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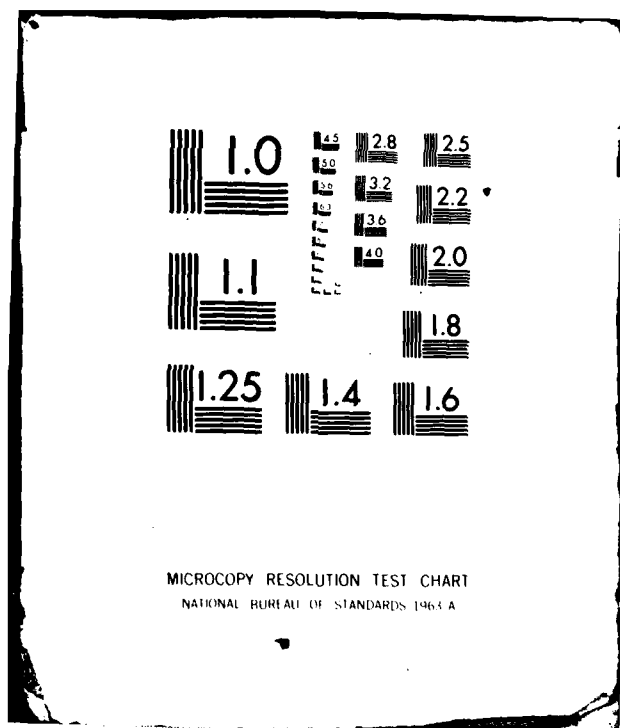
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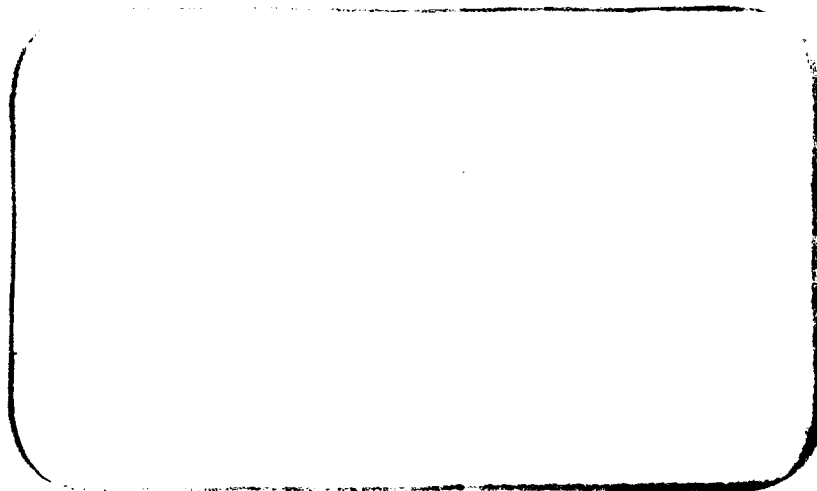
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This report was prepared to describe the results of a preliminary study of the readjustment problems of Vietnam returnees. Purpose of the study was to establish the general areas of adjustment returnees view as most difficult, and to compare the findings with more detailed studies conducted at the end of World War II. A content analysis of tape-recordings of interviews with enlisted men revealed four major problem categories related to (1) garrison duty; (2) new duty assignment; (3) deference and recognition of combat-zone service; and (4) training of new recruits.			

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Consulting Report

ADJUSTMENT AND ATTITUDES
OF VIETNAM RETURNEES

by

Lyle Sussman

August 1969

This Consulting Report was prepared to describe the results of a preliminary study of the readjustment problems of Vietnam returnees. The study was conducted to support planning activities for Exploratory Study COMMITMENT (ES-74). The report has been issued by the Director of Research of HumRRO Division No. 2 (Armor), Fort Knox, Kentucky. It has not been reviewed by nor does it necessarily represent the official opinion or policy of the Director, Human Resources Research Office, or the Department of the Army.

