DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
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IN REPLY REFER TO
AGAM-P (M) (25 Apr 68) FOR OT RD-68X013 29 April 1968

SUBJECT: USARV Seminar Report: Night Operations in RVN, 20 March and 3 April 1968 (U)

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BY ORDER OF THE SECRETARY OF THE ARMY:

Kenneth G. Wickham

KENNETH G. WICKHAM
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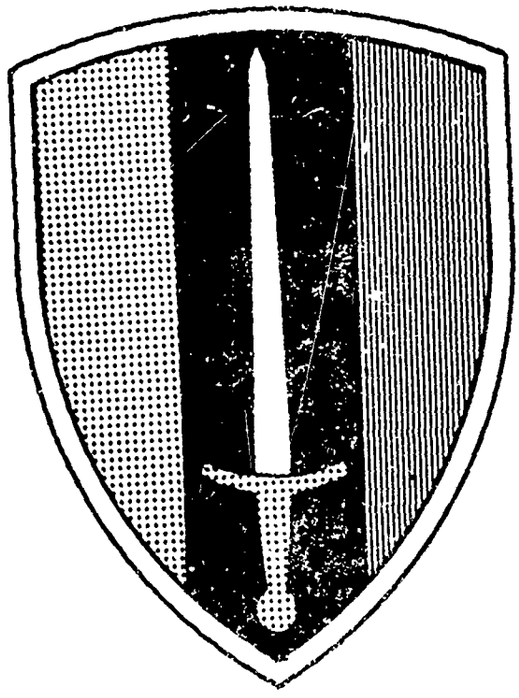
# USARV

# NIGHT OPERATIONS IN RVN



# SEMINAR REPORT

## 3 APRIL 1968
## 20 MARCH 1968

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DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
HEADQUARTERS, UNITED STATES ARMY VIETNAM
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IN REPLY REFER TO

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13 APR 1968

SUBJECT: Report of the Seminar on Night Operations in RVN

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A USARV Seminar on night operations was conducted in two phases at Headquarters, USARV on 20 March and 3 April 1968. The inclosed report of the seminar contains copies of the presentations made by participating commands and a summary of the consensus of the participants concerning key topics discussed.

FOR THE COMMANDER:

CHARLES A. BIRD
Major, AGC
Assistant Adjutant General

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## OPENING REMARKS

GENERAL WILLIAM C. WESTMORELAND

COMMANDER, UNITED STATES MILITARY ASSISTANCE COMMAND, VIETNAM

In opening Phase I of the seminar, General Westmoreland presented remarks which are summarized as follows:

U. S. forces in Vietnam have recently been criticized for using World War II tactics. This is an understatement. Not only are World War II tactics used, but French and Indian War tactics and Civil War tactics are used as well. These are the tactics required by this environment. The tactics used in wars waged decades ago have been further developed so that modern weapons and techniques of war can be more effectively employed.

The innovations that have been made in tactics and techniques by American Forces since the summer of 1965, are truly amazing. But these accomplishments have not been easy. Although our troops today are well trained, very few of the young men have had experience in the brush. Many are from the city and are unfamiliar with a rural environment. However, CONUS training centers have done an excellent job in preparing the soldier for duty in Vietnam.

Some of the weapons in use here were designed for combat in Western Europe and it has been necessary to adapt weapons and materiel to this environment. The tactics and techniques used in World War II and Korea had to be modified. The basic fundamentals of fire and maneuver were applicable, but had to be adapted to the situation. The enemy operates in his own environment which is ideal for waging guerrilla warfare. He takes advantage of his elusiveness and uses the jungle, mountains, swamps, canals, and streams to build his so-called secret base camps and to hide to avoid combat when it is in his interest to do so. The enemy has become a master of operations at night.

U. S. units had experience in night operations during World War II and Korea, but the units that were expert in night operations were the exception. Units that mastered night operations gained confidence because they achieved results with relatively low casualties. These

units were in the minority because man has a certain fear of darkness. In addition, devices produced by technology to aid night operations have been slow in development. However, in the past few years, the Starlight Scope and other devices which provide assistance in night operations have been developed. Further, additional devices which will help in this regard will be coming into the inventory in the near future.

It takes a very high order of discipline and command supervision to effectively plan and carry out night operations. This type of discipline and leadership is present in some units and lacking in others. With the great turnover of personnel, seminars of this type are important to emphasize fundamentals and more important, to exchange ideas between commanders and staffs of various units.

Night operations in Vietnam are particularly important at this time. The enemy launched a major campaign, a Battle of the Bulge type operation, and he committed a major share of his troops. He achieved considerable surprise but has now been beaten back. He suffered tremendous casualties and has broken down into smaller units in most areas, in an attempt to evade. He has changed his tactics and is now attempting to spoil the countryside. He is trying to overrun RF/PF outposts, intercept roads, and harass U. S. installations and units. He capitalizes on his ability to operate at night and the fact that the enemy generally controls the countryside at night must be faced.

Progress has been made by units of this command in developing night operations techniques. The 199th Light Infantry Brigade, for example, developed many excellent and effective techniques during operation Fairfax. The unit put out patrols every night, varied their operations and used deception in placing these patrols. The brigade took full advantage of the Starlight Scope and other early warning devices to ambush trails, streams, and canals. Multiple touchdown of helicopters and fake and partial extractions deceived the enemy as to location and size of patrols. Operation Fairfax was conducted by the 199th Light Infantry Brigade and the ARVN 5th Ranger Group in the province of Gia Dinh. The success achieved during this operation was spectacular.

In all areas of Vietnam the enemy can be expected to continue to operate at night. This calls for Fairfax type operations and it means that increased night operations must be conducted to take advantage of the enemy's vulnerability and make it unprofitable for the enemy to operate at night.

Effective night operations require good planning based on good intelligence. The planning should involve not only close-in ambushes, but ambushes deep in enemy territory along known routes of communication.

Successful night operations also require good management. Personnel who fight at night must rest during the day. All units cannot be expected to operate exclusively at night; however, some units may do so. During the day, search operations must be used to locate enemy caches. Also, aerial surveillance should be conducted during the day and units must be prepared to react against the enemy at all times. Good management is required to make the most effective use of our men, equipment, and transportation.

It takes training to conduct effective night operations. During World War II, a unit could be pulled out of the line to a secure area to train for several days. Here in RVN, there are no secure training areas. However, training is as fundamental today as it was in World War II and it must be conducted to restore confidence in individuals and increase chances for successful night operations.

Control measures and limited objectives were also guidelines used in World War II. Here, they are less applicable since the size of the forces used are not as large as those used during World War II. In addition, the intelligence is not as good and the enemy is more elusive.

It requires strong leadership and close supervision to conduct successful night operations. The chain of command must ensure that orders are properly carried out. All too frequently, ambush patrols fail to go to their appointed place or leave the ambush site early. Frequently, the enemy will follow the ambush patrol back and launch a successful attack.

The enemy has been weakened in this last offensive and the opportunities for U. S. units to operate in the countryside are greater than before. The ARVN have the know-how and experience to conduct night operations and must be urged to do so. Likewise, U. S. units must take advantage of the enemy's weakened condition by placing greater emphasis on night operations.

## SUMMARY OF THE PROCEEDINGS

The seminar, conducted in two phases, was for the purpose of exchanging views, techniques employed, and lessons learned in the conduct of night operations in RVN. Current doctrine was reviewed with a view toward recommending changes as appropriate. The first phase of the seminar was conducted on 2[illegible] March 1968 and presentations were given by representatives from four USARV units. The second phase was conducted on 3 April 1968 and included five discussions prepared by four USARV units. Each phase of the seminar concluded with an open discussion on the important points brought out during the proceedings.

The discussions are summarized in succeeding paragraphs and complete narratives of the presentations are included as separate sections of this report.

It was determined that the main problem was how to best conduct operations against the enemy and deny him the use of the night for resupply, troop movement, and other operations. The problem of how to take the night away from the enemy was the focal point of the discussions.

The types of night operations being conducted in RVN that were discussed during the seminar are ambush patrols, security operations, night attacks, night convoys and convoy escort, reconnaissance patrols and night movements.

The foremost questions that must be answered when discussing night operations are:

What are the advantages of conducting night operations?

What can be done at night, that cannot be done better in the daytime?

What is to be accomplished by night operations?

How does the enemy use the night? What are his techniques?

THE ENEMY: The enemy uses the night primarily to:

Move supplies and personnel.

Maintain observation of friendly installations.

Harass and interdict friendly installations and roads.

Infiltrate to and from populated areas.

He enjoys a measure of success in these activities because he is indigenous to the area or has contact with those who are. He has been forced to use the night to avoid our superiority in daylight detection and our fire power. The enemy does not own the night, he merely uses it. The enemy does not have the problem of fixing his foe. He can attack or harass friendly installations any time it is in his favor to do so. He has the ability to gather intelligence to help him further exploit the darkness to his advantage. The enemy is not the superior night fighter by design. He has been forced to use the night and admittedly with some success, but he can and has been beaten at night.

GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS OF NIGHT OPERATIONS: Because of the enemy's use of the night to move supplies and troops, the most effective way to counter him is to interdict his commonly used routes of communications. The enemy must use trails, roads, rivers and canals just as friendly elements must.

To continue offensive operations into the night hampers the resupply effort, adversely affects evacuation of casualties and equipment, places an extreme burden on the soldier and in some cases jeopardizes the entire unit.

The most successful night operations in RVN are conducted when the enemy comes to us. The use of strong night defensive positions and all available fire power are the best killers of the enemy in the night environment.

Night operations require considerable planning. Maximum use of the daylight hours for reconnaissance, organization, preparation and rehearsals is necessary. Troops to be employed at night must be given ample time to rest and prepare themselves, and cannot be expected to operate day and night on a continuing basis.

Because of man's inherent fear of darkness, confidence must be instilled through:

Detailed planning.

Meticulous preparation.

Precise instruction.

Positive control.

Control is of paramount importance in conducting night operations, particularly in the attack. The objective must be limited and well defined. Control measures must be effective and related to the ground. The

operation must be rehearsed. It is extremely difficult in jungle terrain to limit an objective and determine control measures.

Familiarity with the area of operations is an important consideration. The length of time a unit spends in an area of operations has a direct bearing on the success of the unit. Becoming completely familiar with an area negates the one prime advantage the enemy has over friendly forces.

Noise and light discipline must be strictly maintained, regardless of the type of operation. Particular attention should be paid to radio volume, especially vehicular mounted radios with speakers. The rifleman must respect the importance of noise and light discipline. This comes through supervision, training, and experience.

Fire discipline, extremely important in the daytime, becomes perhaps the key factor in conducting successful night operations. Premature firing can spoil an ambush or ruin an attack. Small arms fire at night gives away friendly positions and should be held until the most opportune time. Indiscriminate firing uses up quantities of ammunition that can ill be afforded on a patrol operation away from the fire base or base camp.

Fire support at night is used to harass and interdict enemy routes of communication and deter enemy activity against fixed installations. Defensive concentrations are plotted around installations, ambush sites and routes of ingress and egress to the sites. Techniques of counter mortar and counter battery fire are particularly important because the majority of the enemy mortar and rocket attacks occur at night.

Illumination resources available to the commander are virtually unlimited. Besides mortar and artillery illumination, the Air Force C-47 flare ships, and Army helicopter flare ships provide highly accurate and consistent illumination. Many units have access to the Xenon searchlight and some have taken to mounting them on ¼ ton trucks for convoy escort.

AMBUSH PATROLS: Ambush patrols deter enemy attacks of friendly installations and units, interdict enemy routes of communications, and prevent the enemy from interdicting and harassing friendly routes of communications. The size of ambush patrols varies from unit to unit and is determined primarily by the enemy situation, area of operations and the mission of each patrol. Patrols range from six men to company size. The majority of patrols used in RVN are eight to twelve men. This provides ample firepower, minimizes noise and light discipline problems, and enhances control.

Ambush patrols must be given ample time to prepare. It is preferable that a prior reconnaissance of the ambush site be conducted. This can best be done if the unit has been operating in the area during the day. Care must be exercised to insure the ambush site is not given away to the enemy.

The patrol must be completely briefed and a thorough chain of command established. Equipment and weapons carried will vary from unit to unit, but generally all agree that the M-60 machine gun, M-79's, claymore mines, and hand grenades are the key weapons. M-16's supplement the firepower concentrated in the killing zone. Some units have experienced success with LAWS and recoilless rifles on ambush patrols. The nature of the terrain and size of the patrol will generally govern the type and amount of weapons to be taken.

Communications are extremely important. A patrol should have at least one AN/PRC-25, an assortment and adequate supply of signal flares, and some means of maintaining communications within the patrol. Sound power phone, radio, or a length of wire or rope tied between patrol members, are some of the devices used for communications within the patrol. If the patrol is operating at extreme ranges, expedient antennas must be used. Other items of equipment a patrol uses vary from unit to unit, but normally includes Starlight Scopes and anti-intrusion devices.

Movement to the ambush site should be timed so that arrival coincides with darkness. Deception should be used so the enemy does not pinpoint the ambush location. Use of multiple touchdowns, if insertion is by air, will assist in deceiving the enemy. The drop off technique or stay behind technique can be used by mechanized elements. A larger unit working in an area can drop off a patrol late in the afternoon. The patrol has the advantage of taking up a position in a familiar area.

Once the patrol is in position, it is quickly prepared, positions are occupied, and movement ceases. The well trained patrol accomplishes these actions in a few minutes with a minimum of movement and noise.

The ambush is initiated by the leader or someone designated by the leader. Techniques differ between units, but for the most part the claymore mines are fired simultaneously with the opening rounds of automatic weapons fire. It is imperative that the firing is simultaneous and at maximum volume. There also must be a signal to cease fire.

Some units have had success with mobile patrols, employing them in a succession of positions throughout the night, but the majority of units believe in the stationary ambush. It is felt that the chance of success is enhanced by the patrol remaining in one position thereby decreasing the chance of being detected.

The method of employing a reaction force varies among the units. By the very nature of its mission a reaction force must be highly mobile. However, the reaction force cannot be hurriedly employed without giving consideration to possibility of an enemy ambush .

## CONCLUSION

The nine presentations and subsequent discussions reflected both successes and failures in night operations. The exchange of ideas, concepts, and lessons learned provided all who attended, a fresh approach toward operating at night. By evaluating what must be accomplished at night, it was concluded that the enemy's ability to move at night, effect resupply, and harass friendly installations can be eliminated. The night ambush is ideally suited to that end. Effective and systematic use of the ambush will assist in taking the night away from the enemy.

3d BRIGADE, 101st AIRBORNE DIVISION PRESENTATION

The purpose of this discussion is to point out the differences and similarities in the method of operation used by 3d Brigade, 101st Airborne Division, in a moving situation and those used by other units in night operations. Some general considerations common to night operations in Vietnam will be compared to the method of operation employed by the brigade. Finally three actions by the 3d Brigade, 101st Airborne Division in night operations conducted during the past three weeks will be reviewed.

