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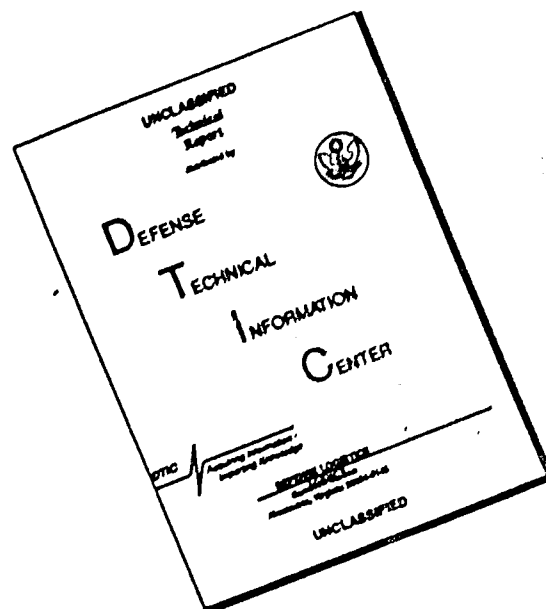
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HQDA Ltr 525-73-5

Expires 11 May 1974

REPLY TO
ATTENTION OF:

DAAG-PAP-A (M) (24 Apr 73) DAMO-ODU

11 May 1973

SUBJECT: Senior Officer Debriefing Report: BG Harry H. Hiestand, Commander,
First Regional Assistance Command, 25 Jan 73 - 23 Mar 73 (U)

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1. Reference: AR 525-14, Senior Officer Debriefing Report (U),
2 July 1971.
2. Transmitted herewith is the report of Brigadier General Harry H.
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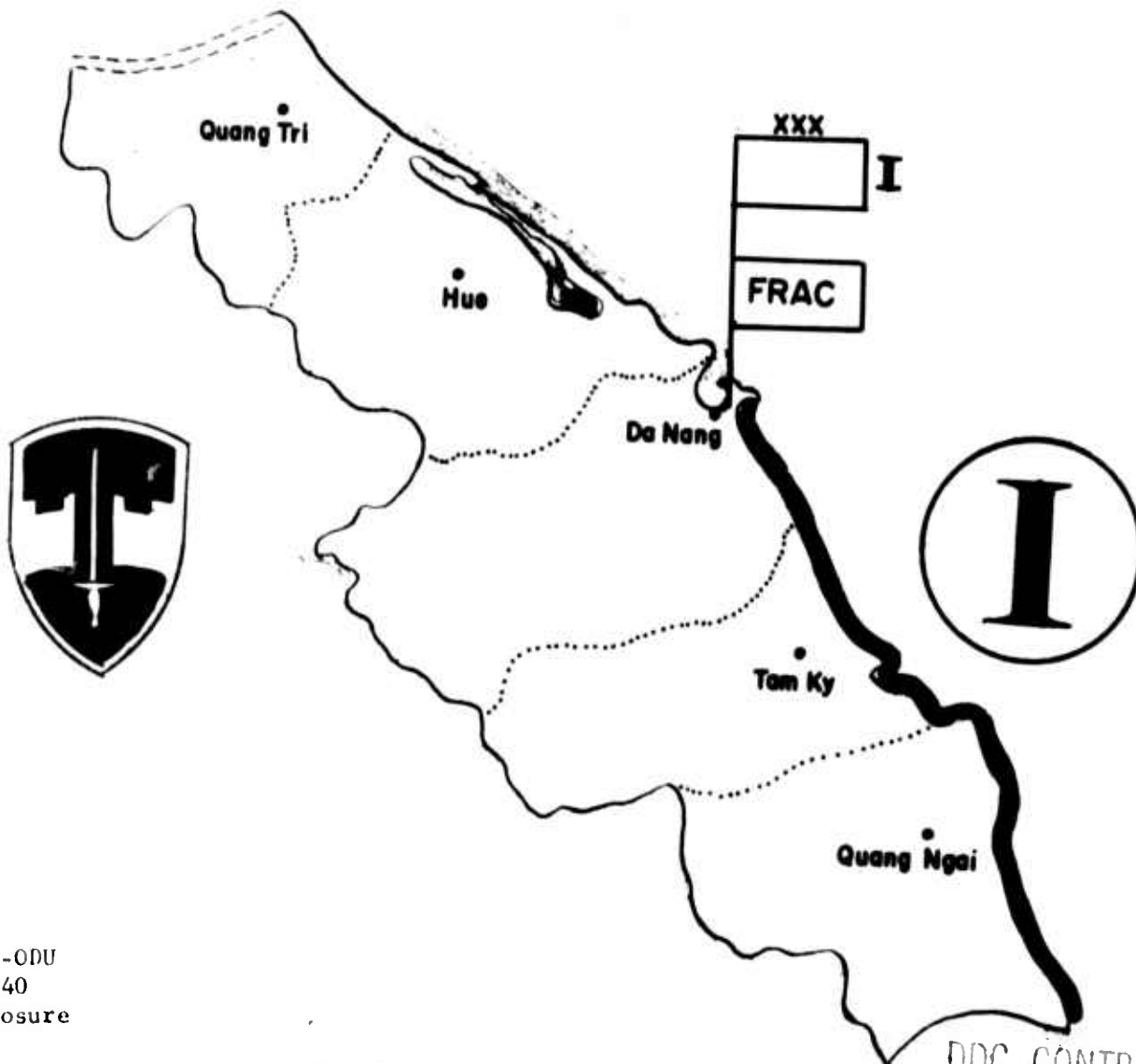
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25 JAN 1973 _____ 28 MAR 1973



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**HEADQUARTERS
FIRST REGIONAL ASSISTANCE COMMAND
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25 MAR 1973

SUBJECT: Senior Officer Debriefing Report, Brigadier General
Harry H. Hiestand, RCS CSFOR-74

THRU: Commander
US Military Assistance Command, Vietnam
ATTN: MACDO-4
APO 96222 (In Country)

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: Brigadier General Harry H. Hiestand

Duty Assignment: Commander, First Regional Assistance Command

Inclusive Dates: 25 January 1973 - 28 March 1973

Date of Report: 28 March 1973

The overall classification of this report is SECRET.

1. (U) PURPOSE

This report summarizes the substantive issues faced by the First Regional Assistance Command (FRAC) during my tenure as Commander and is designed to record the advisory experience gained as well as provide insight for future advisory efforts.

2. (U) BACKGROUND

a. Although this report covers only a relatively short time, the events which occurred were significant in terms of the military and

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political situation prevailing in the Republic of South Vietnam. The President of the United States had recently announced the initialling of a cease fire agreement which would be formally signed and implemented on 28 January 1973. Under the provisions of this agreement all US military personnel would be withdrawn from South Vietnam within a period of sixty (60) days after the cease fire implementation date, and the military effort would end as the political arena became the focal point of insuring the communist insurgency in this country was defeated. These events forecast a turbulent period for the US advisory effort in two (2) primary, inter-related areas:

(1) The Armed Forces of South Vietnam (RVNAF) must coordinate and implement a series of tactical operations plans which would insure that North Vietnamese Army (NVA) and Vietnamese Communist (VC) Forces would be defeated in all attempts to expand any further their control of territory or the civilian population in the coastal lowlands. Also, these forces would need to insure that adequate government of South Vietnam control was maintained and enforced in these areas. This would be accomplished initially with the assistance of US firepower assets and advisors, but effective with the cease fire the use of US firepower would terminate; US military advisors would commence withdrawal; and the entire war effort would be shouldered by South Vietnam's Armed Forces. There were provisions for US assets to be re-employed to protect US troops if the situation arose but the possibility for the communists abrogating the cease fire agreement to this extent was not expected. Fighting following the cease fire was anticipated but at a relatively low level.

(2) Secondly, FRAC was faced with the Military/Logistical problems of withdrawing US military advisory personnel and selected items of equipment from South Vietnam, plus turning over the remaining items of military equipment to the Army of the Republic of Vietnam (ARVN). Also, FRAC was tasked with the problems, primarily logistical, of assisting in the implementation of the cease fire agreement through the establishment of a four party Joint Military Commission (JMC) which would initially attempt to insure compliance with the agreement by the belligerents and to assist in the establishment of the logistical requirements and systems needed to support a four nation, International Commission for Control and Supervision (ICCS) which would control and supervise the cease fire agreement after the withdrawal of US military personnel from South Vietnam.

b. In order to adequately fulfill these requirements, members of FRAC were required to employ a range of ingenuity, stamina and political finesse which was unprecedented in US military advisory procedures. As for myself assuming Command of FRAC during this turbulent period, the move did not place me into a new arena. I had been serving as the Deputy Commander of FRAC since 15 May 1972 and upon assumption of Command was fully aware of the situation and problems at hand.

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3. (U) ORGANIZATION:

a. Headquarters, I Corps and Military Region 1. (Incl 1)
This Headquarters, located in the city of Da Nang, had responsibility for the five northernmost provinces of the Republic of Vietnam. The I Corps and Military Region 1 Commander LTG Truong has two deputies to assist him; one for I Corps tactical units, LTG Thi, and one for Military Region 1 (five provinces) MG Lac. The corps organization consists of a Corps Headquarters, a forward headquarters in Hue, three infantry divisions, corps artillery, a ranger command consisting of one mobile ranger group and eight ranger border defense battalions, and one armored brigade. The Corps also has OPCON of the Airborne and Marine Divisions (Incl 2). The Corps Forward Headquarters was organized at Hue to assist in command and control of units operating in the two northern provinces of Quang Tri and Thua Thien. The Corps Deputy CG for tactical units was stationed at Hue during the period of this report and confined his sphere of interest to the area north of the Hai Van Pass. He was looked upon as Commander of Northern MR-1.

b. The Advisory Organization. (Incl 3)

(1) The advisory organization in First Regional Assistance Command (FRAC) closely parallels that of the Vietnamese I Corps and Military Region 1.

(2) When I assumed command all teams were in place and carrying out the advisory mission. However, the ceasefire had been announced and according to the FRAC plan, some teams would begin phasing out immediately while others would be functional for a few more weeks. All divisional advisory teams remained operational or at a liaison status until 17 Feb when the Marine, 1st and 3rd Divisions Teams closed. The Airborne and 2d Division liaison officers remained deployed until 24 Mar 1973. The FRAC staff continued to function normally for the first thirty days of the ceasefire and then began a steady drawdown of functions. The first function to standdown was the Forward Tactical Operations Center (TOC) in Hue which ceased operation on 28 Feb 1973. The main TOC remained operational until 24 March 1973. Except for occasional burbles caused by communist intransigence over prisoner release, the drawdown went smoothly and generally according to plan. Especially significant was the performance of the 14th Signal Company and the 11th Combat Aviation Group (CAG) Communications Security (COMSEC) Custodians. They received COMSEC equipment from all MR-1 account holders in accordance with HQ MACV published COMSEC retrograde schedules. All equipment from the COMSEC accounts was properly accounted for; this critical gear was crated and prepared for shipment to CONUS without incident. In all, except for the FRAC G4 who became deeply

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involved in support for the JMC/ICCS (See para 10e), there were no major problem areas encountered. However, there were some minor adjustments in drawdown dates and the release dates of personnel. The staff planning for the post ceasefire period had provided an extremely clear guideline for this final major operation.

(3) Support for the US Advisory effort in the I Corps area was outstanding. The US Army Support Element, MA-1, provided assistance with finance and personnel management, postal, medical, staff judge advocate, military police, logistical and Army aviation support. Communications support was provided by the 14th Signal Company a subordinate unit of the STRATCOM Southeast Asia. Other support such as potable water, electrical power and higher echelon maintenance were provided by civilian contractors such as Pacific Architects & Engineers, Federal Electric Corporation, Philco Ford and Vinnel Corporation. Post Exchange and Special Service facilities were available at the Da Nang Air Base and the Camp Horn compound. Each Division and Province team had an imprest fund PX. FRAC also operated and maintained its own open mess and nonappropriated fund system to provide for the welfare, recreation and entertainment of advisor personnel.

4. (C NF) INTELLIGENCE

a. The effectiveness of intelligence support in MR-1 must be addressed as it existed, a U. S. effort and an ARVN effort. The U. S. effort existed primarily to support U. S. forces and provide assistance to ARVN.

b. U. S. INTELLIGENCE SUPPORT: Beginning in October 1972, as a result of Increment #14, U. S. collection assets were drastically reduced. Photo reconnaissance sorties dropped from 15-20 per week to 1-2 a week. Infra-Red (IR), Side Looking Airborne Radar (SLAR), and visual reconnaissance sorties dropped considerably as the 131st Military Intelligence Company stood down. Also affected was the information produced by the 8th Radio Research Field Station (RRFS) which ceased operations. The Military Intelligence Detachment (MID) was inactivated. Its functions and a portion of its personnel were transferred to the FRAC G2 Section. This left FRAC with a limited collection, tasking, and production capability.

c. RVN INTELLIGENCE ACTIVITIES

(1) Corps Intelligence Mission and Function:

The mission of I Corps/MR-1 Intelligence organization (G2 I Corps/MR-1) and its supporting elements was to provide assessments on enemy capabilities and courses of action for the Commander I Corps/MR-1 and his combat and pacification forces and agencies. The area of interest to the G2 I Corps/MR-1 was the five northern provinces of the RVN. It relied primarily on national level intelligence for the remainder of South

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Vietnam and out-of-country activity which may impact on the I Corps/MR-1 area of responsibility. The G2 I Corps/MR-1 did not exercise direct managerial authority over the allocations of non-organic intelligence collection agencies which were assigned to support the Commander I Corps/MR-1.

