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MACSOG DOCUMENTATION STUDY (U)
ANNEX G

to

APPENDIX B

COMMENTS BY THESE INTERVIEWEES

ON

PERSONNEL AND TRAINING

(In Chronological Order)

Name	Association with MACSOG	Tab
Col Clyde R. Russell, USA	Chief, MACSOG Jan 1964 - Jan 1965	A
Col William R. Becker, USAF	Chief, MACSOG Air Operations Jan 1964 - Dec 1964	B
Col Leroy V. Grossheusch, USAF	Chief, MACSOG Air Section Jul 1964 - Jul 1965	C
Col Edward A. Partain, USA	Chief, MACSOG Airborne Operations Section Jul 1964 - Jun 1965	D
LTC William C. Carper, III, USA	Senior Advisor, Camp Long Thanh Nov 1964 - Aug 1965	E
Lt Terry K. Lingle, USN	Supply Officer, MACSOG Nov 1964 - Nov 1965	F
Cdr Kenneth N. Bebb, USN	Staff Officer, Special Plans, MACV J-5 Apr 1965 - May 1966 Chief, Psy Ops Office, Special Operations, J-3, hq PACOM Jun 1963 - Apr 1965	G
Col Donald D. Blackburn, USA	Chief, MACSOG Jun 1965 - May 1966	H
Col John T. Moore, Jr., USAF	Deputy Chief, Operations Branch, MACSOG Jun 1965 - Jun 1966 Chief, Special Plans Office Directorate of Plans, Headquarters, USAF Jun 1966 - to date. Jul 1969	I

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Name	Association with MACSOG	Tab
LTC Ralph R. Garrison, USAF	Assistant Air Operations Officer, MACSOG Sep 1965 - Sep 1966	J
LTC Raymond L. Call, USA	Commander, Command and Control North Oct 1965 - Oct 1966	K
LTC Ernest T. Hayes, Jr., USA	Plans Officer and Strategic Technical Directorate (STD) Liaison Officer, MACSOG Oct 1965 - Nov 1965 STD Liaison Officer, MACSOG Sep 1968 - Jun 1969 Chief, Operations-34 and STD Liaison Officer, MACSOG Jun 1969 - to date: Jul 1969	L
Maj Peter C. Andre, USA	S-3, Modified "B" Detachment Camp Long Thanh Nov 1965 - May 1966	M
LTC Vincent W. Lang, USA	Chief, Plans and Senior Advisor, Camp Long Thanh Dec 1965 - Nov 1966	N
Col Robert C. MacLane, USA	Chief, Airborne Operations Section, MACSOG May 1966 - May 1967	O
Col John K. Singlaub, USA	Chief, MACSOG May 1966 - Aug 1968	P
Col Dennis P. Casey, USMC	Chief, Operations Branch, MACSOG Jun 1966 - May 1967	Q
Maj Frank Jaks, USA	S-3, FOB 2, Kontum Jun 1966 - Mar 1967 ExO, FOB 2, Kontum Mar 1967 - May 1967 S-3, FOB 3, Khe Sanh May 1968 - Jun 1968 S-3, FOB 1, Phu Bai Jul 1968 - Dec 1968 ExO, CCC, Kontum Dec 1968 - Mar 1969 DCSO, CCC, Kontum Mar 1969 - May 1969 S-3, CCC, Kontum Jun 1969 - to date. Jul 1969	R
LTC Jonathon D. Carney, USA	Deputy Director, Operations-35 (SHINING BRASS/PRAIRIE FIRE, DANIEL BOONE/SALEM HOUSE, IGLOO WHITE) Aug 1966 - Jul 1967	S

TOP SECRET

Name	Association with MACSOG	Tab
Capt Bruce B. Dunning, USN	Special Operations Division OSACSA, Staff Officer & Division Chief Aug 1966 - Jul 1967	T
Col Benton M. Austin, USA	Chief, Operations-35 (SHINING BRASS) Chief, MACSOG Operations Sep 1966 - Sep 1967	U
LTC Harold J. Rose, USA	Commander, C&C Detachment North, MACSOG Sep 1966 - Sep 1968	V
Col Eugene A. Wahl, USAF	Chief, MACSOG Air Operations Section Dec 1966 - May 1967 Deputy Operations Officer Jun 1967 - Dec 1967	W
Col Robert C. Kendrick, USA	Chief, Special Operations Branch, Office of the Assistant Chief of Staff for Operations (J-3) Hq PACOM Dec 1966 - to date: Jul 1969	X
Col Robert C. Kingston, USA	Chief, MACSOG Operations-34 Mar 1967 - Jul 1969	Y
Col Harold K. Aaron, USA	Commander, 1st SFG Jun 1967 - May 1968 Commander, 5th SFG Jun 1968 - May 1969	Z
SFC Gerald A. Sanders, USA	Operations and Intelligence Sergeant, MACSOG Operations-34 Jul 1967 - Jul 1968	AA
SFC Donald A. Payton, USA	Intelligence Advisor, MACSOG Operations-34 Dec 1967 - Aug 1968	BB
Maj George W. Gaspard, USA	Operations Officer (STRATA Operations), Operations-34, MACSOG Dec 1967 - Sep 1968	CC
LTC Jefferson Seay, III USA	Liaison Officer, MACSOG to the Strategic Technical Directorate Jan 1968 - Sep 1968	DD
Col Herbert O. Graeser, USA	Staff Officer Special Operations Branch, Office of the Assistant Chief of Staff for Operations (J-3), Headquarters PACOM Jan 1969 - to date: Jul 1969	EE

Name	Association with MACSOG	Tab
Col Robert L. Gleason, USAF	Deputy Chief, MACSOG Mar 1968 - Mar 1969	FF
LTC James R. McCarthy, USAF	Commander, 1st Flight Detachment - under MACSOG operational control May 1968 - May 1969	GG
Col Stephen E. Cavanaugh, USA	Chief, MACSOG Aug 1968 - to date: Jul 1969	HH

COMMENTS ON PERSONNEL AND TRAINING

BY

COLONEL CLYDE R. RUSSELL, USA

. . . . . .

. . . . We, fortunately, had the complete cooperation of the Vietnamese at this time and when they asked the Vietnamese Navy for volunteers, they came up with the required number of naval personnel. By and large, these people were well trained as basic sailors and took to the program rapidly. We did not relieve any of them for any cause and we found them to be a good group of volunteers. Recruiting for the airborne operations types, the types we would train at Long Thanh to go into the north was more of a problem and we could not get the Army to furnish these people. Colonel Ho, my Vietnamese counterpart, was successful in obtaining volunteers, but when we'd go to the Army to have them released, they were being pressed at this time, and they were reluctant to release the people for a program they could not understand or could not be briefed on . . . By and large, the volunteers were high-quality people and the Army hated to lose them. So we did have difficulty in getting the Vietnamese to provide the soldier-type or airborne-type. To obtain PsyOps people, we went to the universities and ran ads in the papers and had a very fine response. We were able to get all of the PsyOps types, from an educational standpoint, that we needed. They became draft exempt. As a result, we got highly educated people who had a desire to help their country and yet at the same time not to carry a rifle. The Chinese air crews furnished to us were outstanding [redacted] (b)(1) (b)(3)

[redacted] We were always confident when they took off that they were going to come back. They did some real fantastic flying for us and we found them extremely cooperative. All we had to do was ask, whether it was a training matter or operational matter, and they cooperated and performed real well. They were extremely fine soldiers and it was a pleasure to be with them.*

(b)(1)
(b)(3)

. . . . . .

. . . . we drew up a JTD and asked the Services to furnish personnel. Unfortunately, in the early days everyone that was assigned objected to the assignment. This was due to ignorance on their part because they didn't know what they were getting into. . . . But, I can say, without exception, as far as the officers were concerned, after they had been in SOG a few months they were highly motivated, enthusiastic, had morale that wouldn't quit and they were a 24-hour-a-day get-the-job-done group of people. It was just a matter of them seeing what was to be done and then getting on with it. So, I have no complaints about the final results but, had we had a package of this type that we could have put in the country, it would have gone much smoother than the first six months. We wasted time while people came in and while we had to train and indoctrinate people who were sent over there to train and indoctrinate the Vietnamese. You must constantly bear in mind that the Vietnamese conducted all of the operations. We were in an advisory capacity, to a degree but we had to train the Vietnamese to conduct the operations in line with our national policy. . .**

* (TS) Interivew of Colonel Clyde R. Russell, USA, pp. 2-3.
** Ibid., p. 3.

. . . . . .

. . . . One of my biggest problems was getting a standardized pay scale established that all three of the Vietnamese armed forces would agree to. I think a detail of this type should be thought about before we go into this type of operation again. You can do this, in my opinion, on a type of combat pay but you certainly should have pay settled before you launch operations. My personal belief is that money is not the answer; motivation and desire, in many cases, are much more important than dollars and cents. Another thing that was quite successful in Vietnam was taking care of agents' dependents. If they were assured that should they be captured or taken prisoner, etc., their families would not be made to suffer, it added a lot to the operations. I strongly recommend that in underdeveloped countries you promise to take care of their dependents and then do it. Remember, the dependent stays there and the wives do get together and the kids do get together, and they know when it comes over the radio that so-and-so was captured and condemned to death. They know the widow and know how you treat the widow so once you commit yourselves to these programs, you must follow through with them or else your recruitment will fall flat on its face.*

. . . . . .

. . . . The assets in being at Long Thanh, i.e., people we were going to infiltrate into North Vietnam, unfortunately, were of questionable capability and we found none who wanted to go. As a matter of fact, we forced them into the airplanes

* Ibid., p. 9.

on numerous occasions and even then they did not want to go back to North Vietnam. We had been told that they had a desire to return to their homeland. The training facilities at Long Thanh left a great deal to be desired. The demolition range hardly existed and it was not adequate for training people in demolitions. The firing ranges were totally inadequate to teach anybody to do anything with weaponry. The communications setup was extremely poor, so we had to start from scratch to build a training base as well as to recruit the people whom we thought would like to participate in this type of operation. . . .**

* Ibid., p. 2.

COMMENTS ON PERSONNEL AND TRAINING

BY

COLONEL WILLIAM R. BECKER, USAF

. . . . The initial selection process seemed to be more a result of availability of personnel of the correct grade and the length of time available remaining in the theater. . . . My selection for it . . . , as far as I can recall, was solely on the basis that I was in the proper grade to fill the proposed JTD and had a length of time to spend in the theater. The sole question that I was asked as to my qualifications before I was assigned to the job concerned my thoughts on certain helicopter operations that were going on in-country, and certainly had nothing to do with our potential operations.*

. . . . a major problem was the total ignorance of everyone concerned on this type of operation. We were a wealth of ignorance. There was only one individual who had any background at all in the operation. Two of the people assigned were from Special Forces. The remainder of us were totally ignorant of this type of operation and, essentially, had no background for it at all other than the fact that we were simply broad generalists in our areas.*

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[redacted] (b)(1) (b)(3)

* (TS) Interview of Colonel William R. Becker, USAF, p. 1.

[redacted] Again, I think that such reluctance stemmed from the security clearance problem. The people who go into this type of operation must have adequate security clearances with all of the agencies that are going to be involved, so that you can talk freely among them. . . .* (b)(1) (b)(3)

. . . . . .

. . . . We went to the Vietnamese aircrews with two thoughts in mind. First, to get rid of the [redacted] Chinese aircrews, secondly, to be able to train, retain and control the Vietnamese aircrews better than in the case of the Chinese. Starting out with a base that the Chinese and Vietnamese were of the same quality, we hoped that through the completion of an intensive training program, to which the Vietnamese would be receptive, we would be able to improve their quality as compared to that of the Chinese who practically refused to participate in any training program at all. The Chinese were insulted anytime we talked about a training program; to them it always seemed to imply that they were something less than trained then.** (b)(1) (b)(3)

The training of the Vietnamese aircrews turned out to be quite a political thing. The crews were provided to us by Air Commodore Ky. They were his precious counter-coup aircrews. Comprising his special squadron, they were loyal exclusively to Ky. They had multiple mission responsibility in that all of them were A-1 pilots and attack pilots before they became

* Ibid., p. 2.
** Ibid., pp. 19-20.

Tab B to

C-123 pilots. They retained their responsibility to be able to fly the A-1s and to provide air cover in the event a coup threatened or occurred in the Saigon area. General Ky, after giving us these crews, was very reluctant to see them get very far away from the Saigon area. In fact, it took considerable pressure for him to allow us to move the Vietnamese crews as far away as Nha Trang. He wanted the crews to be, and the crews themselves desired to be, treated as special personnel, with special pay, privileges, equipment and quarters. All of this posed trouble for us. We had hoped that the Vietnamese aircrews would be a little bit more public spirited than they actually turned out to be.*

The quality of the Vietnamese aircrews was at least as good as that of the Chinese. The Vietnamese were more receptive to training which was reflected in their willingness to participate in training missions. Overall, I think that we did improve our capability by employing the Vietnamese crews in lieu of the [redacted] Chinese crews. The Vietnamese were difficult to control, however. They were very independent, and seemed to feel that they were doing us a favor when they went on a mission. They did not see the mission from a nationalist point of view. They saw it as something they were doing to please the Americans who were guiding. They were independent also in the sense that they had a higher loyalty to perform to Air Commodore Ky than to the accomplishment of their particular Air Force mission assigned to them at the time. At peculiar times, they would all of a sudden disappear at Ky's beck and

(b)(1)
(b)(3)

* Ibid., p. 20.

call because some political maneuverings were going on at the time in Saigon. This created a very difficult situation to work with. Competence-wise and quality-wise, they were an improvement over the Chinese and I am glad we chose the Vietnamese over the Chinese.*

The only other Vietnamese the SOG Air Operations personnel dealt with to any great extent was the air liaison man [redacted] . . . . Supposedly, he was an air pilot, in matter of fact, however, I doubt if he was. He had no knowledge whatsoever of air operations even though, in theory, he was the chief spokesman for the [redacted] Vietnamese organization that [redacted] He was totally incompetent. With regard to any air knowledge, he could be described as a political appointee, ineffective in that he could not provide any direct advice or guide the air operations at all in the Vietnamese counterpart organization**

(b)(1)
(b)(3)

(b)(1)
(b)(3)

* Ibid., pp. 20-21.
** Ibid., p. 21.

COMMENTS ON PERSONNEL AND TRAINING

BY

COLONEL LEROY V. GROSSHEUSCH, USAF

. . . . . .

. . . . The caliber of the /Chinese/ crews ranged from superb to very poor. The first that we received was outstanding. As the later crews arrived, their caliber went down until we finally reached a point where we were unable to use some of the crew members, although we usually salvaged the crew by moving people around among the crews. . . .*

. . . . . .

. . . we found that we had to go into a complete retraining cycle. First, we had to fly the crews through some current programs until they were able to handle the airplane, make weather landings, and fly at night. Following this, we found out that the crews were unable to perform the mission as we believed it should be flown. Our mission required low-altitude night contour flying for seven or eight hours through the valleys below the peaks of the hills to stay out of the enemy GCI coverage. They had to fly visually and they had to fly by the light of the moon. It was a very difficult mission and the people were not really prepared for it. The first problem we encountered was in finding instructor pilots to train the Chinese crews. None of our people was checked out in the C-123 as the plan had been to more or less just act as operations officers, not as flight instructors. The way we solved this problem was to get an instructor pilot from the USAF C-123

* (TS) Interview of Colonel Leroy V. Grossheusch, USAF, p. 2.

outfit. He checked out me and the other two pilots we had (a Marine and a Navy pilot). All of us were fighter pilots and had never been in the C-123 before. After a rapid checkout, we flew many missions back and forth between Saigon and Clark for maintenance purposes and we also flew many missions in support of SOG missions in-country. By the time the Chinese arrived, each of the instructor pilots had in the neighborhood of 100-150 hours in the C-123 and we proceeded to requalify the Chinese. Our method in indoctrinating them into the mission was to develop a series of courses in SVN through the mountains which would simulate as much as possible the type of terrain they would be flying in NVN.*

. . . . . .

We were fortunate in that the first Chinese crew had one of the best pilots [redacted] as the chief pilot. After checking him out rapidly in the last part of October and the first part of November, /1964/ we were able to launch our first mission. That was in the last part of November. It was a very successful mission as were all of the missions that he flew later. He became our Chinese instructor pilot and helped us check out the rest of the crews. It was only because of this fortunate situation that we were able to achieve the success that we did with the Chinese crews.

