

UNCLASSIFIED

AD NUMBER

AD525503

CLASSIFICATION CHANGES

TO: unclassified

FROM: confidential

LIMITATION CHANGES

TO:
Approved for public release, distribution unlimited

FROM:
Distribution authorized to U.S. Gov't. agencies and their contractors; Administrative/Operational Use; 09 MAY 1973. Other requests shall be referred to Office of the Adjutant General [Army], Washington, DC 20310.

AUTHORITY

OAG D/A ltr, 11 Jun 1980; OAG D/A ltr, 11 Jun 1980

THIS PAGE IS UNCLASSIFIED

THIS REPORT HAS BEEN DELIMITED
AND CLEARED FOR PUBLIC RELEASE
UNDER DOD DIRECTIVE 5200.20 AND
NO RESTRICTIONS ARE IMPOSED UPON
ITS USE AND DISCLOSURE.

DISTRIBUTION STATEMENT A

APPROVED FOR PUBLIC RELEASE;
DISTRIBUTION UNLIMITED.

SECURITY

MARKING

The classified or limited status of this report applies to each page, unless otherwise marked.

Separate page printouts MUST be marked accordingly.

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. THE TRANSMISSION OR THE REVELATION OF ITS CONTENTS IN ANY MANNER TO AN UNAUTHORIZED PERSON IS PROHIBITED BY LAW.

NOTICE: When government or other drawings, specifications or other data are used for any purpose other than in connection with a definitely related government procurement operation, the U. S. Government thereby incurs no responsibility, nor any obligation whatsoever; and the fact that the Government may have formulated, furnished, or in any way supplied the said drawings, specifications, or other data is not to be regarded by implication or otherwise as in any manner licensing the holder or any other person or corporation, or conveying any rights or permission to manufacture, use or sell any patented invention that may in any way be related thereto.

CONFIDENTIAL

HQDA Ltr 525-73-2



**DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
OFFICE OF THE ADJUTANT GENERAL
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20310**

REPLY TO
ATTENTION OF:

DAAG-PAP-A (M) (23 Apr 73) DAMO-ODU

9 May 1973

Expires 9 May 1974

SUBJECT: Senior Officer Debriefing Report: Major General Howard H. Cooksey,
Commander, First Regional Assistance Command, 30 May 1972 -
25 January 1973 (U)

AD 525503

SEE DISTRIBUTION

1. Reference: AR 525-14, Senior Officer Debriefing Report (U), 2 July 1971.
2. Transmitted herewith is the report of Major General Howard H. Cooksey, 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 accordance with paragraphs 3 and 5, AR 525-14; however, it should not be interpreted as the official view of the Department of the Army, or of any agency of the Department of the Army.
4. Information of actions initiated under provisions of AR 525-14, as a result of subject report should be provided to the Deputy Chief of Staff for Military Operations, ATTN: DAMO-ODU within 90 days of receipt of covering letter.

BY ORDER OF THE SECRETARY OF THE ARMY:

Verne L. Bowers
VERNE L. BOWERS
Major General, USA
Adjutant General

D D C
RECEIVED
MAY 18 1973
REGULATED
E

1 Incl
as

DISTRIBUTION:

- Commanders**
- US Continental Army Command
 - US Army Combat Developments Command
 - US Army Materiel Command
- Commandant**
- US Army War College
 - US Army Command and General Staff College
 - US Army Adjutant General School
 - US Army Air Defense School
 - US Army Armor School
 - US Army Aviation School
- Distribution (Continued)

"Unauthorized Disclosure Subject to Criminal Sanctions"
"NATIONAL SECURITY INFORMATION"

**Regraded unclassified when separated
from classified inclosure.**

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

DISTRIBUTION (Continued)

- US Army Civil Affairs School
- US Army Combat Surveillance & Electronic Warfare School
- US Army Engineer School
- US Army Field Artillery School
- US Army Infantry School
- US Army Institute for Military Assistance
- US Army Intelligence School
- US Army Military Police School
- US Army Quartermaster School
- US Army Signal School
- US Army Transportation School

Copies furnished:

- Office, Chief of Staff, US Army (DWSA)
- Deputy Chiefs of Staff
- Chief of Research and Development
- Assistant Chiefs of Staff
- Chief of Engineers
- Chief of Military History
- The Provost Marshal General
- Office of the Joint Chiefs of Staff
- Commanders in Chief
 - Pacific
 - US Army, Pacific.
 - US Army, Europe
 - US Readiness Command
- Commander
 - US Army STRATCOM
 - US Army Electronics Command
 - US Army Flight Training Center
 - US Army Security Agency
- Commander, US Army Forces Southern Command
- Chief of Staff, USAF
- Chief of Naval Operations
- Commandant of the Marine Corps
- Commandant
 - Armed Forces Staff College
 - Defense Intelligence School
 - Industrial College of the Armed Forces
 - The National War College
- Senior Army Representative, Education Center,
- USAF Air Ground Operations School
- The Air University Library
- Defense Documentation Center
- Commander
 - US Army Land Warfare Laboratory
 - US Army Logistics Doctrine, Systems & Readiness Agency
 - US Army Mobility Equipment Research & Development Center



CONFIDENTIAL
HEADQUARTERS
FIRST REGIONAL ASSISTANCE COMMAND
San Francisco 96349



MACFR-OP

25 January 1973

SUBJECT: Senior Officer Debriefing Report, Major General Howard H. Cooksey, RCS CSFOR-74 (U)

THRU: Commander
US Military Assistance Command, Vietnam
ATTN: MACDO
APO 96393

TO: Assistant Chief of Staff for Force Development
ATTN: FOR OT UT
Department of the Army
Washington, D. C. 20310

Country: Republic of Vietnam

Debriefing Report By: Major General Howard H. Cooksey

Duty Assignment: Commander, First Regional Assistance Command

Inclusive Dates: 30 May 1972 - 25 January 1973

Date of Report: 25 January 1973

DAMO-ODU
73B037
Inclosure

CLASSIFIED BY: MAJOR GENERAL Howard H. Cooksey
SUBJECT TO GENERAL DECLASSIFICATION
SCHEDULE OF EXECUTIVE ORDER 11652
AUTOMATICALLY DOWNGRADED AT TWO YEAR
INTERVALS
DECLASSIFIED ON 31 DECEMBER 1979

~~NOT RELEASABLE TO FOREIGN GOVERNMENT~~ *ml*

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

MACFR-OP

SUBJECT: Senior Officer Debriefing Report, Major General Howard H. Cooksey, RCS CSFOR-74 (U)

1. (U) Introduction.

a. Purpose.

This paper reports my observations of significant combat, combat support, combat service support and pacification and development activities in the First Regional Assistance Command (FRAC) during above period.

b. Background.

(1) My tour in I Corps commenced 8 weeks after the NVA invasion of Quang Tri Province in late March 1972. This NVA offensive had enjoyed initial success as it pushed its way across the demilitarized zone (DMZ), battled its way into Dong Ha, took Quang Tri City, and appeared to have an open road into Hue. However, I Corps had just received badly needed reinforcements, had begun to untangle its chain of command, and a new Corps Commander had started to make his impact on the military units as well as on the populace of northern Military Region 1. I Corps units held tenuous defensive positions along the My Chanh River with the VNMC Division on the east, two brigades of the Airborne Division west of QL-1, with the battle-tested 1st ARVN Division defending against a strong enemy push on Hue from the southwest. Lieutenant General Ngo Quang Truong had assumed command three weeks prior to my arrival.

(2) The First Regional Assistance Command was relatively new. I was completely new. I Corps had just lost an entire province to the enemy - a Division had been defeated. Units were plagued with low morale and uncertainty. The people of Hue had either departed or were preparing to depart for points south. One could say with certainty that I was apprehensive as this tour began.

2. (C) Discussion.

a. (U) Mission.

First Regional Assistance Command advises and supports the RVNAF in its conduct of combat operations and in pacification and development.

b. (C) Organization.

(1) (U) Headquarters, I Corps and Military Region I. (Inclosure 1) This headquarters, located in the city of DaNang, has responsibility

CONFIDENTIAL

MACFR-OP

SUBJECT: Senior Officer Debriefing Report, Major General Howard H. Cooksey, RCS CSFOR-74 (U)

for the five northernmost provinces of the Republic of Vietnam. The I Corps and Military Region I Commander has two deputies; one for tactical operations and one for pacification and development. In addition to the Corps headquarters at DaNang, a forward headquarters was located in Hue. The Corps consisted of three Infantry Divisions, Corps Artillery, a Ranger Command consisting of one mobile Ranger Group and eight Ranger Border Defense Battalions, and one Armored Brigade. Attached to the Corps were the Airborne Division, the Marine Division and the Seventh Ranger Group (Inclosure 2.) The Corps' forward headquarters at Hue controlled combat operations in the two northern provinces of Quang Tri and Thua Thien. The bulk of my tour was spent with General Truong at the forward Corps headquarters.

(2) (C) The Advisory Organization. (Inclosures 3 and 4)

(a) The advisory organization in First Regional Assistance Command closely parallels that of the Vietnamese I Corps and Military Region I. The basic advisory structure remained generally the same even after a 43 percent reduction in strength was experienced during the last half of 1972. However, the need to maintain advisors at the regimental level strained manpower resources and divisional advisory teams' capability to cover essential areas.

(b) The advisory concept in Military Region I was one of achieving complete integration in the operational, intelligence, and fire support coordination areas. In areas involving the employment of US resources, advisors took the lead and were operators rather than advisors. In the other areas a close advisor/counterpart relationship was maintained. In some instances the intensity of combat in Northern MR I resulted in advisors' reassuming responsibilities which had previously been turned over to the Vietnamese. In such cases, it was our aim to revert all responsibilities and functions to the Vietnamese as rapidly as possible. After the recapture of Quang Tri City, we achieved that goal. To that end, we were fortunate in having LTG Truong as the Corps Commander. He recognizes the importance of a proper advisor/counterpart relationship, clearly understands how advisors should function, and demands that his subordinates follow his lead.

(d) Starting from virtual ineffectiveness in the initial stages of the enemy offensive, the I Corps headquarters developed into a reasonably effective joint (ARVN, VNAF, VNN) element, employing five divisions and supporting arms in conventional combat. Procedures to employ air, naval, and artillery fire support were developed and defunct staff sections, such as Corps Artillery, were upgraded to an effective status. The entire spectrum of ground, airborne, and amphibious operations were carried out as well as

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

MACFR-OP

SUBJECT: Senior Officer Debriefing Report, Major General Howard H. Cooksey, RCS CSFOR-74 (U)

two successful Corps level cover and deception operations. US advisors played a major role in assisting I Corps to develop these capabilities.

(3) Support for the US advisory effort in the I Corps area was outstanding. The US Army Support Element, DaNang, provided finance and personnel records management, postal, medical, staff judge advocate, military police, special services, post exchange, and logistical support. The 11th Combat Aviation Group of the 1st Aviation Brigade provided both combat and logistical support. Communications support was provided by the 14th Signal Company of the 1st Signal Brigade. Other support such as potable water, electrical power and maintenance was provided by US civilian contractors.

c. (C/NF) Tactical Situation and Operations. (Inclosure 5)

Following was the tactical disposition of the major units at the beginning of this report:

(1) (C) Disposition of Forces, 30 May 1972.

(a) Marine Division - Defending the My Chanh River line east of QL-1.

(b) Airborne Division - Defending the My Chanh River line west of QL-1.

(c) 1st Division - Defending along the line Fire Support Base (FSB) King - Bastogne - Birmingham.

(d) 2d Division - Defending in the Que Son Valley.

(e) 3d Division.

1. 2d and 57th Regiments reorganizing and training.

2. 56th Regiment conducting security operations in the DaNang Rocket Belt.

(f) 1st Ranger Group - Conducting training near Hue.

(g) 1st Armored Brigade - 20th Tank Battalion was receiving new equipment and training. Other units were attached to divisions. Brigade headquarters had no mission other than to supervise training and maintenance among its detached units.

CONFIDENTIAL

MACFR-OP

SUBJECT: Senior Officer Debriefing Report, Major General Howard H. Cooksey, RCS CSFOR-74 (U)

(2) (C) During the final days in May the situation was fairly stable with moderate contact reported along the northern front. On 26 May the 3d ARVN Regiment had recaptured FSB Checkmate against moderate resistance.

(3) (C) Operation LAM SON 72.

(a) General Truong's immediate need was to regain the initiative. He had to consolidate his defenses; redeploy his forces to achieve an offensive capability; improve morale; instill a spirit of the offensive and plan his counteroffensive. First, he conducted a series of limited objective attacks and raids to gain the enemy's attention. These were a combination of well executed heliborne and amphibious assaults and ground attacks. They succeeded in getting the enemy off balance, causing him to worry about his own security rather than a resumption of his offensive. More importantly, these operations provided time to prepare for the counteroffensive.

(b) The counteroffensive, named LAM SON 72, had as its principal mission, the recapture of Quang Tri Province.

(c) General Concept.

1. LAM SON 72 provided for the defense of Hue while conducting offensive operations from positions along the My Chanh River north to secure the Quang Tri-Dong Ha area, to destroy enemy forces, and to restore government control to Quang Tri Province. The recapture of Quang Tri Province was the primary objective but the destruction of enemy forces and materiel was an important secondary objective. Initially, the attacking forces were not to capture the cities of Quang Tri and Dong Ha, but instead were to seize terrain controlling those areas.

2. Preparatory operations were to be conducted in three phases:

a. 1-10 June: Reposition forces.

b. 11-18 June: 1st Division attack toward Veghel while the Airborne and Marine Divisions conducted limited objective attacks north of the My Chanh to determine enemy strengths.

c. 19-27 June: Cover and deception operations.

3. Three distinct phase lines (PL) were established. PL Gold followed the Thach Han River to Quang Tri City, then proceeded in a northeasterly

CONFIDENTIAL

MACFR-OP

SUBJECT: Senior Officer Debriefing Report, Major General Howard H. Cooksey, RCS CSFOR-74 (U)

direction to the coast. PL Brown ran from the vicinity of Ai Tu (4 km north of Quang Tri City) northeast to the coast, paralleling PL Gold. PL Blue followed the Cua Viet River to its confluence with the Thach Han River and then along the Thach Han to a point 4 km north of Ai Tu, and then turned southwest. (Inclosure 6)

(d) On 28 June, the counteroffensive was scheduled to commence with:

1. Airborne Division conducting the main attack west of QL-1 in the direction of La Vang - Quang Tri.
2. Marine Division conducting a supporting attack along Route 555 in the direction of Trieu Phong - Quang Tri.
3. 1st Division securing Hue while at the same time holding enemy forces southwest of Hue in position.
4. 3d Division defending DaNang and conducting limited offensive operations in Quang Nam Province, while continuing its reorganization and training.
5. 2d Division conducting operations to eliminate enemy elements in Quang Tin and Quang Ngai.

