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FROM:
Controlling DoD Organization Agency: Assistant Chief of Staff for Force Development (Army), Attn: FOR-OT-RD, Washington, DC 20310.

AUTHORITY

30 Nov 1978, DoDD 5200.10; AGO/DA ltr, 29 Apr 1980

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(18) OACSFOR | (19) OT-RD-660425



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DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
OFFICE OF THE ADJUTANT GENERAL
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20310

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IN REPLY REFER TO
AGAM-P (M) (14 Mar 67) FOR OT

17 March 1967

SUBJECT: Operational Report - Lessons Learned, Headquarters, 39th Signal Battalion (u) (8)

④ Operational reft. for quarterly period ending 31 Oct 66.
TO: SEE DISTRIBUTION

⑪ 15 Nov 66

1. Forwarded as inclosure is Operational Report - Lessons Learned Headquarters, 39th Signal Battalion for quarterly period ending 31 October 1966. Information contained in this report should be reviewed and evaluated by CDC in accordance with paragraph 6f of AR 1-19 and by CONARC in accordance with paragraph 6c and d of AR 1-19. Evaluations and corrective actions should be reported to ACSFOR OT within 90 days of receipt of covering letter. (2) 16 p.

2. Information contained in this report is provided to the Commandants of the Service Schools to insure appropriate benefits in the future from lessons learned during current operations, and may be adapted for use in developing training material.

BY ORDER OF THE SECRETARY OF THE ARMY:

Kenneth G. Wickham

KENNETH G. WICKHAM
Major General, USA
The Adjutant General

1 Incl
a/s

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(Continued on page 2)

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DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
HEADQUARTERS, 39TH SIGNAL BATTALION
APO San Francisco 96291

SCCVSG-SBC

15 November 1966

SUBJECT: Operational Reports - Lessons Learned (RCS CSFOR-65) For The
Period 1 August - 31 October 1966 (U)

TO: Commanding Officer
2d Signal Group
ATTN: SCCVSG-C
APO 96307

(U) IAW AR 1-19 and 1st Signal Brigade Regulation number 870-2, subject
report is forwarded, attached as Inclosure 1.

FOR THE COMMANDER:

1 Incl
as

Gallie Moore, Jr.
GALLIE MOORE, JR
1LT, SigC
Adjutant

RECEIVED LASSITER
NOV 1966

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SIGNIFICANT ORGANIZATIONAL ACTIVITIES (U) (SECTION 1)

1. (C) During the reporting period, the 39th Signal Battalion, assigned to the 2d Sig Gp, was commanded by Lieutenant Colonel Donald L. Jenkins. Captain David J. Richards commanded the 581st Signal Company until 15 October 1966 when the unit became Co A of 52d Signal Battalion. Captain Carlo Montisano was promoted to the rank of Major 27 September 1966 and commanded the 232d Signal Company until 12 October 1966 at which time Captain Larry R. Admire assumed command. Captain William P. Rexroad commanded Headquarters and Headquarters Detachment; Captain Donald E. Keen commanded Company D, 41st Signal Battalion, attached to the 39th Signal Battalion; Captain William R. Smith, Jr. commanded the 287th Signal Company, and the 518th Signal Company was commanded by Captain Daniel M. Jones.

2. (C) On 7 August 1966, the 595th Signal Company, commanded by Captain Garner D. Snuffer, was attached to the 39th Signal Battalion. The 595th Signal Company was attached to the 86th Signal Battalion 1 October 1966.

3. (C) The Battalion performed its mission of signal support in the Army of the Republic of Vietnam (ARVN) III and IV Corps areas during the reporting period. Conversion of the 581st Signal Company to the 52d Signal Battalion 15 October 1966 limited operational control of communications provided by the 39th Signal Battalion in the IV Corps area to operation of a 45 channel micro wave system between Soc Trang and Can Tho and termination of a 12 channel VHF system at Vung Tau from Can Tho. In addition, operational control of communications support provided by the 39th Signal Battalion at Soc Trang and Vinh Long, less microwave, was turned over to the 52d Signal Battalion effective 15 October 1966. Administrative and logistical support was retained by the 39th Signal Battalion.

