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**AUTHORITY**

28 Feb 1979, DoDD 5200.10; AGO/DA ltr, 29 Apr 1980
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CONFIDENTIAL
DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
OFFICE OF THE ADJUTANT GENERAL
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20310

SUBJECT: Operational Report - Lessons Learned, 39th Signal Battalion (SPT)

9 Operational rept. for quarterly period ending 31 Jan 67.

TO: SEE DISTRIBUTION

1. Forwarded as inclosure is Operational Report - Lessons Learned, Headquarters, 39th Signal Battalion (SPT) for quarterly period ending 31 January 1967. Information contained in this report should be reviewed and evaluated by CDC in accordance with paragraph 6f of AR 1-19 and by CONARC in accordance with paragraph 6c and d of AR 1-19. Evaluations and corrective actions should be reported to ACSFOR OT within 90 days of receipt of covering letter.

2. Information contained in this report is provided to the Commandants of the Service Schools to insure appropriate benefits in the future from lessons learned during current operations, and may be adapted for use in developing training material.

BY ORDER OF THE SECRETARY OF THE ARMY:

C. A. STANFIELD
Colonel, AGC
Acting The Adjutant General

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National Aeronautics and Space Administration

TO: Deputy Commanding General
United States Army Vietnam
ATTN: AVHOC
APO 96307

Section I, Significant Organisational Activities

1. (C) During the reporting period the 39th Signal Battalion, assigned to the 2d Signal Group, was commanded by Lieutenant Colonel Donald L. Jenkins. Captain Larry R. Adair commanded the 232d Signal Company until 15 December 1966 when the unit became the 44th Signal Battalion. Captain William P. Rexroad commanded Headquarters and Headquarters Detachment until 5 January 1967 when 1st Lieutenant Gallic Moore, Jr. assumed command. Company D, 41st Signal Battalion, attached to the 39th Signal Battalion was commanded by Captain Donald E. Keen until 5 January 1967, at which time Captain William P. Rexroad assumed command. Captain William R. Smith, Jr. commanded the 267th Signal Company until 12 November 1966 at which time Captain Hugh M. Henke assumed command. The 518th Signal Company was commanded by Captain Daniel M. Jones until 6 November 1966, when Captain Bernard K. Kellom, Jr. assumed command.

2. (C) On 26 November 1966, Company C, 36th Signal Battalion, commanded by Captain Franklin F. Follett, was attached to the 39th Signal Battalion. On 28 December 1966, 1st Lieutenant Daniel S. Klunk assumed command.

3. (C) The Battalion performed its mission of signal support in the Army of the Republic of Vietnam (ARVN) III and IV Corps areas during the reporting period. The 39th Signal Battalion had only limited operations in the IV Corps area, operating a 45 channel microwave system from Vinh Long to Can Tho and termination of a 12 channel VHF system at Vung Tru from Ly Tho, until 10 January 1967 when a provisional platoon from Company C, 36th Signal Battalion started setting up base camp communications at Don Ta, 6 kilometers west of Ly Tho.

4. (C) The Battalion sponsored Company C, 36th Signal Battalion upon its arrival 28 November 1966. The company was established at Bearcat (Long Thanh North) the same day.

5. (C) During the reporting period Company C, 36th Signal Battalion deployed overseas to the Republic of Vietnam from Fort Bragg,
North Carolina. The unit was notified of its impending deployment in June 1966 and immediately began preparations for movement. These preparations included RWV orientation, qualification in arms, training to improve MOS qualifications, and preparation of equipment for overseas shipment. The unit had its Operational Readiness test 7, 8, and 9th of October 1966 and shipped its equipment 17 through 22 October 66. The main body of troops departed Fort Bragg on 8 November 1966, while the advance party of one officer and four enlisted men flew to Vietnam on 14 November 1966. The main body arrived at Vung Tau aboard the MSTS ship NSNS OBER on 28 November 1966 and was flown to Gear Cat by C-123 aircraft the same day. The major difficulties encountered during FOM were as follows.

a. Replacement personnel filtered into the unit up to two weeks prior to deployment, making it impossible to fully train or properly process those personnel for RWV orientation, qualification in arms, and mandatory subjects training. Equipment and weapons had been shipped; however, training was attempted aboard ship, but the lack of space made this unfeasible.