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PREFATORY NOTE

This report summarizes the results of a preliminary study of the readjustment problems of Vietnam returnees. The purpose of the study was to establish the general areas of adjustment which returnees view as most difficult, and to compare the findings with more detailed studies conducted at the end of World War II. The results will be used as a basis for planning definitive studies concerning the quantification of relevant attitudes and possible courses for remedial action.

The study was conducted to provide guidance for the planning of activities under an exploratory study, COMMITMENT (ES-74), concerned with increasing the correspondence between soldiers' basic motivational needs and the attainment of Army goals. The results are being published because of their relevance to current Army actions.

ES-74 is being conducted by HumRRO Division No. 2 (Armor), Fort Knox, Kentucky. The Director of Research is Dr. Donald F. Haggard. Military support is provided by the US Army Armor Human Research Unit. The Military Chief of the Armor HRU is LTC John A. Hutchins, Jr. The military research assistant assigned to ES-74 is SP 4 Lyle Sussman.

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SUMMARY

An exploratory study was conducted in response to a request to examine the "Adjustment, Utilization and Motivation of Combat Returnees."¹ The purpose of the study was to determine the general areas of adjustment which returnees from Vietnam view as most difficult. Data for the study were collected by recording on tape the open-end discussions of five groups of EM varying in size from 8 to 12 members. A content analysis of the tapes revealed four major problem categories (in addition to war anecdotes), each containing 10% or more of the total comments. These attitude categories were related to (a) garrison duty, (b) new duty assignment, (c) deference and recognition of combat zone service, and (d) training of new recruits.

¹Letter, OCRD (DA), March 13, 1969, to Director, HumRRO, Inclosure 1, Subject, "Request for Behavioral and Social Science Research," Title: "Adjustment, Utilization and Motivation of Combat Returnees."

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ADJUSTMENT AND ATTITUDES OF VIETNAM RETURNEES

INTRODUCTION

Background

A review of literature indicates that there is little material concerning the adjustment of combat returnees. Furthermore, of the studies reported, all were conducted at the end of World War II and none examined the Vietnam returnee and his adjustment to noncombat duty.

In one of these studies, Corwin conducted extensive interviews with 100 enlisted men and 100 officers. On the basis of the results of the interviews, he stated:

It is clear that the average soldier returns to this country with a sense of anticipation and eagerness, often attended by anxiety as to his reception ... what job he will get, where he will be located, will he be treated well, will he have to return to combat, and when, are the questions he asks.²

Star's study of the combat returnee presents a comprehensive picture of his attitudes and expectations concerning reassignment. The basic findings of the study were: (a) returnees expected consideration and recognition for their service, (b) returnees were unwilling to go through a hard training period, to learn new jobs, to accept garrison discipline, and (c) returnees were dissatisfied in working with men who had not been overseas.³

Objective

The objective of the present research is to determine the applicability of the previous findings to the present-day returnee and to delineate the particular causes of friction after reassignment.

More specifically, the purpose of the study is to determine those general areas of adjustment which the Vietnam returnee views as most difficult. The study does not concern itself with the direction and intensity of specific attitudes. The transition to a study of direction and intensity will be made on the basis of this study.

²Corwin, William. "Attitudes of Soldiers Returning from Overseas Service," American Journal of Psychiatry, vol. 102, no. 3, November 1945, p. 348.

³Star, Shirley A. "Problems of Rotation and Reconversion," in The American Soldier, vol. II, Stouffer et al., Princeton University Press, Princeton, 1949, pp. 457-519.

In order to determine those general areas of adjustment, groups of Vietnam returnees were simply instructed to discuss, in open-end sessions, the topic of adjustment to noncombat duty.

Hypothesis

On the basis of the findings reported by Star and Corwin, this study hypothesizes that the majority of comments in an open-end discussion of adjustment to noncombat duty will be categorized in three general areas: (a) attitudes toward garrison duty, (b) attitudes toward new duty assignment, and (c) attitudes concerning deference and recognition.