4. (C) The Battalion sponsored the Headquarters element of the 86th Signal Battalion which arrived 3 September 1966 and established its Headquarters at Cu Chi. Plans were also begun for sponsoring additional incoming units.

5. (C) Significant communications activities during the period 1 August 1966 through 31 October 1966 were as follows:

a. The 595th Signal Company was tasked to provide Base Camp Communications for the 196th Light Infantry Brigade and the Phillipine Civic Action Group located at Tay Ninh West in support of Operation Blue Jay. Communications support included multichannel VHF radio systems, a teletype terminal facility, and a switchboard facility. The 267th Signal Company successfully completed an extensive outside plant cable project for the Tay Ninh West Base Camp. As a direct result of Operation Blue Jay, the 595th Signal Company relieved the 232nd Signal Company from the responsibility to operate a VHF station at Nui Ba Den. This decision was made to reduce responsibility for operation of 39th Signal Battalion communications in the Tay Ninh area to one unit.

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b. The 518th Signal Company installed and completed two parallel 45 channel microwave (AN/TRC-29) systems, with a relay for each system, from Cam Ranh Bay to Pra Line (near Dalat). The systems were completed 18 August 1966. During mid-August 1966, the 518th Signal Company minimized fading on two parallel 45 channel microwave (AN/TRC-29) systems terminated at Cam Ranh Bay and Nha Trang, with a relay on Hon Mot island. The fading was minimized on these over-the-water systems by careful antenna placement and precise equipment tuning for maximum performance. A temporary AN/TRC-29 system was established near the 518th Signal Company Headquarters for use as a training aid in refresher courses for personnel new to the unit. The system provided valuable experience for those personnel later assigned to communications sites where microwave systems are operating 24 hours a day and only on-the-job training is available. The 267th Signal Company completed installation of a 200 pair cable from the main distribution frame at the IV Corps ARVN Compound, Can Tho, to the Can Tho Airfield. In addition, the 267th Signal Company initiated outside plant cable projects at Phu Loi and Vung Tau. During August 1966, the 232nd Signal Company replaced existing SB-22 switchboards at Special Forces Camps Song Be and Hon Quan with an S3-86 switchboard thus expanding switchboard subscriber service at each location.

c. The 232nd Signal Company provided VHF radio support for Advisory Team 99 in an operation conducted in early September 1966, vicinity of Duc Hoa. The 232nd Signal Company installed and began operation of an AN/MTC-1 switchboard in support of the 173d Airborne Brigade Base Camp, Bien Hoa, and extended an AB-216 Antenna Tower to a height of 156 feet at the III Corps ARVN Compound, Bien Hoa, during September 1966. Supervisory assistance and material for extending the antenna tower an additional 36 feet were provided by the 518th Signal Company. In addition, the 267th Signal Company initiated an interim outside plant cable project to meet the immediate requirements of the 173d Base Camp. The 595th Signal Company began installation of a 6 position AN/TTC-7 Switchboard at Phu Loi during the month of September 1966 to replace an existing AN/MTC-1 Switchboard. Company D, 41st Signal Battalion, attached to the 39th Signal Battalion, provided supervisory assistance to the 595th Signal Company for installation of the AN/TTC-7 switchboard. The 232nd Signal Company established a VHF system between Lam Son and Phuoc Vinh to provide increased communications support for Advisory Team 70, 5th ARVN Division, down to Binh Land and Phuoc Long Sectors. The system was completed and operating 27 September 1966. 12 enlisted men and 1 officer were sent to Thailand 25 September 1966 by the 267th Signal Company for a period of approximately 90 days to assist with the installation of various cable projects.

d. A 23 channel AN/TRC-29 system, Vung Tau to Saigon, was established 1 October 1966 by the 518th Signal Company. Establishment of the system provided sufficient channels to replace two existing VHF systems and improved the quality of circuits. Plans are underway to upgrade this microwave system to 45 channels on 14 November to replace the remaining two VHF systems between Vung Tau and Saigon.

