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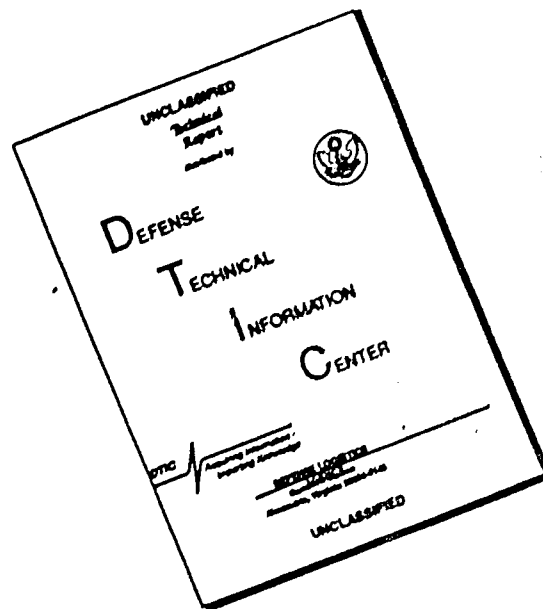
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REPLY TO  
ATTENTION OF:

DAAG-PAF-A (M) (21 Dec 72) DAFD-OTT

12 January 1973

SUBJECT: Senior Officer Debriefing Report: Colonel Edward J. Porter,  
Province Senior Advisor, Phong Dinh Province, Period  
26 May 71 - 1 Dec 72 (U)


AD 523958

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Full release of information to be made by the Adjutant General

1. Reference: AR 525-14, subject, Senior Officer Debriefing Report, (U) dated 2 July 1971.
2. Transmitted herewith is the report of Colonel Edward J. Porter, subject as above.
3. This report is provided to insure appropriate benefits are realized from the experiences of the author. The report should be reviewed in accordance with paragraphs 3 and 5, AR 525-14; however, it should not be interpreted as the official view of the Department of the Army, or of any agency of the Department of the Army.
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VERNE L. BOWERS  
Major General, USA  
The Adjutant General

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**HEADQUARTERS  
PHONG DINH PROVINCE, MR-IV  
ADVISORY TEAM 56, APO 96215**

**MACDR-56-S**

**15 November 1972**

**SUBJECT: AFRIS - Province Advisor Completion of Tour Report  
(RCS: MACCORDS 174-03) (U)**

**COLONEL Edward J. Porter, 459-24-5979**

**THRU: DEPCORDS  
DELTA REGIONAL ASSISTANCE COMMAND  
APO 96215**

**TO: HEADQUARTERS, US MILITARY ASSISTANCE COMMAND  
ATTN: MACCORDS (AC of Staff, CORDS)  
APO 96222**

1. (U) This is my Completion of Tour Report for the period 10 June 1971 to 8 December 1972.

2. (U) Serving in CORDS has been a rare experience for me because of the unique nature of its organization. I have never seen a more diverse and talented group of individuals working toward common goals. I have nothing but praise for those responsible for the creation of CORDS and those who have made it a very dynamic and effective action arm of our pacification and development advisory effort in this country.

3. (CNF) The following areas are ones which I consider most essential in our advisory mission in Vietnam. Unfortunately, they are also the areas where I have been frustrated and had the least success. I am convinced that we have neglected the real problems in this country from the very beginning.

a. Training - In the heat of a shooting war, training has not received the proper amount of advisory emphasis. Combat units are not made in combat but through proper training and good leadership. Perhaps as much as 50% of the Province Senior Advisor's time should be spent in improving training. Advising in this area is much more difficult than in a tactical situation and requires a great amount of persuasion, ingenuity and perseverance. Had

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MACDR-56-S

15 November 1972 4

SUBJECT: AFRIS-Province Advisory Completion of Tour Report  
(MACCORDS 174-03)

the proper emphasis been placed on training the military leaders and Government officials a few years ago, the GVN would be much ~~farther~~ along in its efforts to pacify their country and control their destiny.

b. Quality of Leadership - Closely related to shortcomings in the training area is the development of capable, inspired and patriotic leaders in the numbers required which is one of the most serious failures of the GVN. Through cultural differences or other reasons, we have not been able to convince the Vietnamese of the unrefutable truth that their survival ultimately depends on the quality of their leaders.

c. The Will to Win - Somehow, we have as advisors been unable to influence the will of the leaders and the people to make the efforts required to eject the communists from their country. There is not an incident in history to my knowledge, when a country was victorious without a great amount of patriotism, selflessness and resolve of the people to defeat the enemy regardless of the sacrifices involved.

