

T A. Ho

## THE VIETNAM CIVIL GUARD

by Lt. Tran Anh Tho

### A. Introduction

This is a brief approach to the organizational structure and functioning of the Vietnam Civil Guard. It is hoped by this outline that I may enable my professors at the School of Police Administration and Public Safety, Michigan State University, to have some background information on this organization.

This paper should also be enlightening to other police administration students who are desirous of widening their friendship in the Far East where their Vietnamese colleagues are fighting for the common cause of the Free World.

The reader will become more familiar with all the details of this organization in the following pages.

### B. Background Information on the Civil Guard of Vietnam

The Civil Guard was established within the Department of the Interior by Ordinance No. 26 of the Prime Minister, April 8, 1955, uniting the several existing para-military organizations.

Ordinance No. 5 of November 1955 attached it to the Executive Office of the President.

Similar to the National Guard in the Philippines, this agency is responsible for public order and security, for the supervision of law enforcement, and for the pacification of the whole national territory, and for the safety of our high officials.

There was one Central Headquarters in Saigon City and three Regional Headquarters located in Hue, Central Vietnam; Dalat, Highlands of Central Vietnam and Cholon, South Vietnam. The regional headquarters are now entitled regional inspections and reduced in size and authority.

The total strength of the Civil Guard is composed of about 1,000 officers, 4,000 non-commissioned officers and 50,000 civil guardsmen. There is 1 officer for every 50 guardsmen and 1 guardsman for every 460 inhabitants.

Most of the Civil Guard officers are high school graduates; a large number of them have received a university capacity. The non-commissioned officers have either finished secondary school or an equivalent education.

Every guardsman is required by recruitment regulations to have a thorough reading and writing knowledge of the Vietnamese language. Most of them have received fundamental training in geography, history, arithmetic, and science either before joining the Guard or through the courses of indoctrination during the training period.

The complement of the Civil Guard constitutes 36 provincial brigades; each brigade is composed of from 400 to 1500 people according to the local need for manpower.

#### C. The Symbol of the Civil Guard

The ample resources of the land, the special situation of Vietnam considered from the social and political viewpoint are the two main characteristics; so after two years' fighting in the swamps against the revolting forces and after the tremendous results which the Civil Guard has gotten, civil guardsmen are now honored and characterized by their escutcheon.

The symbol is rectangular, diagonally divided into two parts: the left upper part is red, the lower part is green; these two colors represent respectively the fighting energy of this agency and the fertility of the land.

The officers' shoulder straps are decorated with two golden ears of rice; they would symbolize the duty of the Civil Guard in the rural area whose main product is rice. Every service of this agency is indeed devoted to the welfare and the property of the nation.

The rank symbol of an officer is the follower of the cherry tree; the golden flower is reserved for high officers; the silver flower is devoted to lower officers. The flower of the cherry tree represents the Spring, the new era in the History of Vietnam.

Since the Civil Guard is a para-military force, there is no rank of General.