(b)(1)
(b)(3)

During the period that I was there, all of the Chinese missions were successful. We were completely satisfied with their performance. We had very few operational or control problems. They did insist that we work through the chief who

* Ibid., p. 3.

TOP SECRET

[redacted] and he reviewed our missions to make sure that there was reasonable chance of success. In one situation, he refused to allow us to resupply because it appeared to him as an impossible mission. We were in agreement with him and finally prevailed on the AF fighter people to make these deliveries for us with an F-4. . . .*

(b)(1)
(b)(3)

The Vietnamese crews were another story. We found them to be almost completely unsatisfactory. They would not cooperate with us. They delayed in every way that they could. They held out for more money and more gifts, and did everything they could to keep from actually flying a mission. It was obvious that they were suffering from a great amount of fear and one crew finally refused to fly at all. We lost one crew in a training mission and the third crew finally flew two missions but after that we couldn't get them to fly again. They used reasons such as: they didn't want to live in Nha Trang; they didn't think the quarters were good enough for them; they didn't want to leave their families, and they wanted to stay in Saigon as much as possible. We did everything we could to cooperate with them, even allowing them to come up just for a short training period before the flight and fly out of Nha Trang and then allow them to return to Saigon. It was obvious to us from the beginning that there was no firm agreement between our Government and the Vietnamese Government on what these crews would be required to do in return for the money they received or for the training they received in the United States. In other words, we had one hell of a control problem with them. We couldn't control them;

* Ibid., p. 4.

we had no leverage at all. We had frequent interviews with General Ky and each time we received promises that everything would be all right from this point on and in every case these promises were never fulfilled. Now we were concerned that, while all this was going on with the Vietnamese crews, we were taking a first step to run another group through our training back in the United States; it appeared that we would again not have a firm agreement with their government which would provide us the leverage that we needed to get them to perform the missions.*

As a point of interest, the Vietnamese crew that we lost was lost on a training mission. We were preparing them for a mission in North Vietnam by flying a simulated mission just south of Danang. They flew the mission during extremely marginal weather and hit Monkey Mountain. This was of concern to us. We felt the mission shouldn't go and the air section at Nha Trang was opposed to it. However, the people in Saigon in the Operations Section felt that the weather was not too bad to complete the mission and they gave the go-ahead. This was one of the problems that we had during the first part of the entire mission -- pressure from Washington to get the mission going; to take it over [redacted] as fast as possible and we believe that the people in Washington did not have a proper appreciation for the inadequacy of the crews caused by the delays in getting them to us. . . (b)(1) (b)(3)

. . . . . .

All of us in SOG were quite concerned over the caliber of the teams that we put in. We felt that the effort was so

* Ibid., pp. 4-5.

costly and so dangerous to the crews that the team should give us a good return for the effort. I believe that most of us felt that the team members were really unqualified for a mission of this type, either as intelligence gatherers or as saboteurs. They lacked motivation and, for the most part, I believe they lacked the intelligence to conduct a difficult mission of this type. It was our understanding that most of them were recruited from the farming areas and had very little information about NVN or any experience in operations -- anything similar to this. It was our understanding also that many of them were very reluctant to continue with the mission after they found out what was ahead of them and some of them even had to be forced out of the airplane at the drop zone.*

* Ibid., p. 6.

TOP SECRET

COMMENTS ON PERSONNEL AND TRAINING

BY

COLONEL EDWARD A. PARTAIN, USA

. . . through our counterpart agency . . . we would ask for individuals who had either lived in a specific area or belonged to a specific tribe in the north. They, in turn, would present these people for agent training at which time they came under our supervision which we executed through the Vietnamese with supervisory assistance from a Mobile Training Team. . . . *On the basis of their performance* that I observed both in training and at times of preparation for insertion, I would rate them as unmotivated, lacking in any zeal to serve, and as generally poor, untrustworthy quality.*

. . . . . .

. . . . With respect to the military personnel that were assigned, without exception, they were all regular Army officers who, in most cases, with the exception of myself and my deputy, Major Pete Hayes, had had no Special Forces training. They had been battalion-type advisors or training center advisors in Vietnam and had been pulled back to MACSOG to complete their tour. In my own case, I had had a two-year tour with Special Forces. I was familiar with the terminology and had had a considerable amount of airborne experience, but as far as agent handling or covert type operations, I had had nothing except that taught in the course of classroom activity in a Special Forces Group during the period 1957-1959. My deputy, I think, had had two repetitive tours with Special Forces and

* (TS) Interview of Colonel Edward A. Partain, USA, p. 1.

was a bit more knowledgeable than I but as to agent handling or some of the details of covert operations, specifically communications and code techniques, I would not say that he was a professional. The other three young captains had had no Special Forces experience and they were dedicated, hardworking, willing to learn, but as to agent handling they were not trained at all. It would be my impression . . . that if it is desired to train Army personnel to perform this type activity that this should be done by detaching them to the CIA for training in the techniques that apply. . .*

. . . . . .

During my tenure, all training was done with the assistance of a modified A Detachment out of Okinawa and on a Mobile Training Team basis. They advised the Vietnamese instructors and provided instructions themselves through interpretors. The quality of the teams varied. One team that was there during the first part of my tour I would rate as absolutely unsatisfactory; an incompetent captain happened to command that one. Later, we had this team replaced with another Mobile Training Team which I would rate as excellent, did their job well, were reliable, and conducted themselves properly.**

. . . . . .

. . . . The training of personnel should include a language capability of the area they are going to operate in. They should have a thorough knowledge of the country historically. They should know the various minorities. They should know which

* Ibid., p. 3.
** Ibid., pp. 3-4.

elements they could operate against one another . . . , most important, the uniform types should be given a course of instruction in covert operations by CAS types . . . they should be given such things as agent handling, communications techniques, coding and the like.*

There is one thing that I strongly believe, . . . the personnel who are selected to perform this type of operation should be carefully screened for character and professional competence . . . There are, I know, personnel in the Service who are perfectly willing to devote their careers to this type activity. These people should be earmarked, should be trained, should have repetitive assignments if necessary in the field, without being penalized promotionwise, schoolwise and the like. Perhaps the area that this should come in is military intelligence. There are people in the combat arms that can perform just as capably in this field, are willing to and have potential.**

There would have been a decided difference in the early performance if we had had more qualified and motivated personnel in the program.**

* Ibid., pp. 4-5.
** Ibid., p. 5.

COMMENTS ON PERSONNEL AND TRAINING

BY

LT. COLONEL WILLIAM C. CARPER, III, USA

. . . at Long Thanh . . . The training operation of the Vietnamese consisted of about a 28-week training cycle which essentially copied the Special Forces training program which was taught at Fort Bragg. It included: weapons training, parachute training, medical training, communications training, psychological operations, escape and evasion, survival, navigation and map reading. We also initiated the training program there to conduct exercises with teams to give them confidence in the area around Long Thanh and in this way we added to our security of the base camp. We constantly patrolled and conducted small three to five day operations in search of VC. In this manner we were able to determine what was going on around the camp and kept the area clear of enemy activity. Another aim of this type of training was to determine individual as well as team capabilities. It assisted us in measuring how well these people could be relied upon to operate in the field on their own.*

On training, they were capable of receiving and absorbing the training. For example, in the area of communications, they became very high quality communications operators. They learned weapons satisfactorily but some of their shooting wasn't the best. They learned to be fairly effective medics, and they certainly could navigate and function in the jungle in a highly successful manner. The biggest problem in training was in

* (TS) Interview of LTC William C. Carper, III, USA, p. 1.

developing leadership and teamwork. There was a discipline problem that stemmed from the Vietnamese side because in the cadre group themselves the problems were numerous and no effective disciplinary measures were every carried out by the staff headed by Colonel Ho. If you had a disciplinary problem, the matter was taken up with Colonel Ho's staff and usually the man was removed from Long Thanh and placed in Saigon in another job or in Danang or in Nha Trang. If one of the Vietnamese cadre didn't get the job done he was just moved out of the way and the pot was stirred once more. There was evidence of poor leadership when it came to launch; on numerous occasions teams would refuse to go. We always got them on the aircraft but it was one hell of a job for us and our Vietnamese counterparts to do so. We always finally got them on the plane, however.*

. . . . . .

During my tenure after I arrived there, some of the teams that were in camp in training were specifically recruited for missions in North Vietnam and there were one or two teams that were well selected . . . from areas in the north. But by and large during the time I was there it appeared to me that most of the recruits were coming from the Saigon-Cholon complex and these personnel were highly mercenary and pretty unreliable and certainly not motivated to doing a job for their government. They were only interested in the money they could gain from enlisting in the program.**

. . . . . .

We also had to use the same American cadre personnel for training and as team members to give it the proper stimulus and

* Ibid., pp. 1-2.
** Ibid., p. 2.

Tab E to

motivation to make the cross-border teams realize that they were going to have Americans with them from the outset. So, it did curtail my operations as far as the program up north was concerned. To get the program underway on time I had to improvise to get the job done I'm sure security was lax at that time because of the mixing of people. I don't think it was a good idea to mix people going north with people going cross border. Obviously the training would have received greater attention and greater detail if I'd had a separate American cadre for the conduct of this training, but, of course, the job had to be accomplished with what we had.*

. . . . . .

. . . . The SOG Staff recognized that the American team at Long Thanh should be augmented to provide the necessary support in training as well as participation in cross-border operations. At the time, I know they were having difficulty getting replacement personnel from Ft Bragg and the ZI to take care of all the Special Forces needs let alone SOG needs. As an interim measure . . . we were to get replacement personnel for cross-border from Okinawa. Although this meant six-month TDY, as I understood it, it was the only step that SOG could take to get the job done. I personally was opposed to six-month TDY personnel from Okinawa because I felt that they were on the job for too short a time. By the time they got their feet on the ground and acquainted with their Vietnamese counterparts and rapport established, they were ready to go back to Okinawa. I had some unsatisfactory experience with TDY personnel.*

* Ibid., p. 5.

Initially to get cross-border teams organized, we had six to eight officers to use as team leaders for the initial development of six teams. We started initially in June, as I recall, with four teams. These teams were made up of about six Vietnamese and two Americans. At the time that I had 23 or 24 Americans in the camp, we only had sufficient American personnel for three teams or six Americans. But this is the initial organization of the cross-border teams as I knew it.*

This business of combining the north operations with cross-border operations was not very efficient administratively because being in a very small camp it meant that two different missions were being mixed together and the left hand and the right hand knew what was going on. In this case, it was not too good from a security standpoint. I separated them as best I could. We were able to separate them by keeping one group of people in one area of the camp and the other group of people in a separate fenced-in area in the camp.**

* Ibid., p. 5.
** Ibid., p. 6.

Tab E to

COMMENTS ON PERSONNEL AND TRAINING

BY

LIEUTENANT TERRY K. LINGLE, USN

I was very disappointed in the personnel in logistics in SOG, mostly because I had expected much higher caliber personnel, both from a technical standpoint and personal integrity. The Army enlisted people assigned to me, although some of them were very good and tried very hard, were for the most part parachute riggers who had very limited knowledge of actual supply procedures. Perhaps the worst problem was that all personnel, both officer and enlisted, seemed to have a total lax attitude towards drinking and carousing with the local women. This happened not only after duty hours but during duty hours with Vietnamese women who worked on the premises. An officer was actually living with one in the supply area. This situation became so bad that I was finally directed to leave the downtown headquarters and go out and take over the job as Supply Officer and relieve the Army Major concerned. The senior enlisted man assigned to me was an Army Master Sergeant. He took up where the Army Major left off and was eventually apprehended by the CID for passing some of our stock or selling it to the black market operations. He was also paying rent on an apartment near our warehouse and living with the same woman that the Army Major had been living with previously.*

* (TS) Interview of Lieutenant Terry K. Lingle, USN, pp. 1-2.

Tab F to

TOP SECRET

COMMENTS ON PERSONNEL AND TRAINING

BY

COMMANDER KENNETH N. BEBB, USN

. . . . . .

. . . . Our part in the program was basically to assist SOG in the formation of various programs and in gaining approval for various proposed operations. SOG would come to CINCPAC and request assistance in various problem areas and we in turn would go to ARPAC, PACFLT, and PACAF there in the Hawaiian area and try to solve the problem at that level; and, in most cases, we would have to go back to Washington or Coronado to carry out some of these actions, to solve these problems. One of the key problems that comes to my mind that we wrestled with initially in the MAROPS field was the lack of trained crew people for the boats. We assisted in providing naval personnel to Danang in order to expedite the training program for the Vietnamese. The reason that we wanted the Vietnamese to run the boats was because we were having a terrible time with third-country maritime people in running SWIFTs and NASTYs. [redacted] They were difficult to control and caused all sorts of problems while on liberty. They were getting in trouble in Danang and there were definite fears in the Washington circle that the whole program would be blown because these people were getting involved with Vietnamese girls and the police in Danang. So they felt that the credibility of the program would soon be shot. [redacted] For these reasons, and the fact that they wanted to expand the program,

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TOP SECRET

Tab G to
Annex Q to
Appendix B

Tab G to

they decided to train the Vietnamese naval officers and enlisted personnel to man the boats and more or less run the operations. [redacted] (b)(1) (b)(3)

* (TS) Interview of Commander Kenneth N. Bebb, USN, pp. 1-2.

TOP SECRET

COMMENTS ON PERSONNEL AND TRAINING

BY

COLONEL DONALD D. BLACKBURN, USA

. . . . . .

. . . . Originally, Special Forces were sent to train the tribes as mountain scouts and strike forces in an area and people denial role (CIDG Program). They did great work, but when they were committed to more conventional roles their effectiveness greatly depreciated. We need small groups that have the capability to advise paramilitary forces, particularly in more backward nations. But it must be remembered that we should send conventional soldiers to train conventional forces - they can do the job better than can Special Forces personnel. . .*

* (TS) Interview of Colonel Donald D. Blackburn, USA, p. 4.

TOP SECRET

COMMENTS ON PERSONNEL AND TRAINING

BY

COLONEL JOHN T. MOORE, JR., USAF

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. . . . My relations with the Vietnamese people working for MACSOG centered primarily on the aircrews. I can speak perhaps better to those than I can to the others, but I do have some knowledge of the others, too. [redacted] I can say unqualifiedly that they were professionally highly competent. Also, they were highly motivated and had a genuine interest in accomplishing the mission. [redacted] leaving four to be able for combat missions. As to the missions themselves, they imposed certain restrictions on us, like not wanting to fly unless they had a 50-50 chance of the weather being favorable. They would not fly anywhere in the vicinity of known SAM sites even though they were at altitudes below the effectiveness of the SAM missiles. With regard to the 30-mile ring that we used to arbitrarily put around each known SAM site, the crews would not even fly through the ring, though they could have used terrain masking, etc., to avoid defensive action.*

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* (~~TS~~) Interview of Colonel John T. Moore, Jr., USAF, pp. 11-12.

Tab I to
Annex Q to
Appendix B

Tab I to

As far as the Vietnamese C-123 crews were concerned, 1
although they were professionally highly qualified in the C-123 2
and could effectively accomplish the mission, we had several 3
problems with them. Foremost among these, I think, was their 4
attitude toward the mission. They were not particularly interested 5
in it. They played the part of real prima donnas insofar as 6
making themselves available to fly the missions. They would 7
not permanently station themselves up at Nha Trang, the base 8
of operation. They were based down at Saigon and would only 9
come up to Nha Trang to fly their mission. They would not fly 10
missions on weekends. They would not fly during any Vietnamese 11
holidays. They would not fly if a day of the mission was one 12
of those inauspicious days that they have due to their 13
superstitions, etc. In fact, the use of these crews got to be 14
such a hardship and so much of a problem that I finally took 15
steps to disqualify the Vietnamese C-123 crews from flying any 16
more combat missions. As far as I know, this has remained 17
this way up to the present time. We have no qualified Vietnamese 18
C-123 crews any longer. The Vietnamese Air Force itself did not 19
seem to put any high degree of importance or priority on the 20
MACSOG mission. These crews, of course, came from Premier 21
Ky's elite coup force that he kept in Saigon, this is probably 22
one of the roots of our problems with the Vietnamese crews. 23
This was not so, however, of the Vietnamese crews on the 24
helicopters or the A-1s. These people were also professionally 25
highly qualified in their particular aircraft, but they 26
differed from the C-123 crews in their degree of motivation and 27
the priority that they gave to the accomplishment of a MACSOG 28
mission.* 29
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* Ibid., p. 12.

