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AUTHORITY

28 Feb 1979, DoDD 5200.10; AGO DA ltr dtd 29 Apr 1980

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DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
OFFICE OF THE ADJUTANT GENERAL
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20310

(11) 24 Feb 67

(12) 23 p.

4 May 1967

IN REPLY REFER TO
AGAM-P (M) (25 Apr 67) FOR OT

SUBJECT: Operational Report - Lessons Learned, 54th Artillery Group
(Headquarters) (2)-8

AD389971

TO: SEE DISTRIBUTION

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

Forwarded as inclosure is Operational Report - Lessons Learned, Headquarters, 54th Artillery Group for 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:

Kenneth G. Wickham

KENNETH G. WICKHAM
Major General, USA
The Adjutant General

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DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
HEADQUARTERS, 54TH ARTILLERY GROUP
APO San Francisco 96257

AVGA-C

14 February 1967

SUBJECT: Operational report on Lessons Learned (U)

THRU: Commanding General
II Field Force Vietnam Artillery
ATTN: AVFB-FAC
APO 96266

Commanding General
United States Army Vietnam
ATTN: AIC-DH
APO 96307

Commander-in-Chief
United States Army Pacific
ATTN: GFCF-MH
APO 96558

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

SECTION I

SIGNIFICANT HEADQUARTERS OR UNIT ACTIVITIES

1. (C) Administration and Personnel.

a. This headquarters remains assigned to United States Army Vietnam (USARV) and operates as a major subordinate command of USARV. Commanding General, II Field Force Vietnam Artillery retains operational control of the 54th Artillery Group.

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<u>LOCATION</u>	<u>NUMBER OF QUOTAS</u>
Bangkok	19
Hong Kong	18
Taipei	19
Penang	8

h. Unit mail clerks pick up and deliver mail at the nearest APO as follows:

(1) HHS, 54th Arty Gp - APO 96257

(2) 7th Bn, 9th Arty - APO 96370

(3) 2d Bn, 35th Arty

HHS	- APO 96257
B Btry	- APO 96257
C Btry	- APO 96257
A Btry	- APO 96291
Svc Btry	- APO 96491

(4) 1st Bn, 83d Arty

HHS	- APO 96291
A Btry	- APO 96291
Svc Btry	- APO 96291
B Btry	- APO 96370
C Btry	- APO 96257

i. Judicial and non-judicial actions by units included:

<u>UNIT</u>	<u>ART 15</u>	<u>SCM</u>	<u>SPCM</u>	<u>CCM</u>
HHS, 54th Arty Gp	9	0	4	0
7th Bn, 9th Arty	21	0	1	0
2d Bn, 35th Arty	32	8	3	1
1st Bn, 83d Arty	21	0	1	0

j. Reportable accidents included:

<u>UNIT</u>	<u>VEHICLE</u>	<u>AIRCRAFT</u>	<u>PERSONNEL</u>
HHS, 54th Arty Gp	0	0	1
7th Bn, 9th Arty	2	0	5
2d Bn, 35th Arty	6	0	6
1st Bn, 83d Arty	3	0	2

k. The morale of the group is excellent.

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l. Educational opportunities for personnel are provided by USAFI extension courses and GED.

m. Religious services are held each Sunday at base camps by both Catholic and Protestant Chaplains assigned to the group. Chaplains visit field locations and conduct services and counselling during the weekdays. The chapel at the group base camp has been erected. Interior work is being completed.

n. Headquarters and Headquarters Battery Base Camp -

Development of the base camp progressed rapidly during the reporting period. C, Company, 27th Engineer Battalion stayed in the area until 12 November. Prior to its departure, the company had completed the following buildings:

- 2 Latrines
- 2 Showers
- Operations building
- mess hall
- Hq building
- warehouse
- Dispensary
- Orderly room/supply room

Through self-help, the Headquarters Battery constructed the following by 31 January:

- 6 NCO billets
- 2 NCO billets
- Communications building
- NCO Club (not completed)
- Officers' Club (not completed)
- Chapel (not completed)
- 5 SQ buildings (smaller than standard size)

On 24 December a brief ceremony was held to name streets and certain installations in Camp Lee.

o. medical section activities included the following:

(1) During this period two Battalion Aid Stations and the 54th Group Headquarter dispensary became fully operational within wood-on buildings. These buildings were constructed along similar lines, providing space for efficient, modern handling of routine and emergency medical problems. In addition space has been provided in all the dispensaries for over-night care of patients on quarters.

(2) Preventive medicine activities have continued to receive emphasis with excellent results. Environmental sanitation within the

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Group has been superb. It is felt that the low incidence of Gastro-intestinal diarrheal disease is a direct result of this. The malaria prophylaxis program has had notable success, as units from this command have operated within endemic malaria areas with extremely low incidence of disease.

