

UNCLASSIFIED

AD NUMBER

AD509282

CLASSIFICATION CHANGES

TO: unclassified

FROM: confidential

LIMITATION CHANGES

TO:
Approved for public release, distribution unlimited

FROM:
Distribution authorized to DoD only;
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1967. Other requests shall be referred to
U.S. Army Combat Development Command,
Liason Dept., HQ USARV, APO San Francisco,
CA 96375.

AUTHORITY

31 Dec 1973, GDS, DoD 5200.1-r; USACDC
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DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
US ARMY COMBAT DEVELOPMENTS COMMAND
Liaison Detachment, HQ USARV
APO San Francisco 96375

CDCCS-LV

5 December 1967

SUBJECT: Route and Convoy Security

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1. The inclosed report (Incl 1) is based on information gathered during visits to units and headquarters in Vietnam during August-October 1967. At the request of Hq, USARV classified information and references to publications not available to USARV units were placed in a separate appendix (Incl 2) to facilitate distribution to subordinate units.

2. Since preparation of the report, a Convoy Security Seminar has been held at Hq USARV (27 November 1967). A condensed version of Incl 1 will be incorporated in the report of the seminar in lieu of distribution in its present form. Copies of the seminar report will be requested for USACDC addressees.

3. Discussion at the Convoy Security Seminar indicated that the inclosed report did not give sufficient emphasis to the following points:

a. The use of "hardened" logistical vehicles, equipped with field expedient armor or LWL "armor by the yard", and MP jeeps with LWL armor kits to enhance the security of convoy movement. 1st Logistical Command has a program to provide additional hardened vehicles.

b. The possible reduction of mission capability when transportation or other logistical units are required to provide "shotgun riders" for security. Unit TOE's do not provide sufficient personnel for two men per vehicle, two shifts per day. Unit responsibilities for their own local security further reduce personnel availability. Requirements for security personnel aboard logistical vehicles should be examined carefully, considering the threat, other security available, and the reduction in logistical capability.

c. Increased night convoy operations in Vietnam. Several units in different areas and situations reported to the seminar that they were successfully moving convoys at night. Techniques included

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SUBJECT: Route and Convoy Security

variations of escort and outpost methods discussed in Incl 1. Advantages of night movements include reduced civilian traffic interference and visible demonstration of FVMAF domination of the area both day and night.

George F. Hoge LTC

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COL, GS(Armor)
Senior Liaison Officer

2 Incl
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Liaison Detachment, HQ USARV
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CDCCS-LV

14 November 1967

SUBJECT: Survey of Route and Convoy Security Methods [U.S.C. 5105]

1. Introduction.

a. While performing liaison visits to units on other matters during July and August 1967, the undersigned was impressed by the variety of methods used to secure roads and military traffic. Methods appeared to vary from unit to unit and area to area, and included techniques not found in doctrinal field manuals. Consequently, a survey was undertaken to determine what methods were in use, and why, with the objective of providing data for development of doctrinal literature by USACDC. The results of this survey have been furnished MACV J-3 for use in a "Lessons Learned" pamphlet on convoy and route security and to USARV units for information.

b. Planning Research Corporation has examined some aspects of the subject for Army Research Office under Advanced Research Project Agency, Project AGILE. The results were reported in Volumes II and III of Vietnam Research Studies, PRC R-906. This report is classified SECRET, which limits its usefulness as input to doctrinal literature. Some of its conclusions and recommendations do not appear to be valid in the light of information gathered in this survey. Nevertheless, it does contain valuable information and worthwhile analyses of the factors involved in route and convoy security; some of these analyses are incorporated in this report.

c. For brevity, and to avoid the necessity of classifying this report, observations are summarized without identifying units, dates and locations. A separate appendix provides the sources of observations.

2. The Problem.

a. The types of environmental situations affecting route security may be classed as follows:

(1) Situation I - where the degree of control of the surrounding area is low, the enemy potential for ambush of convoys and interdiction of routes is high, and roads are used infrequently.

(2) Situation II - where the surrounding area is a friendly operational area over which a medium degree of control is exercised, the enemy has a medium potential for ambush and interdiction, and roads are opened periodically for convoy movement and closed to movement between open periods.

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(3) Situation III - where there is a high degree of control over surrounding areas, ambush potential is low but there is still considerable potential for interdiction, and there is a rather normal flow of traffic.

b. These types are related to the RED-YELLOW-GREEN classification of routes used in RVN.

