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

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. DATA

DATA

DATA He kept these people under stringent control and they trained hard and

did an excellent job. 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.*

. . . . . .

. . . . 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.

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. . . . 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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. . . there was the problem of security clearances.

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The air section itself was reluctant to disclose

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

any of the details of their operation or to go into their operation in any depth at all or to give any of the background information on their operation which would certainly have helped in the initial transition period. 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. . . .*

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. . . . We went to the Vietnamese aircrews with two thoughts in mind. DATA secondly, to be able to train, retain and control the Vietnamese aircrews better DATA Starting out with a base that the DATA 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

DATA

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.

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 DATA 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 DATA 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

* 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 DATA and I am glad we chose the Vietnamese DATA

The only other Vietnamese the SOG Air Operations personnel dealt with to any great extent was the air liaison man

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. . . . Supposedly, he was an air pilot; in matter of fact, however, I doubt if he was. He had no knowledge whatsoever of air operations

DATA

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**

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

COMMENTS ON PERSONNEL AND TRAINING

BY

COLONEL LEROY V. GROSSHEUSCH, USAF

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. . . . The caliber of the DATA 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. . . .*

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. . . 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 DATA 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 DATA arrived, each of the instructor pilots had in the neighborhood of 100-150 hours in the C-123 and we proceeded to requalify the DATA 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.*

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DATA

After checking him out rapidly in the last part of October and the first part of November, DATA 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 DATA 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 DATA

During the period that I was there, all of the DATA 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.

was a colonel from the DATA 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. . . .*

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:

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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.

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

DATA

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 DATA 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

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* 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 ~~DATA~~

DATA

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

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

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.

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.

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 DATA maritime people in running SWIFTs and NASTYs.

DATA

. 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. They also had some DATA skippers who were a bit more reliable but once again these were mercenaries and we just didn't have control of the people 24 hours a day. For these reasons, and the fact that they wanted to expand the program,

they decided to train the Vietnamese naval officers and enlisted personnel to man the boats and more or less run the operations.

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

COMMENTS ON PERSONNEL AND TRAINING

BY

COLONEL DONALD D. BLACKBURN, USA

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. . . . 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.

COMMENTS ON PERSONNEL AND TRAINING

BY

COLONEL JOHN T. MOORE, JR., USAF

. . . . . .

. . . . 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. Beginning with the GRC crews, which only flew the C-123 aircraft, I can say unqualifiedly that they were professionally highly competent. Also, they were highly motivated and had a genuine interest in accomplishing the mission. We had very fine relationships between MACSOG DATA There were, however, some limitations that the DATA imposed upon us that we had to live with which made the operations somewhat difficult. They wanted frequent leaves. As a matter of fact, out of the six crews we had, we practically had two of them back in DATA all the time, 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.*

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

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

* 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.**

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

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 [illegible] 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.

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.

DATA

I considered them very professional. I would like to make a point, however, that they are very cautious. The crews are headed by a full colonel DATA His approval is required before any DATA will fly a mission. The MACSOG AIROPS people must make available to him intelligence, weather data and other pre-mission planning information. The DATA then decides whether the weather is good enough and whether intelligence indicates that his crews can get in and out safely. In general, the DATA required very good weather before his crews would fly an OPLAN 34A mission

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DATA

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

drop. As North Vietnamese defenses built up, DATA were more and more reluctant to get in close enough to NVN to get a good drop on a particular target.

DATA

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.

DATA

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* Ibid., p. 2.

COMMENTS ON PERSONNEL AND TRAINING

BY

LT. COLONEL RAYMOND L. CALL, USA

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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.

COMMENTS ON PERSONNEL AND TRAINING

BY

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

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In the long-term agent operations in North Vietnam,

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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.*

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.

man. 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,

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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 have 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. . . .***

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

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.*

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

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

training. Thereafter, we would give them some MT . 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: MT .*

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.

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 DATA 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 DATA 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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MT

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.

MT

. 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.

COMMENTS ON PERSONNEL AND TRAINING

BY

COLONEL ROBERT C. MacLANE, USA

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DATA

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

COMMENTS ON PERSONNEL AND TRAINING

BY

COLONEL JOHN K. SINGLAUB, USA

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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 DAO 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 psychological operations and did not really understand the operations. A great effort was placed on training the US personnel that we had in-country

MT

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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.**

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. . . . 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 DATA 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.

DATA

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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.

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* Ibid., p. 11

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.*

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. . . . The indigenous personnel working for MACSOG fitted into three national categories: The DATA nationals whom we employed; the DATA 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.**

First of all, the DATA 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

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

DATA 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.*

DATA

DATA 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 DATA 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

DATA This meant that, in some cases, DATA misconceptions about the capabilities of Soviet radar and Soviet-made antiaircraft weapons. When these capabilities were known DATA , 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 DATA whom we employed in South Vietnam are sometimes referred to as DATA They were actually DATA and would have remained DATA 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 DATA Presumably, they were members of the DATA which had been formed from among the DATA 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 DATA would be forced to recruit DATA in fact, were young boys anxious to avoid the draft into the Vietnamese Army; we generally referred to them as the DATA DATA 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 DATA 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 DATA 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. DATA 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.**

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

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.

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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.

COMMENTS ON PERSONNEL AND TRAINING

BY

COLONEL DENNIS P. CASEY, USMC

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DATA 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.*

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. . . . 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.