

# VIET CONG



## BASE CAMPS

### AND



## SUPPLY CACHES

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SUBJECT: Counterinsurgency Lessons Learned No. 68: Viet Cong Base  
Camps and Supply Caches (U)

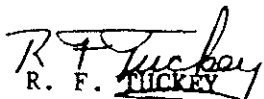
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COUNTERINSURGENCY LESSONS LEARNED NO. 68

VIET CONG BASE CAMPS AND SUPPLY CACHES (U)

SECTION I

VIET CONG BASE CAMPS

1. (U) GENERAL:

a. Fortified base camps are the pivots of Viet Cong (VC) military operations and if denied their use, the VC movement would wither. Local force units tend to place reliance on numerous small base camps dispersed throughout their area of operations and each attempts to maintain at least one elaborately fortified refuge. The larger local force units normally construct a tunnel complex which houses their hospital and headquarters. The camps are usually extensively booby trapped and protected by punji stakes, mines and spike traps. Main force base camps, on the other hand, are usually not so well guarded by mines; they are larger and frequently include training facilities, such as rifle ranges and classrooms. Main force units may be expected to have pre-stocked base camps throughout their area of operations, and may shift their forces as the tactical situation dictates, either for offensive or defensive reasons.

b. Years of labor and an immense amount of material have gone into building a complex network of base camps throughout the country. It is this network which sustains irregular operations. A semi-guerrilla army, such as that of the VC, cannot survive without its base camps any more than a conventional army can survive when cut off from its main bases. However remote and concealed, the base camps cannot be easily moved or hidden indefinitely. To find and destroy these camps is a prime objective of the military effort.

c. Defended base camps present a formidable obstacle to the

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attacker. They are normally somewhat circular in form with an outer rim of bunkers, automatic weapons firing positions, alarm systems and foxholes. Within the circle there is a rather complete system of command bunkers, kitchens, and living quarters constructed above the ground from a wide variety of materials. (Figs. 1, 2 and 3 illustrate the various types of VC base camps which have been encountered by tactical units in South Vietnam). The exact shape of the camp will vary in order to take maximum advantage of natural terrain features for protection and to restrict attack on the camp to one or two avenues. Some of the camps, particularly those used only for training or way stations, have minimum defensive works. However, in all cases, the enemy is prepared to defend his camp against a ground attack. Even though natural terrain features may cause a given camp to resemble a cul-de-sac there will be at least one prepared exit or escape route opposite the anticipated direction(s) of attack. Tunnels connect the bunkers and firing positions, enabling the defenders to move from one point to another. This technique enhances the effect of their firepower and gives them a significant advantage over the attacker. An unfordable river may parallel one flank of a typical camp while open paddy land borders the other. The apparent lack of escape routes makes the position appear like an ideal target for ground attack. However, until bombardment has removed most of the foliage, any maneuver into these areas on the ground is a complex problem. One local force squad has been known to withstand the assault of two US Army infantry companies, and a VC sniper or two, firing from within a mined camp, can inflict numerous casualties on the attacking force.

2. (CMHA) LOCATION AND DETECTION OF BASE CAMPS:

a. The 1st Brigade, 101st Airborne Division (US), made a study to determine if patterns existed for the establishment of enemy base camps and defensive fortifications. It was found early in the operation that the enemy invariably established his bases in the upper reaches of draws where water was available and dense foliage precluded aerial observation. Fortifications were found on the "fingers" covering the base camps and were mutually supporting. A comparison with information obtained from other sources such as agent reports, trail studies, etc., indicated that a pattern did exist and that potential base areas and bunkered positions could be predicted with reasonable accuracy. Based on this finding, information obtained from the Combined Intelligence Center, Vietnam (CICV), photos, Red Haze, visual reconnaissance and special agent reports was placed on overlays and the density of activity plotted. The plot was then transferred to maps using the color red to represent probable base camp locations. A careful study of surrounding terrain was then made to determine likely defensive positions and these were entered in blue

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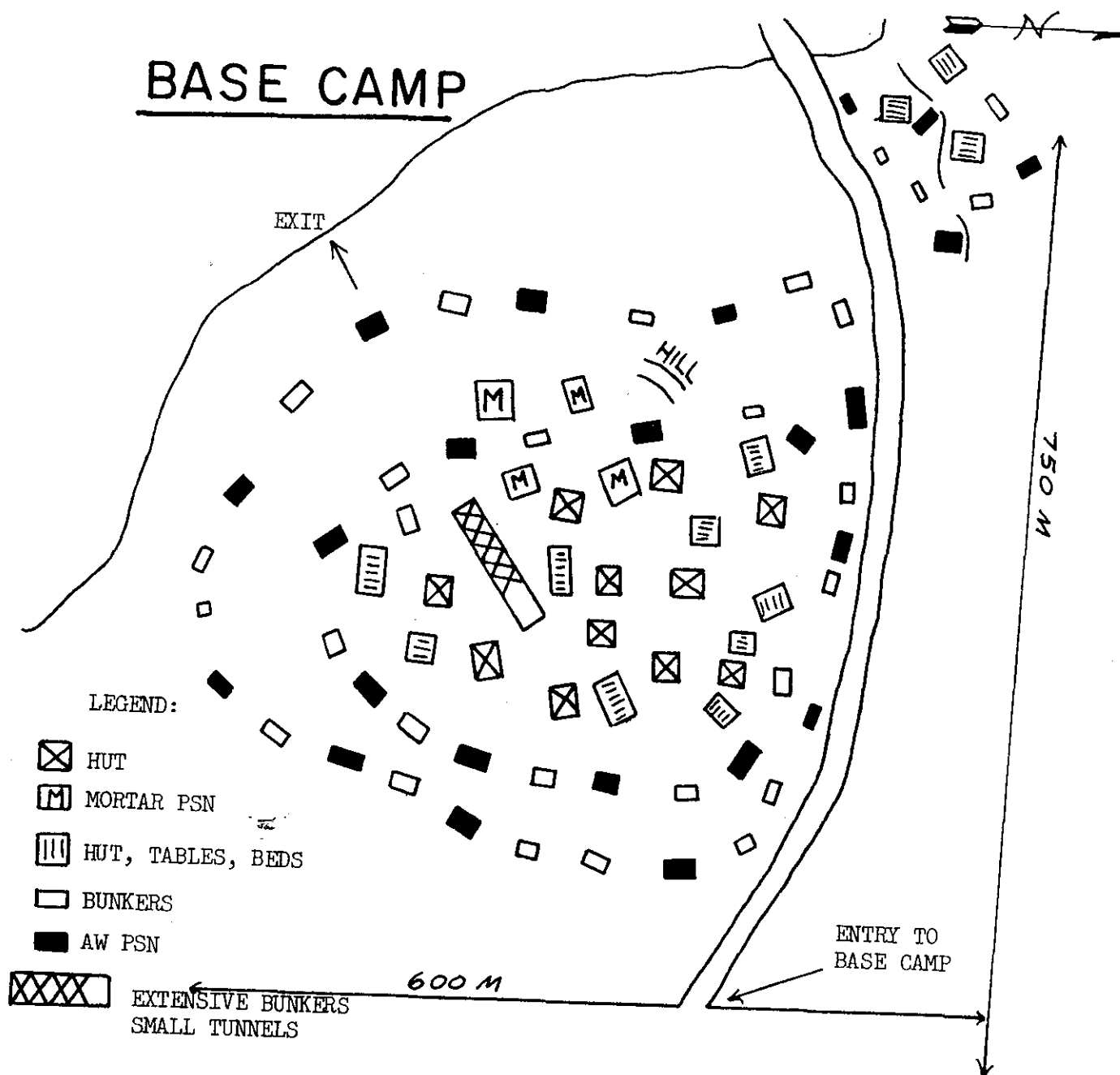


