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DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
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IN REPLY REFER TO

AGDA (M) (20 Aug 69) FOR OT UT 69B031

11 September 1969

SUBJECT: Senior Officer Debriefing Report: COL Robert V. Lee, Jr.,
CO, 108th Artillery Group, Period 4 September 1968 to 14
August, 1969 (U)

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1. Reference: AR 1-26, subject, Senior Officer Debriefing Program (U)
dated 4 November 1966.
2. Transmitted herewith is the report of COL Robert V. Lee, Jr., subject
as above.
3. This report is provided to insure appropriate benefits are realized
from the experiences of the author. The report should be reviewed in
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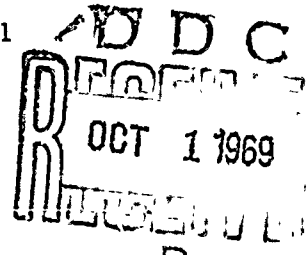
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1 Incl
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ROBERT E. LYNCH
Colonel, AGC
Acting The Adjutant General

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DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
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AVHGC-DST

10 AUG 1969

SUBJECT: Senior Officer Debriefing Report

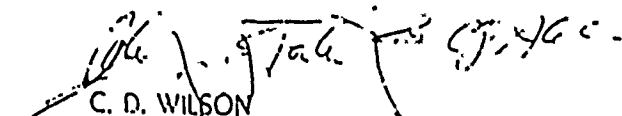
Assistant Chief of Staff for Force Development
Department of the Army
Washington, D. C. 20310

1. Attached are three copies of the Senior Officer Debriefing Report prepared by COL Robert V. Lee, Jr., Commanding Officer of the 108th Artillery Group, for the period 4 September 1968 through 14 August 1969.

2. COL Lee is recommended as a candidate guest speaker at appropriate service schools.

FOR THE COMMANDER:

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as (trip)
2 cy wd Hq, DA


C. D. WILSON
1LT, AGC
Assistant Adjutant General

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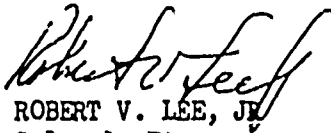
AVGL-A

31 July 1969

SUBJECT: Senior Officer Debriefing Report

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

The attached Senior Officer Debriefing Report is submitted in compliance with USARV Reg 1-3, dated 1 June 1968.



ROBERT V. LEE, JR.
Colonel, FA
Commanding

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Country: REPUBLIC OF VIETNAM
Debrief Report By: Col Robert V. Lee Jr
Duty Assignment: CO, 108th Artillery Group
Inclusive Dates: 4 Sep 68 - 14 Aug 69
Date Of Report: 31 July 1969

1. (C) Introduction.

The 108th Artillery Group is in general support of XXIV Corps. Being mobile and flexible, our units ranged from Hai Van Pass to the DMZ and from the coast to the Laos border. Not having an area of operations of our own, we were in the position of cooperation with the supported divisions in their civic actions. The group had input to division and Corps intelligence agencies but was almost completely dependent upon them for intelligence planning, correlation and analysis. Therefore there will be many areas in this debriefing report in which there will be little that I can contribute from first hand knowledge and experience.

2. (C) The Insurgent.

During the period covered by this report, the tactics of the enemy have changed. Perhaps this is a result of the apparent increase in the ratio of NVA to VC encountered. Initially, attacks by fire on fire support bases were generally conducted in isolation. As a result the US troops went into bunkers and stayed there until the attack was over. Now however, the attacks by fire are apt to be coordinated with ground attacks including both sapper and infantry troops and tactics. So now perimeters are fully manned during attacks by fire.

Tactics have apparently changed in another, more subtle manner. Generally speaking, it is hard to find any sizeable enemy force which will fight. It appears very much like the pacifying of our own West with the Indians; small groups hitting installations and disappearing until they strike again. This is also true when US forces go out to find and fight the enemy.

3. (C) Local government stability operations.

Here, the only item of interest is the political/military relationship in areas that have civilian populations which affect the military operations. Political clearance for artillery fire is sometimes unobtainable due to the proximity of civilians and villages or hamlets. Thus enemy activity initiated from these areas cannot be effectively countered immediately. This problem also appears when defensive fire concentrations are planned and shot in. I realize that this is an effect of the political/military interface but the situation does exist. Basically it appears to be a conflict between the pacification program and military operations.

4. (C) US role in support of local government.

The relationship at the working level between ARVN and US forces is peculiar in as much as they are cooperating with each other under their own distinct command structure. Thus good cooperation has often been based upon personalities as opposed to fundamental merit. This group has generally had excellent relations with the ARVN troops. We answer their calls for fire, supply liaison officers to and for them and provide them with forward

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observers. This group set up a working, combined, regimental fire support coordination center with an ARVN regiment. Difficulties have arisen from time to time with Americans not understanding "oriental face" and their outlook concerning the relationship between supervisor and subordinate. As an example, we have had an experience wherein we had difficulty in getting an ARVN regiment to request fires through a well qualified US NCO in the FSCC. This apparently was beneath an ARVN officer's dignity.

This same sense of cooperation and the advisors sense of "trying to help" have hurt the development of the ARVN and their relationship with US forces. Some advisors were doing work themselves--such as coordination fire support and calling for US air strikes. Hence, in the recent past when one advisor was changed and another withdrawn, the ARVN commanding officer was forced under extreme pressure, to set up his own system with the advisor "advising" as opposed to "working". This again involved "face" in as much as the ARVN commander was very reluctant to request air strikes or additional artillery fires through a subordinate of his wherein before he had told the US advisors to do it and they did.

Until the announced redeployment of US forces the ARVN had a tendency to count on US forces. Case in point is their insistence upon US forward observers and liaison officers who can deal directly with US artillery instead of using their own personnel and artillery and asking for additional fire support through fire support coordinators. Recently however, the ARVN are making their system work and are becoming more proficient in becoming selfsufficient.

5. (C) Lessons learned.

- a. Artillery technique as taught in the Army school system is good.
- b. In dealing with the ARVN with the command and cooperation structure as it is, patience must be exercised and prompt action should not be expected.
- c. As a military organization geared to act efficiently and with dispatch, the command structure in SVN is not responsive in all cases. Too much individual and national pride is involved which requires particularly astute commanders.
- d. Tactically, artillery raids are effective. On the one artillery raid conducted by this group, a battery went out at dusk to shoot targets which normally were out of range. The targets were fired before the enemy could react and the battery returned to its position the same night. The fires of this raid caused 45 secondary explosions.
- e. We have found that when a radar is on site, there is a greater probability that the fire support base will receive incoming rounds when the generator is not running. As a result, we try to have it running all the time even if it is not compatible with the radar set and the radar set itself is turned off. This seems to have decreased the amount and frequency of incoming artillery and mortar rounds.

6. (U) Recommendations.

- I have only two basic recommendations,
- a. Understand and have a little patience with the ARVN and they will do a good job.
 - b. The basic fundamentals for artillery as taught at both Artillery Schools is sound and should be adhered to and stressed at all times.

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