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

REPLY TO
ATTENTION OF:

DAAG-PAP-A (M) (19 Mar 73) DAMO-ODU

13 April 1973

SUBJECT: Senior Officer Debriefing Report: Senior Advisors,
LTC Laddie B. Logan, III Corps Ranger Command and
MAJ Thomas J. Haycraft, 1st Armor Brigade, Period Ending
February 1973 (U)

AD 525106

"NATIONAL SECURITY INFORMATION"

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1. Reference: AR 525-14, Senior Officer Debriefing Report (U),
2 July 1971.
2. Transmitted herewith are the reports of LTC Laddie B. Logan and
MAJ Thomas J. Haycraft, subject as above.
3. These reports are provided to insure appropriate benefits are
realized from the experiences of the authors. The reports should be
reviewed in accordance with paragraphs 3 and 5, AR 525-14; however,
they should not be interpreted as the official view of the Department
of the Army, or of any agency of the Department of the Army.
4. Information of action initiated under provisions of AR 525-14,
as a result of subject reports should be provided to the Deputy Chief
of Staff for Military Operations, ATTN: DAMO-ODU within 90 days of
receipt of covering letter.

BY ORDER OF THE SECRETARY OF THE ARMY:

Verne L. Bowers
VERNE L. BOWERS
Major General, USA
The Adjutant General

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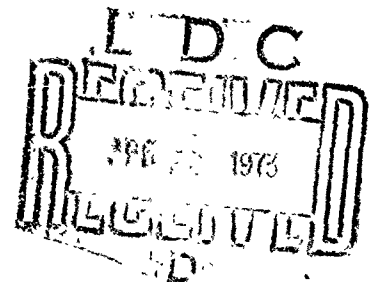
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HEADQUARTERS
III CORPS RANGER COMMAND ASSISTANCE TEAM
THIRD REGIONAL ASSISTANCE COMMAND
APO SAN FRANCISCO 96266

MACTR-RC

7 February 1973

SUBJECT: Senior Officer Debriefing Report of LTC Laddie B. Logan, Senior Advisor to III Corps Ranger Command (RCS CSFOR-74)

THRU: Commander
Third Regional Assistance Command
APO San Francisco 96266

Commander
US Military Assistance Command, Vietnam
ATTN: MACDO-34
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TO: Assistant Chief of Staff for Force Development
ATTN: FOR OF UF
Department of the Army
Washington, D.C. 20310

1. This report is submitted as required by AR 525-14. It is assumed that the readers of this report are familiar in general terms with the advisory effort, the tactical environment in Vietnam during 1972, and ARVN organization. The report is in four main parts as follows: (a) overview of III Corps Ranger Command activities; (b) assessment of III Corps Ranger Command operations; (c) advisory effectiveness and methods; and (d) considerations/recommendations for the future.

2. Overview of III Corps Ranger Command Activities:

a. Prior to November 1972: The III Corps Ranger Command, subordinate to the Ranger High Command and the III Corps Command, was responsible for the command and support of the 3rd, 5th and 6th Ranger Groups and eight border battalions; however, seldom did the Ranger Command have operational control of the Ranger groups and/or battalions. The groups are usually

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Senior Advisor to III Corps Ranger Command (RCS CSFOR-74)

OPCON to a corps, division or sector headquarters, and the border battalions are OPCON to the respective province they are operating in. Since the beginning of the Nguyen Hue Campaign, the ranger units have been heavily engaged. Six of the eight border battalions were forced to withdraw under heavy NVA assault which resulted in two battalions being completely decimated (only three rangers survived from the 74th Battalion located above Loc Ninh). The 3rd Ranger Group participated in the defense of An Loc where they suffered heavy casualties. Since July they have operated in Phuoc Tuy, Tay Ninh, Lai Khe and Trang Bom areas with good results. The 5th Ranger Group participated in the battles at Quan Tri, Phuoc Tuy and An Loc with some success. However, the group lost most of its equipment infiltrating to Hue after the battle of Quang Tri and sustained over 1200 casualties in all three battles. The 6th Ranger Group was deployed to I and II Corps from April through July and fought well in the battles at Kontum and Bong Song. During this time, however, they had three group commanders, continuously took casualties, received replacements who had been recruited in MR4 and had been promised to go to MR4, and developed morale and discipline problems. On arriving in III Corps, 800 rangers went AWOL, and the Group received its fourth commander. In spite of the fact the rangers have been under constant battle and have taken heavy casualties, only one of the border ranger battalions and one battalion from the 6th Group have had an opportunity to stand down to retrain and refit their units. The rangers have done remarkably well considering all that they have been through.

