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.*

. . . . . .

. . . DATA . . . 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. . . .*

* Interview of Major Frank Jaks, USA, p. 1.

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 [illegible] people and found very quickly that the [illegible] 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

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

Tab S to
Annex Q to
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. . . .

MT

. . . . . .

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.

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.

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

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 DATA 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

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.

MT

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 DATA recently discharged by the DATA could be very well employed in any

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.

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 Tab7.

a. MT MT MT MT ion does not contain the kind of specialization necessary to perform MT

MT

. 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 MTA 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.

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 DATA 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.

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. 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. 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 that the Army strongly resists any further such identifiers and would 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

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. MT

MT

MT 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.

DATA

Many of us feel that there is a need for better integration in training. 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.

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

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.

COMMENTS ON PERSONNEL AND TRAINING

BY

COLONEL BENTON M. AUSTIN, USA



DATA



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

Tab U to
Annex Q to
Appendix B

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. . . .*

. . . . . .

State AS Comp



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.

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.

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.

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.

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 DATA 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 . . . DATA

DATA

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.

. . . . . .

. . . . 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 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.

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 by 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.

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.

. . . . . .

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

. . . . . .

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

* 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.

. . . . . .

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.

DATA

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.

COMMENTS 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 MT MT 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. . . .*

. . . . . .

. . . . 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.

. . . . . .

CLASSIFICATE SECRET RL

MT

The only noticeable thing that was "sold" was

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

was the PRC-77, which was incorporated into the communications system on the advice of the communications expert. The airborne specialist gave his recommendations in several fields which apparently were not followed. These experts should be assigned to MACSOG permanently as are military personnel.*

. . . . . .

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 DATA descent . . . The DATA . 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.

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.*

. . . . . .

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 [redacted], 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 [redacted] This could very well have resulted in compromises.*

. . . . . .

There were cases where a member of an agent team did leave the facility, the [redacted], 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.*

. . . . . .

. . . 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 [redacted] e. . . . 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 MT e 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.*

. . . . . .

. . . . My Vietnamese counterpart was, as I mentioned before, a VGS-12, which is a high Vietnamese Government rating.

MT

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. . . .**

. . . . . .

. . . . 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.

COMMENTS ON PERSONNEL AND TRAINING

BY

MAJOR GEORGE W. GASPARD, USA

. . . . . .

We ran the DATA 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.

COMMENTS ON PERSONNEL AND TRAINING

BY

LT. COLONEL JEFFERSON SEAY, III, USA

. . . . . .

. . . the Liaison Service, which is a subordinate organization under STD, did all of the recruiting for the OP 35 /cross-border/ operations. Recruiting agents or agent teams for North Vietnam was handled through Colonel Ho, primarily, and he used attaches attached or located in Vientiane and Bangkok. 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.*

. . . . . .

DATA

State
AS
Conf.

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

Tab DD to
Annex Q to
Appendix B

Ho.



CLASSIFICATION
SECRET
RIC

ed

* Ibid., pp. 3-4.

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 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 ~~DMZ~~ 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.*

. . . . . .

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

. . . . . .

. . . . DATA

DATA

DATA

DATA

Many had been in the mission for a long time and were very familiar with the operation.

DATA 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.*

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

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, Para work. We need a better understanding of agent handling. We need a better understanding of Para 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.

man 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.

recognize it is asking too much of a man who is in the Service for only two or three years to prepare himself for the type of mission he is being expected to run in this organization. Nevertheless, the requirement exists and an effort should be made to establish an adequate, though small, training facility outside of Vietnam which would train selected personnel for this type of mission. Above all, the individuals should be carefully selected and volunteers. It might be possible to designate selected Ranger or Special Forces units for this type of mission and since all Ranger or Special Forces individuals are not suitable or want to do a job like this, these special units, while retaining a Ranger or Special Forces identity, would be specially trained and organized.*

* Ibid., pp. 12-13