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e. Company D, 41st Signal Battalion provided a VHF terminal at Long Thanh North for a system between Long Thanh North and Long Binh in support of Base Camp Communications for the 3rd Brigade, 4th Infantry Division. The system was established during the month of October 1966. Installation of a 1000 line Dial Central Office was begun 15 Oct 1966 at the Vung Tau Airfield communications building operated by Company D, 41st Signal Battalion. Testing of the existing Vung Tau outside cable plant revealed that it would not support dial service. Many of the major cables were found to be defective as a result of the water in the cable, shorts, grounds, etc. In addition damage to cable had resulted from engineer construction during the military build-up in the Vung Tau area. Plans are now underway to rehabilitate the Vung Tau outside Cable Plant to facilitate ease of cutover from the existing AN/TTC-7 6-position switchboard to dial service. The 232nd Signal Company installed a 96 foot Antenna Tower at Duc Hoa, completed the shell of a new communications center building at III Corps ARVN Compound, Bien Hoa, and rehabilitated the wire head at the compound during the month.

f. Throughout the reporting period, plans have been made for the eventual conversion of the 232nd Signal Company to the 44th Signal Battalion. In May 1966 communication responsibilities were redistributed between the 518th Signal Company and the 362nd Signal Company (TROPO) under an area concept. All microwave and troposcatter equipment and personnel in a designated area came under the operational control of one company headquarters. The purpose of the redistribution of responsibilities was to effect more efficient control of microwave and troposcatter facilities throughout South Vietnam; however, several difficulties were encountered. All personnel actions for attached personnel had to be processed through one or two company headquarters based upon the type of action. Attached personnel were not being replaced by the parent unit. Equipment was laterally transferred to units not authorized the equipment. As a result of such difficulties all equipment and personnel were returned to their parent unit, and separate tropo detachments were attached to the 362nd Signal Company. All actions were completed 29 October 1966 resulting in more efficient operations, improved esprit de corps, expeditious processing of personnel actions, and increased maintenance and supply support to previously detached communications sites.

g. The 518th Signal Co was tasked to establish a communications system in Bangkok, Thailand. A major operation involving troop and equipment movement resulted. The mission was to provide communications support during the President's visit to Thailand. AN/TRC-29 radio equipment and AN/TCC-13 multiplex equipment were to be utilized. Equipment, 3 officers, and 20 enlisted men departed Vung-Tau 20 October 1966 in an LCM. The contingent arrived in Saigon at approximately 1330 hours, and, after unloading and coordinating problems were resolved, managed to get the equipment to the airfield. The team and equipment departed 21 October 1966 for Bangkok and was in position that evening to prepare for establishing a 45 channel microwave system between JUSMAG compound and the Grand Palace. The required antennas and towers were installed by an antenna team assigned to the 29th Signal Group. System alignment was completed 1530 hours 22 October 1966; however, no contact was made. After extensive troubleshooting the problem was found to be with the antenna orientation. This was resolved and the system

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alignment was completed 1730 hours 23 October 1966; circuit assignments were made 25 and 26 October. The President arrived in Thailand 27 October and Bangkok 28 October. The system was disassembled 30 October and preparations were initiated for the return of personnel and equipment to South Vietnam.

h. During the entire period, select personnel from the Battalion attended classes on the new Tech Control Van, AN/MSQ-73, conducted by the 1st Signal Brigade Signal School in Saigon. During the month of October, the 267th Signal Company installed a 200 pair cable in support of the 52nd Signal Battalion for the cutover of systems and circuits to the AN/MSQ-73 at Soc Trang. Prior to activation of the 52nd Signal Battalion, a 6-man AN/MSQ-73 installation team was formed comprised of personnel from the 581st Signal Company, Company D, 41st Signal Battalion, attached to the 39th Signal Battalion, and the 232nd Signal Company. The installation team was organized to assist in the installation of AN/MSQ-73's at Can Tho, Soc Trang, and Bien Hoa.