(2) Organization:

(a) The Corps G2 section of I Corps Headquarters was organized with an office of the G2 (composed of an Administrative Section, Operations Section, and a G2 Air Section). Separate elements under the control of the Corps Military Intelligence Detachment (MID) and a Combined Interrogation Center (CIC). The CIC was a field element of the Saigon based CMIC but operated by I Corps. The Corps MID consisted of a Hqs Element, Document Analysis Section, IPW Section, OB Section, Technical Intelligence Section, and a Targeting and Imagery Interpretation Section. The G2 and the two subordinate organizations consisted of 150 personnel. Each division had a similar but smaller organization and each province had an intelligence officer assigned.

(b) There was a Radio Technical Detachment (ASTD) which came under operational control of JGS but was assigned to support the Corps.

(c) In Human Intelligence (HUMINT), support was provided by the 65th MID of the 101st MI Group which came under JGS control. The Corps G2 could task this organization directly for the Commander. Other organizations which provided HUMINT were the National Police Command's Special independent CI arm of the Ministry of Defense. These organizations were controlled and tasked by their parent organizations. Subordinate divisions and the provinces had their own intelligence resources which could be tasked by the Corps Headquarters. They also had their own HUMINT resources as does the Corps MID.

(d) The Corps did not have any organic aerial reconnaissance capability except for light observation aircraft (L-19's) provided by the VNAF. The ARVN in I Corps was totally dependent on U.S. assets for photo reconnaissance. Until the ceasefire, air cavalry reconnaissance was provided by the U.S.

(3) Capabilities:

In terms of self-sufficiency and sustained support capabilities to meet the current and expected ARVN requirements, the intelligence capability of I Corps and subordinate units was rated adequate to good.

d. EVALUATION OF INTELLIGENCE EFFORTS

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(1) Significant Limiting Factors:

(a) The Corps did not have any organic aerial reconnaissance assets. I Corps was totally dependent on the U.S. for Air Cav and photo reconnaissance. This was a major deficiency. The VNAF had 20 L-19 aircraft in the Corps. Two L-19 visual reconnaissance (VR) sorties were allocated each day to the Corps G2. The remaining VNAF L-19 sorties were assigned to the divisions for forward air controller (FAC) operations. While U.S. FACs and Air Cav provided VR, the Corps was able to receive the important information on road movements, road construction, and troop and vehicular activity. However, after the U.S. phasedown the burden for this vital information fell to VNAF, and the two sorties which were allocated to Corps were insufficient for its needs. Through advisory efforts the division FACs began providing VR coverage. However, because of poor aircraft maintenance the number of VR sorties averaged only 2-4 a day, depending on weather.

(b) This lack of a reconnaissance capability also seriously jeopardized the sensor program. Here again, the problem was not one of ARVN trained personnel but lack of assets. In addition, the sensor program was not afforded the command emphasis it required. ARVN commanders have a tendency to ignore sensor activations which are not of an immediate threat. Consequently, the use of sensors as an indicator of forthcoming enemy activity received minimum attention.

(c) There was a serious lack of coordination in HUMINT collection, which was primarily caused by inter-agency rivalry. The MSS, the PSB or the National Police Command, ARVN MI, and G2's were all engaged in HUMINT collection. Without close coordination between the various agencies there was a serious duplication of effort, which produced a waste of resources with the resultant affect of contradictory and confusing intelligence reports. The Corps G2 did not have operational control over the various HUMINT agencies which provided him with the intelligence, nor did he have the analytical capability to sift the large volume of reports for valid intelligence.

(d) In the technical intelligence area, the ARVN has yet to be imbued with the significance of captured enemy equipment. Often enemy material, such as control boxes for the AT-3 Sagger Anti-Tank Missile, were kept as war trophies rather than exploited by technical personnel.

(e) Security was another limiting factor. Classified material was handled with little or no control, and classified information was discussed openly. Consequently, sources of information were frequently compromised. The VC/NVA have exceptionally good security practices so when a leak in

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their system was divulged they summarily stopped the leak from developing into a lucrative source of intelligence.

(f) The last significant limiting factor was the general inability to provide continual assessment of the myriad of intelligence reports received. The G2's at corps and division level were able to personally keep abreast of the situation by relying on two main sources, radio technical data and photo reconnaissance as well as personal contact with each other. Although the ARVN did maintain an outstanding data base, there was a lack of qualified junior officers and non-commissioned officers capable of analyzing the various reports and statistics. This was in part due to the general educational level of the junior officers and the Vietnamese hierarchical culture which calls for concepts to flow down rather than up. This left the G2 himself as the only effective intelligence analyst, and he was far too busy to consistently provide quality assessments to his subordinate echelons. Consequently the intelligence products from the corps and the division, such as the Daily Intelligence Summary, were a compilation of facts primarily obtained through operational reports rather than an assessment as to the significance of the intelligence. Until this problem area is resolved the HUMINT collection effort and intelligence production effort will be marginal.

(2) There was a general lack of coordination between the various agencies that engaged in intelligence collection. Although their final products flowed to the Corps G2, there was widespread duplication. This, coupled with the inability on the part of the Corps G2 to directly task some of these agencies and analyze the reports, caused serious gaps in the knowledge of the enemy. This lack of coordination stemmed from interagency rivalry and non-centralized control over the various intelligence agencies supporting the Corps. The loyalty of the non-organic organizations such as MSS rests more with the parent organization in Saigon rather than with the mission in MR-1.

(3) Penetration of the VCI was multi-pronged. The Phong Hoang Program now under control of the National Police, was created to establish a system to penetrate the VCI at district level and below, while the PSB would conduct long term penetration at province level and above. Penetration was also accomplished by the MSS and ARVN MI. The Phong Hoang Program was aimed at coordinating the efforts of various agencies involved in low level penetration, intelligence gathering, and neutralization. The long term penetration program was plagued, however, with the same feeling that affected the sensor program. Mainly, operations were terminated prematurely because it was felt that immediate results were better than long term results which could seriously disrupt the infrastructure.

(4) Generally, communications for the Corps G2 system were poor.

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No special purpose intelligence net was established. The corps headquarters did not have a communications facility where Special Intelligence (SI) could be received on a timely basis and safeguarded. The primary communications was through operational channels (TOC) and couriers. Communications Security (COMSEC) remains weak.

e. The corps G2 organization was adequate for the needs of the Command. The division and corps G2s were very capable intelligence officers, and despite many problem areas were able to generally assess the enemy situation. However, improvements in the potential of their subordinates is needed if they are to most effectively complete their task. The material provided by the various agencies was too voluminous, thus, an improved management of collection efforts was also required in order to assign priorities, tasking, and resources, to achieve the desired information in the most expeditious and economical manner. This problem, however, will continue to exist as long as these separate intelligence agencies are capable of jealously guarding their prerogatives.

5. (C) SUMMARY OF TACTICAL ACTIVITY (Incl 4)

a. Enemy activity in Military Region 1 (MR-1) in the week preceding the ceasefire was relatively quiet as the Republic of Vietnam Armed Forces (RVNAF) were shifting into pre-planned defensive positions; continuing current offensive operations; and preparing or conducting attacks in accordance with the I Corps ceasefire plan.

b. In Quang Tri Province, the Vietnamese Marine Corps (VNMC) Division was deployed from Quang Tri City northeast to the beach. The 147 Brigade, on the right flank, had just completed an unsuccessful attempt to reach positions on the Cua Viet River to their north. The Vietnamese Airborne Division southwest of the VNMC was completing consolidation of positions along the Thach Han River and to the southwest of Fire Support Bases (FSB) Anne and Barbara, and concentrating on cutting enemy infiltration into rear areas and the populated coastal lowlands along the Nhung, My Chanh and O Lau Rivers. For the first time in nearly a year, 1st Armor Brigade, OPCON to the Airborne Division, had been assigned a mission with a tactical area of responsibility (TAOR) within the Airborne AC along QL-1. The 7th Ranger Group was on loan from MR-IV and commenced withdrawal from the Airborne Division TAOR on 27-28 Jan 73 for redeployment. The mission of controlling Phase Lines (PL), Gold, Brown and Blue, that had been established during the Lam Son 72 offensive plan the previous spring remained in effect. (Incl 5)

c. 1st (ARVN) Division was deployed in and responsible for the major portion of Thua Thien Province. Its forces were positioned on the high ground west and southwest of the coastal lowlands which followed a general

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arc of FSB's King, Birmingham and Arsenal. For several weeks, 1st ARVN Division forces had been conducting reconnaissance in force operations well forward of this line.

d. Current I Corps offensive activity centered in the 3d ARVN Division TAOR, (Quang Nam Province) where 2d, 51st and 56th Regiments were concluding attacks in the western Que Son Valley. 57th Regiment (minus) was deployed in the coastal lowlands surrounding Da Nang, known as the Da Nang Rocket Belt. (See para 15).

e. 2d ARVN Division had responsibility for security and offensive operations in Quang Tin and Quang Ngai Province. 5th Regiment (minus) had just completed a successful operation in the mountains north of Tien Phuoc and was undergoing rest and refit at FSB Hawk Hill. The remaining 2d ARVN Division forces in Quang Ngai Province were the 1st Ranger Group conducting search and clear operations in western Binh Son/Son Tinh Districts; 6th Regiment forces were operating in eastern Binh Son/Son Tinh Districts with emphasis being placed on clearing the Batangan Peninsula of its Vietnamese Communist Infrastructure (VCI) and destroying enemy local force units; the 4th Regiment with 2/5 Battalion attached was deployed throughout southern Quang Ngai Province with units operating in the FSB San Juan Hill, Landing Zone (LZ) Liz, Mo Duc and Duc Ph areas. 4th ARVN Regiment was also conducting an operation with engineering support to repair and open QL-1, the main supply route (MSR) from just north of Sa Huynh to the MR-1/MR-2 boundary.

f. Also operating throughout MR-1 were Territorial Forces (TF) and a Ranger Border Defense (RBD) Group. Some TF units were deployed on line with VNMC and Airborne Divisions plus performing rear area security missions for them. In Thua Thien and the three southern provinces of MR-1, TF units were conducting local clearing operations and maintaining outposts protecting virtually every hamlet and village, (See para 16). The RBD Group had eight battalions which protected outlying Government of Vietnam (GVN) positions; two operated in Quang Nam Province; one in Quang Tin Province; and five in Quang Ngai Province. Several of these RBD battalions were placed OPCON to either 2d or 3rd ARVN Divisions during the pre and post ceasefire period.

6. (C) PRE-CEASEFIRE TACTICAL SITUATION (Incl 4)

a. As of 26 Jan 73, I Corps/MR-1's subordinate commands had all but completed final plans for pre and post ceasefire operations. Broadly, the I Corps plan called for its forces to shift into defensive positions for the purpose of defending and maintaining (GVN) control in the lowlands with emphasis on district and provincial capitals and major population centers. There were, however, three operations either underway or in the process of being initiated. These offensive operations were designed to expand GVN control into specified areas and to preempt any North Vietnamese

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Army (NVA) or Vietnamese Communist (VC) force's effort to seize GVN held territory immediately prior to the ceasefire effective date, which was 280800H Jan 73. The operations were:

(1) The VNMC Division was to initiate an all-out effort to secure all terrain east of route 560 between PL Brown and Blue (the Cua Viet River), and establish an outpost at the old US Naval base on the south bank of the mouth of the Cua Viet River. This objective was designed to cut the NVA main waterborne supply artery and to expand GVN control to the natural boundary of the Cua Viet, and Thach Han River line and provide GVN with at least a share in the use of this South China seaport entrance.

(2) The 3rd ARVN Division was attacking to seize and secure the western Que Son Valley, and Hiep Duc, a district capital lost to the Communist in April 1972. Although the seizure of this district capital was politically important, more significantly the town was also a main hub of NVA/VC operations and resupply into the lower three provinces.