b. Repair parts and all TOE equipment were slow in being issued to the unit. The unit did not have all of its required generators until the day its equipment was shipped to port. At port the generators were received, stenciled, and shipped. These generators would not have been received had the inspection team from higher headquarters called all over corps trying to locate enough generators to fill the unit. In lieu of two All/HP-73 Radio Terminal Sets one EN/MRC-69 Radio Terminal Set was issued. This gave the unit its required capability in number of radio relay sets and carrier equipment, but did not give the unit its required number of teletype carrier equipment AWR/TCC-20.

c. The unit was informed by transportation personnel that the basic load of ammunition would be placed in a conex container, loaded aboard ship, and stowed on deck. The ammunition would not be available during the sea voyage but upon debarkation the conex containers would be opened and the ammunition distributed. The night before debarkation it was learned from the Navy and transportation personnel in RWV that the conex containers would not be opened and that the ammunition would be handled as hold baggage. As a result, the unit did not receive its basic load of ammunition until three days after it had arrived at its final destination. The S-6 of the 39th Signal Battalion obtained ammunition for the company (more ammunition was obtained from an armored cavalry troop in the area) in order that the unit could defend itself.
SUBJECT: Operational Report for Quarterly Period Ending 31 January 1967, Reports Control Symbol CS/QR-65

6. (C) On 30 January 1967 the 267th Signal Company (Cable Construction) moved by truck convoy from Vung Tau to Ben Hoa. They joined a convoy of a brigade of the 9th Infantry Division. Another brigade secured highway 15 from Bong (Phuoc Long) to Bearcat (Long Thanh North) for the move. All vehicles were sandbagged for protection and the trip was made without incident.

7. (C) Significant communications activities during the period 1 November 1966 through 31 January 1967 are as follows:

a. Company C, 36th Signal Battalion was tasked to provide base camp communications support at Bearcat (Long Thanh North), RVN, for the 3rd Brigade, 4th Infantry Division to enable the Brigade to move its communications equipment and personnel to a new location. In order to provide base camp communications the company had on loan a Teletypewriter Central Office AN/KTC-9 for a telephone switchboard, a Communication Patching Panel SB-616/1RC, two AN/RBC-69 Radio Terminal Sets, and a Telegraph Terminal AN/KSC-29 for a concentrator facility until their equipment arrived in country. The 518th Signal Company erected a 106 foot AB-585 tower at Bearcat for the VHF antennas. When the 9th Infantry Division moved into Bearcat the switchboard became overloaded. Company C installed its own Manual Telephone Central Office AN/KTC-1. At the same time the loaned equipment was replaced by the unit's Communications Patching Panel SB-616/1RC, Radio Repeater Sets AN/RBC-54(V), Telegraph-Telephone Terminals AN/KTC-6, and a AN/OSQ-80 shelter to go with the AN/KSC-29 to form a complete concentrator facility. The 267th Signal Company (Cable Construction) installed an extensive outside cable plant for Bearcat Phase I. In order that the outside plant cable could be connected to tactical equipment, an intermediate distribution frame was constructed in the Signal operations area. This operation gave valuable training to the unit in cutting over from one switchboard to another and in reterminating systems from one area to another.

b. The Vung Tau-Saigon microwave (AN/TRC-29) system was upgraded from 22 to 45 voice frequency channels by the 518th Signal Company on 14 November 1966 upon the return of AN/TCC-13 multiplex equipment from Thailand.

c. Company D, 41st Signal Battalion (39th Signal Battalion) completed the installation of a 1000 line Dial Central Office begun 15 October 1966 at the Vung Tau Airfield communications building. The cutover to the dial system (upgraded from six to seven digits) is now planned for 25 February 1967. During the construction of the Dial Central Office a new outside cable plant was being installed by the 267th Signal Company. This project was completed in January 1967, and the present manual telephone system was converted to the new outside plant pending the cutover to dial service.
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14 February 1967


d. The 516th Signal Company erected a 78 foot AB-216 tower for the 121st Signal Battalion at Di An 16 November 1966. In December 1966 they erected a 120 foot AB-216 tower for the 125th Signal Battalion at Lai Khe and a 264 foot AB-216 tower for the 18th Engineer Brigade at Bien Hoa. In January 1967, an AB-216 tower was extended from 48 feet to 78 feet for the 36th Signal Battalion at Gia Rie.

