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AGO ltr 11 Jun 1980 ; AGO ltr 11 Jun 1980

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DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
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WASHINGTON, D.C. 20310

REPLY TO
ATTENTION OF:

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

Expires 9 May 1974

SUBJECT: Senior Officer Debriefing Reports:

Colonel James Henslick, SA, 2d (ARVN) Div, 6 Jul 72 - 27 Jan 73
Colonel Lucian Rawls, Jr., SA, 9th (ARVN) Div, 24 Jan 73 - 22 Mar 73

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1. Reference: AR 525-14, Senior Officer Debriefing Report (U), 2 July 1971.
2. Transmitted herewith are the reports of, COL James Henslick and COL Lucian Rawls, subject as above.
3. These reports are provided to insure appropriate benefits are realized from the experiences of the authors. The reports should be reviewed in accordance with paragraphs 3 and 5, AR 525-14; however, they should not be interpreted as the official view of the Department of the Army, or of any agency of the Department of the Army.
4. Information of actions initiated under provisions of AR 525-14, as a result of subject reports should be provided to the Deputy Chief of Staff for Military Operations, ATTN: DAMO-ODU within 90 days of receipt of covering letter.

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Verne L. Bowers
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Debriefing Report by: COL James R. Henslick

Duty Assignment: Senior Advisor, 2d ARVN Division

Inclusive Dates: 16 July 1972 to 27 January 1973

Date of Report: 27 January 1973

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1. (C) Introduction: During the relatively short period covered by this report the operational performance of the 2d ARVN Division ran the gamut from extremely poor to highly successful. The period covered encompasses the disgraceful and disastrous operations in Quang Nam and Quang Tin Provinces against the 711 NVA Division in July and August that resulted in the rebuilding and remolding of the division which was initiated in late August and is still in progress; and the highly successful operations against the 2d NVA Division and Quang Ngai PRU that started in late September and resulted in a serious defeat for the enemy who, prior to the introduction of the 2d ARVN Division, had all but succeeded in an attempt to overrun Quang Ngai Province in its entirety. Since the defeat at Que Son, the 2d ARVN Division has experienced a massive transfusion of replacement personnel, significant turnover of key personnel, some retraining, and considerable rebuilding of pride, morale, and confidence. It has been a long road back to respectability, but as demonstrated by recent successes against the 2d NVA Division, the 2d ARVN Division can once again be considered a strong, competent, combat seasoned unit that can be depended upon to accomplish the assigned mission in an aggressive and professional manner.

2. (C) Organization:

a. The 2d ARVN Division is organized in accordance with the standard ARVN Infantry Division TOE and consists of the 4th, 5th, and 6th Infantry Regiments (each of which has three infantry battalions), 4th Armored Cavalry Squadron, Division Artillery consisting of four battalions (20th, 21st, 22d, and 23d Arty Bn) and normal combat service support elements. The Division TACR currently encompasses the southern two provinces of MR-1.

(1) The Division Main HQ and Rear are located at Chu Lai Combat Base with a forward tactical CP at Quang Ngai City.

(2) The 4th Regiment, reinforced with the 21st Arty Bn, 3/4 Armored Cavalry Troop, and 1/4 Tank Co, is currently assigned an AO extending from the southern boundary of MR-1 northward to the Tra Khuc River. The 4th Regiment CP is located at Duc Pho (BS 805382).

(3) The 5th Regiment, reinforced with the 22d Arty Bn, is currently assigned an AO extending from the northern boundary of Ly Tin District, Quang Tin Province, northward to the northern boundary of Quang Tin Province. The 5th Regiment CP is located at Hawk Hill (BT 233311).

(4) The 6th Regiment, reinforced with the 23d Arty Bn and 2/4 Armored Cavalry Troop, is currently assigned an AO extending from the Tra Khuc River northward to the northern boundary of Ly Tin District in Quang Tin Province. The 6th Regiment CP is located at the Binh Son District Seat (BS 600922).

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In addition to commanding the organic units listed above, the 2d ARVN Division Commander has CPOC of the 11th Ranger Group which commands the 60th, 66th, 69th, 70th, and 77th RD Battalions which respectively are currently located at Binh Thanh (BS 310700), Binh Long (BS 526515), vicinity San Juan Hill (BS 617367), Gia Nghia (BS 371272), and Thanh Phuoc (BT 107142).

The 2d ARVN Division Commander exercises, at least on paper, CPOC of all territorial forces in his assigned TACR. Currently, he also has CPOC of the 1st Ranger Group, which consists of the 21st, 37th, and 39th Ranger Battalions with command and control headquarters.

