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SUBJECT: Senior Officer Debriefing Report

Assistant Chief of Staff for Force Development
Department of the Army
Washington, D. C. 20310

1. Attached are three copies of the Senior Officer Debriefing Report prepared by Colonel David L. Jones, Commanding Officer, 103th Artillery Group.
2. The extensive experience of the 103th Artillery Group, during the period of Colonel Jones' command, in counterbattery operations, and in employment of sound, flash and radar, and his application of command techniques to leadership problems peculiar to the Vietnam environment, qualify him to speak at the Field Artillery School and at the Junior Course, Marine Corps Schools.

FOR THE COMMANDER:

1 Incl
as (trip) 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34, 35, 36, 37, 38, 39, 40, 41, 42, 43, 44, 45, 46, 47, 48, 49, 50, 51, 52, 53, 54, 55, 56, 57, 58, 59, 60, 61, 62, 63, 64, 65, 66, 67, 68, 69, 70, 71, 72, 73, 74, 75, 76, 77, 78, 79, 80, 81, 82, 83, 84, 85, 86, 87, 88, 89, 90, 91, 92, 93, 94, 95, 96, 97, 98, 99, 100

W.C. Arntz
W. C. ARNTZ
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SENIOR OFFICER DEBRIEFING REPORT:

(REF: CASFOR-74)

Country: Republic of Vietnam

Reporting Officer: COL David L. Jones

Duty Assignment: Commanding Officer, 108th Artillery Group,

Inclusive Dates: 8 October 1967 to 3 September 1968 (U) 2, 3

Date of Report: 3 September 1968

1. (U) General.

a. This report is submitted in compliance with AR 1-26 and USARV Regulation 1-3.

b. Since the 108th Artillery Group has not been directly involved in such matters as causative factors of insurgency and local government stability actions, but rather has been totally engaged in combat operations against North Vietnamese Army forces along the Demilitarized Zone (DMZ), the format prescribed in AR 1-26 is inappropriate. I have therefore modified it to accommodate the group's operational situation.

2. (U) Environment.

a. Throughout the period, the group was deployed in the northern I Corps Tactical Zone, with its principal elements in positions along the southern edge of the DMZ. The eastern portion of this sector consists of relatively flat and sandy coastal plains; these give way toward the west to high, densely forested hills.

b. Weather in the area is typical of that prevailing throughout the northern portion of the Republic of Vietnam. Visibility is generally good except during the period of the northeast monsoon (October to March).

c. The most significant environmental peculiarity of the area is the existence of the adjacent sanctuary represented by North Vietnam, in which the enemy is immune from ground attack.

3. (U) Enemy forces.

a. The enemy forces facing the group were almost entirely regular North Vietnamese Army units, occasionally augmented in the southern portions of the sector by Viet Cong elements. They were well armed and well equipped, but generally had received only a minimum of training before being committed to combat.

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b. From the group's standpoint, the most significant feature of the enemy's capability was his considerable cannon artillery force deployed in and north of the DMZ. This artillery threat is not found to any appreciable extent elsewhere in the Republic of Vietnam.

c. The enemy forces were habitually engaged in direct, wholesale infiltration through the DMZ into northern Quang Tri province and into the A Shau Valley in Thua Thien province. For all practical purposes, they were thereafter engaged in conventional military operations involving squad to regimental size actions.

4. (C) U.S. Military Forces.

a. During the first half of the reporting period, the 108th Artillery Group was assigned to Headquarters, USARV. Operational control was exercised by III Marine Amphibious Force, which in turn passed operational control of the bulk of the group's units to the 3d Marine Division and its artillery regiment (the 12th Marines). Upon the formation of Provisional Corps Vietnam, the group was assigned to that headquarters, which further assigned it to Headquarters, Provisional Corps Artillery Vietnam. This was later redesignated Headquarters XXIV U.S. Corps Artillery.

b. The group's mission during the first half of the reporting period was general support of the 3d Marine Division, reinforcing the fires of the 12th Marines. Upon the formation of Provisional Corps Vietnam, the group's mission became general support of the corps, reinforcing the fires of the 12th Marines, 1st Cavalry Division Artillery and 101st Air Cavalry Division Artillery. The group's principal function within its general support mission was the operation of the corps artillery counterbattery program along the DMZ. In support of this program, the bulk of the group's heavy artillery and target acquisition assets were concentrated along the southern edge of the DMZ.

c. The group's direct contact with the enemy consisted primarily of the following:

(1) Attack of enemy forces of up to battalion size with light and heavy artillery fire.

(2) Attack of enemy artillery, antiaircraft and automatic weapons positions with heavy artillery fire.

(3) Support of friendly convoys, minesweep teams, defensive perimeters and ground combat operations with automatic weapons.

d. The only ARVN force in the group's area of operations was the 1st Infantry Division. Its 2d Regiment operated in an area along the eastern portion of the DMZ. The group maintained liaison with this regiment throughout the reporting period. Considerable intelligence information concerning

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the enemy was obtained through this link. In addition, one of the U.S. light artillery batteries was continuously in support of that ARVN regiment. During the first half of the reporting period, this battery's mission was direct support of that regiment; when the regiment received its own direct support ARVN artillery battalion, the battery's mission became one of reinforcing that battalion. The U.S. battery maintained liaison with the ARVN battalion, and assisted it with training, survey control, meteorological data, and registration support. The ARVN battalion was competent, and relations between its personnel and those of the group were cordial.

e. Aside from this association and the frequent fire support, by both artillery and automatic weapons, given ARVN elements during their ground combat operations, the group had little direct association with ARVN forces.

f. The group and its subordinate units engaged in the usual civic action programs common to Vietnam. These included extensive MEDCAP activities in surrounding villages, assistance in the construction of community buildings, sponsorship of a local orphanage and, toward the close of the reporting period, refurbishing and returning to operation a civilian hospital at Dong Ha.

g. The policy of the Commanding General, 3d Marine Division not to allow local nationals on combat bases within the division sector and to place all civilian communities off limits to military personnel virtually eliminated problems of civil-military relations and local national hire within the group.

h. The group was not involved in any third country support of the local government.

5. (U) Summary. Throughout its operations in the Republic of Vietnam, the group's activities more nearly resembled those of conventional warfare than those of an insurgency of the type contemplated by AR 1-26. Consideration should be given to modifying the regulation to limit its scope to key personnel actually involved in insurgency as opposed to combat operations of a virtually conventional nature.

David L. Jones
DAVID L. JONES
Colonel, Artillery

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