b. 25 November, 1972 - 28 January, 1973: On 25 November the III Corps Ranger Command assumed command and control of all three ranger groups, relieved in place the 18th ARVN Division at An Loc, and accepted the challenging mission of defending, with minimum casualties, An Loc and the surrounding country side controlled by friendly forces. This was a challenging mission since never before had the Ranger Command operated as a tactical, division type, headquarters. It did not have the numeral strength of a division nor the organic artillery and support units of a division. Also the Ranger Command was still expected to provide combat service support for the border battalions scattered throughout MR3.

3. Assessment of III Corps Ranger Command Operations:

a. General Posture: The mission of defending An Loc, though a difficult mission for the Ranger Command, served as a stimulus to reach out and seek higher realms. No longer would the glory of doing well be taken from them to be bestowed on the higher unit they were OPCON to, and, if they did poorly, they would have the eyes and wrath of their nation upon them. The rangers not only defended An Loc with minimum casualties, but they also cleaned up the city by burning and burying tons of garbage and material; they rebuilt and strengthened all the bunkers along

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the perimeter using only 36,000 new sand bags; all the headquarters bunkers were also rebuilt; five large field generators that had been badly damaged and abandoned were rebuilt and placed into service; the landing zone, a place of mass confusion and danger from grenades and explosives accidentally being set off, was organized, well policed and controlled; all the individual and mass graves throughout the city were properly decorated, marked and registered; property locations and boundaries were identified from what deeds and legal papers were available; and Minh Duc, long sought after by the 18th Division, was finally captured and secured, thus enlarging the area of operation substantially. The rangers from the limited resources available to them, have earned great respect for the contributions they have made to An Loc and Binh Long Province.

b. Dependence on Non-Ranger Resources: The III Corps Ranger Command's combat support and combat service support ability is extremely limited. It has organically only a signal company, medical company and a logistics service company. When the Command moved to An Loc, it had to depend heavily on the assets of Corps in the form of an artillery battalion reinforced, a special intelligence section, signal support for the patch telephone system and additional logistics personnel. The command also depended upon the 5th Ranger Group's organic transportation and engineer companies for assistance. Resupply to An Loc was completely dependent upon VNAF and the USAF. Eventually the USAF worked itself out of a job when sufficient Chinooks were available to sling supplies up to An Loc and VNAF C-130's and C-123's began air dropping supplies on 24 January. The majority of air strikes were by US fighters; however, towards the latter part of January, VNAF FAC's were controlling the majority of the missions.

c. Effectiveness of the Ranger Command Staff: ARVN staffs customarily are intimidated by their commander, respond to his initiatives but are hesitant with their own initiative, and often carry a preponderance of dead wood. The III Corps Ranger Command staff is no exception. In spite of this fact, the staff sections have done well and are becoming accustomed to working together more efficiently.

(1) Personnel: III Corps Ranger Command has the same reluctance of all ARVN units in allowing advisors to deeply involved themselves in the GI sphere. This reluctance significantly hinders the advisory efforts to improve personnel operations. The extreme slowness with which personnel actions, including awards, transfers, and promotions, are accomplished is the result of the extreme centralization of authority to issue orders and by the absence of command interest. Records management is extremely thorough, but because every single paper is filed whether it is a completed routine action or a policy announcement, the system is stifled by its own immensity. Personnel records are generally poorly

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maintained and seldom current. Finance suffers from the same lack of speed as other G1 activities for generally the same reasons. Pay changes require months and rangers are sometimes unpaid for two or three months. Replacements are poorly handled as are recruits. Recently graduated rangers are not given leave after training and most, consequently, go AWOL or desert prior to reporting to their new units. Personnel strengths seem to be managed on the basis of the most popular subordinate commander receiving the most replacements. The 6th Group is still significantly lower in strength than the other two groups apparently due to this procedure. Some policy concerning 3rd and 5th Group's National Reserve mission may influence the replacement procedures, but no factual basis for the difference in assigning replacements can be found. In spite of these problems, the whole ponderous process of personnel operations still manages to accomplish its mission.