(e) On 28 June 1972, I Corps launched LAM SON 72. The attack progressed well but at a slower pace than planned. With the exception of a few heavy battalion-sized engagements during the penetration of the enemy's first line of defense at the My Chanh River, resistance was moderate during the initial days of the operation. However, as the enemy fell back and the attack approached the Thach Han River, enemy resistance increased sharply.

1. Lead elements of the Airborne Division reached the outskirts of Quang Tri City on 7 July and fighting became intense. The enemy gave ground grudgingly and supported his forces with heavy concentrations of artillery and mortar fire. On 11 July, in an attempt to relieve the pressure on Airborne units, the Marine Division's 1st Battalion conducted a combat air assault into a contested LZ 21 kilometers northeast of Quang Tri City. The enemy countered with an infantry/armor attack that stopped friendly forward movement. By this time the enemy's intentions were clear; he would defend Quang Tri City to the last man. Quang Tri City, which was to be bypassed, suddenly became an emotionally inspired, national objective. President Thieu demanded the City be seized. The enemy was determined to hold. The attack bogged down.

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

MACFR-OP

SUBJECT: Senior Officer Debriefing Report, Major General Howard H. Cooksey, RCS CSFOR-74 (U)

Effective 27 July, the boundary between the Marine and Airborne Divisions was shifted and the Marine Division was given the mission of recapturing Quang Tri City. The concept of the counter-offensive was changed: the mission was to destroy the enemy; if the enemy chose to reinforce in Quang Tri City and massed his forces there, an opportunity to accomplish this would be presented to the superior fire power available to friendly forces. These missions were assigned:

a. Marine Division: to eliminate enemy forces in Quang Tri City; to establish a defensive line along Phase Line Gold, as an economy of force measure; and to conduct limited objective attacks against enemy forces between PL Gold and the Cua Viet River.

b. Airborne Division: to secure the Thach Han River line in support of the Marine attack; to seize Fire Support Base Barbara and to destroy the 304th NVA Division; to block the enemy supply routes from the west; and to protect QL-1, the Corps main supply route.

(f) On 8 September, I Corps launched three separate, but supporting, operations which led to the capture of Quang Tri City. The Airborne Division seized three fortified bunker complexes south of the Quang Tri Citadel, thereby securing the Marines' southern flank. On 9 September, the Marine Division launched its main attack against the Quang Tri Citadel. On the same day, US and Vietnamese forces conducted an amphibious demonstration north of the Cua Viet River. Progress was slow against determined enemy resistance; nevertheless, elements of the 6th Marine Battalion succeeded in penetrating the Citadel wall on 11 September. On successive days, link-up was achieved by forces outside the wall; additional wall penetrations were made from the east and south; link-up was achieved inside the wall on the night of 15 September; and on 16 September the Marines gained control of the Citadel. Heavy fighting at close quarters continued throughout that day and night but by nightfall on 17 September, the Marines had the city. During the last 10 days of the assault, 2767 enemy were killed and 43 were captured; the Marines averaged 150 casualties per day during the period. The capture of Quang Tri City was followed by a sharp decrease in activity, particularly in the Marine Division. Light activity continued until 30 September when the Airborne Division began its campaign to seize Fire Support Bases Anne and Barbara.

(g) The Airborne attack met strong resistance. Progress was slowed by heavy attacks by fire and the October monsoon weather. However, by the end of October, FSB Barbara had been retaken and the Airborne Division shifted its attack toward FSB Anne, located north of Barbara.

CONFIDENTIAL

MACFR-OP

SUBJECT: Senior Officer Debriefing Report, Major General Howard H. Cooksey, RCS CSFOR-74 (U)

(h) Meanwhile, the 1st Division was active in Thua Thien Province. The 1st Division retained the responsibility for the defense of Hue. It also had the mission of conducting offensive operations to expand its area of control to the west and southwest.

1. Activity in the 1st Division area during early June was light to moderate and focused along the line: FSB's Birmingham, Checkmate, and Bastogne. But as the month drew to a close, enemy pressure began to increase.

2. In July, Checkmate was lost, retaken, and lost again. On 26 July, Bastogne was lost and remained in enemy hands at month's end. For the first time during the entire battle, the 1st Division began to show weariness from five months of intensive combat. However, the Division hung on and maintained its defense. In early August, Bastogne was again retaken. Checkmate came under friendly control on 12 August, aided by heavy US tactical air and B52 support. During August, the enemy lost the initiative and the 1st Division began offensive operations to expand its control to the west. On 19 September the 1st Regiment seized FSB Veghel from the 324B NVA Division. At this point, the enemy lost his enthusiasm and avoided significant contact.

3. In October, activity was at a low level as monsoon weather conditions forced the 1st Division into a defensive posture.

(i) Military Region I south of the Hai Van Pass.

1. Quang Nam Province reported light combat activity in June and early July; however, near the end of July enemy activity began to increase in the Que Son area.

2. In August, activity focused on the Que Son Valley as the 711th NVA Division opened its offensive to seize control of Que Son and Thang Binh Districts. The 2d Division was defending in static positions in Que Son Valley and the mountain range to the northwest.

3. Fighting erupted in the vicinity of FSB Ross early on 18 August following heavy attacks by fire. The attacks by fire included the entire Quang Nam lowlands; DaNang Air Base received forty-three 122mm rockets. The enemy attack was well coordinated and executed. The 2d Division abandoned its positions and most of its equipment and fled in disorder. FSB Ross and Que Son District town were lost. The 711th NVA Division controlled the Que Son Valley. The Division and two regimental commanders had to be replaced before the 2d Division could launch its counterattack on 21 August. On 24 August, the Division was reinforced by the 4th Regiment from northern

CONFIDENTIAL

MACFR-OP

SUBJECT: Senior Officer Debriefing Report, Major General Howard H. Cooksey, RCS CSFOR-74 (U)

Military Region I. The counterattack was poorly executed and uninspired; however, the 60th Ranger Border Defense (RBD) Battalion succeeded in entering Que Son District Town on 25 August. Enemy forces still controlled the dominating terrain and FSB Ross at the end of August.

4. The counterattack continued with the 2d Regiment securing Nui Lac Son, southwest of FSB Ross on 1 September. The 4th Regiment seized FSB Ross on 9 September. Following the recapture of Ross, activity in the Que Son Valley area decreased and action shifted to Tien Phuoc located to the south.

5. On 14 September, the 3d Division was committed in the Que Son area, locating its Forward Command Post at FSB Baldy. The 2d Division became responsible for the security of Quang Tin and Quang Ngai Provinces.

6. Activity then shifted to Quang Tin Province. Tien Phuoc was attacked on 9 September and the town and surrounding area were lost to the enemy. The battered 2d Division was unable to launch a successful counterattack. On 24 September, the 4th Regiment made an attempt to retake Hill 211, dominating Tien Thuoc. No progress was made.

7. Plans were changed. The 3d Division was given the mission of retaking Tien Phuoc. The 2d Division was moved further south to counter an increasing enemy threat to Quang Ngai Province.

8. On 30 September, the 3d Division conducted a combat air assault north of Tien Phuoc District town, and by 7 October elements of the 2d, 6th and 56th Regiments had recaptured the town and taken control of the area. The 3d Division performed well. The retaking of Tien Phuoc was significant. It was the Division's first offensive operation since its withdrawal from Quang Tri. There was a marked change in the Division; it had truly arrived. For the Corps Commander, it was like being reinforced by an additional division.

9. Meanwhile, in Quang Ngai Province the 2d Division again came under attack. On 15 September Mo Duc District town received a 30-round mortar attack. This marked the beginning of the 2d NVA Division's offensive against Quang Ngai Province. On the 16th, Mo Duc received a heavy attack but did not fall. However, LZ Dragon, just south of Mo Duc, fell into enemy hands in late afternoon. The following day, heavy enemy attacks occurred at Mo Duc, Duc Pho, and Ba To. Several bridges along QL-1 were blown. The entire province south of Quang Ngai City was threatened. At this point, the 2d Division again appeared headed for a defeat as intense fighting continued at Duc Pho, Mo Duc, and Ba To until 21 September.

CONFIDENTIAL

MACFR-OP

SUBJECT: Senior Officer Debriefing Report, Major General Howard H. Cooksey, RCS CSFOR-74 (U)

10. This time, however, the 2d Division responded. It held. The 5th Regiment relieved the pressure on Mo Duc and, with border ranger elements, began operations in the Ba To area.

11. At the beginning of October the 4th Regiment was deployed in the Mo Duc/LZ Dragon area; the 5th Regiment was in Ba To; the 2d Ranger Group (on loan from Military Region II) was at Duc Pho.

12. After heavy fighting, the 4th Regiment retook LZ Dragon on 8 October. The 2d Ranger Group and elements of the 4th Regiment reopened QL-1 between Duc Pho and Mo Duc on 21 October. The situation had improved significantly.

13. Enemy units then shifted to the west and, beginning on 15 September, pressure increased against the 69th Ranger Border Battalion at Ba To. The 69th fought valiantly but the enemy surrounded the camp, precluding ground resupply. Monsoon weather blocked aerial resupply and friendly forces were forced to evacuate Ba To on 30 October. It remained in enemy hands at the time of cease-fire.

14. On 28 October, the 1st Ranger Group was moved south from northern MR I and commenced operations in Binh Son and Son Tinh Districts of northern Quang Ngai. The Group had the mission of restoring GVN control to enemy strongholds in northern Quang Ngai Province.

(4) At this point a possible cease-fire brought about a change in plans. A new campaign plan (November - December) was developed generally as follows:

(a) Missions.

1. Hold positions in the foothills and mountainous areas while denying the enemy access to populated areas.

2. Eliminate communist infra-structure, guerrilla, and local forces operating in populated areas.

3. Consolidate defenses, reorganize units, and tighten the chain of command.

4. Concentrate fire power against enemy logistic installations.

(b) General Concept.

CONFIDENTIAL

MACFR-OP

SUBJECT: Senior Officer Debriefing Report, Major General Howard H. Cooksey, RCS CSFOR-74 (U)

1. Marine Division.

a. Maintain the bridgehead at Ai Tu Combat Base (The Marines had been ordered to take Ai Tu north of Quang Tri City. This had not been and, in fact, was never accomplished.).

b. Organize limited objective raids on enemy positions south of Cua Viet River.

2. Airborne Division.

a. Expand control southwest of La Vang and interdict movement of supplies in area west of Fire Support Bases Anne and Barbara.

b. Conduct limited objective attacks against enemy positions along Thach Han River.

3. 1st Division.

a. Consolidate and hold defensive positions along the Khe Thai-Mai Nha-Khe Cu Mong Mountains.

b. In conjunction with territorial forces, provide security to QL-1 between Hue and Hai Van Pass with emphasis on the Phu Loc area.

c. Prevent enemy incursions into the lowlands in Thua Thien Province.

4. 3d Division.

a. Contain the 711th NVA Division.

b. Defend vital installations in DaNang area.

c. Defend Quang Nam and Quang Tin.

5. 2d Division.

a. Eliminate enemy presence in Ba To.

b. Defend populated areas in Quang Ngai Province.

c. Reopen QL-1 south to the Quang Ngai-Binh Dinh Province border.

CONFIDENTIAL

MACFR-OP

SUBJECT: Senior Officer Debriefing Report, Major General Howard H. Cooksey, RCS CSFOR-74 (U)

6. Territorial forces (Tactical operations were to be under control of Division Commanders).

a. Conduct operations within the framework of the "Dong Khoi" (Spontaneous Uprising) campaign to render enemy local forces, guerrillas, and infra-structure ineffective; consolidate administrative organizations; and take actions to insure pacification and development progress.

b. Organize defensive systems in remote, mountain districts. Insure food and ammunition availability on location for at least two months without resupply.

(5) (C) Conduct of the November - December Campaign.

(a) In late October, announcement of a possible cease-fire resulted in a marked change in attitude. Initially, although the plans for the campaign had been disseminated, apathy seemed to prevail. However, this was only temporary as the Corps Commander recognized an urgent need for friendly forces to consolidate control of populated areas and to secure key installations.

(b) The enemy was caught in a bind. He was told a cease-fire was imminent. He jumped the gun and came out into the open to claim territory and people. Friendly forces seized on the opportunity and dealt severe blows to several enemy local force units. His losses, coupled with a lack of progress toward a cease-fire, appeared to lower morale among enemy local force units. They never seemed to recover.

(c) Activity by Divisions.

1. The Marine Division continued to secure Quang Tri City. Several unsuccessful attempts were made to advance toward the Cua Viet River. An attempted crossing of the Thach Han River at Quang Tri City resulted in severe losses and defeat. The Marines held in those positions until the cease-fire.

2. Airborne Division. After seizing FSB Barbara on 31 October, the Airborne Division doggedly continued its attack and by 14 December had secured FSB Anne. Success resulted from determination, excellent employment of fire support, and, significantly, the employment of a night attack. The latter was a major factor in taking these two critical objectives in the face of strong enemy resistance. This operation penetrated the enemy's logistic complex and produced large quantities of weapons, equipment,

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

MACFR-OP

SUBJECT: Senior Officer Debriefing Report, Major General Howard H. Cooksey, RCS CSFOR-74 (U)

ammunition, foodstuffs, and medical supplies. By late January, the division had all but completed its mission. More than 90 percent of its AO had been cleared of the enemy and was under friendly force control.

3. 1st Division operations resumed as monsoon weather was not as severe as anticipated. The division remained in the FSB Veghel area and succeeded in continuing to disrupt enemy resupply efforts. The tough 324B NVA Division was unable to mount any sort of sustained operation prior to the cease-fire.

4. 3d Division. On 31 October, elements of the 711th NVA Division attacked and again penetrated the old Que Son District town. The 3d Division responded well and immediately recaptured the town, inflicting heavy casualties on the enemy. In December, the division continued its offensive and launched operations in the Que Son Valley. Nui Lac Son, FSB Lion, LZ Center and LZ West were recaptured. The 3d Division had outlived the dark days that followed its retreat from Quang Tri.

5. 2d Division. Quang Ngai Province continued relatively quiet. Ba To remained in enemy hands although several half-hearted attempts were made to retake it. The 1st Ranger Group and the 5th Regiment conducted successful operations south of Thien Phuoc and on the Batangan Peninsula, the latter a traditional stronghold of the VC.

(6) (C) Friendly and enemy casualty figures for the 8-month period are shown at Inclosure 7.

7. (C) DaNang Defense.

a. DaNang, Vietnam's second largest city, headquarters of I Corps and FRAC, and location of a large US air base and port, was a popular and lucrative enemy target for sapper attacks, terrorism, and rocket attacks. 122mm rockets were the enemy's preferred method of attack. Protection against these was a continuing concern.

b. Initially, 1st Special Brigade Commander was overall coordinator for the defense of DaNang and the 196th Infantry Brigade Commander was responsible for defending US installations in the DaNang area. These two brigades maintained close liaison to counter this splitting of responsibilities. At night, C-119 gunships and helicopters, (equipped with night vision devices, lights, and flares, called "Night Hawks") were used to observe the rocket belt. Obtaining timely clearance to fire was a major, continuing obstacle.