(3) 2d ARVN Division was conducting combat assaults to seize and secure Ba To, a district capital in Quang Ngai which the GVN lost in late October 1972. While the seizure of this district seat was politically important, the operation was also designed to distract the 2d NVA Division from a predicted attack to seize GVN positions along QL-1 in the Sa Huynh area.

b. At 270630H Jan 73 following an intensive, 24 hours Naval Gunfire (NGF) and artillery preparation, the Marine Division initiated its attack. The old US Naval base was designated Objective Tango, and the force assigned to take it was dubbed Task Force Tango. TF Tango was composed of elements of the VNMC 147 Bde, 20th Tank Squadron and 17th & 18th Cavalry Squadron units. This was the largest combined arms operation launched by I Corps since it initiated attacks to push the invading NVA forces out of South Vietnam in late spring of 1972. Initially, the operation progressed smoothly as Task Force Tango penetrated the NVA forward defensive belt. From the outset, the operation was characterized by continuous combat. All units were subjected to heavy attacks-by-fire, constant ground attacks and some of the most intense shellings of the entire war. Despite increasingly heavy casualties as they entered the well prepared and strongly defended in-depth positions up the coast, the Vietnamese Marines and attached ARVN Armor forces distinguished themselves by their gallant conduct of an unrelenting attack to achieve this critical objective. At 280758 Jan 73, Task Force Tango reported it was on Obj Tango; however, the force had bypassed several large pockets of enemy resistance and had failed to adequately secure lines of communication (LOC). This shortcoming, as was determined after the ceasefire, was to prove the downfall of the entire operation.

c. The Airborne Division continued operations to thwart enemy initiated attacks along their forward lines which followed the Thach Han River,

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to prevent enemy infiltration into its rear area; and to protect QL-1 from Quang Tri City to the division rear boundary, vicinity An Lo. Prior and up to the cease fire deadline, the Airborne Division successfully repulsed an enemy attempt to cross the Thach Han River at a natural fording site in vicinity of Thon Nhu Le in the 1st Bde sector. Also, the Airborne Division forces along with Thua Thien TF Forces succeeded in driving out NVA infiltrators in the Phong Dien and An Lo hamlet areas along QL-1.

d. The 1st ARVN Division mission was to stop enemy infiltration into the coastal lowlands and to protect QL-1 from the Airborne Division rear boundary (near FSB Sally) to the Hai Van Pass at the Thua Thien/Quang Nam Province border. During the period immediately prior to the cease fire, the 1st ARVN Division succeeded in repulsing an enemy attempt to occupy friendly villages along the Truoi River in vicinity of QL-1, but were forced by enemy armor to temporarily abandon outpost positions on old FSB Veghel.

e. The 3rd ARVN Division had initiated its pre-cess fire plan well prior to 26 Jan 73. By this time, because of a singular lack of aggressiveness on the part of the regiment that was supposed to spearhead the attack, the Division had abandoned plans to seize the Hiep Duc District Capital; however, they had succeeded in seizing key terrain objectives which would insure GVN control of the lower Que Son Valley. Also the terrain feature north of FSB Ross, known as Tiger Ridge, had been fully cleared and secured. The western Que Son Valley had been in enemy hands since the 2d ARVN Division was driven out of the area in August 1972. Immediately prior to the cease fire, 3rd ARVN Division shifted its forces to stop enemy infiltration into the populated lowlands and to destroy the VCI which existed in Quang Nam Province. To accomplish these missions, 3rd ARVN Division withdrew 2d Regt from the western Que Son Valley battlefield and organized it into two mobile battalion sized reaction forces utilizing the division armor cavalry assets; 56th and 51st Regiments deployed on a defensive line in the Que Son Valley between FSB West and Hill 441 and 381; 57th Regiment with one battalion from 2d Regiment deployed throughout the Da Nang Rocket Belt and approaches. As of the cease fire implementation, Quang Nam Regional Forces had succeeded in halting a major enemy attempt to occupy the Duc Duc District capital. Heavy fighting continued in western Que Son Valley where the 711th NVA Division had launched an armor/infantry assault against 51st Regiment positions between FSB West and Hill 441. Throughout Quang Nam Province, there were clashes between VC local force units and GVN TF units as several hamlets were being contested, and VC flags were flying in several locations. The Da Nang Airbase received a light, 122mm rocket attack, but a large scale attack which intelligence sources were predicting was preempted by aggressive air cavalry operations in the Rocket Belt (See para 15).

f. The 2d ARVN Division TAOR, which included Quang Tin and Quang Ngai

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Province, was hit harder by enemy efforts to occupy coastal lowland hamlets than any other area in MR-1. In the weeks preceding the cease fire, intelligence sources were predicting an enemy attack in the Mo Duc, Duc Pho and LZ Liz areas which would have an ultimate goal to divide MR-1 from the remainder of South Vietnam. As the cease fire approached these enemy plans became more apparent, and the 2nd ARVN Division began repositioning its units to counter such an effort; however, the priority mission for the 2nd ARVN Division continued to be an attack to retake the Ba To District Capital. This task received priority planning, but upon execution was badly handled, and the 4th Regiment failed to seize their objective. Lack of adequate VNAF air lift slowed troop insertion, and follow-up attacks lacked the aggressiveness and mass needed to force the 2nd NVA Division to divert any major portion of its forces to the area as had been calculated. During the early morning hours of 27 Jan 1973, enemy forces launched a series of coordinated attacks against TF and ARVN positions at Sa Huynh and FSB Charlie Brown; in the Pineapple Forest west of Tam Ky; on the Batangan Peninsula in eastern Binh Son and Son Tinh Districts; southwest of Quang Ngai City; and west of Mo Duc, Duc Pho and LZ Liz. These attacks were so scattered that the true enemy intent and the full impact would not be realized until several days after cease fire implementation as fighting continued during that period. It appeared, however, that the 2nd NVA Division had achieved its goal of severing MR-1 from the remainder of South Vietnam as Sa Huynh and FSB Charlie Brown were in enemy hands by nightfall of 28 Jan 73. Heavy fighting continued in the area.

7. (C) POST-CEASE FIRE TACTICAL SITUATION: (Incl 4)

a. At 280000H Jan 1973, the agreed cease fire was implemented by the United States as all US firepower support activities were terminated. But as had been anticipated, fighting continued in all division TACR's. Also, an apparently pre-arranged GVN decision was implemented which denied all but top echelon US advisory personnel access to ARVN official records at Division level, and the previous free flow of tactical information was curtailed. Although this situation did not grow into a major point of contention, it did hamper US efforts to analyze the tactical situation. At I Corps Headquarters the flow of information concerning enemy and friendly initiated actions continued without interruption. The saving factor which prevented a complete breakdown in exchanging information was the previously established rapport between Senior Advisors at MR/Corps, Divisions and Province levels. Most senior advisors continued to receive verbal updates from their counterparts.

b. In the Marine Division TACR, Task Force Tango's position at the mouth of the Cua Viet River was tenuous at best. The task force had moved rapidly, bypassing several large pockets of enemy resistance; and after the battle settled, only an estimated 150 man force occupied the former naval

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base. The maneuver of bypassing enemy resistance may have been advisable under circumstances where these remaining pockets of resistance could be eliminated by follow-on forces, but in this instance, the Task Force could not be resupplied or reinforced and was totally isolated from other VNMC Division forces. In the following days, despite the cease fire, enemy pressure on elements of the Task Force within the naval base grew steadily and at 310935H Jan 73 it was overrun. Also, pressure was applied against other Marine positions in the 147th Bde area, and the decision was made to redeploy 147 brigade units to their original positions along Phase Line Brown. As the original positions were established activity decreased throughout the division TACR. The Marine Division formally requested a JMC team be dispatched to the area to investigate the violation. From then on, contacts that followed resulted primarily from VNMC Division units policing their rear area. The Cua Viet expedition was costly in all respects. From its initiation on 27 Jan 73 to the withdrawal of VNMC Division units to original positions on 31 Jan 73 the division suffered 94 Marines KIA, 238 WIA and 149 MIA; 11xM48 Tanks, 11xM41 Tanks and 15xM113 Armored Personnel Carriers (APC's) destroyed. The report also stated that a number of other tanks and APC's were seriously damaged but remained in friendly hands. Armor and cavalry personnel losses were listed as 15 KIA and 89 WIA. Enemy losses consisted of 1265 KIA and 37 POW's taken. Also 158 Crew Served weapons, 832 Individual weapons, and 27 Radios were captured while 23 T-54 and PT 76 Armored Vehicles were destroyed.

c. Tactical activity in the Airborne Division was limited as clashes with NVA infiltrators occurred in the Phong Dien and An Lo areas; however, another enemy attempt to cross the Thach Han River was made in vicinity of Thon Nhu Le on the night of 28 Jan. This attack was initially successful as Airborne forces in the area were forced to withdraw. A rapid consolidation and counterattack by the 3rd Airborne Battalion restored friendly unit positions in this area by 1 Feb 73, but control of the fording site remained in enemy hands. Following this action, minor enemy probing actions continued on the outer periphery of the Airborne Division forward positions, and forces continued attacks to clear the enemy from the fording site. Fighting flared in the An Lo area as enemy infiltration attempts along the Song Bo were interdicted by Thua Thien Territorial Forces (TF). The 803rd NVA Regiment was apparently attempting to move sizable forces along the river to seize the An Lo bridge, cut QL-1 and reestablish control in the lowlands north of Hue in the old "Street Without Joy" area. This activity was characteristic of the action of VC elements during the early stages of the Tet 1968 offensive. In the three day period 27-29 January, 60 enemy soldiers were killed in contacts near the An Lo bridge. In early February, as pressure continued to be applied in this area, elements of the 3rd Regiment, 1st ARVN Division were moved to reinforce the TF in countering the enemy. Friendly hamlets in the Airborne Division rear area remained under GVN control, and QL-1 remained open throughout the division AO.

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d. 1st Division and Thua Thien TF units encountered several enemy incursions after the cease fire. In the FSB Veghel area, 1st Regiment forces maintained elements in the area although the platoon on the firebase was forced to withdraw. There was a brisk action extending over several days in the Truoi Bridge area southwest of QL-1 where the enemy attempted to move up the river and cross the highway in order to gain access to the Phu Thu District populated areas. Some enemy pressure was applied against TF positions in vicinity of the Lang Co bridge on QL-1; however, 1st Division and TF forces maintained control of all areas along QL-1, and the MSR remained open throughout the division AO.

e. The enemy attacks along the Song Bo (An Lo bridge area) and Song Truoi to the north and south of Hue city were very important for the enemy. These operations were very carefully coordinated and orchestrated to move large NVA forces into the lowlands surrounding Hue, and was reminiscent of opening phases of the 1968 Tet offensive in this area. Involved were old VC strongholds and it was clear that the enemy desired to reestablish control in these very populous areas. It is significant that the TF and ARVN moved swiftly and decisively to eliminate these enemy thrusts. By so doing Hue remained clearly in GVN control along with the thousands of people in the affected areas.

f. In the 3rd ARVN Division area fighting was ongoing throughout Quang Nam Province as the cease fire was implemented. Most contacts were sporadic, and the blunting of an enemy attack to seize the Duc Duc District Capital at An Hoa early on the 26th proved significant (the attacking enemy battalion lost 73 killed and 11 captured.) as enemy pressure in the Da Nang Rocket Belt and approaches steadily decreased after that action. There were many scattered contacts resulting from GVN forces clearing enemy infiltrators from friendly hamlets and their efforts to remove the numerous VC flags that briefly appeared in the lowlands. The most significant activity was focused in western Que Son Valley where the 711th NVA Division's armor/infantry attack against 51st Regiment was just beginning. This battle continued at an intensive level for several days after the cease fire. Several significant contacts were also recorded in the Arizona Territory between Dai Loc and Duc Duc. Also during this period VNAF deployed an average of 30 TAC Air sorties per day to support friendly units in the area, and a threat of a possible enemy breakout was thwarted. Despite several enemy attempts to interdict QL-1 it remained open.

g. The 2d ARVN Division in Quang Tin Province was holding well considering the multiple enemy attacks. The 5th Regiment (minus) had successfully regained the lost TF outposts in the Pineapple Forest west of Tam Ky prior to the cease fire deadline, but several contacts continued during the daytime hours of 28 Jan 73. These conflicts subsided and by 1 Feb 73 only

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light attacks by fire were being reported. QL-1 was open and secure throughout the province. In Quang Ngai Province, fighting continued until Tet with only slight decreases in activity being noted in the contested areas. Eastern Binh Son and Son Tinh Districts experienced several post-cease fire enemy attacks against TF outposts there. GVN forces in southern Quang Ngai Province were not faring as well. The enemy had firm control of Sa Huynh, FSB Charlie Brown and QL-1 in that sector. 39th Ranger Battalion (minus) in Sa Huynh had been overrun and 2/4 battalion (minus) was holding precariously to positions on the MR-1/MR-2 boundary. The 4th Regiment (minus) had failed to get moving against Ba To and was being chewed badly in short, intensive night attacks by elements of the 52d NVA Regiment, 2d NVA Division. On 4 Feb 73, attempts to extract the 4th Regiment (minus) were unsuccessful as heavy anti-aircraft fire prohibited utilization of Vietnamese Air Force (VNAF) helicopter assets. In the 4th Regiment field positions and on FSB San Juan Hill, supply stockage was dwindling. US assets were still authorized and available to be used for resupply at this time. This situation in southern Quang Ngai Province remained basically unchanged for several days following the cease fire, but on 2 Feb 73, 2d Division began formalizing plans for GVN forces to reopen QL-1 and to retake Sa Huynh and FSB Charlie Brown; 4th Regiment forces were to be extracted from the Ba To area, thus abandoning that attack plan, and GVN control would be retained only on FSB San Juan Hill. The attack to retake Sa Huynh and FSB Charlie Brown began pushing south from FSB Debbie on 3 Feb 73. Bitter fighting continued in lower Quang Ngai for the next two weeks and it was not until 19 Feb 73 that the port of Sa Huynh and its protecting fire base were once again in friendly hands.

h. Although the GVN command had been remiss in failing to heed advisor warnings that the port of Sa Huynh was an obvious target for a pre-cease fire land-grab, they did well in the campaign to recapture this vital area. This was the first all-RVNAF major operation to be successfully conducted in the face of very determined and tenacious enemy forces. After some initial mis-handling of forces, the final days of the campaign saw well orchestrated ARVN, Ranger, VNAF and VN Navy successfully gain their objectives and by 22 Feb they had cleared QL-1 all the way to the MR-1/MR-2 border. Cost of the Sa Huynh operation (for the period 27 Jan to 22 Feb 1973) was 106 KIA, 413 WIA, 294 MIA, 20 Crew Served Weapons and 366 Individual Weapons lost. Enemy losses were 899 KIA, 40 POW's taken while 76 Crew Served and 250 Individual Weapons were captured. In addition there were 70 GVN civilians killed and 37 wounded. Overall light combat activity continued, however, as VC/NVA elements persisted in initiating incidents and ARVN and TF reacted to them. The VC/NVA apparently wanted to keep the ARVN off balance by continuing the harrassment as the GVN fought to eliminate the rebels and firmly assert their control.