(1) RED. Road closed by VC/NVA military control or by extensive physical interdiction; requires major military operations or engineer effort to open.

(2) YELLOW (AMBER). Road can be used by US/RVN/FWMAF by employing thorough security measures; frequent incidents may occur.

(3) GREEN. Road controlled by US/RVN/FWMAF during daylight hours with minimum security measures required; isolated incidents may occur.

3. GREEN Routes (Situation III).

a. In this situation specific security measures tend to be limited to:

(1) Reconnaissance for mining and interdiction incidents ("Road runner" operations).

(2) Coordination and planning to ensure that the artillery and combat units in the area are capable of rapid reaction in case of need. Convoys provide their own security by means of "shotgun riders" and perhaps a few machine gun vehicles. MP's provided for traffic control of major convoys also give added firepower and communications capability. Some particularly important and vulnerable movements, such as medical evacuation and replacement movements at night, may be provided special armed escorts.

b. Practices on some GREEN routes vary from the above to the extent that the routes should probably be classified as YELLOW (or Situation II). For simplicity, they will be so considered in this report.

4. RED Routes (Situation I).

a. At the opposite end of the spectrum are RED routes, or Situation I. Here, major operations are required to open roads to traffic. Although oriented along roads, these operations have much in common with search and destroy operations. An implicit (and often explicit) concurrent

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objective of such an operation is to provoke an enemy reaction, thereby gaining contact and an opportunity to destroy enemy forces. They may be conducted primarily to facilitate future tactical movement rather than route and convoy security as such.

b. Search and destroy operations normally involve establishment of mutually supporting battery fire support bases and company night defensive positions or patrol bases. When a road is to be secured, these are extended along the line of the road. Patrols, ambushes and local search and destroy missions are conducted near the road. The positions provide security for some of the work needed to open the road and local security accompanies work parties. Reaction forces are provided to exploit enemy contacts.

c. As major road opening operations are repeated over a given route, certain improvements may be undertaken which will eventually result in a YELLOW, or type-II situation. Repair of bridges and culverts and improvement of the road surface promote the flow of civilian traffic, leaving fewer opportunities for the enemy to interdict the road. The presence of a large friendly force encourages RF/PF units; they may also be provided direct assistance in improving their outpost positions along the route. When jungle and plantation growth next to the road provides concealment for ambushes, road opening operations should include jungle clearing with "Rome Plows" to distances of 100 to 300 meters from the road. Although rubber plantations do not restrict ground observation and fire as much as jungle, they should also be cleared because they interfere with aerial reconnaissance along the route and with off road movement by tracked vehicles on security missions. The cleared stretch of road also provides a continuous landing zone for airmobile operations by reaction forces in future security operations.

d. In one case where frequent enemy mining and road block activities required time-consuming daily clearing of a road, night operations oriented on the road were used as a counter measure. In this case the general level of control of the area was fairly high, but numerous built-up areas and vegetation not suitable for land clearing techniques permitted the enemy access to the road at night. Cavalry troop operations along the road at night interfered with this enemy activity and eventually sharply reduced it, permitting night movement of convoys and full use of the road in day light.

5. YELLOW Routes (Situation II).

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a. The definition given above indicates that "thorough security measures" are required for use of YELLOW roads. Many methods of providing security were observed in the survey. To some extent the variations in methods used were the product of individual or unit preferences, but they were fundamentally related to differences in enemy situation and methods, terrain, and types of forces available for route security. Possible methods for situations requiring security beyond that provided by logistical convoy personnel and routine MP patrols, but short of full-scale tactical operations, are discussed below under the headings of "Escort Methods", "Temporary Outpost Methods" and "Sustained Outpost Methods".

