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AUTHORITY

AGO/DA ltr, 29 Apr 1980

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

IN REPLY REFER TO
AGAM-P (M) (11 July 68) FOR OT RD 682215 15 July 1968

SUBJECT: Operational Report - Lessons Learned, Headquarters, 63d Signal Battalion, Period Ending 30 April 1968 (U)

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

BY ORDER OF THE SECRETARY OF THE ARMY:

Kenneth G. Wickham

KENNETH G. WICKHAM
Major General, USA
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63d Signal Battalion

DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
HEADQUARTERS 63D SIGNAL BATTALION
APO 96308

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SCCVNG-PB 30 April 1968

SUBJECT: Operational Report of Headquarters 63d Signal Battalion (Army) for Period Ending 30 April 1968, RCS CSFOR-65 (R1)

1. SECTION I, OPERATION: Significant Activities.

a. General:

(1) This report will be in no way comparible to the report of the last quarter. The following significant changes have taken place since the last quarter:

(a) Relocation of the 459th Signal Battalion Headquarters from Nha Trang to Phu Bai effective 29 January 1968.

(b) Assignment to the 459th Signal Battalion Headquarters of the following units: D Company, 43d Signal Battalion; D Company, 36th Signal Battalion; B Company, 37th Signal Battalion; 588th Signal Company (Support).

(c) Infusion of the 596th Signal Company replacing D Company, 36th Signal Battalion and D Company, 43d Signal Battalion.

(d) Redesignation as the 63d Signal Battalion (Army) effective 25 March 1968.

(e) Complete change of area of operation and communication responsibility.

(f) Complete change of mission.

(2) The organizational structure of the battalion including organic and assigned units, and attached units under the battalion's operational control are listed in Inclosure 1.

b. ACTIVITIES:

(1) On 28 January 1968 the 459th Signal Battalion Commander was directed to move the Battalion Headquarters from Nha Trang to Phu Bai, RVN. The advance party moved with four personnel on 29 January 1968 and arrived in Phu Bai the same day.

(2) On arrival in Phu Bai, the Commanding General, 1st Signal Brigade, assigned tailored units to the 459th Signal Battalion. B Company, 37th Signal Battalion, D Company, 36th Signal Battalion, and D

Company, 43d Signal Battalion were assigned to the 459th Signal Battalion. The original total authorized strength of the 459th Signal Battalion (CA) was 613 personnel.

(3) The original mission of the 459th Signal Battalion (CA) in Phu Bai was to provide Army Area Communications facilities within the Northern I Corps Tactical Zone. In addition, it had the mission of providing fixed communications facilities and services to Headquarters, MACV Forward.

(4) The original disposition of the battalion had B/37th providing Army Area coverage from the Hue area north to Dong Ha. D/36th provided VHF terminal and relay facilities in the PhuBai area, while D/43d operated the Communications Centers and telephone exchanges in support of MACV Forward Headquarters in Phu Bai.

(5) Having achieved this unit disposition, the 588th Signal Company (Spt) located in Long Binh was assigned to the battalion. It moved its first increment into Phu Bai. Living conditions and physical facilities were extremely crowded so elements of the 588th were moved to the Gia Le area and established signal facilities where a troop buildup of the 101st Airborne Division was expected. Transportation difficulties prevented the remainder of the 588th from joining the forward elements. A decision was then made by the Battalion Commander to send the 588th north into Quang Tri - Dong Ha area. The 588th was infused into these locations and B/37th was relieved of the responsibility in that area. Concurrent with the relocation of the 588th into areas previously operated by B/37th, B/37th took over the responsibilities for the Gia Le area. This decision was made because B/37th still had personnel resources which had been unable to close into Camp Evans (its new CP location) due to limited facilities.

(6) Finally, the last increment of the 588th arrived by boat at Da Nang and convoyed to Quang Tri. With the closing of the 588th a complete Signal Support Company was in position in the northernmost region of the Northern I Corps Tactical Zone. This proved to be a wise decision as later tactical requirements (Operation Pegasus) and other requirements soon tasked the resources of the 588th.

(7) The next major change in the organization of the battalion came with the infusion of the 596th Signal Company (Support) into the Phu Bai area. The infusion affected four companies. The 596th assumed responsibility for the Gia Le - Eagle complex enabling B/37th to relocate its company Headquarters at Camp Evans in support of the 1st Air Cavalry Division. Then, with a five day overlap, the 596th assumed the missions of

of D/36th and D/43d releasing those units to new assignments in the south.

(8) Inherent in all unit moves were the problems encountered in operational continuity and property accountability. Though many problems remain in those areas, the majority of the problems have been resolved with the assistance of the 21st Signal Group and 1st Signal Brigade.

(9) During this same period, MACV Forward was dissolved and Headquarters Provisional Corps Vietnam (PCV) was activated. This change proved to be a challenge to the battalion as the Corps was not given a Corps Signal Battalion. In lieu of a Corps Signal Battalion, the 459th Signal Battalion was tasked to provide communications support for PCV.

(10) With the continuous mission expansion, the original authorized strength of 613 personnel proved inadequate and the Commanding General, 1st Signal Brigade authorized augmentation to provide additional personnel resources.

(11) With the remote location of the battalion and the rapidly changing tactical situation, the Commanding General, 1st Signal Brigade, assumed direct operational control of the 459th Signal Battalion (CA). Thus, the 459th Signal Battalion (CA) became the only battalion in Vietnam directly under the operational control of the 1st Signal Brigade. This was beneficial from the operational standpoint as it decreased response time for tactical support requirements. However, this arrangement did not relieve the battalion of the requirements of reporting on operational status to the 21st Signal Group to include administrative and logistical matters since the 459th Signal Battalion was still administratively and logistically supported by 21st Signal Group.

(12) The next and final change came with the redesignation of the 459th Signal Battalion (CA) to the 63d Signal Battalion (Army) effective 25 March 1968. The change had little visible impact as it was merely a matter of changing the battalion's colors. The 459th Signal Battalion (CA) colors returned to Nha Trang and the 63d Signal Battalion became active in Phu Bai. The real effect of the change was the new personnel authorization for the Battalion Headquarters under TOE 11-76G.