CONFIDENTIAL

MACFR-OP

SUBJECT: Senior Officer Debriefing Report, Major General Howard H. Cooksey, RCS CSFOR-74 (U)

With the redeployment of the 196th Infantry Brigade and the inactivation of the 1st Special Brigade (ARVN) on 30 June 1972, the 3d Division assumed overall responsibility for defending DaNang and all its installations. This eliminated the split responsibility but the problem of obtaining clearance for fires continued. The 3d Division established a tactical command post to coordinate and control this defense. With all participating units and sectors represented, it was specifically charged with coordinating tactical and surveillance operations and with fire clearance and control. It was supported by an intensive US and GVN intelligence gathering and disseminating effort.

c. Despite these measures, occasional rocket attacks occurred but with reduced frequency and intensity. Many rockets were captured or destroyed prior to launch and on one occasion a site was discovered during launch and 20 of the 40 rockets at the launch site were destroyed. Nothing new here but it worked.

8. (C) Training. (Inclosure 8)

a. The I Corps training program received careful attention by the Corps Commander. Probably the most effective was a 2-week, battalion-level refresher training program conducted with superb support by the Army Advisory Group, MACV. In this program, Mobile Training Teams from AAG moved to units' locations and supervised the training.

(1) Several battalions became ineffective due to losses and reverses suffered during April, May, and June 1972. For example, the 56th Regiment which was defeated at Camp Carroll in early April was completely disorganized. In fact, its commander had surrendered. By early May, sufficient personnel of the Regiment had rallied to form only a composite battalion. Even though the battalion was urgently needed, the decision was made to have it undergo two weeks of intensive refresher training before re-entering combat.

(2) Training was conducted by a US and Vietnamese Mobile Training Team with all unit officers and NCOs participating. Included were instruction and practical exercise in individual and crew-served weapons, tactics, and reconnaissance. Special emphasis was given to anti-tank weapons. The Corps Commander closely observed this first unit and directed that the remaining 3d Division battalions be given similar refresher training. As units were trained and returned to combat, the benefit of the training was clearly evident. The program was expanded promptly to other divisions and separate units.

CONFIDENTIAL

MACFR-OP

SUBJECT: Senior Officer Debriefing Report, Major General Howard H. Cooksey, RCS CSFOR-74 (U)

A similar training program was initiated by artillery units. A total of 38 battalions conducted this training: 8 Artillery battalions, 9 Ranger battalions, 4 Regional Force battalions, and 17 Infantry battalions. Overall, the program was a notable success and contributed substantially to the rapid recovery of MR-1 forces following the enemy invasion.

b. Another training accomplishment concerned the TOW missile system. Training began on 21 May 1972 when the first TOW system arrived. Initially, training was conducted by personnel from the US 196th Infantry Brigade. Later, after the 196th Brigade redeployed, training was conducted by instructors from the Hoa Cam National Training Center. Two crews were trained for each of the 58 TOW systems. Refresher and replacement training continues at the Hoa Cam National Training Center.

c. A non-commissioned officer candidate course began in September of 1972. This program, based on the NCO Course conducted at the US Army Infantry School, is designed to provide for rapid advancement of well qualified people. Outstanding soldiers, selected by their units, attended the course. Those who performed well were promoted after successfully completing the course. The Corps Commander compelled his subordinate commanders to support this training. By the end of 1972, the course had produced 517 non-commissioned officers.

d. An intensive training program was installed to upgrade territorial forces. Training included small unit leader and refresher training for Regional and Popular Force units. A total of 232 PF platoons and 26 RF companies underwent refresher training; a total of 1,628 Peoples Self Defense Force team leaders, 768 PF squad leaders and 299 PF platoon leaders were trained. Top priority in this training was given to Quang Tri Province territorial forces to overcome losses suffered in April-May 1972.

e. Division training centers also received attention. Command interest improved the quality and efficiency of training center cadre and resulted in vastly improved facilities. Most facility improvements resulted from such self-help projects as construction of bayonet and obstacle courses, mine and booby trap exercises, infiltration courses, testing areas, covered bleachers and improved troop welfare facilities. Only combat experienced personnel were assigned as instructors. Most officer and enlisted instructors had received formal instructor training.

9. (C/NF) Leadership.

CONFIDENTIAL

MACFR-OP

SUBJECT: Senior Officer Debriefing Report, Major General Howard H. Cooksey, RCS CSFOR-74 (U)

- a. The quality of leadership within the Corps varied.
- b. The Easter invasion demonstrated vividly that incompetent leaders had to be identified and replaced promptly.
- c. A problem is the strong inclination toward centralization of authority in a single individual at each level. If the leader is not at hand, nothing is done. A Division Commander in the hospital results in an ineffective division awaiting its commander's return. The latter occurred with both the 1st and Airborne Divisions during my tour.
- d. General Ngo Quang Truong, I Corps Commander, is absolutely tops. (I have prepared and forwarded a separate appraisal of him.) Four of the five division commanders, the Ranger Group Commander, and the Armor Brigade Commander were replaced during my tour. All replacements were distinct improvements; officers were selected for demonstrated competence rather than political ties. All are young, responsive, rising instead of holding, and have clearly shown their ability to command in combat. The November - December group of individuals promoted to brigadier general in I Corps are truly outstanding officers.
- e. Similarly, many regimental-level commanders were replaced. Here success was not as complete because truly competent regimental commanders are hard to find in the RVNAF. Also, here is where the most glaring weaknesses were found; one regimental commander surrendered his regiment; three retreated without authority (one had been specifically directed not to withdraw); several went into recluses when the fighting became intense; some refused to undertake missions that promised casualties. Modest progress was made but this remains a significant problem. The Commander of the 1st Regiment (youngest Colonel in ARVN) was as good as any Regimental Commander I have seen. Two of the three Marine Brigade Commanders are potential general officers; two Airborne Brigade Commanders were made Division Commanders (and promoted to Brigadier General) during my tour. Both were successful.
- f. Below regiment, leadership is spotty. Quality becomes progressively worse as you go down the chain of command. Heavy casualties among company grade officers resulted in a new leadership crisis. This is recognized by the Corps Commander. (Inclosure 8A)

10. (C/NF) Intelligence.

CONFIDENTIAL

MACFR-OP

SUBJECT: Senior Officer Debriefing Report, Major General Howard H. Cooksey, RCS CSFOR-74 (U)

a. (C) Corps Intelligence Organization.

(1) Mission and Function:

(a) The Corps intelligence organization has the standard intelligence mission. The Corps G2 devoted his complete attention to the five northern provinces of RVN. The Corps relied on national level intelligence for out-of-Corps activity which might impact on the Corps area of responsibility. The G2 did not exercise direct managerial authority over the non-organic intelligence collection agencies in support of the Corps.

(b) Organization.

1. The Corps G2 Section consists of an Administrative Section, Operations Section, and a G2 Air Section. Separate elements under the control of the G2 include the Corps Military Intelligence Detachment and a Combined Interrogation Center. The CIC is a field element of the Saigon-based CMIC. The Corps MID consists of a Headquarters Element, Document Analysis Section, IPW Section, OB Section, Technical Intelligence Section, and a Targeting and Imagery Interpretation Section. The G2 Section and the two subordinate organizations consist of 150 personnel. Each division has a similar but smaller organization and each province has an intelligence capability.

2. The Corps also has a Radio Technical Detachment (ASTD). These units are under the operational control of JGS but support the Corps.

3. Human Intelligence (HUMINT) support is provided by the 65th MID of the 101st MI Group also under JGS control. The Corps G2 can task this organization. Other organizations which provide HUMINT support are the National Police Command's Special Branch (PSB) and the ARVN Military Security Service (MSS). These also are controlled and tasked by the JGS.

4. The Corps does not have organic aerial reconnaissance assets. Light observation aircraft (L-19's) are provided by the VNAF. The Corps was totally dependent on US assets for reconnaissance and photographic missions.

(c) Capabilities.

In terms of self-sufficiency and capabilities to meet ARVN requirements, the intelligence capability of I Corps and subordinate units is adequate.

CONFIDENTIAL

MACFR-OP

SUBJECT: Senior Officer Debriefing Report, Major General Howard H. Cooksey, RCS CSFOR-74 (U)

b. (C/NF) Evaluation of Intelligence Efforts.

(1) Significant Limiting Factors.

(a) The major limitation is the lack of a photo reconnaissance capability. The Corps does have qualified imagery interpreters.

(b) The sensor program was not afforded sufficient command emphasis. Commanders tended to ignore sensor activations which were not of an immediate threat. Consequently, trends and indications were often overlooked.

(c) There is a lack of coordination in HUMINT collection, primarily caused by a competitive duplication of effort. The Military Security Service, National Police Command, ARVN MI, G2 and S2 were all engaged in HUMINT collection. Consequently, a waste of resources and contradictory, confusing intelligence reports resulted. The Corps G2 does not have operational control over HUMINT agencies nor does he have the analytical capability to analyze the large volume of reports.

(d) The ARVN gave little attention to captured enemy equipment. Often enemy material, such as SA-7 missiles and AT-3 Sagger Anti-Tank Missile Systems were jealously guarded as war trophies rather than exploited by technical personnel.

(e) Security was another limiting factor. Classified material was handled with inadequate controls; classified information was discussed openly over unprotected communications. Consequently, sensitive classified information was frequently compromised. Security was so bad in some instances that subordinate units refused to notify Corps HQ of impending operations. This was a serious, continuing problem.

(f) The last significant limiting factor was a general inability to assess the myriad of intelligence reports received. Thus, G2's at Corps and division levels rely almost exclusively on technical data, photo reconnaissance, and personal contact with each other. A lack of qualified junior officers and non-commissioned officers rendered the Corps incapable of analyzing various reports and statistics maintained in an outstanding data base. Thus, the G2 was the only true intelligence analyst. He was far too busy to provide quality assessments. Corps and division intelligence products, such as the Daily Intelligence Summary, were a compilation of facts obtained through operational reports rather than an assessment of significant intelligence. Until this problem is resolved, the intelligence production effort will be marginal at Corps and division levels.

CONFIDENTIAL

MACFR-OP

SUBJECT: Senior Officer Debriefing Report, Major General Howard H. Cooksey, RCS CSFOR-74 (U)

c. Coordination among Agencies.

There is a general lack of coordination among agencies engaged in intelligence collection. This stems from interagency rivalry and a lack of centralized control over the various intelligence agencies.

d. Penetration of the Infra-structure.

Penetration of the VCI was multi-pronged. The Phung Hoang Program was created to establish a system to penetrate the VCI at district level and below, while the PSB conducted long-term penetration at province level and above. Penetration was also accomplished by the MSS and MI. The Phung Hoang Program was aimed at coordinating the efforts of various agencies involved in low level penetration, intelligence gathering, and neutralization. In June 1972 the National Police assumed full responsibility for the VCI threat, thus placing the total effort under the control of one agency. This improved coordination and effectiveness. Long term penetration was plagued, however, with the same problem that affected the sensor program. Operations were terminated prematurely when immediate results were not attained.

e. Effectiveness of Communication.

Generally, communications for the Corps intelligence system were poor. No intelligence net has been established. The Corps headquarters does not have a communications facility where Special Intelligence can be received, safeguarded, and disseminated. The primary means of communication was via unsecure telephone and courier.

11. (C/NF) Combat Support.

a. (C) Artillery

(1) Field Artillery.

Employment of artillery in Military Region 1 gradually evolved from the firebase concept we had used to conventional artillery tactics. This change resulted from the introduction of 122mm and 130mm artillery. The enemy used these weapons effectively to deny us the use of fixed firebases. Although artillery contributed extensively to successful combat operations, poor artillery procedures were evident in all units. The failure to survey, register, apply meteorological data, and the use of improper ammunition handling procedures reduced the accuracy of artillery fire. A tendency to substitute

CONFIDENTIAL

MACFR-OP

SUBJECT: Senior Officer Debriefing Report, Major General Howard H. Cooksey, RCS CSFOR-74 (U)

massive fires for the lack of observation into enemy areas resulted in excessive expenditure rates. (Inclosure 9)

(2) Fire Support Coordination.

Development of the I Corps Fire Support Element (FSE) at Hue during May 1972 enabled the Corps, for the first time, to integrate all US and RVNAF fire support means. The FSE worked extremely well and contributed substantially to the Corps' success. This was the best example of coordination and cooperation among the RVNAF and US that I saw in two tours in Vietnam.

(3) Counterbattery Activities.

Simultaneously with the development of the FSE, the I Corps Artillery Counterbattery Information Center (CBIC) was established. It was through this agency that shell reports, sound and flash information, aerial photography, radar activations, acoustic sensor activations, and visual reconnaissance reports were collated and suspect gun locations developed. Despite intensive command interest and attention, the overall counterbattery program failed. We were never able to identify a gun location by other than an aerial or ground observer. This weakness requires prompt attention.

(4) AN/TPS-58 Radars.

Five AN/TPS-58 ground surveillance radars were operated by US personnel to provide information on enemy movements. These were particularly effective and provided timely information on enemy movements. They played a key role in defense of Hue/Phu Bai.

12. (C) Tactical Air Support.

a. United States Tactical Air Support.

(1) US Tactical Air (TAC AIR) support was responsive and decisive. Its substantial contribution to the I Corps success cannot be overstated. The available sortie rate was adequate to fulfill all needs. Time and again the Commander influenced operations by employing US Tactical Air. Quang Tri could not have been recaptured and Hue could not have been defended successfully without US TAC AIR support. Equally as decisive and essential to I Corps success was the B52. There is absolutely no way that the Airborne and Marine Divisions could have withstood an assault by five, combat-ready,

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

MACFR-OP

SUBJECT: Senior Officer Debriefing Report, Major General Howard H. Cooksey, RCS CSFOR-74 (U)

heavily reinforced and supported enemy divisions without US Air power. Anyone who disputes this just does not have the facts.

(2) A significant problem developed, however, as the RVNAF became overly dependent on US Air Support and failed to use his organic fire power resources. Similarly, VNAF frequently failed to respond because of the readily available US Air.

(3) I Corps Direct Air Support Center (I DASC).

A majority of I DASC moved to Hue and assumed control of TAC AIR on 1 May 1972. A skeleton crew was left in DaNang to provide backup in communications, administration, and supply. Tactical Air Control Parties (TACP) were established in the Division Command Posts.

(4) Prior to April 1972, air operations were at a slow pace; more than 10 sorties of US air were considered a busy day. After the invasion, however, sorties increased to as many as 300 or more per day. Even though plagued by poor weather during April, US Air was instrumental in slowing and eventually in stopping the invasion as radar-directed bombing techniques allowed all-weather operations.

(5) Air operations were at a peak during July, August and September, with substantially more than 6,000 sorties being employed. A highlight of the Quang Tri operation was the use of laser guided bombs against the walls of the Citadel. Holes blasted in the walls enabled the Marines to penetrate the Citadel.

