire for in the densely covered areas is navigation.

TAC air seems to be very effective the way I've seen it used in the regiment. Having our own FAC's really makes a difference. An immediate air-strike takes about 20 minutes. With our own FAC there, we get strikes right where we want them. The strikes have been very effective, and on target. The biggest advantage in having our own FAC's is that the FAC's talk to the commander on the ground. This makes the firepower of TAC air that much more effective.

15. ARE THERE ANY TO&E CHANGES YOU WOULD LIKE TO SEE IN YOUR RECONNAISSANCE TROOP?

We definitely have a need for tanks, whether you put two or three tanks in a platoon, would not matter particularly. We get into fights with a well entrenched enemy, and we need organic HE capability. We need to pound him with direct fire. Tanks can do this. The ACAV's put out a lot of firepower, but if the enemy is dug in and well set up, automatic weapons fire is not going to hurt him too much. Another tremendous capability of the tank is its canister. Canister is a most effective anti-ambush weapon. They fire an RPG and we answer immediately with canister. It's one quick way of getting the enemy. We definitely need some tanks in the scout platoons.

The M578 light recovery vehicle is not as effective as the M88. We are in a cross-reinforced situation with tanks as well as ACAV's, and the M578 can't pull a tank if it's stuck. If we have tanks we also need an M88. I'd like to have an M88, because of its greater pulling capability. I've been in situations where an ACAV has thrown a track, and a light VTR (M578) could not pull it out. Another thing we need is a TO&E authorization for fuel bladders. We have some, but it's not TO&E, and we're just lucky to have them. You need the bladders, and the pumps that go with them. For aerial resupply of fuel, there is nothing better. Without the pumps, we must gravity-feed the fuel. We have a considerable need for these bladders.

A piece of equipment that would help us out is the M548 cargo carrier. Our Howitzer battery has some M548 cargo carriers and we have some in our support platoon. In some of the areas that we go into, we must resupply on the ground. Having a completely mechanized force such as ours, we need this M548 carrier to augment our capability to resupply on the ground.

I've used radar north of Tan Khe where there is some open terrain, and it was very effective. Down around Xuan Loc, and areas where there is considerable jungle, it is not effective. It becomes just a lot of excess equipment to carry around. What we use our radar tracks for is one for the XO

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and one for the 1st Sergeant. You need something for the XO to ride in, and the TOE didn't provide it.

In addition to the TO&E that I think is severely needed, is in the line of the PLL. Instead of the weapons PLL, we almost need an extra weapons for each track. When we get in a fight, or are going through the jungle and the M60 is shot up or trees fall on them, then we have a reduction in fire-power. If you have an extra M60 on each track, this would help. We may need 1 or 2 extra .50 Caliber machineguns because of combat losses, we are using the ones from the food and supply vehicles. We even took the one from the medic track. You need to balance this with the combat necessities of the troop. We need some way to lay our hands on some machineguns as immediate combat loss replacements. When you lose one during combat, it is a long time before you can get a replacement. We can't afford that time.

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