(2) Intelligence: Vast quantities of intelligence data come to the G2 from reports from agents working in Loc Ninh, sensor readings, limited recon patrols, prisoners and enemy bodies, spot reports from III Corps, radio intercepts and other units intelligence personnel. The big weakness in the Command's G-2 area is the analysis of this intelligence data. There is a big tendency for the G2 and his staff to merely collect, secure and report to the commander what has been found instead of analysing what the data means. From the assistance of the advisors, the G-2 did start a targeting conference which included Binh Long sector and the ranger groups S-2 and S-3 personnel. A very effective "E and I" firing program was developed based on the sensing reports of 30 sensors implanted around An Loc.

(3) Operations: The III Corps Ranger Command operations officer is a captain and has the distinction of filling a division level G3 position, of having a major on his staff and of addressing other major and colonel staff officers with the over all result that he is ineffective. Prior to An Loc the operation section served merely as a reporting section, since the Command had no control of any of the ranger units. A G3 captain was then acceptable. TOC procedures are still weak with actions and coordination being accomplished only upon individual initiative and without the G-3 staff influence or guidance. With senior personnel changes these weaknesses could be changed. One unfavorable result of bringing three independent ranger groups together to work under one headquarters is the tendency for each ranger group to fight its own war without coordinating with higher or adjacent headquarters. This problem can also be solved through command action and a stronger G-3. Due to the situation of the rangers continually having to put out brush fires, the units, with exception of two battalions, have never stood down to refit and train to correct obvious combat deficiencies.

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(4) Logistics: The logistics system functions reasonably well for class I, II and V common staple items. Less common items, ranging from uniforms to radios, particularly - class II, IV, and IX are poorly handled. Spare parts and food items are subject to pilferage by soldiers and theft by corrupt officers and are, consequently, in low supply. In general, valuable and salable items are always scarce, but beans and bullets are provided. The rear transshipment point in 5th Group's base camp operated well, with the G4 shipping supplies via helicopter to An Loc on priority of need basis. While confused and disorderly, the area was organized well enough to do the job. VNAF helicopter support was erratic, slow and undependable. If the assigned four ships had been available daily, it would have been sufficient for the needs of the Command at An Loc. Unfortunately, only two or three CH-47's were usually available, and consequently, the parachute drops had to be continued. Transportation resources available to the Ranger Command from 5th Group were inadequate and Corps support minimal. Property accountability was excellent once property was documented. All too frequently property never was "picked up" and consequently became private property. The slowness, pilferage and corruption notwithstanding, the system usually and eventually put property in the hands of the user.

(5) Maintenance: The primary maintenance problem is lack of spare parts as noted above. Skilled mechanics are limited in number but sufficient for a good maintenance program. Maintenance facilities are reasonable, except at An Loc, although tools suffer the same fate as repair parts. Most actual maintenance work is accomplished "on the economy", where the repair parts and tools are, and paid for by the vehicle user. The maintenance in An Loc, consequently, really suffered. Weapons maintenance was generally poor, mostly because cleaning materials were not always available. Also all maintenance above organizational level was so slow that commanders hesitated before turning in a weapon for repair, because it would be a long time, if ever, before the weapon was returned. This last point is even more true for vehicle maintenance support from ASU's.

d. Command and Cooperation Among Units: When the III Corps Ranger Command assumed control of An Loc, the command automatically inherited a patch work of many battalion AO's with regiments not necessarily controlling their own units and with borders not clearly defined. This patch work of AO's was quickly changed into four AO's under the control of the group commanders and the sector commander covering the three avenues of approach into An Loc and the city itself. Each commander had control of his own forces. Col Chuan, commanding officer of III Corps Ranger Command, does not hesitate to cross attach Regional Force units with ranger units for specific operations, which seems to be working

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satisfactorily. The biggest pitfall with the ranger command is the concept of commanding from the bunker. The practice of getting out and making the commander's presence felt or to oversee how a particular order is being carried out is not practiced. The result is the squad or platoon is on its own and will only perform if it has a dynamic leader. Combat during March through August generally killed most of the experienced junior leaders leaving the lower ranks leaderless.