METHODOLOGY

Subjects

A total of 50 subjects participated in the discussion groups. All were enlisted Vietnam returnees on active duty status. The mean length of time before discharge from the Army was 3.8 months. Thirty-two subjects were assigned as cadre personnel in basic training units. The other subjects were assigned to TO ~~and~~ E units.

Table 1 presents a frequency distribution of the characteristics of the sample.

Table 1

Frequency Distribution of the Characteristics of the Sample

Component	N	Years of Education	N	Age	N	Rank	N
RA	34	<12	8	18-19	2	E-1	3
US	16	12	21	20-21	17	E-2	0
		13	8	22-23	14	E-3	9
		14	4	24-25	9	E-4	20
		15	4	>25	8	E-5	18
		16	5				

Procedure

On the day of the discussion, a group of the subjects were assigned to re-

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port to the Armor Human Research Unit. Operations sergeants selected the subjects on the basis of three criteria. All subjects had to be E-5 and below, on active duty status, and Vietnam returnees. Each day 8 to 12 subjects were selected without bias from the total population meeting these criteria. None of the subjects received previous information concerning the purpose or rationale for their assignment. Thus, none of the subjects prepared material for the group discussion.

The subjects were taken to a room in which chairs had been previously placed in a circle. A microphone was placed in the center of the circle, in full view of all the subjects. After they were seated, the following instructions were given:

My name is Specialist Sussman, and I am assigned to the Human Research Unit at Fort Knox. The major mission of this unit is to conduct research related to the military. One area of research the unit is currently working on is the Adjustment and Utilization of Vietnam returnees.

The Army is becoming increasingly aware of the fact that when a soldier returns from Vietnam duty, he is faced with a period of adjustment. This period of adjustment is easier for some returnees than for others. You men have been ordered here today because you have all experienced the adjustment to Stateside duty.

The purpose of this session is to discuss, as a group, some of the things you experienced during the period of adjustment.

This session will be recorded for future reference only. Please participate in the discussion as truthfully and openly as possible. Let me emphasize that all remarks will be anonymous, and what is said during this session will have absolutely no bearing on your military career.

I am here solely as an observer. In no way am I to be viewed as a leader of this group, or even a participant. All leadership and participation will come from you.

The tape recorder was then turned on. To initiate the discussion, the observer asked the group the following question: "After returning from Vietnam, what was the most difficult thing to adjust to on Stateside duty?"

The discussions were unstructured in the sense that status between members was not clearly defined, nor was the role of leader. At no time did the observer assume a leadership position. He did not initiate remarks, nor did he respond to remarks made by the group members. At those periods during the discussion when there was a lengthy pause, the observer simply asked the group to

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elaborate on the material which immediately preceded the pause. Since the groups were not asked to respond to any specific questions (except the initiating question), the content and direction of the discussions evolved solely as a consequence of interaction among the participants.

The discussions were terminated in the following manner. After a lengthy pause, the observer responded as noted earlier in this section. If no discussion followed, he then asked the group, "Is there anything else you would like to say?" If, again, there was no response he thanked the group and dismissed them.

CONTENT ANALYSIS OF THE TAPES

The five sessions, ranging in duration from 45 - 70 minutes, yielded a total of 275 minutes of taped discussion. The tapes were subjected to a content analysis. The categories used in making the content analysis were based on the findings of Star's Study of World War II Combat Returnees.⁴ Essentially, Star's study presented data concerning the returnees' attitudes toward:

1. Expectations of respect and recognition for their accomplishments.
2. Garrison discipline.
3. New duty assignment (satisfaction).
4. Geographic location of assignment.
5. Military personnel who have not served in a combat zone.
6. Quality of training prior to serving overseas.