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SECTION 2, COMMANDERS OBSERVATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS (U)

PART 1, OBSERVATIONS (Lessons Learned) (U):

1. (U) Personnel: None
2. (C) Operations:

Interference with VHF Systems

Item: Reducing interference with VHF systems near airfields.

Discussion: Vertical polarization of VHF antennas has been found to reduce and in some cases eliminate interference with VHF systems near airfields.

Observation: The above may prove helpful to units experiencing push-to-talk radio interference on VHF systems operated near airfields.

Communication Sites

Item: Consolidation of Power.

Discussion: In an effort to conserve power generators, several large signal sites have consolidated power requirements for all VHF, Microwave, Tropo-scatter, and cable carrier systems into a single source. If the single power source fails, all systems are out with no alternate capability for high priority circuits until a new source is obtained. While these sites do have a back-up and spare power source, this does not necessarily guarantee rapid restoration of communications. For example, damage to the main power cable and damage to the power distribution panel connected to the single power source could disrupt all communications for excessive periods of time. Where separate power sources for different systems (especially back-up systems) are utilized, a power failure on anyone of the systems would not affect all systems; high priority circuits on systems that are inoperative as a result of a power failure could then be alternate routed over remaining systems that are operative.

Observation: To prevent possible total communications blackout, large radio and carrier signal sites should not consolidate their power requirements in a single power distribution system.

System Cutover

Item: Control communications during system cutover.

Discussion: To provide proper supervision and control of circuit cutover from one system to another, e.g. VHF to Microwave, facilities control personnel at terminals of the system may or may not be connected into the order wire or engineering channel of the system accepting the new circuits. The control personnel and system operators at either end are thus tied together for closer coordination during circuit cutover.

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Observation: Control personnel should be connected into the order wire communications of the new system during system cutover.

Microwave Tests

Item: Testing Microwave Systems in the Mekong Delta.

Discussion: Proposed microwave systems in the Mekong Delta of South Vietnam whose paths, because of distances involved, appear to be obstructed or partially obstructed by the curvature of the earth, should be tested by actually installing the equipment and attempting to establish radio to radio contact. Systems which appear to be all or partially blocked in the flat, watery, lowland areas of the Delta Region have operated successfully in several instances.

Observation: Proposed microwave systems in the Delta Region which appear to have marginal line of sight path clearances should be tested with microwave equipment before the proposal is abandoned as not being feasible.

Cable Construction

Item: Aerial vs Buried Cable in South Vietnam.

Discussion: The various Class IV Outside Cable Plant Projects for Vietnam have been engineered for buried cable, thus requiring subterranean splices and non-tactical splicing materials to be used in installation by tactical cable construction units. The proper materials have not, in general, been available and field expedients have been resorted to by ill-equipped and ill-trained troops in efforts to install critically needed communications. The extremely high water tables of the ARVN III and IV Corps Tactical Zones has caused very short life spans for buried cable. Additionally, the prolonged and extensive engineer construction efforts required in the Zones cited have resulted in excessive and recurring damage to buried cable.

Observation: In general, outside cable plants in Vietnam should be installed aurally and away from road lines. The risk of damage to the aerial cable plant by artillery, mortar, and small arms fire is far outweighed by the risk of damage by engineer construction efforts and water seepage.

3. (II) Training and Organization:

AN/TRC-24 Adjustments and Maintenance

Item: Failure of PP-685

Discussion: Failure of the PP-685 power supply, a component of Radio Set AN/TRC-24, to operate efficiently under continuous operating conditions has been a problem. The primary cause of failure has been found to be due to a lack of cleaning of the air filters of the PP-685 by the radio operators, resulting in overheating and subsequent failure of the T-1 transformer within the PP-685. Several solutions to this problem, with appropriate command emphasis,

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have been initiated as follows:

- a. Insure air filters of the PP-685 are thoroughly cleaned on a daily basis.
- b. Where local conditions permit, removal of the air filters from the PP-685.
- c. Installation of air conditioners, where available, to reduce dust content in the air in conjunction with periodic cleaning of the PP-685 air filters.