e. One 23 channel microwave (AN/TRC-29) system between Nha Trang and Cam Ranh Bay, with a relay at Hon Tre Island, was installed 1 January 1967 by the 516th Signal Company. A 45 channel microwave (AN/ITC-29) system between Nha Trang and Tuy Hoa with "drop and insert" relays at Minh Hoa, Hon Tre Island, and Vung Hoay was installed 26 January 1967. In addition, the 516th Signal Company also installed a 45 channel microwave (AN/ITC-29) system between Saigon and Long Binh. Radio contact was established 31 January 1967 with channelization scheduled in February 1967.

f. The 267th Signal Company started extensive construction on an outside cable plant for Bien Hoa in support of the 173rd Airborne Brigade and other units in the Bien Hoa area.

g. In January 1967 Company C, 36th Signal Battalion, attached to the 35th Signal Battalion, was tasked to provide base camp communications for one brigade of the 9th Infantry Division at Dong Taw, RVN, using a provisional platoon. Communications Support provided the brigade included switchboard, concentrator, multichannel VHF radio systems, and wire/cable construction. The 516th Signal Company erected a 204 foot AB-216 tower for the mounting of VHF antennas. The soil posed a problem for erection of the antenna towers and telephone poles. The ground in the area had been dredged from the river bottom and had not settled enough to give a firm foundation for the tower and poles. Installation of telephone poles in the area and the erection of the tower gave valuable experience to personnel of the battalion in construction using unstable soil.

Section 2, Commanders Observations and Recommendations (U)

Part 1, Observations (Lessons Learned) (U)

1. (B) Personnel: None
2. (C) Operations

Commitments of New Signal Units Upon Arrival in Country

Item: Time of commitment of new signal units upon arrival in country.

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SUBJECT: Operational Report for Quarterly Period Ending 31 January 1967, Reports Control Number CSF R-65

DISCUSSION: During the first two to three weeks in country, a new unit normally does not have its TO&E equipment to undertake an assigned mission. A unit can complete a mission more rapidly utilizing its own equipment rather than borrowed equipment which is not always adequate for the task. A short, additional waiting period (operating permitting) would give the unit a chance to properly program work and mission. It would also avoid the additional delays by reconverting to TO&E equipment upon arrival.

Observation: A newly arrived unit should be allowed time to become settled and to receive TO&E equipment before being committed.

Microwave Systems Alignment

Item: Difficulties in aligning new microwave systems.

Discussion: An extended alignment time of over a week was required for a system from Nha Trang to Tuy Hoa due to the large number of relays (Ninh Hoa, Hon Tre Island and Vung Ro Bay). The lack of alternate communications from Vung Ro Bay to Ninh Hoa and Tuy Hoa, on a station to station basis, further lengthened alignment time.

Observation: Strict system control by a single station is required to minimize alignment time. Alternate communications are needed from station to station to facilitate control. Detailed alignment procedure and system control techniques should be included in plans for new system installation.

Two Frequency Relay Plans for Microwave

Item: Use of the two frequency plan for microwave systems.

Discussion: A two frequency relay plan, including all criteria outlined in TM 569, was employed on all possible microwave relays by the 516th Signal Company. Unpredicted failures developed in the form of high random noise and interference. Hon Tre Island experienced both troubles and corrected them by going to a four frequency plan.

Observation: The two frequency plan gives unpredicted results but should be utilized in systems planning. The two frequency plan should be used on a trial and error basis to reduce the number of frequencies and equipment used wherever possible.
Signal Company Operations Sections

**Item:** An operations section is needed in every signal company.

**Discussion:** A strong central coordinating point is required for coordination between the various sections and platoons of a company.

**Observation:** Restoring circuits and systems to service are greatly enhanced by a company operations section.

**Installation of Multipair Cable**

**Item:** 60 cycle hum on cable pairs.

**Discussion:** Telephone lines that parallel power lines often pick up a 60 cycle hum when the power lines are too close to the telephone cable.

**Observation:** Using shielded cable, increasing the distance between the power lines and the telephone cable, and avoiding power lines altogether where possible will eliminate or greatly reduce the induced noise.