B. (C) Personnel:

a. The authorized strength of the 2d Division is 14,201. The assigned strength at mid-January 1973 was 12,385 and the operational strength was 10,179. For a detailed breakout of strengths, gains, and losses see Tab B. During the reporting period, maintenance of 2d Division strength has been a continuing problem due primarily to desertions, heavy combat losses, and inability on the part of the 2d Division to meet JCS recruiting quotas. Consequently, in the past and currently, subordinate combat units have been plagued with significant personnel shortages, with the major deficiency being a lack of riflemen and a shortage of NCO's and junior officers at the company and battalion level. Additionally, there is a problem of grade imbalance, i.e. many personnel in command and staff positions are below authorized grade at battalion and company level while the regiments and division staff are overstrength.

(1) Desertions have been and continue to be a major 2d Division problem and represent the largest single manpower loss. During September 1972, following the defeat at LZ Ross and Que Son, the division desertion rate hit a yearly high of 83 per thousand. Since then there has been a significant and steady downward trend to a mid-January 1973 rate of 41 per thousand. In the past the factors which contributed to the high desertion rate included, but were not limited to:

(a) The heavy and constant combat in which the Division has been engaged coupled with inadequate leadership at all levels of command from battalion to division.

(b) The low standard of living and extremely difficult life of the individual soldier.

(c) Homesickness on the part of the soldier and his concern for his family which is aggravated by the lack of an effective communications system and inadequate family welfare programs.

The above listed factors have been recognized by the current CG as contributing to the desertion rate and he has instigated an active and aggressive program to rectify the problem to the fullest extent possible, i.e. he has initiated a plan wherein each battalion is given a period of rest and refit each month; he has initiated a multitude of welfare and morale policies ranging from providing dependent housing to hundreds of families to trucking wives to see the soldier if the soldier can't get home to see his wife; he demands that each commander and selected staff officers make frequent visits to subordinate units and he himself makes such visits checking on everything from the adequacy of food rations to pay and medical treatment.

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(2) Through a system of special NCO and Junior Officer training courses, selective promotion, counseling, and rotation of personnel, and by bringing competent men into the division, the CG is upgrading the level of leadership throughout the 2d Division.

(3) During the early portion of the time frame covered by this report, the 2d ARVN Division's recruiting record was shameful, i.e. 135 recruited in August 1972. However this situation has improved somewhat as evidenced by recruiting figures of 295 in November 1972 and 256 in December 1972. This improvement is the result of two factors: command emphasis and the return of the regiments to their traditional AO's where historically most of their recruiting is accomplished.

(4) The 2d Division has been plagued with officer overstrengths at regiment and division level. Reportedly, many of these officers bought their way out of the field and/or deliberately performed so poorly while in the field they had to be relieved. Since September 1972, the Division CG has been identifying these officers and sending them back to the field. Much progress has been made but the situation remains unsatisfactory.

b. Leadership:

(1) Commanding General:

(a) BG Phan Hoa Hiep: BG Hiep commanded the 2d ARVN Division for less than two months (6 Jul 72 - 25 Aug 72) of the time frame covered by this report. He was relieved of his command as a direct result of the unnecessary and almost self-inflicted defeat of the 2d ARVN Division by the 711 NVA Division in the Que Son. BG Hiep proved to be nearly totally inept as a Division Commander. The value of long range planning completely escaped him and when circumstances forced him to develop a plan, he would commence to change or modify it before the ink was dry. Often times, he simply ignored the plan after it had been prepared. This is to say that he made tactical decisions by whim or impulse hour by hour and as enemy pressure increased so did his fickleness and indecisiveness, until, finally, when he could stand the pressure no longer, he would lock himself in his room and wait for the problem to go away. As a tactician, he was limited to thinking on a battalion level. With the exception of the G2, he neither used nor instructed his division staff. With rare exception, he never visited his subordinate units in the field, showed no interest in logistics, and even though he talked about the welfare of his troops, he never took action to actually enhance that welfare. He was not respected by his subordinate commanders or staff officers (they referred to him as "that French General") nor did he have their confidence. The relief of BG Hiep as CG, 2d ARVN Division, was not only desirable but absolutely necessary if the 2d Division was ever to regain its combat effectiveness, the loss of which he personally precipitated.