(3) A cooperative Venereal disease control program has been initiated in the Xuan Loc area. This program involves US and ARVN medical corps officers, the Province medical chief, a Philippine Free-World-Medical-Assistance Team, and utilizes the facilities of the Long Khanh Province Hospital. In addition Venereal disease information lectures are conducted by medical corps officers.

(4) All medical units of this command have participated in "MEDCAP" activities. Attempts have been made to always include Vietnamese nationals in these activities either as interpreters, nurses, or aid-men. Activities have included school physicals on grade school children, medical visits to outlying villages, emergency medical treatment of injured Vietnamese, and assignment of airmen, who have received OJT training in radiology and laboratory techniques, to Vietnamese Province Hospitals.

(5) Effective and beneficial liaison has been established with Vietnamese civilian doctors, 18th ARVN Division Doctors, and Philippine Doctors in the Xuan Loc area. Two medical society meetings have been held with lectures and discussions of common medical problems.

2. (C) Intelligence.

a. The 54th Artillery Group conducted a one hundred percent semi-annual inventory of classified documents during the month of November. There were no short-comings.

b. The group was provided three O1 type aircraft each day for visual reconnaissance, adjustment of artillery fires, and convoy coverage. An average of 42 visual reconnaissance missions were flown each week with an average of 15 hours per day in the air. In the month of January a total of 171 "will adjust" missions were fired using these three O1's. An average of 10 hours per week were flown in convoy cover missions. The group headquarters also received, on an average of five out of seven days, one OH-13 type aircraft for the use of the group commander.

c. When night reconnaissance missions were flown, only two aircraft were available during day light hours. This, plus the large areas to be covered, prevented optimum surveillance. In spite of this limitation, the VR program was the single most responsive target acquisition means available to this group. VR flights furnished H&I target information, allowed for observed target-of-opportunity missions, and provided the capability for registrations.

3. (C) Training.

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a. The 1st Bn, 83d Artillery arrived in country with 8" SP M110 howitzers. The mission of the battalion and location of batteries necessitated replacing two 8" tubes of each firing battery with 175mm tubes. The change took place with relative ease and very little training was necessary to bring the crews up to the proficiency known with the M110.

b. When the battalions assigned to the 54th Artillery Group arrived in country they were using several different systems of fire direction computation, primarily in the method of chart operation. A standard system employing the 6400 mil firing chart technique as explained in Fort Sill Fire Control and Coordination Information Letter #1 is being adopted.

c. The 54th Artillery Group requires a system of dual checks for all steps in the computation and application of firing data. There have been no incidents of injury to friendly personnel by units of this command.

4. (C) Operations.

a. Since the last report quarter, the 54th Artillery Group has had two artillery battalions assigned in addition to the already assigned 2d Bn, 35th Artillery. The 7th Bn, 9th Artillery (105mm towed howitzers), commanded by LTC Wallace S. Dickel arrived in country on 31 October 1966 and was "staged" at Phu Loi by the 23d Artillery Group. The battalion became operational on 14 November 1966 with base camp at Bear Cat (see 7th Bn, 9th Artillery Operational Report - Lessons Learned). The 7th Bn, 9th Artillery is organized under TOs 6-405D; the 1st Bn, 83d Artillery is under TOs 6-445d.

b. During the reporting quarter units of this command have participated in operations in support of the 11th Armored Cavalry Regiment, 1st Infantry Division, 25th Infantry Division, 1st Australian Task Force, 3d Brigade, 4th Infantry Division, 173d Airborne Brigade and the 18th AAVN Division, including operations Alouquerque, Atlanta, Antelope, Yass, Hayman, Ingham, Lam Tam 81, Canary, Duck, Glenn Burnie, and Cedar Falls. The operations are covered in detail by the Operational Reports - Lessons Learned from each battalion. The 54th Artillery Group also supported six Special Forces operations of short duration with artillery fire and forward observer teams.

c. During the reporting period the 54th Artillery Group maintained a permanent liaison officer in the Combat Support Coordination Center of the 18th AAVN Division (formerly 10th AAVN Division) and a permanent liaison officer with the 11th Armored Cavalry Regiment. The liaison officer with the 18th AAVN Division had the duties of clearing artillery fires in the 33d Division Tactical Area with AAVN ground personnel and helping to maintain and operate the Aircraft Warning Control Center.

d. The group instituted a method for expanding the fire program which could be best described as observed H&I fires, both confirmed and

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suspect locations were targeted and recommended for attack under the control of an air observer. A card file system was used for historical data and compared with current intelligence reports to select the daily targets. Targets of opportunity took precedence over the pre-planned observed H&I's.

e. The 54th Artillery Group has been pursuing a program to provide artillery support to RF/FF outposts within range of group artillery. The program is designed to:

- (1) Establish liaison with the outposts.
- (2) Teach a basic system of artillery adjustment to outpost personnel.
- (3) Insure that communication means are available to call for ARVN and F.MAF artillery fire in defense of positions.
- (4) Guarantee accurate fire support by firing in defensive concentrations.