Figure 1

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## BASE CAMP

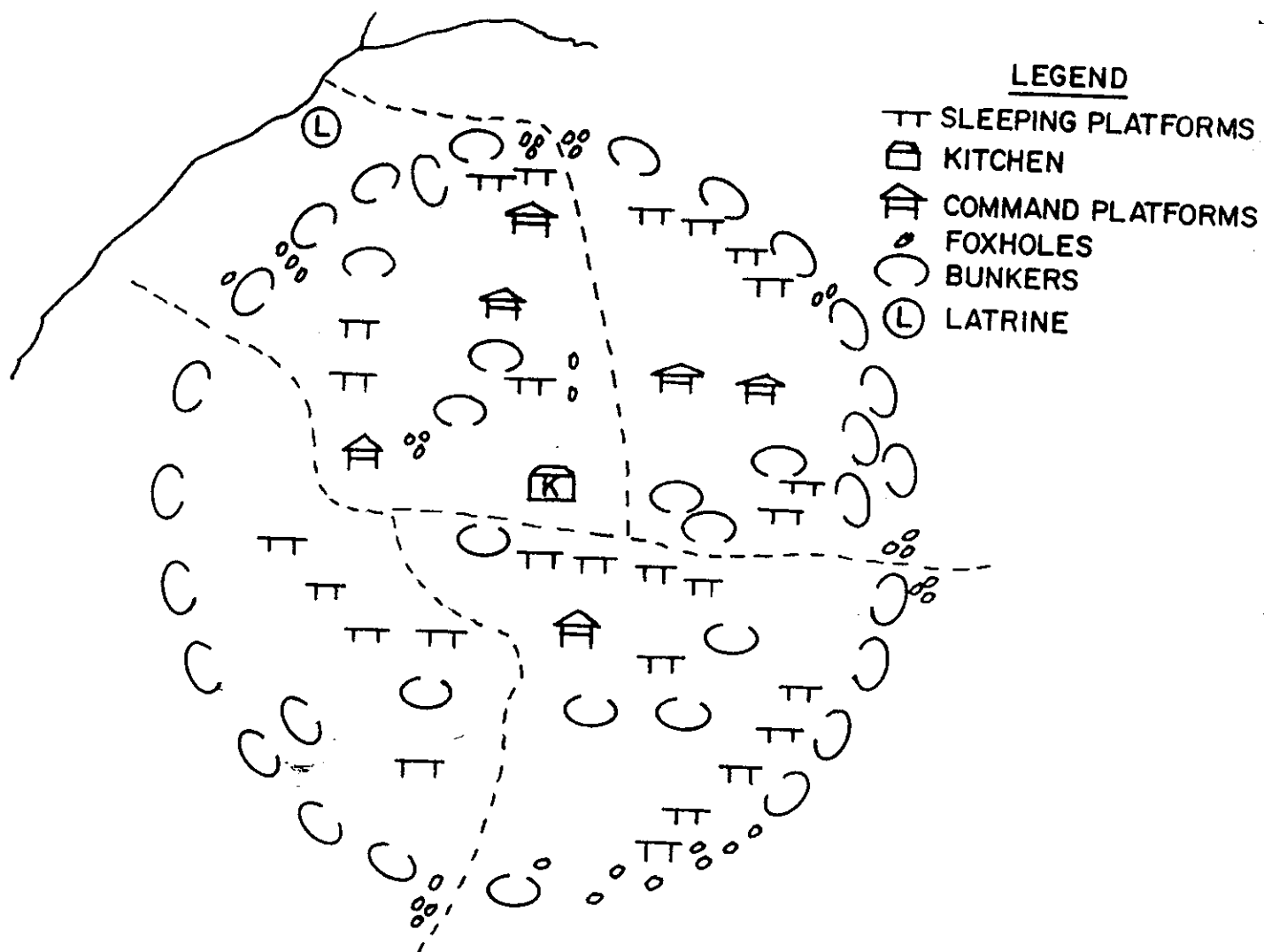


Figure 2

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## BASE CAMP

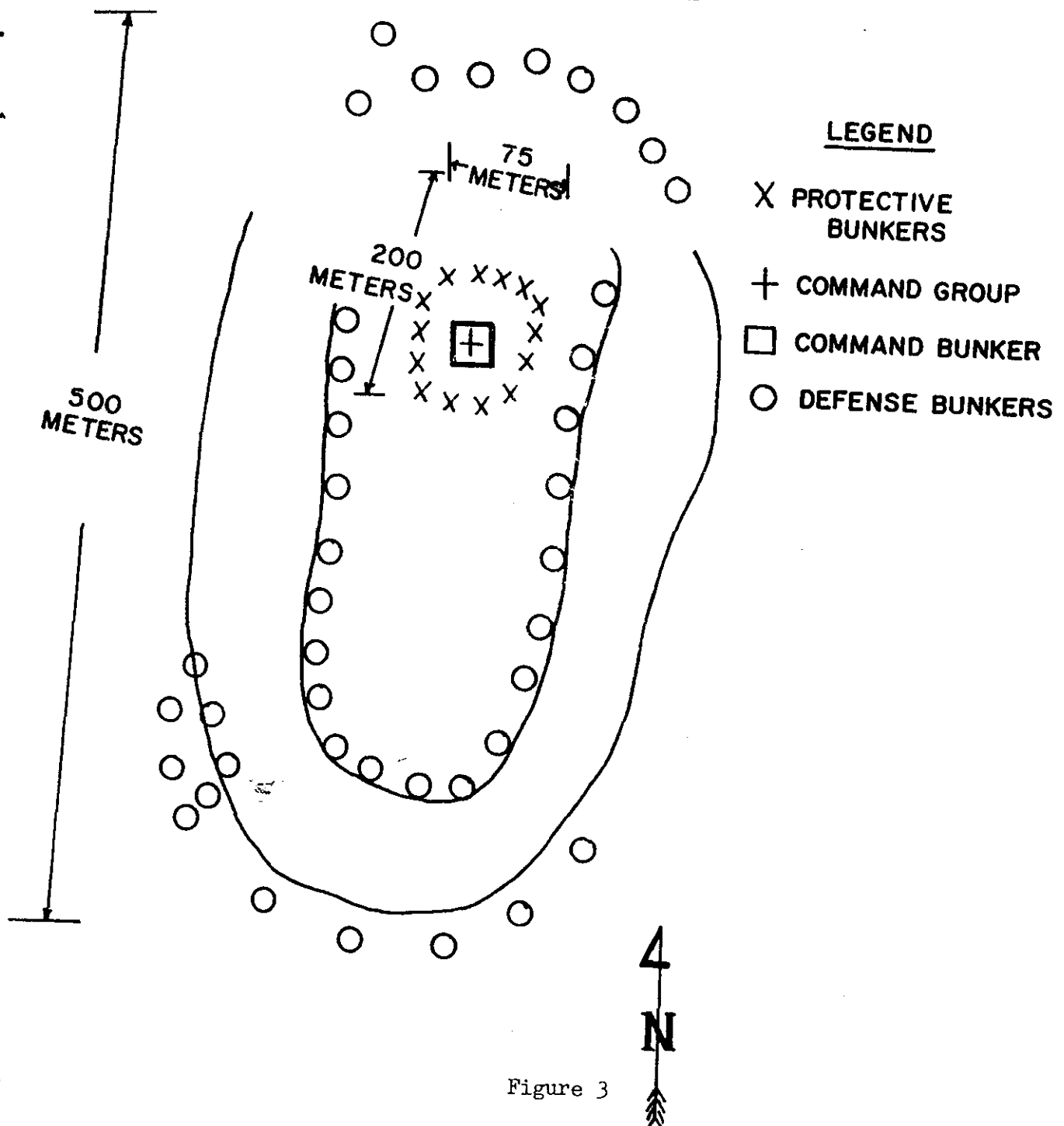


Figure 3

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on the map. Thus, commanders were presented with a clear indication of the most likely areas which would be defended. This method of identifying probable base camps and defensive positions has proven to be relatively accurate.

b. During OPERATION MAKALAPA, the 25th Infantry Division (US) found that VC base camps were normally located along streams and canals and that extensive bunker complexes were built into the banks. Bunkers were usually constructed of a combination of mud, logs and cement. The bunkers presented a low silhouette and had extensive lanes of fire along the main avenue(s) of approach. Excellent camouflage negated the effectiveness of our aerial and ground observation.

c. In OPERATION WHEELER, the 1st Brigade, 101st Airborne Division (US) found that "People Sniffer" missions effectively produced intelligence in areas of heavy vegetation where visual reconnaissance was ineffective. These missions were also invaluable in verifying agent reports as well as specifically locating enemy units, hospitals or storage areas as revealed by detainees or captured documents.

d. The After Action Report of the 25th Infantry Division (US) for OPERATION JUNCTION CITY, reflects that of the sixteen base camps discovered, two were considered to be regimental size, ten battalion size and four company size or smaller. All base camps were located 200 meters or closer to a stream or other source of water. Each camp was encircled by a bunker system with interconnecting trench systems. The defensive positions showed evidence of careful planning of fields of fire and were well camouflaged and expertly organized. Enemy claymore mine positions were marked on the enemy side of a tree, usually with a single strip of white cloth or an "X" cut into the tree.

e. The 3rd Brigade, 1st Infantry Division (US) reported, after the completion of OPERATION JUNCTION CITY, that most base camps were located near streams or roads. It appeared that the plan was to locate all installations close to transportation routes. This Brigade made the same comment in their After Action Report for OPERATION BATTLE CREEK.

f. The 3rd Battalion, 22nd Infantry, 4th Division (US) After Action Report for OPERATION BREMERTON, which was conducted in the Rung Sat Special Zone, reflected that the most likely base camps in that area existed on the high ground. Therefore, caution had to be exercised when entering dry ground from the swamps. Also, all base camps encountered were within 150 meters of some type of waterway. Further, these camps, without exception, were well concealed and

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effectively bunkered. Similarity of these base camps enabled units to plan their method of approach to minimize friendly casualties.

g. In the conduct of OPERATION BENTON by the 196th Light Infantry Brigade (US), it was noted that in almost all cases the enemy installations were within 1000 meters of a valley or actually in the valley. This indicated that in this area, the VC avoided the rugged and more formidable higher elevations.

h. The 1st Brigade, 101st Airborne Division (US) found in OPERATION HOOD RIVER, that the VC continued to utilize mutually supporting draws, each characterized by a water supply, dense foliage and fortified positions guarding accesses to base camp areas. This same unit noted in their After Action Report for OPERATION BENTON that the VC guarded his base camps with local forces who were well trained and very capable of executing all aspects of guerrilla warfare.