(13) The end of the reporting period finds the battalion in its first relatively stable, but mobile, configuration since its move to Phu Bai. The 63d Signal Battalion (Army) is now performing the mission of Army Area Support, Corps Signal Support, Post Signal Support, and tactical communications support for Headquarters, Provisional Corps Vietnam. This support is being furnished by the 588th Signal Company (Support), B Company, 37th Signal Battalion, and the 596th Signal Company (Support). The 588th Signal Company Area of Operations includes Khe Sanh, Dong Ha,

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Quang Tri, Quang Tri MACV, Cua Viet, Wunder Beach, and Landing Zone Betty. B Company, 37th Signal Battalion operates in Hue North (Camp Evans), Hue Citadel, Hue MACV, Hue Tropo Site, Landing Zone Sally, and at a signal location in support of Operation Delaware. The 596th Signal Company (Support) operates at Phu Bai, Radio Relay Hill 180, Gia Le, Camp Eagle, Fire Support Base Bastogne and Landing Zone Veghel.

c. PERSONNEL AND ADMINSTRATION:

(1) During the reporting period many problems areas were developed in the areas of personnel and administration. Many of these problems have been solved with the assistance of 21st Signal Group and the 1st Signal Brigade. The following problem areas remain to be resolved.

(a) During the initial stages of the operation in the Phu Bai area, there were many cases of personnel reporting to the battalion with no orders, or incomplete orders. In the cases where no orders were issued, the movement authority was VOCO. In many cases, individuals were sent to the battalion in a TDY status, and personnel and finance records did not accompany the individuals. Also, where assignment orders were issued, special instructions were either lacking, or if present, not complied with as regards TA-50 equipment, weapons, and personnel records. The effect of these oversights created a monumental task in assuring personnel accountability and combat readiness. Through continuous coordination with all units concerned, these problems have, in the main, been corrected. It is noteworthy, however, that considerable time and effort could have been saved by the issuance of complete assignment instructions and the rigid enforcement of special instructions.

(b) Another example of the personnel problems in the area of operations is illustrated as a result of the TET offensive in Hue. During the TET Offensive, the Hue Tropo Site was completely surrounded by enemy forces. The site distinguished itself by preventing the site from being overrun and by continuous operation throughout the attack. It was later decided that a unit citation should be requested for their performance. Since elements of five separate units were located in the same compound, it was decided to request the award for the unit having the largest population, and attaching the other personnel to that unit for purposes of receiving the award. The final action on this request is not known at this time.

(c) Financial support for personnel of the battalion has been inadequate during the reporting period. To obtain financial assistance for personnel assigned north of Da Nang has required each individual to travel to the 192d Finance in Da Nang if assistance is desired in a reasonable amount of time. Normally finance assistance can only be

given on pay day, providing the Class "B" Agent is informed a week in advance that assistance is desired. Although a Class "B" Finance Office has not been established in Phu Bai, there is sufficient troop strength to justify one. Plans for the establishment of a Finance Office in Phu Bai have been discussed between Provisional Corps Vietnam G-1 and the 192d Finance Office.

d. SECURITY:

(1) During the reporting period, nine TOP SECRET and 78 SECRET clearances were validated. No Confidential clearances were granted. Cryptographic access was authorized for 104 personnel.

(2) Command emphasis continued to be placed on handling of communications in conjunction with operations. Emphasis also continued on construction of reinforced bunkers due to the ever present threat of mortar and rocket attacks throughout the battalion's area of responsibility. A vigorous program of security inspection on both site physical security and safeguarding classified material remains in force.

(3) The Commanding Officer, 63d Signal Battalion was tasked by the Chief of Staff, PCV with the responsibility of the Foxtrot portion of the Phu Bai Combat Base perimeter defense. This is the northwest area of the base perimeter, defended by U.S. Army personnel only. The remainder of the perimeter is under Marine Control, Task Force X-Ray. In order to strengthen defense along this perimeter, bulldozers, backhoe diggers, and troops were employed in clearing fields of fire, as well as preparing trenches and bunkers. In addition, new concertina fences and wire aprons were installed. To take advantage of the natural obstacles and further improve the defense posture, fighting bunkers were rebuilt and new bunkers were constructed in more advantageous positions to improve the ability to withstand enemy attack.

e. SAFETY:

(1) Command emphasis continues to be placed on all aspects of safety. The following recordable accidents and personnel injuries occurred during the quarter:

Personnel injuries 4 . Vehicle accidents 3 .

(2) Accident exposure for the Quarter:

MONTH	MAN-DAYS	MILEAGE
February	16,412	5,919
March	30,780	88,920
April	27,570	52,638
Total For Quarter	74,762	147,477

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f. TRAINING:

(1) The formal training of the battalion has suffered greatly since relocation to the Phu Bai area. Contributing factors to the reduction in formal training have been expanded operational mission requirements, lack of adequate training facilities, the unstable situation caused by major unit infusion, and the mobile tactical situation in support of PCV.

(2) The majority of training within the battalion continues to be on-the-job instruction conducted at unit level. The OJT Program has been tailored to meet the battalion's need in critical MOS fields.

(3) It is signficant to note that during the reporting period the battalion has conducted 90 days of continuous operation with the minimum shift per individual being 12 to 16 hours.

g. OPERATIONS:

(1) Only three Army Area Systems were established in the Northern I Corps Tactical Zone prior to the arrival of the battalion in Phu Bai. They were BBH03, BBH59 and BBH65. During the period 1 February to 30 April 1968, the following systems have been activated or deactivated:

BBH67	PHU-HUN	14 February	Activated
BBH72	Hue MACV - Hue Citadel	15 February	Activated
BBH72	PHB-QTA	20 February	Activated
BBH75	PHB-GAE	22 February	Activated
BBH77	QTA-HUN	26 February	Activated
BBH76	DGH-QTA	26 February	Activated
BBH79	PHB-EGL	7 March	Activated
BBH80	PHB-GAE	7 March	Activated
BBH81	PHB-HUN	9 March	Activated
BBH82	QTA-WUB	11 March	Activated
BBH85	PHB-EGL	20 March	Activated
BBH87	EGL-LZ Sally	23 March	Activated
BBH91	QTA-LZ Betty	29 March	Activated
BBH89	CLN-CLU	2 April	Activated
BBH90	CLN-CLU	2 April	Activated
BBT15	PHB-CLN	2 April	Activated
BBT16	HUN-CLN	2 April	Activated
BBH92	EGL-FSB	3 April	Activated
BBH80	PHB-GAE	14 April	Deactivated
BBH89	CLN-CLU	14 April	Deactivated
BBH90	CLN-CLU	14 April	Deactivated
BBT16	HUN-CLN	14 April	Deactivated
BBT15	PHB-CLN	14 April	Deactivated
BBT17	PHB-QTA	30 April	Activated

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Since 1 February an average of two systems per week have been activated or deactivated.