Insofar as the helicopter pilots are concerned, the US Special Forces operating with the Vietnamese cross-border teams expressed the fact that these helicopter pilots were probably as qualified as, if not better so, than most of the US helicopter crews that were also employed on the infiltration/exfiltration missions. There was no question about their courage or their accepting the normal operational hazards of bad weather, etc., and bad terrain. They would even fly under conditions that some of the US people would hesitate to fly in.*

The Vietnamese boat crews were also highly qualified, motivated, courageous, and aggressive. Sometimes they were probably a little more aggressive than we would have liked them to be. I can't say this about the across-the-beach teams we trained. We never seemed to be able to instill in them the leadership that was required for this type of operation. Of all the across-the-beach operations we conducted during my tenure, I would have to say that I don't think any of them could be classified as completely successful The reasons underlying this are not fully known to me. I know that the US people training these across-the-beach teams were thoroughly qualified and that the training emphasized the aggressiveness needed for this type of operation. I think perhaps the lack of Vietnamese leadership was probably the most critical factor. The opinion of the US supervisory personnel was that the lack of aggressiveness of these teams probably was the sole factor contributing to their failure to accomplish the mission.**

* Ibid., p. 12.
** Ibid., p. 13.

Tab I to

I have already commented on the ground agent teams. We did notice while I was in MACSOG a gradual degradation in the caliber of the persons we were getting to train for these teams. We were beginning to have to reject some of them due to their inability to assimilate the training or their lack of aggressiveness, etc. Again, I think that one of the most important factors contributing to their lack of success was their lack of motivation and, of course, we attributed this to our inability to stimulate in them the motivation they needed. If we had had a resistance movement going, I feel sure we would have been able to highly motivate these teams.*

. . . . . .

. . . . This brings up the point, if we had to do this all over again, if we had a similar operation like MACSOG is conducting to start up in another area of the world, where would we get the people, how would we staff it, and how would we organize it? One thing that is not being done, to my knowledge, in any of the Services is maintaining the identity of the people who have acquired experience in conducting covert operations. Our attempts in the Air Force to get some kind of identity put into the man's records so that we can recall him on a computer and question the computer as to the availability of these people has not been achieved yet. I don't think it is in the other Services either. We are handicapped in the Military Services from the outset and, except on a name-by-name basis, you have to remember who these people are, etc. We are running into this, for example, even in MACSOG's operations today. I can speak only from the Air

* Ibid., p. 13.

Force standpoint. In manning the Air Force positions in MACSOG, we're having difficulty getting people with prior experience. Due to the length of the war and the short tour over there, we have run through just about everybody who has had any experience in it. We're having to use people who are qualified in some type of tactical air operations, but not necessarily who have any experience whatsoever in how to run them covertly. This is one weakness that we have, that is, identifying people who have this kind of experience, keeping track of them, and being able to recall them at a future date.*

* Ibid., p. 17.

TOP SECRET

COMMENTS ON PERSONNEL AND TRAINING

BY

LT. COLONEL RALPH R. GARRISON, USAF

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. . . . I was intimately familiar with air operations associated with the OPLAN 34A missions. Initially, all OPLAN 34A missions were to be flown by C-123s. These missions were infiltration of teams into North Vietnam. The C-123s were flown by Chinese crews, third country crews. The Chinese were well disciplined crews and were given proficiency training frequently. I considered them very professional. I would like to make a point, however, that they are very cautious. [redacted] His approval is required before any Chinese crew will fly a mission. The MACSOG AIROPS people must make available [redacted] intelligence, weather data and other pre-mission planning information. [redacted] then decides whether the weather is good enough and whether intelligence indicates that [redacted] crews can get in and out safely. In general, [redacted] required very good weather before [redacted] crews would fly an OPLAN 34A mission and they also required a good full moon. Although this limited operations to only a few days per month, it was probably valid since 34A missions were only flown at night. . . .*

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. . . Although the Chinese crews only flew 34A missions during the light of the moon, we also used them for PsyOps missions during the dark of the moon. These missions were flown at minimum route altitude with a pop-up for the actual

* (TS) Interview of LTC Ralph R. Garrison, USAF, pp. 1-2.

drop. As North Vietnamese defenses built up, the Chinese were more and more reluctant to get in close enough to NVN to get a good drop on a particular target. As a result, we obtained approval for the American C-123 crews to fly PsyOps missions. Subsequently, we were very successful in these operations insofar as the C-123 capability was concerned. . . .*

. . . . An effort was made in 1964 to qualify VNAF crews in the C-123s to perform 34A missions. These VNAF crews were never used in the 34A program. They did perform some training missions; however, the VNAF crews had a bad accident at Monkey Mountain. Also, these crews came from the Saigon area and they did not like to be located out in Nha Trang on a continuing basis as required. Since the Chinese crews seemed to be better motivated and better qualified, the VNAF C-123 OPLAN 34A program was dropped. . . .*

* Ibid., p. 2.

COMMENTS ON PERSONNEL AND TRAINING

BY

LT. COLONEL RAYMOND L. CALL, USA

. . . . . .

There is one thing that I think is extremely important to bring out . . . and that is the fantastic performance of the Vietnamese helicopter pilots. We had some of the most decrepit, beaten up pieces of junk that were ever built; you never knew whether they were going to land or crash. Grease would drip out of them, they would smoke, shiver and shake, but these pilots kept these things flying as well as did the maintenance people. We rarely had more than three or four helicopters flying at any one time. They had been used prior to being assigned to me on Project DELTA. They had some experience in inserting and extracting the teams. I think the success of our program was initally and probably during the entire period I was there due to these pilots. They lost some good people. Without them, I don't believe that we could have had the success that we did have.*

* (TS) Interview of LTC Raymond L. Call, USA, p. 7.

TOP SECRET

COMMENTS ON PERSONNEL AND TRAINING

BY

LT. COLONEL ERNEST T. HAYES, JR., USA

. . . . . .

In the long-term agent operations in North Vietnam, to conduct these operations we had an assistant provided by the Special Assistant at the Embassy. [redacted] I had been involved in unconventional warfare activities during the Korean War; however, not directly in agent operations as such. The three operations officers who worked directly under me came from conventional units in Vietnam and normally served six months with SOG after completing an advisory assignment. Some had previous Special Forces experience; however, . . . none was Special Forces qualified. This did not really prove to be a hindrance in the conduct of our operations. As each officer was assigned, he would receive a briefing, be given background on the agent teams already in place, and be introduced to a standard operating procedure prepared early in 1965. This period was primarily one of on-the-job training; the officer really became productive and aware of the details and the intricacies of the operations during the last 90 days he was with us, if he came in for only a six-month period. In other words, it took about 90 days to really make the man productive.*

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The selection of the captains, the junior operations officers concerned with the long-term agent operations, was

* (TS) Interview of Lt. Colonel Ernest T. Hayes, Jr., USA, p. 1.

based primarily on a personal interview by Partain or myself. In these interviews the main things we looked for were imagination and an indication that the man would pay close attention to detail. As I said earlier, we found very few individuals that had had prior Special Forces experience before coming to us and none had had actual experience in the conduct of agent operations. It was apparent to all of us involved that there was a need for having personnel who had been specifically trained and were experienced in the conduct of agent operations. For this very reason, we subsequently submitted a change to the Joint Table of Distribution (JTD) to have agent handler spaces authorized within OP 34. . . .*

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. . . . members of the teams that were already in-place and the reinforcement teams and the personnel that were recruited were actually native to the operational area for which they were intended. Many of these tribal groups were centered around Dalat and Ban Me Thuot and the case officers, who were of the same tribal groupings, would go to these two locations to recruit new team members. . . . These recruits would then be brought to Camp Long Thanh where they would be administered physical examinations to find out if they had any chronic disease that would prevent their being committed as agents; tuberculosis was the main thing we were after here. Those that had TB would be released back to their former occupation. Occasionally we would have personnel from ARVN recruited and brought into the program to be a team leader or assistant team leader or a communications

* Ibid., pp. 1-2.

-an. They would be married up with the personnel that would form a team. I believe that there was an effort made to keep integrity among the groups that would be on a particular team at this time.*

. . . . . .

The training conducted at Camp Long Thanh included weapons, demolitions, tactics, map reading, compass work, basic communications, and there was also a significant amount of time spent on psychological operations. The members of the teams were taught how to make bandy rolls, and also balloon leaflet bombs which they could release on a stream; when the balloon burst, the leaflets would be spread out along the banks of the stream. Extensive airborne training was conducted as the main means of infiltration for all personnel by parachute. All of the team members were taught tree landing techniques and how to let themselves down by rapelling from trees that sometimes were 200 to 250 feet in height. The field training exercises conducted at the end of their training were normally held in the Dolat area or at the site of one of the Special Forces camps. They would actually be parachuted into the treetops, remain on the ground, and conduct a problem of several days duration.**

The FTX was used as a vehicle to reveal any weak spots in their training. Corrective training would be conducted when they returned to Camp Long Thanh.

The trained reinforcements could not always be infiltrated as soon as they completed their training and were frequently given leave. It was always a problem to get them back from

* Ibid., pp. 6-7.
** Ibid., p. 7.

leave and the AWOL rates the first day after their leave was to have ended would normally be 40 to 50 percent. One of the big problems we would have in getting a reinforcement group ready for infiltration would be to gather them up after they had been given a leave. Naturally enough, we would nave to give them a physical examination at this time also.*

. . . . . .

As to the qualifications of the individuals who went into the area (NVN), they had had a great deal of training. I think that the field training exercises adequately, evaluated them and that necessary corrective training was conducted. I am not so sure that they had no leadership difficulties after they were infiltrated. I personally feel that they may have been lax in some of their disciplinary measures, instead of staying off trails, roads and making every possible effort to avoid contact, they would often take an easy route and chance an encounter with someone in the area. . . .**

. . . . . .

I feel very strongly that in the type of operations we are involved in specifically agent operations, one year tours are completely inadequate and unsatisfactory. The minimum tour should be either 18 months or two years. It takes that long to become completely acquainted with counterparts and with the details of the operations. . . .***

* Ibid., p. 8.
** Ibid., pp. 16-17.
*** Ibid., p. 19.

TOP SECRET

COMMENTS ON PERSONNEL AND TRAINING

BY

MAJOR PETER C. ANDRE, USA

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. . . . The team leaders were designated actually by STS. Once they were designated, we were concerned about their leadership traits and whether or not they should be leaders. One of the things that we had set up at Long Thanh was a leadership reaction course which was something similar to Fort Benning. They would run this course and we saw that the selected leaders would stand out with regard to coming up with the solutions on how to go over the various obstacles, etc. It was an indication that people they did pick were the natural leaders of the group.*

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. . . . The understanding I got from my counterpart at Long Thanh was that the regular ARVN units did not want to release their people for this type of an operation. Consquently, the recruiting would have to come from people who had no prior military training . . . I'll put in probably one exception on that. There was a lieutenant who was, I believe, part of STS and I think he did some recruiting himself. He formed up a team. I believe his name was Lieutenant Ben. He was a regular military type and I think he did go in as a leader of a team in a cross-border operation after I left.*

. . . . . .

Once the teams were formed up . . . we would start off with their basic training which would be primarily weapons,

* (TS) Interview of Major Peter C. Andre, USA, pp. 1-2.

TOP SECRET

Tab M to
Annex Q to
Appendix B

patrolling, map reading and then we would give them basic jump training. Thereafter, we would give them some tree training. We would take them up to Dalat and jump them in as teams into the mountainous area around Dalat. Also during the training program, we would break them down into their specialties: intelligence, weapons, demolitionists and commo.*

As much as possible, we tried to handle this through our counterparts. They would give the training, but we would oversee it to insure that the training was coming out correctly. We would make a point of making sure that our advisors or American types would be around at their training to observe it at all times.**

Once the agent teams had completed their basic training and their team training, they would not be put into isolation until MACSOG had ordered their insertion. We would continue training them in more advanced techniques and give them patrolling, etc., to sharpen them up . . . until word came to isolate them. The isolation area was fenced in with barbed wire on the tops of the fences and gates with guards. Inside the isolation area, there were permanent personnel who would take care of the team as to cooking and anything else they might need. The team was not permitted to leave the isolation area once it was put in it. After they were put in and it was getting time for their mission, SOG representatives would come down. This would be the case officer and the Vietnamese counterpart. They would brief the team for the operation. The Vietnamese case officer would be the one to brief the team on its mission. In my first encounter with this, just observing and watching the briefing, I felt that it was just a little bit too short really for a team to digest everything that they were supposed to do in the area they would be going into. I'm

* Ibid., pp. 1-2.
** Ibid., p. 2.

judging this on the concepts of Special Forces and our basis of briefing teams, which we have evolved over a period of years. I'd talked to the detachment commander about this, Colonel Munger, and we talked to the OP 34 people and tried to set up a sand table affair and the OP 34 people would construct terrain features, etc., of the area that they would be going into. In addition to this, we talked to the OP 34 people and set up a briefing package that the team leader and his team could use to give to the OP 34 representatives once they had received their briefing. In this way the briefing was lengthened by about two hours and gave us a better idea that they knew where they were going and what their mission was to be. In other words, the team would brief the briefers to show that they knew the mission.*

During isolation, there were breaches of discipline and probably security. In the case of one team, once they had received their briefing, one of the men all of a sudden refused to go and it was a question of what to do with this man. He had already been briefed on the mission and the team tried to talk him into it; the case officers tried to talk him into it. Nothing would work. I was running the camp at the particular time and I put the man into our (US) commo bunker and talked to the Vietnamese camp commander on this and we agreed that he shouldn't communicate with any other Vietnamese. During the day, we took him out and put him in a conex container and the Vietnamese camp commander, Major Sang, said to keep him there. So we put an American guard over him and kept him this way until word had come back that the infiltration had been completed. Once the infiltration had been completed, we turned him over to STS and they took him to Saigon. I don't know what happened to him after that.**

* Ibid., p. 3.
** Ibid., pp. 3-4.

* Ibid., p. 3.

COMMENTS ON PERSONNEL AND TRAINING

BY

LT. COLONEL VINCENT W. LANG, USA

In my opinion, the average trainees we had were extremely poor with the exception of one Meo team that we got out of Laos. Ninety percent of the personnel we had were grossly lacking in motivation and had an almost non-existent ability to assimilate whatever we tried to teach them. I think we had some success with some of the teams because of one factor - that was leadership, a good team leader. If you were able to select an individual who had some sort of a military background or some sort of a motivation for the type activity that he was going to be involved in, and gave him a team and gave him the backing so that he could eliminate or get rid of those people on his team he thought were not compatible or just didn't have the motivation that he felt was necessary, you wound up with a pretty good team. Keep in mind when I say a good team I'm not comparing them with a US team.*

. . . . I think it was Vang Pao who sent these /Meo/ people to us (about 20 to 24 people) and they were outstanding troops. They did everything we asked of them They contributed to our own knowledge of what was going on in Laos and they were willing to give us the benefit of their experience in Laos. So, all in all, had we been able to work with people like this particular group of Meo, I think our program in North Vietnam and Laos would have been a hell of a lot better than it was.*

* (TS) Interview of LTC Vincent W. Lang, USA, p. 2.

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We never had a CAS representative at Long Thanh as long as I was there. We very definitely should have because this man had access to the type of information that we needed prior to deploying teams. There are many things that we could have gotten out of a CAS representative. If nothing else, just simple recommendations that we could have used to great advantage.*

We had a secure base camp area (Long Thanh), security force and all of the defense necessary to maintain the area. Administratively we had everything you could possibly ask for including 200 kw generators plus air conditioners. We had a small range where we could fire all of our small arms and machine guns. We had a demo site where we taught demolition training and training in indirect fire weapons, mortar and this sort of thing. We had a very good communications classroom within the compound which had all of the electrical communications instructional gear you could possibly ask for. Inside the camp we had an airborne training facility which had everything that was required with the exception of the 34-foot tower. We conducted tower training at the RVN airborne center in Saigon. We had an air strip and a drop zone for airborne training and for any aerial exfiltration training that we wanted to do. Chopper exfiltration training we did at the same site. We had additional classrooms right in the compound to be used for interior instruction. In addition to that, we had an isolation area in the camp that we could use to handle two or three teams.**

* Ibid., p. 5.
** Ibid., pp. 1-2.