i. Following OPERATION YELLOWSTONE, the 3rd Squadron, 17th Cavalry (-) (US) reported that sightings of previously unlocated base camps were reported daily. As each sub-area was searched in detail, large bunker complexes were located along every large stream in the jungle area. Enemy lines of communication interlacing the fortified base camps were found and plotted. Many of the base camps were vacant but a large percentage proved to be occupied and well defended.

j. The After Action Report of the 1st Brigade, 25th Infantry Division (US) for OPERATION LANIKAI reflected that during this operation VC base camps were normally found along stream beds adjacent to built-up areas or in the midst of occupied villages. Bunkers were found in most homes, astride or strung along roads and dikes and in the corners of hedge rows. Pagodas are normally VC meeting places and were often protected by bunker complexes.

k. The use of the "Open Arms" program to obtain intelligence of specific areas and for guides to areas can be very effective. During OPERATION DAN TAM 81, conducted by the 11th Armored Cavalry Regiment, the exact locations of VC base camps were revealed by a Hoi Chanh.

l. The 1st Battalion, 18th Infantry, 1st Infantry Division (US) reported upon completion of OPERATION BATON ROUGE that whenever a unit moved into an area where there are indications that much wood had been cut, the unit could expect to find a base camp within 200 to 500 meters of the cutting area. (Note: VC regulations prescribe that wood cutting must be done at least one hour's walking time from such facilities.) Upon completion of OPERATION LEXINGTON III, this same unit reported that base camps and facilities were generally

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found near streams, indicating the need for easy accessibility in the type of terrain encountered in the area.

m. During OPERATIONS MANCHESTER, UNIONTOWN/STRIKE and UNIONTOWN I, the 199th Brigade's 503rd Chemical Detachment conducted twelve "People Sniffer" missions during the period 17 December 1967 to 13 January 1968, identifying 94 hotspots of probable enemy activities. The "People Sniffers" enjoyed several successes by identifying VC base camps and supplementing other intelligence means in locating areas of enemy activity.

n. The After Action Report of the 199th Light Infantry Brigade (US) for OPERATIONS MANCHESTER, UNIONTOWN/STRIKE and UNIONTOWN I contains the comment that the humane and considerate treatment of Hoi Chanh reaps high dividends, saving countless manhours of operational time. Once the confidence of these returnees is gained and sincere concern for their well being is established, they willingly provide information leading to identification and destruction of Viet Cong forces or their base camps.

o. It has long been thought that because of their superior knowledge of these areas, the Viet Cong habitually establish base areas deep in the interior. Operations conducted by the 1st Brigade, 101st Airborne Division have tended to disprove this belief. Apparently the Viet Cong do not regularly inhabit the interior of dense jungle areas unless they are accessible by trail. Instead, they operate from bases within two or three kilometers of the jungle periphery.

p. Upon completion of OPERATION JUNCTION CITY, the 196th Light Infantry Brigade reported that defoliation flights cleared away brush and effectively revealed the enemy's base camps and supply routes.