(6) US TAC AIR also played a major role against enemy attacks in southern MR-1. When enemy attacks were initiated in Tien Phuoc, Mo Duc, Duc Pho, and Ba To, I DASC (Rear) controlled air operations from DaNang.

(7) Total sorties decreased during October, November, and December. Several factors combined to produce this result. The most important factor of course, was the marked improvement in the tactical situation and the lessening of requirements for TAC AIR support. Another factor was the weather. Heavy rains with low ceilings prevailed in November and December. A high percentage of air support during this period had to be employed under IFR conditions. Lastly, the resumption of bombing above the 20th parallel and in the Hanoi-Haiphong area reduced sortie availability rate.

CONFIDENTIAL

MACFR-OP

SUBJECT: Senior Officer Debriefing Report, Major General Howard H. Cooksey, RCS CSFOR-74 (U)

(8) I DASC operations were shifted from Hue to DaNang in early December. This transition was relatively smooth. A potential problem concerning communications with the TACP's north of the Hai Van Pass never materialized.

(9) Beginning in late October, special attention was given to supporting territorial force operations. Air control coverage was revised and 25 percent of daily TAC AIR sorties were allocated to the RF/PF. Territorial forces showed renewed determination and demonstrated a marked increase in aggressiveness after being assured of air support.

b. 41st Tactical Wing (VNAF).

(1) The VNAF 1st Air Division developed steadily. Following is a summary of 41st Tactical Wing activities from April 1972 to December 1972:

(a) The 516th and 528th Tactical Fighter Squadrons flew a total of 9,641 sorties in A-37 aircraft. Flying hours averaged 105 percent of programmed over the period. The courage and flying skill of the Vietnamese pilots were superb. They were, however, restricted to VFR weather.

(b) The 110th and 120th Liaison Squadrons flew a total of 30,169 hours and 14,556 sorties in O-1 and V-17 aircraft.

(c) The 427th Tactical Airlift Squadron (C-7A) arrived at DaNang from Phu Cat on 15 July 1972. Although hampered by a shortage of qualified crews and operationally ready aircraft, the 427th immediately commenced flying tactical airlift support missions. During the 6-month period from July through December, the squadron flew 2,437 sorties. A total of 504.5 tons of supplies, 10,937 passengers and 862 troops were airlifted during this period.

13. (C/NF) Helicopter Support.

a. US Army Aviation. 11th Combat Aviation Group (CAG).

(1) 11th CAG capabilities increased significantly beginning in early May. By late June, its size had been increased to the equivalent of eight aviation companies, totaling 1,600 personnel and 209 aircraft. In late July Group strength began to decline with the continuation of the redeployment of US Forces. Although reduced in size, its mission did not change;

CONFIDENTIAL

MACFR-OP

SUBJECT: Senior Officer Debriefing Report, Major General Howard H. Cooksey, RCS CSFOR-74 (U)

this required strict priority tasking with stringent controls over the Group's flying hour program. The performance of all US Army Aviation units was magnificent. The pilots and crews invariably exhibited courage, skill, and aggressiveness in the face of heavy concentrations of enemy anti-aircraft fire.

(2) In June and July the 11th CAG participated in several combat assaults conducted by the Airborne and Marine Divisions. These insertions behind enemy lines were designed to assist in gaining the initiative from the enemy. The CAG provided armed escort, aerial fire support, command and control, search and rescue, and lift aircraft. These operations contributed substantially to the successful accomplishment of the I Corps mission. (Inclosures 10 and 11)

b. 51st Tactical Wing (VNAF Helicopter).

(1) The period May 1972 through January 1973 witnessed vastly increased activity by the VNAF helicopter fleet. Formed in August 1972, its 213th and 233d Helicopter Squadrons supported forces in northern MR- and the 239th Helicopter Squadron supported operations in the south. Helicopter squadrons rapidly gained experience and began providing support to ground forces. Combat assaults were conducted throughout the military region.

(2) An important aspect of the VNAF helicopter operations was the rapid build up of the 51st Wing. New crews received orientation and training; new helicopters were received; medical evacuation training was initiated; and flight leaders were trained to lead combat assaults and to perform re-supply missions. Helicopter recovery and search and rescue procedures were incorporated into operations. In mid-September, the 51st Wing assumed night surveillance missions, along with US air cavalry and USAF units in defense of DaNang.

(3) Overall, the 51st Wing performed remarkably well when one considers the combat situation that existed during its development. By the end of November, the wing was averaging 40 missions daily.

(4) Maintenance capability was inadequate. Insufficient skilled maintenance personnel were available. VNAF has no ability to train maintenance personnel. Additionally, pilots were reluctant to fly during periods of low visibility. This reluctance became especially critical in the monsoon season and became most evident in Medevac operations. On occasion, even when other helicopters were flying, Medevac pilots refused to fly. Apparently no one had authority to direct that missions be flown.

CONFIDENTIAL

MACFR-9P

SUBJECT: Senior Officer Debriefing Report, Major General Howard H. Cooksey, RCS CSFOR-74 (U)

(5) This brings us to the principal problem concerning VNAF helicopter operations. They were just not responsive to ARVN commanders. Throughout my tour, VNAF exhibited complete independence; frequently they refused missions and, on occasion, abandoned critical missions without notice, leaving the supported unit in jeopardy.

14. (C) Naval Gunfire Support.

a. US Naval Gunfire (NGF) support was effective and used extensively. It was particularly valuable in support of the Marine Division. Its all-weather capability, accuracy, and responsiveness made many friends for the US Navy in MR-1. No other supporting fires were as mobile and flexible during the monsoon season.

b. The number of ships available varied from eight to twenty-three. Ammunition fired ranged from in excess of 7,000 to less than 1,000 rounds daily. US NGF observer teams were provided to the 1st, 2d, Marine and Airborne Divisions, to the 1st Ranger Group, and to territorial forces operating in Quang Tin and Quang Ngai Provinces. Training of Vietnamese as NGF observers began in October and at cease-fire was progressing well.

15. (C) Vietnamese Naval Operations.

a. Mission.

Mission of the Vietnamese Navy (VNN) was to maintain control of coastal and inland waterways, to interdict all enemy waterborne lines of communication, and to assist ground units with fire and logistics support.

b. Organization. (First Coastal Zone)

VNN in Military Region 1 consists of:

- (1) Six Coastal Groups (CG).
- (2) Two River Patrol Divisions (RPD).
- (3) One River Assault Group (RAG).
- (4) One Mine Interdiction Division (MID).
- (5) One Coastal Flotilla (COSFLOT).

CONFIDENTIAL

MACFR-OP

SUBJECT: Senior Officer Debriefing Report, Major General Howard H. Cooksey, RCS CSFOR-74 (U)

(6) MR-1 Coastal Surveillance System (CSS).

(7) Assigned Ships of the Fleet Command.

The locations of these units are displayed at Inclosure 12.

c. The 1972 NVA offensive increased the need for vigilance against attempted coastal transshipment and NVA trawler infiltration. Enemy forces used the sea and inland waterway system as an important means of support. The loss of the Cua Viet River Operating Base soon after the invasion began and subsequent loss of Quang Tri Province left the Thach Han/Cua Viet River system in enemy hands. The VNN and the heavy concentrations of US naval gunfire support ships effectively denied the enemy use of the coastal area south of the Cua Viet River. Indications are that the VNN learned its lessons well. Invaluable experience and confidence were gained by Fleet Command ships participating in NGF missions north of the Cua Viet River. Fleet Command ships also served with distinction on the notification line operation organized to intercept ships proceeding to mined North Vietnamese harbors. This operation provided valuable high sea steaming experience.

d. On 12 June, VNN operations were expanded to interdict enemy activity along the coast of southern Military Region 1. Fleet Command ships and patrol junks participated. The force provided effective NGF along the Quang Ngai Province coast and were successful in preventing coastal transshipment and trawler infiltration along Quang Ngai's southern coast, especially in the historically vulnerable Batangan Peninsula area.

e. To deny the enemy use of the important inland waterway network in Thua Thien Province, three VNN units conducted patrol operations. River Assault Group 32, located at Hue, patrolled the Song Huong River from Tan My to Nam Hoa. This unit consisted of river craft uniquely suited to provide support functions ranging from troop insertions to direct fire support. River Patrol Division 60 and Mine Interdiction Division 92 patrolled the river and bay system east of Hue and south to Phu Loc. These units prevented infiltration of enemy cadre into the fertile Huong Dien and Vinh Loc Districts.

f. The VNN also was responsible for harbor defense in DaNang and Tan My. A highly trained enemy naval sapper unit was targeted against DaNang harbor. It experienced partial success on three occasions by damaging merchant ships with Limpet Mines. After these initial setbacks, a comprehensive effort was made to improve harbor security. The effort succeeded and

CONFIDENTIAL

MACFR-OP

SUBJECT: Senior Officer Debriefing Report, Major General Howard H. Cooksey, RCS CSFOR-74 (U)

at least nine swimmer sappers were killed in the harbor between April 1972 and the cease-fire. Enemy activity was limited to harassing attacks on bridges near the periphery of the harbor. Large quantities of essential cargo, including ammunition, were handled by DaNang harbor without loss. During periods of intensive combat, unloading operations continued around-the-clock.

g. VNN Seal Teams conducted clandestine operations in enemy held territory north of the Cua Viet River. Missions were to gather intelligence and to prepare beach surveys to support planning for future military operations. Little was achieved by these teams other than a beach survey of the coast north of the Cua Viet River.

h. The US advisory effort was reduced significantly in February 1972. Following that, advice was provided by a Mobile Advisory Team supervised at the headquarters level in DaNang with the Senior Advisor working with the First Coastal Zone and the Logistics Support Base Commanders.

i. The Vietnamese Navy played a vital role in containing the enemy. Based on progress I observed, I am confident the VNN is capable of controlling coastal infiltration in MR-1. Its baptism of fire successfully motivated its leaders.

15. (C) Strategic Air Power (ARCLIGHT). (Inclosure 13)

a. Previous mention has been made of the effectiveness of the B52. Its decisive effects were ever-present. Time after time I saw the enemy concentrate his forces for attack only to be slammed by a B52 strike. The Airborne, Marine and 1st Divisions could not have stopped the enemy without B52 support. Likewise, the GVN counter-offensive could not have succeeded without the B52. Moreover, in the future, the Airborne and Marine Divisions would be hard pressed to defend against the five heavily reinforced enemy divisions that remain in northern Quang Tri Province without B52 support.

b. There is no doubt that the B52 did its greatest damage in interdicting enemy support activities. But it was decisive also in close support of ground operations. Many, including me, have criticized its employment in the latter role. On reflection, however, it is difficult to label this a mistake. Its psychological impact alone, on enemy and friendly forces, perhaps justifies its use in a close support role.

c. Its disadvantages, however, were evident:

CONFIDENTIAL

MACFR-OP

SUBJECT: Senior Officer Debriefing Report, Major General Howard H. Cooksey, RCS CSFOR-74 (U)

(1) Units tended to forget their organic supporting weapons. These capabilities were never fully or effectively employed. The tendency to substitute an ARCLIGHT for fire and maneuver persisted. It reduced initiative and slowed advance. I have seen units wait several days to launch an operation with the Commanders convinced that success was not attainable until the operation could begin with a B52 strike.

d. A point that should be emphasized is the great care given to the safety aspects of B52 employment. Targets were cleared through US military and civilian advisory channels. Either could veto a target. Following that, an aerial visual reconnaissance was performed to verify that the objective area did not contain non-military targets. If the visual reconnaissance could not be made, the target was not struck. In MR-1, I had final authority over B52 employment.

16. (C) Armor (1st Armor Brigade).

a. The Brigade consisted of the 20th Tank Squadron (M48A3) and the 17th and 18th Cavalry Regiments. The 18th Cavalry Regiment, a III Corps unit, was attached.

b. The Brigade suffered severe losses in personnel and equipment during the NVA offensive. Following that, nearly two months were devoted to refitting, replacing personnel, and training. The 20th Tank Squadron did not return to action until late June and July. Even then it was never deployed as a unit. Brigade and Battalion HQ were limited to supervising administrative and logistical support of detached units. In January 1973, the Brigade was finally made responsible for an area of operations and was deployed as a Brigade with tank and territorial forces assigned.

c. As stated, units of the Brigade were fragmented down to platoon and section level. M-113's were used for resupply; tanks were used as assault guns. The Brigade, as a unit, never regained its confidence after the NVA invasion. It is badly in need of comprehensive individual and unit training. First on the list of training needs is maintenance.

17. (C) Engineer.

a. US Engineer Effort.

(1) The US Engineer Troop strength was reduced to four officers and three non-commissioned officers in December 1972. After that, R&U functions

CONFIDENTIAL

MACFR-OP

SUBJECT: Senior Officer Debriefing Report, Major General Howard H. Cooksey, RCS CSFOR-74 (U)

were performed by contractor and self-help. Transition to contractor support was accomplished with little difficulty.

(2) At that time, the Region Engineer expanded his mission to that of coordinating contractor support of ARVN facilities engineering and engineer direct support supply and maintenance.

b. ARVN Engineer Effort.

(1) ARVN Engineers were capable and well motivated. In some instances they did more with less than US units. However, they lack personnel, materials, tools, and funds. Quality of personnel, however, is high. Commanders of the two ARVN engineer groups supporting I Corps were competent and responsive.

(2) Management of the engineer effort was poor. The 10th Engineer Group (Cbt) is subordinate to the Corps; 8th Engineer Group (Const) was in direct support. Commander of 10th Group was also I Corps Engineer. He devoted little time to Corps Engineer matters and, in fact, had no authority over the 8th Engineer Group.

18. (C) Combat Service Support.

a. (C) Personnel.

(1) General. Little advisory effort is needed in the Corps GI/AG field. Key personnel are highly qualified. All have received advanced training, including training at US schools.

(2) Noteworthy was the replacement systems response to the heavy casualties suffered during the NVA offensive and the RVN counter-offensive. Over sustained periods, divisions suffered casualties in excess of 100 per day (during the first two weeks of September, the Marine Division's casualty rate was more than 150 per day), yet combat strengths did not dwindle as had been the case in my previous tour. Seldom did battalion field strengths go below 500.

(3) AWOL's and desertion rates remained high. Factors which contributed to desertion were:

(a) Inadequate leadership at the unit level.

CONFIDENTIAL

MACFR-OP

SUBJECT: Senior Officer Debriefing Report, Major General Howard H. Cooksey, RCS CSFOR-74 (U)

(b) Concern for welfare of families, particularly in cases where families were living in areas threatened by the enemy or had been moved into refugee camps as a result of enemy action.

b. (C) Logistics.

