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

21 March 1969

AVIC-WE

21 March 1969

SUBJECT: Exit Interview

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

1. The attached exit interview was conducted with CPT William W. Hansen, 0570899, Armor. CPT Hansen commanded C Troop, 1st Squadron, 11th Armored Cavalry Regiment, from 25 Sep 68 to 3 Mar 69. The interview was conducted by CPT William B. Overbay, Commanding Officer, 28th Military History Detachment, at the Detachment office.

2. The interview was recorded on channel 1 at a speed of 1 7/8 IPS on a Sany TC-530 tape recorder. There is no security classification or restriction on the tape. The interview covers significant events, accomplishments, problems, and lessons learned of CPT Hansen's command.

3. The following is a 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? (005-007)

CPT Hansen found his command to be diversified and demanding. His missions, reconnaissance in force, route security, and pacification, covered the spectrum of US involvement in Vietnam. The Troop commander must adjust to each situation with continuity.

Although the normal tenure of command is six months, tenure of command should depend on how much activity or contact the troop has had during the command. The tactical situation and season should dictate tenures.

The personal requirements of a commander are maturity, flexibility, and standing up for what you believe. (007-021)

b. During your command, what have your general missions been? How did you accomplish these missions? (021)

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Missions ranged from night ambush patrols in the LAM SON and road security to combined arms reconnaissance in force missions with the 1st Cav Div. (021-059)

c. What is your evaluation of the Troop's performance of duty? (060-061).

CPT Hansen evaluated the Troop's performance of duty as outstanding, particularly in view of constantly changing situations. (061-066)

d. What has been some of the significant enemy action during your command and how did the troop react to each? (066-067)

CPT Hansen discussed the 27 Nov 68 combined arms contact with the 141st NVA Bn, 7th NVA Div, and the 9 Dec 68 contact where C Troop provided ready reaction for 5-7th Cav, 1st Cav Div. (068-098)

e. Would you like to comment on the Troop's TOE? Was it adequate to accomplish the mission? Would you recommend any changes? (098-101)

CPT Hansen cited the new General Sheridan tank as filling a significant gap in the Troop's TOE. It is better able to keep up with the light AGAV and provides firepower equal or superior to the M48A3. Recommended, however, was the replacement of the M578 VTR with the M88 to handle the Sheridan.

CPT Hansen also recommended that more PRC-25/77's be allotted to the troop for dismounted operations. Usual dispersion of the troop also requires the VRC-46 in place of the VRC-53 in the track vehicles for more range. (101-134)

f. Do you have any comments on the M-60 as a track mounted weapon? (135-137)

CPT Hansen observed that the M-60 is a good weapon, but is not designed to be track mounted. He would like to see the heavier M37 or M1919. (137-150)

g. Do you have any comments on maintenance and logistics? Would you recommend any changes? (150-152)

Maintenance and logistics support was outstanding. Since many resupply missions are for water, CPT Hansen recommended water purification capabilities down to troop level.

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ASR's were not sufficient for M-79 ammunition and pyrotechnics. Two reasons were cited: the use of reconnaissance of fire during night missions and the need for flexibility in ammunition loads due to the mobility of armor. (153-175)

g. Did the training which your officers received prior to coming to Vietnam prepare them for leadership in Vietnam? (202-203)

The officers were sufficiently trained to adapt to any situation encountered and were professional in their attitudes and execution. (180-187)

h. It has often been said that the Army lacks effective middle management personnel. Would you like to comment on this statement? (202-203)

GPT Hansen encountered little problem with the senior NCO's; the E-5/E-6 brackets lacked experience to some degree and required some time to work into their jobs. (189-202)

j. How would you evaluate the overall manner of performance of your EM? (202-203)

They were outstanding, smart, energetic, and motivated. The EM are professional in outlook and action. (203-210)

k. What effects have weather and terrain had on the use of armor? (214-216)

The wet season slows armor down tremendously relative to the dry season where armor can move freely almost anywhere with speed and flexibility. Use of the medium tank is marginal during the wet season and, at the height of the wet season, rice paddies present problems for ACAV's. Regardless, the armored cavalry unit can still get where it is going and do its job. (217-235)

l. How would you characterize the artillery and air support which you received? (236-237)

The elaborate artillery bureaucracy hinders its support--particularly with illumination. Air support is a different story. FAC's get as much support as is available and get it out fast. One recommendation, however, would be that troop radio frequencies be assigned in the 60 kc range so that troop CO's can communicate with air. Another recommendation is the close coordination between the CO and gunship support. Aerial rocketry artillery was cited as being highly professional. (237-279)

m. What comments do you have on the ARVN units you have worked for? (280-282)

3. JAMES B. COHEN

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CPT Hansen's experience with joint operations with ARVN forces has been favorable. The keynote to success is cooperation. A concerted effort on both parts will establish a good working rapport. Paramount is helping them out in the areas where they are short, particularly in the logistics area. Better armament has made them more confident. (283-309)

n. How would you evaluate the training, tactics, weapons, logistics, morale, and equipment of the VC/NVA soldier? (310-313)

Although some are only notable for their non-aggressiveness, elements such as the 7th NVA Div are well trained, well armed, disciplined, and have high morale. They respond well to their intelligence. (315-360)

o. To what advantage do the VC/NVA put terrain, weather, and our mistakes? (360-361)

The enemy is expert at using terrain, particularly in movement. They use camouflage well and exploit natural obstacles. Weather, however, upsets them as much as us. Our firepower protects us from our mistakes. (362-389)

p. How do you assess the enemy's anti-tank capability at this time? What is the trend of this capability? (390-392)

The VC/NVA has adjusted to armor by beefing up his anti-tank capability with more RPG's and mines. There is a definite emphasis. (392-419)

q. Since you were the Squadron S-2 prior to assuming command, would you like to comment on staff activities, intelligence, and TOC operation? (420-426)

The S-2 must have initiative and motivation. He has to get out and meet the advisors and ARVN's. ARVN's have a fine intelligence system. The breakdown comes with their failure to react. There must be a close rapport between the S-2 and S-3. This is particularly true in TOC operations. (427-470)

r. Is there any other relevant information, personal observations or lessons learned that you would like to add? (470-474)

CPT Hansen reasserted the manifest success of armor in Vietnam. (474-489)

WILLIAM B. OVERRAY
CPT, Armor
Historian

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