q. The 5th Special Forces Group (Airborne) reported that the questions most frequently asked local VC PWs and ralliers, especially Hoi Chanh, pertained to the location of their base camps and AOs. The 5th SFG found that the two frequently used methods of map study and aerial observation were unsuccessful. Most PWs and Hoi Chanh do not know direction, cannot read a map and, when they are taken aloft for Visual Reconnaissance (VR), it is usually their first flight so they cannot associate what they see from the air with what they saw on the ground. However, most of these people will not admit that they cannot read a map, tell direction or do a terrain analysis from the air. As a consequence, they usually reply in the affirmative when questions are asked. When detainees were re-interrogated using the same techniques, the information received in the second interrogation frequently differed from the first interrogation. One method of

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interrogation which proved successful is based on direct terrain orientation questions by the interrogator. First the detainee is asked the direction of the sun when he last left the base camp. He is then asked how long it took him to walk to the point where he Chieu Hoi'd or was captured. Judging from the type terrain and health of the detainee the distance to the camp can generally be determined. The subject is then asked to enumerate significant terrain features he saw on each day of his journey, i.e., open areas, rubber lots, hills, rice paddies, swamps, etc. As the subject speaks and his memory is jogged, the interrogator finds these terrain features on a current map and gradually plots the subject's route and finally identifies the area in which the base camp is located.

3. (CMHA) METHODS OF DESTROYING OR RENDERING BASE CAMPS UNTENABLE:

a. The 1st Australian Task Force used tactical airstrikes, immediate and preplanned, against occupied enemy base camps during OPERATION INGHAM. Assessment of damage revealed that one strike was on target and destroyed two underground rooms, collapsed 60 yards of tunnel and blew in several weapons pits. One strike was not assessed as the camp was not revisited. The Task Force also reported that airstrikes were directed against the camps to force the enemy out of occupied camps during OPERATION PADDINGTON.

b. The 1st Brigade, 101st Airborne Division's method of rendering base camps untenable, as reported in their After Action Report for OPERATION MALHEUR, was to contaminate them from the air using CS. The CS concentration remained effective for a period of from four to six weeks.

c. During OPERATION DALLAS, the 2/2 Infantry (Mech) conducted jungle clearing operations in the Vinh Loi Woods with tank dozers and Rome Plows. During jungle clearing, when contact was made which indicated the presence of a VC base camp, the mechanized elements developed the situation by deploying laterally while directing supporting air and artillery fires into the suspected base camp. The jungle clearing vehicles immediately began clearing a swath completely around the base camp. When the circle was completed, additional swaths were progressively cleared into the center of the camp. The configuration of the cleared jungle took on the appearance of a spoked wheel superimposed on the base camp. After occupation and security of the base camp by mechanized elements, the camp would be systematically destroyed by dozers. The 2nd Brigade, 1st Infantry Division also reported the use of both Rome Plows and demolitions to destroy enemy base camps during this same operation.

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d. The 4th Infantry Division utilized tactical air to destroy bunkers during OPERATION FRANCIS MARION. Battle damage assessment (BDA) indicated two bunkers destroyed and one or two bunkers damaged severely, depending upon point of impact. Eight inch artillery did not affect the bunkers unless there was a direct hit and then only the bunker receiving a direct hit was destroyed. The 3rd Brigade, 4th Infantry Division reported after OPERATION NISQUALLY that enemy base camps were destroyed by burning but that during the dry season caution must be exercised to prevent the fire from spreading to the adjacent jungle.

e. The 1st Infantry Division's tactic for destroying VC base camps during OPERATION TUCSON was that of backing off, destroying them with air and artillery, and then sweeping through the base camp with troops. During OPERATION CEDAR FALLS, this same division found that a dozer team of two tank dozers and six bulldozers was very effective, particularly when working in a joint effort with infantry. The infantry provided the security and the dozers destroyed the base camps and fortifications.

f. During OPERATION ATTLEBORO, elements of the 2nd Brigade, 1st Infantry Division discovered nine base camps, all of which had the same type fortifications. These ranged from open trenches and fox-holes to bunkers with overhead cover. The largest base camp had fifty bunkers with overhead cover. The most elaborate was a circular bunker (See Fig 4). Overhead cover consisted of logs with a layer of dirt. Destruction was difficult. At times units would physically remove the overhead cover and fill in the holes. When demolitions were available they were used to destroy the bunkers. The primary means, however, of destroying the enemy installations was to call for air and artillery after evacuating the area.

4. (CMHA) SUMMARY OF SALIENT LESSONS LEARNED WITH RESPECT TO VC BASE CAMPS:

a. Fortified base camps are the pivots of VC military operations. Denied their use, VC operations suffer significantly.

b. When a base camp is discovered, it must be thoroughly searched and all facilities destroyed, even if it takes two or three days.

c. Offensive operations can be more successful if units know where to search for different types of base camps in varying types of terrain.

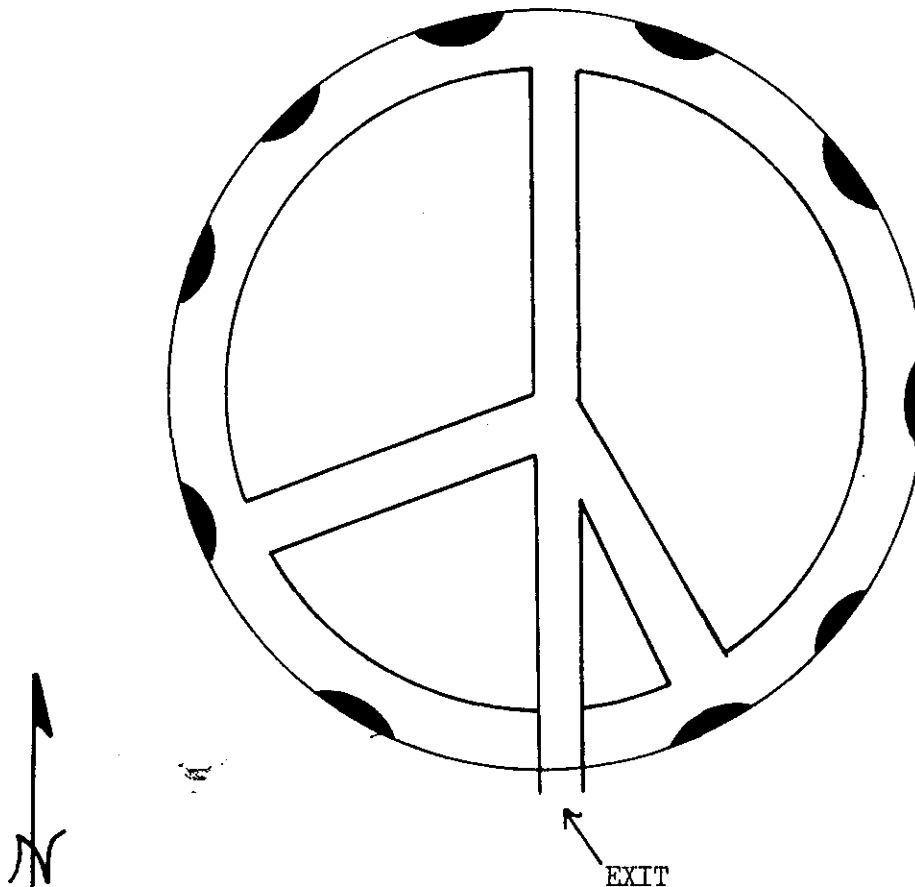
d. The VC normally re-enter a base camp area after US forces

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BASE CAMP  
CIRCULAR BUNKER



THE BUNKER WAS 50 METERS IN DIAMETER AND THE TRENCH WAS 5 FEET DEEP AND 2 FEET WIDE. 10 DUGOUT HOLES IN THE TRENCH WERE LARGE ENOUGH FOR ONE MAN'S PROTECTION AGAINST ARTILLERY. 6 CLAYMORES WERE WIRED AND IN THE TRENCH READY FOR GROUND EMPLACEMENT. CONTROL TO FIRE THE CLAYMORES WAS LOCATED AT THE SOUTHERN EXIT.