Item: Alignment of Telephone Modem, TA-219/U.

Discussion: Instances have occurred in the alignment of Telephone Modem, TA-219/U, where unidentifiable and unwanted noises have produced false indications that maintenance of the modem is required.

Observation: The proper procedure for alignment of the TA-219/U Telephone Modem should be as follows:

- a. Adjust channel number 1 (12 KC).
- b. Adjust channel number 3 (28 KC).
- c. Adjust channel number 2 (37 KC).

Any other sequence of adjustment of the modem will result in producing unwanted noise and give a false indication that maintenance is required.

Operation of Switchboards

Item: Ringdown of switchboard trunk circuits.

Discussion: Upon occasion switchboard operators have asserted they do not experience a drop on their switchboard during the ringdown of trunks from operators of distant switchboards. Failure to receive a drop has been due to switchboard operators not signaling distant switchboards for a long enough interval.

Observation: A ring of four seconds is required for the ringdown of all long distance switchboard trunks IAW paragraph 220b, ACP 134. This procedure should be strictly enforced.

Item: Telephone subscriber complaints.

Discussion: Telephone subscribers have complained of their inability to hear the switchboard operator; yet the called party is heard loud and clear. The weak response from switchboard operators was found to be a result of the operators wearing their headset with the mouthpiece portion too far away from

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their mouth. 15

Observation: All switchboard operators should be instructed on the proper wearing of their headsets.

4. (U) Intelligence:

Classified Document Markings

Item: Improper marking of classified documents.

Discussion: Classified documents continue to be received by this Headquarters without proper classification markings of the title/subject and each paragraph and without proper regrading instructions. AR 380-5 and AR 380-6 require that this information be clearly marked on all classified documents. Failure of the originator to so mark a document results in time consuming delays while such information is requested from the originator. Incomplete classified document markings also creates uncertainty on the part of the recipient as to what portions of the document may be disseminated in the clear and what portions must receive appropriate security protection. Uncertainty is poor security.

Observation: Proper marking of classified documents is the responsibility of the originator. Continuing command emphasis must be directed towards proper security practices and the responsibilities of all personnel who originate release, and handle classified defense information.

5. (U) Logistics:

Repair Parts

Item: Supply of repair parts.

Discussion: An excessive amount of equipment has remained on non-operational status for long periods of time due to lack of repair parts. Upon investigation of the causes for the long lead time in receiving parts from the supply system, it was found units had not been requisitioning with the proper priority and/or not following up on the requisitions. The normal tendency when the supply system is not fully operational is to obtain supplies from other than the normal supply system. Once initiated, this practice is difficult to stop and requires extensive retraining in proper procedures.

Observation: During a rapid troop build-up in a combat area, extreme command emphasis is necessary to insure that proper requisitioning and supply procedures are followed.

Shipments of Major Items of Equipment

Item: Need to accompany shipments of equipment.

Discussion: Many items of equipment have been lost during in-country

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air and water shipment. These items were plainly labeled with the addressee and contact personnel and were shipped individually, e.g., 600 gallon aluminum fuel tanks, refrigerators, air conditioners, and fragmentation vests. It has been found that the most effective method to insure safe and timely delivery of bulky items which may or may not be useful to parties other than the addressee, is to have such items accompanied during shipment by unit personnel.

Observation: Individual in-country shipments of high value items should be accomplished by personnel to insure safe and timely delivery.

6. (U) Other:

Base Camp Support In Vietnam

Item: Need for coordination.

Discussion: With the advent of the concept of base camp support to combat units by non-divisional Signal Corps personnel, a new need for closest coordination between supported and supporting units has arisen. Combat units have been deployed in Vietnam in enclaves, often resulting in operationally-separate brigades being located great distances from division headquarters. The Signal support companies/platoons assigned to division/brigade base camps have found that each establishment is unique, depending upon the personality of the DSO or Brigade Signal Officer involved, the needs of the supported unit, length of time the supported unit had occupied the base camp prior to the arrival of the non-divisional Signal unit, and the extent of the tactical wire system installed. Many of the coordination problems resulted from ignorance on the part of the supported unit staff as to precisely what base camp support entails -- the assumption of post signal responsibilities by non-divisional units to free organic divisional communications personnel for tactical deployment with the brigades of the division.

