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1. Reference is made to AR 1-26, 4 November 1966.

2. Transmitted herewith is the debriefing report of Major General C. W. Eifler, former Commanding General, 1st Logistical Command, United States Army, Vietnam. Major General Eifler is recommended as a speaker at appropriate service schools and colleges, the National Interdepartmental Seminar, and the Military Assistance Institute.

3. The contents of this report and the opinions expressed therein should not be interpreted as reflecting the official opinion or view of the Department of the Army or any Army command, installation, or agency.

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**CONCEPT OF OPERATION**  
**1ST LOGISTICAL COMMAND**

**DEBRIEFING REPORT BY:** Major General C. W. Eifler

**DUTY ASSIGNMENT:** Commanding General  
1st Logistical Command

**DATE OF REPORT:** 13 June 1967

## Concept of Operation

### 1st Logistical Command

The 1st Logistical Command is responsible for providing logistics support to all U.S. Army units in the Republic of Vietnam. It does not, however, do the engineer construction (that is done under the Engineer Command). Neither does it support aircraft for maintenance nor repair support for the missile systems.

The 1st Log Command supplies and supports other U.S. Forces, Free World Military Assistance Forces, and some RVN forces in the II, III, and IV Corps sectors of Vietnam, with certain common supply and construction materials. The I Corps Tactical Zone common support is done by the Navy. AID cargo is also unloaded by the 1st Log Command.

The forces that we support directly number about 430,000. We unload through our ports, not including Da Nang and Chu Lai, about 813,000 short tons a month. The forces that the 1st Log Command supplies consume monthly: 80 million gallons of POL, 10 million rations, and 76,000 tons of ammunition. About half of our POL goes to Air Force fighters. The current strength of the 1st Logistical Command is now just over 62,000 men.

The concept of support varies between zones of operation. The I Corps Tactical Zone is supported logistically by the Navy, except for those Army units stationed there. The 1st Logistical Command forges the link between the Navy support troops and the Army units in depth in I Corps. The remainder of South Vietnam is divided into three slices. Each area slice is under the command of one officer who has responsibility for providing support from the sea to the Cambodian border. This commander has all of the assets which he needs in order to perform his mission. He unloads the ships and commands the large base depot, all base support, and all logistical support to the battlefield.

The concept is for the commander to put his back to the sea where he has the port and depot and work inland from here to the base camp. He in turn provides supplies, services, and maintenance support for the troops in the battlefield.

The three support commands in the 1st Logistical Command are essentially alike, with the exception of the Saigon Support Command. The port and terminal facilities within this command are organized

separately. The Saigon port is a river port operated by the 4th Transportation Command. The security of the Saigon port is the responsibility of the 1st Log Command, unlike the other ports of Vietnam which are the responsibility of the Navy.

Each support commander is also responsible for a depot. These depots are very similar to those found in the United States. The ships come directly from the ports in CONUS and are unloaded at one of a number of port facilities. Supplies are then moved from the port to the base depot and then from the base depot to the combat area. Movement of supplies to the combat area from the depot is by truck, line-haul, or by sea along the coast.

Supply support for field operations is provided from a base area known as a Forward Support Area (FSA). The FSA is usually located near an airfield so that supplies can be moved to the fighting troops quickly. This FSA is also located in the immediate vicinity of the combat operation. Forward Support Area concept is a new one. Each FSA has a specified stockage level for all classes of supply, based upon the units which it supports. Supplies are automatically moved forward each day in order to meet these previously agreed upon levels. We in the headquarters keep an eye on the level of the stock, so that we will know what supplies are needed at the FSA.

In addition, hospitals are located in each support command area. All of the hospitals are assigned to one of three medical groups which control all facilities and are responsible for air evacuation of wounded soldiers from the battlefield. The established policy dictates that the hospitals be first-class facilities and strategically located in permanent structures throughout Vietnam. Patients can be brought in from the battlefield within one hour to a fixed hospital. There are 17 such hospitals in Vietnam. They are linked professionally to the 44th Medical Brigade, another of the five major subordinate commands of the 1st Logistical Command.

There is one other organization attached directly to the 1st Logistical Command which should be mentioned. This is the 14th Inventory Control Center which has the mission of supply management for all three base depots.

The major headquarters of the 1st Logistical Command is located in Saigon near Tan Son Nhut Air Base. All of the support commands are directly subordinate to this headquarters. The headquarters has the responsibility for plans and operations, fiscal control, personnel control and management, and the normal administrative and legal staff functions found in a headquarters of this type.

There are, in addition, several other types of managers in the headquarters. These are the managers responsible for commodity management and function management. There is another group known as materiel expeditors. This group of 30 people scattered throughout Vietnam is tied together with a very fast communications net. Should some item or type of supply or service be needed for support of a tactical operation quickly, and it is not available, we place this requisition on the expeditor net. If that item is anywhere in Vietnam, these expeditors will find it. They have the authority to go to any port or facility in order to locate the needed item. When the item is located, the expeditor can then take action to insure that it is sent quickly to the field to the supported unit utilizing the established supply channels.

The use of commodity managers, which were mentioned earlier, is a new concept. The three big supply commodities in the combat zone are, of course, rations, ammunition, and petroleum products. The 1st Logistical Command maintains a 60-day stock level of each of these commodities. The level of rations is currently 92% of this long-term goal. Petroleum is at 94% and ammunition is at 83%. The authorized stockage levels are based upon normal usage factors. Because of the continuous issue of supplies, the stock levels are never quite filled to 100%. This is the way it should be.