TOP SECRET

COMMENTS ON PERSONNEL AND TRAINING

BY

COLONEL ROBERT C. MacLANE, USA

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[redacted]

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* (TS) Interview of Colonel Robert C. MacLane, USA, p. 5.

TOP SECRET

COMMENTS ON PERSONNEL AND TRAINING

BY

COLONEL JOHN K. SINGLAUB, USA

. . . . . .

I found after arriving that the training of some of our US as well as indigenous personnel had not yet been realigned to the changed mission. I refer specifically here to the fact that the US Special Forces personnel were coming to Vietnam with their training oriented primarily to the counterinsurgency role rather than to the unconventional warfare role, although the specific tasks that we wanted the Special Forces personnel to accomplish under the SHINING BRASS (later the PRAIRIE FIRE) programs were not directly related to unconventional warfare. Generally, however, many of our operations were more closely related to UW than to the counterinsurgency training the Special Forces personnel had received at Fort Bragg. I, therefore, directed a training program be established to train these personnel, who were at that time being assigned in fairly large numbers to the SHINING BRASS program, in order to enable them to accomplish their reconnaissance and later their reaction force operations*

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When SOG was first established, there was no US aircraft flying over North Vietnam so that any leaflets being dropped there were those dropped by SOG. Although these leaflets were designed to be black or grey, the changing situation in late 1965, in which very large quantities of white leaflets were being scattered all over North Vietnam, suggested to me that we should reduce our leaflet operations in the north and convert our resources to a different type of black covert psychological operation. This proved to be difficult because of the lack of

* (TS) Interview of Colonel John K. Singlaub, USA, pp. 1-2.

training of personnel who were being sent to SOG for this operation. The personnel coming from both Air Force and Army sources were trained in white psychological operations and did not really understand the covert operations. A great effort was placed on training the US personnel that we had in-country and setting up a program of training in the United States [redacted] in order to train the psychological operations personnel after they had completed the course at Fort Bragg and before they were sent to Vietnam. This proved to be very successful and enabled me in the second half of my tour to initiate reasonably good covert PSYOPS.*

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I found in my briefings in Washington while preparing to go to SOG that the intelligence community was not fully satisfied that they were receiving full benefit from the investment in SOG's operation. I made an effort after getting there to realign and expand the intelligence collection efforts not only in the PLOWMAN operations but in a more systematic debriefing of the SHINING BRASS teams and in the debriefing of all personnel who participated in any way in interrogation of personnel who had come from enemy-controlled territory, whether in-country or out of country. One of the limitations was the poor quality of the intelligence personnel assigned and it took some major effort to get some assistance in this area.**

. . . . . .

. . . . I attempted to increase the Vietnamese participation in some of the technical aspects of the operations. Here,

* Ibid., p. 3.
** Ibid., pp. 3-4.

I refer specifically to the provision of Vietnamese crews for the aircraft and the provision of Vietnamese maintenance personnel. As far as the maintenance personnel for the boats were concerned, for several years the boat maintenance was provided by a Mobile Support Team sent on temporary duty from Coronado to MACSOG. All maintenance was performed on the boats by these American personnel in the shops at Danang. It occurred to me that it would be much better to get the Vietnamese involved in this, thereby reducing the requirements for US personnel. In addition, it would be easier in the future to conceal the activity if we had all Vietnamese personnel with only an occasional US advisor. To implement this policy, it was necessary to obtain the assurance of the Vietnamese Chief of Naval Operations that he would provide me with quality Vietnamese personnel and would allow them to remain long enough to complete the training and to perform the mission. We were able eventually to establish a training course at Subic Bay in the Philippines where the boats were being overhauled on a periodic basis. We trained a fairly large number of maintenance personnel in engine maintenance and, to a lesser extent, in electronics, and armament maintenance. The ultimate object of this was to completely Vietnamize the boat operation.*

The Vietnamizing of the aircrews ran into a different problem and was not a success. A plan had been developed to train six C-123 crews to ultimately replace the Chinese crews. Two crews had gone to the States and when they returned I made an effort to move them to Danang where the aircraft were located and to integrate them immediately into the program. One of the first difficulties we ran into was that the Vietnamese pilots had become accustomed to the fine living on

* Ibid., pp. 4-5

USAF bases and decided that the facilities at Danang were not adequate for their new positions in life. They desired to live in Saigon and to fly occasionally from Nha Trang. Since flying missions is only a small part of the overall effort in developing crew proficiency and training flights, as well as administrative combat support flights, represent a large part of the mission, it was necessary, in my opinion, to have the crews in Nha Trang all of the time. An impasse occurred and when I discussed the problem with the Chief of Staff of the Vietnamese Air Force I found that he was actually anxious to get these crews back as a cadre for the new C-119 program which was about to start in the VNAF. Under these circumstances, I agreed with him to release the crews that we had there and to cancel the C-123 program for the other crews scheduled to go to the United States and permit him thereby to employ the trained crews on the C-119 program. This meant that we had to retain the Chinese crews who, by this time, had reached a very high level of proficiency.*

. . . . . .

A . . . problem area, which reduced the effectiveness of the overall SOG mission, is related to the lack of trained personnel for this type of operation. The Services do not have now and did not have then a system which would enable them to identify those personnel especially qualified as a result of prior training or experience to perform the various missions called for in the SOG Joint Table of Distribution. The inexperience of the personnel we received combined with the

* Ibid., p. 5.

short one-year tour, resulted in greatly reduced effectiveness. It was necessary to conduct a great deal of orientation and training of the newly arrived personnel. Those who were bright could learn their new trade and skills, but could only do what they were told and were unable, as a result of no prior experience, to contribute any new ideas or new concepts to the overall mission. This, of course, reduced our effectiveness.*

This same combination of short tours and inexperienced personnel forced me on many occasions to centralize the decision-making because I was unable to trust inexperienced personnel to make some of the key decisions that should have been made at a much lower level. This was true in those areas where I had experienced personnel. It was a general overt centralization of decision-making which would have not been necessary had more experienced personnel been available. Another result of this problem area (untrained personnel) is the inability of the personnel to perform their roles as advisors to the Vietnamese. It would be impossible for an American who had no previous experience in this field to provide any advice to the Vietnamese which would improve the quality of the Vietnamese effort, in fact, in most instances, the Vietnamese were advising the Americans. This perpetuated the problems that existed initially in the Vietnamese because they, too, were inexperienced, but practially in all cases resulting from the short tours and the inexperienced US personnel, the Vietnamese knew more than the Americans.*

Related to this problem of providing qualified personnel to MACSOG is the problem of the Joint Table of Distribution.

* Ibid., p. 11

Tab P to

The JTD is typical of all documents of this type. It lists the job description in a few words, the military occupational specialty number, the grade, and the Service component from which the individual should come. This is insufficient to accurately describe the qualifications needed for that particular job. The JTD must either have a section which explains in greater detail the prerequisites for the job or some written description is needed to better describe training and background for that job. This would assist the personnel officers in selecting suitable individuals.*

. . . . . .

. . . . The indigenous personnel working for MACSOG fitted into three national categories: [redacted] whom we employed; the Chinese nationals whom we employed; and those individuals who are considered by the Vietnamese Government as Vietnamese nationals. This last group, of course, breaks down into a variety of ethnic groupings which I'll discuss in detail in a moment.** (b)(1) (b)(3)

First of all, [redacted] were not used in any operational roles. They were used primarily as technicians and support personnel. In this role, they were essential to the success of the operation because we were very limited in the number of support personnel we could get from the United States. The skills that they possessed did not exist among the Vietnamese available to us. Construction, maintenance (a variety of maintenance), and other technical skills were essential to the conduct of the SOG mission and one should consider using (b)(1) (b)(3)

* Ibid., pp. 11-12.
** Ibid., p. 22.

third country nationals of this type in any future operation. They were highly motivated for their job, took unusual risks, and some of them were actually killed in operations in support of our activities.*

The second group, the Chinese, consisted primarily of air crews that manned the C-123 aircraft. This group of pilots and crew members constituted some of the most professional crews that I have ever encountered. I have great admiration for their skill. There have been some criticisms leveled against them but when the situation was really clarified, they exhibited those qualities of courage and professional skill that made their contribution a very significant one. They had the great advantage of having had, in some cases, 20 years of experience in this type of operation and when they were concerned about a given point it was because they felt the United States had not given sufficient thought to the seriousness of the problem or had not taken the time to explain the situation to the Chinese. A lot of this was related to the increasing air defense capability of the North Vietnamese, and the fact that some of the intelligence which revealed this capability was a very highly classified source which could not be passed on to the Chinese. This meant that, in some cases, the Chinese had misconceptions about the capabilities of Soviet radar and Soviet-made antiaircraft weapons. When these capabilities were known to the Chinese, they flew where we would fly and, in general, would fly it just as well or better.**

Finally, with respect to that group that I have described as Vietnamese nationals, I emphasized that the Vietnamese

* Ibid., p. 22.
** Ibid., pp. 22-23.

considered them Vietnamese nationals. In many cases the individual groupings did not know themselves to be Vietnamese nationals but considered themselves as members of a given tribe. The Chinese whom we employed in South Vietnam are sometimes referred to as Nungs. They were actually ethnically Chinese and would have remained Chinese citizens if it had not been for the directives of the Diem regime which required them to take out Vietnamese citizenship.*

Initially, the teams that we employed for PRAIRIE FIRE were made up of Nungs. Presumably, they were members of the 5th Chinese Division which had been formed from among the Chinese population in North Vietnam. They had fought well against the French. When they came south, they were broken up and disarmed. Many of them had good military training and they initially made good soldiers. Later, however, these people found that they could make more money by working as guards for civilian construction concerns and took up that less hazardous occupation. The recruiters who were former officers in the Chinese 5th Division would be forced to recruit Chinese who, in fact, were young boys anxious to avoid the draft into the Vietnamese Army; we generally referred to them as the "Cholon cowboys." They had no previous military training. They did not have the sense of belonging nor the loyalties to one another that we found in the early Nungs, and certainly did not have those qualities of endurance and ability to overcome hardship that the earlier groups had. They were, in fact, city boys and had all the disadvantages of city boys. They then became less a part of the organization and were reduced in numbers. In their place, personnel from some of the Montagnard tribes were recruited.*

* Ibid., p. 23.

An effort was made to recruit members of the Montagnard tribes who would provide language and, in some cases, area coverage of that part of Laos in which we intended to operate. For example, we took Bru tribe members from the northernmost province of South Vietnam and made them into a good fighting force, first as SPIKE team members. Later, we established full platoons and companies of these Bru tribals. They fought well, they had a tribal loyalty which made them more compassionate for one another and provided them an esprit that did not exist in the city boys from Cholon.*

We recruited Sadang members down in the south for operations into the Southern part of Laos with a view toward ultimately contacting tribals on the far side of the border to form an intelligence net or to obtain intelligence from them as a result of direct contact. This was not quite successful because very few personnel on the Vietnamese side belonged to the specific tribes that extended into Laos, but this was an effort that should have been made. These personnel, when motivated well, like the Bru, would fight reasonably well and were usually a good source of manpower.**

Some of our efforts to form complete Vietnamese teams, i.e., Vietnamese teams that had no US personnel in them, met with initial success but when it came down to final operations the team was something less than successful. They would fight just as well when a part of a combined team, as did the Brus and the other Montagnards, but when we tried to use them to provide their own leadership, there was a breakdown in

* Ibid., pp. 23-24.
** Ibid., p. 24.

communications. They could not call in air strikes to save themselves at the critical time because their language wasn't good enough and they lacked confidence in themselves as leaders.*

. . . on the attempted use of Vietnamese as pilots . . . we made an effort to train some C-123 crews to ultimately take over from the Chinese. The shortage of pilots in the Vietnamese Air Force, which was rapidly expanding, combined with the fact that the Vietnamese considered the accommodations at Nha Trang to be less than what they had been offered in Saigon. They decided that they would rather remain in Saigon than go to Nha Trang. I considered this a lack of motivation on the part of the Vietnamese and I did not consider it worth my effort to try to overcome this. We had well-trained Chinese crews available. I would have liked an all-Vietnamese show, but the efforts to try to overcome this difficulty did not seem to be justified in view of the only slight gains to be achieved. So, I abandoned this and we did not use Vietnamese as pilots for the C-123s. We did, however, use, with very great success, Vietnamese Air Force crews in our H-34 helicopters. These pilots proved to be superior to those whom we received from the US Services primarily because they were knowledgeable of the terrain, having lived in it for many years and flown over it for many years straight. In addition, they seemed to be more willing to go in to help pull out a team than the US pilots would be even though there were US members on the team on the ground. In some cases, the US pilots felt that the risks were too high. I was never aware of any Vietnamese helicopter pilot ever suggesting

* Ibid., p. 24.

that he should not accept the risks. Many of them died very heroic deaths trying to rescue some of their teams. I say their teams because they considered that the SOG teams, both US and Vietnamese or Montagnard, were part of their organization and they did extremely well in this regard.*

We also had a few Vietnamese pilots flying our U-17 liaison-type aircraft and they did well in this. They sometimes lacked good judgment in accepting risks, but they nevertheless showed great courage and very great skill in flying.**

The use of Vietnamese as crew members on the PT boats worked out fairly well. There was a sufficient motivation in terms of the financial rewards that they would get for making these missions and, although we sometimes felt that there was malingering after crossing the 17th parallel, by and large, they performed adequately in the fights. There were some cases in which the Vietnamese who were all on their own exhibited outstanding leadership and they did what was right in the face of the enemy. On several occasions, however, the tense situation caused them to lose their composure and this, on several occasions, resulted in the loss of a boat, through accident or inadvertent self-inflicted damage. In at least one case, one boat was shot out of the water by another one because of lost navigational capability on the boats. This would suggest a relatively low skill level, which was eventually recognized by the Vietnamese commander, Commander Twi, and he took extreme measures to improve the training and motivation of these personnel. I think that he did very well in this regard.**

* Ibid., pp. 24-25.
** Ibid., p. 25.

Tab P to

As far as the maritime action teams are concerned, we were never really able to get personnel of sufficient quality, in terms of intelligence and physical fitness, to form good action teams. These were teams that we were training to be underwater demolitionists, to be personnel to infiltrate the coast by sea to capture prisoners or to destroy specific targets. Despite efforts to improve their training, they never did reach a level of training that had my complete confidence. Quite frankly, a part of this problem was brought about by the fact that the US trainers (the advisors who came to train the Vietnamese) were on a TDY basis. They would come for six months at a time and then leave. This produced a situation in which one group of advisors would start a training program but before the trainees reached a level of proficiency the advisors would rotate, then, a new group would come in with a completely different idea on how the training should be conducted. This created morale problems and was an inefficient way of operating. The SEAL personnel (the UDT personnel assigned to that mission) should have been on PCS to SOG and not on a TDY basis. That was a very ineffective use of naval manpower.*

Perhaps I should say a few words about the quality of the indigenous personnel who were taken into the TIMBERWORK program for operations in North Vietnam. I've commented earlier that we had recruiting problems in this regard because the best personnel could not be sold on the idea of going into North Vietnam for an extended period of time with the sole mission of counting trucks or some other low-level intelligence mission.

* Ibid., pp. 25-26.

The personnel originally recruited as action team members were both highly motivated and action-type personnel. When they were sent to North Vietnam, there was no intent to keep them in that country for several years. It was the US bombing of North Vietnam that suggested these personnel should be retained as intelligence collection and target acquisition teams in North Vietnam and remain in-place in that role. They were subsequently captured and the radio nets were doubled back to deceive us by the North Vietnamese enemy. I cannot blame the quality of the personnel who accepted this doubling as a deficiency of the personnel. They were recruited for action team members and then were put in a position which would have required a completely different personality and type of individual. That was an error in the highest levels which decided to convert these teams.*

The intelligence of the personnel whom we were recruiting seemed to vary a great deal. In the process of trying to improve the training procedures, I attempted to develop a personnel evaluation system which was to be a scientifically-designed test that required no knowledge of any special language, but a test which could be administered to trainees with a view towards checking their basic intelligence and ability to follow instructions and to absorb the new instruction. This project was underway but the contractor who had bid on it started to escalate his price and I assume that it was eventually dropped. Some means of evaluating indigenous personnel before you spend great resources on training them is a very important part of improving our effectiveness in this area.*

* Ibid., p. 26.