(2) On 10 February 1968 an RWI station was established to support Provisional Corps Vietnam Headquarters (then MACV Forward Headquarters).

(3) On 1 March 1968 the Provisional Corps Vietnam Command Net was established to provide PCV Headquarters with emergency and alternate means of secure RATT Communications with major subordinate units. Vehicular mounted AN/VSC-2 radios were used to meet requirements of member units for compact mobile operations.

(4) During March 1968, the Provisional Corps Vietnam Secure Command Net (FM) was established to provide PCV Headquarters with secure voice communications to major subordinate units. Initial problems in long range propagation were overcome by using a log periodic directional antenna with a rotor unit.

(5) The 63d Signal Battalion operates a station in the MACV HF Command Net (AM, RATT). This new net provides secure communications between PCV, TOC and MACV COC, Tactical Air Support Element (TASE), Combined Intelligence Center, Vietnam (CICV), and Headquarters, USARV.

(6) The battalion operates as a station in the MACV Command Single Sideband Net with a KWM-2A. This net provides Provisional Corps Vietnam Headquarters access into the MACV Command SSB Net.

(7) The battalion operates an AN/GRC-26D as a station in the Military Intelligence Net. This net services the 525th MI Detachment.

(8) The battalion operates a station in the 21st Signal Group Operations Net (AM, RATT). This net provides secure RATT Communications between the commanders of the 21st Signal Group and the 63d Signal Battalion.

(9) On 1 March 1968, the IDF previously located in room F-8 of the Provisional Corps Vietnam Headquarters building was relocated to the old Tactical Operations Center Bunker. This relocation affords greater protection to the frame which is the central point for distribution of all voice and teletype communications in support of the Provisional Corps Vietnam subscribers.

(10) On 1 March 1968, the relocation of the TOC Commcenter as well as the telephone installation in support of the TOC was completed. The relocation enabled this battalion to provide greater security and speed in message delivery to the TOC subscribers. The TOC Commcenter is now located in the underground TOC Bunker.

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(11) On 4 March 1968, the installation of a 50 pair underground cable from Gia Le to Camp Eagle was completed. The activation of this cable, which connected to a cable running from Gia Le to the Phu Bai Dial Telephone Exchange, replaced two VHF systems. The VHF systems had connected Phu Bai to Camp Eagle. The cable provided expanded capabilities in communications support of the 101st Airborne Division.

(12) On 6 March 1968, a 25 Pair aerial cable was extended from the Phu Bai post distribution system to the 22d Surgical Hospital area. This cable provided telephone communications to this unit which had little organic communications capability.

(13) On 12 March 1968, this battalion completed the telephone installation of the Provisional Corps Vietnam Headquarters. In addition to Class "A" and "C" service, telephones from the sole user TOC switchboard were installed as directed and common battery lines to the Phu Bai Dial Telephone Exchange were installed for the Commanding General and Deputy Commanding General, Provisional Corps Vietnam.

(14) On 13 March 1968, a 25 pair underground cable was installed between Gia Le and the 5th Special Forces Group "Project Delta". The cable provided communications from "Project Delta" area to the Gia Le MTC-1 and thus to the Phu Bai DTE. This cable replaced long WD-1 field wire lines which had proven totally unreliable.

(15) On 13 March 1968 the Phu Bai Dial Telephone Exchange, TOC MTC-1 and associated wire teams were placed under the operational control of the S-3, 63d Signal Battalion. This action was deemed necessary due to the projected turn over of companies and the infusion within the battalion. Continuity of command and supervision of the telephone communications enabled the battalion to provide better service to the subscribers in the Phu Bai area. The battalion wire officer was designated as OIC of these facilities under the supervision of the battalion S-3.

(16) On 18 March 1968, the 3d Platoon of Company B, 40th Signal Battalion was placed under the operational control of the 63d Signal Battalion by the 1st Signal Brigade. This provided the battalion with a heavy cable construction capability. This capability proved essential in performing the battalion mission.

(17) On 25 March 1968, 500 feet of 50 pair cable was installed underground from the TOC frame to the Marine AN/TRC-94, activated in support of combat operations "Pegasus/Lam Son" in the Ca Lu area. The cable distribution provided interconnection from the AN/TRC-97 to the Headquarters, Provisional Corps Vietnam subscribers in Phu Bai. The

battalion supported the 1st Air Cavalry Division on operation "Pegasus" in a joint communications effort with the USMC. Support provided consisted of one AN/TRC-97 system (USMC) from Phu Bai to a Signal Hill location and a AN/TRC-97 system from Camp Evans to the Signal Hill Location. Two AN/TRC-24 systems provided down-the-hill interconnection to the TAC CP location. An alternate means of communications on the AN/TRC-24 system was installed between the TAC CP location and Quang Tri, with a relay on the signal hill. The AN/TRC-97 equipment, operated by the USMC, provides 12 voice and 16 TTY channels, utilizing either line of sight or tropo mode of propagation. The AN/TRC-24 equipment at the signal hill was operated by the 588th Signal Company. Circuits provided interconnection thru Division CP to the Division Rear Support elements and to Provisional Corps Vietnam. Signal support provided was of such high caliber that the 63d Signal Battalion was commended by the Commanding General, Provisional Corps Vietnam, along with other selected units at Corps level on Operation "Pegasus".

(18) On 8 April 1968, the Phu Bai outside plant installation was completed by the 3d Platoon, B Company, 40th Signal Battalion. This Installation provided reliable, noise free wire paths fro the installation of telephones for subscribers in the Phu Bai area.

(19) Since 23 April the 63d Signal Battalion has provided signal support to the 1st Air Cavalry Division on a standby basis in A Shau Valley. (One 12 channel VHF system to Phu Bai, and one from the signal hill location to Camp Evans, a TAC CP terminal package is on standby for immediate deployment when required). This package will interconnect with equipment located on the signal hill and thus provide circuitry for Division Command, control and logistics functions in addition to voice and teletype circuits to Provisional Corps Vietnam. The signal support for operation "Delaware" is provided by elements of B/37th Signal Battalion and the 596th Signal Company.