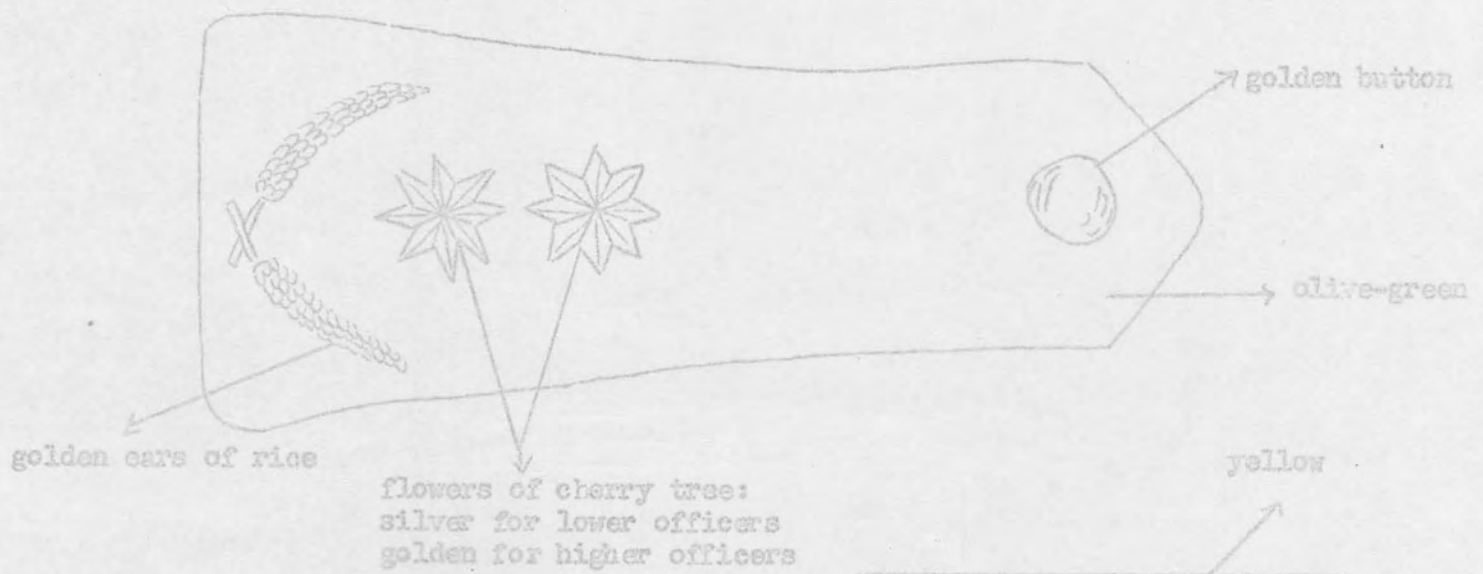
#### D. Organization - Staff Units

Assisting the General Director at Headquarters, there are the Staff units composed of a general secretariat, 10 bureaus and divisions. Formerly they were designated by number as the Army, but they are now classified according to their tasks.

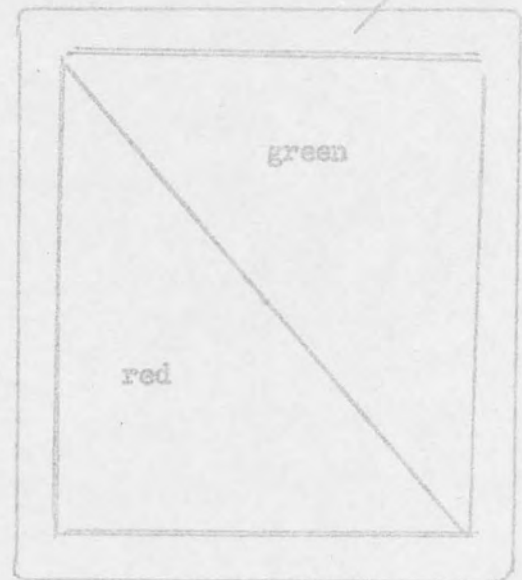
1. General Secretariat works between the Chief, his assistant and other units. Each problem is submitted to review before reaching the chief of the Civil Guard for decision. It is supervised by a Captain.

2. Personnel Bureau commanded by a major normally is supervised by a captain. This department is responsible for recruitment, induction, transfer and maintenance of personnel records; in other words, it provides the functional supervision of the whole strength of the Civil Guard. In order to serve its purposes, the bureau is divided into four divisions:

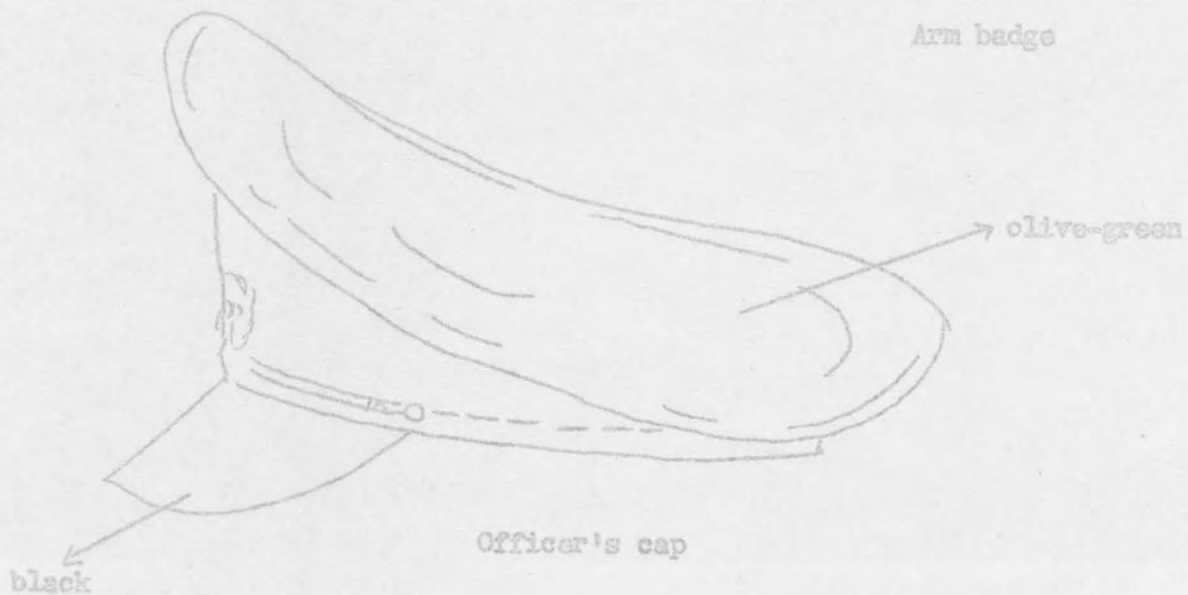
- a. The Effective Division is charged to maintain an accurate record of the effective force of every unit and to balance their complement proportionally to the local need in manpower. It deals also with retirement and leave.



Golden Cap Symbol



Arm badge



Officer's cap

VIETNAM  
CIVIL GUARD

Organization Chart

Executive Office  
Of  
President

Notices:

Chain of command

Chain of relationship

General Director

Assist. Director

Secretariat

Personnel  
Bureau

Safety  
Bureau

Tactics  
Bureau

Supply  
Bureau

Communication  
Bureau

Finance  
Bureau

Public Service  
Division

Medical  
Division

Civil Guard  
Band

Chaplain  
Service

Central  
Brigade

Midland of  
Center Vietnam  
Inspection

Highland of  
Center Vietnam  
Inspection

South Vietnam  
Inspection

Province  
Brigades

Province  
Brigades

Province  
Brigades

b. The Transfer Division actually brings about shift of personnel from one unit to another upon recommendation of the Effective Division.

c. The task of the Recruitment Division is to provide every necessary step which recruitment requires:

- i. Advertising
- ii. Selection tests
- iii. Establishing candidates' eligibility
- iv. Maintaining records of the applicants until they are assigned to a unit for service. Their records are then transmitted to the Personnel Records Division.

d. The Personnel Record Division is responsible for the maintenance of the record of every civil guardsmen. It is also responsible for disciplinary action, promotion, retirement, leave, etc.

3. The Safety Bureau's primary functions are the prevention of violation of regulation within the Civil Guard, the safety of high officials and those of citizens; the investigations of crime, recovery of property, arrest of offenders and criminals at large.

In order to perform its tasks the Bureau is divided into three branches located at Headquarters; the Studies Section, the Intelligence Division and the Investigation Section; the last two maintain representative branches in every regional inspection and province brigade.