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i. The constant harassment by the VC/NVA was also employed at the negotiating level as the PRG refused to join the GVN, US and DRV at the JMC conferences. In this regard the ARVN found it difficult to tolerate the communist antics and as a result were slow to respond to requirements, did not fully meet all responsibilities and in some cases insulted the delegations from North Vietnam. On several occasions demonstrations near DRV compounds became unruly and in one instance, in Hue, some slight personal injury was suffered by a few of the DRV representatives when they were set upon by a mob. The lack of effective security was cited as the reason the DRV representatives were recalled to Saigon on 2 Mar 1973. Their leaving the region made it almost impossible for the JMC to function, because the PRG still refused to make any effort to join the talks at the region level.

j. Evidence of communist lack of intent to fully support the cease fire was noted on 10 Feb 1973, when aerial reconnaissance detected the construction of an SA-2 (Soviet) Surface to Air Missile (SAM) site at the old Khe Sanh airfield. Initially, only two launchers were sighted. By the end of the month an additional launcher was noted. In addition, the runway at Khe Sanh had been extended sufficiently to support liaison and transport aircraft, and indications were that the runway would be extended to accommodate combat type aircraft. The creation of a SAM umbrella over the Khe Sanh airfield, in addition to violating the cease fire, confronted the RVNAF with a viable air defense system in this area. The VNAF, should the need arise, would find it extremely difficult to counter this threat. By reason of US political pressure, launchers and missiles were removed during the second week of March. However, the Soviet SAM systems are highly mobile and consequently the missiles may be concealed nearby or just across the border and could be reintroduced in short order at a later date. (Three launchers and associated equipment were again sighted near that area on 20 March).

k. On 14 February, the first increment of North Vietnamese prisoners were released by the RVN as 175 POW's were sent across the Thach Han River at the release point south of Quang Tri City. By 21 February when Phase I ended, about 4586 additional prisoners gained their freedom while US, RVN, DRV and PRG representatives to the JMC witnessed and supervised the exchanges. Phase II and III were combined and as of the 21st of March an additional 8887 POW's were released. Like those who had gone before them, they divested themselves of their issued clothing and crossed the river which marked the line of demarcation between RVN and NVA forces. During all of this period the communists freed only 1499 ARVN POW's in MR-1. The first PRG release of ARVN prisoners did not take place until 11 March.

l. By late February it was becoming apparent that the fighting was not beginning to phase down on either side. At this juncture, positive steps were initiated to reduce the scale of activity by forced cut backs in ammunition.

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tion supply and insistence on compliance with the measures agreed upon by the signatories to the peace protocols. This unilateral action by advisory personnel brought about the desired results and by the end of March the major concerns were those connected with prisoner releases, while active tactical operations were almost entirely eliminated.

8. (C NF) LEADERSHIP

a. Some characteristics of leadership noted in I Corps are considered typical throughout RVNAF. These include the lack of a reservoir of capable leaders, particularly at the junior level, and the tendency to over centralize authority in the commander at each level.

b. In general, the I Corps leadership has had beneficial effects on all other commanders throughout the Military Region. The current principal commanders in the Corps are considered patriotic, well motivated, and competent.

c. My counterpart, Lieutenant General Ngo Quang Truong, Commanding General of I Corps and MR-1 is the best of the ARVN generals and by far the dominant personality in the region. His four year tenure in Hue as CG, 1st Division (during which period he was "The law north of the Hai Van Pass") coupled with his dramatic return to save Hue and Northern MR-1 and stem the tide of invasion, eventually leading to the recapture of the Quang Tri Citadel, made him a legend in his time - at least in the eyes of the people of this area. He has a reputation for honesty and portrays an image of purpose, calmness and dedication. General Truong has an exceptional grasp of military matters - from basic fundamentals to South East Asia strategy. He prefers persuasive leadership techniques where possible. He is deliberate but takes positive action promptly when a need is indicated. He is confident, decisive and possesses a great understanding of human nature. General Truong has an unusually retentive memory and displays a good grasp for detail. He listens to suggestions and accepts good advice. He has demonstrated an excellent capacity to manage all units of the Corps. General Truong is basically an infantryman. His military training stems from continuous active combat throughout his career. He has finessed the normal staff assignments, occupying leadership positions almost exclusively. His grasp of US doctrinal concepts is somewhat hampered by his lack of formal advanced military schooling; however, his natural instincts are superb. He leaves details to his subordinate commanders but provides the direction and means for them to execute the missions he assigns them. He recognizes the importance of logistics and maintenance; however, he appears to force himself to concentrate attention in these areas. He is totally lacking in mechanical aptitude. General Truong is an extremely neat and orderly individual. This applies equally to his own person and to areas and units over which he exercises control.

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He has a great concern for the welfare of his troops. He takes rapid and severe action against anyone abusing their authority, not caring for the troops or being involved in corruption. Since becoming Corps Commander, he has adopted a more serious mien than formerly. He occasionally expresses concern with matters of national interest to which he did not previously refer, e.g. inequities in national conscription practices. Tactically, he is more cautious than he was as a Division Commander. He is very grateful for the assistance and deeply appreciative of the sacrifices of Americans in Vietnam.

d. The stresses of severe enemy shelling and major land operations throughout the spring and summer following the 1972 NVA Easter invasion had led to a major overhaul in the leadership within the ARVN in MR-1. This action had resulted in a significant upgrading of the caliber of officers who were leading the regiments and divisions and the combat capability of their troops had shown a concomitant improvement. This situation, however, led to difficulty at the time of the cease fire as these officers were suddenly asked to reverse a career of aggressiveness which had heretofore been required to win them their present positions. As a result it was difficult to slow these leaders down when the cease fire was announced and it became necessary to curtail combat activity. In this context it was understandable that it required a longer period of time to adjust combat in the MR-1 to a lower, more manageable level, as efforts were made to abide by the cease fire protocols.

e. LTC Truong has displayed great care and unusual perception in the selection of personnel to fill key positions. This is an on-going program and he is constantly searching for new talent to fill leadership positions in the National Police Force and provincial administrations as well as within the Army of the Republic of Vietnam.

9. (C) PERSONNEL

a. The Corps G-1 and AG personnel, Division G-1's and field S-1's perform functions similar to those performed by individuals occupying corresponding positions in US Army units.

b. There is little advisory effort needed in the Corps G-1/AG field. The incumbent G-1 is highly qualified, having worked in the G-1 field since 1965 and having attended the AG Advanced Course as well as the Manpower Control Course at Fort Benjamin Harrison, Indiana in 1969. He is well aware of personnel problems within the Corps and takes appropriate action to solve them. The Deputy G-1 is also qualified having attended the ARVN AG Advanced Course. These two individuals maintain a solid Corps G-1 staff section. The Corps AG is a very competent, highly qualified officer, having served in G-1/AG positions since 1958. He complements the G-1 and together they make the I Corps G-1/AG sections highly

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efficient and professionally managed.

c. The Corps G-1 is responsible for and adequately manages seven major functional areas which include: Programming, procurement, individual training, distribution, personnel management and services, separations and veterans' affairs, and reporting.

d. Maintenance of Strength: Assigned strength of divisional units has been fairly constant with the 1st Division holding at about 86-90%, 2d Division at 82-85%, and the 3rd Division at 75-78% of authorized strength. However, present for operations strength was somewhat lower in all divisions. A continuing problem is provision of adequately trained personnel in key positions in various corps units. The Corps G-1 is well aware of the personnel requirements and keeps his requests for such into Saigon. JGS had established a goal of 90% assigned strength for all MR-1 divisions by the end of January 1973. This goal was not met, however, and it is unlikely that it will be in the foreseeable future.

e. Absence without leave and desertions continued to be high, averaging 10/1000 for the last available reporting period, (11-18 Feb) and are an item of G-1 concern for corps units. The Corps G-1/AG are aware of these problems and have initiated active programs to rectify sources of malcontent in an effort to help reduce the desertion rate. In a somewhat contradictory move, however, effective with the cease fire the criteria for reporting AWOL and desertion was revised and made more strict. The new criteria marked a soldier as a deserter after 48 hours absence where formerly the period had been 15 days. This criteria change makes comparison with previous records somewhat difficult. It is too early to tell yet, but with a viable cease fire in effect, the problem of AWOL and desertion may become less chronic.

10. (U) LOGISTICS

a. General: The logisticians themselves at I Corps Area Logistics Command (I ALC), I Corps and the Division G-4's, appear to be professionally qualified. There is degradation at the lower organizational levels.

b. Supply:

(1) While the combat mission was supported at all times it was done only at a great waste of dollars, manpower and duplication of effort. At present a great deal of material is worn out, particularly artillery major components, MHE, some armored vehicles and trucks. Currently the ARVN supply system is not responsive to the needs of its users. This unfavorable situation is due to over-stockage of repair parts, expenditure

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of time needlessly on many dead and inactive items, and the failure of using units to develop a prescribed list of parts necessary to support their organic equipment.

(2) By traditional American military standards, the ARVN soldier does not have an adequate appreciation for supply conservation. However, commanders have begun to stress individual and organizational supply discipline. A major lack of supply discipline at the division levels was the abuse of the available supply rate (ASR), particularly in 105mm howitzer ammunition. Although I Corps continually exceeded the ASR, there seemed to be little pressure from JGS to correct the matter. In mid-February the ASR was reduced by about half. Even after the cease fire ARVN gunners continued to fire seemingly without restriction, until late February when expenditures were forced down.

c. Transportation: Although the situation is improving, there is a shortage of 2½ ton trucks. This results in overall slowdown in resupply and troop movements. The transportation problem is partly a US Advisory legacy which was brought on by the abundance of helicopter support which turned attention to this easier and quicker mode. However, the VNAF inability to provide support in the quantities needed has forced a return to the traditional support vehicle.

d. Maintenance:

(1) At the Corps level the backlog of maintenance jobs awaiting repair is conservatively estimated at two years, even if the parts were on hand and work started now. This has been caused by a reluctance on the part of tactical commanders to take care of their equipment in the field. Also some of the backlog is worn US equipment being transferred to RVNAF in an as-is condition.

(2) There is generally little organized 1st or 2d echelon maintenance except for vehicular maintenance in transportation units. 1st and 2d echelon maintenance is delayed or ignored until the equipment requires 3rd echelon attention. Some improvement has been made in certain units, and is the result of specific command emphasis. As in unit supply, maintenance problems are too often considered solved simply by discussing them.

e. Support for Cease Fire and Peace Keeping Forces:

(1) FRAC's introduction to the Joint Military Commission, (JMC) and the International Commission of Control and Supervision (ICCS) was somewhat cloudy in regard to our exact responsibilities for support and

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formulation. During the time preceding the cease fire announcement the information concerning JMC was given only limited distribution and could not be released to staff planners. In early January FRAC was under the impression that all support for the ICCS would be arranged for by contract or would be satisfied through ARVN channels, and that the interface between FRAC and the ICCS/JMC would be minimal.

(2) On 25 Jan we began to receive telephonic directives which made it clear that FRAC would become deeply involved in the support given to the peace keeping organizations. On the 26th, MACV directed that the RAC Commander, along with his RVNAF counterpart would provide facilities, equipment, and support necessary for the proper execution of the respective missions of these two bodies. Also, FRAC would provide the support to the ICCS until such time as it was self-sufficient. As yet, I Corps/I ALC had not completed their plan to provide the support the JGS had promised, and FRAC logistics personnel were becoming more involved daily in their efforts to meet the requests and directives.

(3) FRAC G-4, through his conversations with JMC Region Chiefs, I ALC and MACV had determined the support shown at Incl 7 was needed to at least get the program off the ground and had proceeded with preparations and actions to implement the plan; such actions as leasing facilities etc., were being accomplished. On 27 Jan MACV provided FRAC with definitive support guidance. Essentially the message confirmed the planning which had been developed here. Regarding facilities, these were to be leased as required. The contractor was to provide for mess, billeting and headquarters sites. FRAC was to establish a Joint Hq, separate billeting and messing facilities, joint motor pool and common user communication, (teletype). By the end of the day on the 27th, most arrangements had been accomplished. Suitable facilities and adequate support arrangements were made.

(4) On the 28th the US and ARVN JMC elements moved to the designated areas to await the arrival of the communist representatives. Almost immediately a problem developed in Hue. The JMC site was declared unsuitable by GVN and orders were received to change. This decision was to give us the most trouble of the entire operation. A new site was selected but renovation was required and the Tet holidays looming just ahead exposed the possibility that difficulties in contract support would be experienced. Work did stop 2-5 February.

(5) On 2 Feb, ICCS advance elements arrived at Da Nang and Phu Bai. They inspected facilities and explained the standards they expected. They went back to Saigon satisfied with the initial billeting and mess arrangements. Based on verbal guidance from MACV-DL, arrangements were made to provide mess facilities to the ICCS until X+30. This was

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accomplished through a restaurant located in a civilian hotel used for ICCS billets in both Hue and Danang and financed by AIF funds. A field ration mess was also used in Danang until 17 February.

(6) The ICCS delegation arrived on schedule on 5 Feb. On the 6th the Democratic Republic of Vietnam (DRV) JFC delegation for Regions I and II arrived. The reception in Hue of the Region One DRV delegation was poorly handled and they were insulted when met by a National Police captain. ARVN provided insufficient bedding to spend the first night. This lack of concern for the reception and welfare of the delegation caused a severe breach in what might have been correct relations. The DRV seized on this initial shoddy treatment to find fault with everything that was done for or to them. By 10 Feb some progress was being noted in the JFC situation in Hue; at least the DRV seemed to be eating the rations which were being provided although they preferred to be allowed to go out and purchase their own.