6. Escort Methods.

a. Security for a convoy may be provided by an accompanying escort. Strength and composition of the escort will depend on the forces available, the enemy threat, and additional security provided by reaction forces and operations in adjacent areas. When the situation permits use of a relatively small escort, this method is economical, in that forces are not tied down to static outpost systems. In relatively insecure areas where large escorts are required, or when there are frequent convoys, the escort method may require greater resources than outpost methods.

b. As a minimum, the escort for a convoy should include armed/armored vehicles at the front and rear and interspersed in the convoy. These may be machine gun jeeps or hardened trucks. Based on limited experience with a few V100 "COMMANDO" vehicles, armored cars appear to be excellent escort vehicles. They combine firepower, protection and mobility superior to convoy elements. Tracked combat vehicles - APC's, ACAV's and tanks - provide greater combat power and the ability to maneuver off the road in ambush situations. Poor road speed, particularly in the case of M48 tanks, may slow the convoy movement. Use of combat vehicles for escort takes them away from other combat missions and results in the rapid accumulation of mileage, wearing out suspension and power train components.

c. A point element should move far enough ahead of the convoy to clear the route and avoid having the main body caught in an ambush. On many routes the main threat is mines, requiring careful sweep operations before each day's movement. The point must then include mine detection and removal personnel and security forces for their protection. In this case the point will move out much earlier than the convoy and its accompanying escort.

d. Escort vehicles should be grouped (i.e., two or three escort vehicles, then a convoy element, then two or three more escort vehicles),

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rather than being spread evenly through the convoy. This enables the escort commander to control his forces and provide a coordinated response to enemy action and makes it more difficult for the enemy to deal with individual escort vehicles because they mutually support each other.

e. If the enemy ambushes the convoy the escort should:

- (1) Gain fire superiority with organic and supporting weapons.
- (2) Move logistical vehicles rapidly out of the ambush area (kill zone).
- (3) Maintain contact with the enemy and (within available resources) destroy enemy forces.

f. It is essential that a trail party be provided to repair or tow disabled vehicles. This party must also be secured by combat elements.

g. Aircraft can be extremely valuable for escort mission. As a minimum, arrangements should be made for the airborne FAC's and artillery observe: operating in the area to observe the route for the enemy activity and to be prepared to employ air and artillery support against ambushes. For large movements a command and control aircraft should be provided. When available, helicopter gunships can be added to the escort, providing reconnaissance and immediately responsive fire support.

h. Preplanned artillery fires should be arranged at possible ambush locations and the escort should maintain communications with supporting artillery. Members of the escort must be trained to call for and adjust artillery. When air support is available, artillery should not be stopped during air strikes. Rather, artillery should be used on one side of the road and air on the other, with the road serving as the fire support coordination line. As air strikes are finished, artillery or gunships should take up the fire. When elements of the escort or reaction forces begin to operate off the road, fires should be shifted to enemy withdrawal routes and rallying points.

7. Temporary Outpost Methods.

a. When the volume of traffic to be moved is large, escort methods may require excessive numbers of combat troops. In this case it may be preferable to clear the road with a combat force, leaving outposts to maintain control of the cleared stretch while convoys or individual vehicles move with minimum escort.

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b. Clearing operations should be conducted as discussed in paragraph 6c. This process can be expedited if elements of the clearing force can begin work simultaneously from several locations along the route. Outposts should be placed to protect bridges and defiles, to prevent enemy mining activity or occupation of ambush positions, and to provide reaction force anywhere along the route. Patrolling should be conducted along and adjacent to the road by outpost forces.

c. Convoys and other vehicles moving over the road establish contact with the outpost force and report progress and departure from the area. At the end of the open period the road should be cleared of disabled vehicles by a party similar to the trail party discussed in paragraph 6f, above, before outposts are withdrawn.

d. While temporary outpostting may be more economical and effective than escorting in some situations, it has disadvantages. Establishing outposts and clearing the road is time-consuming and may result in accumulation of excessive mileage by combat vehicles involved. During non-secured periods the enemy is free to interdict the road. (The night operations discussed in paragraph 4d, were begun to combat frequent interdiction of a road in this situation.) Individual outpost elements are small and dispersed and may thus be subject to defeat in detail.

8. Sustained Outpost Method.

a. Instead of periodically establishing an outpost system, the security force may maintain outposts continuously. This method is particularly applicable when the route includes critical bridges and defiles, destruction of which would interdict the road for long periods and require great engineer effort for repair.

b. Outpost positions should be improved with protective wire and fortifications. RF/PF outposts should be integrated into the position. These are characteristically located immediately adjacent to the bridges. The security force should emphasize development of positions covering avenues of approach to the bridges.

c. Armored cavalry outposts have been used very successfully in this manner; because of the combat power of its armored vehicles one platoon can provide 3 relatively strong outposts. However, infantry units reinforced with heavy weapons can also be employed. Armored cars would also appear to be suitable for this type of employment. Outpost elements should conduct patrols along and adjacent to the road.