(1) General. The logistics picture must be viewed against a backdrop of the heavy strain experienced during the NVA offensive. This offensive created a heavy requirement for all classes of supply, including major end items. The 3d Division, for example, lost 80 percent of its equipment during withdrawal from Quang Tri. The relocation of the Marine and Airborne Divisions to Military Region 1 created an additional burden for the logistics organization. Overall, the 1st Corps Area Logistics Command (1 ALC) met the challenge. With massive US assistance, large quantities of equipment were replaced quickly. By mid-June most essential items had been replaced. The logistic system is effective at the regional level; however, there was degradation at lower echelons.

(2) Supply.

(a) The ARVN Commander (and consequently his soldiers) has little appreciation of supply discipline. Although some senior commanders have begun to stress supply discipline, there are no punishments or pay forfeitures awarded, even in cases of serious neglect. Available Supply Rates (ASR), have no meaning if ammunition is immediately available. Even the Corps Commander was hesitant to enforce the ASR for fear such action would be considered a lack of support by his subordinates. Although I Corps continually exceeded its ASR, there was never any pressure from JGS to conform. MACV, through me, was the bad guy. Similarly, tables of allowances are largely ignored.

(b) Mention has been made of the massive US support given to the replacement of equipment lost during the NVA offensive. Emergency replacement of major end items of destroyed equipment began immediately. Most significant was the emergency air shipment of 105mm howitzers, trucks, individual and crew-served weapons, gas masks, and other combat essential items which began to arrive at DaNang Air Base less than six days after the initial combat loss report was received in Washington. Although absolutely essential at that time, this had the disadvantage of continuing to teach poor supply habits to the RVNAF who still do not understand the importance of "making the supply system work."

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

MACFR-OP

SUBJECT: Senior Officer Debriefing Report, Major General Howard H. Cooksey, RCS CSFOR-74 (U)

(c) There is little knowledge below division level as to quantities of equipment authorized. Regimental and battalion S-4's are not familiar with what they are authorized and, in some cases, what they have. Authorization documents and valid requisitions are still mysterious. There has been an effort to correct these shortcomings but they are uniformly evident throughout most units.

c. Transportation. There is a shortage of 2-1/2 ton trucks. This, coupled with poor maintenance programs and a reduction in aerial resupply support caused, on occasion, serious problems.

d. Maintenance. Lack of spare parts was a continuing problem. There is generally little organized 1st and 2d echelon maintenance except in transportation units. 1st and 2d echelon maintenance was ignored until the equipment required 3d echelon attention. Command attention was given to this matter and maintenance programs have been organized. A basic need - training at all levels - is being remedied. A Senior Officers Preventive Maintenance Course has been organized.

19. (C) Communications.

a. The I Corps tactical communications system is a complete network of FM radio, VHF, teletype, and radio teletype. Communications routes between major headquarters are well diversified. A complicating factor is the mountain barrier along the Thua Thien - Quang Nam Province border (Hai Van Pass) which impedes north-south communications. To reduce this vulnerability, duplicate or relay facilities have had to be installed. The major weakness is that nearly all equipment is committed leaving little in reserve for emergency situations.

(1) Communications security is a monumental problem. The Corps relies on unprotected telephone and FM radio; there is no hesitation to transmit classified material via these means. The problem was evident at lower levels. This resulted only partially from a lack of secure equipment; it was primarily a problem of attitude and lack of understanding. Codes were distributed, but were not used. I know of no case where an individual was punished for a communications security violation, despite such flagrant violations as transmitting B52 strike times and target information over non-secure means. Repeated discussions with the Corps Commander resulted in no significant improvement. In one case I caused a B52 strike to be diverted out of the area because of a known security violation.

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

MACFR-OP

SUBJECT: Senior Officer Debriefing Report, Major General Howard H. Cooksey, RCS CSFOR-74 (J)

(2) Maintenance. Communications maintenance was adequate.

b. Fixed.

(1) The Integrated Communications System (ICS) sites and the Dial Telephone Exchange (DTE) have been Vietnamized. The 610th Signal Battalion has assumed responsibility for sites outside the DaNang area (Chu Lai, Hue, and Phu Bai ICS sites and the Chu Lai and Phu Bai DTE). VNN operates the ICS sites near the DaNang Deep Water Pier. VNAF receives technical assistance from the Federal Electric Corporation (FEC) at the DaNang DTE.

(2) The Vietnamese are not as professional in operating fixed communications facilities as with tactical networks. They will continue to require technical assistance to achieve an adequate degree of reliability.

20. (C) Pacification.

a. (C) During the period May 1972 through January 1973, territorial forces experienced several changes in scope of operations and organization. (Inclosure 14)

(1) At the beginning, territorial forces were attempting to recover from the initial shock of the NVA invasion. Quang Tri territorial forces were decimated and disorganized after an initial heroic stand in the area north of the Cua Viet River. In Thua Thien Province, territorials were tied to the security of QL-1, Hue, and other populated areas. Only in Quang Nam and Quang Tin Provinces was there any evidence of aggressiveness. Quang Ngai Province territorials were the least effective of all.

(2) In the ensuing months, intensive training and reorganizing took place. New leaders were appointed; commanders were required to participate in operations; fire support was provided; and Province Chiefs were held accountable. The results were dramatic. Quang Tri forces were committed under operational control of the Marine and Airborne Divisions, and performed well in sustained combat. In Thua Thien Province populated areas and roads became relatively secure. Territorials reoccupied and now defend the district town of Que Son. The long time VC stronghold on Barrier Island was smashed and territorials took control of the area. The coastal area of Quang Ngai Province from the Tra Bong River south, to include the Batangan Peninsula, was reoccupied by territorial forces.

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

MACFR-OP

SUBJECT: Senior Officer Debriefing Report, Major General Howard H. Cooksey, RCS CSFOR-74 (U)

(3) In mid-November, the Corps Commander continued his upgrade program by directing division commanders to allocate regular personnel for duty with selected RF/PF units. He modeled this plan after the US Marine Combined Action Platoon (CAP). This concept seemed especially well suited for controlling populated areas. This program not only increased the capability for local defense but provided additional GVN visibility as well. Although some division commanders were understandably reluctant to relinquish experienced platoon and squad leaders, the project succeeded.

(4) The 2d Division was the first to initiate the CAP program but others fell rapidly into line. The Corps then began to conduct region-wide territorial force operations. The concept was: (a) all-out; (b) short duration; (c) well-planned; and, (d) targeted against known enemy locations. Success was immediate. As a result, at the time of the cease-fire, population security was the best it had been since the invasion. The most effective aspect was the Corps Commander's insistence that leaders, including Province Chiefs, personally involve themselves. Shadow command was not tolerated. This gave the territorials the leadership they had needed so badly.

c. Government.

(1) The final days of May 1972 found Military Region I beginning to recover from reverses of the previous two months. Civilian government had just about ceased to exist north of the Hai Van Pass, and was demoralized in the southern provinces of the Region.

(2) Top leadership had failed. Quang Tri had fallen; Hue, the psychologically important key city, seemed doomed as fire bases guarding the western approaches to the city were falling. Thousands of families were homeless; DaNang was inundated with refugees. The southern three provinces had fared better, but fear and a sense of impending disaster prevailed. Government officials, and the more affluent, had sent their families to safety. Public contempt for military leaders, long prevalent, had reached its apex and was open and bitter. Added to their long-standing reputation for corruption, leaders were now publicly condemned as cowards.

(3) By mid-June there was an upsurge of hope and the beginnings of effective action. The Government had removed the Corps Commander; his replacement, General Truong, brought with him a reputation of strength and integrity. He projected an image of purpose and calmness; and the people responded. Citizen's defense committees mobilized public opinion. Region

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

MACFR-OP

SUBJECT: Senior Officer Debriefing Report, Major General HOWard H. Cooksey, RCS CSFOR-74 (U)

and Province officials, and their subordinates, discarded their apathy and pessimism and turned to the tremendous job at hand. The threatened breakdown of public services and civil disorder were thwarted. Government again began to function. Over the following months, many ineffective functionaries were replaced. Dishonest officials involved in the mismanagement of relief supplies were removed and penalized. By the end of the year, long dormant government investigative agencies were active in rooting out some of the worse military and civilian officials.

(4) While the process of public service management in Military Region I improved, the trend of recent years in building popularly supported representative government was reversed. Over one-third of the Region's population had voted in the national election. One hundred and forty-four candidates had vied for the Region's 24 seats in the Lower House. By May 1972, 92% of the Region's 462 villages and 90 percent of its 1,974 hamlets, had elected their own local officials. But during the month of May the Central Government suspended all elections. Elected officials whose terms expired were retained in office or replaced by appointees. In August, Province Chiefs were given the power (Decree 120) to replace and appoint all Hamlet Chiefs and all non-elected village administrators. By the end of 1972, Province Chiefs had replaced 458 Hamlet Chiefs, more than a quarter of all incumbents, with appointees.

(5) The intervention in local autonomy was even more pronounced, as the Central Government in December used the emergency authority to empower the Province Chief with the authority to replace elected Village Chiefs and Village Council Members (Decrees 169 and 170). The overall effect, coupled with the failure to initiate popular elections of Province Chiefs and City Mayors as had been expected in 1972, was to seriously weaken what had been the highly promising growth of representative government of the Region.

(6) The last of the emergency measures, Decree 160 in late December 1972, established new, and strict requirements for the organization and operation of political parties. Although the Region's political forces are affected, it is yet too early to predict its consequences.

(7) The Region's hamlet, village, and province governments have depended on Saigon fiscal support to sustain their operations. Beginning in June 1972, the Central Government, faced with the probability of reduced foreign assistance, exerted increasing pressure to raise the amount of locally generated revenue. To increase taxes in the midst of a near-chaotic situation, seemed unrealistic. Nevertheless, 90 percent of the Region's

.....

CONFIDENTIAL

MACFR-OP

SUBJECT: Senior Officer Debriefing Report, Major General Howard H. Cooksey, RCS CSFOR-74 (U)

villages which were assigned an increased revenue goal met the target. Public opinion polls disclosed no major resistance to the tax program.

(8) The chronic public service management deficiency has been the Region's lack of centralized direction and coordination over the many central government ministry representatives and their operations. At year's end, the Corps Commander moved his headquarters to DaNang where all regional offices are located. Already, a closer relationship has developed between civilian and military leaders. The relationship has broadened and more problems of civilian government are being faced and resolved. By mid-January 1973, the Corps Commander had issued directives providing for monthly coordination meetings on all aspects of civilian government operations. Additionally, the inclusion of the CORDS technical staff in the Vietnamese Regional Development meetings, and the weekly attendance of the Corps Commander's representative (a major general) to CORDS staff meeting, gave proof to the establishment of a new harmonious relationship which portends well for the future in carrying out development programs in Military Region 1.

21. (U) Pacification and Development.

a. To evaluate the progress of the GVN Community Defense Local Development Plan (CDLD Plan or Pacification/Development Plan), one must clearly understand three basic governing factors:

(1) The Military Region 1 security situation is more limiting than in other regions.

(2) The populace in general is independent in its attitudes toward most national government programs.

(3) Military Region 1 ability to accomplish a pacification program is about three years behind Military Regions 3 and 4.

b. Because of the military situation from March until June 1972, almost no progress was made in the 1972 CDLD Plan. In fact, the plan for 1972, with detailed goals for each program, in each province, was not published until August. Also, as a result of the NVA invasion, Quang Tri Province was almost completely destroyed and the entire populace either fell to enemy control or were evacuated to other areas. During the months from April to June, all GVN efforts were channeled toward administering relief to the 540,000 refugees created by the NVA invasion.

CONFIDENTIAL

MACFR-OP

SUBJECT: Senior Officer Debriefing Report, Major General Howard H. Cooksey, RCS CSFOR-74 (U)

c. Military Region 1 appears to have received a low national priority. The GVN seems hesitant to invest heavily in Military Region 1. The majority of competent GVN assigned local government officials consider Military Region 1 as an undesirable assignment and endeavor to be reassigned to other areas. This fact has resulted in poorly motivated key administrative assistants.

22. (U) Hamlet Evaluation System.

a. Hamlet security suffered as a result of the unsettling events in early 1972. The 60-day period prior to 30 May witnessed a drastic decline in hamlet security throughout the Region. However, the downward trend bottomed out in May and June.

b. Successful military activity later in the year produced a brighter picture leading to the significant improvement recorded during December.

c. A comparison of population statistics in all Hamlet Evaluation System (HES) rating categories, as of May 1972 and December 1972, graphically illustrates the direction of hamlet security during this period. Although by May, overall security had reached a point of relative stabilization, significant advances in hamlet security did not occur until the last quarter of 1972. The percentage of population in AB hamlets remained in the low 40's percentile throughout September. However, by December that figure had increased to the low 70's percentile.

d. Shown at Inclosure 15 is a comparison of Hamlet Evaluation System statistics.

23. (U) Conclusion.

a. (C/NF) That just about tells the story of my tour in Military Region 1. In summary:

(1) (U) A most pressing problem from an advisory standpoint was the 3d ARVN Division. Following its withdrawal from Quang Tri, it had to be completely reorganized and retrained. Initially, I felt it would be combat ineffective for at least six months. Its dramatic recovery can be attributed to an almost superhuman effort by the Corps Commander and his staff, the Division Advisory Team, the MACV and FRAC logistic staffs, and the MACV Army Advisory Group. The Division acquitted itself well in the Que Son Valley, Thien Phuoc, and continues to do so.

CONFIDENTIAL

MACFR-OP

SUBJECT: Senior Officer Debriefing Report, Major General Howard H. Cooksey, RCS CSFOR-74 (U)

(2) (U) The ARVN counteroffensive was well planned and was well executed until the Thach Han River and Quang Tri City were reached. For reasons previously discussed, the attack bogged down at this point and became a battle of attrition. While there is much upon which to speculate, it is certain that one significant opportunity was missed. The recapture of Quang Tri City was truly a gallant effort by the Marine Division and it should be recognized as such. However, the battle for Quang Tri Province was won at this point and should have been vigorously pressed across the Thach Han River. Unfortunately, the attack stopped and the period was given over to rest, refitting, and celebration. Consequently, the enemy was given ample time to reorganize and resupply. Pursuit of the disorganized and fleeing enemy at this time could have led to the recapture of Dong Ha and possibly a move on to the DMZ. The initiative was never regained. Nevertheless, the capture of Quang Tri City was a significant accomplishment and provided a great boost to the GVN. This heroic performance is recorded in our recommendation of the Presidential Unit Citation for the Marine Division.

(3) (U) The Regional and Popular Forces made the greatest improvements of all GVN military units that I observed. They developed confidence, pride, acceptable leaders, a willingness to seek rather than to avoid contact with the enemy, and reliability. The Corps Commander's interest and attention to these forces must be given credit for this success.

(4) (C/NF) Significant progress was made in the appointment of Military Commanders. General Truong's insistence that selections be based on accomplishment and demonstrated capability paid dividends. I felt he moved too slowly in some cases but in every case, he made excellent choices and the replaced commander had been thoroughly tested. This not only improved units but improved morale among senior commanders as well.