To this list of categories, the following were added: Attitudes toward

7. Quality of training received by new recruits.
8. Promotion.
9. Dental care, medical care.
10. Opportunity for independent thought and action.

Because of the methodology of this study, two final categories were added:

11. Anecdotes of Vietnam experiences.
12. Miscellaneous.

Holsti⁵ has specified three criteria for category definition. The categories must (a) be exhaustive, (b) be mutually exclusive, and (c) represent the problem area under investigation.

⁴Ibid.

⁵Holsti, Ole R. "Content Analysis," in The Handbook of Social Psychology, vol. II, G. Lindzey and E. Aronson (eds.), Addison-Wesley Publishing Co., Reading (Mass.), 1968, pp. 596-693.

The categories selected for this study appear to meet these three criteria. To ensure replicability, category indicators were defined as follows:

<u>Category</u>	<u>Indicators</u>
1	Comments referring to respect and recognition for the returnee's accomplishments.
2	All comments referring to procedures and discipline in the Stateside garrison; any comments comparing Stateside and Vietnam garrisons.
3	All comments referring to (a) type of work required in new assignment; (b) satisfaction with new assignment.
4	Any comments referring to the geographic location of the duty assignment.
5	Any comments referring to the returnee's attitudes toward military personnel who have not served in Vietnam.
6	Any comments referring to the quality of training prior to serving in Vietnam.
7	Comments referring to the quality of training received by new recruits. This category also includes comments of BCT instructors indicative of their satisfaction with training procedures and of their role in training units.
8	All comments referring to promotion practices in the States, Vietnam, or both.
9	Comments referring to the quality of dental and medical care in the States, Vietnam, or both.
10	Any comments referring to the returnee's perception of the opportunity afforded him to exercise independent thought and action, either in the States, Vietnam, or both.
11	Any comments not falling under one of the categories that describes an experience of the returnee's Vietnam tour (e.g., a combat story).
12	Any comments not falling under one of the other categories.

The 275 minutes of taped discussion were analyzed in terms of the above categories. Tabulations were conducted for each type of response made, and percentages were computed. Table 2 summarizes the results of the analysis. Detailed analyses for the direction (positive, neutral, negative) and intensity (high, medium, low) of specific responses were not computed. However, illustrative comments which indicated the tenor of discussion were recorded.

Table 2

Per Cent of Comments in Each Category

Category	Per Cent of Comments
1. Anecdotes of Vietnam Experiences	16.5
* 2. Garrison Discipline	14.6
* 3. New Duty Assignment	12.5
* 4. Deference and Recognition	11.5
5. Training of New Recruits	10.2
6. Quality of Training Prior to Vietnam Duty	9.2
7. Opportunity for Independent Thought and Action	7
8. Military Personnel Who Haven't Been to Vietnam	5
9. Geographic Location of New Assignment	4
10. Dental and Medical Care	3
11. Promotions	2.5
12. Miscellaneous	4
*Predicted major problem areas.	

The results will be presented in terms of the percentage of comments made under each category. The categories will be presented in descending order. A paragraph containing a summary of the comments made will follow each category heading. This paragraph will also indicate the general direction of the responses and in some instances will include a direct quote for illustrative purposes.

1. Comments Pertaining to Experiences in Vietnam (16.5%).

The majority of the comments in this category consisted of combat stories, recollections of R and R (Rest and Recuperation), leaves, and anecdotes of Vietnamese life.

2. Comments Pertaining to Garrison Discipline (14.6%).

The majority of the comments falling into this category referred to the

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strictness of garrison discipline as compared to that in Vietnam. Aspects of garrison discipline which were mentioned most frequently were inspections, formations, and details. The participants also made reference to the severity of punishment for offenses committed in the Stateside garrison. The participants felt that punishments (Court-Martials, Articles 15) are more frequent in the States than in Vietnam. As one participant stated, "In the States they'll give you an Article 15 for anything; in Vietnam they throw the rule book away."