(20) On 26 April 1968, partitions inside the Phu Bai Dial Telephone Exchange were completed. These partitions provide a break area for the operators as well as a viewing area. A plexiglass window allows visitors to watch the switchboard without disturbing the operators.

(21) On 27 April 1968, a 300 pair underground cable in support of the Air Force AN/TRC-66 facility near OL-24 in Phu Bai was completed. The project required 8900 feet of 300 pair cable. The installation required 10 splices. The cable was installed by the 3d Platoon, B Company, 40th Signal Battalion under the operational control of the 63d Signal Battalion with engineering assistance provided the 1st Signal Brigade.

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(22) On 29 April 1968 the Dynamic TOC AN/MTC-1 was replaced with a new AN/MTC-1. The previous switchboard was in need of Depot overhaul and proved unreliable. A better ground was prepared for the new MTC-1.

(23) On 30 April 1968, control of the Phu Bai Dial Telephone Exchange Dynamic TOC AN/MTC-1, and associated wire teams reverted to the operational control of the 596th Signal Company. This decision was made since the 596th Signal Company was firmly entrenched in its operational mission.

h. LOGISTICS:

(1) In the move to Phu Bai, the main body of the battalion was forced to remain in Da Nang for a period of approximately three weeks. This was caused by route #1 being closed because of enemy action and the nonavailability of lift aircraft due to the tactical requirements.

(2) After the main elements of the battalion arrived in Phu Bai, the equipment continued to be moved from site to site and between units. This was necessitated by the tactical situation and operational requirements. Property accountability was hindered by the lack of documents indicating the original source of many items of equipment. Paperwork documenting lateral transfers of equipment did not accompany equipment at the time of movement. Higher headquarters held all paperwork until the entire move was completed, a move which spanned 30 days. A logistics team was sent to the Phu Bai area approximately 45 days after the move. The team brought with them all the copies of the lateral transfers. Until this time, property book officers in the area had no idea where the equipment had come from nor were they able to pick the items up on their property book. When the paperwork did arrive many items of equipment had already been transferred and in some cases, retransferred to different locations because of the rapid operational needs.

(3) The lack of a direct support supply unit in the Phu Bai area hindered the units efficient accomplishment of the mission. The 1st Logistical Command at Da Nang was unprepared at that time to meet the demands of such a large force. Fuel, both mogas and diesel fuel has been obtained from the Marine Depot in Phu Bai. As of this date the Army has not provided adequate fuel supply areas.

(4) The lack of logistical support in the Northern I Corps Zone area has hindered the battalion in acquiring key items of supply. The main sources of supply are at Da Nang and Quin Nhon. Some requisitions processed at the Da Nang depot may have been lost due to the initial lack of liaison personnel present at the depot to check the status daily. Equipment ready for issue in some cases has been put back into stock

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because no one has been at the depot to accept it and the depot has failed to notify the unit. To solve this problem, the battalion has established a liaison office at Da Nang and at Qui Nhon. As a result of liaison personnel at these areas, requisition status is being checked continuously and supplies are being expedited to meet battalion requirements.

i. AVIATION: None

2. SECTION 2. LESSONS LEARNED: COMMANDER'S OBSERVATIONS, EVALUATION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

a. PERSONNEL

(1) Infusion and AOR Reporting

(a) Observation: Loss of accounting of personnel reported on AOR Report due to infusion.

(b) Evaluation: Personnel reassigned from other in-country units to this organization under the infusion program resulted in a lack of knowledge of AOR Reporting. A complete screening of battalion records was required to determine AOR reporting and further screening of our report at Group and Brigade Headquarters was required.

(c) Recommendation: An entry should be made in item 31, DA Form 20, showing the date EM was reported on AOR, i.e. "AOR submitted January 1968".

(2) Assignment Instructions

(a) Observation: Late receipt of assignment instructions.

(b) Evaluation: On many occasions since relocation to Phu Bai reassignment instructions for personnel rotating to CONUS due to DEROS are not received until very near the rotation date. This has been especially true with personnel assigned to the 588th Signal Company.

(c) Recommendation: Reassignment instructions should be furnished NLT the 15th of the month preceding the month of DEROS.

b. OPERATIONS:

(1) Preventive Maintenance on HF Antenna

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(a) Observation: VSWR along HF coaxial Transmission Line.

(b) Evaluation: After prolonged exposure to rain or high humidity, the terminals within the center insulators (cobra heads) of dipole type antennas tend to corrode. The combination of corrosion and moisture reduces the efficiency of the insulator thereby changing the surge impedence of the line at the feed point to the load. This results in increased VSWR along the line, particularly troublesome in AN/GRC-26D and AN/GRC-46 installations.

(c) Recommendation: To prevent moisture and corrosion from influencing antenna efficiency, center insulators should, as a part of scheduled monthly PM, be disassembled, thoroughly cleaned and wiped dry. A very thin layer of petroleum jelly may be applied to the machined faces of the insulator halves prior to reassembly to form a better seal.

(2) VHF Frequency Changes

(a) Observation: Changing from lower to higher frequencies in the same band.

(b) Evaluation: A system put in operation in Quang Tri was assigned a receive frequency of C137. Experiencing strong helicopter push-to-talk interference, the frequency was raised to C146. Days later persistent interference necessitated another increase to C170. At this frequency the interference was less noticeable, however the receive level was poor. Investigation disclosed that the antenna dipoles had been cut for a lower frequency spread than now assigned. The antenna was lowered and dipoles recut.

(c) Recommendation: When raising or lowering frequencies in the same band, particularly more than once in the same direction, operators must be aware of the frequency spread the antennas were originally cut for. When the new frequency is beyond the old range, the dipoles must be recut.

(3) TSEC/KY-8 Failure

(a) Observation: Failure of TSEC/KY-8 due to overheating.

(b) Evaluation: Prolonged use of the TSEC/KY-8 can result in failure due to overheating. During monitoring or passing traffic in clear text the cabling between the FM radio and the KY-8 may be disconnected, so that the transmitted signal bypasses the KY-8. The KY-8 can be reconnected when passage of secure traffic is anticipated.

(c) Recommendation: The KY-8 should not be connected unless passing secure traffic.

(4) Power Supply Failure

(a) Observation: PP-685 Power Supply failure due to high voltage rectifier.