All information converges at the Safety Bureau at Headquarters; after having been reviewed and analyzed the information will be transmitted to the Executive Office of the President for decision, and/or will be communicated to other services involved.

At the level of regional inspection or province brigade information could be transmitted to the chief of local administration for immediate solution.

The Safety Bureau of the Civil Guard is responsible for the surveillance of alien Chinese or other aliens; most of its efforts are directed against communist agents who are constantly infiltrating from the Northern zone. By virtue of the republicanism in Vietnam the communist agents have crept into the population and are trying to spread out their activities within the lower social classes.

The heavy responsibility of the Civil Guard is made more difficult because of the unpredictable activities of the communists.

These difficulties are due mainly to the fact that the Civil Guard is not sufficiently equipped with facilities such as communication and transportation. In addition the budget appropriated for the activity of the Safety Bureau is scanty.



4. Tactics Bureau is responsible for five main functions:

- a. Training Programs
- b. Tactical Plans
- c. Operational plans
- d. Strategic studies
- e. Statistical information.

The last four functions are somewhat similar to those performed by the Vietnamese infantry so I shall pass over them to mention some of the characteristics of the training program.

In order to face every situation the Civil Guard could meet the Training programs are especially designed to enable each civil guardsman to cope with his complex duty. The training programs are divided into the following courses:

1.) Basic recruit training is composed of the following phases:

- i. The first phase is rather functional; it deals with the regulations of the Civil Guard, military discipline, routine, etc.
- ii. The second phase is devoted to the training in arms and ammunition; it also treats weapons studies such as daggers, grenades, pistols and revolvers of every caliber, rifles such as MAS 36, Garand M1, grape-shot 36, MAT 49, etc.

The trainees also study map reading, compass and orientation, photography and military symbols.

Since the Civil Guard assumes the tasks of civilian service agents besides their military training, they are also skilled agents of propaganda and emergency service.

"The Civil Guard Training School should not be a mere factory for the manufacture of fighting men," President Diem stated, "it must be devoted to turning civil guardsmen into efficient public servants of the people."

So an important part of the training is devoted to making new recruits aware of the needs of the inhabitants - intellectually, morally as well as materially as will be explained in the Public Service Division.

2.) Advanced In-Service Training and Specialized In-Service Training.

- 1. Advanced In-Service Training is a period when trainees learn from instructors the up-to-date knowledge and application of modern materials, and training in special fields which are taught to members with the rank of sergeant or its equivalent. Machine guns such as MIT, BAR, MIT 30 and Mortars 50 mm, 81 mm are also taught in this course. This is secondary training.

SUMMARY SCHEDULE OF A BASIC TRAINING COURSE

<u>Order:</u>	<u>Matters taught</u>	<u>1st-4th</u> <u>Week</u>	<u>5th-8th</u> <u>Week</u>	<u>9th-12th</u> <u>Week</u>	<u>Amount</u>
1.	Civil Guard Regulations	12H	8H	4H	24H
2.	Close Order Drills	20H	15H	10H	45H
3.	Arms Training & Maintenance	16H	15H	25H	56H
4.	Public Service	10H	14H	16H	40H
5.	Law Enforcement	18H	19H	10H	47H
6.	Photography & Military Symbols	10H	10H	12H	32H
7.	Transmission & Communication	8H	12H	10H	30H
8.	Combat Tactics	19H	19H	13H	50H
9.	Fundamental of Criminal Investigation	20H	20H	20H	60H
10.	First Aid & Emergency Service	10H	10H	14H	34H
11.	Judo Training	13H	13H	21H	47H
12.	Visits to Organizations	7H	7H	7H	21H
Total.....:		162H	162H	162H	486H

- Notices:
- The time devoted to weekly written examination and oral final examination is extra.
  - Each instructor is responsible for one or two subjects.
  - Two or three Training Operations, lasting from 7 to 14 days each, are organized during the Training Course to put in practice all theoretic studies.





b. A Mechanic and Repair Division has been created in order to avoid unnecessary expenses since most of these vehicles are too old.