e. Ability to Shoot, Move and Communicate: Communication is generally good within the Command and to and from Corps. Some companies are still without sufficient AN/PRC-25 radios; however, this shortage is in the process of being eliminated. Small unit tactics are basically good, but there has been a lack of real aggressiveness when in contact with the enemy due to the desire to use air strikes, and, in some cases, the lack of good leaders at squad and platoon level. The Ranger Command is participating in the NCO schooling program, which eventually may help. The favorite combat formation is still the file and line when in contact. Ambushes and stay behind forces are not used enough. One would think the rangers would use a lot of long range reconnaissance patrols; however, just the opposite is true. Very seldom do they use "LRPs", and again, I feel it is due primarily to the lack of training and poor junior leadership. Use of artillery is good, and the techniques of the TOT and the massing of fires on a particular concentration are used extensively. However, in the attack, the troops are very hesitant about using artillery or their own mortars and prefer to stop or even withdraw so an air strike can be put in. There is a tendency on a battalion attack or sweep operation to place companies so far apart that they cannot support each other by fire. With one company in the rear and one on perimeter duty, a battalion operation quickly becomes a two company operation.

f. The Ranger Group:

(1) The 3rd Ranger Group is commanded by Col Biet, who with his officers were all promoted one grade as a result of the units action defending An Loc. Col Biet does not visit his units very much, but stays in the CP and is plagued by poor health. In spite of his seemingly poor leadership qualities, he seems to issue the right orders and his outstanding battalion commanders carry them out. The third Group is probably the best of three groups in terms of leadership.

(2) The 5th Ranger Group, Commanded by LTC Hong who was seriously wounded on 27 January, is in the best shape strength wise of the three groups. It also has a reconnaissance company, a transportation company and an engineer company. The group is supposedly designated by JGS as one of the national reserve units. It has two outstanding battalion commanders and one very good one. Most of the Group's staff was also

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wounded on the 27th, a factor that will undoubtedly have some affect on the units action in the future.

(3) The 6th Ranger Group is commanded by LTC Lac who was previously the 36th battalion commander in the 3rd Group. LTC Lac was a captain 22 months ago and is now a LTC Group commander. He has had some trouble switching his command responsibility from battalion to group level. He is an outstanding combat commander, however, and is slowly rebuilding the 6th Group. The Group is the weakest of the three groups in strength and junior leadership, and it has the distinction of not having its own logistics support company. This factor places the Group completely dependent on III Corps Ranger Command's logistics company for support. When the group was operating in the II Corps area, it operated for weeks on end from what it could find for itself, since the III Logistics Company and G4 failed to assume their responsibility in supporting the Group.

4. Advisory Effectiveness and Methods:

a. Before 15 November 1972: At the start of the Nguyen Hue Campaign the Ranger Command Combat Assistance Team totaled 16 men. Nine of these 16 men were assigned to the three ranger groups leaving only seven men in the Command HQ. Probably the weakest advisory effort in the Command was in the personnel area due to the fact the G1/5 personnel advisor was kept busy with normal U.S. housekeeping chores required of an S-1. The OPN/INTEL advisor turned out to be the least needed. At this time, the command did not have control of any units and the Ranger G-2 and G-3 personnel were merely reporting agencies, informing the commander what the different units in III Corps were doing. The G-4 advisor was the only staff advisor able to perform as per his job description. The three man group advisor team proved to be a very workable team. With the group operating long distances and for long periods of time away from the Bien Hoa area, the third man gave the team flexibility incase one member became ill or was away on pass or leave.

b. After 5 November 1972: Due to the Vietnamization program and U.S. phase down, the Ranger Command Assistance Team went from 16 men to three on 15 November. All three group advisory teams were eliminated and the command team was reduced to a senior advisor, a G1/G4 advisor and a G2/3 advisor. Before this organization was operational, however, the III Corps Ranger Command received its An Loc mission and the advisory team was again reorganized into a seven man team. The SA, DSA, G1/5 advisor, G2/3 Advisor, and OPNS IGO were based at An Loc. The G4 advisor and clerk typist stayed at Bien Hoa. As the team went to work, job titles for the advisors were in name only. The G4 at Bien Hoa became the AG/G1/ Supply Officer for the advisory team in An Loc. Working with the support agencies at Bien Hoa or Long Binh became secondary to his U.S. support duties. Between the requirement for keeping members of the team in the

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Senior Advisor to III Corps Ranger Command (RCS CSFOR-74)

TOC for 24 hours and sickness, leave and R&R, the remaining members in An Loc, excluding the SA, were involved in TOC operations, and their advisory responsibilities became secondary. Just two additional OPN NCO's would have alleviated the TOC requirements to enable the officers to perform their originally intended functions.