. . . . . .

There must be a procedure established which would permit the organization that conducts covert operations to obtain qualified, experienced personnel. We have through the years built up a valuable reservoir of personnel who have had some experience in some phase of covert operations. As we have indicated in other answers to questions in this series, one of the most difficult problems is that associated with trying to obtain experienced personnel. The Services must have some system established where the names of those who have had covert operational experience can be retrieved and the individuals assigned to this type of operation for repeat assignments without it adversely affecting their career.*

* Ibid., p. 38.

TOP SECRET

COMMENTS ON PERSONNEL AND TRAINING

BY

COLONEL DENNIS P. CASEY, USMC

. . . . . .

. . . . The CADO operations (across-the-beach operations and amphibious raids), in my opinion, were neither successful nor meaningful and the reason they were not successful is because they didn't have the proper people to train to do the operations. They needed some discipline and guidance on the mission; American participation probably would have provided this. . . . The airborne operations, in my opinion, were not successful for the same reason. The caliber of the recruit was such that he wanted to make the money but he had little interest or patriotism in trying to carry out the objectives.*

. . . . . .

. . . . In my opinion, the VNAF pilots were some of the best. They could fly the airplanes well and they would fly them anywhere that they were asked to take them. They were a little difficult to deal with in their demands, the requirement for money and the equipment that they said they needed. They were a little bit, especially the AD pilots, what you might call prima donnas. The helicopter pilots were outstanding. They really did a lot for the SHINING BRASS program. The boat crews were pretty good. They had some good captains and some who were not so good. They had one in particular, by the name of Tew, who apparently had all successful missions, except he did not always do what he was told. He was told to bring back so

* (TS) Interview of Colonel Dennis P. Casey, USMC, pp. 1-2.

many prisoners - at one time he was told to bring back something like eight and he brought back 120 - and this sort of thing. On another mission, instead of capturing some sampans he came across, he shot them out of the water so that there was nothing left but a few pieces of debris - nothing of intelligence value. But, all in all, the boat skippers were hard chargers and they ran some pretty good missions.*

. . . . . .

. . . . The Chinese pilots . . . . were, in my opinion, very good, well trained, well disciplined. . . .**

* Ibid., pp. 2-3.
** Ibid., p. 3.

COMMENTS ON PERSONNEL AND TRAINING

BY

MAJOR FRANK JAKS, USA

. . . . . .

A typical reconnaissance team in CCC consists of three US, some four, and up to nine indigenous (referred to as SCU). Most of our SCU at this location are Montagnards from the various surrounding tribes. We have one team manned with Cambodians and several with Vietnamese. An average team receives a minimum of two months training prior to going to the field. We have at least 50 percent of experienced US personnel going on these missions. . . .*

. . . . . .

. . . . The ideal US reconnaissance personnel would be of E6 or E7 grade, with approximately 10 years' service, and not over 30 years of age. We would prefer a light weapons infantryman or an operations specialist. . . .*

* (TS) Interview of Major Frank Jaks, USA, p. 1.

TOP SECRET

COMMENTS ON PERSONNEL AND TRAINING

BY

LT COLONEL JONATHON D. CARNEY, USA

. . . . . .

. . . . Vietnamese do not have the physical stamina which can compare with that of the American soldier. The requirement placed on the Vietnamese people for numbers of courageous, dedicated, willing people is such that it was impossible to find very many of that kind as the war progressed. We attempted to fill the gap by recruiting first among the Nung people and found very quickly that the Nung tribe had been depleted over the years and the ones that were left were of little value to us. We tried to use Montagnards and had good success with the few we were able to acquire and train and keep. This was a turbulent situation in that the Montagnards, being illiterate tribesmen, ordinarily don't really understand the necessity to stay with something for six months to a year or two years. The Montagnard will do something for a while, get tired of it, and go back to his family. This does not do anything for a training base or for a base of operations in the SOG kind of endeavor.*

. . . . . .

One of the most severe problems we experienced in the SHINING BRASS Program was the competition for qualified people that existed between the 5th Special Forces Group and our Special Forces unit. For cover purposes, all personnel who came to us passed through the 5th Special Forces Group

* (TS) Interview of LTC Jonathon D. Carney. USA, pp. 4-5.

Tab S
Annex Q
Appendix b

Headquarters at Nha Trang, where they were administratively processed and where their administrative records were maintained for the time they were with us. The commander of the 5th Group had his own problems which were just as severe as ours and he had his own mission which he considered just as important as we considered ours. However, he sat in a very enviable position of being able to pick the people that he wanted and to give us the people that he didn't necessarily think he needed. For a long time . . . this problem was absolutely acute. . . .*

. . . . . .

. . . . There was a complete lack of a data base in regard to information from the North that we could use, brief our agents, or train our agents or equip them with such items as money. There were no passes that we could duplicate; there were no items of North Vietnamese clothing or equipment or uniforms that we could duplicate and equip them with before we sent them north.**

The recruitment of the personnel was essentially inept; the training of the people was questionable in its value; and certainly the people were ordinarily retained entirely too long in South Vietnam before they were inserted on their mission -- the question of being there too long refers primarily to the chance the mission would be blown before it was ever begun.**

. . . . . .

. . . . The structure of the American participation in this thing was wrong from the beginning in that US Army Special Forces or infantry/airborne or people like myself were employed.

* Ibid., pp. 6-7.
** Ibid., p. 8.

It was only in 1967 that we were able to have intelligence-trained personnel added to our staff to begin to function in a somewhat effective manner in the art of agent handling. Even at this time the people we received from the pipeline were very young and normally relatively inexperienced captains who did not have the background, experience, and knowledge to enable them to operate as effectively as the situation demanded. . . .*

. . . . . .

One of the major weaknesses in the entire TIMBERWORK program was the lack of a mature, well-experienced, qualified intelligence operations specialist. He should have been assigned to SOG and, on some basis, remained with the program throughout. That, of course, by definition would really mean that there should be more than one in case the first guy gets killed or whatever. There was no continuity. There was no tracking of what had taken place in the past. The 12-month rotation cycle was a crippling influence in this area. We made the same mistakes time after time after time and ordinarily we would find out about it only after we sat down and attempted to review why something didn't work. . . . [redacted] (b)(1) (b)(3)

. . . . . .

The MAROPS organization and their installation at Danang were undoubtedly the best structured and equipped of any we

* Ibid., p. 9.
** Ibid., pp. 9-10.

Tab S to

had in SOG. There were, however, definite organizational weaknesses in that the US Navy operational planning staff, in my opinion, was not adequate personnel-wise to provide the necessary operational direction to the Vietnamese. We did not have small boat people prepared and trained for small boat operations. We frequently had SEALs or cruiser men or aircraft carrier men in positions in which they were held responsible for planning cross-beach operations for small boat contact operations.*

One of the more serious problems facing us in the MAROPS activity was the decision made in the Department of the Navy that the SEAL teams responsible for training and preparing the Vietnamese for this activity would be on a six-months rotational basis. The SEAL teams, thereby, were even at a greater handicap than the rest of the structure which was on a 12-month rotational basis. With the Oriental penchant for waiting things out, it seemed obvious that the Vietnamese teams who were responsible to go across-the-beach and to do the job on the ground had elected to wait until that particular US Navy field team rotated because maybe the next one might be better. Once again it's a matter of continuity of trained, experienced, motivated US people to do the job. The rotational structure was such that this just could not impact on the Vietnamese in any lasting sense because he knew you were going to go away pretty soon.*

With respect to indigenous personnel:**

a. The most severe limiting factor to successful operations

* Ibid., p. 14.
** (TS) Memorandum for the Record by LTC Jonathon D. Carney, USA, "Lessons Learned in SOG (U)," 26 November 1968, pp. 1-3.

Tab S to

by SOG in any of it's programs has been the quality of indigenous personnel available for use. The Vietnamese Armed Forces (VNAF) personnel, both officer and enlisted, have been less than adequate; their performance has been very spotty. There are notable exceptions to this comment, primarily in the 219th Helicopter Squadron and in the A-1 Detachment. An example of general inadequacy is the fact that no really effective ARVN or mercenary led team has been developed for either STRATA or the other cross-border operations.

b. Another equally true generalization is that the quality of the mercenaries available for input to field operations is uniformly low. Since the Nung tribal group was depleted in 1965 - 1966, there have been very few tigers available to fill the programs.

c. There are many reasons for this deficiency. Some of them are: SOG must compete with a booming economy in which jobs at good pay and much less risk are readily available; SOG cannot effectively control recruitment since there are never enough US personnel with a language competence; SOG's advisory role, with Chief, SOG and Chief, STD on a equal plane, has inhibited the degree of control that Chief, SOG can exercise over VNAF inputs to the counterpart organization.

d. In the formation of similar organizations in the future, an understanding must be reached with the host government to permit US approval/rejection authority over cadre assignments. The US commander and staff must be able to pick and choose from within the allied military structure the individuals suited for this task. It is true that this is a drain on the available quality personnel who must be spread over many tasks, however, the number involved is quite small and should not be an overriding consideration. In

Tab S to

those countries which can be identified early as candidates for this type operation, personnel should be selected from the schools and armed forces and trained specifically for this task as early as possible. We are now training hundreds of foreign officers and men from all over the world, but in every case the training is from the view of requirements for conventional war or conventional unconventional warfare, not for the special problems attendant to a SOG type operation.

e. Future SOGs must be organized to better control, if not actively conduct, recruitment activity. The primary and only critical requirement in establishing this capability is the provision of area trained US fluent in the language and very knowledgeable in the sociological implications of the ethnic groups in the area. [redacted] An in-house capability for these approaches would be most helpful.

(b)(1)
(b)(3)

f. In the fall of 1967, SOG initiated a project to establish a battery of tests to test recruits on a broad base. After expenditure of a respectable sum of money and time, this was abandoned because of the steady escalation of the costs involved. A vehicle for testing indigenous recruit candidates which would employ the advanced techniques reputed to be available would also be of great help. Resurrection of this project probably deserves consideration.

g. Utilization of third country mercenaries would provide another means of alleviating this problem in future conflicts. As an example, the Gurkha troops recently discharged by the British could be very well employed in any

Tab S to

of the cross-border patrol operations in progress. Such troops could be employed unilaterally which is not now possible with the other SEA ethnics employed by SOG. Unilateral operations could be of great value to the Joint Staff.

In connection with the development and preservation of US expertise for UW/SO:*

a. A large part of SOG's problems have been caused by the continued input of personnel whose qualifications for their jobs has been questionable. The fact that the United States does not have large quantities of experts in UW/SO is not surprising since the demand in the recent past has not been great. SOG has served as an excellent training ground for such specialists and some have developed into true experts in the field as a result of their year in Vietnam. However, nothing is being done to retain either their identity, or to further develop them for future use in this specialization, or to utilize their skills in similar jobs elsewhere in the world now. The invaluable educational by-product of the war is being lost. When the next SOG is activated, the US will again be dependent on those few persons known by word of mouth to be competent in this specialty to put together the command, control and support headquarters as well as some of the operating units.

b. A system should be established to identify the experts developed in Vietnam, to maintain their expertise through assignment management, to develop new experts by schooling and assignment after the Vietnam opportunity is lost, and, finally, to be able to rapidly acquire the needed qualified personnel when the need arises. This system need not be an empire nor difficult to manage. I think all the Services

* Ibid., p. 3.

Tab S to

will agree that some such move is necessary and will assist in plugging into the existing personnel management systems to permit the capability grossly described above. An approach to this system is described in some detail in . . . /the exhibit to this Tab/.

As to an in-house counter-intelligence/espionage capability:*

a. SOG has never had the capability to professionally and routinely monitor its own activities for defense against enemy intelligence services. The SOG Security Section does not contain the kind of specialization necessary to perform this task; that section is charged with installation and document security and personnel clearance tasks. On two occasions recently, SOG borrowed the necessary expertise from CAS and MACV J2 to conduct security surveys aimed at determining extent of enemy penetration of operational TIMBERWORK teams. An in-house expert would not necessarily preclude the use of a disinterested expert but would probably alleviate the requirement to some degree.

b. The TIMBERWORK surveys example is not the primary reason for the addition of a counter-espionage expert. SOG continually fears and worries about penetration of its organization by the enemy, probably through STD or one of the many accesses open to mercenaries. The desirability of a searching review of this weakness was discussed on a monthly basis, to exaggerate a little. At one point, the US capability to conduct a counter-espionage operation against STD was researched. The conclusion reached was that such was not within the capability of the military or of CAS Saigon, in terms of quantity of assets available to be assigned to the task or the quality of the assets to have some assurance that the effort would not be blown. If the

* Ibid., pp. 4-5.

* Ibid., pp. 4-5.

South Vietnamese became aware that the US was conducting such an investigation, irreparable harm would be done to counter-part relationships.

c. Future SOGs should be provided a highly qualified counter-espionage specialist on their staff under some cover which will provide an opportunity to move through the entire organization and also give immediate access to the commander. Above all, he should be expected to remain with the unit for a long period of time and not be subject to short tour rotation.

It is my opinion that the primary reason for the continuation of the black long-term team concept for so many years is that the mission was entrusted to unqualified people, like myself. From inception of SOG until mid-1967, the staff for this role was completely US Army Special Forces officers. Col Singlaub became aware of the deficiencies in the program caused by lack of agent operations educated and experienced personnel and took a corrective step in introducing MOS 9668 officers into the JTD change in 1967. This has improved the situation to a great extent and should provide an adequate basis for true agent operations. Further refinement to the JTD is required to bring the agent operations staff into line with accepted doctrinal intelligence staff and operation organization structures. Special Forces experience in airborne techniques and survival, to mention only two aspects, is very valuable for operations in SEA; experienced agent handlers, trainers and planners are more important, and indeed, critical to success in this field of endeavor. (prior to my departure from SOG, OP 34, the agent operations staff office, had developed a draft change to the JTD which was believed to be optimized for SEAsia

agent operations, both singleton and team. That TD would be of interest in the documentation record as a basis for future SOGs in this aspect of operations.)*

A primary cause of the inadequate intelligence operations organizational structure of SOG is that it (SOG) has never had a well rounded intelligence operations trained officer in its command section. To my knowledge, there has never been a truly qualified intelligence operator of any of the Services assigned at the executive level. Generalists of all the Services have been charged with the organization and operation of the command from the beginning. Based on the results in the more esoteric areas of intelligence operations (particularly agents and counter-espionage), this may be a major weakness in the SOG structure and one that would be easily corrected in future SOGs.*

In regard to personnel continuity:**

a. One of the most serious problems in Vietnam and in SOG is the twelve month rotation policy and the ever-present personnel turbulence. The continual training and briefing requirements ate into productive time to a terrible degree, particularly in view of the access list character of SOG. As Chief of OP 30, I conducted a minimum of one and usually two FOOTBOY briefings per week for incoming MACV, etc., personnel who needed to know our business. And that is admittedly a poor example of the kind of problem created, for the internal SOG staffing problems were the real problem. One of Col Singlaub's recurrent and violent pleas was for

* Ibid., p. 6.
** Ibid., pp. 9-10.

some kind of "institutional memory" that would prevent repeating the same mistake or rehashing the same rejected thought for actions. With personnel shuffling through the organization on a twelve month basis, wasted effort is almost impossible to prevent

b. Somehow, in future SOGs, an exemption from short tour assignments must be made for selected key personnel from every major staff element of the command. SOGs represent preferential assignments in many ways, if that fact plus routine home leave benefits were advanced, I believe the necessary personnel would agree to extended tours in advance of assignment. Another approach that would help alleviate the situation is the use of civil service personnel on long tour contracts for selected positions within the more critical staff areas, such as logistics, communications and intelligence. In regard to intelligence, the Army has a program called the Intelligence Civilian Career Program which is a very carefully managed agent handler program for both positive and counter-intelligence collection specialists. If the Services are to continue to function in that role, some of these personnel would/might provide higher quality and continuity to future operations.