(b) BG Tran Van Nhut: BG Nhut assumed command of the 2d ARVN Division on 25 August 1972 following the relief of BG Hiep. BG Nhut's reputation as the "Hero of An Loc" and as being a man of great personal bravery, outstanding organizational abilities and keen mind preceded his arrival at the 2d Division. If anything, he has proven himself to be even a better man than his reputation implied. He is exceedingly astute in the management of all his resources to include manpower. He is an excellent long range planner and uses his staff well. BG Nhut is an able

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tactician. He places considerable emphasis on having a sound and comprehensive intelligence function and recognizes the value of immediately exploiting tactical intelligence, which he has done several times in the past three months with significant success. He leans toward perfectionism and is a disciplinarian, however he has a great deal of compassion for his troops and actively seeks and finds more important ways to improve their welfare. BG ⁴hwt is obviously admired and respected by his subordinates. He is an outstanding Division Commander and is personally responsible for the rapid and somewhat surprising manner in which the 2d ARVN Division recovered from its defeat at Que Son and returned to the ranks of the competent, combat ready divisions. He is an ambitious man who merits special attention. He has not even begun to reach his full potential.

(2) 4th Regiment:

(a) Commanding Officer: LTC Truong Dang Liam moved up from Regimental Executive Officer, a position he held for four years, in late December 1972. He is a good planner, able organizer, and knows how to extract a full measure from his staff. In the past he appeared to both know and practice the fundamentals of good leadership. While LTC Liam has not yet been fully tested as a Regimental Commander in battle, it is expected that he will carry the responsibility well.

(b) 1st Battalion: MAJ Tran Van Kham is a strong and experienced leader. He has commanded two battalions in the regiment and is considered one of the best battalion commanders. He is an aggressive and competent commander who is apparently well liked and respected by his men. He has good potential for higher command.

(c) 2d Battalion: MAJ Tran Hu Phuc has been in command of the 2/4 Battalion only since 1 Dec 72. He is currently doing an adequate job. He is aggressive and appears competent. He shows promise.

(d) 3d Battalion: MAJ Mai Van Hoa has been in command of the 3/4 Battalion only since 5 Dec 72. He is currently doing an excellent job but has not yet been tested against determined enemy forces. It is expected that he will develop into an outstanding commander.

(3) 5th Regiment:

(a) Commanding Officer: LTC Vo Vang assumed command of the regiment in late August 1972, after his predecessor had been relieved following the defeat and disorganized withdrawal of the regiment from LZ Ross. LTC Vang is young and inexperienced. He displayed a good degree of organizational ability and administrative competence in garrison while rebuilding and refitting the regiment, but immediately began to have difficulties when committed in a tactical environment. In a tactical situation he lacks aggressiveness and can't seem to put it all together. He lacks confidence and under pressure he becomes indecisive and loses emotional control. He should be restricted to staff positions.

(b) 1st Battalion: CPT Tran Van Nho has commanded the battalion since 12 September 1972. He is a senior Captain of 14 years service. By appearance and bearing, he displays the attributes of a seasoned mature commander. However, time and again, his battalion has been slow to move and reluctant to engage the enemy. CPT Nho seems to be organized but lacks aggressiveness and is hesitant in making decisions. He is considered to be the weakest Battalion Commander in the 5th Regiment.

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(c) 2d Battalion: CPT Tran Van Thuat has commanded the battalion for only two months. CPT Thuat has demonstrated a great deal of personal bravery, however he displays considerable immaturity and in combat appears to be only interested in personally fighting the enemy as opposed to commanding. He knows and understands fundamental tactics. If his energies can be properly directed, he has the potential to be an excellent Battalion Commander.

(d) 3d Battalion: CPT Thuy Ngoc Thu is an outstanding Battalion Commander. He understands tactics well and maneuvers his companies expertly. He is aggressive and decisive and he is popular with his men. His performance is equally impressive in garrison. He has good potential for higher command.

(4) 6th Regiment:

(a) Commanding Officer: LTC Nguyen Tahi Lai assumed command of the 6th Regiment after his predecessor performed poorly in the Que Son battle. LTC Lai is an able tactician and consistently formulates sound tactical plans. He is quick to grasp orders, uses and supervises his staff well, and at all times seems to be aware of both the tactical and administrative situation of his regiment. His use of fire support assets has been excellent. LTC Lai has, at times, been less than aggressive in the employment of his subordinate maneuver elements and initially displayed a lack of interest in coordinating and controlling territorial forces placed under his OPCON. He has shown significant improvement in the latter shortcoming. LTC Lai is currently an adequate Regimental Commander, and he is improving daily. However, he has probably reached the summit in terms of command ability.

(b) 1st Battalion: MAJ Tran Kim Duc is an experienced Battalion Commander and is the best of the three in the 6th Regiment. He is aggressive, a sound planner, and responds well to advice. MAJ Duc displays considerable potential for growth and eventual higher command.

(c) 2d Battalion: MAJ Hoang Van Ngoc is young, enthusiastic, and shows initiative. With additional experience and sound guidance he should become an outstanding Battalion Commander.

(d) 3d Battalion: MAJ Le Tan Hung is a substandard Battalion Commander. He is lazy, indecisive, and displays no interest in battalion administration or the welfare of his men. His recent performance warrants his immediate relief.