3. Comments Pertaining to New Duty Assignment (12.5%).

The majority of the comments in this category expressed dissatisfaction with Stateside duty. The participants felt that they were either not being utilized in their MOS or that they were not really needed. In terms of the latter feeling, many participants felt that their remaining months in service were of no value to themselves or to the Army.

4. Comments Pertaining to Deference and Recognition (11.5%).

The majority of the comments in this category expressed dissatisfaction with the amount of deference and recognition paid the Vietnam returnee. Many felt that as a consequence of serving in Vietnam they should be treated with greater respect, by both NCO's and officers. As one returnee stated, "You came back from Vietnam feeling pretty good about your accomplishments and decorations. When you get assigned to a Stateside company, though, you're treated like dirt. It's as if they don't give a damn whether or not you've been to Vietnam. We should be treated with greater respect."

5. Comments Pertaining to Basic Training (10.2%).

The majority of participants were assigned as cadre personnel to BCT companies on returning to the States. The responses they made in this category did not refer to the basic training they received, but to the type of basic training recruits were receiving. The majority of the comments expressed dissatisfaction with the current state of basic training. The participants felt that the recruit is treated with "kid gloves"; the discipline and physical requirements expected of him should be more stringent. They also felt that basic training programs were not taking advantage of the experience and knowledge of the enlisted returnees.

6. Comments Pertaining to Quality of Training Prior to Vietnam Duty (9.2%).

The majority of the comments in this category expressed dissatisfaction with the quality of training prior to Vietnam duty. The participants felt that the



only worthwhile training they received in AIT was familiarization and qualification training with the M-16 rifle. As one participant stated, "AIT does not prepare you for Vietnam. I learned much more by talking with guys who had returned than I did in AIT."

7. Comments Pertaining to the Returnee's Opportunity for Independent Thought and Action (7%).

The participants as a whole felt that in Vietnam they were given the opportunity for independent thought and action. They felt, however, that this opportunity no longer existed when they returned to the States. As one participant stated, "In Vietnam you were treated like a man; you could act and think for yourself. In the States you better not act without checking with your NCO or officer. Everyone here passes the buck."

8. Comments Pertaining to Military Personnel Who Have Not Been to Vietnam (5%).

The responses made in this category expressed animosity toward military personnel who have not served in Vietnam. This feeling was strongest against those personnel who spend their entire tour of duty in the States. The returnees felt that Stateside personnel often made rank quicker and had the better jobs. Many returnees indicated that they find it extremely difficult to work with personnel who have not been to Vietnam. As one returnee stated, "I've got nothing in common with those guys. It's like we were in two different armies."

9. Comments Pertaining to the Geographic Location of the Returnee's Stateside Assignment (4%).

The majority of the comments in this category expressed dissatisfaction with the location of the participant's duty assignment. Although a few were stationed relatively close to home, the majority were stationed too far from home to make weekend trips practical. Most of the participants felt that the Vietnam returnee should be given his choice of duty station when he completes his Vietnam tour.

10. Comments Pertaining to Dental and Medical Care (3%).

The returnees felt that the dental and medical attention they received in Vietnam was superior to that which they now receive. They felt that the medical personnel in Vietnam expressed far greater interest and were more thorough. As one returnee explained, "I don't even go to the military doctors any more; you have to wait weeks to see them and when you do they give you a poor examination. Even the dependents get better medical treatment than Vietnam returnees."

11. Comments Pertaining to Promotions (2.5%).

The comments in this category refer to the manner in which promotions are given in Vietnam as opposed to the practice in the States. For the most part, the returnees felt that promotions in Vietnam are based more on merit than promotions in the States. The participants also felt that promotions in the States are based on political maneuver.