The 54th Artillery Group, in coordination with II Field Force Vietnam Artillery taught a class in December to representatives from RF/FF outposts in Long Khanh Province. Visits to two outposts have been accomplished and initial liaison has been established with the Revolutionary Development Cadre school in Vung Tau, to include a class on artillery adjustment in the school curriculum. A class was taught in late January to the Vung Tau battalion defending the Vung Tau sub-area. Plans are being developed for group units to support this program within their respective areas.

f. The group was given one UH-1D helicopter daily, and a second helicopter by every third day on an average, to transport command and staff, perform liaison visits, move personnel replacements, and transport critically needed repair parts and equipment. An average of 25 personnel per day were moved among the battalion base camp areas and field positions. During the latter part of the reporting period, the second helicopter was available an average of 2 out of 3 days.

5. (C) Logistics.

a. During the period 1 November 1966 to 31 January 1967, Class I, III, IV, VI supply has been excellent. Class II has been issued sporadically and most subordinate units are lacking in this area. Medium sized fatigues and coats have been difficult to obtain in quantity, but the situation is improving. The group has a sizable backlog of due out on desks, tables and chairs. Poncho liners have not been issued to the group.

b. Maintenance support for units has been erratic. This was due to a new battalion assuming the support mission without an established ASL and experienced personnel. These deficiencies are being corrected as the new battalion gains experience. Some of the group's

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major potential problems in the area of maintenance have been alleviated by the establishment of a C&I team that conducts four-hour-notice inspection of the unit's equipment. Commanders have shown a pronounced interest in their equipment status and are experiencing little down-time at present.

c. The shortage of repair parts has been somewhat of a problem. The various components of the M107 and M110 elevating mechanisms are difficult to obtain. Careful training of gun crews and proper maintenance of the assembly has reduced the down-time of the weapon considerably. Artillery down-time because of sights has been eliminated in the group. This was accomplished by obtaining float sights at the group level that are flown immediately to the gun location when sight problems are imminent. Other maintenance problems have been solved by close liaison with the supporting ordnance. Experience has proven that by consolidating maintenance teams at the group level, and flying them and parts to the site of trouble, facilitates the immediate detection and correction of problem areas.

d. The short tube life of the M107 has presented a problem in the past. If the new tube was on hand it required a trained team with proper equipment from three to six hours to replace a tube. Nitrogen has proven difficult to obtain and a great percentage of the containers have less pressure than required to refill the equilibrators after they are drained. It has been found that by fabricating a bracket assembly that will hold the cradle at zero elevation without draining the nitrogen, the tubes can be exchanged and the weapon can again be operational within two hours. The supporting maintenance battalion has fabricated an adequate supply of these brackets and now experiences little down-time due to tube change.

e. Engineer support of the group has been excellent. The construction of drainage facilities, mess halls, showers, and latrines have been completed in all of the units base camps. Class IV engineer supplies have been excellent. Sand bags, bunker material, and self help material have been provided. Wooden gun pads are currently being constructed in the group's heavy battery positions.

6. (C) Civil Affairs.

a. The group is assigned a major with primary duty as S-5. Each battalion has S-5 duties assigned to an officer as an additional duty. Civil affairs have been coordinated with the following units and/or officials throughout the group's area:

- (1) 18th ARVN Division (and G-5 advisor)
- (2) Long Khanh Province Chief (and sub-sector advisor)
- (3) Buon Loc District Chief (and sub-sector advisor)
- (4) Phuoc Tuy Province Chief (and sector advisor)

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- (5) Long Thanh District Chief (and sub-sector advisor)
- (6) 9th Infantry Division
- (7) 11th ACR
- (8) 1st Australian Task Force

An active program of visits to and from GVN officials within the 33d AT. has been instituted. On Christmas day, over 100 orphans and school children from the Kuan Loc area were guests of Group units located in Kuan Loc. Batteries of the 2d Battalion, 35th Artillery, and the 7th Battalion, 9th Artillery, did limited civic action projects in conjunction with exercises Ban Tam 81 in the Gia Rai, Vo Dat, and Vo Au areas. Plans have been coordinated with the Long Khanh Province USAID and RD Cadre Advisor to support the RD Cadre Team at Binh Loc and the Montagnard Cadre Team at Soui Chien.

b. The group has supported the MDCAP program extensively. In the Kuan Loc area, the 1st Battalion, 63d Artillery, has made 13 MDCAP visits in conjunction with the 1st Australian Task Force, treating 413 Vietnamese. The 2d Battalion, 35th Artillery, has made 8 MDCAP visits in conjunction with the Long Khanh Sector medics, treating 1010 Vietnamese. The Group Surgeon and the Battalion Surgeon from the 2d Battalion, 35th Artillery have worked extensively with the Long Khanh Province hospital and the Philippine World Medical Team in Kuan Loc. They have assisted in numerous surgical operations and have been instrumental in setting up a Kuan Loc medical society and a Kuan Loc VD control program.

c. Three English classes were started on 30 January 1967 at the Long Khanh public school taught by officers of the 54th Artillery Group Headquarters.

d. During the reported period the group has employed an average of 184 Vietnamese workers daily.