(b) Evaluation: Frequent outages of AN/TRC-24 systems have been traced to the failure of the high voltage rectifier tube (836). The recurring cause of the tube failure was found to be the improper adjustment of the screen voltage adjust on the tuning heads of T-302 transmitters. The proper setting is between 270 and 280 VDC. Settings were discovered as high as 300 VDC.

(c) Recommendation: Adjustment of the screen voltage adjust must be checked periodically to ensure proper setting.

(5) Protection of Terminal Strips TM-184

(a) Observation: Terminal strips require protection when used in the outside plant.

(b) Evaluation: Due to unavailability of terminal box TA-125/G, and a requirement for the extension of outside plant cable facilities, terminal strips TA-184 were used in lieu of TA-125/G. TM-184's are unprotected against the elements and frequent telephone circuit outages were traced to dust and moisture on the terminal strips.

(c) Recommendation: Terminal strips TM-184 should be placed in 2.75 inch rocket cases (wood) for protection from dust and rain. The 2.75 rocket cases hold four (4) TM-184 terminal strips.

(6) AN/VSC-2

(a) Observation: The problem has been to find a method to speed up traffic with the AN/VSC-2. A TT-4 is too slow since it involves sending a message while actually typing it.

(b) Evaluation: The battalion electronic maintenance section experimented with an AN/VSC-2 and was able to parallel wire a TT-76 and a TT-4 in order to get both of them into the circuit. Operationally, this modification will permit the AN/VSC-2 to be used as a tape punch and as a page copy machine. This arrangement will permit more efficient use of time in a directed net.

(c) Recommendation: The AN/VSC-2 should be modified to include a

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TT-76 which measureably accelerates traffic in the net.

(7) Power Surge Problems

(a) Observation: Rectifier, power unit PP-34 and its capabilities with the VSC-2.

(b) Evaluation: When using the rectifier power unit PP-34, or similar, with the VSC-2 all operators must be cautioned not to allow the voltage reading to exceed 28 volts. When using rectifiers of this type two 12 volt batteries should be connected in parallel to the rectifier and the electonic equipment. If the reading on the rectifier exceeds 28 volts or the batteries run dry the protective diode device in the VSC-2 will blow. If the diode does not blow the radio set may be damaged.

(c) Recommendation: Many pieces of elctronic equipment need a buffer to absorb a power surge or voltage transient before the surge reaches the electronic equipment. Constant watch to insure the volt rating does not exceed the equipment capabilities will minimize power surge damages. A voltage supressor MX-7777/G or Power Supply PP-4763 (both new items) will protect transistorized electronic equipment from voltage transients.

(8) TH-5/TG Ventilation

(a) Observation: TH-5/TG Ventilation

(b) Evaluation: Frequent circuit outages have been traced to shortened tube life of 12AU7 tubes due to heat. To improve circulation, the cases were removed from all TH-5's, the TH-5's were staggered to improve ventilation, and the tube shield was removed from the 12AU7.

(c) Recommendation: When experiencing heat problems remove the tube shield from the 12AU7, remove the cases from the TH-5's and position the TH-5's in order to provide maximum ventilation. This will provide a greater life expectancy for the 12AU7.

(9) Antenna Damage by Vehicles

(a) Observation: VHF Antennas damaged by vehicles backing into guys or antenna mast.

(b) Evaluation: Incidents have occurred where vehicles have backed into antenna guys and antenna masts. This has occurred in combat areas under blackout conditions. Although a guide is always required, blackout

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conditions can cause him to fail to see a guy wire and allow a vehicle to back up.

(c) Recommendation: Accidental damage to antennas by backing vehicles can be prevented by placing a ring of long stakes outside the guy wires. The stakes should be set close enough not to allow a vehicle to pass through. When hit, they serve as a warning to the driver to stop. All site personnel must be aware of the presence of the stakes in order to minimize the safety hazard inherent in the black out condition.

(10) MTC-1 Recall Light

(a) Obervation: The recall light in the Dong Ha MTC-1 will not light unless a strong ringing current is present.

(b) Evaluation: The Dong Ha MTC-1 recall lights in some trunk circuits, some will not light unless sufficient ringing current is present. This is probably due to the relays not being energized adequately to close the contacts. As the age of the switchboard grows, this problem occurs often and especially if long land line trunks are used.

(c) Recommendation: Although the relays are pre-set by the manufacturers specifications, a knowledgeable switchboard chief should be able to adjust the relays on channels which experience problems so that the relay contacts would close on less energizing current. The same answering cord should be used whenever possible so that the circuit can be challenged more often to provide efficient use of that channel.

(11) Amplifier Tube Failure

(a) Observation: Frequent failure of power amplifier tube 4X150A.

(b) Evaluation: Failure of power amplifier tubes 4X150A will result from over driving the power amplifier grid of the amplifier converter in the transmitter T-301/TRC. The tube will also fail if the transmitter is allowed to drift off frequency, i.e. the P.A. section for long periods of time. This causes the tube to draw excessive plate current.

(c) Recommendation: Frequent inspection of the transmitter is required to ensure that drifting has not occurred.

(12) Protection of Windshields

(a) Observation: When moving on convoy, windshields that are

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set down to avoid flying glass will crack if they are not supported by sandbags and a board.

(b) Evaluation: Upon driving in convoy from Da Nang to Phu Bai, the windshields of the vehicles were set down to avoid flying glass if an explosion occurred. Because the windshields were not supported by a board and sandbags, the windshields cracked.

(c) Recommendation: Whenever driving vehicles on convoy, ensure that all windshields which are set down, are set on a board plank which is covered with sandbags.

(13) Drainage System for Bunkered Equipment

(a) Observation: Pools of water accumulated due to lack of suitable drainage in areas where equipment is bunkered and buried below ground level.

(b) Evaulation: During recent rains, two generators were ruined and a system outage suffered because of a poor drainage system. The generators were in a hole and were flooded resulting in a loss of power and communications.

(c) Recommendation: Before signal equipment or generators are dug in, an adequate drainage system must be provided to prevent the accumulation of water.

c. TRAINING

(1) Cable Splice Protection

(a) Observation: Field expedient protection for multipair cable splices.