(7) On 17 February the requirement to coordinate and provide support to the JFC/ICCS was transferred from the FRAC staff to the PR-1 Area Support Element (ASE). In that the FRAC Commander also commands ASE, this action only shifted the points of contact as the overall responsibility for this support remained with the FRAC Commander.

(8) Lessons Learned.

(a) There was a lack of timely definitive guidance from higher headquarters concerning the exact extent of support FRAC would be required to provide. This was primarily because the close-hold nature of the operation prevented staff officers from being briefed early enough to prepare adequate plans.

(b) In dealing with GVN/ARVN it became obvious that a staff action was not completed until their prepared paperwork was compared in detail with the original intent.

(c) We experienced a general reluctance on the part of ARVN to fully enter into the spirit of providing for the JFC delegates. It appeared they did not recognize that providing for the ceasefire forces should have been high on their priority list. Additionally, advisors spent considerable time convincing counterparts that it was in their best interest to meet requirements as they were presented. Failure to do so was invariably used as excuses by the Communists to impede progress on substantive issues.

11. (C) COMMUNICATIONS.

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a. Tactical. The I Corps tactical communications system is a complete network of FM radio, VHF, teletype and radio teletype. Communications routes between major headquarters are diversified as much as possible considering equipment limitations. A complicating factor in the communications system is the high mountain ridge along the Thua Thien - Quang Nam Province border which effectively bisects the MR. This ridge requires extensive antenna networks and employment of relay in many cases. In order to reduce vulnerability in I Corps communications, duplicate facilities have been installed where possible. The major weakness in the I Corps tactical communications system is that nearly all equipment is committed and there is very little reserve to meet emergency situations. The communications system has shown that it can support I Corps in combat.

(1) Security. Communications security was a matter of continuing concern. Elements of the corps relied heavily on the telephone and FM radio, for business and tactical discussions. At best, communications security was deplorable especially at lower levels. This was partially a function of lack of secure equipment but was primarily a problem of attitude. "Circle" type codes were distributed, but not used to any great extent. From time to time commanders would emphasize COMSEC and the situation would improve but rapidly degenerate again.

(2) Maintenance. Communications maintenance was adequate.

b. Fixed.

(1) The Integrated Communications System (ICS) sites and the Dial Telephone Exchange (DTE) in Military Region 1 have all been Vietnamized. The ARVN 610th Signal Bn has complete responsibility for all sites outside the Danang area.

(2) The Vietnamese have little experience with the ICS and DTE fixed communications facilities. Therefore, they are not as professional in operating these facilities as they are the tactical networks. Operating problems are compounded by the logistic support problems for the low-density non-standard equipment at the ICS and DTE sites. The Vietnamese will continue to need technical assistance, emergency repair assistance, and continued constructive critical performance evaluations in order to achieve the desired level of professionalism in operating and maintaining the fixed communications facilities.

c. Communication Support to JMC/ICCS. Much of the MACV G-6 effort during the period of this report was directed toward providing for the Four Party Joint Military Commission (FPJMC) or (JMC) and to the International Commission for Control and Supervision (ICCS). MACV directed

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FRAC to provide assistance and liaison with RVNAF to support local communication requirements of the US element of JMC. Later the primary source of ICCS support was to be contractor provided. FRAC was to be involved in ICCS support by validating local service requirements not requiring expenditure of resources and provide the requirement to I Corps G-6. If an expenditure of resources was involved, each national delegation was to validate the requirement through their channels to JMC or ICCS headquarters in Saigon. For additional detail see Incl 8.

12. (C) COMBAT SUPPORT

a. Artillery: Field artillery continued to be relied on heavily by ARVN ground commanders. Each division artillery was heavily utilized and provided effective support to its respective division. Corps artillery provided additional support in terms of mix and calibers. The Corps artillery organization was effective and maintained the capability to shift positions to mass fires to support a particular operation as required. Although ARVN artillery contributed extensively to the many successful combat operations during the period, it was not as effective as it could have been had correct artillery procedures been used by all units. The failure to use survey, registration, metro data, and proper ammunition handling procedures reduced the accuracy of artillery fire and contributed to the excessive ammunition expenditure rate that prevailed. The constant disregard for the available supply rate (ASR) was never so pronounced as it became after the cease fire. By about 20 Feb ARVN began to make noticeable efforts to restrict artillery fire by requiring units to get permission from higher headquarters to engage all targets except in support of troops in contact and counterbattery fire. This became more stringently enforced after JGS published their rules of engagement in March.

b. Fire Support Coordination: I Corps maintained a fully operational Fire Support Element (FSE) in the tactical operations center in Da Nang, and a similar one in Hue at I Corps Forward Command Post (CP). The FSE was active in coordinating and integrating all fire support means available. The FSE maintained an artillery fire planning section, Naval gunfire section, counterbattery section and liaison section. The FSE was co-located with the I DASC in order to facilitate close cooperation and coordination between ground and air support means.

c. Counterbattery Activities: The I Corps Counterbattery Information Center (CBIC) was very active in the FSE. It was through this agency that shell reports, sound and flash information, aerial photography, radar activations, sensor activations, and visual reconnaissance reports were collated and suspect gun locations developed. This section itself was very efficient and capable but it depended directly on field reporting which varied

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from excellent to poor. When multiple field reports were received this section was very effective in producing lucrative targets.

d. Air Defense Artillery (ADA): The one air defense artillery battalion assigned to I Corps was deployed by sections in static positions around the Da Nang Air Base, with the batteries of the 175mm gun battalions, and on some critical bridges. The ADA weapons were not effectively used in their ground role and they were never tested in the air defense mode.

13. (C) VIETNAMESE AIR FORCE (VNAF)

a. The Vietnamese 1st Air Division provided air support to I Corps. This support included tactical bombing (Tac Air), helicopter support, air transport and aerial observation.

b. VNAF Tactical Air Support: The flying skill of the VNAF A-37 and A1-H pilots is excellent. They worked very well with either US or VNAF Forward Air Controllers and achieved good battle damage as they consistently went in low to gain maximum advantage from their ordnance. They were particularly effective in providing support to the 2d ARVN Div in the latter phases of the operation to recapture Sa Huynh and FSB Charlie Brown. The biggest drawback their force experiences is their inability to fly during inclement weather. In IR-1, where low hanging clouds and fog prevail much of the year, this is a serious handicap. None the less, the Tac Air averaged about 43 sorties per day until it was reduced about 25 Feb in compliance with the JMC/ICCS cease fire efforts.

c. Tactical Air Lift: The 1st Air Division had one squadron of C-7A tactical air lift. This aircraft was utilized where possible to air lift supplies into isolated positions if an air strip was available. Although its effectiveness was restricted somewhat by shortage of qualified crews and operationally ready aircraft, it was a valuable asset to I Corps. With the withdrawal of the US tactical air lift, the VNAF will be even more heavily dependent on the C-7A for resupply.

d. Aerial Observation and Liaison: Two squadrons of C-1 and U-17 aircraft provided I Corps with an aerial observation capability. The aircraft availability allowed each division to have dedicated use of one or more of these aircraft. They were used for command and control, liaison, artillery or naval gunfire spotting, radio relay, propaganda broadcast and leaflet drops as well as aerial reconnaissance. The pilots of these aircraft were highly skilled and consistently flew above the programmed availability rate.

e. VNAF Helicopter Support: The ability, availability and capability of the VNAF helicopter squadrons were consistently below that which will be

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required to provide adequate helicopter support to I Corps. The 51st Tactical Wing of the 1st Air Division experienced a very rapid build-up in mid 1972 and this in large measure accounts for the problems which continued to plague this organization. Aircraft availability was a reflection of the lack of trained mechanics and repair parts. The requirement for highly skilled technicians for aircraft repair could not be sustained. General Truong visited the 1st Air Division on 6 February and pointed out his disappointment with their support. About 9 February helicopter availability increased. Hopefully as repair parts become more readily available and experience is gained, aircraft availability will continue to improve as it has in the recent past. Until late 1972 there was no test pilot program, but that project is now functioning.

(1) Pilot skill is rated as good except in periods of poor weather or when visibility is bad. This deficiency is markedly more noticeable during the wet monsoon season. VNAF performance in medevac was excellent in good weather but in poor weather the medevac crews were consistently unable to lift off.

(2) In order to improve the responsiveness of air support to the needs of the ARVN commander, serious consideration must be given to the existing command structure. All operations which now include helicopter support must be planned through liaison and coordination because the helicopters belong to VNAF. The obvious solution is to place helicopter support under ARVN control. This arrangement has been urged by US advisors for many years.

14. (C) US MILITARY FORCES

a. US forces other than military advisors, assisting the Republic of Vietnam Armed Forces (RVNAF) during the period immediately prior to the cease fire included US Air Force, US Naval and US Army Aviation assets. Additionally, there was a small US Army radar detachment controlled by the senior US Artillery Advisor. These US forces were actively involved in providing fire support, aerial and ground surveillance and technical advisory assistance in these areas. US involvement with these assets would continue until the time of cease fire, and at that point would cease or become totally advisory in nature.

b. The US Air Force efforts revolved primarily around the employment and use of Tactical Air (TAC Air) and B-52 (Arclight) bombing. Aerial photography and visual reconnaissance assets were utilized, but these were secondary to the primary fire support effort.

(1) Concerning TAC Air, US Air Force personnel along with VNAF counterparts maintained the I Corps Direct Air Support Center (I DASC)

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located within the I Corps Fire Support Element (FSE) at Da Nang. The I DASC controlled both ARVN and US TAC Air assets throughout the MR, but a forward element was also co-located with the I Corps forward command post at Hue to serve as a back up and communications relay. Additionally, Tactical Air Control Parties (TACP's) were located with the 1st ARVN, Airborne and VNAF Division Command Posts. During the final month of USAF involvement in the I DASC, advisory efforts were increased and by about the end of January the VNAF DASC was approaching self sufficiency.

(2) B-52 (Arclight) strategic air support was controlled by the Strategic Air Command (SAC) and administered from MACV in Saigon. FRAC maintained a small targeting and planning staff from our G2 and G3 offices. This element was co-located with their ARVN counterparts who did most of the actual targeting. There was little advisory effort required in the Arclight program except in targeting where constant monitoring was required. The ARVN target analysts came from the I Corps G2 and were generally effective as technicians. However, they were hamstrung in their efforts because of command directives which caused this asset to be used as a close support weapon rather than for interdiction where it would have been more effective. The ARVN had one other glaring deficiency in this program. This was an apparent lack of interest in friendly troop safety. Policy required absolutely no less than 1000 meters separation distance between the bomb impact area and the nearest friendly troops. Our G3 element was constantly required to demand that troops or the target be moved in order to meet this requirement. The safety problem, of course, was a function of the weapon being improperly used for close support.

(3) During the last three days of the US involvement in fire support, about 17 Arclight strikes per day were dropped in support of I Corps, primarily in the northern areas to assist the Marine operation. The daily TAC Air sortie rate, an average of 178 per day, was adequate and through ARVN/US determined priorities these were allocated to the various divisions in an equitable manner.

(4) Both TAC Air and Arclight support within MR-1 were exemplary, and both were significant factors in impeding enemy pre-cease fire initiatives and aiding ARVN ones. Upon termination of this support on 28 Jan 73, the DASC and TACP's commenced their withdrawal which was complete by 6 Feb 73. At that time all US DASC operations were established at the Da Nang Air Base with the US Air Force Headquarters, Bluechip Forward, where a contingency for possible redeployment was maintained until 14 Mar 73. The Arclight shop maintained its capability until 10 February and then closed. Photographic reconnaissance missions in the MR continued with plans developed to continue these activities after total US withdrawal. Photography derived from these missions would be processed and forwarded to RVNAF through other channels.

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c. The amount of US Naval Gunfire (NGF) assets supporting the RVNAF during this period ranged from 8 to 10 US Navy Ships. These assets were concentrated primarily off the northern two provinces in support of the VMMC and Airborne Divisions; however, 2-3 ships were always utilized on gunline positions off the coast of Quang Ngai Province to support 2d ARVN Division and territorial force operations.

(1) To advise in the use and control of these NGF assets a liaison element from the ANGLICO was maintained with the I Corps FSE at Da Nang and with the I Corps forward headquarters at Hue. NGF spotter teams were located with each of the ARVN, and the VMMC and Airborne Divisions. Quang Ngai and Quang Tin Provinces also had spotter support. Following the cease fire, NGF spotters commenced withdrawal from the field on 31 Jan 73 and were completely withdrawn by 7 Feb 73. These teams were held in Da Nang at the FASU compound on the Da Nang Air Base until 21 Feb 73 in the event redeployment became necessary due to enemy abrogation of the cease fire. ANGLICO liaison was maintained at the I Corps Headquarters during this time frame; however, NGF liaison with the I Corps FSE were terminated on 31 Jan 73.