Figure 4

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depart to remove items not located or destroyed.

e. The VC camps are seldom found high in the mountains or far from supporting populated areas.

f. Base camps are normally guarded by well trained local forces.

g. The time-distance factor in planning operations should be sufficiently flexible to permit ground commanders to fully exploit and search any located base camp without having to conform to preplanned schedules.

h. A unit moving into a base camp must do so with a definite plan. The plan must include a minimum force to locate the base, a security element and a force to react to the enemy in the base camp.

i. Prior to the initiation of an operation, a clear intelligence picture should be obtained and presented to commanders to include, if possible, the exact location of VC base camps in the area of operations.

j. Exploitation of hard intelligence can result in disruption of the VC logistical base and deny the enemy the use of supplies.

k. The detailed and painstaking compilation of intelligence and its dissemination in concise graphic form, will permit the smallest elements to plan their operations in detail.

l. When a base camp is uncovered, units must be given time to conduct a thorough dismounted search.

m. Special consideration must be given to Hoi Chanhs from the moment of surrender to expeditiously capitalize on their knowledge and previous experiences, their ideas and impressions.

n. Plotting of known resupply routes can provide reliable intelligence for probable locations of base areas.

o. A mechanized battalion can effectively destroy an enemy base camp with armor and Rome Flows.

p. Tactical air is an effective means of destroying enemy base camps. Artillery is less effective.

q. Caution should be exercised when burning huts in enemy camps during the dry season so as to prevent fires from spreading to the adjacent jungle.

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r. Hoi Chanhs and PWs, when properly interrogated, can be a productive source of information as to base camp locations.

s. Where there are indications that a lot of wood has been cut, units can expect to find a base camp within 200 to 500 meters.

t. "People Sniffer" missions can effectively supplement other intelligence means in locating areas of enemy activity including base camps.

u. Defoliation flights clear away brush and effectively reveal enemy base camps and supply routes.

v. A supply of cratering charges, demolitions and blasting devices, held at battalion level, ready for delivery by helicopters, proved to be of great value in the destruction of installations in the Rung Sat Special Zone (RSSZ).

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SECTION II

VIET CONG SUPPLY CACHES

1. (CMHA) GENERAL:

a. Combat experience has shown that supply caches are the lifeblood of the enemy offensive. Without them, the Viet Cong's (VC) capability to sustain operations is seriously impaired. Cache destruction has an adverse affect upon the morale of the enemy individuals and units, and has a significant military impact on his operational plans and logistical support. Loss of medical supplies further compounds the VC's problem of maintaining unit effectiveness and conducting propaganda and recruitment operations.

b. Combined Intelligence Center, Vietnam (CICV) Study ST 63-09, Logistics Fact Book, dated 14 April 1968, states that the enemy uses an intricate system of caches and depots from which supplies are distributed to the units. In the past, the enemy used large central caches at locations which provided quick and easy access to units in the field. As allied operations have uncovered and destroyed these large depots and caches, the enemy has found it necessary to disperse them. The VC now appear to be storing rice in homes of private citizens, but there are still instances when they maintain large central depots. Most caches serve as temporary consolidation points for out-of-country supplies coming into SVN for distribution to units. It also appears that highly accurate records are maintained of the supplies in the caches but there is normally little reference to cache locations.

c. Caches vary in size as to their content, and the unit or operation they support. One example of a VC directive on construction of storehouses (caches) and the maintenance of supplies and facilities, as published by Doan 84 (Group 84), Rear Service Unit, SVN Liberation Army Headquarters, is at Appendix 1. (The document was found in a hut by K/3/11th Armored Cavalry Regiment and translated by the Combined Document Exploitation Center, J2, MACV.) Caches are usually well concealed or camouflaged and search operations must be thorough and methodical. (See Fig. 5).

d. Emphasis must be placed on evacuation of rice and other food caches for use by the GVN since evacuation of captured food caches

