

UNCLASSIFIED

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

NOV 15 1967

VN COLL  
MACV  
IL 31  
c.1

MODIFIED HANDLING AUTHORIZED  
HEADQUARTERS

U. S. ARMY SECTION  
MILITARY ASSISTANCE ADVISORY GROUP, VIETNAM  
APO 143, San Francisco, California

MAGAR-OT (S&A)

11 27 September 1963

SUBJECT: Lessons Learned Number 31: Artillery Organization and Employment in Counter Insurgency (U).

8

12 7p.

TO: See Distribution

"This document contains information affecting the National Defense of the United States within the meaning of the Espionage Laws, Title 18, U. S. C., Sections 793 and 794. Its transmission or the revelation of its contents in any manner to an unauthorized person is prohibited by law."

1. (CMHA) Introduction.

a. This lesson learned is devoted primarily to the organization and employment of artillery in a counter insurgency environment. Its purpose is to highlight some of the significant differences in organizing for counter-insurgency, as opposed to organization for conventional warfare. Artillery employment concepts in Vietnam have differed considerably from those used in the past. Assuming these concepts to be valid, certain changes in organizations and techniques are justified to achieve more efficient use of available resources.

b. It is recognized that the basic principles of artillery organization and employment remain valid. The variations in organizations and employment discussed in this ~~lessons learned~~ document are dictated by local conditions such as terrain, nature and size of targets, availability of artillery and the requirements of the supported force. The basic mission of artillery, to support the ground gaining arms, remains unchanged.

c. This paper presents in general terms some of the significant aspects of artillery organization and employment in counter-insurgency. Future Lessons Learned will treat specific operational aspects in greater detail.

2. (CMHA) Present Army of Vietnam (ARVN) Artillery Organization.

a. Artillery consists of 4.2-inch mortars, 105mm howitzers and 155mm howitzers. These weapons are organized into battalions. There are no major differences between ARVN artillery organization and the organization used by the US Army in the past. All artillery battalions, and the Corps Artillery Headquarters and Headquarters Battery, are organized and equipped in nearly identical fashion to comparable units of the US Army. The only significant difference is that there is no Division Artillery Headquarters and Headquarters Battery, but rather an

DOWNGRADED AT 3 YEAR INTERVALS  
DECLASSIFIED AFTER 12 YEARS  
DOD DIR 5200.10

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

REGRADED UNCLASSIFIED BY  
AUTHORITY OF DOD DIR. 5200.1 R  
BAKERS ON 15 NOV 81

UNCLASSIFIED

BASED  
ATION

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

~~MODIFIED HANDLING AUTHORIZED~~

UNCLASSIFIED

6710M/AV: MAGAR-OT (S&A)

AVAIL. SUBJECT: Lessons Learned Number 31: Artillery Organization and Employment in Counter Insurgency (U)

artillery staff section in the Division Headquarters. Total strength of this section is 28.

b. All artillery battalions are organized into a Headquarters, Headquarters and Service Battery, and three firing batteries. Each howitzer battalion has 12 howitzers and each mortar battalion is equipped with 27 4.2-inch mortars.

c. ARVN Artillery organization is shown in Inclosure 1.

3. (CMHA) Artillery Counter Insurgency Environment.

In countering insurgency the requirements placed upon ARVN artillery are considerably different from those experienced by US artillery in past combat operations. Insurgent elements have the capability of attacking ground forces or the local populace at times and places of their choosing. There are no well defined battle areas. Insurgent attacks are characterized by their very short duration, hence the response time of the ground force must be instantaneous. It is generally impossible to displace artillery to counter the usual type of attack in sufficient time to be of value. If the time to displace were available the road net of terrain would frequently prohibit displacement.

4. (CMHA) Artillery Employment.

a. To provide the most effective fire support possible in its counter-insurgency environment, ARVN artillery is employed to obtain maximum area coverage with available weapons. In addition to supporting ground operations, artillery is positioned to provide fire support for towns, strategic hamlets and critical installations.

b. Artillery is usually employed by platoons in order to obtain greater area coverage. Platoon employment is justified to some extent by the lack of lucrative targets. The typical target is a squad or platoon. Larger targets are seldom encountered. The concept of greater area coverage dictates that some artillery be within range of an attacking force at all times. This concept tends to outweigh the desirability of using a battery or massing the fires of a battalion against these small targets. Fires on many targets are frequently requested by province chiefs, rather than by a supported ground force commander.

c. Platoon employment has been dictated by the fact that there are relatively few weapons for the size of area to be supported. The entire Republic of Vietnam can be considered an area of operations.