(2) US Naval Gunfire support prior to the cease fire was also exemplary. The ANGLICO liaison element was continually updating ARVN and US advisory personnel on their capabilities and were always ready to provide instant assistance to insure smooth integration of US Naval firepower in the overall fire support plans of Division and Corps operations. Additionally, the US Naval spotter teams were significantly beneficial in the training of GVN military personnel in the techniques of NGF adjustment.

d. US Army Aviation support was provided by the 11th Combat Aviation Group (11th CAG). This group consisted of the Headquarters and Headquarters Company; two Air Cavalry Troops, Delta Troop, 17th Air Cavalry Squadron (D/17) and Foxtrot Troop, 4th Cavalry Squadron (F/4); the 62d Aviation Company (The Royal Coachmen); the 142d Transportation Company (Aircraft Direct Support); and the 321st Airfield Detachment (Divisional). Additionally, there was one Airmobile Medical Evacuation Detachment, the 521st Helicopter Ambulance Company; however, this unit was attached to the 11th CAG for maintenance support only and was under the OPCCN of 95th Medical Evacuation Hospital. The 11th CAG had eighty-two aircraft and 797 officers, warrant officers and enlisted men assigned at ceasefire. (Incl 9)

(1) Control and use of US Army Aviation was solely by US channels except for the US Chinook (CH-47) which was requested through ARVN G4 channels. The ARVN G3 would then establish priorities and determine which missions would be flown; however, the final decision as to whether a US Chinook would fly a resupply mission was retained in US channels. US Air Cavalry teams deployed within division TACR's upon request of US advisors after coordination with their counterparts. To facilitate adequate air reconnais-

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sance of the MR, F/4 Cavalry was based at Tan My in Thua Thien province, and D/17 Cavalry was based with other 11th CAG units on the Da Nang Air Base in Quang Nam Province.

(2) All US Army Aviation support during this period was never less than outstanding. With limited assets, 11th CAG units greatly assisted the advisory effort and aided ARVN tactical operations. F/4 Cavalry was particularly effective in the VNMC Division where Light Observation Helicopters (OH-6A) flew along the coast and adjusted NGF almost daily, thus freeing other NGF spotters flying in fixed wing aircraft for engagement of NVA rear areas north of the Cua Viet River. D/17 Cavalry and 62d Aviation Company "Nighthawk" teams in the Da Nang Rocket Belt were responsible for thwarting several possible major 122mm rocket attacks against the Da Nang vital area which saved an untold amount of equipment and lives. Also, D/17 Air Cavalry Teams were responsible for location and destruction of several 130mm artillery guns in the Hiep Duc area during the 3rd ARVN Division offensive operation there immediately prior to the cease fire.

(3) US Army Aviation combat engagement continued until 280800 Jan 73. At cease fire the two air cavalry troops commenced immediate withdrawal. Some gunships were maintained on strip alert for protection of US personnel, but this status was terminated 8 Feb 73 upon direction by higher headquarters and then withdrawn from country. 62d Aviation Company assets were, however, utilized for support of Divisional Combat Advisory Teams (DCAT's), and resupply of several beleaguered, outlying GVN outposts and FSB's after the cease fire. Also, an aviation detachment was formed from 62d Aviation Company Assets for support of the JMC/ICCS.

(4) Unless their command and control structure is greatly improved, it is doubtful that VNAF will be able to match these efforts in terms of reliability, dedication or proficiency and provide the support ARVN will require in the absence of US forces.

e. The final US asset supporting the RVNAF was the FRAC Radar Detachment. This element utilized five experimental models of the AN/TPS-58 Ground Surveillance Radar which were operated by US and ARVN personnel. The radars were deployed on Hills 55 and 327 in Quang Nam Province for monitoring enemy movement in the Da Nang Rocket Belt; on FSB T-Bone in the 1st ARVN Division; at Camp Evans in the Airborne Division; and at Hai Lang in the VNMC Division.

(1) The AN/TPS-58 Radar provided intelligence pertaining to enemy movement particularly at night and assisted in preventing several enemy attacks during the pre-cease fire period. Additionally, these radars had

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the capability of adjusting artillery fires on the radar sitings without a visual observer; however, GVN artillery units did not fully utilize this capability.

(2) Although training of ARVN personnel on the utilization and employment of these radars was progressing well, permission to turn-over these sets to GVN could not be obtained. Thus, commencing on 29 Jan 73 the sites were dismantled and the radars withdrawn, with withdrawal completed on 7 Feb 73.

f. The loss of all firepower and supporting US assets as a result of the cease fire agreement will restrict the GVN capabilities to counter an all-out NVA/VC effort to obtain a military victory in South Vietnam. If, however, the enemy forces observe the cease fire agreement in principle and fighting remains at a low or limited level, RVNAF should be able to contain the enemy with their own organic assets.

15. (C) DANANG ROCKET BELT DEFENSE

a. DaNang, as the second largest city in Vietnam, Headquarters of I Corps and FRAC, location of the large Air Base and Port, for years had been a lucrative target for enemy indirect fire attacks. Since the introduction of the 122mm rocket into the war, this weapon with its 11 kilometer range had been the preferred method of attack. And because of the ease with which it could be launched from any position, an arc 11 kilometers from the air base became known as the "Rocket Belt".

b. Protection of the DaNang complex or "Rocket Belt Defense" was a source of continuing concern to the I Corps and FRAC staff. All means available were employed to deter attack or to detect and destroy enemy forces in the execution of their attack. Some of the means besides normal deployment of RF/PF and ARVN forces included:

(1) USAF C-119 "Stinger" gunships mounting 20mm cannons and machineguns.

(2) US Army Air Cav elements conducting an operation termed "Night-Hawk".

(3) US Army Air Cav Teams flying normal Cav missions at "1st and last light".

c. Accurate intelligence was a key ingredient in the rocket belt security program. Particularly helpful was the intelligence network established by the Province Security Control Group (PSCG) located in Da Nang. This group played a very important role in the defense of the

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Air Base. They busily and very often, and very accurately, reported impending attacks, rocket movement plans and proposed launch sites. Rapid dissemination of this information to the responsible commanders who were in positions enabling them to capitalize on this information was a major contributing factor. Messages between elements of local enemy rocket forces revealed a continuing saga of their frustrations with GVN patrols, ambushes, and constant aerial surveillance. In many cases planned attacks were delayed four or five times and finally abandoned or were delivered with only a fraction of the number of rockets originally planned.

d. Intelligence sources were predicting a massive 122mm rocket attack against the Da Nang vital area on the morning of the cease fire. Validity of these reports was emphasized on 27 Jan 73 when communist gunners targeted the Da Nang Air Base and surrounding populated area at 1125 hours with an estimated 22 round attack. This was the first midday attack against the Da Nang area in more than a year and indicated the enemy would be bold and daring in their final attack. To off-set the possibility of another of the predicted, massive 122mm attacks, D/17 and F/4 air cavalry teams and 62d Aviation Company were tasked to commit maximum assets to the rocket belt area during the 12 hours preceeding cease fire. Additionally, USAF stinger aircraft were utilized to the maximum extent possible and 3rd ARVN Division's 57th Regiment and Quang Nam Province's TF's saturated suspect rocket launch sites with ground troops. As a result the 122mm rocket attack did not materialize.

16. (C) TERRITORIAL FORCES (TF)

a. Military Region 1 Territorial Forces are organized into standard Regional and Popular Force units. The only exception was in Quang Tri Province where Popular Force adopted company size organizations after the spring 1972 NVA invasion. Also in Quang Tri, Territorial Forces were attached or placed OPCON to the Marine and Airborne Divisions; this arrangement continues.

b. The coming of the cease fire period was seen as a critical test of TF viability. As has been shown earlier, the cease fire and period immediately thereafter was characterized by enemy efforts to seize hamlets, villages, population centers and to cut QL-1. The defense of most of these areas was solely a TF responsibility, although the I Corps cease fire plan called for ARVN attention to be focused on performing security and defense of critical areas.

c. Overall, the Territorial Forces can be considered successful in meeting their assigned missions and there has been no known lapse in morale or discipline. They fought well in numerous flag fights and sharp local engagements throughout the region. In some instances such as the Vinh Dinh

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Canal area in the Marine AC and the An Lo and Truoi Bridges in Thua Thien Province they performed adequately but were overmatched against infiltrating NVA forces. Regular units had to be committed to bolster the areas mentioned above. It is noteworthy that throughout the period of this report, QL-1 remained open from My Chanh to Duc Pho except for brief intervals of a few hours, primarily in lower Quang Ngai. This is largely attributable to effective Territorial Force reaction. In the sharp clashes over village and hamlet ownership the TF were at their best. While they did not prevent every case of VC/NVA flags flying over hamlets, they were successful in engaging enemy forces and removing a great many of the flags. By about 27 February all VC flags had disappeared from view. These contacts continued well into the cease fire period as the VC/NVA persisted in selecting new targets almost daily.

d. The RF/PF performance in many instances, as in regular units, was a direct reflection of the particular leader. Strong District Chiefs had good forces who would show some aggressiveness consistently. The most obvious shortcoming was lack of aggressiveness when operating strictly on their own. When reinforced by ARVN, Airborne or Marines they seemed much more willing to close with the enemy.

e. At cease fire, Territorial Force strength was as shown below:

STCP	RF Co	RF Bn	RF Plt	TF Arty Plt
Auth Depl	Auth Depl	Auth Depl	Auth Depl	Auth Depl
7 7	260 259	50 46	1257 1215	20 20

Personnel

Authorized: 80,904
Present for Duty: 67,386

17. (S NF) OVERVIEW.

(Note: Only subparagraphs b, c, d, and e are S NF; the rest are C NF)

a. with the cease fire becoming more manageable and as the level of combat continues to subside, a period of negotiation may prevail. Should this occur the period will provide the RVNAF a much needed period of respite from battle and give them a chance to assess their status.

b. The RVNAF as presently constituted can cope militarily with a purely VC struggle. If the DRV receives external support near current levels and chooses to commit his capabilities in a massive offensive, no GVN action with current forces could hold MR-1 north of the Hai Van. This of course, considers that there is no diminution of NVA capability;

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current enemy resupply and repositioning activities continue to enjoy freedom from interference; no effective air defense system is established for RVNAF, and constant harassment by unconventional war continues in the RVNAF rear. A delay of two or three years in the NVA initiation of such an offensive would provide opportunity for RVNAF to equip and train forces which could be competitive in such a war.

c. The following functional areas appear to require added equipment for successful RVNAF defense under all-out NVA attack:

(1) Air Defense: Redeye-type local defense missile weapons would be the simplest means of providing forward area defenses. No great density should be required to inflict an unacceptable attrition rate on limited DRV air assets. Longer range and higher altitude weapons would be needed to deny free access to enemy air to base and logistic areas. The Hawk missile could provide a very limited capability in this role. Air to Air weaponry could also assist in filling this gap.

(2) Counter Battery: The NVA is well equipped with 130mm guns. These are durable, accurate, and long range. Without friendly air superiority to assist in suppressing 130mm fire, and with more freedom for NVA supply, the 130mm gun could be a dominant force on the battlefield. The 175mm gun (SP) is the only weapon available to ARVN which can match range with the 130mm, and accuracy of the 175 is a limiting factor. Careful employment and priority support of the 175mm guns would be essential. Some other response to the 130mm gun should be sought. (The recent campaign in Quang Tri pointed up our serious weakness in locating enemy guns when conditions do not permit continuous aerial surveillance).

(3) Armor: Weaknesses in enemy doctrine have been a major limiting factor on effectiveness of enemy armor, and friendly air, artillery, and anti-tank weapons have inflicted significant losses. There is evidence of new enemy doctrine on employment of armor, restricting it largely to a stand-off role of direct fire support. Given a changed air environment and the conservation of armor resources until the right opportunity is offered, enemy armor could become more important than here-to-fore. A ready supply of AT mines and LAW must be on hand. Friendly tank forces should be kept intact and the available TCW capability must be maintained.

(4) Infantry: Equipment for infantry warfare is basically sound. Retraining is required to break habits acquired in association with total air superiority and massive fire support. Greater emphasis must be placed on effective positioning and use of organic weapons for direct and indirect fire.

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d. Logistics:

(1) During active operations, a high standard of responsive support would be required for critical items such as 175mm guns, MHE and air defense material. Similarly high standards will be required for materials and equipment to maintain and reconstruct the LOC in the midst of unconventional war.

(2) As a corollary, there is a need for development of forward area supply capability for light infantry forces which would not be dependent on sophisticated equipment and maintenance concepts. Many times the operating area for the infantry is constrained by the need to reach the battalion with either a helicopter or a five ton truck. Bicycles and bearers offer more efficient use of indigenous resources, greater freedom of action, and reduced vulnerability to enemy action against forward LOC. Serious consideration should be given to development of doctrine and organization for unsophisticated forward supply.

e. Overall, the major structure of the RVNAF appears sound. Units which perform the role of current territorial forces appear necessary for the next few years. Mobile army forces will also be essential for capability to concentrate forces and meet a variety of threats. The Rangers are a convenient structure for maintaining recognizable reserves.

(1) The Airborne and Marines provide a national mobile reserve. In the local MR-1 view the present commitment of these two divisions in this area is essential to even slowing any major offensive, and at least one additional division is needed to have a ground capability for stabilizing such a situation at any point north of the Hai Van Pass.

(2) The separation of helicopter squadrons from VNAF Air Division, placing them under ARVN control would be a great step forward. Technical aspects are at least theoretically better handled under consolidation of air assets; however, helicopters under clear command authority of the ground force commander at corps level would be much more responsive to actual needs.

(3) Command attention to maintenance and supply economy can be expected to become increasingly important. The Area Logistic Command concept has performed a useful function in centralized management. However, a new approach could add emphasis to the influence and responsibility of the chain of command in supply and maintenance matters. Continuing attention will be necessary to avoid loss of control, but the advantages of decentralizing more logistic responsibility to commanders should offset the cost.