Normally, if a unit is to be in a fixed position for two days or more, a fire base or strong night defensive perimeter is established. This requires equipment such as sand bags, concertina wire, engineer stakes and timbers. The unit stops moving about 1500 or 1600 hours and starts digging in. Quite often an artillery battery is lifted into a battalion night defensive position early in the afternoon to support the position. It also provides direct fire support in the event of an enemy attack.

In contrast to this, by not building a fixed position, the unit can continue its operation until late in the afternoon. Resupply of Class I and Class V are normally all that is necessary and this can be done almost anytime in the afternoon. If contact develops prior to darkness, it might be necessary to have additional ammunition brought to the field. After darkness, the unit continues to move until it reaches its night position. Artillery and mortars are registered after positions are occupied. In this case, airlift is saved by not having to bring in defensive materials, and artillery need not reposition or register. The Viet Cong are confused many times as to where the positions are since movement continues after dark.

The division commander feels that units fight as well at night as during daylight and emphasis should be placed on offensive operations. Primary bases or night defensive positions are constructed only when necessary.

Using the offensive approach the unit must sacrifice much of the overhead cover found in more deliberate positions and beehive ammunition cannot be fired in support of infantry troops by direct support artillery. Defensive concentrations and illumination are normally available and 90mm recoiless rifles can be brought in with resupply if beehive capability is desired. Infantry units, regardless of size or mission, never operate beyond the effective range of 105mm howitzers. Movement the following day is faster and easier since materials need not be recovered or dismantled.

Tactical air operates and supports ground forces at night the same as it does during the day. If the forward air controller has radio contact and can identify the ground elements, then air support continues in the normal manner. There are many ways to identify the unit at night. The 3d Brigade, 101st Airborne uses six volt lanterns sometimes referred to as "Bean Bag Lights". These lanterns are equipped with red and green filters and are arranged on the ground to form an arrow pointing north. Using the arrow as a reference, ground forces give enemy locations or directions of attack. When placed in holes, these lights are visible only to aircraft and do not illuminate friendly positions.

Good primary and alternate communications are absolutely essential. Unit SOP's should include detailed instructions on actions to be taken if complete loss of communication develops with a security element or another subordinate unit.

Road clearing operations are also conducted without establishing fire bases. Troops are inserted daily to clear, sweep and man outposts on the road. After the convoy passes, they are extracted either by aircraft or trucks.

On 29 February 1968, Company B 2d Battalion (ABN), 506th Infantry established a night defensive position 800 meters northeast of the Song Dong Nai River in Tan Uyen District, Bien Hoa Province. Company B had one 81mm mortar squad attached from the combat support company, Company E. During the afternoon of 29 March, several enemy sightings were made but contact was not made.

The company established its night defensive position just prior to dusk and prepared for two ambush patrols, each consisting of one rifle platoon. Each patrol member carried one claymore mine in addition to his normal prescribed load of ammunition. Defensive concentrations were fired in support of the company to include the two ambush sites.

The two ambush patrols moved from Company B's night defensive perimeter after dark. Upon reaching the ambush sites, the ambush members were positioned and the claymores sited to provide all around security and fire. At approximately 0330 hours, 1 March, the company (-) night defensive position received both 60mm and 82mm mortar rounds. These rounds all landed within the defensive perimeter. Ambush patrol #1 could easily see the enemy mortars firing from positions only 100 meters from their ambush site. The patrol radioed this information to the company commander. At this time ambush patrol #1 detected a large enemy force moving directly toward their position. The patrol leader waited until the enemy was well within the killing zone of his ambush and then fired claymore mines followed by a shower of hand grenades. Small arms

were not used in order to prevent disclosure of the friendly position. The patrol then withdrew, on order, to its rallying point.

The forward observer with the company had called for artillery fire as soon as the first enemy mortar rounds had fallen. Counter-mortar artillery was fired on known and suspected enemy positions and the enemy mortar fire was quickly silenced. The forward observer then called for illumination followed by high explosive fires around the perimeter.

The VC next appeared to the south of the company (-) position. It appears that the VC had planned to attack the B Company position. Their mortars were positioned with silence and stealth and initial fires were extremely accurate. The enemy then launched an assault with two elements, one advancing from the southwest and one from the south. The southwest axis ran into ambush patrol #1. Seeing that the enemy would make contact with the ambush site, the patrol waited until the enemy force was within the killing zone before initiating their fires. The ambush was sprung by activating claymore mines and hand grenades.

At this point the enemy attack was no longer coordinated as evidenced by noise, shouting and loss of control. The southern attack, now apparently bewildered by the firing on the left, advanced straight toward the edge of the company perimeter. Again the enemy was met by claymore mines and grenades and withdrew in confusion. The ambushes remained in position until first light when elements of B Company swept the ambush sites and the company perimeter.

A search of the area revealed 21 VC KIA and 1 VC captured. Large pools of blood and drag trails were also found. Two RPD machine guns, one RPG-7, one AK-47, a 60mm mortar sight, several grenades, ammunition of all types, and a large amount of personal equipment was found in the battle area. Four U. S. personnel were wounded.

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199th INFANTRY BRIGADE PRESENTATION

A night ambush is a surprise attack on a halted or moving unit from a concealed position, to generally reduce the enemy's fighting capability by harassment or destruction. To accomplish this mission there are certain guidelines for the night ambush that should be followed.

Ambushes will always be planned so as to interdict known enemy routes of travel. To facilitate this, each battalion compiles and maintains a current ambush overlay for its area of operation. This overlay shows the most likely locations for ambush contacts with the VC. In compiling this overlay all of the available intelligence sources will be used; Chieu Hois, PW's, radio intercept, photo interpretation, captured enemy documents and past experience. This ambush overlay is correlated with all data available on VC movements to ascertain at what locations and times friendly ambushes will have the greatest probability for success. This information is used in the selection of ambush positions.

A pattern is not established with ambushes. Times for movement of the ambush site are staggered so as not to form a pattern. The same position is never occupied on consecutive nights. If moving to a previously occupied position, a new route is chosen. When moving into position during daylight, the ambush does not remain in the same position that night. Return times vary from day to day and the patrol returns by a different route than the one taken to the ambush site.

A reaction force must always be designated. This reaction force must be of the size appropriate to the tactical situation and the number of ambushes to be established.

Every ambush leader must be thoroughly knowledgeable in the procedures to be followed when requesting and adjusting artillery and mortar fire. As a minimum, one concentration, either artillery or mortar, must be planned for support of each ambush.

Ambush leaders must always plan the following: immediate action drill in the event that the patrol is ambushed, either while moving or in its final positions; rallying points; alternate ambush positions; and use of aerial photos in addition to maps.

The ambush leader must plan the configuration of his ambush at the ambush site. From the forces available, security elements and killer elements must be selected and formed. A point man and a compass man, if needed, must be selected and briefed. A plan must be developed for employment of starlight scopes, anti-intrusion devices, and claymore mines. After completion of planning, the ambush leader should make appropriate written notes. To be included in these notes should be a sketch or schematic

drawing of the ambush leader's plan. The leader must give his patrol order orally to all members of his ambush. He must insure that each man understands the part that he is to play. He should coordinate with the reaction force leader. This coordination is to insure that should the need arise, relief or recovery of the ambush will be as speedy and expeditious as possible.

The ambush leader must make a physical inspection of his men prior to departure. He must insure that all equipment is clean and serviceable, and that each man understands his job. He must also insure that all men are healthy and in a sound physical condition. Any man with a cough or cold should be left behind.

All weapons must be cleaned and, if possible, test fired. All ammunition must be cleaned. Radios must be cleaned and given an operational check. Fresh batteries should be placed in the radios prior to departure. The long antenna for the AN/PRC 25 radio should be carried. Starlight scopes and anti-intrusion devices must be cleaned and given an operational check. Claymore mines must be cleaned and an inspection performed to insure all accouterments are present.

The individual must be checked to ascertain that all loose ends of clothing and equipment are tied down so as not to rattle. All shiny objects are blackened. If available, camouflage paint should be applied to the skin.

The ambush should travel to its ambush site using all available cover. Only when there is no other way possible should an ambush travel in the open. Before the main body moves into the final ambush position, a small element should first check it out. Only when the area has been thoroughly checked and found clear should the main body move in.

Flank and rear security must always be established. The security elements should each have a claymore mine. Men will be positioned in pairs. A man will never be positioned by himself. The starlight scope should be located with the ambush leader. At least two men will be detailed as starlight scope users. One man will be operating the starlight scope while the other man rests. A wire or piece of string should be strung between all men. By tugging on the wire, all members of the ambush can be alerted to danger of approaching VC in a quiet and rapid manner.

Upon occupying an ambush site there will be absolute noise discipline. There will be no moving around permitted except for the ambush leader or in cases of emergency. There should be no smoking or eating permitted, except on ambushes of extended duration and then only during daylight. The ambush should remain at 100% alert until one hour after EENT. There-

after until one hour prior to BMNT, the ambush can be at 50% alert. One hour prior to BMNT, the ambush should revert back to 100% alert and remain there until daylight.

If at all possible the leader should initiate contact. To facilitate identification of the target, the ambush leader should have all tracer rounds in his first two magazines. To assist in marking the target, the starlight scope users should also have their first two magazines full of tracer ammunition. If at any time the VC approaching an ambush site veer away from the killing zone, contact should be initiated by the man best able to identify the target. As a consequence, for ease of identification all members of an ambush should carry two magazines full of a mixture of tracer and ball ammunition.

When ambushing a sampan on a waterway and after contact has been initiated, hand grenades should be thrown into the water to kill VC attempting to escape by swimming under water. Continuous fire should be kept on the target until the ambush leader gives the command to cease fire. Should the need arise for immediate illumination, a star cluster can be used.

After the contact has been broken and if the tactical situation permits, a search of the target area should be made to immediately retrieve any weapons or documents carried by the VC. After completion of the search, the ambush should shift to an alternate position, from which it can observe its former position. When daylight arrives the ambush patrol should return to its former position and make a thorough search of the target area.

The return of the ambush patrol will be conducted just like its movement into position. The patrol must be as alert returning as it was during movement to the ambush site.

The unit commander will debrief each ambush leader upon his return when there has been enemy contact or any significant activity. This will serve as a vehicle for gathering intelligence and for ascertaining lesons learned. The ambush leader will always critique his men and point out any mistakes made. Before standdown is permitted, all weapons and equipment will be thoroughly cleaned.

SLIDE 1

The price paid when violating too many of these guidelines was clearly demonstrated on the night of 14 November 1967. That night, an ambush patrol was given the mission of ambushing the RACH TAN Canal, south of THU DUC. This was in a highly populated area from which the

VC had been almost completely cleared out. However, it was difficult to move into any ambush site undetected by farmers in the area. The patrol departed the battalion base camp at dusk and moved into their ambush site at dark. The route and site had been used many times before. To reach their ambush site they crossed several farm yards, particularly that of house #1 in this diagram.

The patrol leader placed his men along the north-south dike which was the best position available and gave them a commanding view of the main canal. Out of the six claymores he carried, only two were placed at the positions indicated with a trip flare each. Up to 2300 hours, communications problems were experienced with this patrol. This was caused mainly by dozing operators. This laxness was caused by the fact that the unit had not had contact for several months and the men had gotten the attitude that they were in a secure area and there were no dangers from the enemy.

The following is a sequence of events started at 2300 hours:

At 2300 hours, the ambush saw three people to the north but they could not identify them as VC. They did not open fire and were not spotted.

At 2310 hours, five people were observed to the north with a motor bike. Again they could not identify them as VC. They did not fire and were not spotted.

At 2400 hours, a large truck was heard about 200 meters north. It stopped and many dogs began barking.

At 0100 hours, the north trip flare was activated. The #1 and #2 men engaged one VC. They heard the man yell and saw him fall backwards clutching face. An M-79 hit him in the leg and he took an M-16 burst in the face.

At 0200 hours, two men were seen to the east and were engaged by the #10 man with an M-79. At the same time a radio was playing American music very loud from house #1. The house had outside speakers mounted and three ambush patrols could hear the music as far as 500 meters away. It was assumed that the music was to attract attention to the fact that there were Americans near by and to camouflage the noise of enemy soldiers moving into position around the ambush.

At approximately 0300 hours, the ambush was probed from the east by small arms fire. It returned the fire. However, the machine gun did not engage the enemy. At this point, it was suggested to the patrol leader that he move his ambush. However, he replied that there was no other site available and he felt he couldn't risk moving at this time.

At 0455 hours, the company command net was jammed. The jamming signal was a combination of bag pipes and continuous wave. Communications with the patrol became very difficult.

At 0500 hours, the VC opened fire with M-79's, claymores, and many automatic weapons from the north, east and south of the canal. The ambush patrol managed to transmit the fact that they were under heavy attack as they scrambled into the rice paddy. In their haste they pulled the radio into the water and contact was lost.

The ambush was effectively counter ambushed by the enemy because the patrol leader failed to heed the following basic guide lines:

A previously established pattern was followed by using the same route and same site used too often before.

No immediate action drill had been planned in the event they were ambushed.

An alternate ambush position had not been selected.

The patrol leader failed to plan for an adequate configuration of his ambush at the ambush site.

Effective coordination with the reaction force was not made, therefore they were not able to arrive on time to assist the beleaguered patrol. They arrived 30 minutes after the fight was over.

The ambush failed to travel to its ambush site using all available cover.

Flank and rear security was ignored. Additional claymores were not put out.

In addition the company failed to have an alternate means of communication to take care of an emergency in the event the patrol's radio should be knocked out.

Since that ambush, 85% to 90% of the night ambushes sent out by this particular company have been in conjunction with search and destroy missions. The missions have basically required a search during the day. The unit would stop at approximately 1600 hours to set up a company perimeter and be resupplied. At night the unit would send out two ambush patrols. This leaves very little time for the troops to rest and much less time for daylight reconnaissance of the ambush site, preparation and rehearsal of the ambush, and inspection of the ambush party. Another

consideration is the nature of the area and the rules of engagement for our areas of operation. Around Bien Hoa and Long Binh south of the Song Dong Nai, our current area of operation, clearance of supporting artillery fire takes a long time due to the safety requirements of aircraft landing and taking off from the Bien Hoa air base. Because the curfew was not enforced, the rules of engagement prescribed that a patrol could only open fire if fired upon or if they could see weapons on their prospective quarry.

