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

UNCLASSIFIED

MAGAR-OT (OP)

SUBJECT: Lessons Learned Number 7.

TO: See Distribution

1. GENERAL: Operation "DAN TIEN VIII" was conducted by an Infantry Division (-) in KIEN HOA and DINH TUONG Sectors, 32 DTA, III CTZ, during the period 7-14 March 1962.

2. PARTICIPATING UNITS: The units which participated in the operation were a Provisional Brigade Task Force composed of two Infantry Battalions, two Provisional Sector Battalions, a 105mm Artillery Battalion, and a Regimental Task Force consisting of two Infantry Battalions and a 105mm Artillery Battery supported by 1 Co of U.S. Helicopters, 2 LCU, 4 LCM, 2 FOM, 2 L-19 and 2 AD-6.

3. MISSION: The mission of the operation was to destroy elements of two VC battalions and other guerrilla forces in the area.

4. CONCEPT: The concept of the operations was to use one task force to locate and destroy all enemy units and bases found in the area while the second task force was to isolate the area and prevent escape of the enemy. Air observation was to be continuous. Tactical air and artillery fire were to be used on targets of opportunity to include enemy routes of escape. A battalion heliborne operation, not initially planned as a part of the operation, was conducted due to intelligence received during the operation.

5. RESULTS: The operation was considered to be only partially successful with negligible destruction of the VC, however, numerous bases of operation were destroyed.

6. LESSONS LEARNED:

a. CONTACT WITH THE VC MUST BE MAINTAINED ONCE MADE. Several contacts with the VC were made, but units failed to aggressively maintain the contact, and the VC elements were allowed to successfully withdraw.

b. ASSIGNMENT OF HIGHER THAN REQUIRED PRECEDENCE TO OPERATIONAL MESSAGES REDUCES EFFICIENCY OF COMMUNICATIONS. The average handling time for "emergency" traffic was over one hour. It is obvious that this time is excessive, and was caused by improper assignment of message precedence. 67% of all outgoing and 56% of all incoming messages at the message center were assigned "emergency" precedence. Therefore, legitimate "emergency" traffic was delayed.

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c. PLANS SHOULD NOT BE CHANGED WITHOUT VALID REASONS ONCE THE EXECUTION PHASE BEGINS. Several unnecessary changes in plans were made and permitted the VC present in the area to evade the friendly forces.

d. NAVAL PARTICIPATION AND COORDINATION IS REQUIRED IN LAND AREAS ADJACENT TO THE SEA. A naval liaison officer present at the Division Command Post during the conduct of this operation would have been of immeasurable assistance in coordinating to prevent enemy movement along the coastal areas. Lack of sufficient naval officers for permanent assignment is understood. However, this liaison might well be provided by the assignment of a naval officer TDY for each operation. In any event, it is mandatory that Naval Hqs. participate in the planning of operations near the sea, and that the SOP for ARMY-NAVY communications be implemented in future operations.

7. The foregoing is for your information and guidance.

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