4. (CNF) If I am an advisor again I will pattern my ideals and techniques after those of Von Steuben rather than those of a diplomat with his pockets stuffed with money. We have overwhelmed the Vietnamese with fancy, costly and sophisticated programs when in reality they woefully needed something else. Through our generous nature we have negated our leverage and clout required to push the things that really counted. It is natural for Americans coming from a highly industrialized and materialistic society to believe that material and money alone can win a war, and forgetting our own country's history where a lean, poorly-equipped but highly motivated and dedicated Army defeated a well-equipped, but undisciplined and unmotivated one.



EDWARD J. PORTER  
COL, ARMOR

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SECTION I

NAME: PORTER, EDWARD J.

GRADE: Colonel

SSAN: 459-24-5979

BRANCH OF SERVICE: Armor

PROVINCE: Phong Dinh

INCLUSIVE DATES OF TOUR: 26 May 1971 - 1 December 1972

EXPECTED REASSIGNMENT DATE: 1 December 1972

PREVIOUS TOUR(S) IN VIETNAM (DATES - INCLUSIVE): October 1964 - October 1965

ASSIGNMENT ON PREVIOUS VIETNAM TOUR(S): BN S-3, BN Executive Off: BN Commander  
13th Aviation BN, Cantho VN.

SECTION II

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1. What background did you have for your position?

21 Years experience as Combat Arms Officer. Previous tour in Vietnam.

2. What training did you have for this position?

PSA Course. Vietnam Training Center Foreign Service Institute.

3. What additional training would you suggest for your position?

Full Length Vietnamese Language Course.

4. What should be the length of tour for your position?

Two years at least.

5. Was support from Region and/or Saigon Headquarters satisfactory? If not, specify deficiencies.

I consider support received from Region and Saigon excellent.

6. Were there any programs delayed because support was not forthcoming? Were there any programs that were especially successful because support was readily available? Which one?

N/A

7. Do the reporting requirements as set forth in Joint Directive 4-70 provide a means for reporting all information of present and future value? If not, what changes would you recommend?

Suggest you change these forms to conform to current conditions and programs.

8. Do the MACCROS Management Information System Field Reporting requirements set forth in Joint Directive 4-70 adequately measure progress in pacification programs?

Adequate but too standardized to cover all conditions in all provinces.

9. Were instructions from higher headquarters clear with no conflicting requirements? If not, what specific instances occurred where conflicting instructions were received?

Generally, no problems on conflicting requirements. However, recent requirements on COMLID Planning has been completely unrealistic. Short suspenses allow insufficient time to prepare and coordinate actions.

10. The most clearly defined and directed programs are:

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1. LTT
2. Public Safety
3. RDC

11. The most effective para military forces are:

1. APT
2. NPFF
3. PRU - (SRG)

12. The most successful pacification programs are:

1. LTT
2. Agriculture/Economic Development
3. Education

13. The programs that have the greatest impact upon the pacification effort are:

1. RF/PF
2. LTT
3. Education

14. The least successful pacification programs are:

1. People's Organizations
2. Youth & Sports
3. VIS

15. The programs that have the least impact upon the pacification effort are:

1. People's Organizations
2. Manpower Development
3. VIS

16. The rural people (e.g.) (are not) aware of the pacification efforts the WH and US are making. If not, how can they be informed?

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More face to face contact between Govt. Officials and the Rural People is needed. Both military and civilian leaders should talk directly to as many people as possible. More free discourse (questions and answers) is suggested.

17. The people, as you know them, are (more) (less) committed to the GVN than when you assumed your job. Why?

Because of recent possibilities of a political settlement of the conflict, there is more solidarity of the people now than when I assumed this job.

18. Do you feel that the pacification plan is sufficiently detailed to provide guidance and set goals that will result in security and growth of Vietnam? (Yes) (No) If no, what change in the plan should be made?

1. Many programs as outlined in the National Guidelines are so vague that writing a comprehensive plan is difficult.

2. Many programs are done in name only with no material support to bolster grandiose plans thereby resulting in no achievements; merely a paper shuffling exercise and meaningless statistics, examples: People's Organizations, Youth & Sports, Manpower Development. Others are directed and controlled from Saigon and the province has no control. Example - PTT, Water resources, Power plants etc so why require the province to include them?

19. Do you feel that the pacification plan was adequately communicated and explained to you and your counterpart? (Yes) (No) If not, how can this be accomplished?

Adequately communicated and explained but usually disregarded after publication.