(5) 4th Cavalry Squadron: The Squadron Commander, MAJ Phan Cong Tuan, has been with the squadron for 12 years (started as Platoon Leader), has an outstanding leadership record, has displayed his personal bravery on the battlefield on numerous occasions, and is considered by most to be one of the best cavalry commanders in the RVNAF. He has recently been recommended for promotion. He understands the capabilities and limitations of his equipment and is a strong advocate of proper maintenance. MAJ Tuan has good potential for higher command.

(6) Division Artillery:

(a) DIVARTY Commander: LTC Le Thuong has been DIVARTY Commander for nearly one year. He is highly qualified in both the technical and operational aspects of artillery, but because of a lack of aggressiveness and ambition he has probably reached his career peak.

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(b) 20th Arty Bn: MAJ Tranh Than Hao has commanded the 20th Arty Bn since 15 May 68. He appears to be technically qualified but lacks leadership ability and is basically lazy. He gets the job done but only marginally.

(c) 21st Arty Bn: MAJ Nguyen Van Ha has commanded the 21st Arty Bn since 16 Jul 71. He is a competent artillery battalion commander in all ways. He is mission oriented, aggressive, and has the potential for higher command.

(d) 22d Arty Bn: MAJ Thai Thanh Hoi has commanded the 22d Arty Bn only since late August 1972. He has displayed considerable growth since assuming command. He is a hard worker and is technically proficient. When MAJ Hoi develops more confidence in his own ability and learns to use his staff more fully he will be an outstanding battalion commander.

(e) 23d Arty Bn: MAJ Chu Manh has commanded the 23d Arty Bn since 16 Nov 69. He is technically proficient and manages assets well. He is a good leader and is well liked and respected by his men. He has a wealth of experience, sound understanding of tactics and shows potential for higher staff/command.

4. (C) Intelligence:

a. General: In spite of the adverse effects created by the loss or reduction in several US collection assets, the overall intelligence effort within the 2d ARVN Division has been quite good. The current G2 is a cut above the average Vietnamese staff officer and has ably managed the gathering, analysis, and dissemination of information pertaining to the enemy's capabilities and probable courses of action. These factors have been heavily weighted and integrated into the division's regular operational planning process. Under the present CG, the divisional staff has collectively demonstrated a marked improvement in its ability to react to current intelligence in a timely and effective manner. Since General Nhut arrived, a number of very successful Arc Light strikes, artillery raids, and ground operations have been launched on very short notice, in response to selective tactical intelligence. Although normally an operational matter, the G2 Section has had primary staff responsibility for the targeting and processing of all B-52 missions flown within the 2d Division TAOR. This additional mission was accomplished in an effective manner.

b. The most significant problem area is in the counterintelligence area. Although some improvement has been shown, the Division's overall security posture is still less than desirable. Despite advisory recommendations, the 2d Division does not have a proper facility for the destruction of classified material. Additionally, simple, easily deciphered brevity codes are widely used instead of KAC wheels. Often, when KAC wheels are utilized, only the first and fourth digits are encoded for transmission. These insecure systems are being utilized to transmit information to both subordinate and higher headquarters.

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5. (C) Operations:

a. Goals(Mission): The 2d ARVN Division has had two broad missions during the period covered by this report

- (1) To destroy the 711th NVA Division.
- (2) To destroy the 2d NVA Division.

Included in the broad missions has been the requirement to protect the populated areas vicinity Que Son, Southern Quang Tin Province, and Quang Ngai Province.

b. Summary of Operations of Note: In early July 1972, the 2d Division had two regiments and part of the 11th Ranger Group in the Que Son Valley area. The 4th Regiment was detached and operating in Quang Tri Province. During this phase of the division's operations, too much reliance was placed on Arc Light strikes and tactical air in accomplishing offensive objectives, and the division's defensive operations (particularly around FSB Ross) were much too passive. During this period the Division CG, BG Hiep, underestimated the enemy's potential offensive capability, thus setting the scene for the fall of Ross/Que Son. Early failures by the division to blunt the 711th NVA Division offensive caused BG Hiep to lose confidence and he became totally inept. Shortly after the enemy introduced 130mm guns into the battlefield, FSB Ross fell and the 2d Division withdrew in disorder. The remnants of the division were rounded up and a defensive line established between FSB Ross and FSB Baldy. The 711th NVA Division paused to consolidate its gains and never regained the initiative in the Que Son Valley. The 2d Division Commander and the 5th Regiment Commander were relieved and the division assumed the initiative. The 4th Regiment returned to the division and FSB Ross was reoccupied in early September 1972. Probably initially as a diversionary tactic, local force elements attacked the district seat at Tien Phuoc. Early success caused the enemy to reinforce with a regiment from the 711th and the 2d ARVN Division entered the battle to recapture Tien Phuoc. During mid-September 1972, enemy forces launched coordinated attacks against Ba To, Duc Pho, and Mo Duc in Quang Ngai Province. The enemy failed to capture their objectives, however QLL was cut in several places. Despite being committed in Tien Phuoc, the division was withdrawn from the Que Son Valley and given the additional mission of destroying the 2d NVA Division and relieving enemy pressure in Quang Ngai Province and reopened QLL. Ba To remained under seige and finally fell on 31 Oct 72. With the exception of the Ba To campaign, the 2d Division's operation in Quang Ngai Province has been extremely successful. All the major population centers are under GVN control and the enemy has suffered heavy losses in personnel, equipment, and food supplies.