To prevent the mistakes made on 14 November, ambush sites are selected during search operations conducted during daylight hours. As they are found, the location is pointed out to the platoon leader and he is given time to evaluate it and show his squad leaders the location. At approximately 1600 hours, the company stops its search for the day and goes into a perimeter of two platoons. The other two platoons scheduled for ambush that night prepare to go to their ambush sites after dark. If, during the search, suitable ambush sites could not be located, ambush sites are placed on the most likely avenues of approach to the company perimeter. Upon finding these sites, the ambush patrol will move through them, not stopping, and return over a different route so as not to compromise their locations. They must select a primary position, and an alternate position to move to in case the first is discovered. In selecting a site, the most obvious sites are avoided. Ambushes are placed within supporting distance of each other and act as reaction forces for each other. This provides a platoon that can maneuver in support rather than having to move the company first. The company's location is not a secret and it could easily be ambushed on the way to assist the ambush. This technique provides time for the company to take a round about route to assist a beleaguered platoon, avoiding an ambush on the most direct route.

Upon returning to the company perimeter, the platoons complete their preparation for the ambush. The ambush personnel leave their packs, air mattresses, and cigarettes at the company perimeter and depart at dusk. If the patrol leaves during daylight hours, it will leave in the opposite direction from its destination and move under cover towards the ambush site, stopping well away from it to wait until darkness before moving into position. Once close to the site, the patrol will again stop and send a small reconnaissance party to check out the area and make sure it has not been occupied by the enemy. When the party indicates the area is clear either by calling back on the squad radio or by returning, the ambush moves into position.

At the ambush site, most of the fire power is directed into the killing zone and strong security elements are placed on the flanks and rear.

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Scout dogs are used as early warning, however, it must be verified that the dog has been on ambushes before and that he gives very quiet or silent alerts. Some dogs are too noisy for ambushes.

Claymores are placed not only to reinforce the killing power of the ambush, but also to provide 360 degrees security. Claymores should be concealed in the brush or grass where they will not be detected by the enemy. If possible, we place them with their backs to a tree, rock, or dirt mounds that will act as a tamper and give force to the shrapnel.

Men on ambush are on 100% alert until one hour after EENT and from one hour prior BMNT until daylight. In between times they are on a 50% alert. They sleep with their combat gear on and on line so that no movement will be required to get into position to spring the ambush.

On extremely dark nights, artillery illumination is fired far enough away so that the eye cannot sense any illumination of the area, yet close enough to provide enough illumination to permit the use of starlight scopes.

A radio check is initiated every half hour by the patrols calling the company using a combination of whisper and blowing into the microphone to guarantee noise discipline. A radio check is initiated by the company twice during the night to ascertain that the patrols are awake.

Emergency communications procedures have been set up which require that if the company command net is jammed, all stations switch to the company fire direction net. If this proves ineffective, they enter the battalion command net. Also, if artillery white phosphorous airbursts in the vicinity of the patrol, or the patrol is illuminated by artillery or hand held flares, it is to contact the company NCS. If that fails, the patrol is to contact battalion and if that fails, it is to return to the company perimeter. Should the patrol's radio fail to transmit the operators voice but still break squelch and receive the following signals will be used:

One break - yes

Two breaks - no

Three breaks - say again

In addition, the company will try to establish contact with the patrol on the platoon net, entering that net with an AN/PRC 25 on small squelch.

Communications within the ambush is provided by two PRC 25s, the platoon's squad radios, and whenever possible, by the use of wire and TA-1s.

Communications are maintained at least between the flanks and the center for proper control of the ambush.

Ambush patrol leaders constantly remind their riflemen of the importance of keeping the fire low. A tool employed to do this, is to insist that every magazine has tracers as the first and last two rounds. The first round tells the rifleman if he is firing low or high and the last two rounds verify this again and informs him that his magazine is empty.

The ambush patrol leader springs the ambush either on a voice or radio command, by opening fire or by blowing a claymore into the killing zone.

SLIDE 2

In conclusion these are the most important guidelines in the conduct of night ambushes. The success or failure of a night ambush is dependent on whether they are followed.

X= VC 2-3 MAN POSITIONS
O= US POSITION (2-3 M)
V= TRIF FLARE
= US CLAYMORE
N
HOUSE
PAGODA
HSE
2
ESE
1
X 1
X 2
30 M
X 3
X 4
X 5
20 M
30 M
X 6
X 7
X 8
X 9
X 10
V
3 SAMPAN LANDINGS
3 SAMPANS
RACH TAN
X 12
X 11



SLIDE 1

GUIDELINES FOR AMBUSHES

1. AMBUSHES ARE PLANNED TO INTERDICT KNOWN ROUTES OF VC TRAVEL.
2. A PATTERN IS NOT ESTABLISHED.
3. REACTION FORCE MUST BE DESIGNATED.
4. PLAN ALTERNATE POSITIONS.
5. PHYSICAL INSPECTION OF MEN.
6. MOVE TO SITE USING ALL AVAILABLE COVER.
7. FLANK AND REAR SECURITY ESTABLISHED.
8. AMBUSH LEADER SHOULD INITIATE CONTACT IF POSSIBLE.
9. SEARCH AREA IMMEDIATELY AFTER CONTACT IS BROKEN.
10. DEBRIEF PATROL.

SLIDE 2

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4th INFANTRY DIVISION PRESENTATION

The purpose of this discussion is to indicate how the 4th Infantry Division conducts night operations in dense jungle.

The division area of operations (AO) extends from Kontum Province on the north to Darlac Province on the south. The western edge of the AO is the Laotian and Cambodian border. The eastern edge is determined by the eastern boundary of each included province. This AO incorporates in excess of 8,000 square miles of which 70% is considered dense jungle.

The terrain is composed of rugged mountains in the north gradually leveling to a broad plain in the south. The terrain found in the Pleiku area consists of a relatively flat table in the vicinity of Pleiku City with rolling hills and smaller plateaus both east and west of the city.

The vegetation found in the AO includes the entire spectrum of jungle from primary in the flat areas to triple canopy in the mountains. In the vicinity of river beds and mountain springs, bamboo thickets will invariably be found. In almost all areas appearing clear from the air, elephant grass and scrub brush reaching a height of six to twelve feet can be found. This dense jungle affords little or no visibility beyond 20 meters. In many instances, visibility is limited to ten feet. An attacking or moving force is at a disadvantage due to the physical inability to move and maintain control.

The weather is mild by contrast to other areas in Vietnam. The monsoon rains will begin in June and continue through October. The dry season extends from early November through early June. During both wet and dry seasons, extremes of temperature are experienced with mid-day temperatures reaching a humid high of 110° and late evening temperatures dropping into the 40's and high 30's.

Trafficability and mobility are limited to foot and air movement upon leaving the road network during the rainy season. During the dry season, the open plateaus become suitable for track movement.

The division base camp is located south of Pleiku City in a permanent installation. The brigades have established semi-permanent forward bases to best control and support the maneuver battalions. The maneuver battalions are deployed in temporary fire support bases (FSB) which move frequently to best control and support the maneuver companies. Companies establish patrol bases and move at least every two days. Based on the tactical situation, FSB's will move to support the companies. FSB

moves are normally accomplished by CH-47 due to the lack of roads and density of the terrain. From time to time, maneuver companies will be rotated from the field into the FSB.

Because of the nature of the terrain in the division AO and the configuration of the deployed elements, night operations are conducted both as an enhancement of the defense of installations and bases and as a means to destroy the enemy. Night operations are never used to seek out and fix the enemy.

The objectives of night operations are destruction of enemy forces, enhancement of the defense of fixed installations and forward bases, denial of free movement to the enemy, and to gain surprise.

In order to achieve these objectives, the following tactics and techniques are available:

The deliberate ambush is the most effective and most frequently employed night tactic in dense jungle. The reasons for this are:

A unit can cover a larger area at night by employing the ambush.

The enemy is denied free movement.

The use of the ambush facilitates destruction of the enemy.

Employment of the ambush favors the ambusher.

The following conditions should exist prior to deploying a deliberate ambush:

A suitable ambush site with an avenue of approach should be available.

The element conducting the ambush must be sufficiently manned and armed to accomplish all around security, provide warning parties, and sustain itself in the event of attack by a larger force.

The success of a deliberate ambush depends upon three factors. These factors are detailed planning, thorough preparation to include servicing of night visual devices, and continuous training and rehearsal.

When conducting search and destroy operations, a rifle company will often employ two rifle platoons to conduct daylight operations. The third platoon will concentrate its efforts on night ambushes.

Ambush sites will be determined by the findings of the two platoons conducting daylight operations.

Some specific techniques utilized when conducting the deliberate ambush in dense jungle include:

Method of movement to the ambush site. An approach is selected to allow entry into the position from the rear to prevent disturbing the enemy avenue of approach and the surrounding foliage.

Upon reconnoitering the position and emplacing the killer element, security element, and earlier warning parties, the platoon leader will insure that firing funnels are cleared and that sectors of fire interlock to maximize complete coverage of the kill zone. He will then select appropriate positions for claymore mines, 90mm recoilless rifles and light machine gun emplacements. In dense foliage it is the practice to place the killer element within 10-15 meters of the kill zone. This necessitates especially careful placement of claymore mines and light machine guns. Trip flares rigged in trees and beside a trail are often used to illuminate the kill zone, thereby identifying targets and rendering a dazzle effect on the enemy. Security of the ambush site is provided by a listening post (LP) and placement of claymore mines. It must be emphasized that in the event the enemy launches a counter attack, attempts to flank the ambush site, or approaches from an unexpected direction, alternate positions are designed for each man. If the ambush is penetrated and split, designated rally points are chosen along preselected routes of withdrawal. To insure the success of a withdrawal under pressure the use of passwords and identification devices is a necessity.

When the site is prepared, the platoon will then lie in wait for the approach of the enemy. In the dense jungle, the distance between the early warning party and the killer element may be substantially short, between 30-50 meters. A silent method used to alert the killer element is a continuous strand of rope passing through each position. A system of signals consisting of tugs insures that every man is alerted. This system is used with a view toward enforcing complete silence.

Once an ambush is initiated, planned artillery fires should be employed to block routes of withdrawal and seal approaches into the area in order to contain the ambushed enemy and deny access to other enemy elements which may be following. All available fire from the killer element must be brought to bear on the enemy in the kill zone to include small arms, automatic crew served weapons, and claymore mines. The initial volume of fire should be so violent as to insure destruction of all enemy in the zone. Following the initial volume of fire, the

kill zone should be swept to insure that the enemy has not escaped. In dense terrain this is best accomplished with the aid of illumination, with a cover man for each sweep man.

A second night operation well suited to dense jungle is the ambush patrol. Essentially, the ambush patrol is a mobile LP with a limited fighting capability. The planning, preparation, and employment of ambush patrols are similar to that of a deliberate ambush with a few exceptions. These exceptions are:

The ambush patrol is best employed in close proximity to a larger force.

The ambush patrol is composed of three to five individuals.

The ambush patrol is not suited nor intended for sustained contact. It will ambush an enemy force and immediately withdraw on a previously selected route to a predetermined position. They will then direct artillery and air strikes against the enemy.

An ambush patrol should always operate in its assigned sector during the daylight hours to insure familiarization with the terrain.

Some specific techniques utilized in employing ambush patrols in dense jungle at night include:

Saturation of an area. Since the ambush patrol is a small force, only the capability to equip them with sufficient communication and night visual devices limits the number that may be deployed in a given area. Used in the saturation role, they can effectively cover avenues of approach into a fixed installation or base area, providing early warning and inflicting limited punishment upon the enemy. Unless hotly pursued, the ambush patrol will not return to the installation or base, but will move to another preselected position and prepare to again ambush the enemy should he continue his advance, or call and adjust supporting fires on his location should he halt or attempt to withdraw.

When ambush patrols are used to saturate an area, the commander employing them must carefully plan and coordinate their movement. The greatest success is insured when the patrol occupies its primary position during daylight hours and moves only in the event of enemy contact.

An ambush patrol is an excellent means of enhancing security of an organized position and is capable of giving early warning of an approaching enemy. Because the patrol does attempt to ambush, they tend to disorganize the enemy causing premature deployment of his forces if he is attacking, or immediate withdrawal if his intention is to probe.

A third tactic is night movement to gain tactical surprise. In dense jungle, this type of an operation is generally considered infeasible and is used only when a special situation dictates. Such an operation as cordon and search may be critical enough to necessitate moving a unit through dense jungle at night to successfully perform its mission. Circumstances may even necessitate positioning units under the cover of darkness to enable them to initiate search and destroy operations against an especially lucrative enemy location. A more common example of a night movement brought about by necessity would be the withdrawal of a unit in contact. If the situation demanded, the withdrawal would be performed in the conventional manner despite the obvious difficulty of movement and control in dense jungle. In any event time and circumstances allowing, the following technique would be used:

A route would be selected and reconnoitered.

Guides would be assigned a short segment of the route.

The guides would move over their portion of the route several times to insure complete familiarization. They would then man a pick-up point. When the main body moves out, each guide would, in turn, lead the move over his portion of the route.

The night attack is generally considered to be infeasible. Our experience with enemy initiated night attacks against friendly elements has borne out the fact that the difficulties encountered with movement and control in dense jungle at night give a decided disadvantage to the attacker. The enemy night attacks in all cases were failures. His losses were high and he enjoyed no success in these endeavors.

It must be realized that in any operation in dense jungle the following disadvantages exist:

It is extremely difficult to employ the M79, 81mm mortar, and hand grenades. Contacts have been made when these valuable weapons could not be employed simply because their use would cause excessive friendly casualties.

Difficulty is experienced in adjusting artillery and close air support because the strike of the round or bomb can seldom be observed.

Difficulty is experienced in controlling maneuver elements all the way down to squad and fire team level.

It is virtually impossible to mark a position on the ground so that it may be observed from the air when operating under thick jungle canopy.

With these disadvantages constantly present, it is readily understandable that they would become more intensified at night.

Our own attempts during the recent Battle of Kontum to clear enemy positions overlooking the city included a night attack. This attack was a failure primarily because of the density of the jungle through which the attacking force had to move and fight.

Tactical doctrine points out that there are certain requirements which favor a night attack. These requirements are:

Limited objective.

Well defined objective.

Enemy positions not extensive or prepared in depth.

Preponderance of force locally.

Surprise possible.

Troops have the will to engage the enemy in close combat.

Even though all these requirements may exist, the difficulty of control and movement in dense jungle at night would virtually negate the conduct of a night attack. Because it is so difficult to move quietly in dense jungle, surprise is virtually impossible to attain. Therefore, if a night attack were an absolute necessity, it should be conducted in the following manner:

During daylight, lines of departure and routes of approach are reconnoitered and marked as close to the objective as possible. The forces designated to conduct the attack are moved as close to the objective as possible. Detailed plans for illumination, supporting fires, command and control, and actions to be taken after the objective is occupied are made. In the conduct of the attack, forces move in column, the flanks of the enemy position are marked with illumination rounds, and supporting fires are massed in order to saturate the objective thereby keeping the enemy fixed in position and reducing his vision. The enemy automatic weapons are immediately taken under fire and destroyed by the attacking force's base of fire. The final assault is conducted when it becomes apparent that excessive friendly casualties would not be sustained. Upon siezure of the objective, all night sensing and visual devices are immediately and carefully emplaced to aid in the repelling of a counterattack.