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SECTION III  
FUNCTIONAL AREAS

TERRITORIAL SECURITY DIRECTORATE

RF/PF: There has been a marked improvement in the Territorial Forces over the last several months, particularly in recruiting. From a 20% understrength position of a year ago the RF are now near full strength and in fact were slightly overstrength until several new companies were recently formed. PF strength is comparable, with over 1100 awaiting training that are not carried as troop strength, which when trained will create an overstrength situation. The RF/PF have performed well in most instances and where they didn't it was usually because of poor leadership. There are continuing problems of Sector and Sub-sector headquarters being overstaffed with officers and NCO's while the line units and OB's were understaffed. Overall officer and NCO strength is 60% of authorized strength. Territorial Forces have performed much better than the occasional ARVN unit operating in the province.

Another area of improvement is that of mobile forces. Currently there are two RF Battalions and 24 RF Companies in a mobile role compared to only one battalion previously. Over seventy OB's and watchtowers have been eliminated in areas where they were no longer needed.

Weaknesses are evident and require constant effort to overcome. Some of the more prevalent weaknesses are: lack of training; and the need to improve training techniques, quality of leadership, effective use of artillery, night operations and ambushes, and indiscriminate use of air assets without follow-up.

PSDF: The PSDF generally have performed well in "A" and "B" hamlets with less effective performance in "C" and "D" hamlets which is to be expected. When they have not performed well; kidnappings, loss of weapons etc, it has usually been instigated by a traitor in the ranks. Recent training, particularly that funded by AIK funds, has been directed towards combat training, government service, political motivation, intelligence gathering and other key items and has been successful. The PSDF have shown improvement and there have been instances of outstanding PSDF activity against the enemy. The Cantho City units are particularly well trained units and are primarily responsible for security of the city.

PUBLIC SAFETY DIRECTORATE

National Police Field Forces: The effectiveness of the National Police Field Force is substantially increased when missions are assigned by the province and district police commanders.

Too often in the past the province and district chiefs have mis-used the Field Police as static guards or in some cases as personal guards. With the exception of one platoon which is now assigned static guard posts in Cantho City, the Field Police in Phong Dinh Province are being utilized in concept. They are a well trained viable organization. They operate effectively in combined operations with military units as well as independent police operations.

One of the most important assignments delegated to the Field Police is rural patrol down to hamlet level. Increased supervision and control by the National Police command will improve this area of responsibility.

National Police Operations: The National Police have undergone many changes in the past eighteen months. They had a complete re-organizations in August 1971; since that time they have introduced many operational and administrative changes, all which have been designed to create an organization that would be more effective in the enforcement of civil law and the elimination of subversive elements, (the VC Infra-structure).

The National Police in Phong Dinh have accepted these changes and have utilized their assets in a more effective manner. They are required to provide a higher degree of security within relatively pacified areas. Emphasis has been given to the concept of aggressive, systematic police patrolling on a random basis. The improved command and control arrangement within the National Police has resulted in vastly increased operational capabilities. A comprehensive administrative and management review has cut down, to an extent, the bureaucratic waste motion inherent in the Vietnamese system. The only discouraging factor in this area is the vast amount of work remaining to be done.

#### COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DIRECTORATE

Village Self-Development: The Village Self-Development Program was successfully carried out in 1971, with project emphasis going to construction of classrooms and bridges. However, some shortcomings were evident such as villages failing to comply with established dossiers and hence, refusal of the province authorities to accept the projects is completed. Other projects were not completed within the specified time frame. A partial cause for both of these problems involves inflation. Project dossiers were based on the then current prices for construction materials and price increases occurring between the time of dossier preparation and actual implementation forced villages to make revisions in the original plans and projects were not constructed according to the specifications in the dossier.

In 1972 the entire program was delayed by the late submission of the 4 year CD&ID Plan. Village self-development meetings for project approval were still being held up until 15 October 1972. Implementation of several of the projects has been delayed because of high water. The entire VSD program process should begin at an earlier date. Villages should have their VSD meetings for project determination before the actual allocations are made and then the priority projects should be chosen within the limits of the allocation. Making the

Cadre responsible for VSD project implementation is proving to be of value since the village officials have received help in the preparation of technical dossiers and are able to constantly monitor projects.

Success in the VSD program depends entirely on the enthusiasm and willingness of the village officials. The goal of involving the people in the participation of the program is fully attained only in those villages where the village officials are successful in promoting public participation in meetings and people's contributions. Overall, I do not believe the VSD program has been as successful as it should have been due to special interest groups and projects that do not affect the entire populace.