MORI DocID 570375

THE JOINT CHIEFS OF STAFF
WASHINGTON D C 20301

THE JOINT STAFF

OFFICE OF THE SPECIAL ASSISTANT FOR
COUNTERINSURGENCY AND SPECIAL ACTIVITIES

26 November 1968

MEMORANDUM

Subject: Development and Preservation of Expertise for Unconventional Warfare and Special Operations (U)

1. (S) The United States has engaged in unconventional warfare/special operations (UW/SO) activities in each major war and in certain instances in between wars. In each instance, the military establishment has developed the organizations and mechanisms from a standing start with the exception of special organizations (USAF, SEALS, etc.) in each of the services. The headquarters elements to form the JUWTF, by whatever name, is normally a pick-up crew largely selected by service personnel departments responding to sometimes inadequate selection criteria. There is no mechanism to identify and retain knowledge of the existence of the competent individuals who have attained expertise in these very esoteric skills.

2. (S) Studies and Observations Group is an outstanding example of the inadequate systems now in use in manning UW/SO organizations. Time after time personnel were ordered into SOG to fill critical command and staff positions who were not qualified by either training or experience. In numerous cases, Chief SOG refused to accept them; in others, he accepted the responsibility to train them which created an unnecessary burden within the twelve month rotational scheme. Further, after completing their tours and after having achieved varying degrees of expertise, the individuals would move on to other assignments with no established means of future identification for subsequent similar assignments in order to utilize the skills expensively achieved or to further develop them.

3. (U) Based on the assumption that the United States military establishment will continue to engage in UW/SO in all future conditions of hostilities, I recommend the following actions be initiated without delay. All these actions

Incl.

Exhibit to Tab S
to Annex Q to Appendix B

are predicated on my belief that it is necessary to the JCS to be able to manage the development, maintenance and assignment of qualified UW/SO experts to more efficiently conduct these operations in the future. In this case, the use of the term future refers to any time from this point forward.

4. (U) Specific actions, in order of accomplishment, follows:

a. Establish within SACSA the capability to manage or to monitor service management of assignment of identified, qualified UW/SO experts. This capability would consist of the assigned responsibility or authority to do so, the few personnel necessary to the establishment and maintenance of a file of a few thousand individuals at most, necessary space and office machinery.

b. Define the categories of experts to be monitored. This step should include a system of codifying job titles both by definition and by degree of expertise. For instance; cross border, heliborne, LRP, all indigenous; small boat handling; aerial delivery specialist, very small unit; etc. Expertise could be classified subjectively in any number of ways: ethnic group experience, length of experience, rating of skill level, etc.

c. Require the services and the unified commands to provide a listing of the existing jobs within their manning structure which require UW/SO expertise and a statement of the degree required for each. This listing would provide both a record of the key jobs which need experienced personnel as input and those others which would provide a learning vehicle for input of new personnel to develop the skills under discussion.

d. Require the services and the unified commands to provide lists of personnel considered to be experts in this field based on previous assignments, along with the codified data discussed in sub para b above. Completion of this step would probably require reference to previous known commanders of such organizations as SOG and SOTFE.

e. Require the Central Intelligence Agency to submit listings of service personnel who have been detailed to them with an evaluation of the individuals in accordance

with subpara b above In addition, require that they submit similar data on all personnel so detailed in the future.

f. Require the services to inform SACSA of the requisitions for personnel to fill the spaces on the existing jobs list described in subpara c above along with their nominations to fill that job. When necessary or desirable, influence such assignments to further exercise identified experts from the SACSA listing.

5. (U) In conjunction with the activity described above, a means to refine the expertise of personnel on the SACSA listing through civilian schooling, service with CIA, language training and any other means should be developed and implemented.

6. (U) I am confident that the initial reaction of many readers to this proposal will be entirely negative in the belief that the program described as "meddling in service personnel practice", too grandiose, too cumbersome, etc. In rebuttal to those assumed objections, I offer the following:

a. The listings referred to are not intended to include the entire gamut of positions and personnel in Special Forces, SEAL/UDT/Recon units, or Air Commando units. It is pointed specifically at only key positions in those organizations, command planning and control spaces at unified commands, organizations such as SOTFE and SOG, instructors in service schools and positions here in Washington. It will probably not exceed two or three thousand job titles at most in all the services.

b. It is a relatively simple management system that will require minimum effort once established and will not impose a major burden on service personnel management offices. When operating, the services will only have to route information copies of already used documentation through SACSA. There should not be a requirement for any special paperwork.

c. It avoids the use of special prefixes or suffices by the services. I know tnat the Army strongly resists any further such identifiers and woulc probably fight any move in that direction.

d. It lends itself to security considerations in that all administration is conducted within a small loop, there is little chance that the use of this system would draw undue attention which might otherwise result in facilitating enemy registration of US experts in this field.

/S/ J. D. Carney
J. D. CARNEY
LTC USA

MORI DocID: 570375

COMMENTS ON PERSONNEL AND TRAINING

BY

CAPTAIN BRUCE B. DUNNING, USN

. . . . . .

Regarding the training of our Service assets for UW, I think the requirement applies equally to the type of integrated operation I'm talking about or to the JUWTF. Even if you take the JUWTF concept, you can't just pour into the unit conventionally trained people and say, "You're UW; go to it." In carrying out UW, almost all of the Service functions, air, maritime or ground operations, require quite different techniques from those of conventional warfare. Each of them requires an entirely different frame of mind and a considerable background in these specialized operations, for example, in air operations, where support is to be provided in terms of infiltration of agents or of strike teams, etc. The planning and laying out of these missions, and the setting up of signal plans, if you are going to be flying over denied areas, requires techniques and experience which the normal air operations planner doesn't have. The same thing is true in maritime operations. You don't conduct such operations against enemy coast lines in the same way that the conventional Navy does. The more sophisticated and sneaky you get, the more specialized experience you need. For instance, running a patrol along the coast line probably doesn't require too much in the way of specialized experience, but operations involving the infiltrating of agents are quite specialized. The average naval officer has never even thought about most of the problems he is likely to encounter. Infiltrating and exfiltrating people by sea in a secure manner is a pretty complicated operation. As to the training for UW operations, certainly the personnel resources have to come initally from the Services.*

* (TS) Interview of Captain Bruce B. Dunning, USN, p. 36

The parent Service must basically train the personnel. We have now in each of the Services some capability for UW training, and do a reasonably decent job of training people in some of the special techniques. In the Air Force, there is the Air Special Warfare School at Eglin AFB. The Navy has UDT and SEAL training programs at Little Creek and Coronado. The Army has Fort Bragg. All of these facilities do a reasonably decent job in, at least, the less sophisticated and, in some cases, even the more sophisticated aspects of UW. Many of us feel that there is a need for better integration in training. There is some cross-training now; e.g., some Navy people go to Fort Bragg. However, the cross-training programs are not extensive enough. The personnel resources should be committed by the Services but trained in a highly specialized joint training establishment under the control of, or at least under the policy direction of, a joint unconventional entity at the Washington level, i.e., the head shed for all of the true unconventional operations. . . .*

I think probably we'd get a higher quality of training with perhaps a three-echelon training system: first, the basic military training by the parent Services; secondly, for selected personnel, training in unconventional warfare by the Services much as is done now, thirdly, highly specialized joint training by a really top-notch joint training establishment. An alternative, and a very second best one in which some progress is being made but not enough, is in cross-training and in integrated joint exercises by the various Service UW elements. For instance, in the very near future in FLINT LOCK II, an

* Ibid., pp. 36-37.

Tab T to

essentially Special Forces exercise in Europe, Germany, and Turkey, we will have Navy SEAL elements operating along the Baltic coast of Germany in close cooperation with the 10th Special Forces Group (SFG). This is a pretty good exercise plan. We were able to get the SEAL personnel involved in the early planning for this operation to a greater extent than they had been previously. This is good because the SEAL people and the 10th SFG have to achieve the same kind of rapport, the same kind of understanding of each other's concepts and modes of operation, as you presently have, say between the 10th SFG and the 7th SOS. There is a lot, however, you can do without having a joint training establishment. I think that, for the time being, progress has to be made along the lines of this integrated cross-training, including close cooperation during planning phases. I think a lot of emphasis is necessary from a joint entity in Washington to try to force these people to really get together in all phases of planning, training, doctrine, development, etc.

As to whether some of this joint specialized training could be satellited on an in-being facility, maybe we could do it at Eglin AFB. Perhaps we could start and expand the Navy Special Warfare School and make it a joint school. Maybe we could do it at Fort Bragg. Physically, Eglin would be a fine place for the training because there you have water, air, land, everything. Although I don't know too much about the Strategic Intelligence School, there may be some disadvantages in satelliting this type of training there. Though there are very

Tab T to

close relationships between unconventional warfare operations and intelligence, and between psychological operations and intelligence, there is essentially mutual support relationships. Often there is a tendency in the minds of many people to say that UW operations, just because they may be covert, may require a high degree of security, that they are the same things as intelligence, or that they would be in the same box with intelligence In that situation, what you are getting is the feeling that anything highly secretive must be intelligence. This simply isn't true. You should avoid the mistake of thinking that just because certain aspects of UW are clandestine or highly secret that they bear a specific relationship to intelligence. They do bear a special relationship to intelligence but for other reasons, e.g., they have to be mutually supporting.*

* Ibid., pp. 37-38.

TOP SECRET

COMMENTS ON PERSONNEL AND TRAINING

BY

COLONEL BENTON M. AUSTIN, USA

. . . . . .

. . . . in my opinion, the Nungs and by this I mean the Chinese who were in the SHINING BRASS Program early in the operation were much better than the Chinese who were available from early January 1967 to present (1969). By this time, the best sources of the true Nungs had been pretty well dried up. Generally speaking, these people lived in agricultural areas; in fact, I am told that the word "Nung" in Chinese means "farmer." By early 1967, we were recruiting mostly what we referred to as the Cholon cowboy-type, the city boys from Saigon. Their motivation for joining seemed to be more for getting the enlistment bonus and evading the draft into the Army of Vietnam than to fighting the enemy. There may be individual exceptions but these people were not nearly as good as the earlier Chinese. While I was there, we began to get organized groups of Montagnards into action. There was a company of Montagnards organized by FOB No. 2 /Kontum/. . . . They were good fighters. . . . The Montagnard fighter at that time was superior to the Chinese not only from the point of view of his fighting ability but, as one of the sergeants told me who was the adviser of a Montagnard 12-man SPIKE team, they had more compassion, they were more concerned as to what happened to their team mates. They would be more apt to carry a wounded man under fire back to the safety of a covered position or to a helicopter than the then Cholon cowboy-type of Chinese who would want to get the hell out of there at the first trouble they got into.*

* (PS) Interview by Colonel Benton M Austin, USA, pp. 5-6.

There is another type of Montagnard that we had very good success with. It was the Bru. This is a tribe that was up in the northwestern part of South Vietnam that extends over into Laos and North Vietnam. That area was very important to us because there is a route that extends down from NVN just above the DMZ where it hooks out into Laos, goes around west of Khe Sanh bypassing the Laotian battalion there known as the Elephant Base west of Khe Sanh and then hooks back into SVN. This tribe, the Bru, sat right over this tri-country area of considerable North Vietnamese Army infiltration traffic. The Bru had been described to me previously as the dregs of humanity. . . . . The bru, it turned out, under good leadership and humane treatment, were as good human material to work with as you could find. . . .*

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. . . . As regards recruitment, the recruitment of Chinese was handled in coordination with the Liaison Service whose commander, Colonel Ho Tieu, reported directly to the Joint General Staff (JGS). We had an American captain and two sergeants with an office inside the Liaison Services compound which was near Tan Son Nhut and right on the edge of the JGS compound on the outskirts of Saigon. They had contacts, which had been provided originally, I am told, by the Vietnamese Army Liaison Service in Saigon, in the Cholon district, in Can Tho, in Dai Loc and certain other cities in SVN. These contacts were worked by a sort of contractor, . . . who would travel there with the American recruiter and, depending on the number of people

* Ibid., p. 6.

Tab U to
Annex Q to

that we recruited, the contractor received a commission. The individual recruited, if he passed his physical examination after he arrived in Saigon at our recruiting depot there in the Liaison Service compound, would be given a bonus and he was usually urged by his family to come into this service This system of recruiting made possible certain abuses which I was unable to prove; in fact, I couldn't investigate without going along with the recruiter devoting some considerable time and effort to this. But I have the feeling, . . . that some of these people enlisted, got the bonus and then went AWOL and it is quite possible that we may have recruited the same individuals under different names more than once.*

. . . . . .

. . . . because of the nature of a clandestine operation, the selectivity of personnel is even more important than in other types of military operations. This is because you're not subject to constant supervision of those restraining forces such as existing Service regulations, Inspector General, etc., and the fact that if something irregular comes up, a problem of investigation or disciplinary action and court martial, etc., were complicated by the high classification of the expected testimony. We had problems with people who couldn't resist the temptation for stealing highly desirable types of equipment and supplies. Simple accounting procedures or lack of procedures, perhaps, made it possible for people to take advantage of the situation. The big thing to me is that the individual who gets involved in this sort of dishonest activity

* Ibid., pp. 6-7.

Tab U to
Annex Q to

soon becomes more interested in his own business than he is in conducting the operation and it makes penetration easier for the enemy. Where we didn't have, perhaps, too much of this sort of thing, any of it at all is too much really. So, the selectivity of personnel coming in is very important and I think that in many cases the people coming in to us are the people of the type that would normally come through the pipelines in a military unit. . . . . I do think there is a need for careful screening of these people coming in for character as well as professional qualities. . . .*

. . . . . .

. . . . Now, a word about the Special Forces types who came into the SHINING BRASS operation. These were on the whole some of the finest men I have ever seen. Many of them had volunteered to come back for additional tours in very dangerous activities. . . .**

. . . . . .

The biggest problem, in my opinion, that was faced in this type of operation was the normal one-year tour problem. I'm sure this plagues conventional operations, also, however, in those there is less background to absorb than there is in the highly specialized, highly sensitive operations that SOG was running. I have the feeling that by the time the American was really becoming fully effective in his job in SOG he was completing his tour and was ready to go home. I often thought that if I were a highly motivated, honest Vietnamese counterpart, and always in this type of operation you've got to work through

* Ibid., pp. 7-8.
** Ibid., p. 8.

Tab U to

indigenous people, I would have been greatly frustrated in trying to educate a succession of American counterparts who came through there one year at a time Now, turn it around. Assuming that the Vietnamese counterpart was . . dishonest, would deal with the enemy, suppose he'd been subverted, suppose that he was a coward and didn't want to stick his neck out, suppose he was a profiteer, how easy it would be for him to operate with Americans who are there for only one year. I think that the one-year tour is the biggest problem in clandestine operations or unconventional warfare.*

* Ibid., p. 8.

Tab U to

TOP SECRET

COMMENTS ON PERSONNEL AND TRAINING

BY

LT. COLONEL HAROLD J. ROSE, USA

. . . . . .

. . . . In the beginning, all US types were Special Forces trained personnel. I felt that a large percentage of these people whom I received were not properly trained and were not properly motivated to perform this type of a mission. I think the reason for this is the way the Special Forces have gotten used to being used in Vietnam, i.e., setting up camps, training indigenous personnel and not really getting involved in the UW type mission. When some of them were assigned to me and given this type of mission, it was a shock to them. Some of them I had to send back to the 5th Group. Some didn't work out at all.*

The indigenous people were mostly Chinese and Montagnards. I'd set up a special training camp for these people at Kam Duc. There I'd run them through about two or three weeks training on long-range patrols and try to train them to shoot and use the weapons they would be assigned . . . Most of these Chinese were from Cholon and they weren't the real Nungs as most people know them. They did fair on operations. When you came off operations and if you ever let them get to Saigon on leave, you would generally lose them and all your training would be down the drain. The Montagnards were a little different. They did good in about all cases. The only bad things about the Montagnards was that in any camp that you set up they must move in their whole family

* (TS) Interview by LTC Harold J. Rose, USA, p. 4.

lock, stock and barrel. They keep them there the whole time they are in the camp. You commit them on operations, they do a good job and when they get out, of course, they want to go back to their families and that's where they want to stay until the next operation. You didn't have the problem of the Montagnards going AWOL like the others because the Montagnard had no place to go. He was already home when he got back to his base camp.*

* Ibid.

COMMENTS ON PERSONNEL AND TRAINING

BY

COLONEL EUGENE A. WAHL, USAF

. . . . . .

