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DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY  
28TH MILITARY HISTORY DETACHMENT  
11TH ARMORED CAVALRY REGIMENT  
APO SAN FRANCISCO 96257

AVIC-WE

18 October 1968

SUBJECT: Exit Interview

Office, Chief of Military History  
Washington, D.C. 20315

1. The attached exit interview was conducted with Major Kenneth F. Melton, 089557, Military Intelligence. Major Melton commanded the 541st Military Intelligence Detachment assigned to the 11th Armored Cavalry Regiment from 6 November 1967 to 17 October 1968. The interview was conducted by Cpt William B. Overbay, Commanding Officer, 28th Military History Detachment, at the Detachment.

2. The interview was recorded at a speed of 4.75 cm/sec:1 7/8 IPS on a Sony TC-800 tape recorder. There is no security classification or restriction on the tape. The interview covers significant events, accomplishments, problem areas, and lessons learned of Major Melton's command.

3. The following is a general synopsis of the interview:

a. What is your general evaluation of your assignment as a commander, including job requirements, tenure of command, and personal qualifications?

(007-037) Major Melton discusses his command from the standpoint of someone new in Military Intelligence. He considers the command instructive. Major Melton feels that the most important requirement of the command was a correct relationship between the Detachment and the Regimental S-2. The tenure of command should have been longer than one year in order to accomplish the command goals.

b. During your command, what have your general missions been? How did you accomplish these missions?

(037-071) All missions were intelligence support to the Regiment. The missions were accomplished in a variety of ways. Because of the merits of each unit in the Detachment and the requirements of the forward and rear sections, Major Melton discussed each section, where it was located, its deployment, and

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what it did. Major Melton talked about the Battlefield Intelligence Center (BIC), a new concept resulting from a MACV study.

c. Discuss each section in the Detachment, its deployment, and where it was employed.

(071-113) Major Melton discussed the five sections: Headquarters Section, Counter Intelligence Section, Image Interpretation Section, Order of Battle Section, and Interrogation Prisoner of War Section.

d. Would you like to comment on the Detachment's TOE? Was it adequate to accomplish the mission? Would you recommend any changes?

(113-137) Major Melton discussed the difficulties which he encountered with TOE 30-14G. He considered it antiquated and inadequate for a counter insurgency situation. The biggest problem was too many people in the wrong places and not enough in the right places. There is pending MTOE which will correct these problems and increase personnel in the Order of Battle and Counter Intelligence Sections.

e. Did the training that your officers received prior to coming to Vietnam prepare them for their jobs here?

(137-215) On the whole, no. They were not fully or adequately trained, primarily because of improper assignment by the Military Intelligence Branch. This improper assignment situation includes officers trained in one MOS but assigned in another. There is also a lack of linguists.

The Imagery Interpretation and Counter Intelligence personnel were well trained. The best trained were warrant officers and enlisted agents. Major Melton went on to discuss ways of correcting the mal-assignment problem. He recommended a Military Intelligence group in each Corps Tactical Zone to assist in assignment, particularly those of enlisted agents to avoid the problem of compromising ranks and assisting with promotions.

f. How would you evaluate the overall manner of performance of your enlisted men?

(215-239) The overall manner of performance has been outstanding. In certain cases, however, the average rank has been only E-4 and as such these people do not have adequate experiences to accomplish their missions quickly and adequately.

g. How did you solve the linguistic problem when dealing with VC prisoners?

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(239-290) Major Melton discussed the ARVN interpreters and their job and manner of performance. With these interpreters, language was not a problem. The US interpreters are arriving better trained, but they are not adequately trained to conduct intense interrogation.

h. Is there any other relevant information, personal observations or lessons learned that you would like to add?

(293- ) Major Melton discussed specifically that there is a training responsibility, even though this is a combat situation. This includes an adequate rotation system between field and Base Camp activities.

WILLIAM B. OVERBAY  
CPT, Armor  
Historian

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