RD Cadre: The RD Cadre program has been a mixture of successes and shortcomings. The village level cadre have been specially helpful in the taking of census, house identification, and have recently been successfully used in the flag display campaign. Also, the assignment of RD Cadre as emergency school teachers has been of value in many remote hamlets. Their participation in publicizing the VSD program and actual participation in village meetings and project implementation indicated other valuable functions the RD Cadre are performing. However, it appears that most RD Cadre lack sufficient training and education to be effective at the village level as direct competition to the VCI because of lack of communication and propaganda skills. Local level leadership is generally of poor quality and there is the problem of lack of cooperation and coordination between village officials and the village RD Cadre.

It is suggested that the initial RD Cadre training include more communication and propaganda courses and that refresher training courses be provided which should also include such training.

Ethnic Minorities: N/A

Local Government: The most noticeable changes within local government have been due to Decree #120 rather than any locally initiated programs. Before the implementation of Decree #120, the problems in local government were inability to fill V/N vacancies and poor quality V/N officials. Decree #120 lessened the problem of vacancies because it did away with many positions that were combined with allied jobs but poor quality leadership remains a problem.

One of the remedies for poor leadership, training, has been a problem that has only been partially solved. The first and major problem was lack of a permanent training facility. A training center was constructed but it was "loaned", (on what now appears to be a permanent basis) to the Can Tho University for use as their administrative office. This necessitated the use of temporary facilities for training courses which did not include a dormitory, among other things. Finally, on the urging of the province advisory staff, a portion of the vacated Province Chieu Hoi Center was assigned for use as the training center. Chairs, beds and other equipment were obtained through excess property and the Province now has a semi-adequate training facility. However, these limited advances were not the result of increased interest on the part of the SVN officials, rather they were a result of the urgings from the advisors and cooperation from the new Training Center Chief. The most notable shortcoming at the present time is lack of quality training. Quotas are



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received from MDI requiring that a certain number of people be trained over a certain time period resulting in a rushed training schedule with large classes with consequent poor quality training. Even when Service Chiefs or other knowledgeable resource persons are invited, the quality of instruction is lost on a class that is too large.

Lack of support for training has also been evident in that per diem amounting to over 500,000\$VN has yet to be paid to V/H officials who attended training as long as 4 months ago. This is an obvious discouragement for the V/H officials. Through the implementation of Decree #120 Village Chiefs and Deputies for Administration are taking on new duties and 63 new Hamlet Chiefs were appointed which called for the training which has not been forthcoming. Obviously, the GVN is going to have to place greater emphasis on quality training.

AIK: AIK Funds, if used properly, can play an important and necessary role in the pacification effort. The availability of AIK funds and higher levels urging to spend all allocated funds encourages expenditures on programs which the GVN has planned but not budgeted for. In many instances we end up coming through with the wewewithal to rescue grandiose plans. While we should be discouraging the GVN from making plans without the corresponding budgetary outlay, we are indirectly encouraging such administrative indiscretion.

#### WAR VICTIMS DIRECTORATE

Social Welfare - The Social Welfare Service in this province has not been the pacification tool that it should have been. The responsibilities of Return to Village, War Victims, and Social Welfare Institutions make this service one of the largest in terms of monetary disbursement in the province. Consequently, there have been claims of corruption and graft. There was a change of Service Chiefs in July and deterioration started immediately. There is a huge backlog of payments to be made in RTV. War Victims of September have not received their allowances. Thus, this very important service by its own ineptitude makes for VC propaganda and tarnishes what is really a very good national program.

#### PSYOPS

Although lacking funds and sometimes imagination, public information has been effective and timely. One of the strongest areas is civic action. The POLWAR company has reacted quickly and effectively whenever needed. Their actions have saved the day when other governmental services have faltered. I have no recommendations in the area of Psyops. VIS is expected to be "all things to all people" which it can't be. Considering its assets, it has done a commendable job.

## PHUNG HOANG DIRECTORATE

The Phung Hoang effort by US standards would measure somewhere between unsatisfactory and poor. However, in comparison with other Provinces in MR IV, Phong Dinh's record is among the best. The strong points oft-times have been difficult to find. For the most part the personnel assigned are well-trained and knowledgeable about their duties and responsibilities, but lack motivation. The transition to the National Police transpired more smoothly than envisioned. The weaknesses are not uncommon to the Phung Hoang effort country-wide. Although described as the Nation's top priority program, Phung Hoang is just one of the multitude and receives serious attention only when pressure comes down from Saigon or Corps, which has been sporadic. Very little specific targeting is performed, the vast majority of neutralizations are random in nature. Requests for EEI are minimal. The Province and District Police Operations Centers are content to accept that which is volunteered by the various contributing agencies. The action agency for the most part is at village level, not at district or province where all the assets are to be found. At province an ARVN Major has been designated full-time Special Representative of the Province Chief for Phung Hoang. This is not an authorized position and has only tended to confuse the issue.