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SECTION II

Part One, Observations (U)

1. (U) Personnel.

a. IT&M: Accumulating Pay.

(1) DISCUSSION: Many enlisted personnel were taking the pay option where they received only a part of their pay and left the remainder to accumulate as credits with the finance section. This money did not gain any interest for the personnel concerned. In most cases the money is saved in this manner for R & R purposes.

(2) OBSERVATION: Personnel are being encouraged to put their money in a bank account or into some other savings plan where their money will collect interest and still be available for them for R & R purposes. Banking facilities are available in country and once an account is open at the bank, an individual can bank by mail or have finance send a check to the bank monthly for him.

b. IT&M: Personnel with Improper MOS.

(1) DISCUSSION: Replacements from CCUS have been received from the replacement depot that have been assigned improper MOS's; i.e. a cook that can't cook, a radio teletype operator who can't operate a radio, etc. A check of individual records revealed that some personnel in this category have had their MOS changed for promotional purposes in CCUS.

(2) OBSERVATION: Personnel of this type should be retrained in the MOS assigned before assignment to a combat area.

c. IT&M: Use of Chaplains in Field Positions.

(1) DISCUSSION: During a recent operation, the assistant group chaplain accompanied the 2d bn, 35th Artillery to the field. The units in the field prior to this time had been without the services of a chaplain. During the operation, the chaplain conducted four worship services, one troop "sing along", counseled eight troopers with personal problems, and set up a counseling session for two Catholic soldiers with a Catholic chaplain.

(2) OBSERVATION: Whenever the availability of a chaplain and the situation permits, there should be a chaplain with field units to assist the mental and spiritual readiness of the combat soldier.

2. (C) Operations.

a. IT&M: Group units were employed outside of the group area of responsibility on numerous occasions.

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(1) DISCUSSION: The 54th Artillery Group has the mission of general support, II Field Force Vietnam, reinforcing 15th ARVN Division Artillery, 1st Field Regiment Royal Australian Artillery, howitzer batteries of the 11th Armored Cavalry Regiment, and 9th Infantry Division Artillery. Additionally, the group is responsible for visual reconnaissance, artillery support of ARVN and Regional Force/Popular Force units, and the preparation of contingency plans for the artillery support of special forces camps in an area approximately including the 33d Division Tactical Area plus the Nha Be and Thu Duc districts of the Capital Military District.

Missions assigned to group subordinate units have hampered the group in performing its missions within its area of responsibility. Attachments of group units to other organizations included 50 battery days in November, 79 in December, and 129 in January. Most of these battery days were spent outside the 33d DTA.

(2) OBSERVATION: Because attachments and other commitments draw the light and medium batteries away from group control, the group has been forced to turn down requests for artillery support from reinforced units and to perform close support missions with heavy artillery. Maintenance and proper administration have become problems for the 2d Battalion, 35th Artillery while spread over more than a hundred miles from Tay Ninh to Phu Cat, and for the 7th Battalion, 9th Artillery, though spread to a lesser degree. ARVN commanders have not felt sufficiently confident of continuous US artillery support to proceed with plans for the integration of all artillery coverage. Group units have been less able to establish sound working relationships with reinforced and supported units in the 33d Division Tactical Area. Civic action programs in the vicinity of unit base camps could not be pursued vigorously.

b. ITCs: Difficulty of controlling nonassigned helicopters.

(1) DISCUSSION: This group receives its helicopter support from numerous units under the control of II Field Force Vietnam Army Aviation Element. Request must be made, with mission justification, for specific hours of usage by 1500 hours on the day prior to the requirement. Missions include operational control of units, moving critical repair parts, delivering mail to units in the field, and transporting replacement personnel. All of the group's three battalions are supported from the same one or two UH-1 helicopters provided daily. At the present time the control of these helicopters to insure maximum utilization requires an average of four officer man-hours and fifteen enlisted man-hours per day.

(2) OBSERVATION: Much of the control difficulty arises from the fact that different pilots from different units are assigned to support of the group each day. Some pilots have never previously visited many of the areas where group units are located. Personnel have been in the situation of waiting for a helicopter at one end of the airfield, while the aircraft was at the other. Units and pilots have not been able to

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contact each other because neither knew the other's frequency and call sign, nor did the unit know from which aviation company the helicopter was to come. Helicopters have been diverted from their assigned missions by unauthorized personnel because the pilots did not know the person for whom they were working by name or face.

c. ITA: Difficulty of obtaining surveillance information on artillery missions fired.