(5) I was extremely proud of my US associates, military and civilian alike. Advisors were directly involved in the fighting and were routinely exposed to hostile fire. This was true especially with the Air Cavalry troops who flew combat missions right up until the cease-fire and Marine and Airborne advisors who were deployed at the battalion level. I observed absolutely no hesitation or reluctance to "bite the bullet". Then as redeployment continued and even the advisory effort was reduced, a dedication surfaced greater than I have previously observed anywhere. There was an absolute determination to insure that the GVN succeeded.

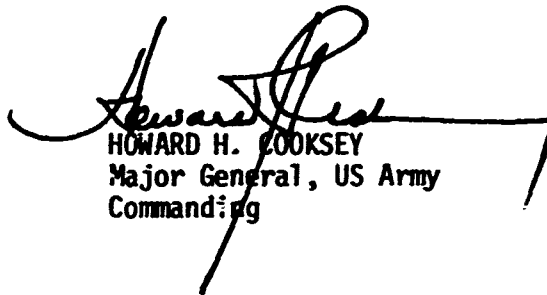
(6) There is always a tendency to focus on weakness - and we have pointed up some fairly serious deficiencies in this report. However, I earnestly

CONFIDENTIAL

MACFR-OP

SUBJECT: Senior Officer Debriefing Report, Major General Howard H. Cooksey, RCS CSFOR-74 (U)

feel that Vietnamization has succeeded. If the peace agreement is adhered to, I am confident the GVN will emerge on top. On the other hand, if the other side ignores the agreement and renews hostilities on a scale of the 1972 invasion of Quang Tri, the US will be confronted with a tough decision. I am convinced that in northern Military Region 1, US Air Support would be required to withstand an assault by the forces available to the enemy in that area.


HOWARD H. COOKSEY
Major General, US Army
Commanding

15 Incl

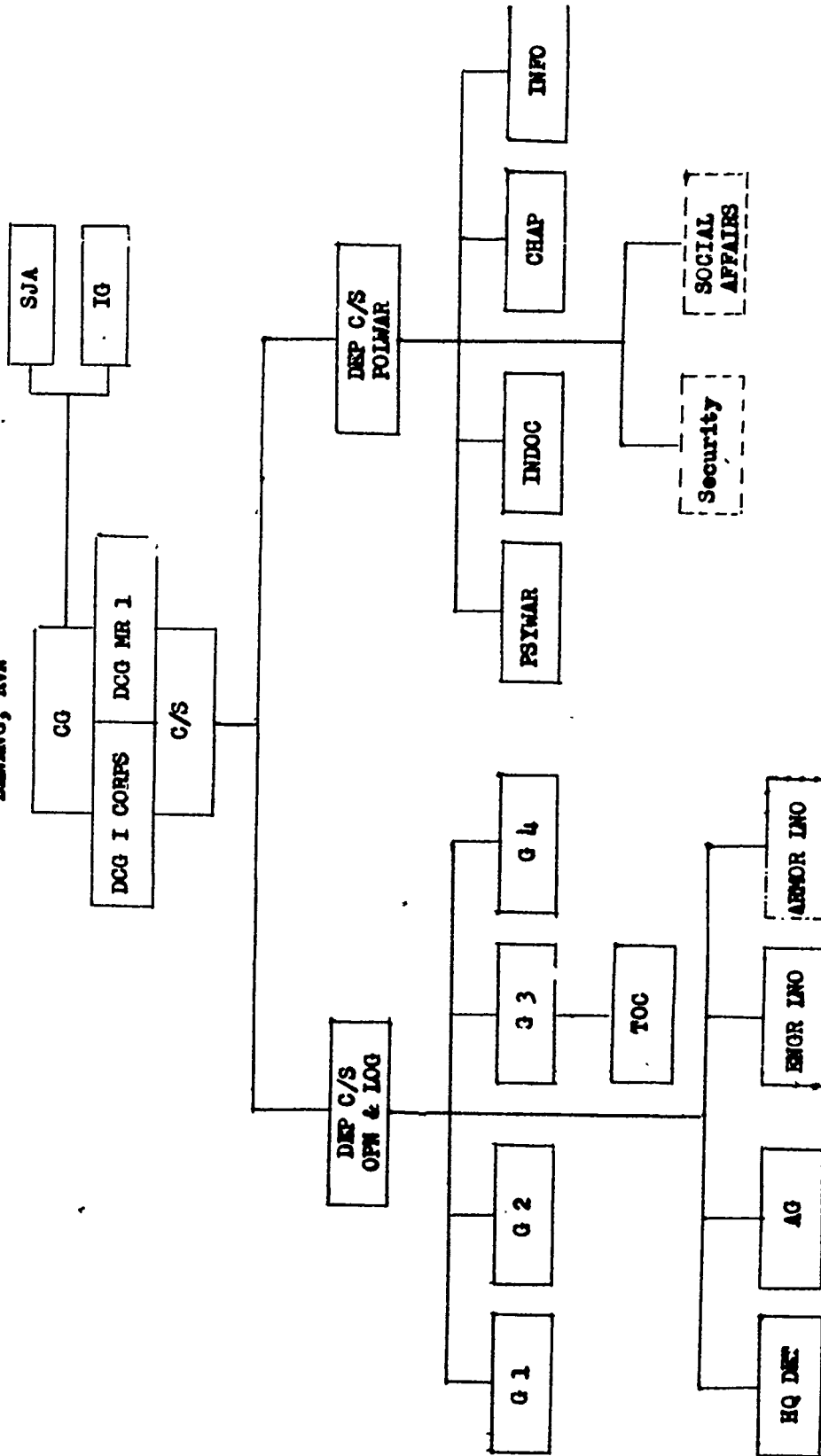
1. I Corps Organization
2. I Corps Organization of Forces
3. FRAC Organization
1 May 72
4. FRAC Organization
1 Dec 72
5. Key Locations
6. Overlay of Operation LAM
SON 72 Phase Lines
7. Enemy and Friendly Casualty
Data
8. Training Completed 1972
- 8A. Assessment of RVNAF Leadership
In I Corps
9. Artillery Ammunition Expenditures
10. 11th CAG Operational Statistics
11. 11th CAG Aircraft Vulnerability
12. Naval Operational Areas
13. ARCLIGHT Strikes in MR 1
14. Territorial Forces
15. Comparison of HES Statistics

