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HEADQUARTERS, U. S. ARMY SECTION
MILITARY ASSISTANCE ADVISORY GROUP, VIETNAM
Saigon, Vietnam

MAGAR-OT (OP)

30 March 1962

SUBJECT: Lessons Learned Number 2

TO: See Distribution

1. General: A three phased operation employing airmobile elements to restore an area to effective GVN control was recently conducted in the I Corps Zone.

2. Participating Units: Eight rifle and Ranger Companies, one airborne battalion, one Civil Guard Company and 1 "Provincial Company" were supported by mortars, air and artillery elements.

3. Mission: Destruction of an estimated VC battalion in the area of operations followed by pacification and extension of effective GVN control into the operational area.

4. Concept of the Operation: Friendly forces, organized into three task forces, were to move by foot and helicopter into the operational area with the bulk of the airmobile forces occupying blocking positions on the West edge of the area. Remainder of the forces were to move to the West sweeping VC into the previously positioned blocking forces.

5. Results: Fifteen VC were killed, 19 wounded and 95 were captured. Seven weapons and other miscellaneous material were seized. There were other VC casualties inflicted by air and artillery but these were not confirmed.

6. Lessons Learned:

a. Tactical surprise, normally achieved by the employment of air-mobile forces, was lost due to the poorly coordinated movement into the objective area. Designated D Day was delayed one day because air-mobile forces could not be landed due to poor weather conditions. The participating foot elements either did not receive the order or did not choose to follow the new instructions. They jumped off in the attack 25½ hours prior to the positioning of the blocking forces by helicopter. Apparently, the VC were alerted by this early movement into the objective area and successfully evaded the blocking forces and escaped.

b. VC casualties are claimed by air and artillery support but are not confirmed because they were inflicted in "inaccessable" areas. Obviously, if the VC could move through the areas they were not, in fact, "inaccessable". This supporting fire should have been the object of ground follow-up action to exploit its effects and to confirm the casualties.

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