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## POTTERY WEAPONS CACHE

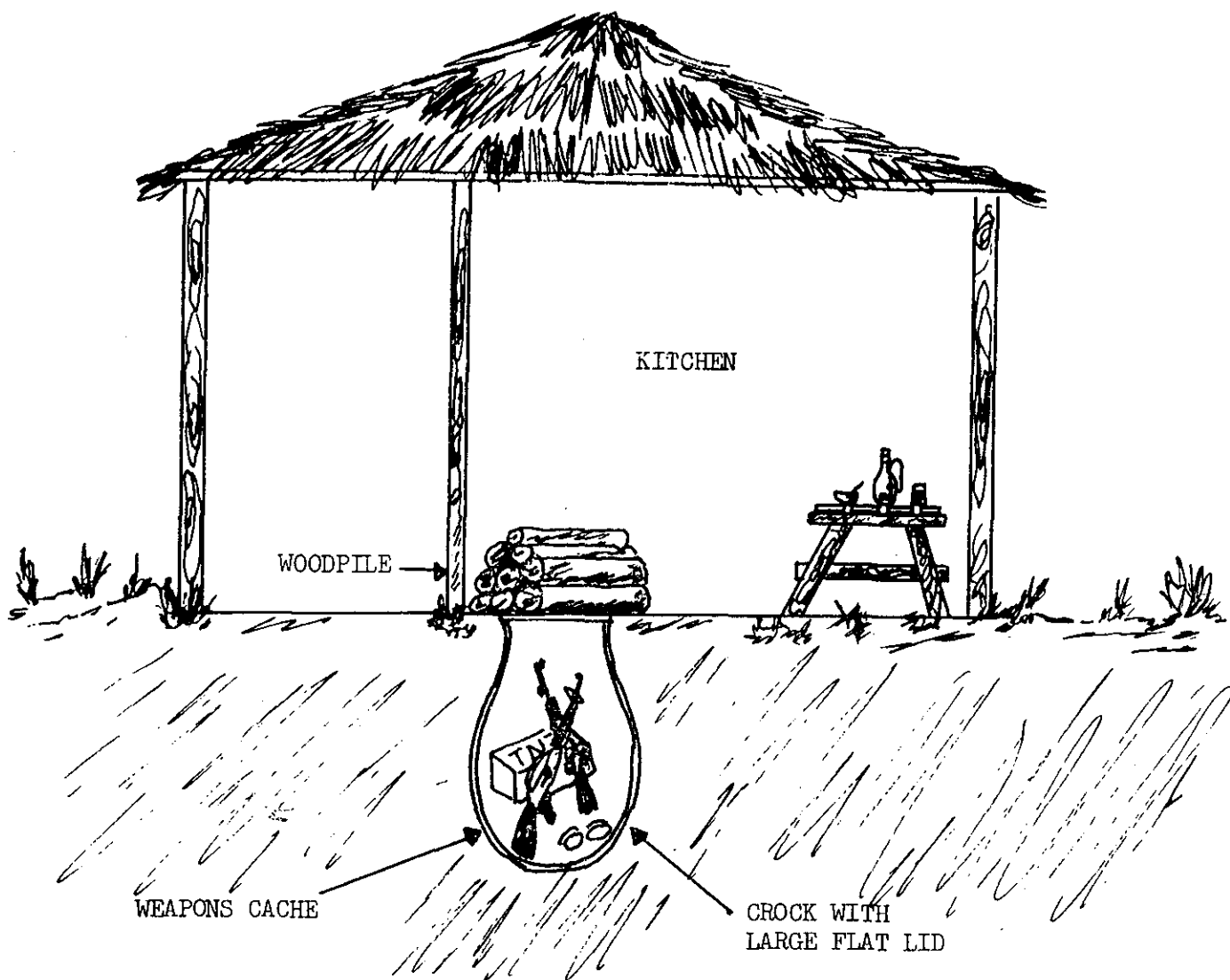


Figure 5

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serves two important purposes. First, it denies the VC a much needed staple and second, it increases the food available to the local populace. However, evacuation is not always feasible due to the remoteness of caches, lack of helicopter or ground transport, and operational considerations which preclude units remaining in the area for an extended period of time. As stated by one commander, "Under some situations, it would be less expensive and more feasible to ship rice from Louisiana than to extract the same amount from the jungle caches." Destruction or denial measures then become necessary to prevent enemy retrieval of this critical resource. The requirement exists for a lightweight and effective system for contaminating or destroying large quantities of rice in a short period of time. The use of chemical contaminants is impractical for political/psychological reasons.

2. (CMHA) LOCATION AND DETECTION OF SUPPLY CACHES:

a. On two occasions during OPERATION MANHATTAN, 1st Infantry Division interrogation of VC PWs led to the capture of two large VC weapons and munitions caches. One of these was the largest discovery of its kind of the Vietnamese war. Two VC officer PWs provided information concerning caches in the division AO. The most significant was located inside a concrete lined warehouse, guarded by a double ring of claymore mines. The caches contained 220 - 7.92 Mauser rifles, 147 Chicom type 53 rifles, 20 VC claymore mines, 500 rifle grenades, 7,500 - 12.7mm AP rounds, 1 BAR (US), 1 VC type 7.62 SMG, 1500 - 60mm mortar rounds, 2,000 - 82mm mortar rounds, 250 radio tubes, 25 - 57mm RR rounds, 25 - 75mm RR rounds; 1600 mortar primers, 71,000 - 7.92 rounds, 231,000 - 7.62mm rounds, 100 lbs. TNT, 200 shoe box mines, 50 US AP mines, 7,800 rounds of .50 caliber ammunition and a number of other items.

b. The 199th Light Infantry Brigade, upon completion of OPERATIONS MANCHESTER, UNIONTOWN/STRIKE and UNIONTOWN I, reported that the VC had ingeniously used "anthills" to provide caches for small arms, munitions, grenades and claymore mines. On numerous occasions, natural anthills were found to be "hollowed out" in a manner not visible from the exterior. Each "hill" housed a cache from which individual defenders could replenish their ammunition stores as they either defended or withdrew. The 1st Infantry Division rendered a similar report upon completion of OPERATION CEDAR FALLS. Their observations were that weapons and munitions caches were generally located in bunkers resembling the anthills that are frequently found in the jungle. The bunkers had two entrances, were not booby trapped, and were located within 75 meters of a trail large enough to allow passage of an ox cart.

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c. Upon completion of OPERATION MAKALAPA, the 1st Brigade, 25th Infantry Division reported that in the PINEAPPLE region (Northern Long An Province) all weapons and ammunition caches were located near canal banks and close to bunker complexes. The storage containers were usually 55 gallon drums or other metal containers buried at ground level with straw or other types of mats for lids. The Brigade also reported that areas which produce large caches of arms, medicine and other important supplies were heavily booby trapped. The booby traps were usually in a circular pattern around the cache and were sometimes marked with crude signs.

d. The 11th Armored Cavalry Regiment reported that during OPERATION CEDAR FALLS any time a flock of small birds had been frightened away by approaching friendly troops, a large rice cache was discovered in the vicinity. Accordingly, any time a flock of birds was noticed, a search for a rice cache followed. It was also noted that intense booby trapping of a particular area was a good indication that valuable stores were hidden nearby.

e. The 173rd Airborne Brigade (Sep) reported, upon completion of OPERATION SIOUX CITY and THE BATTLE FOR DAK TO, that the use of scout dogs at company level aided in discovering enemy caches. However, it was noted that dogs became fatigued and were limited to approximately ten hours of work each day.

3. (CMHA) EXTRACTION AND DESTRUCTION OF CACHES:

a. The 5th Special Forces Group (Airborne), 1st Special Forces, reported that during a three month period when the bulk of the rice harvest had taken place within a province, units conducting combat operations have discovered large numbers of rice caches. Because of distances involved, and the location of these caches, it was difficult to extract or destroy this rice.

b. During OPERATION ATTLEBORO, the 1st Brigade, 1st Infantry Division found that rice located in crudely constructed bins can be effectively scattered by placing 43 pound cratering charges inside the bin and tamping them with loose or bagged rice. To preclude the use of scattered rice by the VC, CS in 8 pound bags was wrapped with one loop of detonating cord, spread over the scattered rice, and detonated. This unit further reported that a fast effective method for destroying bagged rice was to stack the bagged rice in a circular configuration, placing a 43 pound cratering charge in the center and tamping with bagged rice. Thirty to forty 200 kg. bags of rice were destroyed by one charge when using this method. All rice was so effectively scattered that contamination with CS was unnecessary.