Observation: Many, though not all, of the problems involved in coordination of establishing base camp support could have been avoided if the supported unit had been thoroughly briefed as to what the support would entail and what the time table of establishment was to be. Such briefings, conducted by headquarters superior to battalion, would have explained possible delays in installation due to material shortages and order of priorities for allocation of resources. A parallel problem arises in areas where non-U.S. combat troops are stationed and advisors of MACV are present. In these latter instances the requirement for USARV-MACV command channels coordination is an absolute must for establishment of communications support by USARV units.

PART 2: RECOMMENDATIONS (U): None

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SCCVSG-C (15 Nov 66) 1st Ind
SUBJECT: Operational Report - Lessons Learned (RCS CSFOR-65) for the
Period 1 August - 31 October 1966 (U)

HEADQUARTERS, 2d Signal Group, APO 96307 20 NOV 1966

THRU: Commanding General, 1st Signal Brigade (USASTRATCOM), APO 96307
Commanding General, United States Army Vietnam, APO 96307
Commanding General, United States Army Pacific, APO 96307

TO: Assistant Chief of Staff for Force Development, Department of the
Army (ACSFOR, DA), Washington, D. C. 20310

Concur in observation.

FOR THE COMMANDER:

1 Incl
nc

Robert K. Bridwell 2 Lt
for PETER K. FRIEND
CPT, SigC
Adjutant

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SCCVOP (15 Nov 66) 2d Ind
SUBJECT: Operational Report - Lessons Learned (RCS CSFOR-65) for the
Period 1 August - 31 October 1966 (U)

HEADQUARTERS, 1ST SIGNAL BRIGADE (USASTRATCOM), APO San Francisco 96307 6 NOV 1966

TO: Commanding General, United States Army Vietnam, ATTN: AVC-DH, APO 96307

1. (U) IAW AR 1-19, one copy of subject report from the 39th Signal
Battalion forwarded.

2. (U) This headquarters concurs in the observations.

FOR THE COMMANDER:

1 Incl
nc


CHARLES J. DOMINIQUE
Colonel, GS
Chief of Staff

AVC.66.C 10937

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AVHGC-DH (15 Nov 66) 3d Ind
SUBJECT: Operational Report-Lessons Learned for the Period Ending
31 October 1966 (RCS CSFOR-65)

HEADQUARTERS, UNITED STATES ARMY VIETNAM, APO San Francisco 96307 10 JAN 1967

TO: Commander in Chief, United States Army, Pacific, ATTN: GPOP-OT
APO 96558

1. This headquarters has reviewed the Operational Report-Lessons Learned for the period ending 31 October 1966 from Headquarters, 39th Signal Battalion as indorsed.

2. Reference Paragraph 2, Part I, Section 2, Item: Microwave Test, Page 6: This headquarters interposes no objections to the conduct of the proposed system tests. In some instances tests are considered as not feasible based upon the expense and difficulty that would be experienced in the installation of antenna towers.

FOR THE COMMANDER:



R. J. THORNTON
1st Lt, AGC
Asst Adjutant General

1 Incl
nc

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GPOP-OT (15 Nov 66)

4th Ind (U)

SUBJECT: Operational Report-Lessons Learned for the Period Ending
31 October 1966 - Hq 39th Sig Bn

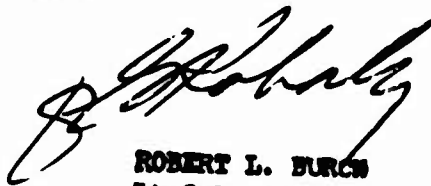
HQ, US ARMY, PACIFIC, APO San Francisco 96558 16 FEB 1967

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

This headquarters concurs in the basic report as indorsed.

FOR THE COMMANDER IN CHIEF:

1 Incl
nc



ROBERT L. BURCH
Lt Col, AGC
Asst AG

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