There is still a duplication of effort within the police department at province and district. The POC and Special Branch both maintain separate dossiers.

In the area of Phung Hoang my recommendations are:

1. To do away with the full-time Special Representative for Phung Hoang. The structure is already top heavy and this duty can be performed on a monitoring basis by the Chief of Staff.
2. To encourage province and district to conduct the Phung Hoang operations to relieve the burden on the villages.
3. To have Saigon or Region conduct a management/efficiency inspection to eliminate non-productive positions and wasted effort.

I do believe that the transition to the National Police was a move in the right direction, and that the more the Police become involved the better and more efficient the effort will be.

## REPORTS AND ANALYSIS DIRECTORATE

Report Requirements: Report requirements are for the most part reasonable. One time reports have increased considerably with the reduction in personnel who used to make field trips to gather much of the information required.

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**Report Feedback:** Some of the feedback is useful, particularly the HES printouts, however, much of the data was generated by us, so of little value unless for comparison with other provinces. The PAAS reports are of very little value to us in province although they are probably of value to a trained pollster who over a long period period of time might detect trends.

#### AGENCY FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

**Public Health:** With 27 aid stations, 29 maternity/dispensaries, 7 maternity/infirmary/dispensaries and 1 hospital, the Province has a capability to care for those in need of health assistance. Still, problems remain, such as insufficient medical supplies and health facilities without personnel and/or furnishings. Emphasis should be placed on upgrading current facilities, by providing adequate personnel, medical supplies and equipment rather than the construction of new facilities.

**Education:** The Education program is finally headed in the right direction with the establishment of a Province Education Service that will supervise both Primary and Secondary education. The framework for such an organization has been set up and should be functioning by the end of the year. However, problems in program implementation, such as closed classrooms for lack of teachers and late teacher assignments continue to exist. The Education Service is aware of these shortcomings but has not been able to successfully cope with them. Assignment of teachers and PF as Teachers in schools in remote, semi-secure areas has been the only expedient for closed classrooms in those areas. This is obviously a problem that will have to be contended with for some time to come.

**Public Works:** The two major successes of 1971-72 are HL-4, ten Km., from Cai Rang to Phong Dien and 100% completed. In addition Road 20 in Can Tho City has been repaired. Although the Public Works Service is capable of producing much more, their small budget looms as the biggest drawback. It is estimated that for the present road system 300 million piasters are needed for proper maintenance whereas the actual budget is only 20 million per year. An additional seven million piasters are provided for Cantho City street repair. Further cooperation is needed between Public Waterworks Service in Saigon and Province Public Works.

**Land Reforms:** The Land to the Tiller program has been one of the most rewarding to work with because of its positive nature, its acceptance by the people and the priority status afforded it by the Central Government. The goals are clearly defined and now that we are nearing the end of the 3 year time frame, the overall program is well on its way. Some problems have been encountered, but overall program progress has been successful. Because of its political importance, the government needed the initiation of the program necessitating such measures as an agency for land identification. The potential problems of land identification and future land identification are numerous.

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**Agriculture and Economic Development:** A rapidly growing economy is a rewarding experience. Farmers are basic creators of new wealth. The prosperity of the farmer through introduction of miracle rice, fertilizers, pesticides and new techniques has enabled the farmer to have an all-time-high buying power, thus he is not opposed to paying higher taxes on his land and on his production to support his government. Inadvertently however this same prosperity has helped the VC extort more money but at the same time the farmer is becoming more of a Capitalist. Efforts to spur economic activity continues with commendable success. Rice production has been particularly good. Of the 60,000 tons earmarked for export to Saigon, 32,793 tons have already been exported as of 31 October 1972. Price stability, while difficult to maintain in view of the galloping inflation, has nevertheless received the attention of the GVN and teams have been dispatched to the districts at least twice a month to check local prices and to see that prices are posted openly. Labor and business leaders convened in March 1972 to work out problems of mutual concern that could contribute to better relations hence a more favorable economic climate. The great hopes and expectations reposed on the Tay Do Industrial Park remains unrealized. The physical completion of the Park itself is still too meager to consider as being an accomplishment. The hope that the Park could absorb the reservoir of trained manpower talent that have been released by closed out US military and contractor facilities has not become a reality.

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