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c. The 1st Brigade, 101st Airborne Division reported that VC rice caches, particularly the larger ones of twenty to one hundred tons or more, are often located in inaccessible areas and are extremely difficult to extract. One possible solution is to arrange with the District Chief or Province Chief before an operation begins to have two hundred to three hundred porters under the protection of military forces, available and ready. Evacuation by helicopters has sometimes been accomplished, but the suitability of employing this method to remove large quantities of rice is questionable.

d. Upon completion of OPERATION WHEELER, the 1st Brigade, 101st Airborne Division reported that of the total rice tonnage (198.7 tons) captured by tactical elements of the brigade, 49.6 tons were located in areas that were inaccessible to helicopters or, due to the tactical situation, could not be extracted. This rice was destroyed by engineer and chemical personnel by seeding the caches with CS and then scattering it throughout the area using cratering charges. A total of eight hundred and ninety three pounds of bulk CS powder was utilized in these operations.

e. During OPERATION MALHEUR, an eighty ton rock salt cache was discovered by A Co, 2nd Bn (Airborne), 502nd Infantry. It was not tactically feasible to extract the salt and therefore, it was decided to destroy the salt in place. Twenty, eight pound bags of CS were dispersed throughout the cache and blown simultaneously with a cratering charge, spreading the salt and CS throughout the area. The next day an additional four hundred and eighty pounds of CS was dropped on the cache from the air. A low level flight was made over the area seven days later and the CS concentration was still heavy; there were no signs of activity in the area or that any of the salt had been removed.

f. During OPERATION CEDAR FALLS, the 11th Armored Cavalry Regiment (ACR) captured a considerable quantity of rice from widely dispersed caches in the IRON TRIANGLE. Since the 11th ACR could not extract or evacuate the rice, due to its combat mission, all possible means of evacuation were considered. Consideration was given to the use of surface transportation such as trucking companies. However, at the time there was insufficient transportation available to move the rice. Efforts were made to have the rice transported by the trucks organic to an ARVN Division. Although the request was not denied outright, the Division set a pickup date so far in the future as to be unacceptable. The 11th ACR then appealed to Province. After considerable pressure had been applied through advisory channels, the rice was partially extracted from the 11th ACR centralized collection point.

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g. During OPERATION MASTIFF, the 1st Infantry Division reported that an effective means of destroying rice by burning had been found. Gasoline, diesel oil and unused artillery powder increments were mixed with the rice to insure a hot fire. In this same operation, the 2nd Battalion, 2nd Infantry discovered a 50 ton rice cache which had been booby trapped. This rice was destroyed by pushing it into the Saigon River with a tank dozer. One other 75 ton rice cache was also destroyed by throwing it into the same river. During this same operation, a medical technical intelligence team was attached to the 3rd Brigade to examine and obtain samples of VC medical supplies taken from one of the base camps destroyed in the area. The team later reported that the antibiotics were of a type and brand that could be purchased on the open market in the Republic of Vietnam. The vitamin K (Ampoule K) found at the base camp was manufactured by laboratories TEVETE in Saigon. Large quantities of this item had been reported secretly captured by the VC in several places. The majority of the other drugs found were of the type normally found in VC captured medical supplies. The lot numbers and other information obtained from these medical supplies are of valuable assistance in determining and eliminating sources of supply to the VC.

4. (CMHA) SUMMARY OF SALIENT LESSONS LEARNED WITH RESPECT TO VC SUPPLY CACHES:

a. The use of information provided by PWs and Hoi Chanhhs can materially assist units in locating caches. Information provided by such people must always be considered and, whenever possible, exploited to the utmost.

b. The VC use natural and man made anthills as caches for weapons and munitions.

c. Caches are more easily identified if units recognize the key protective measures used by the VC.

d. Flocks of birds are a frequent indicator of the proximity of rice caches.

e. Analysis of the disposition of booby traps in an area can lead to the discovery of valuable VC stores and material.

f. When searching for caches, operations should be methodical, deliberate and thorough.

g. Operational planning must include methods of extracting rice or destroying it in place.

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h. Rice caches can normally be effectively scattered by the use of cratering charges and effectively contaminated with CS.

i. Rice caches are frequently booby trapped.

j. The VC frequently place grenade type booby traps inside bags of rice. Therefore, all rice bags should be sanitized by EOD and Engineer personnel prior to handling. (See Fig. 6).

k. Engineer bulldozers can be effectively utilized in the destruction/extraction of rice caches by pushing them into rivers or constructing suitable LZs close to the caches to allow evacuation by air.

l. Caches are usually well concealed, located in the proximity of transportation routes, and are not placed in any discernible patterns.

m. Extraction of rice caches are ideal missions for RVNAF's organic transportation units and Province/District Headquarters in carrying out Civic Action Programs.

n. Nipa palm trees have been used by the VC to store equipment. The foliage of these trees offers excellent concealment for caches.

o. Medical supplies should be evacuated through intelligence channels rather than being destroyed in place.

p. The use of probes and mine detectors in locating buried caches has proven to be effective.