(b) Evaulation: A problem was encountered of devising a field expedient method of protecting multipair cable splices against moisture penetration. The following method was devised: An empty 105 mm shell casing with a small hole drilled in the center of the long axis was used as a sleeve to cover the splice. Two pieces of wood were cut to slip over the cable and into the open ends of the sleeve. This device was then put on the unspliced cable ends. Upon completion of the cable splice, the two wooden end pieces were forced into the ends of the sleeve and boiling tar was poured into the sleeve, thus forming an effective, watertight covering.

(c) Recommendation: In remote areas or during periods when DA ground

protective materials are unavailable, a device of the type described above can be used as an effective deterrant to moisture damage to multi-pair cable splices made in the field.

(2) Switchboard Cutover

(a) Observation: Paralleling of two manual switchboards can cause permanent signal.

(b) Evaluation: When paralleling two manual switchboards, crossed polarity will result in a permanent signal causing that particular local to be inoperative or in the case of a trunk preventing the ringing current from reaching the distant end.

(c) Recommendation: Upon occurrence, reversal of the two conductors at either of the switchboards will prevent a permanent signal.

(3) Road Crossings with Buried Cable

(a) Observation: Road crossings can disrupt traffic.

(b) Evaluation: When having to cross a road to route a buried cable, traffic is interrupted. On a bus highway this can also prove to be a safety hazard.

(c) Recommendation: When crossing a road a length of conduit should be used and the cable routed through the conduit. The conduit should be large enough to enable additional cable to be routed through it. This will preclude having to dig up the road in the future for further cable crossings.

(4) Air Conditioner Maintenance

(a) Observation: Air conditioners failures caused by lack of preventive maintenance.

(b) Evaluation: Most air conditioners in country are operated 24 hours a day. Breakdowns have developed because of an extreme amount of dirt and dust in the filters. The dirt and dust also reduces the efficiency of the air conditioners. Spare parts for air conditioners are difficult to acquire. When air conditioners fail, signal equipment is endangered because of the lack of a cooling device.

(c) Recommendation: Filters of all air conditioners should be cleared daily to prevent breakdown and loss of cooling efficiency.

(5) Odorless Latrines

(a) Observation: Open air latrines generate unpleasant odors as well as providing a breeding place for insects.

(b) Evaluation: Two inches of diesel oil should be placed in the metal waste containers prior to their use, rather than just before buring the waste. The oil saturates the waste material, immediately eliminating unpleasant odors and eliminating a potential breeding place for insects.

(c) Recommendation: Diesel oil should be used in waste cans prior to their use.

d. INTELLIGENCE: None

e. LOGISTICS:

(1) Climatic Deterioration of Teletype Paper

(a) Observation: Climatic conditions in a tactical environment have caused carbon on the two ply purple hecto teletype paper to come off on the white page copy.

(b) Evaluation: The climatic conditions encountered in Vietnam causes the carbon to peel off and spot the white page copy. This results in an inferior and illegible printed copy. The purple 2 ply hecto paper was produced for a commercial environment and is not suited for tactical use. Damp storage areas and the means of shipping the paper also adds to the deterioration.

(c) Recommendation: Subject teletype paper should not be used in a tactical environment and a substitute paper should be used in order for the Commcenter to complete its mission. Only with refrigeration storage will paper perform properly.

(2) Bunker Support

(a) Observation: Use of artillery canisters for bunker supports.

(b) Evaluation: In constructing bunkers around communications equipment, obtaining timbers of sufficient girth to bear the weight of a sandbag roof has been a problem.

(c) Recommendation: Artillery canisters, 105-175 mm, welded end to end have proven to be excellent load bearing bunker supports.

(3) Water-proof Bunkers

(a) Observation: Bunker protection from the elements.

(b) Evaluation: Overhead protection required five layers of sandbags for individual safety in the Phu Bai area. As the sandbags become saturated from the rain, the weight of each bag increases by 5 lbs, further increasing by 25 lbs per 36 square inch the overhead weight. The additional weight becomes a safety hazard in that, with added weight and moisture in the ground, support becomes weak. Covering the bunkers with canvas or rubber tarps or brushing the bags with a slurry of cement and water will allow the rain to flow off the bunkers and thus eliminate this safety hazard as well as double the life expectancy of the sandbags.

(c) Recommendation: Bunkers should be protected from the elements to minimize the safety hazards, reduce costs in replacing sandbags, and reduce manpower costs.

(4) Equipment Escorts

(a) Observation: Major items of equipment were lost due to the failure of the losing unit to provide an escort.

(b) Evaluation: Major items of equipment sent by air were diverted to areas other than Phu Bai. Because escorts were not with the equipment, the whereabouts of the equipment was unknown. Because of the tactical situation, many planes were directed to off load their cargo and to put on board more important cargo such as ammunition and rations. In one instance a 2½ ton fuel truck was sent from Da Nang to Phu Bai without an escort. The plane was scheduled to go to Phu Bai but, inflight, was diverted to Cam Ranh Bay. The truck was found three weeks later after an intense and thorough search. Had the truck been escorted, the escort could have called the unit and immediate action could have been taken.

(c) Recommendation: All major items of equipment should be escorted from shipping point to final destination.

(5) Loose Transfer Case Bolts

(a) Observation: Loose transfer case bolts caused by lack of operator maintenance result in stripped bolts that must be replaced.

(b) Evaluation: Due to the failure of operators in checking the mounting bolts on the transfer case of M35H2 vehicles, the bolts become loose causing the threads to be stripped, therefore, they are not able to

be retightened. This results in cutting the bolts loose and replacing them.

(c) Recommendation: Increased command emphasis on operator maintenance will solve this problem thereby reducing the work load in the unit organizational maintenance shop.

(6) Construction of an IDF

(a) Observation: The battalion was tasked to provide a frame capability of accepting 3,000 terminations on the vertical and horizontal side.

(b) Evaluation: The battalion assets were inventoried and a frame was not amongst them. Utilizing three inch angle iron a cube was built measuring seven feet in height, seven feet in length, and four feet wide. One and three quarters inch metal strips were welded eight inches apart from center to center running vertically on one side and horizontally on the other. Two by fours were anchored in the center of the frame and guide rings for the jumper wire were attached to same at the levels of the horizontal strips. Finally, six 25 terminal blocks were mounted on each side and the frame was ready to accept terminations.

(c) Recommendation: In order to effectively control communications at a central point, a frame is a necessity. If a frame is not available within the unit assets, a few pieces of scrap metal and a little imagination can provide an effective frame capable of providing a central point of distribution.

f. ORGANIZATION: None

g. OTHER

(1) Handling of Hand Grenades

(a) Observation: Serious injury resulting from the careless handling of hand grenades.