The 4th Infantry Division, however, does not believe in night attacks in dense jungle and would employ them only as a last resort.

The situation must be carefully analyzed to determine if night operations are feasible. Generally, the disadvantages of night movement in dense jungle outweigh advantages which may be gained. The primary advantage gained in night operations is the element of surprise. This advantage is virtually impossible to attain against an alert enemy since the jungle itself, especially at night, affords ample noise in the form of human movement and animal noises which warn of movement.

In the conduct of any night operation, detailed planning of the operation, thorough preparation of men and equipment, and a continuous program to improve required skills through rehearsal are necessary.

The following areas must be thoroughly considered:

Night visual and sensing devices must be checked, compasses set, and marking rounds planned.

Noise and light discipline is of utmost importance to prevent detection. Positive leadership and constant reminders to everyone are necessary. Inspection of clothing and equipment to decrease noise is a must.

March discipline to include stealthy, controlled movement is necessary. Every man must be thoroughly oriented on this critical aspect.

In summary, the objectives of night operations in the 4th Division area of operations are:

To enhance defense of fixed installations and forward bases.

To destroy enemy forces in the area.

To deny free movement to the enemy.

To gain tactical surprise.

The key factors to be considered and acted upon in using night operations in dense jungle are:

Analysis of the situat on.

Detailed planning.

Thorough preparation.

In view of the foregoing discussion, it may be said that dense jungle favors the force who lies in wait. For that reason, the deliberate ambush and ambush patrol are the most feasible and effective operations to be conducted during the hours of darkness.

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11th ACR PRESENTATION

This discussion concerns night armor operations in RVN. More specifically, it concerns night operations conducted by the 11th Armored Cavalry Regiment. The regiment does not have a rigid set of rules for night operations. It operates throughout the entire III Corps Tactical Zone in all types of terrain. What works in the jungle may not work in the rice paddies. The regimental commander constantly stresses that both night and day operations must be based on doctrine and a great deal of thinking and ingenuity.

An armor unit is primarily an offensive unit. This may sound like a cliche but to those in the regiment it is a reality. The regiment is organized, trained, and equipped for rapid deployment in the offense. Offensive capabilities are even used in the defense.

Two examples of night offensive actions will be discussed to show what can be accomplished at night. On the night of 18 February 1968, L Troop, 3d Squadron, 11th ACR was in a troop night defensive position seven kilometers west of the Tan Son Nhut runway. The troop position was in a rice paddy area. The paddies were dry providing excellent trafficability. The paddy banks were the low, knee-high types that did not hinder mobility or observation. The fields of fire were excellent and can best be described as being at tracer burn out range for a 7.62 machine gun. The troop detected movement some distance outside the perimeter. The troop commander could not determine the intent of the enemy force. After analyzing the situation the troop commander made his decision. That decision was to attack the VC force with two of his platoons. The personnel carriers with armor kits (ACAV's) were able to close with the enemy force. The contact was initiated at 180335H February 1968 and lasted until 180902H Feb 68. The results of this offensive night operation by the troop were 24 VC KIA and 1 PW compared to three US WHA. Thus the troop detected the VC at night, moved into the attack and caught the VC flatfooted. The firepower, mobility and the aggressive offensive attitude of the troop made this action possible and successful.

The next example concerns a combined infantry and armor night operation. In December 1967, E and F Troop, 2d Squadron, 11th ACR and a rifle company of the 1st Infantry Division conducted a cordon and search of a village between Ben Cat and Phouc Vinh. At about 0100 hours, the cavalry troops with the infantrymen riding on the ACAV's rapidly established a cordon in a very aggressive manner. The ACAV's surrounded the village and the riflemen went in between the ACAV's to bolster the cordon and prevent exfiltration from the village. At dawn the riflemen searched the village and, while they did not find any VC, they discovered a sizable cache of mines. The mobility inherent to the cavalry enabled the cordon to be established at night in the shortest possible time.

L Troop's action brings up another rather obvious point. In the offense, the fighting stations of the individual trooper is in his armored vehicle. He fights mounted. This is also true in the defense. Ambush patrols and listening posts are established, but the fighting station of the individual trooper is still in his ACAV or his tank.

When elements of the regiment are going to be in a stationary posture for the night, troop size or squadron size night defensive positions are not always established. In the past, platoon size, troop size and squadron size night defensive positions were used. The determining factor is not the SOP or a rigid set of rules, but the commander's decision based on his analysis of certain facts.

The regimental commander considers the mission that units are assigned. For example, if the mission is blocking enemy movement across a road or terrain feature, he may decide on platoon size positions in order to spread units across the length of the road or across the entire terrain feature. If on the other hand, the unit is simply spending the night or a portion of the night in an attack position, he may decide to use squadron size night defensive positions.

The regimental commander also considers the intelligence picture prior to determining the size force that will be employed at night. If the intelligence indicates that the enemy is likely to employ rockets and mortars, he is less apt to gather a whole squadron in one location. If the intelligence indicates the likelihood of a ground attack, he will not deploy in platoon size pockets.

Artillery and mortars are used the same at night as they are during the day. Defensive concentrations are planned and fired and the batteries are positioned for mutual support. All 155mm howitzers are used in the direct fire plan. On several occasions a battery was put into position in the jungle where it had poor fields of fire. On one occasion, tanks knocked down a few prominent trees. On another occasion a few well placed 155 HE rounds and did the job quite nicely.

Several important lessons were learned concerning the use of aircraft at night. The forward air controllers (FAC's) must be even more knowledgeable of the tactical situation at night than in the day time. The FAC is required to be in the command post, not only as a staff officer, but to assist the airborne FAC. The FAC's operate right out of the command post as was the case during an operation at Loc Ninh. When a FAC took off on a mission, he received a briefing on the current tactical situation by the S-3 air immediately prior to takeoff. This situation was made possible by our command post being located adjacent to the Loc Ninh airstrip. Many times, however, our command post has been in a rather inaccessible location. In order to provide the pilots with the current tactical situation that is so vital to night operations, we

have a FAC remain in the command post only one day and than he is replaced by a new FAC. This has the advantage that the pilots always know the current tactical situation. The pilot returning from the command post always briefs the other pilots. New personnel in country, and even some old hands, sometimes confuse spooky and moonglow when they become excited. Spooky is the armed flare ship and moonglow is the unarmed flare ship. This has led to a unit not receiving the desired type of support. This is nothing more than an educational problem but with the rapid turnover of personnel within the regiment, it deserves mentioning. The regiment has a good number of H-23 (Hiller) helicopters. If the unit is engaged in the daytime, and it appears that the engagement will continue into the night, UH-1D command and control aircraft must be provided to the squadrons as the H-23 is not instrumented for night flying.

The next discussion concerns the insertion of night ambushes. The 11th ACR has tried techniques other than walking out to establish an ambush. A mounted sweep may be conducted through an area and patrol inserted in the process. Success was achieved at Loc Ninh with stay behind patrols. Several VC were engaged as they came into a recently vacated squadron position to look for items left behind. Occasionally ambushes are inserted by helicopter. The VC know the troop capacity of a UH-1D; two or three helicopters may be used to insert a six man patrol. Fake insertions are conducted by having the choppers land momentarily them move out without dropping anyone off. All of these actions are designed to confuse the VC as to the strength and location of our ambushes. Most of the time the unit fights mounted, but it still manages to establish three dismounted listening posts and one ambush patrol per troop per night.

Fire control at night is more important than in the daytime. The enemy has an easier job in determining the location, type and caliber of weapons at night than in the daytime. We do not have any great problem controlling the fire of the trooper on the machine gun because of the fact that tracked vehicles all have radios.

The command posts are concerned only with defense at night. A command post must have an organized plan for its defense and the plan must be known by every last trooper in the command post. New people in the command posts, not only replacements but attached individuals, must be briefed on the plan. Even the command posts maintain an offensive capability when organizing their perimeters. For example, the regimental command post uses the scout section and command vehicle section as a mounted reaction force. One problem area was discovered with the command post troopers. They all know what they do and where they go when they hear the signal for a mortar attack. The same is true for a ground attack. The problem is that some of them forget that a ground attack probably will be concurrent with a mortar attack. This requires constant briefing and supervision.

The regiment has found that the use of scout dogs does not work very well. This is not the fault of the dogs or the handlers. Because of the frequency of the moves, dogs must be transported with the troops. The scout dog teams can be transported in ACAV's or helicopters. Using either mode of transportation, the dogs end up confused and excited. The excited dogs bark on ambush patrol, for example, and generally speaking, cavalry units cannot use the dogs as well as a less mobile unit.

The regiment uses illumination the same as any other unit. The regiment does have several pieces of equipment that are used extensively at night.

Infrared lights and xenon searchlights mounted on the vehicles are used for night vision.

The use of the starlight scope is something rather new and is something 11th ACR troopes are quite enthused about. One night, just south of Loc Ninh, a trooper in the 2d Squadron detected movement in front of his position. He could only catch glimpses of the VC but he thought he saw about six VC. He reported and continued to observe the activity. Then he got his chance. One VC was kneeling beside a tree looking toward the unit. One shot was fired. The trooper fixed his rifle sighting through a starlight scope. The trooper shot him in the center of the chest. The other five VC disappeared. The whole experience must have been rather frustrating for them. The enemy was detected and one was killed without disclosing the position.

Muzzle flashes of small arms impair night vision, however, the muzzle flash from a tank gun will cause spots to appear before the eyes for quite a period. The troopers are aware of this and shut their eyes for the second of the flash. The ACAV crews, however, sometimes get caught off guard. Infantrymen should be briefed to expect and anticipate these flashes when operating around the tanks.

Infantrymen when operating with tank or cavalry units during a night operation should be briefed on tank gun flashes and some other points as well.

Every infantryman cannot be seen at night. If a tank is moving, the infantryman must identify himself to prevent his being run over. He should not shout because he cannot be heard by the tanker who wears earphones. He should use a filtered flashlight and know how to use the standard signals to properly identify himself.

The infantryman must be told that the tracked vehicles may move at night. In some cases, they may back up to move out of a firing position to get into another. It is a natural tendency to get behind something when you are fired upon. The tank or ACAV is often a convenient thing to get behind, however, it is difficult to see a man crouched behind the tank.

In summary, 11th ACR personnel feel that night operations are possible, necessary, and profitable if planned in advance. They should be planned well enough in advance to permit every man to be thoroughly briefed on every aspect of the operation. The example of 1 Troop's operation and the resulting VC body count represent the worth of an armor unit using offensive tactics in a night operation.

5th SPECIAL FORCES GROUP PRESENTATION

Detachment A 502 is the largest Special Forces A Team in country and it kills more of the enemy than any other A Team detachment in Vietnam. The A Team is charged with the mission of advising, assisting, and providing the logistical support for Vietnamese Special Forces or a Vietnamese Special Forces A detachment. The Vietnamese Special Forces A detachment, in turn, has the responsibility of molding Civilian Irregular Defense Group (CIDG) soldiers into an effective fighting force and leading them into combat with the enemy. Whereas Detachment A 502 personnel have absolutely no command authority over the CIDG soldiers, the Vietnamese Special Forces (LLDB-Luc Luong Duc Biet) A Detachment members serve as both advisors and commanders.

The 5th Special Forces Group arms, feeds, houses, clothes, and pays the salary of the CIDG soldier. Detachment A 502 and its counterpart, LLDB Detachment A127, advise a force of 1,517 CIDG soldiers. The CIDG forces consist of nine operational companies, one headquarters company, four combat reconnaissance platoons of 34 men each, one 16 man special action squad, one civic action team, and a number of small support and administrative units. In addition, Detachment A 502 advises 16 platoons of Popular Forces (PF) and one Regional Force (RF) company.

The average CIDG soldier is either Vietnamese or Montagnard. Seventeen percent of the soldiers advised are Montagnards. He is of normal military age, slightly less than average in educational experience, and there is a possibility that he may be an ARVN deserter or experiencing difficulties with the draft. The Vietnamese give each individual a security check and thus far there have been no problems with VC infiltrating the CIDG ranks. CIDG soldiers are put through a two week training program, usually as a unit, immediately after recruitment. LLDB instructors teach them care and maintenance of their M-2 carbines and M-79 marksmanship. Small unit tactics and medical procedures are also taught. This training turns a man who does little or nothing for his country into a soldier who salutes his flag and kills the enemy.

The specific mission of Detachment A 502 is to provide for the western and southwestern defense of Nha Trang. The detachment is headquartered at Taung Dung. It also maintains five outposts at strategic points in the area of operations. Toiu Tu, Op Ngoe, and Bin Than are situated a short distance from the walls of Nha Trang and provide close-in security. The headquarters and two outposts at My Loc and Saui Cat provide in-depth security and are primarily concerned with the destruction of enemy forces in the area. To the north are elements of the 30th ROK Regiment of the Korean White Horse Division and the massive Korean 100th Logistical Command.

Enemy forces in the area include the 7th, 8th, and 9th Battalions of the 183d NVA Regiment, the 95th NVA Regiment, the NVA Independence Battalion, and the 22d NVA Battalion. Note that the enemy units are all North Vietnamese. All major VC units have been eliminated as effective fighting forces.

In the month of March, 22 separate platoon size or larger operations were conducted in this area. These operations varied in length from three days to two weeks and were successful in that a number of NVA soldiers were killed, some equipment was captured, and the enemy was kept off balance and moving. However, the size of the units involved, the density of the jungle foliage, and the ruggedness of the terrain make night operations in this area all but impossible. Special Forces trained RECONDO teams, not connected with Detachment A 502, continually patrol and reconnoiter this area during the hours of darkness.

The most successful night operations have been ambushes conducted in the rice paddies and fields of the valley. This particular section of the country is geographically and economically ideal for ambush employment. The valley is surrounded by rugged mountains and jungles. This is the enemy's home. It is capable of providing only the barest minimum of nourishment in the form of manioc plants, edible roots, and a form of maze. The valley, by contrast, is one of the most fertile areas in Vietnam and provides three rice crops. Food is abundant. Therefore to obtain food and supplies, distribute propaganda, contact the people and execute military operations, the enemy must leave the relative safety of the mountains and journey by night, across the open rice paddies, to the populated areas.

Ambushes employed by the CIDG require no resupply, a minimum of vehicular transportation, and a minimum of planning. Since the CIDG soldiers speak the language of the people and live in the area of operations, there are, in effect, 1,500 agents from which the LLDB gather information to plan ambushes.