CONFIDENTIAL

(39) 9812-72

I CORPS AND MILITARY REGION I

DANANG, RVN



CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

----- NOT ORGANIC TO I CORPS

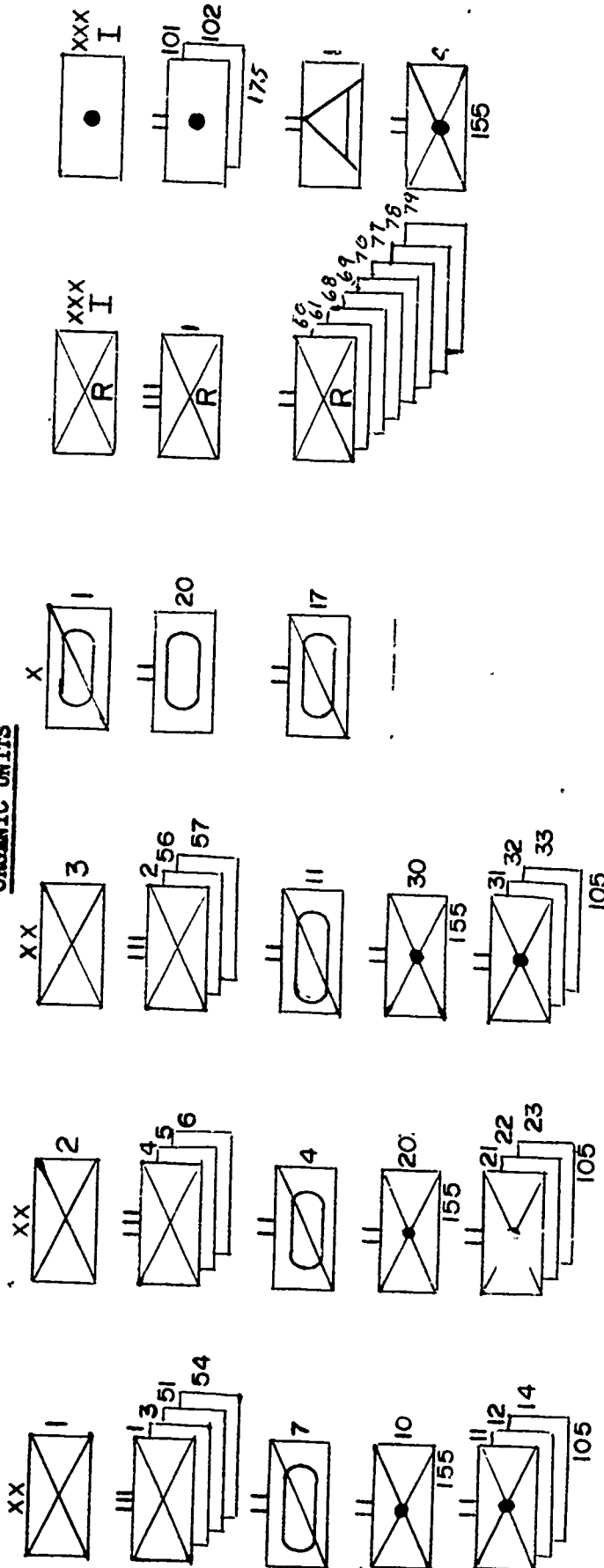
INCL 1

ORGANIZATION OF FORCES

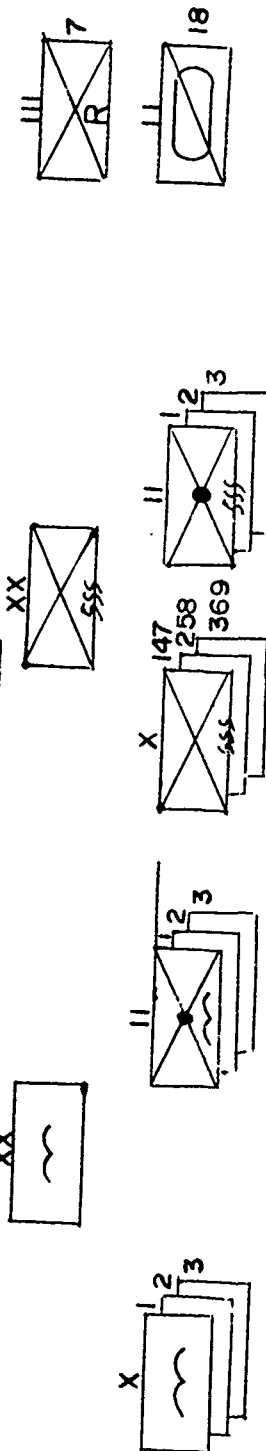
CONFIDENTIAL



ORGANIC UNITS



ATTACHED UNITS

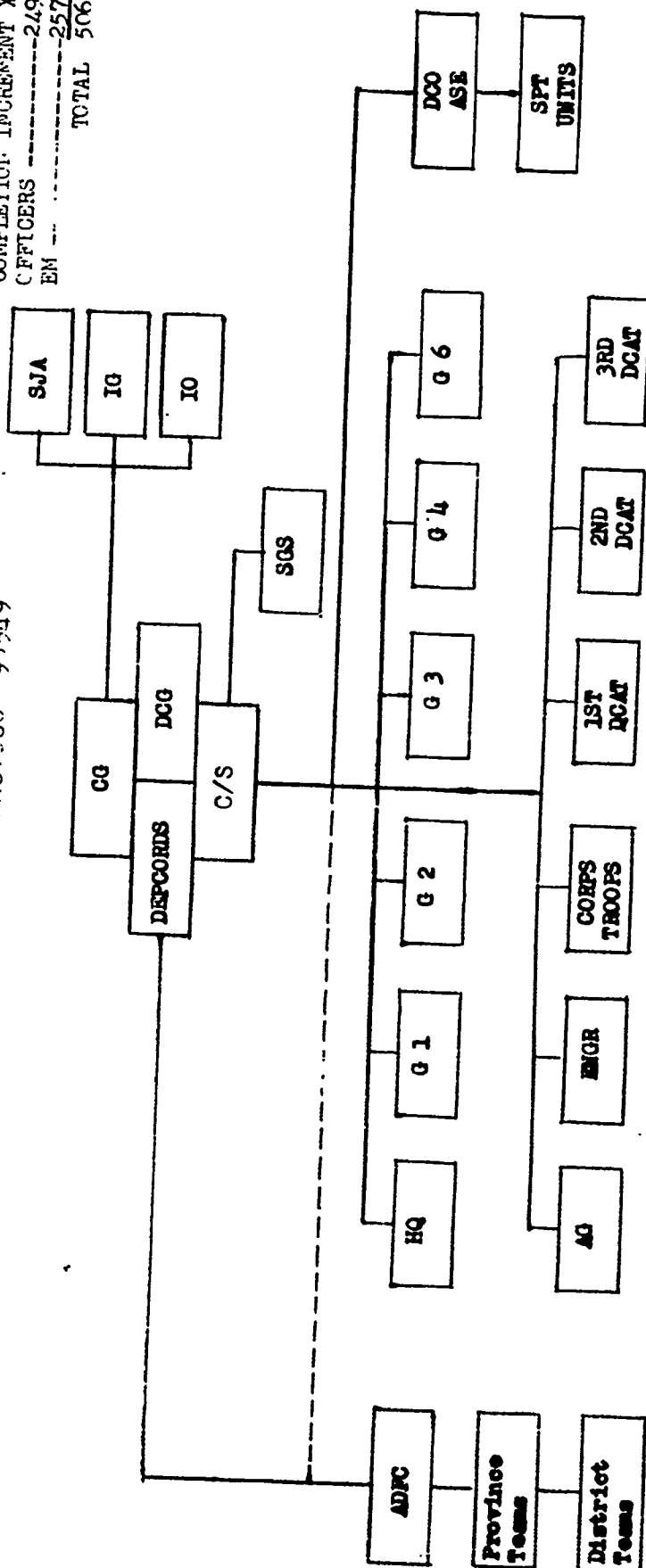


CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

FIRST REGIONAL ASSISTANCE COMMAND
APO SAN FRANCISCO 96349

EFFECTIVE 1 MAY 72
COMPLETION INCREMENT XI
OFFICERS -----249
EM -----257
TOTAL 506



----- COORDINATION

CONFIDENTIAL

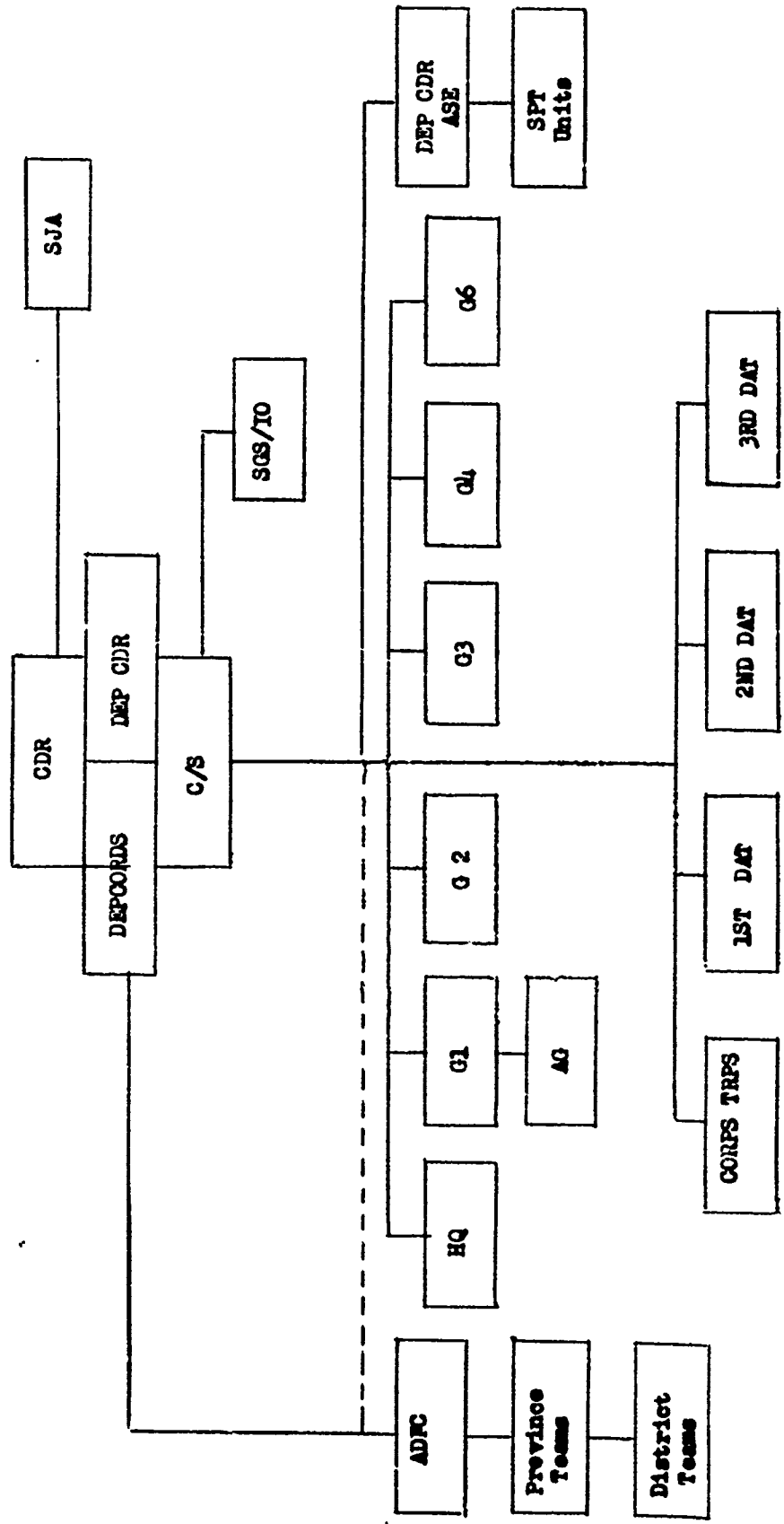
ENC 2

CONFIDENTIAL

FIRST REGIONAL ASSISTANCE COMMAND

APO San Francisco 96349

EFFECTIVE 1 DEC 72
COMPLETION INCREMENT XIV
OFFICERS ---161
EM ---133
TT TAL. 294



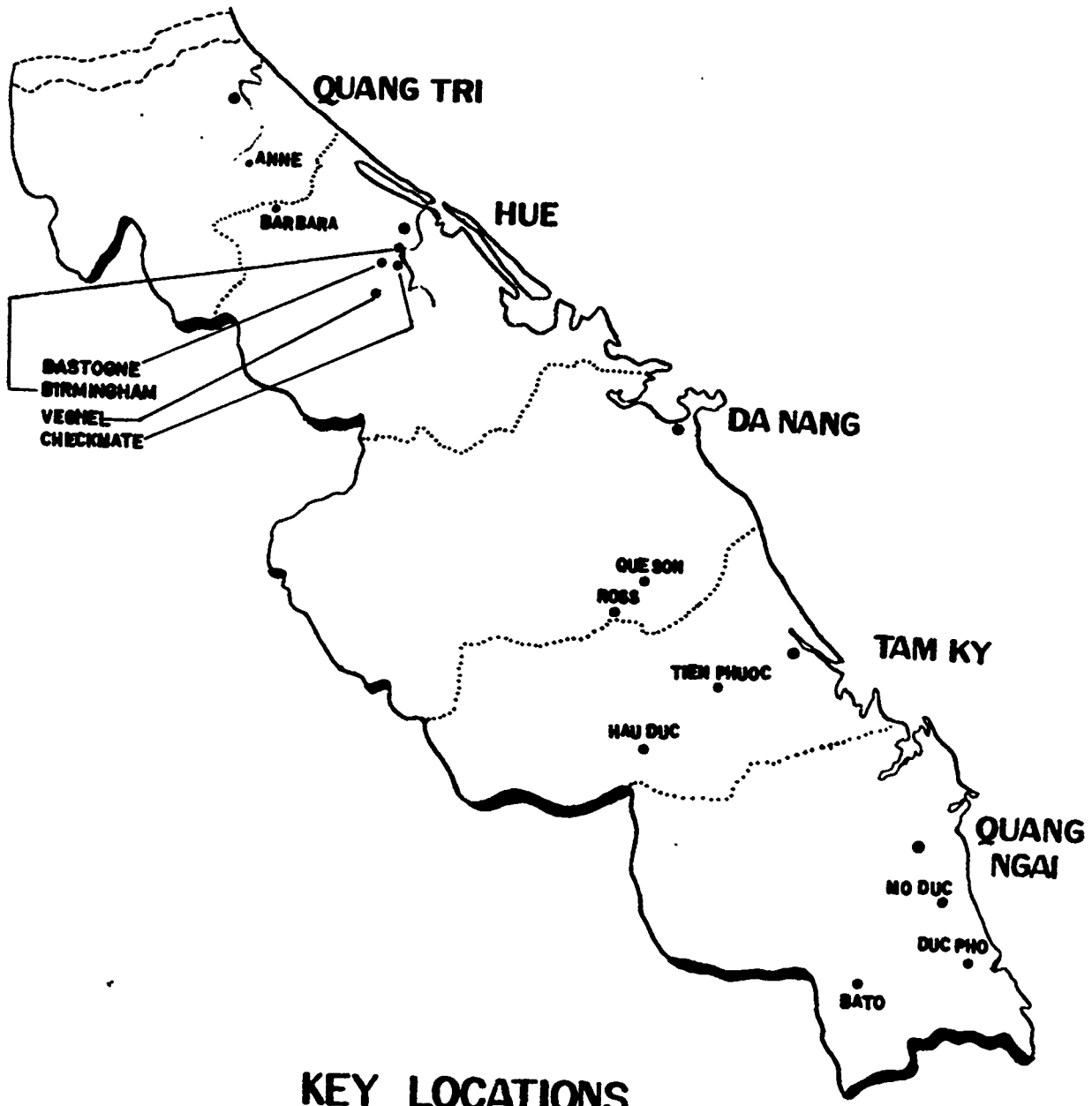
--- COORDINATION

CONFIDENTIAL

41
44

INCL 4

CONFIDENTIAL

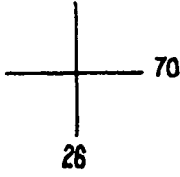


KEY LOCATIONS

40

INCL 5

CONFIDENTIAL



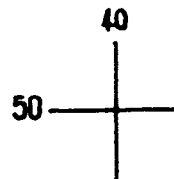
PL BLUE

PL BROWN

PL GOLD

PL BLUE

Reference: MAP, Vietnam, Special
Use S.E. Asia, Scale
1:100,000, Series L607
Sheet 6442



PL BROWN

CONFIDENTIAL

PL GOLD

43 (96)

~~1102 6~~

CONFIDENTIAL

ENEMY and FRIENDLY CASUALTY DATA

JAN 1972 THRU JAN 1973

	Enemy KIA	Friendly KIA	Friendly WIA
June*	4222	399	1517
July*	3763	503	2185
August	6113	969	5043
September	7331	845	4207
October	4172	641	3012
November	2323	629	2500
December	4149	622	2167
January (1-29)	4303	773	2852

* Incomplete DATA. Prior to August, reporting procedures differed from those now in use. Marine and Airborne Casualties were reported by operational time periods.

Early casualty figures for Marine and Airborne Divisions are as shown below.

Marine Division

6 May - 27 Jun 72

Enemy KIA - 3785
Friendly KIA - 558
Friendly WIA - 1745

28 Jun - 19 Sep 72

Enemy KIA - 6439
Friendly KIA - 911
Friendly WIA - 4810

Airborne Division

6 May - 27 Jun 72

Enemy KIA - 1429
Friendly WIA - 664
Friendly KIA - 1429

28 Jun - 19 Sep 72

Enemy KIA - 3567
Friendly KIA 746
Friendly WIA 3991

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

I CORPS AND MILITARY REGION 1

TRAINING COMPLETED IN 1972

<u>COURSE</u>	<u>STUDENTS/UNITS</u>
PSDF Team Leader	1,628 Team Leaders
PF Squad Leader	768 Squad Leaders
FF Platoon Leader	299 Platoon Leaders
ARVN Platoon Leader	290 Squad Leaders
ARVN Platoon Leader	43 Platoon Leaders
Basic and Replacement	19,351 Trainees (Division Training Centers)
	13,178 Trainees (National Training Centers)
	<hr/> 32,529 Trainees
NCO Candidate	517 Candidates
NCO Refresher	213 NCO's
Mines and Booby Traps	158 Students
Artillery Forward Observer	137 FO's
Heavy Weapons	423 Students
Radio Operator	381 Operators
First Aid	137 Students
TOW Crewman	933 Crewmen
PF Platoon Refresher	232 Platoons
RF Company Refresher	26 Companies
RF Battalion Refresher (2-week)	4 Battalions
ARVN Battalion Refresher (2-week)	17 Battalions (Infantry)
	8 Battalions (Artillery)
	9 Battalions (Ranger)
Static Security (2-week)	4 Ammunition Depot Security Units
	8 POL Depot Security Units

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

ASSESSMENT OF RVNAF LEADERSHIP IN I CORPS

1. LTG Ngo Quang Truong, CDR -- Probably the most capable senior officer in RVNAF, he enjoys unique esteem in the eyes of the civilian and military community in the MR. LTG Truong enjoys a reputation for honesty and presents an image of purpose, calmness and dedication. He is the dominant figure in MR 1. He is close to his subordinate commanders and is persuasive in his leadership techniques. He has an exceptional grasp of military matters. He is deliberate, understanding, and listens carefully to suggestions. He takes rapid and severe action against anyone abusing authority, neglecting his troops, or being involved in corruption. General Truong is expert at coordinating the activities of all elements of the Corps, and clearly understands regimental and divisional tactics and operations. Basically an infantryman, his military training is derived almost entirely from continuous active combat in leadership positions. Occasionally, his ability to grasp US doctrinal concepts is hampered by his lack of formal advanced military schooling; however, his natural instincts are superb. He permits his subordinate commanders to make decisions on the ground but provides the direction and means for them to execute the missions he assigns them. He does not pay as much attention to maintenance and logistics matters as he might, but in a period of lesser combat he may turn his attention there. Since becoming Corps Commander, his perspective has broadened. He occasionally expresses concern privately with matters of national interest. Tactically he is more cautious than he was as a division commander. He is grateful for the assistance and sacrifices of Americans in Vietnam. One of his most outstanding characteristics is his deep understanding of human nature. General Truong speaks English and French. He reads English slowly. He is capable of assuming top leadership positions.

2. LTG Lam Quang Thi, Deputy CDR -- He is young, energetic, occasionally impulsive, and rather brusque. He is a "doer" not a planner. He speaks in staccato fashion but understands English very well. He is not overly fond of Americans and would prefer to go it alone if that were feasible. General Thi's basic branch was Artillery. He has traveled widely in the USA, Europe, Australia, Philippines, etc., and has attended several military schools in the USA and written extensively for American military journals. He is a graduate of USACGSC and the Sr Off PM Course at Fort Knox. By reason of his schooling and exposure to Western ideas, General Thi is able to grasp US doctrinal concepts more readily than most Vietnamese officers. He is a strong nationalist and communicates hatred for the enemy. He has a high regard for logistics and maintenance problems. He invariably checks to see that his instructions are carried out. While not appearing to accept suggestions, later events usually indicate that the recommendations were seriously considered and frequently placed into effect.

CONFIDENTIAL

3. BG Bui The Lan, CDR Marine Division — He is a competent, aggressive, dedicated, patriotic, and honorable officer. He works hard and expects the same degree of dedication from his subordinates. General Lan wants to win and can communicate hatred for the enemy. He knows when to take risks and when to cut his losses. He is willing to take casualties and watches for signs that his lieutenants are shying away from battle, ridding himself of ineffective subordinates. He develops subordinates who are dedicated, aggressive, and professional in their performance. General Lan is completely dedicated to the Vietnamese Marine Corps (VNMC) and has few outside interests. He speaks English well.

4. BG Le Quang Luong, CDR Airborne Division — He has commanded the Division since late 1972. General Luong is confident and decisive regarding tactics up through brigade level. He is less knowledgeable and sure of division staff procedures, coordination, and overall division tactics. He conveys a sense of being a strong and sure leader and the subordinate commanders respect him for his combat record and longevity in the Airborne Division. He is possibly too tolerant of poor staff work, doing much himself because he is not fully aware of what the staff can and should be doing for him. He develops junior officers who possess intelligence, aggressiveness, and demonstrated ability to lead troops in combat. General Luong is a sincere and patriotic officer who appears honest.

5. LTC Le Van Ngoc, CDR, 1st ABN Bde — He appears well informed and very much aware of the political situation at all times, but he is less aggressive as a commander than he should be. His approach to the tactical situation has reflected over-caution and little real command over his subordinate commanders who often did not respond. LTC Ngoc appears primarily interested in presenting a favorable appearance. He speaks excellent English.

6. LTC Nguyen Tho Luong, CDR, 2d ABN Bde — He is still not fully confident of his ability to command and appears easily intimidated by superiors. LTC Luong issues orders readily but is weak on follow-up. He is concerned with the welfare of his troops and gives them as much rest as the tactical situation permits. He is a determined fighter with a strong will to win on the battlefield. LTC Luong has concentrated on command and maneuver but has not made material progress in the other areas of command.