6. (C) Training:

a. General: The 2d Division Training Center at Chu Lai is responsible for conducting a nine week basic training program for new recruits from Quang Ngai and Quang Tin Provinces. The division receives approximately 75% of its replacement personnel in this manner. The remaining 25% come from other areas of South Vietnam and are trained at various National Training Centers; however, they receive a one week orientation program at Chu Lai prior to assignment.

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During the first nine months of 1972 the Training Center operation was ineffective and inadequate. Poor leadership, inadequate facilities, shortage of cadre and worst of all a lack of command interest resulted in training programs that were barely effective. As a result of the tactical situation, recruits were being utilized for guard and other details, seriously detracting from the training effort. Graduates had received only the barest rudiments of marksmanship, squad tactics, and other military subjects and were generally poorly motivated and low in morale and esprit de corps. During the last three months of 1972, significant improvements in the Training Center operation have been noted. Increased command emphasis, the personal attention of the Division Commander, and assignments of highly motivated, well qualified personnel to key staff positions have produced significant results. A general revamping and upgrading of training facilities has been conducted. Unfortunately, due to continued heavy enemy pressure and sustained combat operations within the Division TAOR, unit training remains inadequate. Tactical units are presently unable to stand down maneuver battalions for retraining and refitting. Command emphasis is being placed on this crucial area and with the advent of the cease fire significant improvement should be realized in the near future. It is felt, however, that much work remains to be done in the area of training.

b. Training Programs Completed in 1972:

RECRUIT TRAINING	12 Companies	2450 students
TAI-KWAN-DO	1 class	22 students
RANGER BORDER DEFENSE		
RETRAINING	1 class	60th RBDB
ARMOR/CAV RETRAINING	1 class	1/4 Tank Troop
INF BN REF	4 classes	1/5, 2/5, 3/5, and 1/6 Bn
POLWAR TNG	11 classes	1530 students

7. (C) Logistics: The overall logistical support provided by the G4 and Logistical Battalion has been excellent. In the majority of situations, logistical support has been sufficient to fulfill the requirements of the 2d Division's tactical units. The caliber and experience of the key logistical officers has been equivalent to US officers in similar logistical US Army assignments.

a. Supply: Supply and requisitioning procedures, asset accountability, logistical staff liaison visits, prompt follow-up action on supply and equipment shortages and accurate combat loss reporting are areas in which significant improvement has been noted during the reporting period. Three primary problems are still noticeable. These are as follow:

(1) A shortage of critical repair parts, i.e. 2 1/2 ton truck engines, clutches, transmissions, etc.

(2) Shortages of individual clothing and equipment, i.e. ponchos, helmets, etc;

(3) Ammunition, barrier materials, and howitzers, and the non-availability of sufficient air lift resupply assets to support forward units which cannot be resupplied from the road.

b. Transportation: The TOE authorization levels within the division for medical, quartermaster, ordnance, engineer, and transportation major items are at 90% on hand or better. The only exception is in the area of 2 1/2 ton trucks which, out of a total authorization of 396 trucks, the division has 30% on-hand. This

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shortage coupled with the high mileage on the trucks, large Division AO, 10% deadline rate, and the fact that over 50 2 1/2 ton trucks are obsolete Japanese off-shore procured results in a serious transportation problem in the division. This lack of transportation assets has in turn had and will continue to have a direct adverse bearing on resupply support. All other aspects of division transportation support have been highly satisfactory.

c. Maintenance: Overall the support provided by the Logistical Battalion Maintenance Company has been excellent. The key maintenance officers are school trained and highly professional. Approximately 40% of the maintenance enlisted personnel are school trained. On-the-job training and technical training is provided whenever possible. A deficiency in the maintenance support has been a shortage of diagnostic equipment for signal and vehicle repair. This equipment has been requisitioned but not received. The division vehicle 3d echelon deadline rate has been reduced from approximately 25% to 10% in the last six months. This deadline percentage compares favorably with US standards. However, 2d echelon deadline rate is often distorted and the monthly material readiness reporting system does require improvement. The Maintenance Battalion has established forward mobile maintenance contact teams with each regiment. These teams have been highly effective in providing signal, vehicle, and weapons support. Two primary maintenance problems still exist within the division. One is the shortage of critical repair parts and secondly there is a need for still stronger command emphasis and inspections to insure high maintenance standards.