Since 1 January, 3,670 ambushes, ranging from squad to platoon size, have killed 94 of the enemy and captured 24. On any given night there are from 25 to 50 CIDG and SF ambushes placed along likely avenues of enemy infiltration. For every enemy infiltration party which actually moves into the killing zone of one of the ambushes and is destroyed, at least two more are spotted from a distance, fired on, and driven back into the mountains. Thus the enemy's logistical links with the population are effectively hampered if not severed. Intelligence reports indicate he is desperately lacking in supplies and medical equipment. He is forced to rely on long dangerous supply trains coming across the mountains from the southwest. The psychological implications of these ambushes on the enemy are readily apparent. He is literally taking his life in his own hands when he decides to enter the valley.

The mechanics of the ambush operations are relatively simple. The companies and reconnaissance platoons are distributed unevenly throughout the area and are within a 30 minute walk of their night ambush positions. Obviously the number of ambush positions prohibit the accompanying of each ambush patrol by Americans. However, an attempt is made to place US Special Forces personnel with the units most likely to make contact with the enemy. A typical night ambush operation would go something like this. About an hour before dark two American advisors, a Montagnard radio carrier and an interpreter leave Detachment A 502 Headquarters or one of the outposts and are driven by jeep to the command post of the company they advise. They are

briefed by the unit commander, either CIDG or Vietnemese Special Forces, on the location of the ambush sites, intelligence information, and size of the ambush. As dusk is falling the two US personnel move off with the ambush party they are to accompany to a night command post, usually within 100 meters of the actual ambush site. Rucksacks are dropped off at this site and guards are positioned to prevent attack of the ambush from the rear. Then the party moves silently into position, usually along a paddy dike, a hedgerow, or a woodline, and waits for the enemy. The senior American advisor positions himself next to the ambush leader and radios his location to camp headquarters. The other American places himself strategically along the ambush line. A Starlight Scope is used continually to survey the open areas to the front of the ambush location. If no enemy appear within six or seven hours, the ambush patrol leader will usually pull his men back to the night command post and, after checking the security, allow them to sleep. Many of the units on ambush meet the full day's schedule ahead of them. Prime time for the enemy contact is between 2100 hours and midnight. NVA foraging parties leaving the mountains after this time would not be able to secure their provisions and return to cover before daybreak.

In the morning the patrol is reunited with its parent unit at the day command post and the US personnel are picked up by jeep and returned to their outpost.

If, however, the enemy is sighted, the ambush patrol leader will allow them to advance to the closest point to the killing zone before opening up. At this time the entire patrol will fire their carbines and M-79's until the enemy are all deceased or no longer visible. The ambush leader will then contact his command post and 4.2 illumination will be in the air within two or three minutes of the call. An element from the ambush patrol will then sweep the area and determine the results. After the sweep is completed, the patrol will then withdraw to the night command post or stay in place depending on the judgment of the patrol leader. Should the need arise, HE artillery and mortar fire, dragonships, aircraft, and MEDEVAC helicopters are available through the Nha Trang Installation Defense Command. The ambushes are placed so that they have the capability of reinforcing one another. A company size reaction force is held ready at camp for immediate vehicluar deployment.

The configuration of the ambushes varies considerably. However, it normally follows the outline of the hedgerow behind which it is hidden. Since the terrain is flat and open, the enemy is not channelized and the direction and angle of his approach cannot be accurately forecasted. This also accounts for our infrequent use of command detonated mines in ambushing.

This is the ambush "modus operandi." The night has been taken away from the enemy in this area and he has been hurt considerably. The unit's continuing presence in the outlying villages assures the people of our protection and denies the enemy access to them.

The following lessons have been learned:

Neighborhood dogs can be extremely useful in detecting the presence

of an enemy unit. In this area almost every family has at least one dog. Any troop movement, no matter how stealthy, raises a continuous and moving sound pattern of barking which enables the listener to pinpoint quite accurately a unit's location and direction of movement. That is why ambushes are occupied at dusk when the animals are not as noisy. Thereafter, any barking will signify enemy movement in the area.

Enemy bodies are sometimes used for bait for another ambush. After the trap is sprung and enemy personnel are killed, we will leave the bodies in place and the ambush is reset after feigning withdrawal. When the enemy attempts to carry the bodies away, the ambush is sprung again.

The enemy attempts to use the period when the moon is not so bright to move into the valley. During these periods, the number of ambush patrols is substantially increased and maximum use is made of the Starlight Scope.

There are a number of problems which have been encountered with CIDG soldiers in the execution of ambush operations. Lack of patience is the single most detrimental factor in ambush operations. Sitting motionless for long periods of time breeds boredom and fatigue in the soldier. Sometimes they will fall asleep and begin to snore. Sometimes they will move from cover to relieve themselves. Talking, moving around, eating, and toying with weapons all produce distinctive sounds which carry quite a distance at night. These sounds can betray the location of the ambush. Discipline must be enforced and instilled and absolute silence must prevail if a successful ambush is to be carried out.

Premature initiation of firing is another problem ambushers must contend with. On many occasions, personnel have fired before the enemy unit was in the killing zone and netted only a point man. A few more seconds in waiting would have produced a sizable body count. The best solution to this problem is to have a strict SOP which provides that no one will discharge a round until the ambush leader gives the signal.

Special Forces A Team operations vary considerably from team to team and tactics and techniques employed by one may not fit the situation or mission of the other.

25TH INFANTRY DIVISION PRESENTATION

During the past several months the cavalry squadron has employed a variety of techniques aimed at finding the enemy and then destroying him. It is well known that the VC and NVA accomplish much of their movement at night, therefore, night operations can pay off significant dividends.

SLIDES 1, 2 AND 3

The squadron's organization is as shown on these three slides.

The night operations to be discussed are divided into two categories according to the objective they are designed to achieve. These objectives are to locate the enemy and to fix and destroy the enemy. The terrain consists of flatland dotted with rice paddies, hedgerows, and villages. Trafficability is excellent, the only impediment being the rice paddy dikes, one to three feet high.

Ambush patrols at night are a common technique. At first thought it would seem that these patrols are a dismounted infantry effort, but in the squadron, ambush patrols are employed both with and without tanks and personnel carriers.

When using the track vehicles, a location is used where the tracks can be positioned in hedgerows. Once in position the tracks are completely invisible at night because the hedgerows conceal and break up the outline. Even distant illumination does not reveal the track position. With carefully selected locations, an ambush patrol consisting of both dismounted and mounted elements can be an extremely potent force. When used for this purpose we tailor the platoon.

A cavalry troop can effectively employ a maximum of three ambush patrols, one from each platoon. If the ambushes are located on likely avenues of enemy movement, this technique can produce excellent results. It is noted that this method of finding the enemy can also result in his immediate destruction.

Platoon blocking positions are devices frequently used for finding the enemy. The concept here is to establish a series of platoon strong points astride expected routes of enemy advance or infiltration. The platoon has sufficient strength to block a sizable enemy force, and can hold the position until any necessary reinforcements arrive. Depending upon the terrain and the expected routes of enemy movement, this type of night position is established as close as 500 meters to as much as 2,500 meters between platoons.

A modification of this technique that we have used to cover a wider area, involves movement. If, for example, there are five likely routes of enemy movement, the three platoons can occupy three blocking positions. Then, at planned times during the night, one or more of the platoons can be moved to the other two blocking positions. As a variation, all three platoons can be moved, with one reoccupying the recently evacuated blocking position of another platoon.

Experiments have been made with the movement of mechanized forces at night to determine how easy or difficult it might be for the enemy to discover the location orienting on noise. In open country with scattered hamlets and hedgerows, it is nearly impossible to tell where a mechanized force moved or where it stopped if the listener is more than 200 to 300 meters distant. Therefore, if movement is accomplished cross-country rather than on roads and trails, the VC would have to be in the immediate area to learn a platoon's position prematurely.

The third night method used by the squadron is night reconnaissance patrols, both mounted and dismounted. A mounted reconnaissance patrol at night is risky because its noise and movement give the enemy a greater chance to ambush the patrol. However, a combination of mounted and dismounted reconnaissance activity can be valuable. For example, a platoon and a troop sized reconnaissance patrol have moved to a village area at night. Upon arrival in the vicinity of the village, the platoon dismounted the infantry and scout elements and began a search of the area. Under cover of the search operation and the track noise, a dismounted reconnaissance patrol was placed in position to observe movement into and out of the village. The main force departed with loud engine noises and the stay behind reconnaissance patrol was already in position. If enemy movement was noted or if the enemy was located by the reconnaissance patrol, the remainder of the force was quickly employed as a fixing or maneuvering element.

The use of night operations designed to find the enemy is valuable. Since he moves at night, then at night is when he is most vulnerable. The air cavalry troop is employed in a variety of ways during the night operations. The aero-scouts are not capable of night flying, but the aero-rifle platoon can be used as a rapid means of blocking an enemy route of withdrawal in conjunction with a ground troop's ambush. Using a UH-1D with aircraft parachute flares and a heavy scout team of gunships, an enemy force blocked by ground elements can be effectively pursued from the air. Further, the flare ship and heavy scout team combination can be used to deny large areas to enemy movement, and thus canalize the enemy into those areas where strong points and ambushes are established.

Unless he has something to defend, frequently the enemy will withdraw under the cover of darkness. The dawn attack that follows will thus hit only empty holes. The wait until dawn option most frequently requires night operations that will hold the enemy in position until the daylight attack is initiated.

There are several techniques that may be used to maintain contact during the night thus fixing the enemy in position for the daylight attack. Experience with the "Wait 'Til Dawn" option has not always been wholly successful, but a combination of several techniques seems to offer the best chance of success.

Artillery, mortars and air strikes are normally directed on the enemy positions to force him to stay in his bunkers and then to destroy his positions. There are disadvantages to this technique. It is costly in terms of ammunition and the fixing force has to be withdrawn far enough to make itself safe from the supporting fires. This usually means a loss of visual contact with the enemy. The enemy can withdraw without revealing himself if he is willing to risk it, and thereby defeat the whole purpose of the fires.

Another technique is the employment of combat patrols with missions to observe the enemy, to harass his defensive positions, and to report his movement should he attempt to withdraw or change position. The disadvantage here is that the combat patrol's proximity to the enemy will usually negate the use of supporting fires, at least those directed on the evening positions.

If the US force is of sufficient size, it can occupy blocking positions designed to seal in the enemy until the daylight attack can be mounted. The most obvious disadvantage here is the requirement for a large force. Unless the blocking forces are capable of sealing off the entire enemy position, he will find an opening through which he can escape.

The major disadvantages to these individual techniques can be overcome by using a combination of their best points. For example, a mobile force can establish a series of blocking positions to seal in the enemy. Mounted or dismounted patrols move between these positions. Artillery and air elements pound the enemy positions, and are periodically lifted or shifted while combat patrols move toward the enemy positions, then resumed when the patrol departs the enemy area. Artillery and mortars can be used to fill gaps between the strong points.

SLIDE 4

Relating the foregoing to the cavalry squadron, this schematic illustrates the situation. The assumption here is the deployment of two troops of cavalry. Not shown are the uses of aircraft flares and gunships to deter enemy movement and prevent his escape.

The "Wait Til Dawn" option, then, has the advantage of negating a night attack. Further, this option tends to give the troops some rest from continuous action. The disadvantages, however, are numerous. The enemy is given a significantly better chance to escape. Much of the

fixing force is employed throughout the night and is therefore neither rested nor properly deployed for action at dawn without a major reorientation. If he decides to stay and fight, the enemy has had the entire night to readjust positions, redistribute ammunition, and in general, to strengthen his defenses. A combination of techniques have been used with this option with varying degrees of success. It certainly is a feasible option and after considering all the factors of a given tactical situation, it may be better to use the "Wait Til Dawn" option.

This concludes an initial discussion of the "Wait Til Dawn" option. It should be remembered that the point of view here is based upon two factors.

When the elusive enemy is found, it is desirable to fix and destroy him and when the enemy has not been destroyed by nightfall, action must be taken to prevent his escape.

The other option is to continue the attack at night and it has several good features:

The enemy is given no chance to reconstitute his defense.

He is given the least chance of breaking contact and escaping.

The cover of darkness can reduce casualties when a force is attacking a well fortified and concealed enemy position.

The enemy can be decisively defeated and the remainder of his force dispersed and disorganized.

His concealed firing positions are easily identified by the flashes visible at night.

The enemy is prevented from recovering his dead, wounded, and weapons, thereby providing the successful attacker with much information and equipment.

The cavalry squadron is fully capable of continuing the attack at night. One technique used with some success is to scramble the platoons of the troops as follows:

All tanks of a troop are placed in one tank platoon.

All infantry and scouts are reorganized into two dismounted infantry platoons.

The tanks and personnel carriers establish a defensive position for their own security and provide a mobile reaction force if needed.

The dismounted night attack force consists of two troops with two platoons each. Each platoon will have approximately 25 men, and sufficient machine guns, laws, grenades, and radios available within the squadron to support this organization.

A section consisting of three tanks may be used for support.

Timing is important. For example, if it becomes clear that the enemy positions are not going to be secured before dark, reorganization should be accomplished during the last hour or two of daylight. While the reorganization is occurring, maximum use of artillery and air elements is made to keep the enemy fixed and to soften up his positions.

At dusk, artillery is shifted to likely avenues of enemy withdrawal and the night attack begins. For a cavalry squadron, not usually employed as infantry, there can be little maneuver in the night attack because of the difficulty of movement and control.

If the enemy attempts withdrawal in front of the attacking elements, either artillery or flares and gunships can be used to hit the fleeing elements.

On a recent night attack of this nature, the enemy managed to escape. However, he was forced to leave behind his dead and their weapons, and he suffered nine casualties when the night attack surprised him during his attempt to recover his weapons and dead. The attacking force of dismounted cavalry took only two lightly wounded during the night attack. There were, however, significant casualties suffered during the late afternoon attack of the same positions.

The advantages offered by a night attack include:

Maintaining contact with the enemy.

Some tactical surprise.

Less casualties.

Denies the enemy opportunity to recover his weapons, dead and more seriously wounded.

Does not permit him to break contact without casualties.

The disadvantages include:

Difficulty of control.

Less effective use of the tank and personnel carrier weapons.

The problems attendant to resupply of ammunition, water and food during the transition from daylight action to night action.

Over the past two months, the enemy has been engaged many times under the conditions outlined here. His position was located too late in the day to destroy it prior to dark. In most instances where well-planned, night operations were not continued, the enemy escaped under the cover of darkness taking all his weapons and equipment with him. When the attack was continued at night coupled with the use of all supporting weapons, it was found that the enemy was more decisively beaten. Further, although he was still able to break contact and escape, he did so only at the expense of additional casualties who left behind weapons and ammunition.