5. Considerations/Recommendations for the Future:

a. 6th Ranger Group: The primary concern of the assistance team at the phase down of the advisory effort was the upgrading of the 6th Ranger Group's TOC Headquarters to reflect a service-logistics company. This company would enable the group to be as self-sufficient as the other two groups.

b. Training: A secondary concern but one of no less importance is training. Now that the cease-fire is in effect, sufficient time is available to stand down certain units at a time and refit and retrain them. It is recommended that III Corps Ranger Command organize their own Mobile Training Team rather than use an outside ARVN team or send a battalion all the way to the Ranger Training Center in MR2. In regards to the Ranger Basic Training Center, the first five weeks are identical to the five weeks at the ARVN Basic Training Center. The next three weeks are on ranger subjects. I feel that Ranger High Command would gain more by not dealing in basic training, and, instead, expand the basic ranger training and conduct more unit training.

c. Recruiting: A consistent problem that the Ranger Commands have throughout Vietnam deals with recruiting. The III Corps Ranger Command and the 3rd and 5th Ranger Groups each operate sixteen recruiting stands in the greater Saigon-Bien Hoa areas and are thus competitive with each other. A high percentage of the recruits are criminals or those who were given the choice of joining the rangers or going to jail. This factor combined with the arduous and "blood thirsty" training given at Duc My are instrumental in pushing the AWOL rate up to as high as 40% of the ranger trainees. Recruiting of trainees at the ARVN Basic Training Center and allowing draftees at the same center to volunteer for the rangers would eliminate the generally low quality of ranger replacements and the high AWOL rate. The present III Corps policy of assigning returned deserters to ranger units also provides low quality personnel who contribute to the high desertion rate of the rangers. The ranger units should be considered in the same way as the other ARVN units in respect to assignment of deserters.

d. Brigade/Division: In May, 1972, the combined MACV/JGS 5-72 Committee met to consider a new JGS proposal of forming a ranger division.

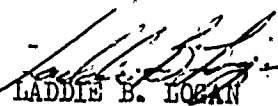
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Senior Advisor to III Corps Ranger Command (RCS CSFOR-74)

At this time MACV did not support the proposal because it was felt that RVNAF had other priorities which would take precedence over the formation of a new division and the logistical support system would not support the additional burden. In late August MACV changed their stand slightly and approved the organization of three ranger brigades with the elimination of two border battalions to provide the necessary personnel spaces. However, no apparent action seems to have been taken to reorganize the groups into brigades. The order placing the three ranger groups in MR3 under the command and control of the III Corps Ranger Command may be a first step towards the organization of brigades and/or a division. I feel that before any reorganization takes place, JGS is going to have to reconcile the ranger concept. Do they want an elite screening and surveillance unit or do they want more maneuver battalions to close with the enemy. At the present time, in III Corps at least, the ranger group and five of the eight border battalions are serving as maneuver battalions. A strong consideration would be to maintain the corps border battalions but convert the remaining ranger units into ARVN or airborne units, and eliminate the ranger command as a national organization, leaving them to the border mission only.



LADDIE B. LOGAN
LTC, INF
Senior Advisor

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SENIOR ADVISOR
1ST ARMOR BRIGADE
MACV, TEAM #1
AFC 96349 In-Country

2 February 1973

SUBJECT: Senior Officer Debriefing Report (u)

To: Commander
First Regional Assistance Command
ATTN: MACFR-OP
AFC 96349 In-Country

Debrief Report by Major Thomas J. Haycraft, 403-48-4113

Duty Assignment: Senior Advisor, 1st Armor Brigade.

Inclusive Dates: 14 November 1972 - 27 January 1973.

Date of Report: 1 February 1973.