(1) DISCUSSION: The majority of missions fired by units of this group are unobserved and consist of H&I's, blocking fires, defensive concentrations, and fire for effect missions on unobserved, suspect VC locations which have been located by intelligence sources. The unobserved nature of these fires is due primarily to the enemy's tactics which emphasize use of natural cover and concealment, night operations, and the dispersion of forces. Even when an observer is adjusting artillery, it is often impossible to get meaningful surveillance because of the severe limitations on visibility caused by heavy vegetation. Artillery is often adjusted by sound alone. The observer can see the impact of his rounds, but the prevalent triple canopy jungle makes it extremely difficult to observe the actual effect on the ground. As a result, the aerial observer is frequently limited to a surveillance report of "good coverage of target area." Much of the target surveillance is of a delayed nature and comes from agents, POW's or defectors at a later date. This data tends to be incomplete and of a general nature which makes it difficult to tie to specific missions.

(2) OBSERVATION: Insufficient target surveillance is a continuing problem due to the nature of the enemy and the restrictions placed on visibility by heavy vegetation.

d. ITA: Observed H&I fires program.

(1) DISCUSSION: Movement of the Viet Cong under the multiple canopy jungle is not detectable in most cases. To deny and limit freedom of movement to the VC, this unit has implemented an observed daylight H&I fire program. Known and suspect locations are selected based on correlation between CIA files or accepted and suspect locations and current intelligence reports. The fires are adjusted to insure adequate area coverage. In many cases a target of opportunity has developed.

(2) OBSERVATION: This program of observed H&I fires cannot be given a positive evaluation; however, VC propaganda campaigns against these artillery bombardments suggest a definite effectiveness.

e. ITA: Operation of Aircraft Warning Coordination Center (A CC).

(1) DISCUSSION: The method of providing protection from friendly artillery for US and F&AF aircraft was promulgated by II Field Force Vietnam Regulation 385-2. In this regulation, the III Corps Military

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Advisory Group is charged with establishing a CC at Xuan Loc. The Advisory Team 87 has been unable to provide adequate resources, which include as a minimum four radio operators and one M/VRC-46 radio. As a result, this headquarters has been forced, in the interest of safety, to supply the required radio and to divert liaison personnel from their primary mission. This headquarters currently mans the M/CC 112 hours per week.

(2) OBSERVATION: Through coordination, a plan providing some relief for the problems is being worked out by including liaison personnel from the 11th Armored Cavalry Regiment in the duty roster for manning the M/CC, but neither is this the mission of those personnel. M/CC's in some other areas are manned by aviation sections personnel. There is no organizational aviation section at Xuan Loc. The 11th Armored Cavalry Regiment Aviation Section must operate from Long Gio to control the regiment's aircraft, and the M/CC must remain in the 18th AVN Division CCCC to maintain the bilingual capability and to retransmit notice of artillery fires in an expeditious manner.

3. (U) Training and Organization.

a. ITAM: Regional Force/Popular Force outposts are generally unaware of how to call for or adjust artillery fire.

(1) DISCUSSION: There have been times when RF/PF outposts were attacked and did not request artillery support even though RVN and/or PAVN artillery support was available. The main causes for this failure to call for available artillery support were:

(a) RF/PF personnel were not aware of the artillery available to support their outpost.

(b) They were not aware of what communication means could be utilized to call for supporting fires.

(c) Defensive concentrations had not been fired in.

(d) Personnel were not familiar with procedures to adjust artillery fire.

(2) OBSERVATION: A concerted effort is being made by this group to contact RF/PF outposts within range to:

(a) Determine communication channels available to call for both RVN and PAVN artillery support.

(b) Teach personnel a basic artillery adjustment procedure (polar plot method).

(c) Show them how to construct and orient a simple direction finding device.

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(a) Determine requirements for defensive fires, and if at all possible, fire in the defensive concentrations.

(e) Maintain liaison with sector and sub-sector advisors to coordinate and implement the above.

4. (U) Logistics.

a. ITM: Rectifier RA-91-A.

(1) DISCUSSION: TMs for 56th Artillery Group does not authorize rectifiers, RA-91-A. The use of rectifiers for the conversion of 120 volt AC electricity into 28 volts would eliminate the dependence on the 3 kw 28 volt generators for radio operations.

(2) OBSERVATION: The use of small direct current generators causes a power supply problem, since the smaller generators are subject to frequent breakdown.

5. (U) Medical.

a. ITM: Medical Supplies.