CHART I DIVISIONAL ARMD CAV SQDN

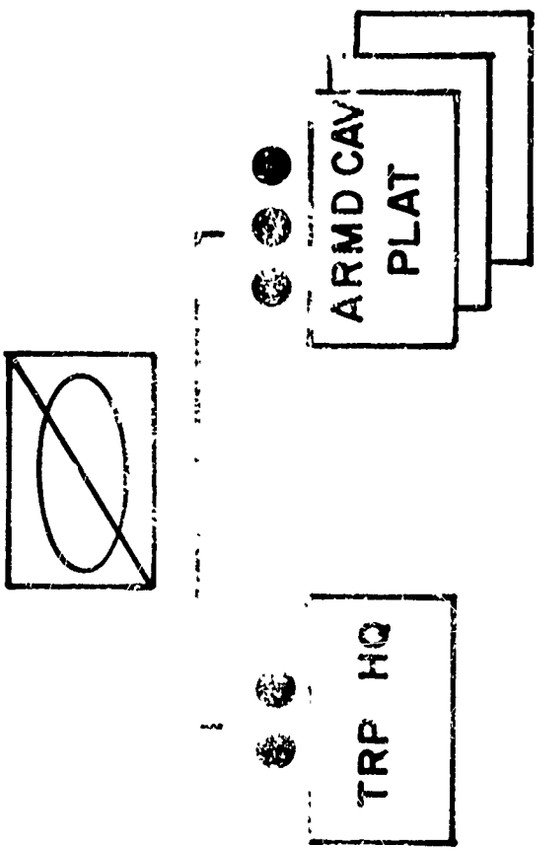
# 3rd SQUADRON 4th CAVALRY
## 25th INF DIV




SLIDE 1

CHART 2A ARMD CAV TRP

# AMORED CAVALRY TROOP




SLIDE 2

CHART 3 COMPLETE ORGN, AIR CAV TRP(FM-17-36)

# AIR CAVALRY TROOP




SLIDE 3

PART 6, FINDING THE ENEMY, NIGHT BLOCKING POSITIONS




SLIDE 4

AMERICAL DIVISION PRESENTATION

During the period immediately after its arrival in the Republic of Vietnam the 1st Battalion, 6th Infantry deployed as a minimum one ambush and one listening post per maneuver platoon each night. Observation posts were manned as required. During the first three months of combat the ambushes were not successful from the standpoint of number of enemy killed or weapons captured. It is believed, however, that the ambushes were successful in denying the enemy the use of roads and trails and served as a deterrent to enemy attacks on night defensive positions or military installations.

In order to improve the effectiveness of the night ambushes a seminar was conducted with the battalion staff officers, company commanders and platoon leaders as the participants. The discussions centered on the various techniques of night operations as written in field manuals, USCONARC pamphlets, lessons learned in Vietnam bulletins, and actual lessons learned. The majority of the participants agreed that more aggressive patrolling was necessary, particularly in view of the patterns established by the local force Viet Cong in the Chu Lai area.

The use of night patrolling soon became standard throughout the battalion. Night patrols were deployed after heavy contact with NVA and main force Viet Cong units in the Da Nang and Hoi An areas of operations. The first successful night patrols were deployed by Company B. Because of the type of movement and the appearance of the men involved, the patrols were named and are now identified as RAT patrols.

The objectives of the RAT patrols are to:

Deny the enemy the use of the night.

Find the enemy.

Impede the enemy rice collecting effort.

Impede the enemy tax collecting effort.

Prevent the enemy mining activity.

To insure that the RAT patrols were successful and to minimize ambushes or casualties, the original RATS pursued an aggressive daylight training program in night patrolling. Although it was recognized that the basic principles of patrolling are included in all basic training ATP's and in the POI's of all basic officer schools, it was believed

that training in a combat environment would be more fruitful. The initial phase commenced in late January in the vicinity of the Binh Sen Bridge complex in the Chu Lai area of operations.

Subsequent to the major attack on the Binh Sen district headquarters on 3 December 1967, the 1st Battalion, 6th Infantry was assigned the mission of securing the Binh Sen Bridge and denying the northern avenue of approach to the district headquarters to the Viet Cong. The area was dominated by heavily populated hamlets that were sympathetic to the Viet Cong. Patrolling could not be conducted in the hamlets until knowledge was gained of the people and the hamlet structure. The battalion commander decided to conduct a series of squad and platoon sized MEDCAPS in the area. Simultaneous with the MEDCAPS, the men were reconnoitering the area selecting rallying points, check points, routes and ambush location. Surprisingly, they were also able to obtain information about the Viet Cong from some of the people. This thorough reconnaissance proved invaluable when the RAT patrols were executed.

The RATS were deployed in late January after conducting intensive training and daylight patrolling programs and being informed about enemy movements, meeting places, mining, and rice and tax collection activities. The first RAT mission was conducted after a MEDCAP and was based on information from a village chief concerning a location used by the Viet Cong near Highway 1, north of the Binh Sen Bridge. This action resulted in two Viet Cong killed (one of them a lieutenant) and the capture of an M-1 carbine and .45 caliber pistol.

The RATS soon became legendary in the battalion and during the period 12 Feb - 1 Apr 67 they killed 33 Viet Cong, wounded five, and captured six. They also captured five weapons, 21 hand grenades, and several documents.

The following lessons learned have been submitted by personnel who have participated in the RAT program:

VOLUNTEERS: Avoid ordering a number of night patrols from each company. Ask for volunteers to form one RAT patrol for each maneuver platoon, Volunteers take pride in the fact that they can defeat the enemy at his own game and develop an esprit that is unparalleled.

LEADERSHIP: Platoon leaders and platoon sergeants provide the most competent leadership for a night patrol. A platoon leader leading a RAT patrol inspires his men and gives them the confidence necessary to overcome the basic human fears of the night and of the unknown.

TRAINING: Training cannot be overemphasized. Daylight training in basic patrolling techniques is of the utmost importance. Every man must have a compass and know how to use it. The selection of routes, check points, rallying points, etc. becomes routine and second nature to every RAT with training.

KNOWLEDGE OF THE AREA OF OPERATIONS: If possible, a company should be given a definite portion of the battalion area of operations. Operating for a period of three to six weeks in the same general area, provides the RATS with the details of the terrain, civilian population, and enemy activities that are so necessary for successful night operations.

RECONNAISSANCE: A thorough reconnaissance is necessary for any type of night operations, particularly a six or eight man RAT patrol. The one to six RATS reconnoiter by providing MEDCAPS, if possible, and execute their mission four or five days following the reconnaissance. Every man must physically reconnoiter the check points, routes, rallying points, objectives, etc. The reconnaissance must be so thorough that reading of a map during a RAT patrol is unnecessary.

CONFIDENCE: Confidence is to a degree synonymous with volunteers when discussing a RAT patrol. The RAT volunteers, working as a team, rapidly develop a high degree of confidence in each other. The RATS have prior knowledge of what to expect from each other. They can assign specific duties within the RAT patrol organizations based on the strengths and weaknesses of its members. Working as a team they develop confidence of success and all fears of the night or unknown are rapidly dispelled.

SUPPORT: The RATS must be informed of the support available to them. The battalion S-3 and S-2 should attend the precombat briefings and assure the RATS that all available combat and combat service support will be assisting them with their mission. The support is obvious to company commanders and staff officers, but lessons learned have indicated that the individual soldier has more confidence in himself and his patrol when he is personally briefed by the company commander and the battalion S-3 and S-2.

There are many more lessons learned in addition to the above but they have been pointed out in the numerous lessons learned bulletins. A review of a few techniques as outlined below may be beneficial:

Uniform and Equipment: The RATS attempt to appear to be "rats", and thereby confuse the enemy. They eliminate the use of steel helmets, since the helmets will immediately identify them as Americans. All precautions are taken such as taping uniforms and covering exposed skin with any substance that will eliminate the glare. Normal RAT equipment follows:

M-16 rifle, one M-60 machine gun, one M-79 grenade launcher.

Green and white star clusters - one per individual.

One compass per individual.

One map sheet per individual.

One small flashlight per individual.

Two Starlight Scopes.

Two M-26 fragmentation grenades per individual.

One gas mask and one CS grenade per individual.

One WP grenade per individual.

Command and Control: RAT patrol leaders use the AN/PRC-25 radio as the primary means of communications with hand and arm signals and pyrotechnic devices as the secondary and emergency signals. Radio silence is mandatory except when in contact. SITREPS are rendered by breaking squelch. Occasionally oral orders will be given to the squad members by the patrol leader on an individual basis.

Continuous Movement: The RATS always move, stopping only at preselected check points that serve as temporary ambushes. Constant movement increases the probability of finding the enemy and/or making contact with him. In addition, movement disciplines the patrol members; they will rigidly adhere to basic patrolling principles while on the move.

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25TH INFANTRY DIVISION PRESENTATION

In the last two months it was recognized that the enemy has many advantages over daytime reconnaissance in force operations by Free World forces. However, since daylight operations are essential, a method was sought of engaging the VC under the most advantageous conditions which would capitalize on daylight operations. The purpose of this presentation is to discuss the techniques that evolved in conducting night ambushes of enemy waterways.

In late February, the 3d Battalion, 22d Infantry was operating in an area 10 kilometers north of Saigon. The mission of the battalion was to stop enemy rocket attacks on the Saigon area and to destroy enemy forces in the area of operations. The mission required the unit to operate in the daytime initially. Using accurate intelligence provided by the local population and the local Popular Force, the center of the rocket activity was located. There ensued a period of extensive daytime offensive operations during which a large VC force was destroyed and a complete rocket launcher with accessories and 16 complete rockets were uncovered. After this fight, the battalion dominated its area of operations. More important to subsequent operations, the soldiers began to know the terrain better than the enemy. This knowledge was largely attributed to the use of local Popular Force members as guides. Daytime operations diminished as the battalion turned more and more to company sized night ambushes as a means of maintaining control of the terrain taken during daylight operations. Once the enemy was under control on the ground, the battalion looked to the waterways as the probable routes of enemy movement and rocket supply in our area.

SITE 1

Soon after its arrival in the area, the battalion received an additional mission to secure an engineer construction project in its area of operation. It was given two 27 foot engineer bridge construction boats to assist in the security operations and to patrol the Saigon River. These boats were so efficient that the battalion requested and received six additional Boston Whalers. The boats enabled larger forces to move within the area and reduced reaction time. Fifty caliber machine guns were mounted on the boats to increase the firepower of our waterborne force.

Since sampans could not be indiscriminately taken under fire during the daytime, the battalion ambushed the waterways at night. This was also the most logical time for the enemy to attempt to move his men and material. To illustrate these techniques, two examples of the battalion's operations will be discussed. The first is an ambush conducted by a company in the area bounded by the square during the night of 29 February to 1 March 1968. It was characterized by the use of boats for insertion and extraction of the ambush force. The ambush site was the intersection of the Doc Mon Canal and the Saigon River. This site

were emplaced on the bottom of the shallow canals primarily in an attempt to take prisoners by stunning the occupants of the sampans.

The ambush was conducted by the lookout elements alerting the killer force when a sampan entered the kill zone. This early warning allowed maximum effective fire by the killer force.

Quite a bit was learned about river ambushes during this night. First of all, there were four separate engagements during the night, all conducted from the same ambush positions. It was concluded that communication between sampans was lacking. If the ambush was sprung and strict noise discipline maintained for one to two hours, another target would appear using the same route. This proved to be an unwarranted conclusion when the battalion discovered the enemy using a traffic cop. He would tap out a signal on the side of a sampan; about 30 minutes later a sampan would appear. The battalion used him until he got wise and fired some warning shots. Secondly, confinement of sampan traffic to the observed waterways, plus early warning, enhances the effectiveness of the ambush. Finally, it was found that after striking a sampan, patient and quiet observation with Starlight scopes and ears afforded an opportunity to hit survivors as they tried to escape. In this situation, the American soldier is far more patient than the Viet Cong.

This ambush, one of the most successful, produced four sunken sampans and at least 22 Viet Cong killed. This included the morning kill and the three swimmers.

The next morning, waterborne extraction was preceded by a visual reconnaissance by a light fire team at first light and a sweep of the immediate area by the company. The return boat ride to the battalion base was also covered by the light fire team.

The second brief example illustrates the insertion and extraction of an ambush without the use of boat transportation.

SLIDE 3

This was a two company operation which took place to the west of the first where the Hoc Mon Canal splits to form a triangle. In this case, Alpha Company was employed on the western triangular island and Company C occupied the eastern island position.

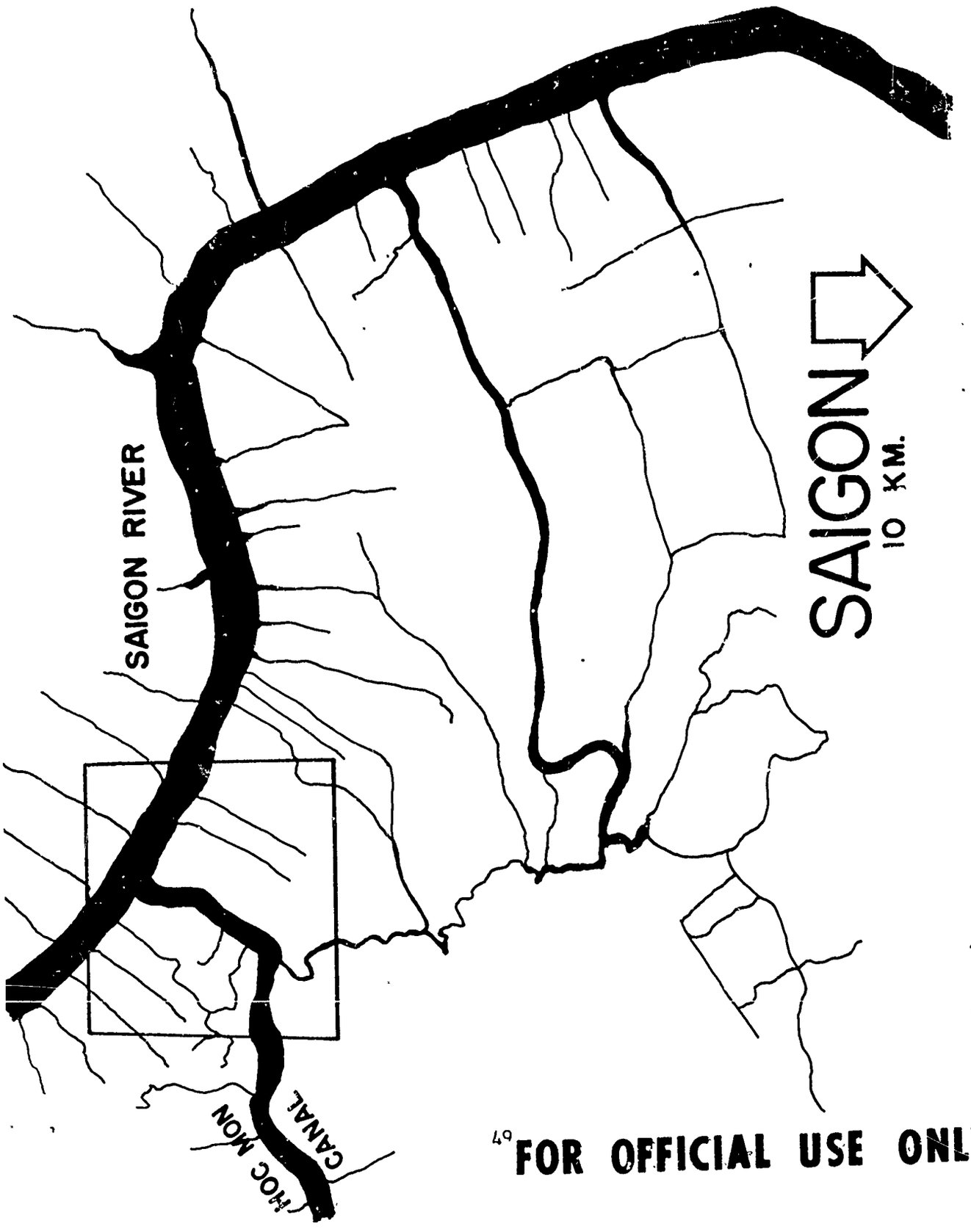
SLIDE 4

This is a blowup of C Company's site. Both companies moved overland and concealed their intentions by searching an adjacent area to the south of their ambush sites. They hid at lunch time and then proceded to their ambush sites at dusk. Each company carried a three-man engineer reconnaissance raft and lengths of nylon rope. The rope was tied to the raft, fore and aft, and a fairly rapid water crossing was accomplished.