1. (C) Introduction: The 1st Armor Brigade is an organization designed to command and control organic armor and attached combat and combat support elements in tactical operations. The 17th Cavalry Regiment and the 20th Tank Squadron are supposedly elements organic to the 1st Armor Brigade, but during the period of this report, units of these two organizations operated only for brief intervals with the 1st Armor Brigade.

2. (C) Organization: The 1st Armor Brigade consists of a Brigade Headquarters, a G-level Brigade Staff and a Headquarters Troop. Total personnel strength authorized is 100; 18 officers, 22 non-commissioned officers, and 60 enlisted men. The authorized rank of the Commander is Brigadier General.

3. (C) Personnel:

a. Strength.

(1) The 1st Armor Brigade was overstrength (115 personnel total) with no significant personnel shortages.

(2) A detailed break-out of authorized and assigned strengths as of 23 January 1973 for the 17th Cavalry Regiment and 20th Tank Squadron follows:

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Unit	AUTHORIZED				ASSIGNED				OPERATIONAL			
	Off	NCO	EM	Total	Off	NCO	EM	Total	Off	NCO	EM	Total
17th	49	130	513	692	38	118	676	832	33	100	571	704
20th	49	193	619	861	42	174	634	850	35	127	415	577

(3) Significant differences between assigned and operational strength in the 17th Cavalry Regiment result from the fact that the 17th Cavalry Regiment was required to keep and secure a base camp in the Da Nang area. In addition, at various times up to 100 new recruits have been assigned to the 17th Cavalry for training and retention as replacements or for subsequent assignment to other Cavalry units. The 20th Tank Squadron similarly always had a number of recruits training on the M48A3.

b. quality.

(1) Training.

(a) The 1st Armor Brigade Headquarters and Staff were in a garrison environment until 10 January 1973. There was no staff training program, though the staff did function in their areas of responsibility as recording agencies. Upon movement to an area of operations on 10 January, staff functioning was poor. With strong guidance from the Brigade Commander, the performance had advanced to average by 27 January.

(b) Prior to January 1973 there was no training program beyond the individual crew duties phase. On 3 January a training program was established for Cavalry and Tank Troops on a 10 day cycle basis. The program was generally outlined by the 1st Armor Brigade, with the 20th Tank Squadron Commander assuming direct responsibility. The advisory team recommended a training cycle of 20 to 30 days. The Brigade Commander agreed but informed the advisory team that it was extremely difficult to get units back from the Airborne and Marine Divisions and that initially, if the Brigade desired to have any training program a 10 day cycle would be best. The prime factor behind the establishment of the training program was the interest shown in armor units by LTG THI, the Deputy Corps Commander. Prior lack of progress up to this time is primarily attributed to two factors; a lack of initiative on the part of Vietnamese armor unit commanders, and the rapidly changing dispersion of Armor units under the control of the Airborne and Marine Divisions. Summing up, a 17th Cavalry and 20th Tank Squadron unit tactical training program was non-existent until January, though both units conducted average quality crew training.

(2) Leadership.

(a) 1st Armor Brigade - COL Vu Quoc Gia was only observed under field conditions for 17 days. Though limited opportunity for observation was available, COL Gia appeared to be a forceful and confident commander. I would place COL Gia in the very good to excellent category as a field commander.

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(b) 17th Cavalry Regiment - LTC Nguyen Kuan Dung had no major tactical role during the period of this report. From prior experience as Senior Advisor, 17th Cavalry Regiment, I would categorize LTC Dung as a good commander.

(c) 20th Tank Squadron - LTC Nguyen Van Ta had no tactical role until the day before his advisor departed. The advisor team categorized LTC Ta as an excellent commander.

c. Personnel Management: An overall shortage of armor officers and non-commissioned officers was found in all maneuver units.

4. (C) Operations.

a. Goals (Mission)

(1) 14 November 1972 - 10 January 1973 - 1st Armor Brigade occupied a compound in Hue and was concerned with receiving and forwarding reports concerning the personnel and logistical status of all Armor Units in MR-1. Occasional staff visits to armor units were conducted with primary concern being the personnel and logistical status of the units. Though a liaison officer was assigned to I Corps, if there was an attempt to influence the use of armor assets in MR-1, it was not apparent to the advisor team. During a visit on 6 December 1972, LTG Thi directed the 1st Armor Brigade to prepare a counter-attack plan for the area South West of Quang Tri.