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f. The RVNAF will require a high state of readiness for best capability to cope with the NVA. This will require that many units improve from present status in individual proficiency, unit training, and condition of equipment. The need for preparation of forces must continue to be balanced against the need for forces in position, to counter the current combat activity and the threat of heightened activity. Forces in MR-1 cannot rely on any preparation time after commencement of attack.

g. The potential exists within RVNAF to maintain the required high level of readiness to meet the threat.

(1) A substantial additional investment of training time and effort will be required to realize this potential. Development of intermediate and low level supervisors is the key ingredient. External support at an appropriate level and internal determination to reduce misappropriations and corruption are also essential prerequisites to attaining potential.

(2) If two to three years pass without major enemy activity, large scale training operations will be required for retaining proficiency. Unless the highest professional standards are realistically sought, such a lapse of time could easily result in lost capabilities and lack of motivation rather than the improved readiness which is possible. There is a current need to overcome apathy in many parts of ARVN, and the problem will be aggravated by long periods of inactivity.

18. (C) SUMMARY/LESSONS LEARNED

a. By the end of the 3rd week in March, fighting throughout MR-1 had subsided and was keyed to low level mop-up operations in the coastal lowlands. ARVN and enemy gunners continued harrassing attacks by fire on opposing positions, and both ARVN and enemy forces were positioned to insure each would be ready if the cease fire was abrogated. Four nation, International Commission of Control and Supervision (ICCS) teams were slowly being deployed throughout the MR. However, full operations of the JMC never materialized as the PRG never came to the conference table and on 2 March the DRV delegates flew to Saigon and did not return.

b. Considering all factors, RVNAF in MR-1 had performed well. With exception of the Sa Huynh/FSB Charlie Brown area, (which was later retaken) the enemy had achieved little success in last minute grabs for control of land and people and had failed to achieve any significant infiltration or disruption in GVN controlled area. For the RVNAF, this period was crucial and demonstrated to themselves that they had the ability, without US support, to counter the VC/NVA in limited, conventional war-

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fare and in concerted insurgency efforts. It was a morale boost to have withstood the challenge; however, several lessons were learned during these operations:

(1) RVNAF no longer had extensive US firepower to bail them out of chancy operations. Thus, committing forces piecemeal without adequate, integrated fireplans became disastrous. The loss of units in Sa Huynh as a result of piecemeal commitment was a hard way of learning through experience, but the I Corps Commander adjusted or halted most of the inept attempts being organized by 2d ARVN Division to retake the area until adequate forces could be massed and compatible fire support plans organized.

(2) Tactical necessity would have to be given priority over possible political or psychological gain if missions were to be fulfilled. The loss of Sa Huynh/FSB Charlie Brown can be directly attributed to the commitment of forces to retake Ba To instead of deploying those forces in positions to counter the obvious enemy plan to attack Sa Huynh. Only when ARVN commanders realized that Sa Huynh and FSB Charlie Brown had fallen was the Ba To operation abandoned.

(3) Conservation of firepower assets, although improved, remained a weak point. Immediately preceding the cease fire, large and excessive amounts of artillery ammunition were expended under the auspices of an I Corps fire plan. Following the cease fire, Corps, divisions and TF artillery units continued to expend at a level which exceeded the pre-cess fire available supply rate. The ARVN still had not learned the proper use of an ASR. Until they received pressure from MACV, through JGS, the exorbitant use of artillery continued.

(4) VNAF needed command emphasis. After the cease fire, aerial troop movement, resupply and reconnaissance missions became a VNAF function, and its assets and abilities were strained. The I Corps commander was quick to realize the importance of VNAF learning to manage its limited assets well and efficiently. He placed personal emphasis on the 1st Air Division, but unfortunately VNAF inadequacies were already severely restricting operational capabilities of the ground forces. On the other hand, however, by the VNAF resources being limited, ARVN in MR-1 were being forced to develop abilities to react and deploy rapidly by land routes. These ground forces were also developing a further appreciation for the necessity of establishing and maintaining secure lines of communication.

c. The Armed Forces of Vietnam have performed well with our support but now must go it alone. In MR-1 they have proved in the past few weeks that when they had to, they could mount a successful operation and over-

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come some of the best the NVA had to offer. The retaking of Sa Huynh was the case in point, and as was shown by the Marine and ARVN armor forces on the Cua Viet they have the capacity for brave and valorous action as well.



HARRY H. HIESTAND
Brigadier General, USA
Commander

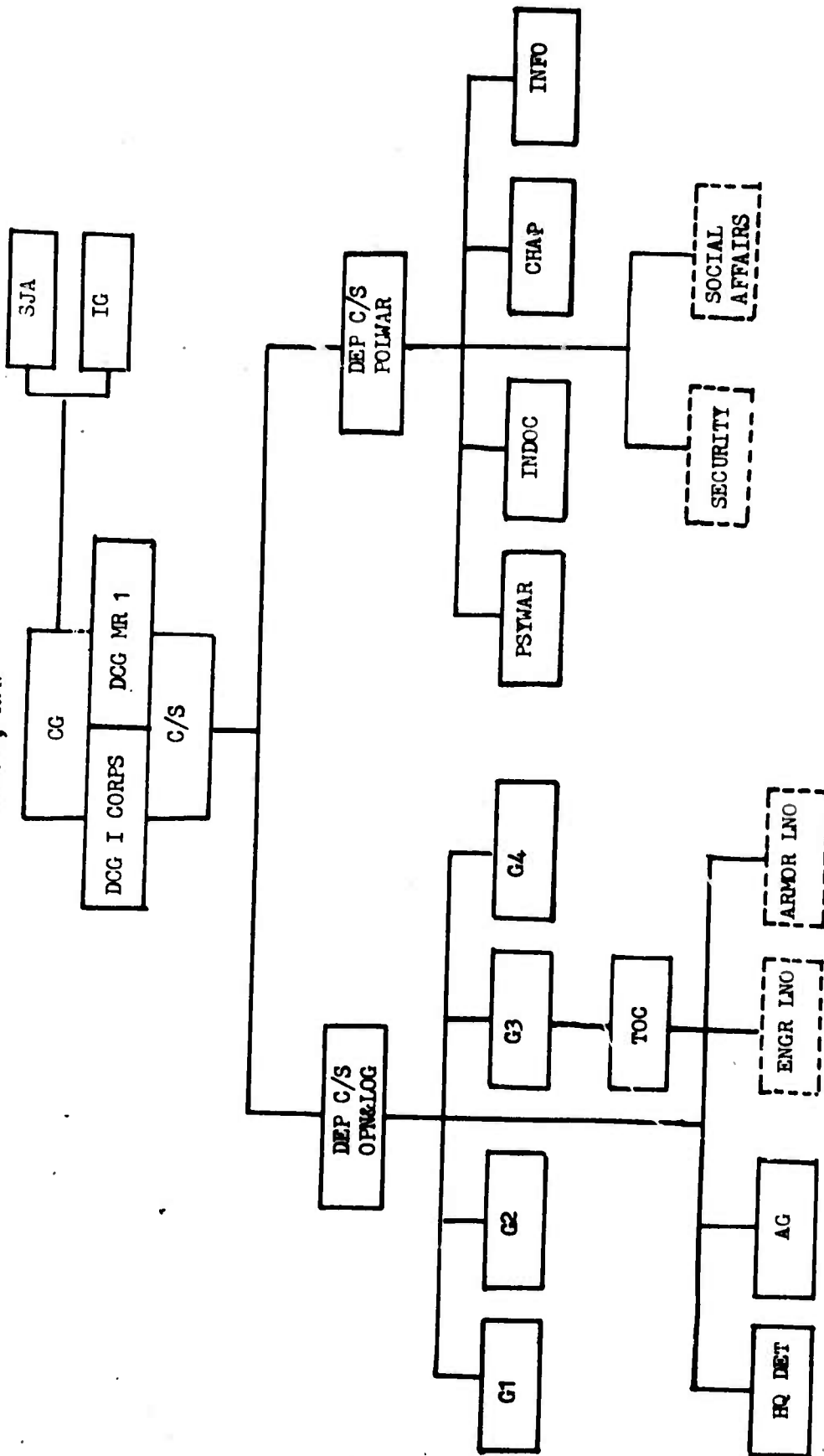
9 Incl

1. I Corps Organization
2. I Corps Organization of Forces
3. FRAC Organization
4. Key Locations
5. Operation Lam Son 72 Phase Lines
6. JMC Regions
7. ICCS/JMC Support Requirements
8. Communication Support to JMC/ICCS
9. 11th CAG Organization