12. Comments Pertaining to Miscellaneous Adjustment Problems (4%).

The majority of the comments in this category were indicative of individual problems of adjustment. For example, two participants found it difficult to adjust to the vehicle traffic on the post. One participant could not adjust to the crowds of people in the Commissary and PX. Three participants expressed difficulty in adjusting to the climate and weather conditions.

DISCUSSION

On the basis of the results of the content analysis, the greatest percentage of comments (16.5) were anecdotes of the participants' Vietnam experiences. This result is not surprising in light of the methodology of the study. Aside from the initiating question, the discussions were completely unstructured. Thus it would be simply a matter of time before a group of Vietnam returnees would start talking about individual or (in some cases) mutual experiences. Essentially, though, it is these experiences that the returnee feels separate him from the soldier who has not been to a combat zone. The combat zone assignment has provided a basis for developing close relationships with other soldiers who have had similar experiences. Upon returning to the States, however, new relationships of this kind are more difficult to form without a similarly strong basis for communality. Thus the combat returnee retains the basis for his Vietnam relationships, remaining essentially a member of a subgroup significantly different from that of the Stateside soldier. Much of the discussion during this study makes it apparent that according to the returnee's scale of values, the Stateside soldier is inferior in terms of experience and status. This observation is consistent with Star's findings.⁶

It is noteworthy that the analysis produced four categories, each of which contained 10 per cent or more of the total comments. These categories were concerned with garrison duty (14.6%), new duty assignments (12.5%), deference and recognition of service (11.5%), and basic training (10.2%). The remaining 34% of the comments seem to be fairly well distributed among the other categories.

⁶Star, *op. cit.*, p. 519.

In terms of the above four categories, one is of particular interest: comments concerning basic training. As mentioned above, many of the participants were assigned as cadre in BCT companies. The dissatisfaction expressed by these returnees pertained to two general areas: (a) They thought that the current status of basic training is not hard enough on new recruits; and (b) they felt that the basic training programs do not utilize their individual talents and experiences. The cadre member who is a Vietnam returnee is forced to follow a program of training which his Vietnam experience tells him will not prepare the trainee for Vietnam. It is interesting to note that Star's study of World War II returnees presents essentially the same picture of the combat returnee assigned to a basic training company.

Many of them were emotionally unstable and most unenthusiastic about the Army and especially about garrison discipline. Moreover, many returnees who did become instructors soon found themselves at war with the training program. It was their frequent claim that the training program was impractical or out of date, and their orders to follow the training manuals created much friction.⁷

It is realized, of course, that comments referring to basic training are essentially referring to new duty assignment. When the returnee is expressing dissatisfaction with his duty as an instructor in basic training, he is at the same time expressing dissatisfaction with his duty assignment. Because many combat returnees are utilized to aid in instruction, it was decided to differentiate the two categories. If one pools the data from these two categories, however, it can be seen that almost one-fourth (22.7%) of all comments were directed toward some aspect of the returnee's new duty assignment.

Another category worth noting is the one dealing with the returnee's attitudes toward deference and recognition for his accomplishments. This category contained 11.5 per cent of the total comments. Star's study of World War II returnees clarifies this finding:

As experienced soldiers, returnees expected that their achievements would be recognized. They were not raw recruits. They were men who had put their Army training to the use for which it was intended, and they felt entitled, on that account, to deference from civilians and less seasoned soldiers alike.⁸

⁷Ibid., p. 480.

⁸Ibid., p. 466.

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As noted earlier, the purpose of the present research was to determine general areas of adjustment which the Vietnam returnee perceives as most difficult. On the basis of an analysis of five open-end discussion sessions, these areas have been identified within the limits of the sample examined in this study. The findings support the hypothesis that the returnee is most concerned with (a) garrison discipline, (b) new duty assignment, and (c) deference and recognition for his service.

The next step in examining the adjustment and attitudes of combat returnees is to define and study the various component factors in each category. The present study has laid the foundation for future research concerned with quantifications of both the direction and the intensity of specific attitudes of the Vietnam returnee.