. . . . I feel that anybody who has served in SOG should be earmarked and an effort made to retain the individual in this type of an operation providing he has demonstrated an outstanding contribution to this particular type of organization. He should be earmarked and reassigned in the ZI to a similar type organization. . . You should maintain this expertise and further develop and control it. While I was in MACSOG I don't think in the Air Operations Group there was one person who had previously served in this type of an organization. When they were reassigned from there there wasn't one of them reassigned in the special operations area.*

* (TS) Interview by Colonel Eugene A. Wahl, USAF, p. 7.

COMMENTS ON PERSONNEL AND TRAINING

BY

COLONEL ROBERT C KENDRICK, USA

. . . . . .

. . . . He (Chief, MACSOG) is hampered by the type of people who have been made available to him. Some have not had staff or command background and lack experience. He has not been offered nor been able to get his share of the cream of the crop. He should have some of the highest caliber people and some of our better field commanders who have had high-level schooling and have also had high-level staff experience. Colonel Cavanaugh has had to get by with people of a lesser caliber. This should be corrected. He has had trouble in getting volunteers in Vietnam for use as team leaders, in the Command and Control Headquarters, and in the MACSOG staff. He has had to take very junior officers who have had no staff experience and put them in his staff. Some of these people have added to the problems of the function and operation of MACSOG.*

* (TS) Interview by Colonel Robert C. Kendrick, USA, p. 16.

TOP SECRET

COMMENTS ON PERSONNEL AND TRAINING

BY

COLONEL ROBERT C KINGSTON, USA

. . . . One of the glaring things that I noticed was the lack of professional background and professional training of both the US and Vietnamese personnel in intelligence operations. I had working for me several Special Forces officers who were professionally motivated, intelligent, aggressive, and oriented towards counterinsurgency and guerrilla warfare type operations. They did not have a sound professional background in intelligence operations, procurement, training, and infiltration and exfiltration techniques of agents or agent teams. They were motivated and tried to operate the best they could lacking this background. Some of the US Army Military Intelligence branch officers I had did not, in actuality, have this training or this professionalism that I believe they should have had.*

. . . . . .

The recruiting procedures were handled mostly by the STS officers. I believe, as in everything STS did, there was a glaring lack of a proper appreciation for security. In the recruiting, I think the procedures lacked adequate security, thus preventing possible penetration in the various organizations by the opposition.

. . . . . .

The training camps that were used, particularly the Long Thanh camp, were in operation prior to my coming to SOG. By the time I got there in March 1967, the usefulness of the Long Thanh camp as a training location for agents had long passed. There is no doubt in my mind that the local population knew what was going on, including what the personnel were being trained for; thus, the possible compromise of everyone who went in or out of the Long Thanh camp.

* (TS) Interview of Colonel Robert C. Kingston, USA, p. 1.

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. . . . I'll comment on US personnel being assigned to OP 34. I don't feel qualified to comment on all aspects of personnel assignments. I believe that a knowledgeable individual should be made aware of the mission of SOG, in general, and OP 34, in general, so that officers could be assigned to have proper training and background for agent handling and agent-type operations, not Special Forces, straight counterinsurgency or guerrilla warfare. I personally believe it would be of great assistance to the individuals if they had knowledge and experience, if possible, in CI and guerrilla warfare, but they must have some knowledge, if not experience, in agent operations. These people back in the personnel shops in the different Services, when they get a person with such qualifications, could easily send a resume or 66 or anything else up to Chief, SOG, let him have a chop at it and say "Yes, I'd like this man," or "No, I would not like the man." I don't think people should be assigned arbitrarily to OP 34. . . . we had people coming out to OP 34 that I didn't have a crack at and I do not know whether Colonel Singlaub did or not. . . .*

* Ibid., p. 6.

COMMENTS ON PERSONNEL AND TRAINING

BY

COLONEL HAROLD K. AARON, USA

I told Colonel Singlaub, Chief of MACSOG, . . that he would have my full and unqualified support. . . . Shortly after my arrival at the 1st Group, I received a mission to provide "A" Detachments to SOG for its command and control detachments in Vietnam. We had the mission of training our "A" Detachments. The first problem, of course, was the selection of the best qualified people we could get, many of whom had previous experience with the 5th Group. This also meant looking at the individuals for their psychological strengths, their physical conditioning, their experience, and their training. This was a very detailed selective process, because we were intent upon giving SOG the best officers and enlisted men we could give them. Our next problem was to set up a training program. . . . . We put these people into training in the Northern Training Area in Okinawa for approximately six weeks. We emphasized particularly helicopter insertions and extractions, and operating on the ground using air as well as artillery and mortar support. We even put them out in the bombing range near I-Shima where they could work with the Air Force. As the teams went through the training, we assessed each individual and if we felt he would not work out we replaced him immediately with another man. My teams then reported to Vietnam and most of them were assigned to the Khe Sanh area and some of them to Kontum on various missions, either cross-border operations as reconnaissance teams or training indigenous companies for exploitation forces.*

* (TS) Interview by Colonel Harold K. Aaron, USA, pp. 1-2.

During this period of time, I would say that my criticisms were generally in two areas One was the improper utilization of highly trained people that had been put together as a team in Okinawa when they were sent to Vietnam. There was a tendency to break them up, eliminate the team cohesion and spirit, which was quite high when they left Okinawa, take some members from the team and make them radio operators or medics, and generally keep them together. The other problem that we found was the lack of logistical support for these teams and their mission. Many of them spent a great deal of their time running around Vietnam scrounging uniforms, equipment for the indigenous people, barbwire, cement for their construction, etc. Members of these teams, when they came back to Okinawa, tried to pick up spare parts for M-16s which they claimed they could not get in-country. I brought these deficiencies to the attention of Colonel Singlaub and his staff as well as the C&C Detachment commanders.*

Another problem in Okinawa concerning training was the lack of helicopter support. We did not have the HUEY helicopters on which many of the teams would be inserted and we had to rely on the H-21 which, for that purpose, was a poor type of aircraft. We were able to get the Marines to provide us with limited H-34 support. In some measure, this approximated the type of helicopter support that the "A" teams would get, particularly in the Laotian area. . . .*

Another experience with SOG was when I took command of the 5th Special Forces Group which had 3,480 Special Forces personnel. Of that number, 756 personnel spaces were SOG assets that were assigned to the C&C Detachments. For these 756 personnel, my responsibility was one of command and

* Ibid., p. 2.

administration. Initially, when I arrived at the 5th Group, I was also responsible for logistical support of the C&C Detachments. This responsibility was terminated as of 30 June 1968 and assumed by SOG itself in Saigon. Essentially, my responsibility for the SOG C&C Detachments was the assignment of personnel to them. When I left, there were three such detachments: Detachment North in Danang, Detachment Center in Kontum, and Detachment South in Ban Me Thuot. In the assignment of personnel, my policy, announced to everyone, was that the top priority would be to the C&C Detachments. All incoming personnel to the Group who volunteered for the C&C Detachments were immediately segregated and sent to the C&C Detachments for further training. We did not put them through the command orientation course, a training period of some twelve days, that we gave our own people. I also solicited the Group for volunteers for C&C Detachments and we did get some.*

The process of getting volunteers for the SOG units was probably not the most efficient in the world. We depended, first, upon the man's willingness for the assignment and that didn't necessarily mean that he was the best man for the job. I think here is where some sort of a testing program might be developed to determine whether one man is more suited for this assignment than another. Since all of the 5th Group personnel were volunteers, it would be impossible to determine those having the best potential for cross-border operations or C&C Detachment missions.

I was never able to keep the C&C Detachments up to strength. There were various reasons for that. One, there was a desire by some Special Forces personnel to avoid SOG. They had heard many stories about improper command, improper

* Ibid., p. 3.

Tab Z to

control, improper logistical support, and they wanted nothing to do with SOG. Other personnel were too old for the demanding missions of the SOG detachments. Others preferred to serve with an "A" team in the CIDG program. Another factor, towards the latter part of my tour with the 5th Group, that interfered with the assignment of personnel to the SOG units was the classification by USARV of the 5th Special Forces Group as a combat support unit rather than a combat unit such as the infantry division. As a result, for example, the bulk of the Light Weapons Infantrymen were assigned to the infantry divisions and very few came to the Group. These were the people needed for the reconnaissance teams in the SOG C&C Detachments. . . .*

In the personnel area, my other problems concerning C&C Detachments included casualty reporting, the question of KIAs, the wounded, the missing in action. Also included were such things as efficiency reports on C&C Detachment personnel, and decorations and awards. For example, I had the authority to award the Bronze Star for valor as well as the Army Commendation Medal. I had an awards and decorations board and personally reviewed and approved all decorations and awards in the Group. I was not too much involved in the discipline of the personnel. I felt this was the responsibility of the Chief, SOG. If there was a disciplinary problem, usually the man was returned to me for either removal from Special Forces or for Article 15 action, court-martial, etc. Responsibility for the discipline was usually handled by the C&C Detachment Commander and Chief, SOG. . . . In some cases, the documentation that was returned with those people was rather superficial or rather incomplete to forward to USARV for reassignment instructions. It was my judgment as to whether the man would stay in Special Forces or be removed.**

* Ibid., pp. 3-4.
** Ibid., p. 4.

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I might mention, also, one other thing in terms of key 2
personnel assignments. Initially, I felt that the commanders 3
of the C&C Detachments, while they were aggressive, and had 4
a lot of guts, drive, and force, left a great deal to be 5
desired in terms of judgment, planning ability and general 6
efficiency. I attempted through the Infantry Branch to improve 7
the caliber of lieutenant colonels assigned to the 5th Group, 8
not only for the CIDG operations but also for the SOG operation. 9
My practice was to nominate LTC's to Chief, SOG, as the 10
commanders of the C&C Detachments and he was free to accept 11
or reject those people. I tried to give him some of the best 12
officers whom I received, but the best were not often received. 13
Part of this, I attributed to the lack of the career branch's 14
interest in Special Forces and in their support as well as the 15
lack of interest by Regular Army combat arms officers in 16
Special Forces because they felt it would not help their 17
careers and future advancement. It was only toward the end 18
of my tour that fine officers were arriving to command the 19
C&C Detachments. . . .* 20

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One of the areas that was particularly sensitive and to 22
which I paid particular attention was that many of the enlisted 23
men and even some of the officers who were assigned to the SOG 24
C&C Detachments felt that they were no longer members of the 25
5th Special Forces Group because they were separated and to a 26
certain extent segregated because of security reasons. My 27
job was to visit these detachments as often as I possibly could 28
and talk to the people, especially the key NCOs and the officers 29
before they went to the SOG units. I constantly reminded them 30
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* Ibid., pp. 5-6.

that they were part of the 5th Group, and that it was my job to look after them. If they had problems they were to see their C&C Detachment commanders but they had access to me at any time. Despite this, there was still this feeling among many of them that they were not members of the group and were apart from the rest of us. The question came up as to whether they were getting a fair share of decorations and there were constant rumors and reports that they were not. This reached my attention, especially after receiving one anonymous letter. I provided the facts and figures to all the C&C Detachments to show that they were getting, in terms of valor decorations, at least three to four times those of any other unit of comparable size in the 5th Group.*

Chief, SOG approached me one time about having the authority to make impact awards - the Bronze Star and Army Commendation Medal. I had no objection to this and suggested he obtain authority from COMUSMACV who was his direct superior. I do not know whether he got it or not. As a general rule, I had a system which I would receive a teletype message recommending a sergeant of a reconnaissance team for an impact award and we would process that within 24 to 36 hours, and the approval would be given to the C&C Detachment commander, who would then make the award of the appropriate decoration. I felt that our system was rapid and responsive in recognizing the man immediately after he had performed the mission.*

I also instituted the program whereby the C&C Detachment commanders had the authority to promote up to Spec 4 or sergeant and had also the power to reduce staff sergeants and below. Because of DA regulations, I kept other authorities under my personal control.**

* Ibid., p. 11.
** Ibid., p. 12.

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In terms . . . improving . . . covert operations, . . We have a lot of people who have a lot of experience and have learned it the hard way. They are not necessarily the most efficient personnel. I think we have to give greater attention to the proper selection of people for operations of this scope and sensitivity than we would give any other operation in the Services. Unfortunately, I don't think that this is the case. The other thing in which we are sadly lacking is training certain selective people in covert operations and maintaining a reservoir of these people in a constant state of training. They can be drawn and used for covert operations and can get started with a minimum amount of time without making some sad and difficult mistakes. For example, I would feel that covert operations should be taught on a very selective basis to a body of people at Fort Bragg. This would include people from all the Services. There may be appendages, for example, at Eglin and at Coronado to round out their education, but on an annual basis we should be constantly replenishing the people for covert operations so that we have a trained pool ready to go. . . . *

* Ibid., p. 13.

TOP SECRET

CONTENTS ON PERSONNEL AND TRAINING

BY

SERGEANT FIRST CLASS GERALD A. SANDERS, USA

Agent teams were recruited on an individual basis. The recruiting was handled by officers in the OP 34 Section by personal interview and records and reports that were made available through the VN. Security investigations were conducted during the process. The teams were trained for a minimum of six to eight weeks and then placed on field training exercises at Dalat for an appropriate period of time to check their operating capability. When it was determined that they were operational, they were issued equipment and put on a mission. These teams were trained at Long Thanh or in safe houses located within the city of Saigon under appropriate cover.*

. . . . . .

On cover, I think that personnel assigned to MACSOG should have a complete civilian documentation prior to reporting for duty. . . .*

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. . . . I think it would be a good idea to have civilian registration on all cars and vehicles that are assigned for duty with SOG. This would eliminate the tie-in with the US military.**

. . . . . .

[redacted] (b)(1) (b)(3)

* (TS) Interview by SFC Gerald A. Sanders, USA, p. 1.
** Ibid., p. 2.

(b)(1)
(b)(3)

[redacted]

. . . . . .

The awards and decorations system for MACSOG was poor. This had an adverse effect on morale. Chief, SOG should be delegated the authority for awards and decorations up to and including the Silver Star. I think this would increase the morale tremendously of the personnel assigned to a remote desolate area doing outstanding work. Somehow this system should be streamlined. We had trouble getting awards through because of classification.*

. . . . . .

The STRATA teams were primarily of Cambodian descent . . . The Cambodians seemed to do a better job than the Vietnamese. They were really aggressive. The STRATA teams should have had US leadership to include team leader and assistant team leader. US leadership produced good results in PRAIRIE FIRE and DANIEL BOONE operations. . . .*

. . . . . .

A problem in the personnel field was that personnel being assigned were not fully qualified in the MOS to which they were to perform duties, such as myself, and other personnel that I knew personally within MACSOG. I had no previous training in communications or intelligence, and had never been in the infantry. The man that I replaced was the same way. He was an administrative sergeant like me. However, the individual who replaced me when I left was a Special Forces operations and intelligence sergeant. He got a handle on the job in about three days where it took me three months to really get to where I knew I knew what was going on within MACSOG.**

* Ibid., p. 2.
** Ibid., p. 3.

I knew what was going on within MACSOG.**

COMMENTS ON PERSONNEL AND TRAINING

BY

SERGEANT FIRST CLASS DONALD A. PAYTON, USA

. . . . When I first arrived in the organization, I was given the task of developing a program of instruction geared toward training potential agents in overall intelligence, with emphasis on observation and description, order of battle -- intelligence subjects of this nature. Primarily the job was, once we developed the program of instruction, to monitor the intelligence training of these individuals slated for an operation. I worked through a counterpart, VGS-12, who actually gave the classes. Prior to each class we would review the POI and the references concerned. Then we would actually monitor the training. The training was given in safe houses in the vicinity of Saigon for the most part, the intelligence training that is. Then, after the classes had been given we would evaluate the team members through tests and performance.*

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The idea of getting training in safe houses in the Saigon area was good from the standpoint that it was close; however, I think overall operational security could have been improved upon. First, procurement of the safe houses was a little in question. Usually my counterpart or the chief Vietnamese instructor was given the task of going out to procure these safe houses. I think this could have been improved upon if an American Vietnamese linguist could have gone along and in every case looked over the situation. This probably could have precluded the exorbitant rates that we were paying for the safe houses. Location of the safe houses, as a rule, was good.

* (TS) Interview by SFC Donald A. Payton, USA, p. 1.