8. (C) Combat Support:

a. Artillery:

(1) General: 2d Division Artillery is composed of three 105mm battalions employed in a direct support role; one 155mm battalion normally employed in a direct support reinforcing role; and one 175mm gun battery employed in a general support role. Artillery, as well as other fire support assets, are controlled by the division. The Division Fire Support Coordination Center controls fire coordination for all ARVN and territorial artillery, US and vietnamese Naval Gunfire, and US and VNAF air assets. The employment of US air assets is monitored very closely by the advisory team.

(2) Problem areas:

(a) Division Artillery's somewhat slow response time and occasional inaccurate fire (particularly initial rounds) degrades otherwise excellent artillery support. Ground commanders are often reluctant to call for artillery fire in close proximity to friendly troops and often ask for air support, when artillery support could accomplish the mission more rapidly and perhaps better.

(b) Ammunition resupply is a continual problem due to the size of the AO, inadequate or insecure road networks and limited resupply assets (ground and air). Curtailment of US helicopter support and non-availability of VNAF CH-47's in MR-1, has limited air movement of artillery ammunition to only the most critical areas.

(3) Summary: Artillery support to the combat troops is more than satisfactory and the problem areas enumerated are not beyond the capabilities of the unit to correct. Much progress has been noted in the past several months.

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b. Tactical Air:

(1) General: Tactical air support provided for the 2d ARVN Division consists of US and VNAF FACs, VNAF land based small bombers, and US land and carrier based bombers. The availability of tactical air support is, of course, determined by the tactical situation and depends upon where the 2d Division is listed in priority in conjunction with the other divisions in MRI.

(2) Problem areas:

(a) A lack of complete coordination and working rapport exists between 2d Division troops in the Quang Tin-Quang Ngai fire support areas and the territorial forces in the 2d Division FSA.

(b) During times of impending or semi-inclement weather, it is most difficult to persuade VNAF to launch a FAC even when a unit may be in a serious tactical situation.

The utilization of tactical air support, especially US assets, by the 2d Division is satisfactory and since July 1972 has increased in efficiency. The increase in effectiveness is attributed to the guidance and training the American advisors have given their counterparts, and to the self-confidence and independence that the Vietnamese have inculcated within themselves.

c. Aviation:

(1) General: Aviation assets available to the 2d ARVN Division are VNAF UH-1 gunships and slicks, US Senior Advisor's dedicated UH-1, air cavalry teams, and CH-47. Aerial field artillery became nonavailable on 1 Sep 72 and CH-54 Skycranes nonavailable on 1 Nov 72. VNAF gunships are used primarily to escort VNAF slicks on combat asaults, resupply, and MEDEVAC missions, US CH-47 resupply missions, and secondarily as close support for the ground troops. The Senior Advisor's dedicated helicopter is used in an operational role supporting the 2d Division and in an operational, logistical, and administrative support role for Advisory Team 2. Air cavalry assets are used strictly in a reconnaissance and screening role. CH-47 are used as logistical support and limited troop movement for both 2d Division and Advisory Team 2.

(2) Problem areas:

(a) VNAF helicopter assets, especially gunships, cannot be depended upon for reliable support due to inability to meet start of mission times and a high incident rate of maintenance difficulties after the aircraft arrive in the AO. VNAF pilots in general (there are exceptions) seem to lack a sense of mission urgency, especially after the noon meal.

(b) Resupply missions are generally given priority over MEDEVAC and such is a surety when ARVN requests resupply and territorial forces request MEDEVAC.

(c) Priority for utilization of CH-47 for resupply within the 2d Division TAOR is established by I Corps G3 and is frequently incongruous with the tactical desires of the 2d Division G3 and G4.

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(3) Summary: The decline of US aviation assets available for support has compelled the 2d Division to increase its aviation utilization efficiency and initiate alternate means of resupply. However, there is still room for improvement.

d. Other Operational Support:

(1) General: Other operational support assets available to the 2d ARVN Division are the WIAF Hoa Long (Spooky), US Stinger, Spectre, and instrument flight rule (Skyspot and Loran) bombers. Spooky, Stinger, and Spectre assets are requested, respectively, when serious contact is made or imminent during hours of darkness and weather permits their use. In times of fair weather, Spectres are requested for use in an interdiction role. IFR assets are continually requested and frequently provided when inclement weather precludes the use of visual tactical air support.