(1) DISCUSSION: Medical supplies for use at battalion level have been difficult to obtain. Initial procurement is protracted, and subsequent requests are received sporadically with a high percentage of due outs. The battalion surgeons have had to resort to personal, weekly trips to medical supply depots to obtain basic supplies. This condition has existed for nearly all types of medical supplies, from antibiotics and biologicals to bandages and surgical sponges.

(2) OBSERVATION: Sufficient drugs should be brought by incoming unit medical sections to sustain the unit for at least 60 days.

b. ITM: Penicillin.

(1) DISCUSSION: Penicillin injection, 400,000 units in Oil (Lantogen NSN 6505-067-8459) has only limited use in Vietnam, due to the cartridge size of only 400,000 units per injection. Routine treatment of acute gonococcal urethritis requires at least 1.5 million units of procaine penicillin oil.

(2) OBSERVATION: Large amounts of Procaine Penicillin for aqueous injection, 1.5 million units (NSN 6505-160-7410) should be brought by incoming units, and be substituted for the penicillin in oil contained in the STRAC drug sets.

c. ITM: Federal Supply Catalog, Department of Defense Section, Medical Material, and Medical Aids.

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(1) DISCUSSION: The Federal Supply catalog has not been available in Vietnam.

(2) OBSERVATION: All incoming unit should obtain these items prior to shipping.

d. ITM: OJT for Medics.

(1) DISCUSSION: Many medics arrive in Vietnam without the benefit of any practical experience. Many have never seen severe injuries or mass casualties. Often these men are overwhelmed by their initial exposure.

(2) OBSERVATION: Upon arriving in country and while staying, the group has been able to assign medics on OJT basis to various surgical and evacuation hospitals, to assist in emergency rooms, see mass casualties, and become familiar with basic emergency medical care. In addition, medics have been sent for OJT to the 946th Medical Lab for instruction in basic hematology, parasitology, and microbiology. Both these programs have worked out exceptionally well. There is no organized plan for such training but must be accomplished by the individual unit. In addition, one medic has received OJT training in radiology and now assists at one of the Vietnamese Province Hospitals.

6. (U) Tube, 175mm Gun/8 Inch Howitzer.

a. ITM: Changing 175mm Gun and 8 inch howitzer tubes.

(1) DISCUSSION: In changing the tubes on the M10 and M107 self propelled weapons, para 40, TM 9-1000-218-35 requires that the nitrogen pressure in the equilibrators be reduced to zero so that the cradle will remain at zero elevation during the removal and installation of the tube. Draining and refilling the equilibrators requires special tools and gauges which are in short supply in Vietnam. Nitrogen is stored and dispensed from a bulky cylindrical tank that is difficult to transport by supporting any aircraft. Nitrogen periodically has proven difficult to obtain in Vietnam. Even when the proper equipment, tools and personnel are available, changing of a tube requires from 3 to 6 hours in the field.

(2) OBSERVATION: Neutralizing the equilibrator force without draining the nitrogen can be accomplished by attaching a bracket assembly around the equilibrators. These brackets are held in place by steel 1/2 inch rods that are welded to the brackets. The bracket assembly holds the cradle at zero elevation while the tube is being changed. Experience has shown that this method reduces the operation to a maximum of two hours and completely eliminates the waste of nitrogen. A drawing of the brackets used is attached as Inclosure 1.

7. (C) AN/VRC-12 Series Radios.

a. ITM: High Decline Rate of AN/VRC-12 Series Radios.

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(1) DISCUSSION: It has been discovered that some units experience a high rate of malfunctioning of VRC-12 series radios, with the primary reason of course being carelessness or lack of knowledge. RT-524's are frequently deadlined due to radio sets not being turned off prior to starting either the vehicle or the auxiliary generator, thereby causing a sudden surge of voltage which knocks out diodes and transistors. Another common mistake which burns out RT 534's, is the practice of transmitting on high power with antenna leads not connected to the radio set, thus burning out circuits or power-amplifiers.

(2) OBSERVATION: Deadline rates can be reduced through simple indoctrination of radio operators by qualified communication personnel and through watchful observation by unit officers and section chiefs.

8. (C) Security Equipment.

a. ITA: Issue of KY-8/TSEC Security Equipment Installation Kits.

(1) DISCUSSION: Although KY-8/TSEC security equipment is requisitioned through crypto channels, many organizations also believe that the same procedures hold true for installation kits. This is not the case; installation kits must be requisitioned through normal supply channels. Considerable delay and inconvenience will be encountered if requisitions are placed through crypto channels.

(2) OBSERVATION: The following installation kits are available through normal supply channels:

FOK: K-151 or Shop Vans - - - - FSN 5810 070 5558
3/4 Tons or 2 1/2 Tons - - - FSN 5 10 070 5559
M577 Tracked Veh - - - - FSN 5810 070 5560

9. (U) Maintenance Support.

a. ITA: Maintenance Support of an Artillery Group in Vietnam.