(2) 10 January 1973 - 27 January 1973 - The 1st Armor Brigade moved from Hue to Hoa My (Camp Evans) and on 12 January under the operational control of the Airborne Division, assumed responsibility for an area of operations in the vicinity of Hoa My. A 24 kilometer portion of QL-1, including six bridges, completed the area of operations. The mission was threefold.

(a) To search for and destroy enemy forces within the assigned area of operations.

(b) To secure Hoa My (Camp Evans).

(c) To be prepared to act as a counterattack force in a Corps reserve role.

b. General Concept.

(1) Maneuver Units Available.

(a) 1 troop (-), 20th Tank Squadron.

(b) 1 Cavalry troop, cavalry regiment.

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- (c) 120th Regional Forces Battalion (4 companies).
- (d) 1st Regional Forces Group (3 companies).
- (e) 3 District headquarters with a total of 7 popular forces companies.

(2) The infantry units operated in their assigned sectors in the area of operations with one tank platoon under the operational control of the 120th RF battalion. The remaining armor forces remained in the Foa My (Camp Evans) area training and for use as a reaction or counterattack force where necessary. On 18 January operational commitment of the armored cavalry unit in training removed the cavalry troop from the forces available.

c. Summary of Operations of Note: There was no significant activity in the area of operations.

d. Plans: Operational plans were adequate. Formal and written contingency planning was virtually non-existent, though verbal directions concerning the reaction or counterattack force had been given to subordinate commanders. There appeared to be no specific guidance, particularly in the area of assumptions, issued by higher headquarters. Contingency planning is an extremely weak area.

5. (C) Training.

a. General. On 3 January 1973 the formal training program discussed in paragraph 3b.(1)(b) was started. An M48A3 tank troop and an armored cavalry troop were to participate in each 10 day cycle. The initial phase was to be broken down as follows:

- 3 days - weapons training and crew firing exercise.
- 2 days - maintenance.
- 3 days - Platoon tactical training to include combined arms training.
- 2 days - troop rest and maintenance.
- 1 day - unit rotation.

As previously mentioned, this training was dependent on the actions of LTG Thi in getting the armor units released by their control units at the proper time. Even with guidance from Corps, some difficulty was experienced in getting units released at the proper time. On 18 January the cavalry units were withdrawn because of operational commitments, thus ending the cavalry training.

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b. Effectiveness: The tank gunnery training proceeded smoothly. The program was well planned and the range was well run, with one major deficiency. Adequate scoring and the provisions for a crew critique did not exist. Much advisor effort failed to correct this deficiency. There is a tendency for the senior armor officers to hang back from the equipment and not get involved with the actual operation of the equipment, particularly the tank weapons and automotive system. Unfamiliarity with comparatively new pieces of equipment and cultural outlook probably account for this lack of involvement. The lack of involvement is detrimental to the training and maintenance program. The armored cavalry training lacked good, high level supervision. The initial weapons training was conducted in a poor teaching atmosphere. A good program of platoon tactical training was never developed. The combined arms training with the airborne units was characterized by poor use of the armor assets. Senior Armor officer supervision could possibly have corrected the deficiencies.

6. (C) Logistics.

a. Supply - There were indications, though nothing specific ever developed, that troops in some units were not receiving the designated Class I. The Brigade Executive Officer and the Senior Advisor discussed the situation, and the Brigade Executive Officer informed the Senior Advisor that he was aware of the situation and was investigating.

b. Maintenance.

(1) Personnel - An adequate, trained maintenance organization exists in all units.

(2) Supply - Maintenance administration has been excellent at the unit level. The formal ARVN maintenance system lacks adequate follow up procedures such as a monthly consolidation. A major problem has been the lack of parts not only of major items but of smaller parts as well.

(3) M48A3 - Major problems in support maintenance were overcome in December when Corps level command influence aided the 814th DS company in upgrading its capability. Movement of general support maintenance assets for the M48A3 from Da Nang to Phu Bai also materially aided the support maintenance program.

7. (C) Communication: No problems.

8. (?) Combat Support.

a. Radar and Artillery - The 1st Armor Brigader area of operation developed no significant activity. A few personnel sightings on radar were engaged by the artillery with unknown effect.

b. Air cavalry: U.S. Air cavalry was used on two occasions. In response to a sighting of fresh wheel vehicle tracks, the 1st Armor Brigade initiated an armor sweep through the sighting area.