**Non-Organizational Power Sources**

**Item:** Installation of Non-organizational power sources.

**Discussion:** It has been the experience of units in the 39th Signal Battalion that Post R & U generators cannot be utilized by signal equipment shelters unless these shelters have the grounding lines in the power panel disconnected in order to isolate the power lines. If this is not done it is possible to obtain from 90 to 110 volts on the signal van itself.

**Observation:** Units should use caution when obtaining power from source other than TOA-E power equipment.

**3. Training and Organization**

**Orientation Prior to POM**

**Item:** Necessity for orientation prior to POM.

**Discussion:** Signal units arriving in Vietnam are not fully briefed on missions and tasks required of them prior to arrival in country. This makes it difficult for the incoming unit to make adequate plans for setting
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SCCIVSG-SRC


up to perform its mission.

Observation: Upon notification of overseas movement, liaison with a like unit should be established well in advance of actual POM. Although the two units may have different missions to perform, the problem areas are generally the same. This should eliminate a majority of settling-in problems for a new unit arriving in country.

MOS Training Prior to POM

Item: Need for additional training of personnel coming to Vietnam.

Discussion: Due to the immediate commitment of personnel upon arrival in country, operators should be knowledgeable in their MOS without further OJT.

Observation: Replacement personnel arriving in this command from AIT in various MOS's need additional training before they are qualified to assume responsible duty assignments. This is especially true in MOS's 72B, 31H, 31L, and 72G.

Cross Training of Signal Personnel

Item: A requirement exists for cross training of Signal Personnel outside their MOS.

Discussion: Because of the terrain in Vietnam and the situations at isolated sites, signal personnel cannot always be used strictly in the MOS for which they have been trained. Personnel must have knowledge in the erection and maintenance of various towers, used by Combat Area Signal Companies to provide base camp support, which in the III and IV CTZ means utilization of AB-216 and AB-565 towers. Personnel must have knowledge on field expedients used to install communications sites with marginal equipment and supplies. Signal personnel coming into Vietnam are not usually familiar with current DCA SAM SOP's, SOI's, and SSI's. Also a lack of signal personnel makes it necessary to cross train personnel in other MOS's in order to accomplish the mission.

Observation: That signal personnel coming to Vietnam must be cross trained in other MOS's in order to alleviate the shortage of personnel in certain MOS's. Also personnel should receive instruction in DCA SOP's, SSI's and SOI's in order to eliminate confusion and deployment time upon entry into country.
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Training and Organization

Organization of Cable Construction Companies

Item: The capability of a long line spiral four cable construction company to construct heavy cable construction lines.

Discussion: The 267th Signal Company is presently organized and equipped to construct long spiral four cable lines. Its mission in Vietnam is the construction of multipair cable on pole lines for which sufficient equipment is not available.

Observation: If a unit is given a mission for which it is not properly equipped, the proper equipment must be given the unit to do the job. A new MTOE has been submitted for the 267th Signal Company.

Instructions for Building Bunkers

Item: Lack of information on building bunkers.

Discussion: There are no references as to how to sandbag signal equipment shelters. All signal shelters must be completely sandbagged, including overhead cover, to preclude incoming mortar rounds from causing damage. Because of the lack of adequate instructions regarding field fortifications, a trial and error method has to be used.

Observation: A change to FM5-15 Field Fortifications, covering construction of large bunkers in terrain such as encountered in Vietnam, should be published.

AN/TRC-24 Antennas

Item: Deterioration of AN/TRC-24 Antennas

Discussion: Exposure to salt air has been found to cause deterioration on AN/TRC-24 antennae. Some dipoles were found to be corroded to a point where they were unserviceable.

Observation: Periodic removal of antennae for maintenance will reduce deterioration and the requirement for spare antennae. Reflectors can be cleaned and painted to retard corrosion. Threads can be cleaned with a tap and greased to reduce corrosion. Dipoles should be covered with a light coat of oil before use.
Maintenance of Switchboards

Item: Maintenance of Switchboards

Discussion: The telephone is the primary means of staff communications in Vietnam. Line packs, relays, cords, jacks, and transmit elements in headsets have a rapid attrition rate causing poor or lost communications.