(1) DISCUSSION: The 54th Artillery Group subordinate battalions and batteries have been employed separately throughout the 3d Corp, Corps Tactical Zone. Batteries have sometimes been separated as much as seventy miles from their assigned direct support ordnance. Battalion organic maintenance sections have had to split up in order to give even second echelon support to batteries. A direct support maintenance company or battalion is normally assigned on a mission and cannot be tailored to give immediate support to widely separated supported units operating out of their normal support areas. The direct support maintenance units that support a given area may or may not have the ASL to render support to an artillery unit that is operating temporarily in its area.

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(2) OBSERVATION: Consolidating ordnance support teams near the group S-4 where deadline information for the entire group is immediately available has proven very beneficial. When information is received by the group S-4 that a specific piece of equipment is down for a given part, a team that specialize in that area is dispatched by air with the part, and is returned to the centralized location when the problem is solved to await another call. Experience has shown that this method of support for artillery units is superior to an area support mission in Vietnam.

Part II, Recommendations (C)

1. Unit commanders should make special efforts to assist and advise their troops in banking and saving money with facilities available in country, in accordance with current USARV policy.
2. Replacements should be properly trained in their MOS's before arriving in country.
3. Chaplains should accompany troops to the field on prolonged operations.
4. In employment of artillery, area responsibility requirements should be given increasing weight, especially as the enemy's capability to mount regimental and battalion size attacks decreases.
5. Helicopter support for units should be provided from assigned sections; barring that, aviation companies should be given direct support missions to specific units.
6. Ground units and artillery units should work closely with special forces personnel, ARVN units, and agents to produce surveillance information on artillery fires.
7. MACV Advisory Team 87 should be authorized and furnished additional personnel and equipment to operate and maintain an MCC for the area located in the proper manner.
8. US artillery commanders should make every effort to work with US advisors in contacting all RF/TF outposts within artillery capabilities, and give them instructions in the proper use of artillery fire.
9. Group headquarters should be equipped with three each rectifier, M-91s for base camp operation of radios.
10. An accelerated indoctrination program for medics should be established, assigning all medics without previous combat experience to surgical and evacuation hospitals as emergency room assistants for a short period of time.

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11. Design analysis of the equilibrator bracket shown in Inclosure 1 should be performed and procurement action be initiated.

12. Continued emphasis should be given to standard procedures for avoiding abuse to AV/VAC-12 series radios.

13. Units should check the manner in which they have made requisition for installation kits for their authorized KY-8/TSEC security equipment.

14. Contact support teams should be co-located with the group S-4 for responsive specialized support.

1 Incl
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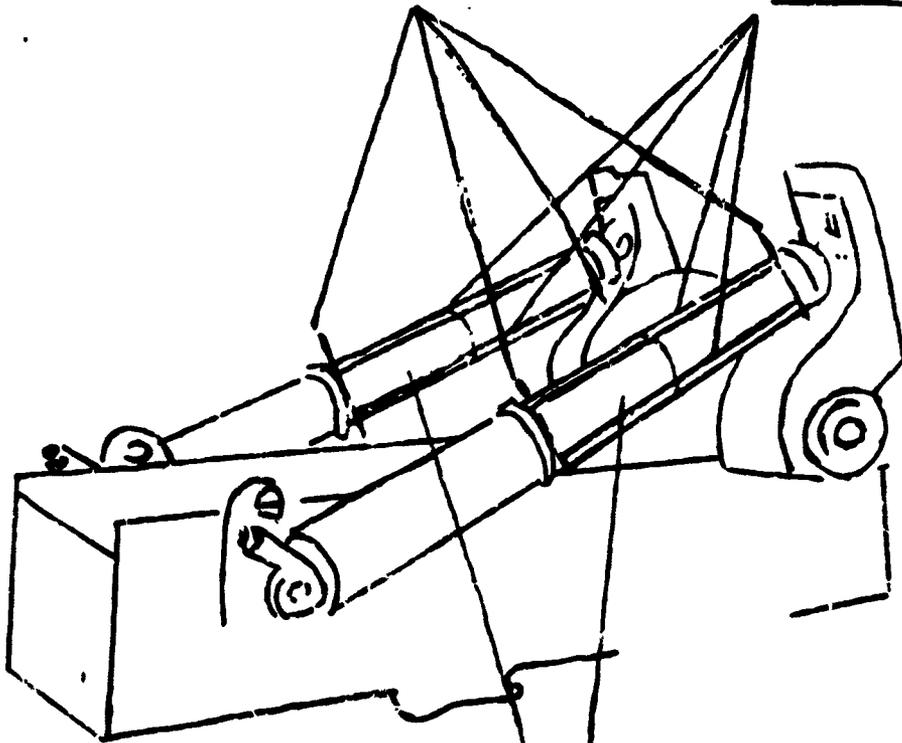
Charles M. Mizell
CHARLES M. NIZELL
Colonel, Artillery
Commanding