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d. Normally the outposts cannot control all portions of the road in darkness so that clearing operations are necessary as discussed above. Because they can be started from all outposts simultaneously they are relatively rapid. Frequent patrolling between outposts will reduce enemy opportunities for interdiction.

e. As discussed above, convoys establish contact with the outpost force when moving through the area. When the road is closed disabled vehicles need only be towed to the nearest outpost for security.

f. Sustained outposting provides a greater degree of security and control over the road than other methods, and conserves combat vehicle mileage. It is particularly useful for routes having heavy traffic and valuable bridges. Its disadvantages are that it ties down large security forces to a relatively static role and that small, dispersed, static outposts may be vulnerable to defeat in detail by carefully planned enemy attacks.

9. Convoy Procedures.

a. Regardless of the means selected to secure the route, convoy personnel should be indoctrinated in certain procedures which will enhance their own security. These include weapons, ammunition and equipment to be carried, rules of engagement, action in case of ambush and action in case of vehicle breakdown. Procedures should be established by published SOP's coordinated among the logistical units and the MP and combat units responsible for their security.

b. Before each movement, all personnel should be briefed on the SOP and all personnel and vehicles should be accounted for and inspected for required equipment and mechanical condition. When a convoy moves into the area of another tactical unit it must establish contact with the security forces, verify the applicability of SOP, and arrange for reporting progress and calling for assistance. If the convoy composition or any procedures are changed the briefing and inspection should be repeated.

10. Summary

a. The most effective method of providing security to a route and to traffic on it will be determined primarily by the degree of control of the surrounding area exercised by friendly units. Where the general level of control is low, major operations are necessary to open routes for use; where it is high, route security operations in themselves require

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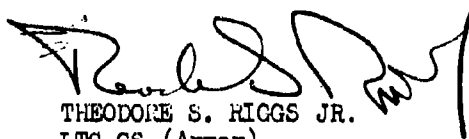
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only limited effort.

b. Where there is an intermediate degree of general control of the area, the most effective method of providing route security will be determined by the characteristics of the route and surrounding terrain, the enemy threat and the troops and equipment available. Techniques to be considered are convoy escorts, temporary outposts and sustained outposts.

c. Regardless of the security measures employed, SOP's for convoy operation and security are necessary. All personnel must be indoctrinated in the SOP.



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Combat Arms Liaison Officer

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APPENDIX I

(Supplement) to Report, Survey of Route and Convoy Security Methods

At the request of Hq USARV, discussion of the PRC report (See para 1b, basic) which appeared in the first draft has been deleted from the report for distribution to USARV units, which do not have access to the PRC report. The following supplement incorporates portions of the deleted discussion and gives references for statements made in the report. It constitutes, in effect, a set of footnotes to the report. Paragraph references are to the basic report:

1. (U) (Para 2a) Situations defined by PRC Study Vol II, page 9-13.
2. (U) (Para 3a) Interview with S3, 18th Military Police Brigade on 26 Jul 67; S3, 720th Military Police Battalion, on 23 Aug 67; Security Branch I Field Force, Vietnam, on 3 Oct 67; observation of convoy operation from Long Binh to Cu Chi, on 24 Aug 67; USARV Convoy Security Conference, on 16 Sep 67.
3. (U) (Para 3b) 11th Armored Cavalry Regiment operations on Hwy #1, between Long Binh and Xuan Loc and 4th Infantry Division operations on Hwy #19, in Division TAOR.
4. (C) (Para 4b and c) 11th Armored Cavalry Regiment operations Emporia I-III, to open Hwy #1, and Hwy #20, in the regimental TAOR; interviews with S3, 11th Armored Cavalry Regiment; Commanding Officer, 1/11 Armored Cavalry Regiment; Commanding Officer, 3/11 Armored Cavalry Regiment, on 28 and 29 Aug 67; 1st Infantry Division operations to open Hwy #13, from Lai Khe to Quan Loi, on 20-27 Aug and 5-10 Sep 67; 3d Brigade, 1st Infantry Division Operation Order No. 18-67; interviews with Provost Marshal, 1st Infantry Division; Commanding Officer, 2/2 Infantry; Plans Officer, G3, 1st Infantry Division; Commanding Officer, 1st Brigade, 1st Infantry Division, on 7 Sep 67; observation of operation on 7 Sep 67 by 11th ACR.
5. (C) (Para 4d) 25th Infantry Division operation "Night Thrust", Phase I, night tactical operations by cavalry troops, resulting in some heavy contact initially but reducing mining and road block incidents from 35 in two weeks prededing operation to 15 in two months after the operation began; Phase II, night movement of decoy convoys containing salvage fuel semitrailers and ammunition trucks loaded with dirt-filled boxes and concealed infantry troops, escorted by cavalry, was conducted without incident; Phase III, night movement of actual logistical convoys, planned to begin a few days after preparation of this report. Interviews with Commanding Officer, 3/4 Cavalry, on 25 Aug 67; G3 operations, 25th Infantry Division, on 17 Oct 67; Executive Officer and G3, 3/4 Cavalry,

