

DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY  
1ST BATTALION 12TH INFANTRY  
"RED WARRIORS"  
APO SAN FRANCISCO 96262

AVDDB-12I

28 October 1969

**SUBJECT:** Operations Report - Lessons Learned.

**OBSERVATION:** It is difficult to maintain a stable firing position for 4.2" mortar baseplates during periods of frequent rain.

**EVALUATION:** The use of wood and rock to form a firm position for the baseplate is sufficient only for short periods of time.

**RECOMMENDATION:** That a cement hard stand large enough to seat the baseplate be constructed with the aid of attached engineer personnel.

**OBSERVATION:** That 4.2 mortar personnel are not qualified to detect worn or defective parts on their equipment.

**EVALUATION:** It is too time-consuming to send the entire gun to the rear to have parts replaced.

**RECOMMENDATION:** That qualified maintenance personnel make regular on the spot technical inspections of all 4.2" guns, replacing parts as needed when possible.

**OBSERVATION:** Radio communication with short range patrol teams is often a problem area due to terrain and weather.

**EVALUATION:** Patrols must return to their parent organization if the situation permits when communication fails.

**RECOMMENDATION:** That short range patrols be equipped with an extra handset and antenna in order to replace these components in the event that they malfunction.

**OBSERVATION:** Accomplishment of Dust-offs during periods of limited visibility for short range patrols is hampered by the inability of the SRP to illuminate the LZ.

**EVALUATION:** Illumination from artillery and mortars is helpful for general orientation but not sufficient to pinpoint a landing zone.

**RECOMMENDATION:** That all personnel on short range patrols be equipped with a light source of some sort. A strobe light is preferable but when not available in quantity a flashlight is an adequate substitute.

**SUBJECT:** Operation Report - Lessons Learned.

**OBSERVATION:** Minor cuts and scrapes suffered by members of short range patrols can easily become infected during the course of a mission and in the absence of medical personnel.

**EVALUATION:** Self treatment of these minor cuts can prevent infection and prevent aborting the mission.

**RECOMMENDATION:** That all members of short range patrols be equipped with some medical supplies to include aspirin, gauze, tape and iodine.

**OBSERVATION:** Adjustment of artillery fire by short range patrols in the vicinity of suspected movement often produces negative results.

**EVALUATION:** Employment of artillery only in the vicinity of suspected movement allows the enemy to flee the area by moving in the opposite direction.

**RECOMMENDATION:** That short range patrols, as with all small unit contacts, employ artillery fires on both flanks simultaneously in order to confuse and channelize the enemy.

**OBSERVATION:** To determine a workable method for employing forces in the AN-LOA Valley.

**EVALUATION:** Initial employment of forces in company or reinforced platoon size elements proved unsuited for the terrain encountered. An improved method bore noticeable results when each company began employing platoon or platoon minus size RIF's in the vicinity of SEL. Using smaller size elements decreases the exposure time as well as increasing the rate of movement and flexibility of the unit.

**RECOMMENDATION:** That forces operating in the AN-LOA utilize small RIF's and SRP's to more effectively cover the AO.

**OBSERVATION:** It is often difficult to obtain a blasting machine for hasty demolitions work.

**EVALUATION:** When available the blasting machine is too bulky for easy storage and movement.

**RECOMMENDATION:** The firing device for the claymore mine is an adequate substitute when no more than one blasting cap is to be fired. When a multiple charge is ignited an AN/PRC-25 battery will serve as an adequate field expedient.

**SUBJECT: Operations Report - Lessons Learned.**

**OBSERVATION:** The clearing of fields of fire for patrol bases and fire support bases is often difficult and time consuming when encountering bamboo and heavy underbrush.

**EVALUATION:** Use of the machete is slow and tiring and requires a large pool of manpower.

**RECOMMENDATION:** That attached engineer personnel be utilized to speed the clearing of fields of fire when encountering bamboo, small trees, and thick underbrush, by employing bangalore charges. Each bangalore will clear an area approximately 10'x10'.

**OBSERVATION:** Clearing of landing zones when utilizing chainsaws is often slowed by maintainance problems.

**EVALUATION:** Continuous use of all chainsaws when clearing a landing zone often results in one or more chainsaws becoming inoperable after extended use.

**RECOMMENDATION:** It is preferable when three chainsaws are available to operate only two at any one time. The remaining saw being held in reserve to be employed when any become inoperable, the operator can then attempt to correct the malfunction while the reserve saw is employed.

**OBSERVATION:** During periods of inclement weather radio handsets often collect moisture and malfunction.

**EVALUATION:** The use of the plastic covering which is supplied with AN/PRC-25 batteries still allows moisture to condense inside the handset.

**RECOMMENDATION:** In addition to utilizing the plastic covering to repel water it is advisable first to encase the handset in a spare sock and then cover the sock and handset with the plastic covering secured by string or rubber bands.

**OBSERVATION:** During periods of excessive rain the AN/PRC-25 may become inoperable due to water collecting in the radio.

**EVALUATION:** Covering the radio with a poncho or suitable covering provides partial protection.

**RECOMMENDATIONS:** The radio will repel water more effectively when carried upside down, bending the flexible joint of the short-whip antenna to a vertical position.

**SUBJECT: Operations Report - Lessons Learned.**

**OBSERVATION:** That perimeter defenses for fire support bases may have "dead spots" due to terrain which must be covered by claymore anti-personnel mines, trip flares and M-79 fire.

**EVALUATION:** The use of the above gives only partial protection against infiltration.

**RECOMMENDATION:** That in addition to other protective measures fougasse canisters be positioned around the perimeter which can be detonated from the respective fighting positions. An expended 105 howitzer canister serves as an adequate container for use of fougasse.

**OBSERVATION:** That too often placement of trip flares follows a pattern that can be easily discerned by infiltrators.

**EVALUATION:** That movement of trip flares daily, as with camouflage, will help somewhat.

**RECOMMENDATION:** That trip flares be positioned perpendicular to the perimeter as well as tangent to it with care being exercised to avoid setting a pattern.

**OBSERVATION:** That employment of tactical and defensive wire around the perimeter will lose its usefulness if precautions are not taken to check its serviceability.

**EVALUATION:** That C-ration and empty soda cans filled with pebbles and hung from the wire can provide some warning of an attempted breach.

**RECOMMENDATION:** That trip flares be randomly placed within and attached to defensive wire to warn of attempts to cut or breach the wire.

GORDON S. AXELSON  
MAJ, Infantry  
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