The regulations require that all vehicles be concentrated at the Supply Bureau Parking Lot after every shift. So vehicles are protected and a large number of vehicles are available for service at any time.

c. The Equipment Division takes care of and distributes equipment to units. It is directed by a Captain.

d. The Arms and Ammunition Division provides each unit with arms and ammunition needed for operation and daily use. An adjusting workshop has been created and works on repairing arms and accessories.

The organization would not function properly unless provided with the necessary property and equipment; and the proper use of equipment and property constitutes another question so frequent. Specialist Training courses are held in order to solve these problems.

6. Communications Bureau which was located in the Supply Division area has been recently transferred to the Headquarters building. It is directed by a captain. Its responsibility consists in maintaining permanent connection with other units in the whole of Vietnam. The materials used in this bureau are:

Long distance:	G.R.C. 9
	P.C.R. 694
Short distance:=-	P.C.R. 500
	P.C.R. 300
	P.C.R. 8

Besides the Signal Section whose responsibility is to transmit and receive messages there is a Code Section. Every secret message must be transferred to this section to be coded before dispatching or to be deciphered before submitting it to the reading of the Chief.

A Radio Repair Section is also part of this bureau,

The Telephone Section takes care of inter-office telephone communication and the installation of new lines. Most of its complement are women employees. This section is lead by an officer.

7. The Public Service Division is concerned with developing and maintaining high morale among the citizens.

Public Reporting - due to the lack of funds for this purpose, public reporting of the Civil Guard is mainly restricted to advertisement forms. Catchy phrases and sentences, both meaningful and impressive, have gained successful results. It serves a dual purpose of explaining

to the public the activities of the local government and inspiring public confidence and cooperation with the Civil Guard. A campaign with such cooperation becomes more effective because the public has a comprehensive understanding of the Civil Guard functions and intentions of the government.

By its own nature, and chiefly under communist agents' influence, the Vietnamese population resists regulations. They resent being told what to do and what not to do. An intensive program of factual propaganda has been necessary to overcome the resistance bred by communists propaganda.

The past results in the pacification of the nation have been influenced to a great extent by the manner employed by the Civil Guard. The Civil Guard, by nature of its tasks, makes more public contacts than any other agency. In addition to this, attitudes of the Civil Guard in dealing with the citizens have increased respect and improved public relations.

In order to function as effectively as possible the Public Service Division maintains permanent connections with the Department of Information and the Safety Bureau, both of which furnish information basic to effective policies and current trends of thought among the population. The Civil Guard furnishes speakers for clubs, civic meetings, and organizations to show government activities, broadcasts and presents theatrical pieces, etc. In brief every opportunity for an effective and honest presentation of both Civil Guard achievement and government programs must be used by the Public Service Bureau.

Because of the pre-service and advanced training programs, all civil guardsmen are very capable in performing their tasks as a result they favorably impress the citizens by their good will and skill in handling difficult situations as well as by their general helpfulness.

Such assistance often serves a dual purpose:

- a. Producing a favorable impression upon the citizens
- b. Learning information about communist activity in the area.

Really citizens are easily impressed by assistance in finding lost property such as a bicycle, buffalo, etc; aid to persons suffering from fainting spells, epileptic attacks, falls; cooperation and supervision in time of fire, flood, etc; and finally assistance in the rural labor of peasants such as drainage, irrigation or reaping.

8. The Finance Bureau is commanded by a captain detached from the Army. The Civil Guard is supported by a legislative budget appropriation. This appropriation enables the chief to pay men, buy equipment and other facilities needed to accomplish the Civil Guard work. With the exception of Army officers selected from the Department of National Defense and administrative officials, all civil guardsmen are paid contractually; thus payroll accounting in the Civil Guard is relatively simple.