(b) Evaluation: Incidents have been observed where serious injury to persons was sustained because of the careless handling of hand grenades. In one such case an individual was carrying a hand grenade attached to his flak jacket while riding in a helicopter. Upon getting off the helicopter the grenade caught on an object causing the pin to be pulled. The ensuing explosion seriously injured the individual and endangered the lifes of others.

(c) Recommendations: Hand grenades should not be carried in flak

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vests, but should be carried in such a manner that the grenade cannot be shaken loose or the pin accidentally pulled.

(2) Immediate Bunkering of Equipment

(a) Observation: Personnel have suffered severe injury when bunkers have not been erected in areas where communications are established.

(b) Evaulation: An incident occurred when a helicopter in the process of landing at a signal site crashed throwing parts of the helicopter throughout the area. Personnel who had built bunkers immediately fell behind the bunkers and escaped injury. Personnel who had not made bunkers were seriously injured by flying debris.

(c) Recommendation: When a new signal site is established bunkers are an immediate priority once communications have been established. If adequate personnel are available, the bunkering should be accomplished concurrently with communications.

(3) Vehicle Parking in Troop Billet Areas

(a) Observation: Parking of military vehicles in troop billet areas poses a serious danger to personnel.

(b) Evaluation: After the initial move of the battalion to Phu Bai an excess of vehicles coupled with limited motor pool facilities required that many vehicles be parked in close proximity to troop billets. This practice poses a serious threat to life in the event of rocket or mortar attack. Secondary explosions and fires resulting from direct hits can cause uncontrollable fires and propulsion of lethal fragments. Personnel protected sufficiently to escape injury from the rockets or mortars may thereforebe killed or seriously wounded because of the vehicles.

(c) Recommendation: In a combat area only those vehicles which are mission required should be allowed to be parked near troop billets.

3. SECTION II, HEADQUARTERS, DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY SURVEY INFORMATION:

Omitted.

Elmer H. Graham

ELMER H. GRAHAM
LTC, SigC
Commanding

1 Incl
Organic, assigned, attached
OPCON units

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SCCVNG-OPT (30 Apr 68) 1st Ind
SUBJECT: Operational Report of Headquarters 63rd Signal Battalion (Army) for Period Ending 30 April 1968 (RCS CSFOR-65) (RI)

DA, HEADQUARTERS, 21ST SIGNAL GROUP APO 96240 22 May 1968

THRU: Commanding General, 1st Signal Brigade, APO SF 96384
Commanding General, United States Army Vietnam, APO SF 96307
Commanding General, United States Army Pacific, APO SF 96558

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

1. Transmitted herewith is one copy of , Headquarters, 63rd Signal Battalion Report, subject as above.

2. Concur in the commanders observations and recommendations with the following comments and/or exceptions:

a. Reference Section I, para 1c (a): In view of the urgency of the mission, maximum effort was devoted to meeting operational commitments. Rapid deployment of personnel was a necessity. Units and/or personnel must be prepared at all times to move with minimum notice given. Maximum effort however, must be made to ensure that complete instructions are included in reassignment orders.

b. Reference Section I, para 1c (a): After certain administrative corrections, the recommendation for the Valourous Unit Award for the 513th Signal Detachment (Tropo) was forwarded from this headquarters on 14 May 68.

c. Reference Section I, para 1c (c): To alleviate some of the financial problems, arrangements have been made with the 22nd Replacement and 90th Replacement Companies to direct personnel (assigned to the 63rd Signal Battalion) to DaNang for processing through the 192d Finance prior to reporting to Phu Bai. Battalions within this Group have been directed to include the statement that personnel will process through the 192d Finance at DaNang in the special instructions of reassignment orders to the 63rd Signal Battalion.

d. Reference Section I, para 1f (1): This headquarters has not pressed the mandantory training requirements for this unit during the past quarter because of the fluid situation within the I Corps Tactical Zone. It is anticipated, however, that the unit will be able to resume a good portion of this training during the next quarter, provided the tactical situation stabalizes to some degree.

SCCVNG-OPT 22 May 1968
SUBJECT: Operational Report of Headquarters 63rd Signal Battalion (Army) for Period Ending 30 April 1968 (RCS CSFOR-65) (RI)

e. Reference Section I, para 1h (3): The 67th Maintenance Battalion located at Phu Bai now provides direct support to the unit.

f. Reference Section II, para 2a (2): This command receives reassignment instructions for personnel rotating to CONUS from 1st Signal Brigade. This data is sent immediately by message to appropriate units. Adequate follow-up procedures are outlined in 1st Signal Brigade Regulation 614-220. Application of these procedures should reduce this problem to a minimum.

g. Reference Section II, para 2c (1): This is an excellent idea and was reported during the previous reporting period by the 37th Signal Battalion.

3. This report is considered adequate.

Daniel W. Mc Ellwee

DANIEL W. MC ELLWEE
COL, SigC
Commanding

SCCVOP-CR (30 Apr 68) 2d Ind
SUBJECT: Operational Report for Headquarters, 63d Signal Battalion (Army) for Period Ending 30 April 1968 RCS CSFOR-65 (R1)

DA, HQ, 1st Sig Bde (USASTRATCOM), APO SF 96384 10 JUN 1968

TO: Commanding General, United States Army Vietnam, ATTN: AVHGC-DST
APO 96375

1. Subject report is forwarded in compliance with USARV Regulation 525-15.

2. Concur in the Commander's observations, evaluations, and recommendations as indorsed with following comments:

a. Item: Assignment Instructions, 2a(2), p.11. Receipt of assignment instructions for enlisted personnel in all grades has deteriorated recently due to the increasing number of personnel being reported late or not being reported at all. Attempts are being made by this headquarters to obtain assignment instructions for these personnel as expeditiously as possible by having information copies forwarded directly to the individual unit as assignment instructions are issued at Department of the Army. This is accomplished both through a USARV weekly teletype communication with Department of the Army and through closer coordination with Headquarters, USASTRATCOM. In most cases, assignment instructions will be received if the individual is reported on the original AOR.

b. Item: Bunker Support, 2e(2), p.18. The common timber sizes used for support columns in bunkers vary from 4" x 4" to 6" x 6", 6" x 8", and 8" x 8". These are neither particularly large nor difficult to obtain in most locations. With reasonable span lengths these same sizes can be used as stringers. Use of expedient materials is certainly acceptable when the normal materials are not available.

c. Item: Waterproof Bunkers, 2e(3), p.19. Standard 1st Signal Brigade drawings for bunkers provide for a sand-cement mixture in the sandbags. This would preclude or at least minimize the problem described. Another measure currently being used is to treat the finished bunker with Peneprime or a similar product. Finally, if the bunker structure is noticeably weakened by the added weight of moisture, it is inadequate because it could not withstand blast effects.

d. Equipment Escorts, 2e(4), p.19. This policy has now been adopted and will be followed as the value and necessity of the item dictate. However, it is felt that the gaining unit should provide the escort. This will then facilitate both a receipt from the gaining unit to the losing unit and a joint technical inspection.