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

~~MODIFIED HANDLING AUTHORIZED~~

UNCLASSIFIED

UNCLASSIFIED

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~  
~~MODIFIED HANDLING AUTHORIZED~~

MAGAR-OT (S&A)

SUBJECT: Lessons Learned Number 31: Artillery Organization and Employment in Counter Insurgency (U)

d. It is not uncommon to find two howitzer platoons of an artillery battery separated by distance of as much as 75 kilometers. The nine 4.2-inch mortar platoons of the divisional mortar battalion are generally distributed throughout the division area. Maximum dimensions of the division area are normally in excess of 150 kilometers. In one instance the divisional mortar battalion is organized into 13 platoons and located throughout an area 200 kilometers in length by 60 kilometers in width.

e. In a few areas single howitzer employment has been used. This concept has been useful in areas where mobility is limited by a complete lack of roads or intense guerrilla activity. Single piece employment is justified to a degree by the great respect the Viet Cong have shown for the capability of artillery weapons. There is considerable evidence that movement of an artillery piece into a new area sometimes causes the Viet Cong to evacuate the area within range of the weapon.

f. Artillery weapons are always in firing position. As an example, weapons at the ARVN Artillery School not being used for training are maintained in firing position to defend the school and surrounding towns and hamlets against guerrilla attacks.

#### 5. (CMHA) Command and Control.

The artillery Battalion Commander, Division Artillery Commander and Corps Artillery Commander exert little or no influence over artillery operations beyond the initial stages of planning. This lack of influence is due largely to the fact that artillery supports operations with platoons, in some instances with batteries, and that the artillery platoon or battery is usually far removed from its battalion headquarters. Once operations are underway, necessary coordination to support operations effectively is conducted at battery or platoon level.

#### 6. (CMHA) Organizing for Terrain Variations.

a. A wide spectrum of terrain types is found in the Republic of Vietnam. In the Delta area terrain is characterized as being inundated during the rainy season. Artillery operations during this period are largely amphibious. In contrast, in the mountainous areas to the North movement of artillery is frequently accomplished by helicopter.

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~  
~~MODIFIED HANDLING AUTHORIZED~~

UNCLASSIFIED

MAGAR-OT (S&amp;A)

SUBJECT: Lessons Learned Number 31: Artillery Organization and  
Employment in Counter Insurgency (U)

b. It is mandatory that in tailoring an artillery organization for counter-insurgency operations the nature of terrain in the area of operations be considered along with enemy tactics and techniques. The same weapons cannot be used with equally promising results in all types of terrain. Any organization that does not possess flexibility should be avoided.

#### 7. (CMHA) Fire Direction.

a. Fire direction is performed within the artillery platoon, infrequently by the battery. Artillery platoons are augmented with personnel, fire direction and communications equipment. The additional equipment required has been obtained largely from Artillery Battalion Headquarters, the Division Artillery staff section, and Corps Artillery Headquarters and Headquarters Battery.

b. Within an artillery platoon, weapons are frequently oriented in different directions. This procedure increases the probability that at least one weapon can take an attacking force under fire immediately.

c. The observed firing chart is used almost exclusively. Firing charts include planned concentrations in a complete circle around the gun position. Data for the various concentrations is determined by firing. This data serves as a basis for shifting fires. The registration is used only infrequently. Experience has shown that weather conditions in Vietnam are relatively stable and periodic registration is less necessary than in areas with frequent weather changes. Map inaccuracies and inadequate map coverage preclude the use of maps as firing charts in many parts of the country.

#### 8. (CMHA) Survey.

The widespread variety of artillery operations, the lack of requirement for massing fires and lack of survey control have resulted in very little use of survey in South Vietnam. If survey is performed in the present environment it is necessary to provide security forces to protect survey personnel against ambush.