7. LTC Van Ba Ninh, CDR, 3d ABN Bde -- He is a quiet, mild spoken, professionally competent officer who moves around to see what is happening. He appears to be troop and mission oriented. LTC Ninh probably has the most potential of any of the airborne brigade commanders.

CONFIDENTIAL

8. BG Le Van Than, CDR, 1st Infantry Division — He assumed command of the Division on 1 November 1972. He is energetic, cheerful, intelligent, thoughtful, and very active. He is highly skilled and an extremely professional soldier. He is a strong and dynamic leader and is particularly concerned about the welfare of his men. He communicates a strength of character and is confident and decisive. He has demonstrated an uncommon interest and professional competence in maintenance and logistics. He works hard, drives his subordinates reasonably hard, and communicates a sense of purpose. He has good potential for higher level command.

9. COL Vo Toan, CDR, 1st Regt — He is bright, vigorous and very competent; is classed in all respects as an outstanding commander. He has led the regiment through nearly all of 1972. He achieved outstanding success in operations which reduced the NVA's 6th and 29th Regiments to combat ineffective status for extended periods of time. He has been wounded five times during his twelve years of service. He also demonstrated the managerial ability to control up to five additional battalions attached to his Regiment during June to Oct 1972. He has the greatest potential of any regimental level commander now in MR 1.

10. LTC Le Duy Hien, CDR, 3rd Regt — He is rated as an adequate field commander and was consistently effective in carrying out assigned missions. He is quiet and hard to know.

11. COL Nguyen Dui Quang, CDR, 51st Regt — He is still new in the job. (Formerly commanded the 3d Regt, 1st Div.) He is a competent and experienced commander who practices the fundamentals of leadership and requires proficiency in his soldiers. His officers are required to know their jobs and the jobs of all who serve under them. He is sincerely concerned with the welfare and needs of his men.

12. COL Nguyen Tanh Hanh, CDR, 54th Regt — COL Hanh was a marginal commander. Under extreme combat pressure he was ineffective. With less enemy pressure beginning in September 1972, a more confident leader began to emerge. He has little potential.

13. BG Tran Van Nhut, CDR, 2d Infantry Division — He assumed command of the Division on 25 August 1972, bringing a reputation as the "hero of An Loc." He is a man of great personal bravery, organizational abilities, and keen mind. He has proven himself an excellent planner and manager who uses his staff well. BG Nhut is an able tactician though he has a tendency to underestimate the enemy capability. He has made tactical blunders when removed from the guidance of an experienced advisor and away from the close scrutiny of the Corps Commander. He emphasizes intelligence and exploits it successfully. He leans toward perfectionism and is a disciplinarian. However, he has compassion for his troops and actively seeks ways to improve their welfare. He is an ambitious man but has only limited potential for higher command.

CONFIDENTIAL

14. LTC Truong Dang Liem, CDR, 4th Regt -- He is a good planner, able organizer, and knows how to extract a full measure from his staff. He appears to know and practice the fundamentals of good leadership. While LTC Liem has not yet been fully tested as a regimental commander in battle, it is expected that he will carry the responsibility well.

15. LTC Vo Vang, CDR, 5th Regt -- He is young and inexperienced. He displayed a good degree of organizational ability and administrative competence in garrison while rebuilding and refitting the regiment, but began to have difficulties when it was committed. In a tactical situation he initially lacked aggressiveness and could not seem to "put it all together." Under pressure he became indecisive and lost emotional control. His recent success in the Sa Huynh operation has added markedly to his self-confidence. His long term effectiveness is not known.

16. LTC Nguyen Thoi Lai, CDR, 6th Regt -- He consistently formulates sound tactical plans and is quick to grasp orders. He uses and supervises his staff well, and is aware of the tactical and administrative situation. His use of fire support assets is excellent but he has not been aggressive in the employment of his maneuver elements. Initially LTC Lai had little interest in coordinating and controlling territorial forces under his OPCON but has significantly improved. LTC Lai is currently an adequate regimental commander; however, he has reached his full potential.

17. BG Nguyen Duy Hinh, CDR, 3d Infantry Division -- He assumed command on 9 June 1972 and has revitalized the Division since its mauling at Quang Tri. He is an excellent tactician and a professional soldier. He enjoys the respect of his subordinates because of his demonstrated ability, broad experience, and well deserved reputation for fairness. He has worked through his staff and subordinate commanders to restore the Division's capability and to build morale and individual self-respect. He displays solid managerial skill, steadiness, inspired leadership, and great strength of purpose. He has excellent potential.

18. LTC Nguyen Thanh Hoang, CDR, 2d Regt -- He is personally engaging but has demonstrated only fair leadership qualities. He is well grounded in infantry tactics and utilizes fair judgement in employing his forces. He willingly accepts responsibility. He is lacking in aggressiveness; advisors have recommended his removal.

19. LTC Vinh Dac, CDR, 56th Regt -- He is intelligent, aggressive, and dependable and has achieved considerable success while rebuilding his unit. He is only 30 years old, but has gained vast experience in his 10 years in command positions. He should continue to perform well in his present position and demonstrates excellent potential for higher command.

CONFIDENTIAL

20. LTC Tran Kin Dai, CDR, 1st Ranger Group -- He is an outstanding commander and leader. Highly qualified, he learns rapidly, and has gained experience in conventional warfare. He is fully capable of commanding a division. He has outstanding potential.

21. COL Bu Quoc Gia, CDR, 1st Armored Bde -- He was observed under field conditions for only 17 days, but appeared to be forceful and confident and is rated in the excellent category as a field commander.

(53) 50

CONFIDENTIAL

ARTILLERY AMMUNITION EXPENDITURES

JUNE 1972 - JANUARY 1973

<u>MONTH</u>	<u>105mm</u>	<u>155mm</u>	<u>175mm</u>
JUNE	687,525	121,968	26,905
JULY	1,304,338	222,788	41,931
AUGUST	1,175,598	192,796	29,625
SEPTEMBER	626,528	113,185	12,895
OCTOBER	538,462	90,650	12,329
NOVEMBER	575,682	81,481	13,699
DECEMBER	626,489	96,730	16,006
JANUARY	991,984	168,103	21,947

53

June 9

CONFIDENTIAL

11TH CAG OPERATIONAL STATISTICS

May 1972 - Jan 1973

Hours Flown:	May 72	5,776
	Jun 72	6,706
	Jul 72	10,441
	Aug 72	8,742
	Sep 72	5,581
	Oct 72	5,640
	Nov 72	4,081
	Dec 72	4,196
	Jan 73	2,472
	Cumulative Hours:	53,635

Sorties flown:	132,260
Troops lifted:	129,905
Cargo lifted: (Tons)	9,440
Enemy KBH:	1,002
Structures Damaged:	396
Structures Destroyed:	1,097
Sampans damaged:	30
Sampans destroyed:	237
Vehicles damaged:	1
Vehicles destroyed:	38
Tanks damaged:	0
Tanks destroyed:	6

CONFIDENTIAL

11TH CAG AIRCRAFT VULNERABILITY

MAY 1973 - JAN 1973

Month	Shot-at	Damaged	Shot-down
May	59	33	10
Jun	58	34	9
July	84	49	11
August	64	38	6
September	59	18	5
October	100	19	2
November	51	15	3
December	55	9	4*
January	<u>25</u>	<u>11</u>	<u>1</u>
Total	555	226	51

*3 Aircraft destroyed during attack on DaNang airbase

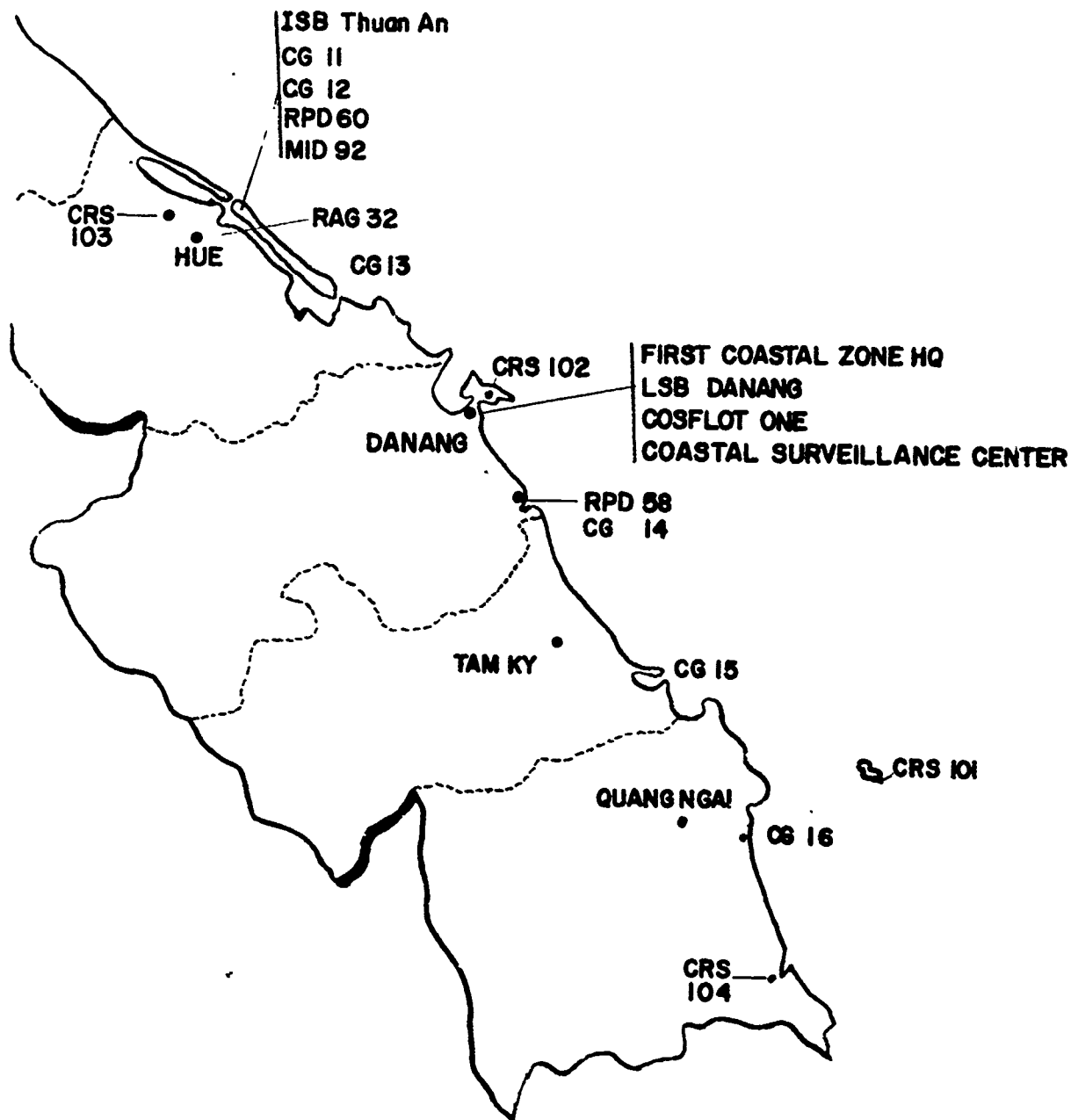
CONFIDENTIAL

53

(57)

INCL 11

CONFIDENTIAL



CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

ARCLIGHT STRIKES IN MR-1
May 1972 thru January 1973

MONTH	STRIKES
May	271
Jun	501
Jul	659
Aug	599
Sep	522
Oct	385
Nov	338
Dec	284
Jan	<u>433</u>
	3992

CONFIDENTIAL

TERRITORIAL FORCES

1. Strengths

Territorial Force Strengths in May 1972

Authorized: 78041 Present for duty: 71076

Territorial Force Strengths in January 1973

Authorized: 80904 Present for duty: 67386

2. Units

Territorial Force Units in May 1972

RF Co	RF Co Gp	RF Bn	PF Plt	TF Arty Plt
Auth: 232	Auth: 34	Auth: 6	Auth: 1358	Auth: 20
Depl: 224	Depl: 34	Depl: 6	Depl: 1322	Depl: 22

Territorial Force Units in January 1973

STCP	RF Co	RF Co Gp	RF Bn	RF Plt	RF Arty Plt
Auth: 7	Auth: 260	Auth: 0	Auth: 50	Auth: 1275	Auth: 20
Depl: 7	Depl: 259	Depl: 0	Depl: 46	Depl: 1215	Depl: 20

CONFIDENTIAL

Comparison of HES Statistics

31 MAY 1972

<u>PROVINCE</u>	<u>% AB</u>	<u>% C</u>	<u>% DEN</u>	<u>%V</u>
Quang Tri	0.0	0.0	100.0	0.0
Thua Thien	26.5	67.4	6.2	0.0
Quang Nam	31.5	48.7	19.7	0.0
Quang Tin	58.6	30.9	10.5	0.0
Hue	100.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
DaNang	87.1	12.9	0.0	0.0
MR 1	49.3	36.5	14.2	0.0

31 DECEMBER 1972

<u>PROVINCE</u>	<u>% AB</u>	<u>% C</u>	<u>% DEN</u>	<u>%V</u>
Quang Tri	0.0	0.0	100.0	0.0
Thua Thien	80.3	17.2	2.5	0.0
Quang Nam	60.5	34.5	4.9	0.0
Quang Tin	90.1	5.5	4.4	0.0
Quang Ngai	49.8	30.7	19.4	0.0
MR 1	73.0	19.3	7.8	0.0

CONFIDENTIAL

UNCLASSIFIED

Security Classification

DOCUMENT CONTROL DATA - R & D

(Security classification of title, body of abstract and indexing annotation must be entered when the overall report is classified)

1. ORIGINATING ACTIVITY (Corporate author) HQ DA DAMO-ODU, Washington, D.C. 20310		2a. REPORT SECURITY CLASSIFICATION CONFIDENTIAL	
2b. GROUP			
3. REPORT TITLE Senior Officer Debriefing Report: Major General Howard H. Cooksey, Commander, First Regional Assistance Command, 30 May 1972 - 25 January 1973 (U)			
4. DESCRIPTIVE NOTES (Type of report and inclusive dates) Senior Officer Debriefing Report, 30 May 1973 - 25 January 1973			
5. AUTHOR(S) (First name, middle initial, last name) Major General Howard H. Cooksey			
6. REPORT DATE 5 April 1973		7a. TOTAL NO. OF PAGES 60	7b. NO. OF REFS
8a. CONTRACT OR GRANT NO.		8b. ORIGINATOR'S REPORT NUMBER(S) 73B037	
b. PROJECT NO. N/A		8c. OTHER REPORT NO(S) (Any other numbers that may be assigned this report)	
c.		d.	
10. DISTRIBUTION STATEMENT			
11. SUPPLEMENTARY NOTES N/A		12. SPONSORING MILITARY ACTIVITY HQ DA DAMO-ODU, Washington, D.C. 20310	
13. ABSTRACT			

DD FORM 1473 1 NOV 68

58 (C) (U)

UNCLASSIFIED

(This page is unclassified)