3. Non-concur in the Commander's recommendations listed below, with the following comments:

a. Item: Infusion and AOR Reporting, 2a(1), p.11. If an accurate

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suspense system is maintained as outlined in Chapter 7 of DA Pamphlet 600-8, sub-chapter 7-6, Preparation of Personnel Suspense Cards, all personnel can be properly reported on the appropriate AOR. There would then be no need to make an entry in item 31, DA Form 20. If the suspense card file is screened daily for suspense actions, personnel will be properly processed and reported on the appropriate AOR. AR 614-220 is explicit concerning the proper procedures for completing the AOR report. The effectiveness of the suspense system is dependent upon keeping the information current and accurate.

b. Item: MTC-1 Recall Light, 2b(10), p.15. Maladjustment of pre-set relays is not a good solution to lower current at the relay. Maladjustment of relays can cause arcing and unnecessary wear; overadjustment can result in false indications from stray current. The solution rests in locating the cause of the current loss and eliminating it. The MTC-1 is designed to operate under tactical conditions and provide termination of local battery or common battery lines and manual or dial trunks. It should not require major relay adjustment.

c. Item: Cable Splice Protection, 2c(1), p.16 with paragraph 2g, 1st Indorsement. This type of practice has caused much difficulty in Vietnam recently. In many instances solid epoxy splices have been made in a like manner and have caused many problems due primarily to permanent inacessibility. Boiling tar is apt to melt the insulation off wires which after the tar has crystalized can cause shorts. Another disadvantage of the recommended expedient is that it can never be pressurized. The best expedient for a temporary splice is the use of taped boots which will completely seal a splice from moisture and yet provide accessibility at any time. Such splices should be well marked and recorded to enable the proper splice cases with sealing washers to be installed at the earliest possible opportunity.

FOR THE COMMANDER:

MERRELL H. SMITH
LTC, GS
Acting Chief of Staff

Copy furnished:

Commanding General, United States Army Strategic Communications Command
ATTN: SCCOP, Fort Huachuca, Arizona, 85613

AVHGC-DST (30 Apr 68) 3d Ind CPT Arnold/dls/LBN 4485
SUBJECT: Operational Report of Headquarters 63d Signal Battalion (Army) for Period Ending 30 April 1968, RCS CSFOR-65 (R1)

HEADQUARTERS, US ARMY VIETNAM, APO San Francisco 96375 16 JUN 1968

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

1. This headquarters has reviewed the Operational Report-Lessons Learned for the quarterly period ending 30 April 1968 from Headquarters, 63d Signal Battalion (Army).

2. Concur with report as submitted.

FOR THE COMMANDER:

JOHN V. GEYCHELL
Captain, AGC
Assistant Adjutant General

Cy furn:
HQ 1st Sig Bde (USASTRATCOM)
HQ 63d Sig Bn (A)

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GPOP-DT (30 Apr 68) 4th Ind
SUBJECT: Operational Report of HQ, 63d Sig Bn (Army) for Period Ending 30 April 1968, RCS CSFOR-65 (R1)

HQ, US Army, Pacific, APO San Francisco 96558 29 JUN 1968

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

This headquarters has evaluated subject report and forwarding indorsements and concurs in the report as indorsed.

FOR THE COMMANDER IN CHIEF:

C.L. SHORTT
CPT, AGC
Asst AG

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63d Signal Battalion (Army)

Assigned

Headquarters and Headquarters Company
B Company, 37th Signal Battalion
588th Signal Company (Support)
596th Signal Company (Support)

Operational Control

3d Platoon, B Company, 40th Signal Battalion
544th Signal Detachment (TROPO)
513th Signal Detachment (TROPO)
3 TROPO Teams, 337th Signal Company
4 AN/GRC - 163 radio temas, 324th Signal Company, 36th Signal Battalion
194th MP Company Security Detachment

Attached

COMSEC Logistic Support Unit, 706th Signal Detachment (Rations, quarters, UCMJ, and logistic support)
Photo Team, 221st Signal Company (Rations and quarters)
AUTOSEVOCOM, Regional Comm Group (UCMJ, Logistics, maintenance, rations and quarters)

Inclosure 1

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Security Classification

DOCUMENT CONTROL DATA - R & D

(Security classification of title, body of abstract and indexing annotation must be entered when the overall report is classified)

1. ORIGINATING ACTIVITY (Corporate author) OACSFOR, DA, Washington, D.C. 20310	2a. REPORT SECURITY CLASSIFICATION Unclassified 2b. GROUP

3. REPORT TITLE

Operational Report - Lessons Learned, Hqs, 63d Signal Battalion (U)

4. DESCRIPTIVE NOTES (Type of report and inclusive dates)

Experiences of unit engaged in counterinsurgency operations. 1 Feb - 30 Apr 68

5. AUTHOR(S) (First name, middle initial, last name)

CO, 63d Signal Battalion

6. REPORT DATE 30 April 1968	7a. TOTAL NO. OF PAGES 29	7b. NO. OF REFS
8a. CONTRACT OR GRANT NO. b. PROJECT NO. N/A c. d.	9a. ORIGINATOR'S REPORT NUMBER(S) 682215 9b. OTHER REPORT NO(S) (Any other numbers that may be assigned this report)	

10. DISTRIBUTION STATEMENT

11. SUPPLEMENTARY NOTES N/A	12. SPONSORING MILITARY ACTIVITY OACSFOR, DA, Washington, D.C. 20310

13. ABSTRACT

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DD FORM 1 NOV 68 1473

UNCLASSIFIED
Security Classification