(2) Problem areas:

(a) When utilizing Stinger or Spectre assets in support of battalion size elements the inevitable language barrier often inhibits maximum utilization.

(b) Coordination between Quang Tin and Quang Ngai Provinces and 2d Division and vice versa is not as rapid and complete as it could or should be concerning IFR clearances, and there is somewhat of a communication gap between Quang Ngai Province and I Corps concerning IFR results.

(c) The proximity of Quang Ngai Province to Loran and radar beacon guidance stations limits employment of IFR assets.

(3) Summary: Proficiency in the utilization of tactical air assets by the 2d Division has burgeoned since July 1972. Monsoon season weather has become the deterrent factor restricting the use of Spooky, Stinger, and Spectre and the promoting factor promoting this use of IFR bombing.

9. (C) Combat Units:

a. Divisions:

(1) Capability: The capability of the 2d ARVN Division was significantly greater at the time this report was written than at any other time within the reporting period. The 2d Division, if adequately supported, is currently capable of accomplishing any suitable and feasible mission in a professional and competent manner.

(2) Evaluation: It is obvious that as this report is written the 2d ARVN Division cannot be rated as the top one, two, or three division in the RVNAF. However, if future progress is as spectacular as that realized during the last 3-4 months, the number one position will belong to the 2d ARVN Division in relatively short order. The division is battle tested and combat effective as a whole. Its most noteworthy strong points include an outstanding and highly capable division level leadership, and intelligence, logistics, communications, and engineer functions of very high quality. The division performs adequately, but requires

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additional improvement in the areas of operational planning, employment of combat support assets, fire support planning and the integration of fire support and maneuver. Areas in which the division appears to be noticeably weak include counterintelligence, training, and PSYWAR.

b. Regiments:

(1) Capability: The three infantry regiments and armored cavalry squadron, if properly supported, are considered capable of performing any suitable and feasible mission. Because of the poor past record and current weak commander, the 5th Regiment must be considered only marginally capable.

(2) Evaluation:

(a) The 4th Regiment is combat tested and proven. It must rate as one of the best infantry regiments in RVAF. While the CO is new, he is a proven leader and displays outstanding potential. Two of the three battalion commanders are strong. The regiment has 80% of its authorized strength and 78% of that is operational.

(b) The 5th Regiment has a weak commander, has just suffered a serious tactical defeat in the recent past, and has not been tested against a determined enemy since then. However, the regiment has a new Executive Officer, S3, and two battalion commanders, all of whom appear to be relatively strong and capable men. The regiment is improving in most all aspects. It has 82% of its authorized strength and 79% is operational.

(c) The 6th Regiment is not as strong as the 4th Regiment, however its performance has been adequate and the regiment shows improvement almost daily. One of its battalions is weak but the other two are rated rather high. The regiment has 81% of its authorized strength and 78% of that is operational.

(d) The 4th Cavalry Squadron has a strong, competent commander. This squadron is one of the better trained combat units of the division and is considered to be one of the best armored cavalry squadrons in RVNAF. The unit has good maintenance practices and consistently holds a relatively low vehicle deadline rate. The squadron has 106% of its authorized personnel strength and 87% of that is operational. Of 63 armored vehicles authorized, 56 are on hand and 52 are operational.

10. (C) The Advisory Effort.

a. Organization:

(1) The authorized strength of Advisory Team 2 has decreased from a January 1972 total of 67 officers and enlisted men to a 1 Dec 72 strength of 18. The various authorized strength levels during the year.

(2) The current tactical situation requires the division to maintain a heavy forward CP at Quang Ngai City with the Division Headquarters and rear at Chu Lai. Paralleling the division's tactical posture, Team 2 is organized into a Forward CP Group, 3 Regimental Liaison teams, and a Support Group. Located at the Forward CP are the SA, G3, G2, and two TOC Advisors; there are two officers in each of the regimental teams; and the support group at Chu Lai consists of D&A, C4 Advisor, Administrative Sergeant, Commo Sergeant, and three communications specialists.

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b. Personnel: The 16 man JTD was adequate for the time frame and environment in which it was used. When future reductions are implemented, the role and mission of the team will be changed from advising to performing liaison. When this occurs, the team will be reduced to a 4 man liaison team with a Combat Arms 05 as Team Chief.

c. Support:

(1) As the result of the recent drawdown and redeployment planning, a number of support functions have been either eliminated, consolidated, or drastically reduced. This was accomplished without causing undue hardships to the team. Activities which have been eliminated include PX facilities, Unit Fund, Field Ration Mess, Open Mess, and the Domestic Wire Fund. Supply levels have been reduced to the minimum essential.