CONFIDENTIAL

I CORPS AND MILITARY REGION 1

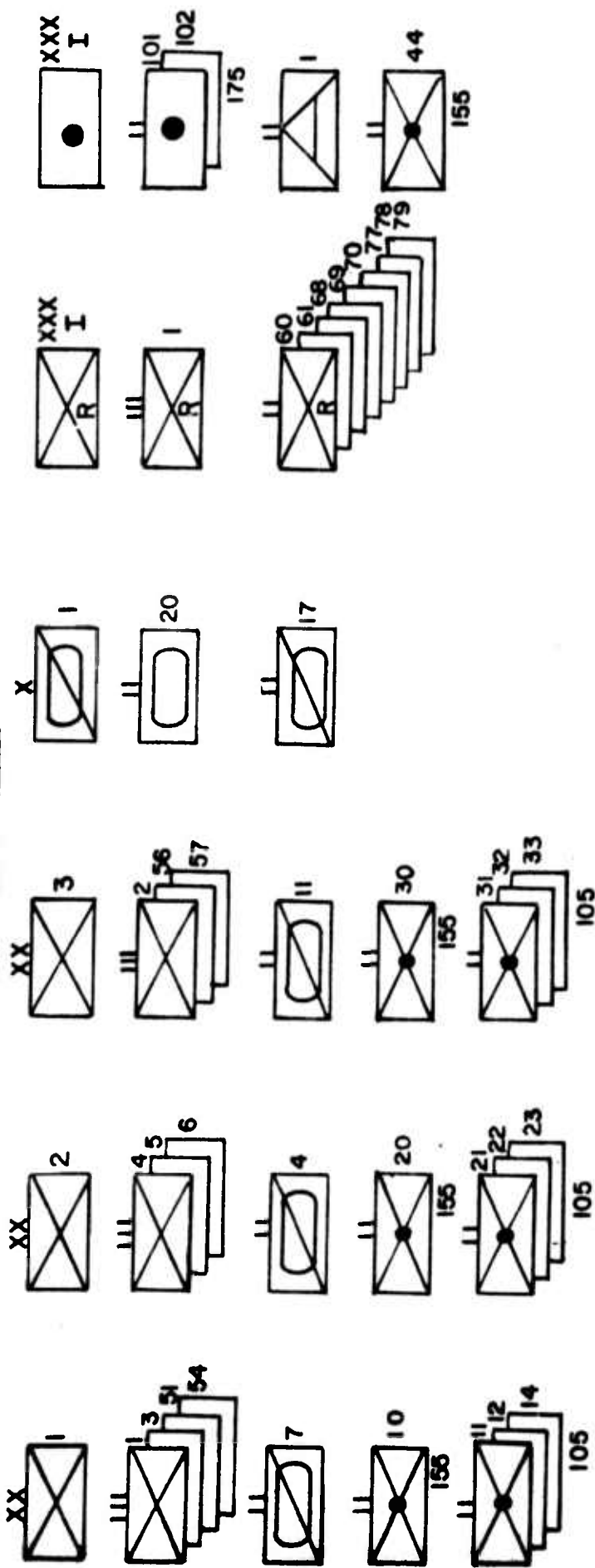
DA NANG, RVN



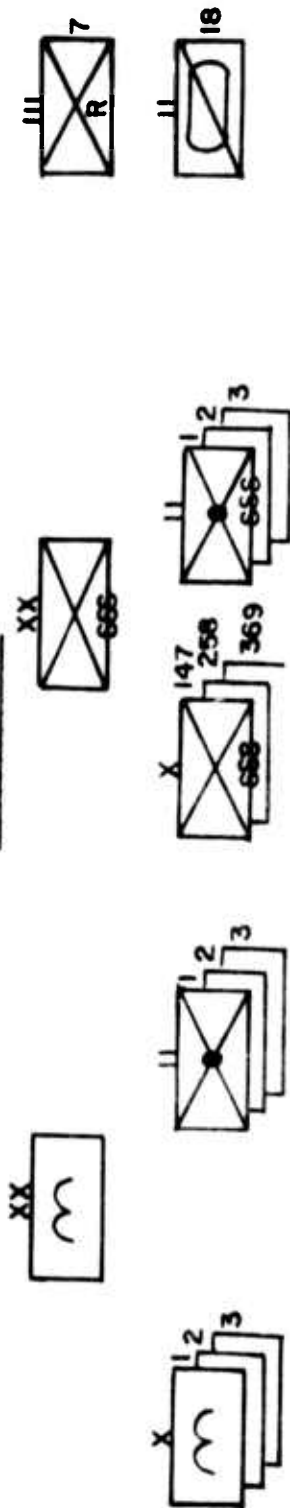
NOT ORGANIC TO I CORPS

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ORGANIC UNITS

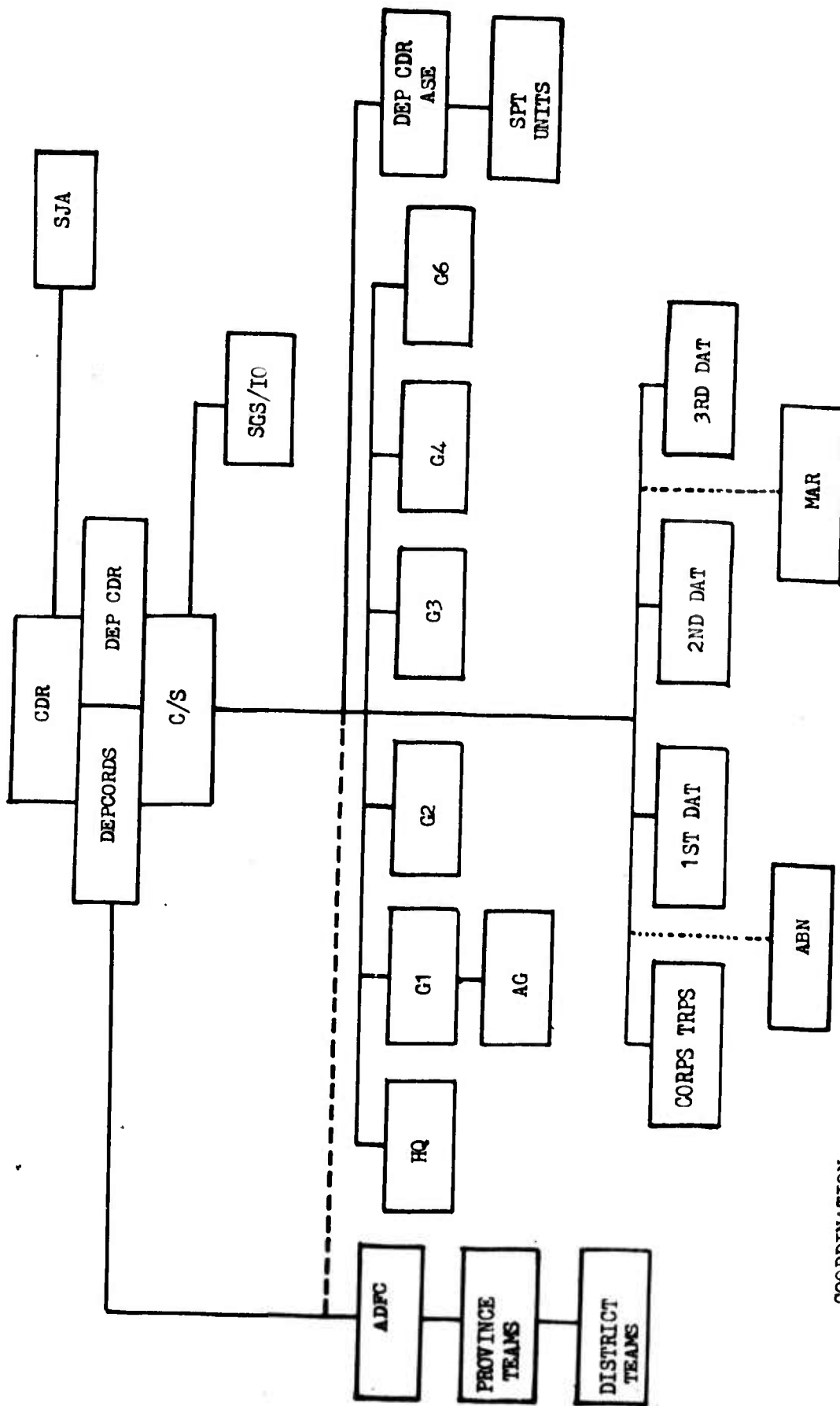


ATTACHED UNITS



FIRST REGIONAL ASSISTANCE COMMAND

APO SAN FRANCISCO 96349



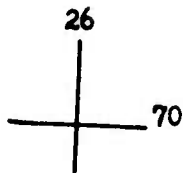
— COORDINATION
 COORDINATION

INCL 3



KEY LOCATIONS

CONFIDENTIAL



CUA VIET RIVER

PL BLUE

PL BROWN

PL GOLD

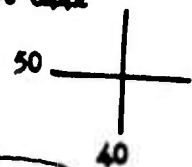
DONG HA



PL BLUE

QUANG TRI

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



PL BROWN

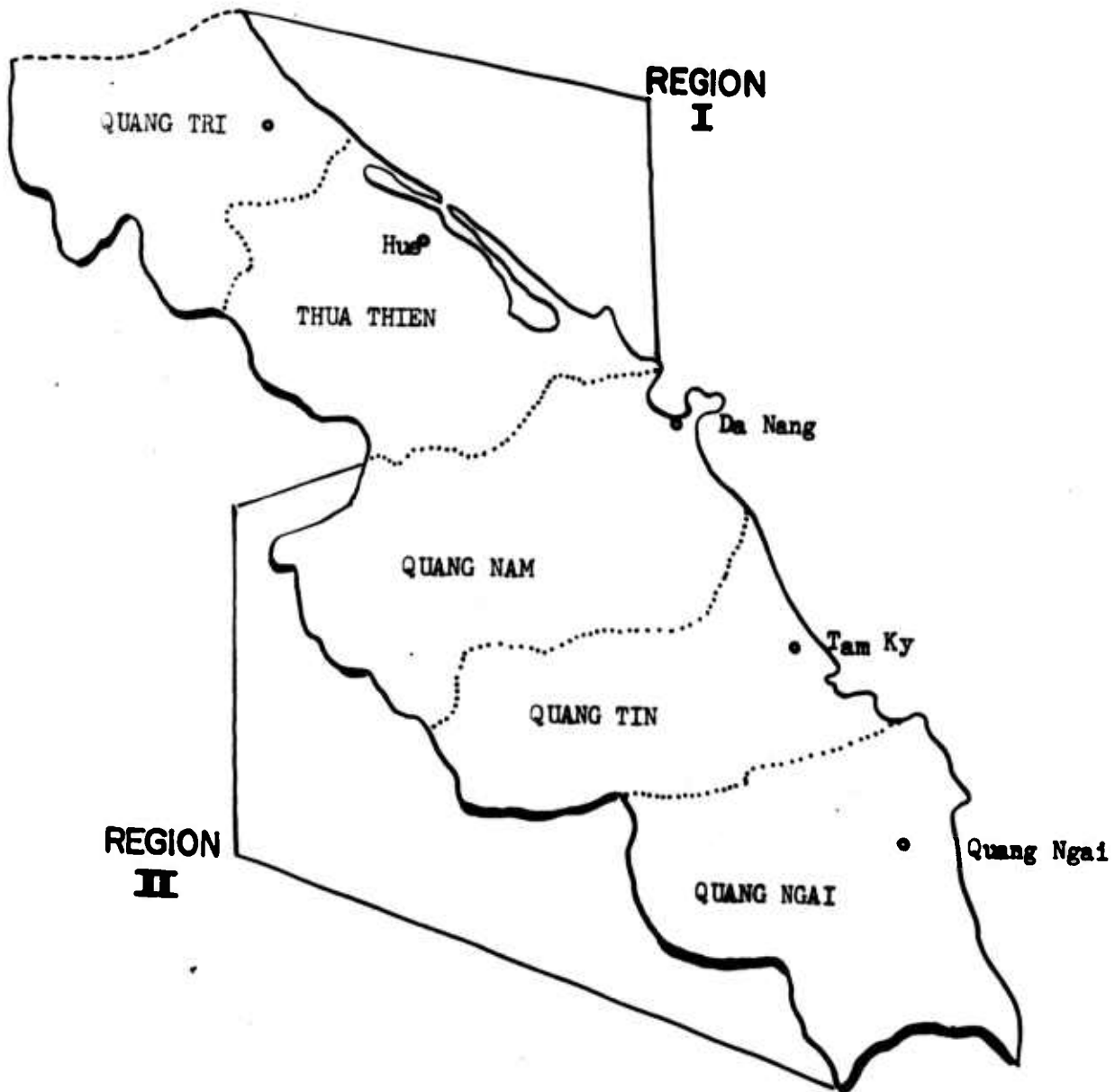
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42

INCL 6

JMC REGIONS



ICCS/JMC SUPPORT REQUIREMENTS

FACILITY REQUIREMENTS

SUPPORT TO BE PROVIDED BY INDICATED PARTY

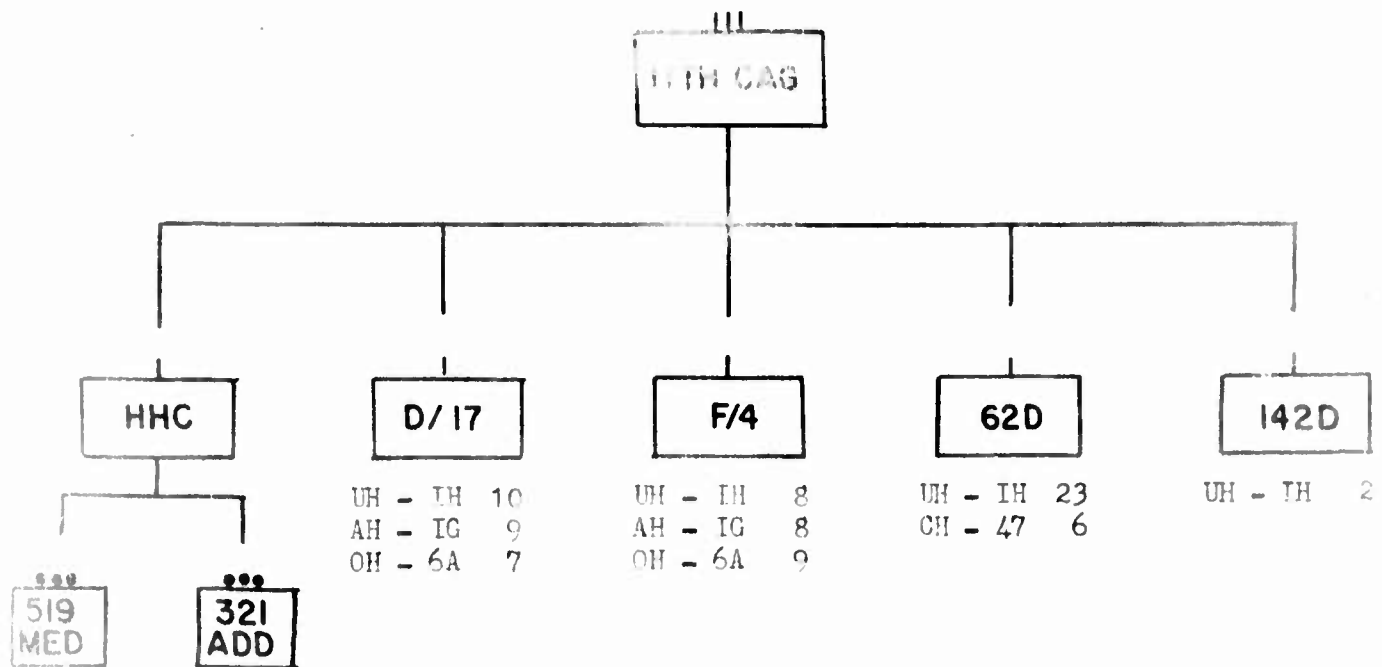
JMC - Joint HQS	RVNAF - Tactical Vehicles&Equipment
- Joint Conf Room	- Maintenance
- Each Party: Four Offices,	- "C" Rations
one Conf Room	- POL
- Separate Mess & Billets	- Billeting material
- Common User Comm Center	- Communications
ICCS - Two or three Offices es Country	US MILITARY - 2 Days Meals
- One Joint Conf Room	- Sundry
- Mess & Billets: 5-11 ea Country	- Other Assistance
Total 44 W/O Spt Pers	if Possible
	- Terminate X+30
	- Billets for Maximum
	of 30 days
	- Communications
	US CONTRACTOR (PA&E)
	- Commercial Vehicles
	- Maintenance
	- Expendables
	- Site Preparation
	- Accountability

COMMUNICATION SUPPORT TO JMC/ICCS

JMC. Two dedicated voice circuits each were provided JMC Region I and II for access into the dedicated ICCS/JMC communications network throughout the RVN. Access was limited to the ICCS/JMC only, and were shared jointly by all parties to the JMC. In addition, the Chief U.S. Region I delegation had two telephone lines from his office to the FRAC forward switchboard, one to FRAC Da Nang board, and one to the Minh Chau (ARVN) switchboard and one Emergency Action Channel (EAC) line. Dial access was through the Phu Bai telephone exchange. The Chief US JMC Region II delegation had one EAC line and one FRAC switchboard line installed in the US operation center of Camp Horn. Dial access was obtained through Da Nang East Dial Telephone Exchange. Communication center support to JMC Region I and II for transmitting and receiving message traffic was provided by the FRAC communications centers in Da Nang and Hue. Responsibility for the communication center was transferred to the US JMC delegations in Da Nang and Hue for operation on 27 February.

ICCS. Two dedicated voice circuits each were provided ICCS Region I and II for access into the dedicated ICCS/JMC communications network throughout the RVN. These dedicated circuits were shared jointly by all parties to the ICCS. In addition, four dial telephones from the Da Nang telephone exchange were installed in the ICCS Region II office to give access to the dial and manual telephone and switchboard network throughout the RVN. ICCS Region I had dial access through the Phu Bai telephone exchange. Communications center support to ICCS Region I and II for transmitting and receiving message traffic was provided by the FRAC communications center in Da Nang and Hue.

11TH COMBAT AVIATION GROUP



TOTALS:

UH - IH	43
AH - IG	17
OH - 6A	16
CH - 47	6

82

UNCLASSIFIED

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