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on 17 Oct 67.

6. (U) (Para 5) In its discussion of situation II, the PRC study recommends a light escort force, with a heavy complement of reaction forces and security for critical areas and fixed points. (Vol II, Page 56) It apparently did not consider combat vehicles in its discussion of close combat resources for escort or protection forces, since only small arms, machine guns, recoilless rifles and grenade launchers are discussed under firepower. (Vol II, Page 40) The need for frequent, probable daily, mine clearing effort in this situation does not appear to be recognized, in that on-call forces for mine clearing are recommended. (Vol II, Page 89) The discussion of command and control points out the many elements involved and the high degree of coordination necessary to provide adequate security. (Vol II, Pages 95-134) However, it should be recognized that security operations are only one of the functions of forces in counter-insurgency and are not significantly more complicated than many other types of operations in such an environment. The route security command proposed by PRC for Situation II consists of eight area defense and mobile reserve battalions and five artillery battalions. (Vol II, Pages 133-134, and Annex E, Pages 135-138) This is equivalent to the combat forces of a division and appears to be an excessive force for security of the portion of road studied. Considering the other functions to be performed by combat forces, this organization appears to be an over reaction to the route security problem. Existing organizations and command and control procedures are capable of providing sufficient security for roads using techniques discussed above.

7. (U) (Para 6) 11th Armored Cavalry Regiment operation Order 11-67; 3/4 Cavalry Tactical SOP; 720th Military Police Battalion SOP; Observation of 720th Military Police escort from Cu Chi to Tay Ninh and return on 24 Aug 67; observation of 11th Armored Cavalry Regiment escort from Long Binh to Giao and return on 29 Aug 67; Interviews with S3, 720th Military Police Battalion, on 23 Aug 67; S3, 11th Armored Cavalry Regiment on 28 Aug 67; Commanding Officer, 3/11th Armored Cavalry Regiment, on 28 Aug 67.

8. (U) (Para 7) Memorandum for Record, 3/4 Cavalry, 9 Aug 67, Subject: Coordination Meeting for the Cu Chi to Tay Ninh Daily Road-runner Convoy; 720th Military Police Battalion SOP; Observation of out-post operations Cu Chi to Tay Ninh, on 24 Aug 67; S3, 11th Armored Cavalry Regiment, on 28 Aug 67; Commanding Officer, 3/11th Armored Cavalry Regiment, on 28 Aug 67. Interviews with Commanding Officer, 3/11th Cavalry, on 25 Aug 67; S3, 11th Armored Cavalry, on 25 Aug 67; Commanding Officer, 2/1st Cavalry, on 5 Oct 67.

9. (U) (Para 8) Observation of 4th Infantry Division operations on Hwy #19, on 7 Aug 67 and 5-6 Aug 67; Interviews with Commanding Officers of 1/69th Armor and 1/10th Cavalry, on 7 Aug 67; Commanding Officer, 2/1st Cavalry, on 5 Oct 67; Executive Officer, 1/10th Cavalry, on 6 Oct 67; Commanding General, 4th Infantry Division, on 14 Oct 67.

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10. (U) (Para 9) USARV Convoy Security Conference, 16 Sep 67; 720th Military Police Battalion SOP; 11th Armored Cavalry Regiment Operation Order 11-67; 3/4 Cavalry Tactical SOP; Interviews with Commanding Officer and S3, 720th Military Police Battalion, on 23 Aug 67; Commanding Officer, 3/4 Cavalry, on 24 Aug 67; S3, 11th Armored Cavalry Regiment, on 28 Aug 67; Commanding Officer, 3/11th Cavalry, on 29 Aug 67.