A Company had no contact on this night, but Company C found a propaganda center complete with printing press on the island and subsequently engaged 10 Viet Cong moving toward the north bank of the Hoc Mon Canal. The early morning search of the north bank and adjacent areas disclosed five Viet Cong bodies. Again, extraction from the islands was covered by visual reconnaissance provided by a light fire team. Both companies returned to the battalion base by sweeping an area not previously covered. It was during one of these follow-up search operations that C Company found 18 122mm rockets in one cache.

As an example of the effectiveness of this technique, Alpha Company alone has averaged more than six kills per ambush for seven ambushes. While this is not a large kill, it is consistent, and it is believed that the Viet Cong movement into the area was disrupted. Most importantly, the enemy was deprived of freedom of movement at night. It has been observed that the Viet Cong are extremely vulnerable at night. They talk, use trails, repeatedly use the same water routes and generally present easy marks for ambushes. As a result, the normal method of operation now is to employ two companies on a 24-hour operation at all times. All of these operations include a daylight search of a company area of operations, a night ambush, and a sweep back to the battalion base.

There are many psychological benefits accrued by these night ambushes. There have been only two casualties in the entire battalion when operating at night. This is an obvious selling point for the men. The results are tangible and the units have become highly competitive and inventive about ambushing. Finally, companies and platoons are now looking for ambush sites during daylight operations and are actually requesting night ambush missions. As a direct result, it is believed that the enemy who formerly owned the night has now lost his sanctuary.


SAIGON RIVER
SAIGON
10 KM.
HOC MON
CANAL

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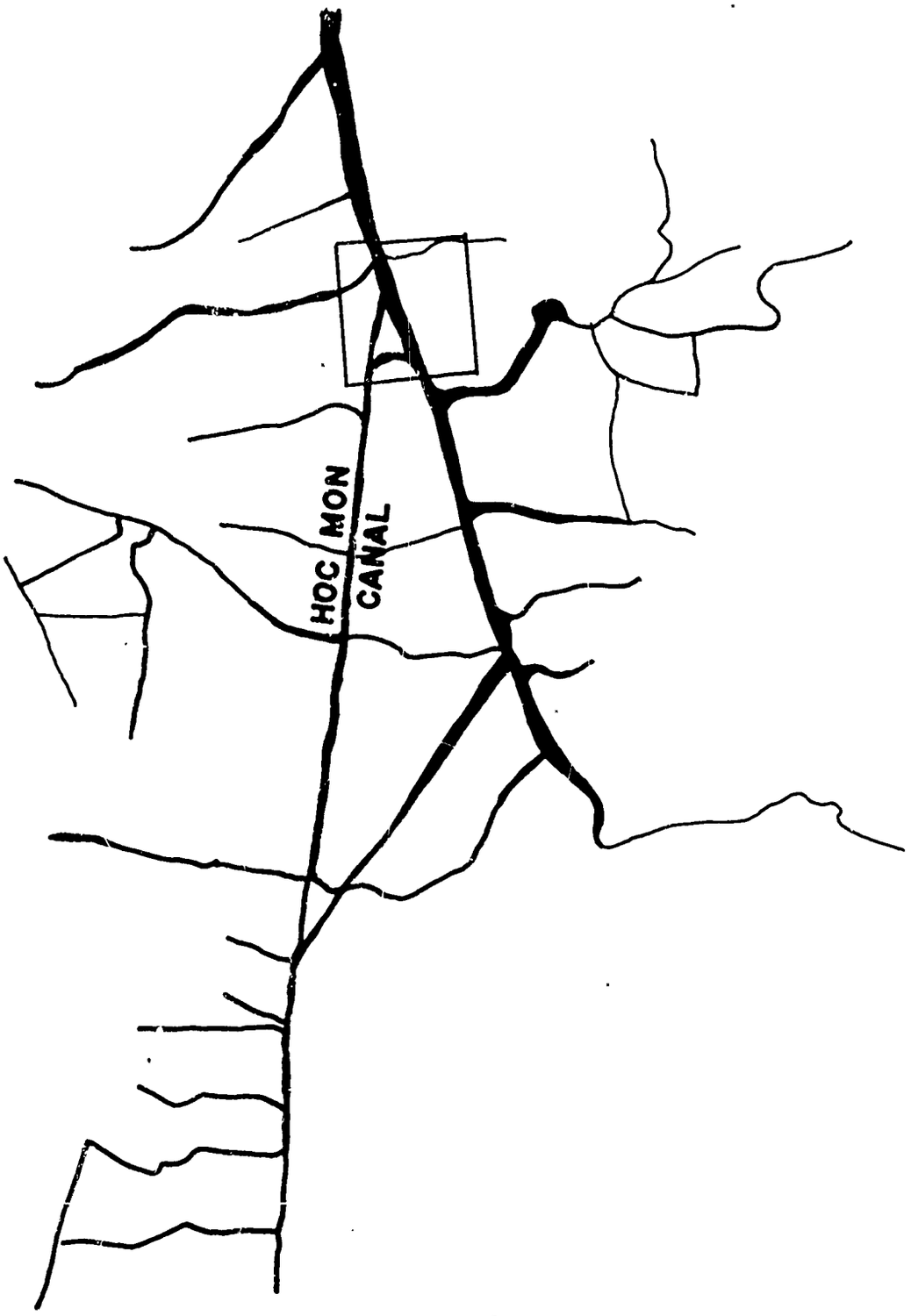
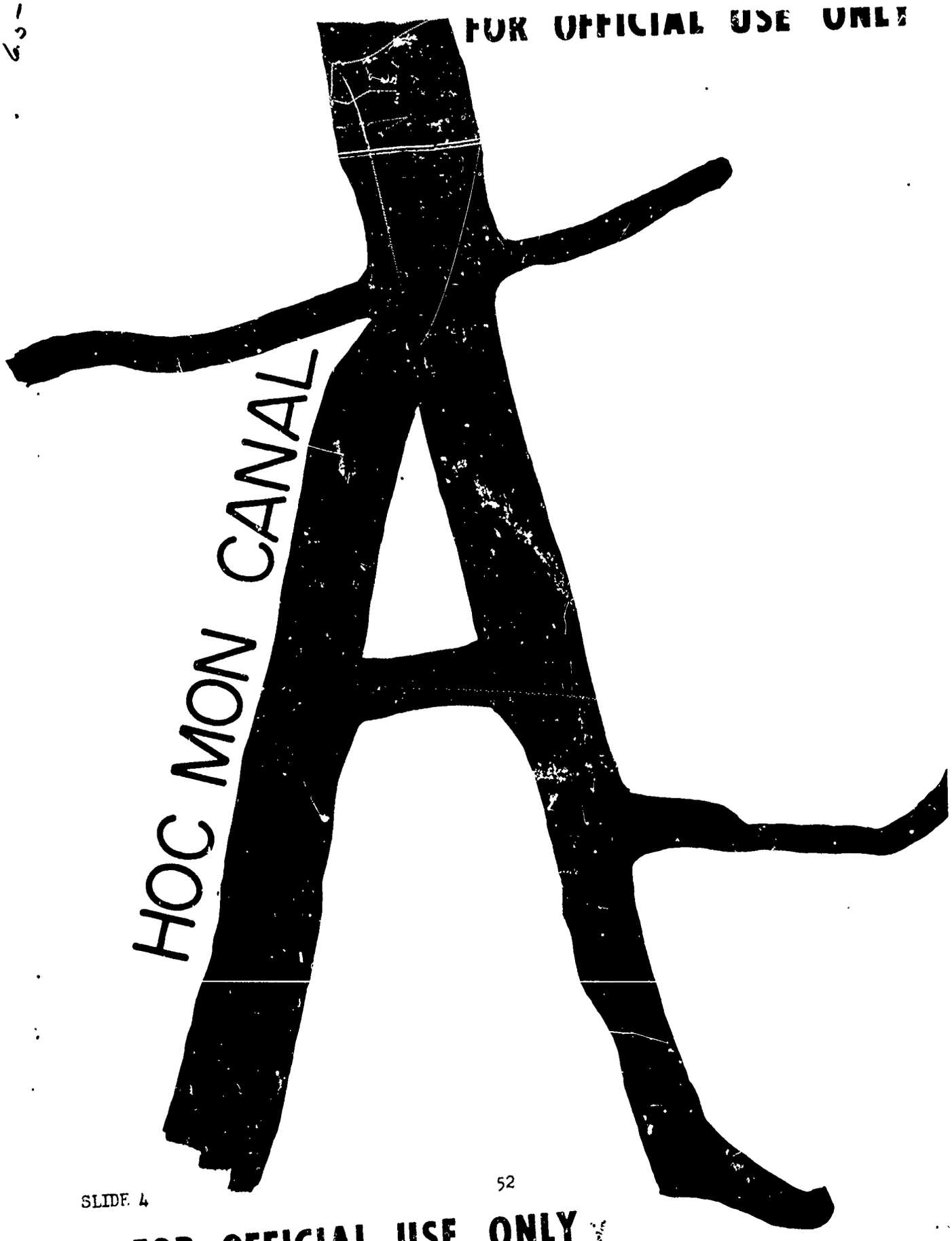
2

OFFICIAL USE ONLY




SLIDE 3




SLIDE 4

9TH INFANTRY DIVISION PRESENTATION

This discussion concerns why the 9th Infantry Division initiated night convoys, planning and coordinating techniques, techniques employed in providing security and fire cover, and the results of night convoy operations.

The 9th Infantry Division conducted night convoys between Long Binh, Xuan Loc and Blackhorse and between Bear Cat, Tan An and Dong Tam. This presentation will be directed towards the experience with convoys into the Delta.

SLIDE 1

9th Infantry Division night convoys into the Delta commenced in May with the expressed purpose to provide necessary resupply and to assert friendly presence on provincial highways. These night convoys were to run between Bear Cat, Tan An and Dong Tam on a periodic basis. This slide shows the planned time and distance factors. The Commanding General directed the division to occupy road space during the hours of darkness at least four nights a week. Later this requirement was increased to six nights a week.

The Commanding General desires that every effort be made to keep Highway 4 from Saigon into the Delta clear of military traffic during daylight hours. The purpose of this maneuver was to allow the free passage of Highway 4 by the ARVN convoys and the civilian populace. This facilitated the free flow of traffic during the peak periods. Additionally, this asserted influence over this main artery of communication during that period when it could be utilized by the enemy forces.

SLIDE 2

The monthly night convoy experience is as indicated on this slide. The number of convoys increased on two occasions to respond to division guidance. The number for September and October met the requirement for four night convoys per week and after 1 November, convoys operated over the roads six night a week.

Generally the convoys consisted of some ten to 20 supply vehicles provided by the 9th Supply and Transport Battalion. This was not an all out effort to keep the forward elements supplied, but a necessary augmentation of the support which was being provided by subordinate units of the 1st Logistical Command. Generally, high priority, critical and sensitive items were selected for shipment from our direct support units at Bear Cat to the brigades located in areas of Tan An and Dong Tam.

SLIDE 3

This slide shows incident rates experienced during the period of night convoy operations. The slide indicates the total number of convoys conducted each month, the number of convoys which encountered enemy activity,

and the number of incidents by type. Approximately 20 percent of the convoys encountered enemy action. However, this contact was more in the line of harassment rather than an all out effort by the enemy to destroy the convoy. Twenty four convoys experienced 47 incidents.

SLIDES 4 AND 5

The next two charts portray the extent of the damage suffered as a result of the enemy attacks. It is interesting to note that in most instances, the enemy fired on the escorted column. Approximately 3,600 vehicles were exposed during the 121 convoys and about 700 during the 24 convoys which experienced incidents. Statistically, the eight damaged vehicles were rather insignificant. The parenthetical entry denotes the number of KHA.

SLIDE 6

The end result of the enemy action coupled with equipment breakdowns along the route was to cause the overall average time required to cover the march distance to increase as indicated on this slide. This is the same as the initial time distance chart with the addition of an experience column. Coordination and communication with escort and security improved in the Bear Cat to Newport leg but delays in movement from Newport through Saigon offset the gain. Road blocks and other incidents caused the half hour increases in the Phu Lam to Tan An to Dong Tam legs.

Planning for a night convoy differs little from planning for a day convoy destined to travel over insecure routes. The 1st Brigade, 9th Infantry Division, operating generally in the Bear Cat area, was tasked with providing security for convoys in that area of operation. Security was not required from Long Binh to Saigon, only security for convoys south of Saigon was required and this was provided by elements of the 3d Brigade at Tan An. With this preface, the following is a short synopsis of how a night convoy was planned and coordinated:

The CO, 9th Supply and Transport Battalion, determined the destination for the required convoy and notified the division transportation officer.

The division transportation officer then determined the most favorable time to run the convoy, prepared the march tables and obtained the highway clearance number.

The support command S3 alerted the G3 to the fact that a convoy was being planned and furnished the required times.

The G3 tasked the 1st and 3d Brigades to provide the required security elements, and informed the Brigades of the linkup points and times.

Prior to 1500 hours on the day of movement, the S3 of the Supply and Transport Battalion informed the transportation officer of the exact number of vehicles to be in the column by type, the cargo to be moved, and its priority.