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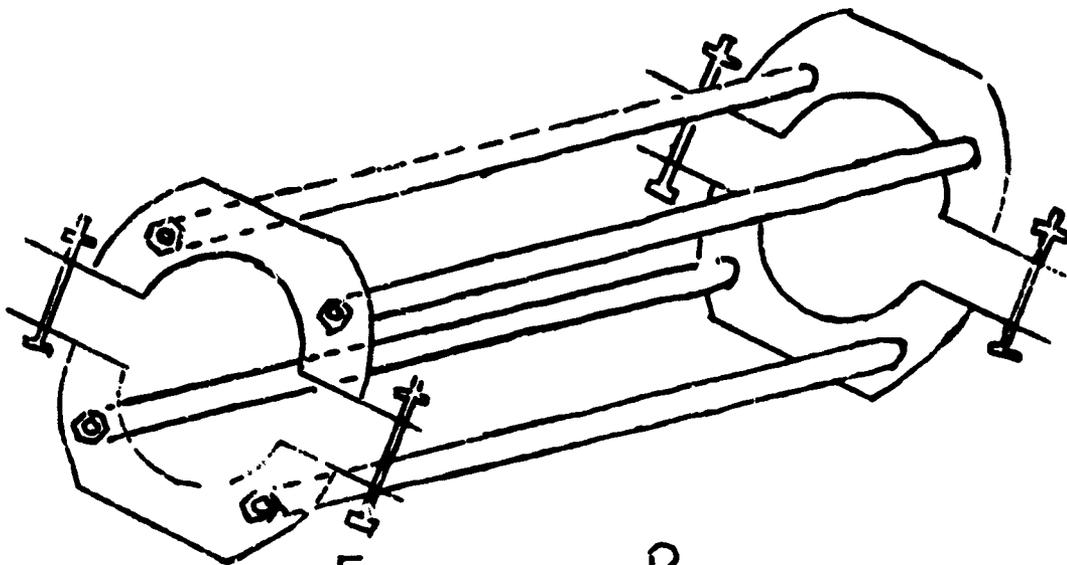
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BRACKETS

1/2 INCH RODS



EQUILIBRATOR



EQUILIBRATOR BRACKET

Incl 1

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SUBJECT: Operational Report - Lessons Learned (U)

DA, HQ, II FFORCEV ARTY, APO 96266 21 MAR 1967

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

1. (U) The quarterly report submitted by the 54th Artillery Group is considered adequate.

2. (C) Reference Section II, Part I, paragraph 2a. Artillery units of II Field Force Artillery are employed where necessary in the III Corps Tactical Zone to support operations. Because of the limited number of units available, battalions are frequently employed at considerable distances from their base camps. As more units are received during CY 1967, this situation will improve somewhat; however, units will continue to be employed on the basis of greatest need for fire support.

3. (U) Reference Section II, Part II:

a. Recommendations 1, 3, 6, 12 and 13. Actions recommended can be taken by the 54th Artillery Group. No action by higher headquarters is indicated.

b. Recommendation 2 refers to the discussion at Section II, Part I, paragraph 1b. Instances of replacements being received with an improper MOS have been infrequent. These individuals are diverted to assignments for which they are trained. This is not considered to be a matter requiring attention by higher headquarters.

c. Recommendation 4. See paragraph 2 above. No action required by higher headquarters.

d. Recommendation 5. Concur. Recent Operational Reports of this headquarters have cited the adverse effect on the operational effectiveness of the 54th Artillery Group caused by lack of organic aircraft.

e. Recommendation 7. Concur. This matter requires solution within MACV.

f. Recommendation 8. Letter of Instruction (LOI 5-66) Headquarters II Field Force Vietnam, dated 9 September 1966 requires US/FWMAF commanders in II Field Force Vietnam to take the action recommended.

g. Recommendation 9. The need for rectifiers has been satisfied in the 54th Artillery Group and that unit is preparing to recommend change to its TOE for these items. Units preparing for deployment to RVN may wish to request this equipment in excess of authorized allowances prior to movement.

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h. Recommendation 10. Rather than establishing a centralized program, the training of medical personnel can be arranged by the group surgeon in the nearest medical facility. No action by higher headquarters is indicated.

i. Recommendation 11. Concur.

j. Recommendation 14. In some instances this may provide more responsive maintenance support, in others not. Units have been requested to coordinate with their support maintenance battalions in order to achieve the most responsive support. No action by higher headquarters is indicated.

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W.D. Crittensberg Jr.
W. D. CRITTENBERG, Jr.
Brigadier General, USA
Commanding Officer

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