The 14th Inventory Control Center insures that the distribution of supply is equitable within each depot and across Vietnam. With an electronic data processing system, the 14th Inventory Control Center shifts stocks between depots and cross levels each depot throughout the country. In the last six months, the 1st Logistical Command has redistributed \$18 million in supplies rather than having to place them on requisition from depots in the United States. These supplies were not short, as one might think. They were simply not located where they were needed at the time, and the Inventory Control Center rectified this. In addition, after the Control Center was in full operation, we were able to cancel \$98 million in supplies which had been placed on requisition from the United States, but were not in fact needed because they were located in other depots here. This is a great money saver.

The concept of the commodity manager also merits further explanation here. There are in the 1st Logistical Command eight directors for all of the commodity and service needs for support of tactical units.

The commodity manager for petroleum products, for instance, has a staff of 50 people. He is responsible for the management of petroleum products throughout Vietnam. He must control the establishment of requirements, procurement, transportation, storage and issue of all petroleum products. He also controls the manpower aspects essential to

the distribution of petroleum products for all U.S. and Free World Forces. He manages petroleum for all three support commands. He also works closely with the support commander and the Director of Petroleum within each support command in order to accomplish his mission. This has proven to be a valuable concept in Vietnam because of the great breadth of the command and the lack of transportation available across the country. The support commander can then capitalize on the limited depth of Vietnam and move the commodity on the ground while the director is able to manage it across the country.

All of the port facilities in Vietnam's II, III and IV Corps are operated by the 1st Logistical Command. The first is Qui Nhon. Seven months ago, the 1st Logistical Command was unloading supplies across the beach at Qui Nhon. Now there is a deep-draft vessel facility at Qui Nhon, and we are able to unload six vessels simultaneously.

Seventy miles south of Qui Nhon is the port of Vung Ro Bay, which is a natural port facility located near the U.S. Air Base and Tuy Hoa. The area between Vung Ro Bay and Tuy Hoa was recently occupied by the Viet Cong. It was my feeling that this would be an ideal location for a deep-draft port and I requested that the Commanding General, I Field Force, order a tactical operation in the area to secure it for our use. Operation John Paul Jones brought this area under allied control and we have since constructed a facility capable of offloading two deep-draft vessels simultaneously. Eighty miles south of Vung Ro Bay is Cam Ranh Bay. Eighteen months ago Cam Ranh Bay consisted of one stone pier. We have since constructed four additional piers and the port is now capable of unloading ten vessels simultaneously.

Near the South China Sea, southeast of Saigon, the 1st Logistical Command has constructed the port of Vung Tau. This port facility consists of one De Long pier and can unload two deep-draft vessels. It has been a key facility in the support of the Saigon-Delta region.

The U.S. Army Terminal, Newport, is located in the Saigon area near the main road to Bien Hoa. Three deep-draft piers have been constructed there and a fourth one is nearing completion. The Newport facility will soon handle the majority of the USAID and military cargo coming into the Saigon area.

The Saigon Port is located three miles south of Newport. At the present time, the 4th Transportation Command shares this facility with the Saigon commercial port. On 4 July 1966, MACV received a request from the Vietnamese Government for assistance in the management of the Saigon commercial port. This mission was assigned to the 1st Logistical Command.

Since that time, the 1st Logistical Command has worked closely with the Vietnamese in order to assist in the movement of commercial cargo and the establishment of a smoothly operating commercial facility. The 125th Transportation Command has acted in an advisory capacity to the commercial port since November 1966.

It would be beneficial to examine the flow of cargo in order to understand the task which existed in clearing the Saigon commercial port. Seventy six percent of the cargo goes from deep-draft vessels to barges. The reason for this is that the warehouse facilities are located on the canals which are not accessible to deep-draft vessels. The cargo must be moved by barges to these areas. Twenty percent of the cargo is unloaded by pier side and goes to customs storage warehouses. Since the majority of the cargo was offloaded to barges, which were used as floating warehouses, the solution to the commercial port problems rested on the examination of the cargo flow on barges.

We first made a complete inventory of all the barges being used as floating warehouses. There were at the time, more than 1600 barges in this category. We then assisted the commercial port by requesting that consignees unload the barges. We were successful in reducing the number of barges under load to the extent that there are now only 200 barges in that category. The great part of the commercial port congestion problem has thus been eliminated.

Part of the problem was also the movement of cargo from the port in comparison with the amount unloaded from the vessel. It must be moved from the port in an amount equal to or greater than that which is removed from vessels or the warehouses fill up and cause further congestion. When the 125th Transportation Command undertook to advise the commercial port, more cargo was being unloaded than was being cleared from the port. This second "bottleneck" has also been eliminated and the cargo inventory in the commercial port warehouse has been reduced to workable levels. Ships coming to Vietnam can now sail directly from Vung Tau to berthing facilities in Saigon rather than face the long delays which existed a short time ago. This is remarkable progress.

The 1st Logistical Command, in the accomplishment of its mission, is organized to provide dynamic support to the fighting troops on the battlefield. The concept used in providing this supply and service has been successful to the extent that the tactical troops fighting in Vietnam are the best in the history of the U.S. Army.

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