#### 9. (CMHA) Communications.

a. Nearly all communication is by radio. Wire is used for internal communication only. Terrain, enemy activity, dispersion of units

MAGAR-OT (S&amp;A)

SUBJECT: Lessons Learned Number 31: Artillery Organization and Employment in Counter Insurgency (U)

and the large area of operations make wire communications impractical and unreliable.

b. Fire direction communication nets from Corps to Division Artillery to Battalion and Battery are not used. The only requirement for radio communications between these echelons has been handled by an AM radio command net. Communications over this net is largely CW.

c. The artillery platoon is usually provided a radio, such as the AN/GRC-9, to permit communication with battery or battalion headquarters.

#### 10. (CMHA) Lessons Learned.

a. Assuming that the tactical environment in the Republic of Vietnam is typical of that to be experienced in large scale counter insurgency operations, the following are lessons learned concerning the organization and employment of artillery for counter insurgency.

(1) Present artillery organizations are valid, however organizations must be adjusted internally to facilitate employment of artillery at the platoon or battery level.

(2) Artillery must be prepared to operate as platoons or batteries far removed from higher headquarters. In supporting ground operations, attachment of platoons or batteries to the supported force may be common practice.

(3) Corps Artillery Headquarters, Division Artillery Headquarters, and to some extent, Artillery Battalion Headquarters exert little influence over subordinate units during operations. Since operations will normally be highly decentralized these headquarters must be prepared to augment subordinate headquarters with necessary personnel and equipment.

(4) The number of forward observers in present TOE's is inadequate to conduct artillery operations at platoon level. To compensate for this inadequacy an aggressive program must be pursued to qualify personnel in infantry and paramilitary units as observers.

(5) Artillery must be prepared to provide on-call fires in defense of villages or strategic hamlets within range of an artillery position. These fires are usually requested by village or hamlet personnel.

UNCLASSIFIED

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~  
~~MODIFIED HANDLING AUTHORIZED~~

MAGAR-OT (S&A)

SUBJECT: Lessons Learned Number 31: Artillery Organization and Employment in Counter Insurgency (U)

Artillery units must be responsible for developing fire plans and for the training of village and hamlet personnel in basic fundamentals of artillery fire.

(6) During hours of darkness illuminating shell is highly effective in deterring guerrilla operations. Once the enemy is illuminated he normally withdraws from the area.

(7) Artillery, mortar or howitzer sections must be prepared to displace by helicopter or boats. Helicopter movement will be required in areas with limited road nets or areas of heavy guerrilla infestation.

(8) Targets are seldom larger than squad or platoon size. Only infrequently will a target of company or battalion size appear.

(9) Maps of proper scale and accuracy will not normally be available for use as firing charts. Personnel must be well trained in the construction and use of observed firing charts.

(10) Use of survey will normally be limited because of the fragmentary nature of artillery operations.

(11) The widespread nature of current operations will generally preclude the use of timely meteorological data as a means of improving accuracy of fires. However, a meteorological capability must be maintained to permit periodic calibration of artillery weapons.

(12) It is absolutely essential that the capability of developing basic fire plans exists at the artillery platoon or battery.

(13) Radio communications at the artillery platoon must include the AN/GRC-9, or similar radio, to permit communications with higher headquarters. Wire communication has little or no application, due to both dispersion of units and vulnerability to insurgent forces.

(14) VT fuze is ineffective over water covered and dense jungle areas.

(15) Artillery is useful in assisting other ground elements

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~  
~~MODIFIED HANDLING AUTHORIZED~~

UNCLASSIFIED

UNCLASSIFIED

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~  
~~MODIFIED HANDLING AUTHORIZED~~

MAGAR-OT (S&A)

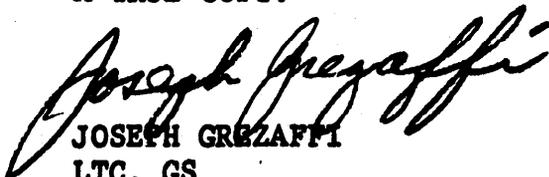
SUBJECT: Lessons Learned Number 31: Artillery Organization and  
Employment in Counter Insurgency (U)

to determine their locations in poorly mapped areas. This can be accomplished by firing marking rounds, using smoke shell.

(16) Artillery must be in firing positions at all times. Weapons must be capable of delivering fires in any direction.

DELK M. ODEN  
Brigadier General, USA  
Chief

A TRUE COPY:



JOSEPH GREZAFFI  
LTC, GS  
Doctrine Branch, J343

UNCLASSIFIED

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~  
~~MODIFIED HANDLING AUTHORIZED~~