(2) To maintain the required support an NAF Mess was established and scheduled runs are made to Danang to provide necessary supplies, PX items, etc. Military pay is now handled by FMAC and there has been no change in mail operations. Administrative support is almost entirely accomplished at team level.

(3) Communications support remains essentially unchanged.

(4) In conclusion, logistical and administrative support is more than sufficient to support the team in accomplishing its mission.

11. (C) Overall Evaluation and Most Significant Problems

a. General: Since early October 1972, the 2d ARVN Division has proven itself by engaging and defeating a determined and tenacious, well equipped equivalent size enemy NVA force in large scale conventional type warfare, while simultaneously combatting and stopping the traditionally tough, at times ferocious, but always evasive Quang Ngai and Quang Tin PRU. The division has demonstrated the ability to move multi-battalion size elements 50-60 kilometers by road convoy in a matter of hours and then professionally and successfully commit the force on foot, by armored vehicle and/or by combat assault helicopter against the enemy with good results. During such operations, combat support has been adequately planned and provided and logistical support and communications have been excellent. The division has engaged in prolonged ground area and population control operations with significant success and has displayed an outstanding propensity of successfully exploiting tactical intelligence by conducting short notice operations ranging in size from multiple platoon to multiple battalion. Command and control within the division is based almost entirely on face-to-face communications between the commander and his subordinate commanders. As a result of continuous and heavy command emphasis from the Division CG, troop and dependent family welfare is a current topic of discussion and the personal situation and environment of the average soldier and his family has improved immensely during the past several months. Spirit, morale, and confidence within the 2d ARVN Division has improved markedly with a concomitant increase in total combat effectiveness.

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b. Most Significant Problems:

(1) Maintenance of personnel strength has been and continues to be a major problem within the 2d ARVN Division. At this writing, the combat losses and desertion rates are steadily decreasing while recruitment has improved. However, increased command emphasis and action are required if this problem is to be reduced to a manageable level.


(2) The heavy loss of junior leaders due to continuous and often times intense combat in recent months has created a serious leadership gap and lack of depth which will require considerable time to correct. Special NCO and Junior Officer training courses are being conducted at the Division Training Center and selective promotion of enlisted men to NCO status has been pushed. These actions have helped the situation but certainly not solved the problem.

(3) Counterintelligence measures are poor. Deficiencies run the gamut from a lack of a centralized document destruction facility to the wide usage of homemade brevity codes. Command emphasis is lacking in this area.

(4) Training of the individual soldier and unit training was treated in a very cursory and light-handed way in the 2d ARVN Division during the early portion of this reporting period. Currently, positive steps are being taken to rectify this situation but additional command emphasis is required.

(5) A reluctance exists on the part of the ARVN Commander at all levels of command to fully accept responsibility for coordinating and/or controlling territorial forces within their assigned AO's. The ARVN Commander accepts the responsibility only when it is absolutely forced upon him or during times of great tactical emergency.

(6) The critical shortage of automotive repair parts, shortages of individual clothing and equipment, and shortages of 2½ ton trucks (396 auth-307 on hand) is a serious problem. The repair parts and truck shortages will have an ever increasing negative impact upon tactical operations unless relief is realized in the very near future.


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UNCLASSIFIED

Security Classification

DOCUMENT CONTROL DATA - R & D

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

1. ORIGINATING ACTIVITY (Corporate author) HQ DA, DAMO-ODU, Washington, D.C. 20310	20. REPORT SECURITY CLASSIFICATION CONFIDENTIAL
	21. GROUP

2. REPORT TITLE
Senior Officer Debriefing Reports: COL James Henslick, SA, 2d (ARVN) Div, 6 Jul 72 - 27 Jan 73 & COL Lucian Rawls, Jr., SA, 9th (ARVN) Div., 22 Mar 73 (U)

4. DESCRIPTIVE NOTES (Type of report and inclusive dates)
Senior Officer Debriefing Report - 6 Jul 72-27 Jan 73 & 22 Mar 73

3. AUTHOR(S) (First name, middle initial, last name)
COL James Henslick
COL Lucian Rawls

6. REPORT DATE 10 April 73	78. TOTAL NO. OF PAGES 24	79. NO. OF REFS
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50. CONTRACT OR GRANT NO. b. PROJECT NO c. N/A d.	59. ORIGINATOR'S REPORT NUMBER(S) 73B035 73B039
	58. OTHER REPORT NO(S) (Any other numbers that may be assigned this report)

10. DISTRIBUTION STATEMENT

11. SUPPLEMENTARY NOTES N/A	12. SPONSORING MILITARY ACTIVITY HQ DA, DAMO-ODU, Washington, D.C. 20310
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13. ABSTRACT

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(This page is unclassified)