Observation: Emphasis should be placed on the maintenance and operation of all types of switchboards. Switchboard plugs should be cleaned at least weekly using an approved plug polish instead of commercial brass polish which leaves a filmy residue.

Necessary Building Equipment Above TOAE Allowances

Item: Necessity of obtaining extra building equipment over and above TOAE allowances.

Discussion: Every new unit coming to Vietnam should be prepared to complete many and various construction jobs not covered by their TOAE mission.

Observation: Before departing the US a unit should try to obtain light construction equipment and materials to build buildings, showers, latrines, supply rooms, orderly rooms, and recreation areas. Such things as pipe, saws, hammers, nails, shovels, drills, mattocks, and shower heads should be collected in order to enable a unit to install adequate billets.

Heavy Cable Construction Supplies

Item: A shortage of supplies for heavy cable construction.

Discussion: Requisitions for supplies for multipair cable construction are not being filled; as a result field expedients are being employed to accomplish the mission.

Observation: The supply system should be analyzed for more efficient acquisition of heavy cable construction supplies. This is particularly true of multipair cable splicing materials and tools.

4. Intelligence - None

5. Logistics

Hose Life

Item: Deterioration of oil hoses on gasoline engine, model 4A084-II.

Discussion: On the gasoline engine, Military Standard, Model 4A084-II the two oil line hoses rub together from vibrations during normal operation. This has the effect of breaking the hoses down, causing severe oil leaks. Many times these leaks are undetectable until after damage has already been caused to the engine.

Observation: Wear on the oil lines can be eliminated by installing two metal bands on the hoses in the area where they touch.

Part 2 Recommendations

1. Personnel: None

2. Operations:

   /A. It is recommended that each signal company set up an operations section for coordination between the various sections and platoons of a company.

   /B. A newly arrived unit should not be committed for an operation until it has received its T&E equipment.

   /C. In aligning microwave systems alternate communications must be provided from station to station to facilitate control.

3. Training and Organization

   /A. It is recommended that direct liaison be made between units already in Vietnam and units that have been alerted for overseas deployment. This will enable the deploying unit to get an idea of its future mission and what the unit should bring into Vietnam to accomplish its mission.

   /B. A change to FM5-15 Field Fortifications covering construction of large bunkers on terrain such as encountered in Vietnam should be published.

4. Intelligence - None

5. Logistics

The supply system should be analyzed for more efficient acquisition of heavy cable construction supplies such as multipair cable splicing materials and tools.

DONALD L JENKINS
LTC SPC
Commanding
SUBJECT: Operational Report for Quarterly Period Ending 31 January 1967  
(ROG OSFCR-65) (U)

TO: Assistant Chief of Staff for Force Development, Department of the Army (ACSFCE, DA), Washington, D.C. 20315

1. (U) Operational Report for Quarterly Period Ending 31 January 1967 submitted by the 39th Signal Battalion has been reviewed and found to be adequate, with the following comments noted:

   Section 2, Part 2, Recommendations, paragraph 3a: Recommend direct coordination between sponsoring unit and incoming unit be authorized and incorporated into 1st Signal Brigade Regulation 612-1, Reception and Processing of Incoming Units.

   2. (U) Further, I fully concur in the Commander's Observations and Recommendations portion of the report.

1 Incl Added

Organizational Chart

[Signature]
Colonel, SigC
Commanding
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SCWP (31 Jan 67) 2d In.
SUBJECT: Operational Report for the Quarterly Period Ending 31 January 1967 (RCS CSPUR-65) (U)

HEADQUARTERS, 1ST SIGNAL BRIGADE (USA STRATCOM), APO San Francisco 96307 16 Mar 1967

TO: Commanding General, United States Army Vietnam, ATTN: AVHOC-DH
APO 96307
Commanding General, USA STRATCOM, Washington, D.C. 20315

1. (U) IAW AR 1-19, subject report from the 39th Signal Battalion is forwarded.

2. (U) Concur in the Commander's Observations with the following comments:

a. Item: Orientation prior to POM page 6. 1st Signal Brigade Regulation 612-1, Reception and Processing of Incoming Units, will be changed to incorporate the recommendations.

b. The requisitions for cable construction supplies and equipment are not being filled rapidly for three major reasons:

   (1) A lack of timely forecasting.