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9. (C) Combat Units:

a. 17th Cavalry Regiment - No observation was made of the 17th Cavalry Regiment during this period as the combat elements were under the operational control of the Marine and Airborne Divisions.

b. 20th Tank Squadron - At present inadequate information is available to properly evaluate the 20th Tank Squadron. The 20th Tank Squadron Senior Advisor was present during operations on 27 January and 28 January, but was required to leave the unit at the time of the cease fire and report to his new duty on the Four Party Joint Military Commission. During the limited time of observation the 20th Tank Squadron (-) took part in a difficult operation, which include a night attack. It is believed the squadron performed in an outstanding manner. More accurate assessments may be available in Marine advisor reports.

10. (C) The Advisory Effort.

a. Organization.

(1) Senior Advisor, 1st Armor Brigade.

(2) Senior Advisor, 20th Tank Squadron.

b. Support - Through FRAC Forward.

c. Awards: The 1st Armor Brigade HQ and the 17th Cavalry Regiment (Minus 1st troop) were awarded the Presidential Unit Citation (Army) by GO No 37, dated 2 October 1972. No award has yet been made to these units.

11. (C) Overall Evaluation:

The 1st Armor Brigade was not employed, and therefore was improperly employed during most of the reporting period. A natural consequence of the lack of employment was the atrophy of the command and staff elements of the 1st Armor Brigade. Staff problems were clearly evident during the initial phases of employment of the brigade. At the brigade and perhaps higher levels there was inadequate contingency planning. Such plans as were discussed were always discussed in vague terms. No specific written contingency plans were ever developed.

Among the keys to armor employment is the combined arms approach. Even the high level interest in the use of the 1st Armor Brigade as a counter attack force appeared to envision the force as an all armor element. There has been almost no combined arms training conducted.

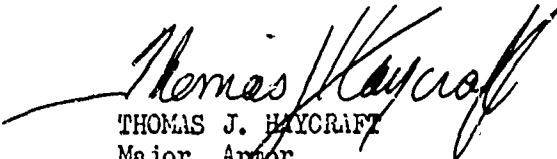
Possibly, a worse problem in northern MR-1 was the employment of the armor maneuver elements. Generally their use was characterized by widespread disassembly of the armor units down to platoon and section level. This disassembly not only destroyed the ability of armor units to mass when

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necessary, but also tended to destroy or negate the chain of command in the armor units. It did not appear that the infantry type units, nor for that matter some U.S. advisors to these units, appreciated the capabilities of the armor units. A tendency to attempt to use M-113 armored personnel carriers in the role of a tank, rather than that of a fire support vehicle and combat personnel carrier, resulted in frustration for all concerned, as the M-113 is not suited for use as a tank in the increasingly sophisticated battlefield environment in northern MR-1. The cliché "The best anti tank weapon is a tank" doomed the tanks to a role more appropriate to other weapons systems. The tank is primarily an offensive weapons system. The tank assets were scattered about northern MR-1 waiting for enemy tank attacks. Available tank assets in any one area generally amounted to no more than a platoon. The important principal of mass was never attained, except for the operation of 27 January in the Marine area of operation, and even then less than one-half of the available M48A3 assets were initially committed. The remaining armor assets remained in their inappropriate anti-tank role.

12.(c) Summary:

Major unit leadership in the armor units in MR-1 ranged from good to excellent. Major armor headquarters were rarely used in a tactical role. Armor assets were widely dispersed and generally poorly used. Employment of armor Brigade as a tactical headquarters should be continued. Combined arms training should be initiated under the control of 1st Armor Brigade. Support maintenance improved from poor to adequate during the period of this report. Contingency planning was virtually non-existent.


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SA, 1st Armor Brigade

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Headquarters, First Regional Assistance Command, APO 96349, 17 February 1973

THRU: Commander, U.S. Military Assistance Command, Vietnam, ATTN: MACDO-1,
APO 96222

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

The Debriefing Report prepared by Major Thomas J. Haycraft, Senior Advisor to the 1st Armor Brigade (ARVN), has been reviewed by this headquarters and no additional comment is necessary.

FOR THE COMMANDER:



CPT, AG
Adjutant General

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