They were in secure areas, most of the houses had the high wall around them, and they were in fairly remote sections of the city. Again, on operational security, once a team was established in a safe house, I think the VN case officer should have monitored their activities a little more closely. Again, more emphasis should have been given on operational security in the initial phase when the agents were actually recruited. In some cases, the agents brought in relatives or friends to the safe houses. This could very well have resulted in compromises.*

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There were cases where a member of an agent team did leave the facility, the safe house, and go down town. This was a team consisting of members of a different ethnic group, not native Vietnamese. One problem was that once they got down town during the routine curfew check of ID cards agents were picked up by the VN National Police immediately because they did not possess the ID card carried by the local Vietnamese in Saigon. This meant that members of our organization had to go down to the National Police and get these people released. Of course, that entailed a great amount of paper work and made more people knowledgeable about our activity.*

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. . . ideal period, of course this is going to vary as to the operation and the amount of training needed on the part of the agents, is no longer than a two to three-week training period for keeping an agent team in a safe house. . . . a two to three-week period would be ideal. It should certainly not be

* Ibid., p. 2.

more than that . . While they are kept at the safe house, they should be isolated to the point where they have no contact with outsiders other than their Vietnamese case officer and the American counterpart. Ideally, a safe house would be used for final phases of training, briefing and preparations prior to actual dispatch of the team. In other words, once the safe house training is completed and final preparations are made prior to dispatch, these individuals or the teams should be immediately inserted.*

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. . . . My Vietnamese counterpart was, as I mentioned before, a VGS-12, which is a high Vietnamese Government rating. He was well-qualified; [redacted] He could speak English very well. In my estimation, he was well qualified. My association with the counterpart was mostly on a daily basis; . . . I restricted the association except for the actual training as much as possible. We had a good overall working relationship. The quality of his training after presenting the classes and monitoring the classes, I would say, was good. . . .**

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(b)(3)

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. . . . My association with the case officers, VN especially, was limited. However, I will say that in most cases they were adequately qualified; in some cases, the relationship between the VN case officer and his American counterpart was a bit strained. I think this was due to a lack of communication between the two. In a couple of instances,

* Ibid., p. 3.
** Ibid., P. 4.

devotion to the program on the part of the VN case officer was questionable. In that respect, I mean one or two seemed a little derelict in the task of monitoring team training and overall preparation of an agent team for insertion. As to the American case officer, every individual seemed to be highly qualified. I think one way we could improve upon the American case officer/VN case officer relationship is to have a better language capability developed for the American counterpart.*

. . . When I mentioned earlier about the case officer being adequately qualified, I was referring to the VN case officer.*

* Ibid., p. 4.

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TOP SECRET

COMMENTS ON PERSONNEL AND TRAINING

BY

MAJOR GEORGE W. GASPARD, USA

. . . . . .

We ran the Cambodians through a training cycle. These people were already highly trained paramilitary types; they had much combat experience. I recall 40 out of 50 exhibited some kind of a wound from previous operations. . . .*

* (TS) Interview of Major George W. Gaspard, USA, p. 4.

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COMMENTS ON PERSONNEL AND TRAINING

BY

LT. COLONEL JEFFERSON SEAY, III, USA

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. . . the Liaison Service, which is a subordinate organization under STD, did all of the recruiting for the OP 35 /cross-border/ operations. [redacted] In addition, he had some professional recruiters who lived in Laos and were Laotian citizens who did recruiting for some time. An effort was made during my tenure to recruit from regular Vietnamese Armed Forces units in an attempt to get highly qualified, highly trained, highly motivated individuals. Our primary targets were the Vietnamese airborne divisions, Vietnamese marine units, and Vietnamese rangers. This met with some reservations from the conventional commanders' headquarters. I assisted the Vietnamese operations officer in getting permission from the J-3 of the Joint General Staff to go into these units and recruit in small numbers on a pilot program. This permission was granted; however, the results were not as good as we expected. Some personnel were picked up, but very few.*

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During this period of time, Colonel Ho was authorized by the Joint General Staff to have an assistant attache in Burma, Thailand, Laos and Hong Kong. The attaches lived in these countries with diplomatic immunity and belonged to the diplomatic

* (TS) Interview of LTC Jefferson Seay, III, USA, p. 3.

community but, in truth, worked for STD and reported to Colonel Ho. [redacted] This proved to be a very difficult task. Colonel Ho was indeed upset about the situation, but . . . it was very difficult to get information from the Vietnamese. Soon after that, the assistant attache in Bangkok, through a police raid by the Thai police, was found to have in his possession a quantity of morphine. This, on top of the opium incident, I think, convinced Colonel Ho and eventually General Vien, of the Joint General Staff, that action had to be taken. At the time of my departure from Vietnam, no concrete action had been taken; however, I was told that both of them would be tried by court-martial and that the maximum sentence would certainly satisfy any US interest in this problem.*

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* Ibid., pp. 3-4.

TOP SECRET

COMMENTS ON PERSONNEL AND TRAINING

BY

COLONEL HERBERT O. GRAESER, USA

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Some opinions have been advanced that there is no need for US personnel on these /cross-border/ teams. I disagree. Teams consisting only of indigenous personnel have not done the job in the way it needs to be done. When using such teams, not only the language barrier but the judgment factor become paramount. It has been the experience both in this and related programs (and my own personal experience in others) that there is a decided limitation as to what you can expect from an all indigenous team operating under US control For one thing, the presence of US personnel is a comforting factor to the indigenous personnel who accompany them: they are really not forgotten but are protected by US might. This is evident to them because they know that the United States will not allow its personnel to be abandoned to the enemy and that assistance to the team is guaranteed because there are Americans on it. Too many times with an all-indigenous team, the mission is either falsified or aborted prematurely because of the team's fear of being abandoned. With US personnel accompanying the teams, the photography, selection of information to be reported, selection of the areas to be investigated and decision as to when to evacuate the area under enemy pressure are controlled by a US individual whose decision is more in keeping with the thought processes of the individual who has to evaluate this mission. This is not to say the indigenous personnel do not perform. They do perform and they perform well. They perform effectively as a team with US leadership and they are capable individuals for the most part. However, when separated from

the US personnel, in most cases, their efficiency falls to an unacceptable degree.*

. . . . . .

I personally do not believe that the personnel, lieutenants and sergeants, who run these operations need to be Special Forces. In the final analysis, this operation on the ground is no more than a reconnaissance or combat patrol The expertise that a Special Forces individual has, of course, is very useful as he is an extremely well-trained individual, but the knowledge of unconventional warfare or the knowledge of special operations is really needed at the planning level, at the MACV or MACSOG level, rather than down at the operating level. When you get down to the nuts and bolts of this mission, it can be done by any long-range patrol or by any infantry-trained individual. As far as the relations with the indigenous personnel are concerned, it has been demonstrated by the Marine combined actions teams (which have worked out very well) that as long as the individuals are closely associated, live and eat and fight together, a close rapport is established. I admit that a great deal of experience is gained by the individual Special Forces soldier which could be applied to his primary UW mission a much greater wealth of experience is gained at the command, control and logistical support level. Once a base of experience for the A team level has been obtained, however, I suggest that the Special Forces operator should be phased out of reconnaissance team operations.**

* (TS) Interview by Colonel Herbert O. Graeser, USA, pp. 4-5.
** Ibid., p. 7.

COMMENTS ON PERSONNEL AND TRAINING

BY

COLONEL ROBERT L. GLEASON, USAF

. . . . . .

I'd like to make a comment on the capability and advance preparation of assigned personnel. -- I have a real bone to pick here. I think the Services could do an awful lot, especially the Air Force and perhaps to a lesser extent, the Navy. I think the Army and the Marine Corps generally prepare them pretty well because these are primary missions or close to primary missions in their own Services. The Air Force, especially in such areas as PsyOps, has very limited experience. There should be careful screening of Air Force personnel for key MACSOG assignments.*

The Army now has a problem concerning the quality and experience of team leaders for cross-border operations. The leader we have now is several notches under the team leader of two or three years ago. The Army is having trouble finding motivated qualified replacements. It's a real tough environment and probably the toughest job in SEAsia, . . . They have to operate in a hostile environment, as guerrillas, so to speak, with US and Vietnamese team members. They are denied tactical air support in such places as Cambodia. They are inserted against a hostile, in most cases, civilian element. This makes their job more difficult than the OSS during WW II or the guerrilla activity in Korea where they were at least inserted in areas where there were some friendly civilians. They have the toughest nut to crack of anybody in the war. There is some work to be done in selecting Army personnel. It goes right back to getting these people properly selected at Bragg and being a lot more selective in SOG Special Forces types than

* (TS) Interview by Colonel Robert L. Gleason, USAF, p. 6.

other Special Forces operations. I think it's more demanding than any of the other Special Forces operations going or conceived. Therefore, you just can't take any guy, even though he's a Green Beret type, and expect him to produce in this environment unless he's a top quality product.*

The Air Force also has to be more selective in scrutinizing their people for staff experience. I think the Marine Corps might have a little problem there also for duty in Headquarters, SOG. Quite often the security nature of the request precludes finding some of the more talented types; at least, this is thought to be the case. The Air Force is prone to send a man over there just out of a cockpit on his first staff assignment on a task that is new to him. Many times it turns out to be his first staff experience. This puts him at a disadvantage and hurts the operation. I think a lot should be done to get good seasoned staff officers. They may not have UW experience but at least they would know how to organize a project, write it up, and do the necessary staff work to get it approved and executed. This is a Marine Corps problem too, but to a lesser degree.**

Things of a general annoyance include such matters as people coming over there with a lack of security clearances. This occurred a few times in the Air Force and to a much greater extent in the Army. However, I can't recall any occasion of the Navy or Marine Corps being involved in this. When a person is recruited against a requirement which clearly states a TOP SECRET clearance as necessary, and is sent over

* Ibid., pp. 6-7.
** Ibid., p. 7.

there with a SECRET clearance, you would have to use the individual as a door checker or truck driver or some darn thing waiting for his clearance to arrive. They would not grant TS clearances in-country unless the man had the background check completed before he comes over there or while he was over there.*

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This leads to the next question on the effectiveness of Vietnamese in joint operations. I have always held the conviction that was strengthened during this tour that the Vietnamese are quite capable of running both sophisticated and unsophisticated military operations. I think they are also prone to stand back when we do it for them. I don't think it's laziness on their part as much as it is a hesitancy to get in and try to compete with the aggressive Americans. They have done a pretty good job with their VNAF; their 219th was provided with little or no US advisory effort yet gave us some of the best helicopter support of any organization in the country. I think the same is true of the crew operations of the PT boats. One would occasionally hear that the reason the US Navy has to support those boats is because they're too sophisticated for the Vietnamese to cope with, British engine, etc. I don't think that is so. I believe that if we put the emphasis on training them and requiring them to maintain the boats, they could do it. I think the same thing is true for cross-border operations. I noted earlier the fact that we initially had cross-border teams in NVN that later deployed

* Ibid., p. 7.

in Laos after the restrictions. These were known initially as STRATA teams. . . . . These were all indigenous teams with indigenous leadership. There was a wide variety of talents in these teams, some were all VN civilian, some were all Vietnamese military and some were Vietnamese civilian mercenary types with Vietnamese military leadership. They were injected into PRAIRIE FIRE and DANIEL BOONE on special missions, again, without US leadership. The teams were well trained, well selected, they had their North Vietnamese experience behind them, their performance out there certainly wasn't the best but again there was nothing to compare them with because there were no US teams operating in that area at the time. But in DANIEL BOONE, especially, and the PRAIRIE FIRE area, those teams performed very well as roadwatch teams, intelligence gathering teams, and stayed in as long or longer than many US teams. Here again, I contend that if the Vietnamese know they have to run the programs and if they are given the responsibility with a kick in the butt rather than being shunted off to one side, they will perform in a fine manner. All the penetrators and infiltrators in SVN (enemy infiltrators) are Vietnamese also. . . . . If they can do it for the other side, I am completely convinced we could train them to do it for our side also.*

* Ibid., pp. 9-10.

COMMENTS ON PERSONNEL AND TRAINING

BY

LT. COLONEL JAMES R. McCARTHY, USAF

. . . . . .

. . . . The Chinese pilots, in my opinion, were some of the finest indigenous pilots that I'd seen. Their capabilities exceeded anything that I had seen in the Vietnamese Air Force and some of their capabilities exceeded what I had seen in our Air Force. Many had been in the mission for a long time and were very familiar with the operation. [redacted] They were able to fly their missions at 500 feet at night over mountainous terrain without the aid of radar. There is no doubt in my mind that there is not another capability like this that can perform day in and day out with the same high degree of mission accomplishment as these people could.*

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(b)(3)

* (TS) Interview by LTC James R. McCarthy, USAF, p. 3.

TOP SECRET

COMMENTS ON PERSONNEL AND TRAINING

BY

COLONEL STEPHEN E CAVANAUGH, USA

. . . . . .

. . . US personnel assigned to SOG have, in the main, been individuals who have had no previous connection with an effort such as this type. Special Forces personnel, of recent vintage at least, have been principally trained in counter-insurgency and "winning the hearts and minds of the people," and not in the reconnaissance type of operation that SOG is involved in. *The officers assigned to the SOG staff, JTD,* were, in most cases, ill-prepared also to function as agent handlers or in any type of intelligence operations where we were not properly trained for this type of operation. A notable exception to this, I think, was that I did find a large number of exceptionally well qualified psychological operations officers who understood psychological operations but not so much from the black side as from the overt, white PsyOps side.*

We do not have enough training in true covert, clandestine type work. We need a better understanding of agent handling. We need a better understanding of black psychological operations. We need to have people work in this type of business in order to develop diversionary programs and broad operations which reflect unconventional concepts and tendencies and not have them connected so directly to overt, military type operations.*

. . . . . .

US personnel assigned to command and control detachments of MACSOG come from the 5th Special Forces Group. During my

* (TS) Interview by Colonel Stephen E. Cavanaugh, USA, p. 8.

current tour, at this time 14 months, personnel shortages have existed at all the command and control detachments The most serious aspect of the personnel situation, however, is not the shortage of personnel but the shortage of qualified and experienced personnel. The TOE for our reconnaissance teams calls for an E7, 11B or F. In most instances we have had a shortage of at least 50 percent of the proper MOS and grade and, in most instances, none has been previously qualified or trained as reconnaissance personnel. The exceptions were those individuals who had previously been assigned to this program and had returned to it after a State-side tour.*

The lack of proper training and qualification for this type of mission is, to my mind, the most serious deficiency which I have seen. Individuals trained at Fort Bragg in Special Forces techniques have, in the main, been qualified in a particular MOS and the techniques thereof and in counterinsurgency and revolutionary development type training. Few, if any, have had an opportunity to actually study or practice reconnaissance procedures and tactics.**

Graduates of the Ranger school at Fort Benning would appear to be a more suitable type of individual for this type of operation provided they have the motivation and interest. If the Army is going to continue to develop highly specialized reconnaissance elements for special operations, the individuals must be carefully selected, must be volunteers, and must be trained in the proper tactics and techniques. Motivation is a key point and it is erroneous to believe that just because a

* Ibid., p. 11.
** Ibid., pp. 11-12.

ran is directed to go to Ranger school or to some form of reconnaissance school that he automatically would be capable of the type of mission which SOG is currently involved in. It might suffice for an individual who is a member of a larger reconnaissance and patrol organization, such as the LRRPs, but not for the special operations, which involve an exceptionally small number of individuals, being conducted in an area which is entirely hostile.*

To overcome the training deficiencies which were so obvious in our reconnaissance team personnel, a reconnaissance team leaders course was established at the SOG Training Center at Camp Long Thanh. It is a two weeks course prepared for and given specifically to reconnaissance team members. It stresses map reading, observation techniques, reporting procedures, communications, escape and evasion, trail watching, etc. No stress is given to those more exotic training concepts currently used by Special Forces to allegedly prepare people for combat, such as rapelling and hand-to-hand combat, and to exotic demolition training. While these subjects are considered to be necessary in certain instances, I feel that undue emphasis has been given to training in these areas and insufficient emphasis to fundamental aspects of ground reconnaissance and patrolling.*

I have found that a great number of our new Special Forces personnel come into this program with no appreciation of the methods of observations and reporting sightings, cannot read a map, have never been taught the fundamentals of leadership and lack an understanding of joint air-ground procedures. I

* Ibid., p. 12.