   (2) Commercial production capability was not prepared for heavy demands generated in Vietnam.

   (3) The supply of initial demands for items in Vietnam requires at least 180 days for materials assigned an PSN. Most of the materials required for outside plant installation were not assigned an PSN until October 1966.

c. The following efforts are now in effect to improve the supply of needed installation materials:

   (1) Consumption of hardware splicing materials has been forecasted for the next year and provided to the supply centers.

   (2) Cable requirements are being forecasted for advance requisitioning through the 14th Inventory Control Center.

   (3) New items, which are identified by telephone engineers and considered appropriate for standard use, are added to the Mission Essential List and the estimated consumption of these items sent to VNM for advance procurement.
Operational Report for the Quarterly Period Ending 31 January 1967 (RCS CSFOR-65) (U)

(4) Depot stockage of cable hardware items has been established for each depot in Vietnam and requisitions have been submitted to provide stockage.

d. The availability of outside plant installation materials is increasing weekly; however, the next six months will be a problem due to the late identifications of specific items, quantities, and Federal Stock Number.

3. (U) Concur in the Commander's Recommendations with the following comments:

   a. Recommendation 2b. Ideally newly arrived units should not be committed until their TOE equipment has arrived; however, the mission of providing communications electronics support has necessitated employment of these units prior to arrival of their equipment.

   b. Recommendation 3a. See paragraph 2a above.

   c. Recommendation 5. See paragraph 2b above.

FOR THE COMMANDER:

William A. Higgins
Colonel, SgC
Deputy
AVHQC-DH (14 Feb 67) 3d Ind
SUBJECT: Operational Report—Lessons Learned for the Period Ending 31 January 1967 (RCS GSPOR-65)

HEADQUARTERS, UNITED STATES ARMY VIETNAM, APO San Francisco 96307 14 APR 1967

TO: Commander in Chief, United States Army, Pacific, ATTN: GPOP-OT APO 96558

1. This headquarters has reviewed the Operational Report—Lessons Learned for the period ending 31 January 1967 from Headquarters, 39th Signal Battalion (Support) as indorsed.

2. Pertinent comments follow:

a. Reference Item on the organisation of cable construction companies, Page 6: MTOE referred to would have been submitted through USASTRATCOM channels.

b. Reference Item concerning the lack of information on building bunkers, Page 8; and Paragraph 3B, Page 10: Nonconcur. Paragraphs 30 and 39 of FM 5-15 are considered adequate for providing instructions on the employment of sandbags and large bunker construction. Interpretation of the instructions in FM 5-15 can be obtained from nearby engineer units.

c. Reference Item on necessary building equipment, Page 9: Nonconcur. Deploying units which require light construction material are provided a NATO package. In-country construction of semi-permanent facilities is a function of base development. It would be both impractical and uneconomical to burden a deploying unit with construction material.

d. Reference Item on deterioration of hose life, Page 10: This unit has established a field-fix, but should submit an Equipment Improvement Report to permit data accumulation on the 4A084-II gasoline engine.


g. Reference Recommendation 3A, Page 10: Concur. Action described in paragraph 2a, 2d Indorsement, is considered appropriate.
AVHOC-DH (14 Feb 67)

SUBJECT: Operational Report—Lessons Learned for the Period Ending 31 January 1967 (BCS CSFOR-65)

h. Reference Recommendation 3b, Page 10: Nonconcur. See paragraph 2b, above.

i. Reference Recommendation 5, Page 10: Concur with comments of 1st Signal Brigade in paragraphs 2c and 2d, 2d Indorsement.

FOR THE COMMANDER:

[Signature]

JERRY VAN HORN
LT, AGC
Ass. AG
CONFIDENTIAL

CPOP-OT (14 Feb 67)  4th Ind (U)
SUBJECT: Operational Report-Lessons Learned for the Period Ending
31 January 1967 (RCS CPOP-65) - Hq 39th Sig Bn (Spt)

HQ, US ARMY, PACIFIC, APO San Francisco 96558  5 MAY 1967

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

This headquarters concurs in the basic report as indorsed.

FOR THE COMMANDER IN CHIEF:

[Signature]

G. R. KOBALY
CP2, AGC
Asst AG

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