At 1500 hours on the day of movement, a briefing was conducted by the transportation officer for the convoy commander and the security element commander for the Bear Cat to Long Binh portion of the designated route of march. At this briefing, the march table was issued, frequencies and call signs distributed, check points and linkup times reemphasized, convoy discipline stressed, and details peculiar to the convoy discussed. Written instructions were provided the convoy and security element commanders.

The Commanding General was briefed at his evening briefing at 1700 hours concerning the convoy, the criticality of the supplies, the availability of light fire teams and ground security forces, and intelligence data along the routes. The decision was then made whether the convoy would proceed as scheduled or stand down.

If the mission was ordered, the convoy and security element commanders checked into the support command net. Linkup with the Bear Cat to Long Binh security element was reported and barring unforeseen circumstances, the convoy then crossed the start point at the designated time.

The convoy commander called in all check points to the support operations center, which notified the operations center of the convoy location. This procedure was followed until the convoy reached the southwest edge of Saigon. At that point the convoy was met by the security element provided by the 3d Brigade. Frequencies and call signs were exchanged and the convoy commander was briefed by the security force commander on the up-to-date status along the route from Saigon to Tan An and Dong Tam and actions to be taken in the event of attack.

From this point on, the security element commander called check points in to the 3d Brigade operations center which in turn relayed the information to the division operations center which in turn notified the support command operations center.

Incidents along the route were reported, assistance was requested as required, and action taken to overcome incidents was reported. Finally, closure times were reported.

An after action report was prepared by the convoy commander and indorsed through command channels.

The convoy SOP requires a driver and assistant driver for each vehicle in the column, a convoy commander, usually a lieutenant, a noncommissioned officer who took charge of the trail party, and a maintenance and recovery team. Aside from the additional firepower and security gained through the provision of assistant drivers, it also proved

to be a definite morale factor. The driver did not feel he was all alone, cut off from the events around him. He had someone to talk to and this materially assisted in keeping the driver awake and alert.

Morale was found to be estremely high among those individuals associated with the operations of night convoys. This enthusiasm resulted in dedicated daily driver's maintenance.

This portion of the discussion concerns the security aspects of night convoys conducted in the 9th Division area. The road in the south traverses jungle type growth and gently rolling terrain. On the other hand, the route from Bear Cat to Dong Tam travels primarily through the Mekong Delta. Here the main artery, Highway 4, is relatively straight over typical Delta terrain which consists of rice paddies intermingled with streams, mangroves, and palms. For this reason, cavalry units, operating over terrain that is more ideally suited for ambushes, are faced with a more tenuous situation than that experienced in the south. Therefore, security forces operating in this area have had to conduct their night convoy missions using a variety of tactics. They have employed strong security forces well forward of the supply vehicles, and also used rapid reaction forces that are positioned along the route. Incidently, the code word for night convoys is incubus, meaning nightmare.

Initially, a platoon consisting of four personnel carriers was employed for the route from Saigon to Dong Tam. For approximately two and a half months this element proved sufficient. However, the VC intensified their attacks along Highway 4 and the US force was increased to company size strength. Concurrently, a thorough, comprehensive study was made of the entire route, VC tactics, and other factors that affected the mission. This resulted in the publication of an SOP that covered all aspects of the incubus. This SOP coordinated the movement of the convoy with Vietnamese elements located along the route and covered the spectrum from the use of light fire teams to the consideration of troop morale.

The most significant aspects of the battalion's SOP will now be discussed. Although the tactics described were employed in the Delta, they also were used to a similar degree by security forces in other areas.

Along the convoy route from Saigon to Dong Tam, there exist numerous ARVN outposts. In order to prevent friendly fires from engaging these outposts, primarily ambush positions, detailed coordination of ARVN locations is accomplished daily. Initially, difficulty was encountered because the Vietnamese did not select their ambush positions until approximately 1900-2000 hours each night. These positions are now received at least two hours earlier.

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To insure immediate, responsive artillery and illumination support, highway checkpoints were established. Targets were then placed 100 to 200 meters on both sides of these checkpoints. The artillery liaison officer who accompanied the convoy commander was responsible for calling in the checkpoints. As the convoy progressed along its route the artillery tubes were layed accordingly. This allowed the artillery to be more responsive with fire power if the tactical situation required its use.

Initially, to conserve fuel and to save flight time, a light fire team was employed on strip alert at Tan An. However, due to the relative brief period of enemy contact, this plan was modified and the light fire team was placed on station. It was felt that this maneuver tended to discourage the VC from attacking the convoy.

By experience, the convoy commander found that specific locations along the route were ideal for ambushes. Coordination was therefore effected with ARVN elements to secure approval to recon by fire along suspect areas. Controlled recon by fire was then allowed. To accomplish this, only specific lead tracks were designated as the elements to fire. This maneuver prevented initiation of some VC ambushes. No friendly Vietnamese casualties resulted from our fires.

We also found that the platoon chain of command, normally designated down to squad leader, had to be identified to a lower level to include more men. In the early stages of the incubus, one action resulted in five men being casualties. These personnel included the platoon leader, platoon sergeant and three other NCO's. The senior remaining individual was a specialist fourth class and he assumed command, but only after precious time was lost.

Two vehicular mounted 23 inch xenon searchlights are used to blind the enemy, direct gunships, and illuminate suspected or lucrative ambush sites. Some elements have these searchlights mounted on tanks or personnel carriers. During extremely dark nights, the infrared capability is effectively used, especially when a convoy is halted. Just prior to the TET Offensive, a convoy located approximately five kilometers north of My Tho was engaged by a small VC force armed with RPG rockets. Rather than running the ambush as the VC expected, the APC's immediately engaged the enemy without serious casualties or damage resulting. Prior to proceeding, the convoy commander illuminated the highway ahead. He then discovered a carefully emplaced road block which included communications wire strung approximately eight to ten feet above the road. Encountering this obstacle while moving most certainly would have knocked personnel off the APC's and caused serious injuries. Normally these searchlights are employed towards the front and rear of the column.

To augment the artillery fire, three 81mm mortar tracks are placed in the center of the convoy. The tubes face left, right and rear.

Two 40mm dusters are also used. One is employed near the head of the column with the other employed towards the rear. Experience with this weapon has been somewhat limited. The dusters are not used in recon by fire and in those instances where the VC have attacked, the enemy was at such close quarters that the weapon was used primarily to fire at the fleeing enemy or block their routes of withdrawal.

Starlight scopes, both individual and crew served weapon types, are also used. They are primarily employed during the halt to scan the surrounding terrain.

In the Delta, vehicles are spaced 75 - 100 meters apart with the security elements grouped together in the front, middle and rear. During periods of diminished visibility, this spacing may be further reduced. This formation allows the convoy to be protected and still provide the security element the unit integrety required for rapid reaction. Initially, a point element was employed but a better tactical and control balance, in this type terrain and enemy situation, was achieved by a general overall vehicle interval. By dispersing radio jeeps within the convoy, greater control of supply vehicles was possible.

Regardless of the convoy formation, the security element commander was responsible for the entire convoy to include supply vehicles.

In the Delta, the standard vehicle lights are turned off and blackout is observed when running the incubus. This SOP presents certain advantages and disadvantages. One of the greatest advantages is that a less lucrative target is presented and the enemy cannot observe the convoy from great distances, especially in the Delta where visibility is almost unrestricted. The fact that the highway is relatively straight, paved, and slightly elevated, also makes for more favorable blackout driving. There are some disadvantages. The vehicle speed is greatly reduced. This fact does not please the average soldier because he feels the faster he travels, the more likely the chance that the VC ambush will be unsuccessful. It is interesting to note that the cavalry units do not observe blackout driving and their experience has been that the travel time is cut almost one half. Statistically it has been proven that more vehicle accidents occurred during blackouts. In one specific case, an ARVN soldier who was either sleeping or sitting on the shoulder of the road was injured by a tracked vehicle. This fact was not known until the next morning because due to the blackout conditions, the driver had no knowledge he had hit someone.

The 9th Division has not specifically adopted a standard SOP in this respect. The units are, in a sense, still experimenting and weighing relative merits of both sides of the vehicle blackout issue.

What about the Viet Cong? What are their tactics? Without exception, the VC engaged a convoy from positions less than 30 meters off the road. The primary weapon employed was the RPG rocket fired normally against an escort vehicle. The VC set no pattern for selecting his target. The first, middle or last vehicles were susceptible. He engaged the convoy with a relatively small force with the intent of causing maximum damage without actually closing with the convoy. He normally selected a position from where he could withdraw from the area with some degree of concealment. Another consideration was a position that could not immediately be encircled by the APC's. In other words, he selected locations that had canals, small rivers, large dikes, or other obstacles between his position and the highway. One of his favorite locations was in a village where indiscriminate reaction fires would endanger the lives of innocent civilians who were in the area. This atmosphere also tended to minimize the personnel carrier's advantage of fire power and mobility.

Following a thorough analysis of the VC tactics in the Delta, it was discovered that the enemy was concentrating his activities in an area generally north and south of the Ben Luc Bridge. Our survey also determined that no friendly ambushes covered this area. A concerted effort was then made to sanitize that particular section of Highway 4 and also encourage the Vietnamese to do likewise. This step proved successful as evidenced by the initial contacts made and results obtained. However, the VC again proved to be a crafty, resourceful, and flexible adversary by shifting his points of contact further south toward My Tho. Before this action could be countered, the TET Offensive commenced and the battalion assumed other priority missions.

Although immediate reaction plans were formulated for employment against an ambush, difficulty was encountered by the men in locating the origin of fire. If the VC employed only RPG rockets, it was not uncommon to see forces reacting to the wrong side of the road. This was equally true when the VC were positioned 25 meters off the road. If the enemy employed small arms then detection was facilitated and reaction was readily accomplished. By remaining always alert and having all personnel carriers on one common radio frequency, enemy actions were immediately countered and proficiency was obtained in locating the hidden VC.

Although the personnel carrier was designed to carry an internal personnel load, it was found that due to the nature of the terrain, the enemy tactics, and his heavy reliance on the RPG rocket, personnel have a better chance for survival riding on the vehicle. We also have

found that a six man force, to include the driver and the troop commander, is a well balanced unit to be on each track. This still allows sufficient troops to react or dismount as required. Although the personnel carriers are armed with the armored kits for protection, it is felt that additional personnel riding on each track during the incubus mission exposed an unnecessary number of personnel to sniping.

The men have found the incubus to be challenging. They realize that the mission establishes patterns. It is conducted at night over the same route. However, they also know that the fire power they possess and the overall ability to react rapidly overcome these disadvantages.

It is significant to note that the incubus is quite similar to other military operations that require careful planning and coordination. However, in this instance it is felt that added importance is placed on the necessity for having a light fire team available, a requirement to vary the mission starting times and a need to tailor a force specifically for an incubus mission.

At the present time the incubus is not being conducted. This is primarily due to the nonavailability of the light fire teams and the occupation of mechanized and armored units with higher priority missions. In addition, the present situation does not dictate a requirement to run the incubus. However, the unit has the capability to perform the mission if required.

The night convoy missions were run primarily to relieve the congested traffic on major highways during peak daytime hours and also to exert influence during nighttime over principal provincial arteries.

This approach, as presented, may not prove feasible in other areas of Vietnam due to the enemy situation, the nature of the terrain, and the requirement to perform other higher priority missions.

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TIME - DISTANCE FACTORS

| | Distance-KM(MI) | Rate of March KMIH(MIH) | Time |
|---|---|---|---|
| BEAR CAT-LONG BINH | 20(12) | 32(20) | :39 |
| LONG BINH-NEWPORT | 19(11.4) | 32(20) | :36 |
| NEWPORT-PHU LAM (THRU SAIGON) | 12(7.2) | 24(15) | :30 |
| PHU LAM-TAN AN | 36(21.6) | 16(10) | 2:12 |
| TAN AN-DONG TAM | 33(19.8) | 16(10) | 1:58 |
| TOTAL | 120(72.0) | | 5:55 |

SLIDE 3

NIGHT CONVOYS CONDUCTED

| LOCATION | AUG | SEP | OCT | NOV | DEC | JAN | TOTAL |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| BEAR CAT-TAN AN | 4 | 9 | 7 | 8 | 16 | 13 | 57 |
| BEAR CAT-DONG TAM | 0 | 8 | 10 | 13 | 13 | 12 | 56 |
| OTHER | 0 | 1 | 0 | 3 | 3 | 1 | 8 |
| TOTAL | 4 | 18 | 17 | 24 | 32 | 26 | 121 |

TYPE INCIDENTS

| MONTH | NR CONVOYS | NR CONVOYS W/INCIDENTS | ROAD BLOCKS | SA FIRE | AW FIRE | RPG FIRE | MINES |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| AUG | 4 | 0 | - | - | - | - | - |
| SEP | 18 | 5 | 3 | 1 | 1 | - | 2 |
| OCT | 17 | 2 | 1 | 2 | 2 | 1 | - |
| NOV | 25 | 5 | 2 | 3 | 1 | 3 | 1 |
| DEC | 32 | 6 | 2 | 3 | 1 | 2 | 2 |
| JAN | 26 | 6 | 7 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 3 |
| TOTAL | 122 | 24 | 15 | 11 | 6 | 7 | 8 |

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EQUIPMENT DAMAGE

| | SA FIRE | AW FIRE | RPG FIRE | MINES | TOTAL |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| SUPPLY VEHICLES | - | - | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| SECURITY ELEMENT VEHICLES | - | - | 3 | 2 | 5 |
| TOTAL | 0 | 0 | 4 | 4 | 8 |

PERSONNEL CASUALTIES

| | SA FIRE | AW FIRE | RPG FIRE | MINES | TOTAL |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| SUPPLY VEHICLE PERSONNEL | - | 1 | - | - | 1 |
| SECURITY ELEMENT PERSONNEL | 2 | 5 | 12(2) | 3 | 22 |
| TOTAL | 2 | 6 | 12(2) | 3 | 23 |



SLIDE 5

TIME/DISTANCE

EXPERIENCE (AVERAGE)

| | DISTANCE-KM(MI) | RATE OF MARCH KMIH(MIH) | TIME | TIME REQUIRED AVERAGE |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| BEAR CAT-LONG BINH | 20(12) | 32(20) | :39 | :34 |
| LONG BINH-NEWPORT | 19(11.4) | 32(20) | :36 | :31 |
| NEWPORT-PHU LAM (THRU SAIGON) | 12(7.2) | 24(15) | :30 | :43 |
| PHU LAM-TAN AN | 36(21.6) | 16(10) | 2:12 | 2:42 |
| TAN AN-DONG TAM | 33(19.8) | 16(10) | 1:58 | 2:28 |
| TOTAL | 120(72.0) | | 5:55 | 6:58 |

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