## 2 Appendices

1. Translation of a Captured Enemy Document
2. Source Material

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RICE BAG  
BOOBY TRAP

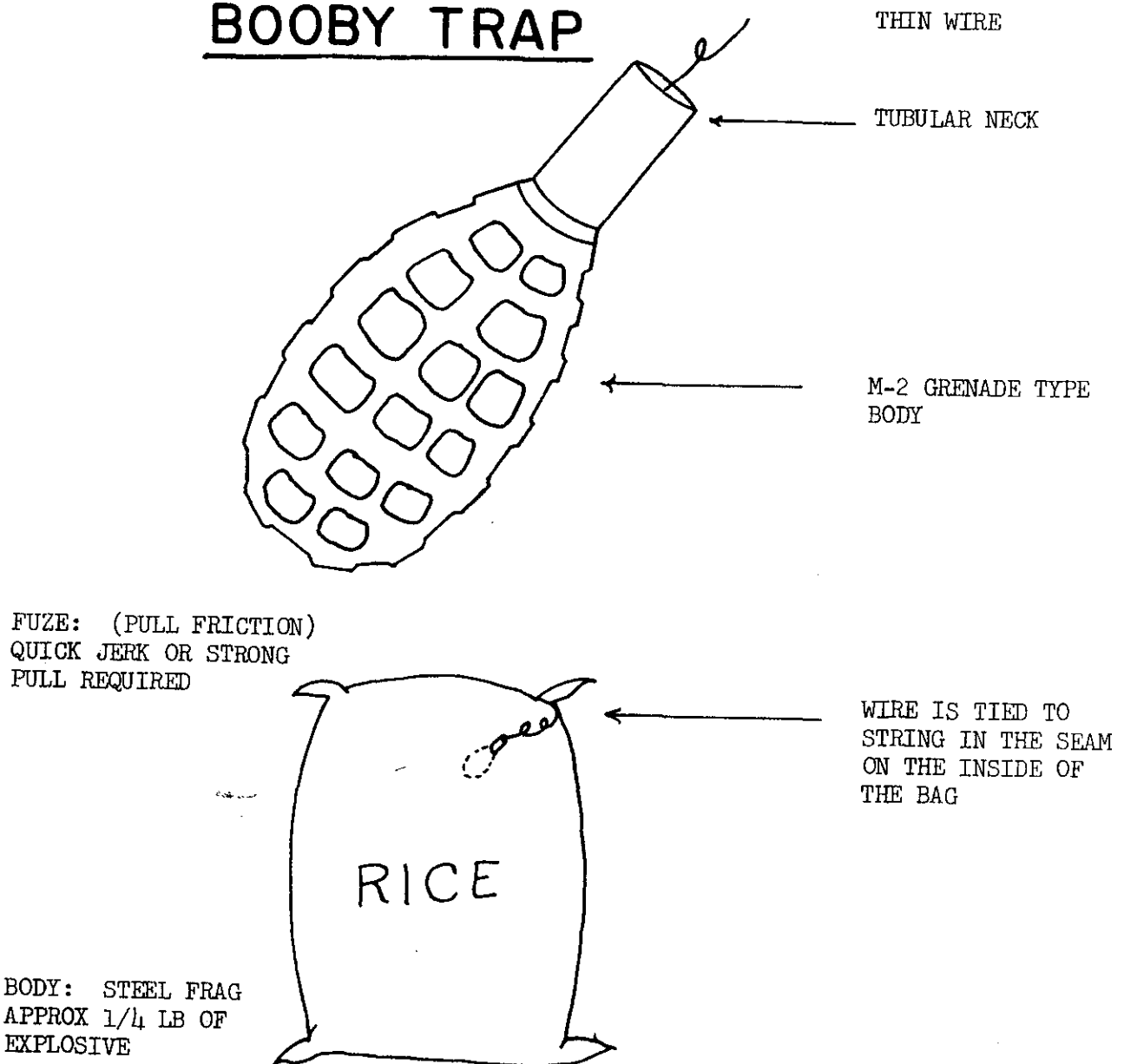


Figure 6

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#06-3913-67

-----FULL TRANSLATION-----

NOTE: This is taken from a copy of a full translation of a captured enemy document. The translation was published by CDEC under Log No. 06-3913-67. Minor editorial changes have been made.

Liberation Army  
Doan 84

No 44/cv "DETERMINED TO FIGHT AND DEFEAT US AGGRESSORS"

-----oOo-----

TO: Subordinates: K., K2., K3., K7., C200. (Doan = Group; K = District; C = Company).

According to the agreement signed between Doan 84 and the local forward supply council; Doan 84 was to secure and store all supplies required for 1966 before August 1966. This agreement was sent to the various K (District). Now, we wish to remind you of building storehouses:

1. Based on the criteria of your branch, you should draft a specific plan for construction of various storage and issue sites.
2. You should use the requirements to calculate and estimate the materials and instruments needed for building the storages. The Group will study the estimate and approve the amount of money to be expended. At the same time, you must try by all means to purchase the necessary materials in advance in order to satisfy the immediate needs of holding the supplies.
3. During the rainy season, the provisions must be kept in high and dry places in order to prevent damage by termites and rain. Store keepers must kill termites, sweep the store, and repair leaks in the roof. The maintenance task must be looked after.
4. Following the construction of the storages, their defense must be rapidly set up to include: making fences, camouflaging, digging spike pits and laying minefields. Although temporary, the storages should be well camouflaged.

According to the criteria, each K (District) must have many caches which can accommodate assorted goods. The method of construction should be carefully and scientifically studied. The caches must be

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appropriate to the goods. For example:

- Salt caches must be built underground. The floor should be lined with nylon sheets or straw.

- Only a small amount of salt should be stocked in the above ground storages.

- Salt fish should be kept in wooden airtight barrels set on stilts. They should be shaded with a roof.

- Rice depots: Cache frames must be set on stilts.

- Clothing equipment storage: High, floored and with safe roof. This storage must be covered with curtains to shield light. Next to these curtains should be a layer of nylon or thatch used to prevent rain damage. Equipment must be set on the stilts. The blind must be tight so that mice cannot creep into the storage.

- Gasoline must be kept in cellars.

- Drug storages must be built as carefully as rice depots. Drugs should be set on a high and dry place.

Due to the great number of storages, the maintenance of storages must be concentrated. Ks (Districts):

- Know the number of storages, and the goods held in each store.

- Make a clear register in order to control issues and receipts.

- Unit leaders must control their storages and provide guidance for the cells.

Requisition and purchasing, transportation, and storage are three important tasks. Especially, in the storage task, the maintenance of goods is most important.

In the past, transportation was carried out well, but maintenance was still deficient.

You should try to step up this task because in the near future, provisions will be continuously sent to your unit in large quantity.

12 May 1966

Commander of Doan 84

/s/ NGUYEN VAN HUE

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Method of preventing damage by termites:

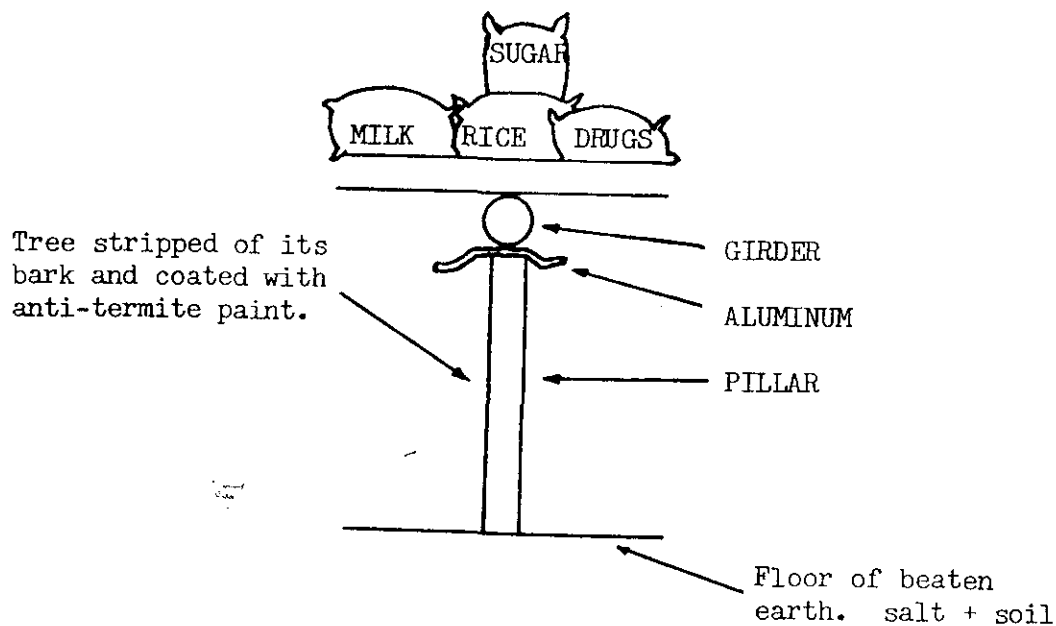
In the maintenance task, some places applied an anti-termite method by using an aluminum plate. This method obtained favorable results. Now, we disseminate it to you for study and use:

-Bury the pillar in the soil (soil mixed with salt).

-Put the aluminum plate on the end of the pillar. The perimeter of the plate must be at least two times larger than the pillar.

-Set a girder on the plate.

Thus, when climbing up to the plate, the termites can not reach the girder, and must climb down.



-----END OF TRANSLATION-----

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29. 1st Brigade, 101st Airborne Division, Combat Operations After Action Report, 11 September 1967.
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35. 4th Infantry Division, Combat Operations After Action Report, 16 December 1967.

36. 1st Australian Task Force, Vietnam, Combat Operations After Action Report, 19 December 1967.

37. 1st Brigade, 25th Infantry Division, Combat Operations After Action Report, 28 December 1967.

38. 5th Special Forces Group (Airborne) Operational Report for Quarterly Period Ending 31 January 1968.

39. 199th Light Infantry Brigade (Sep), Combat Operations After Action Report, 8 February 1968.

40. 3rd Squadron, 17th Cavalry (-), Combat Operations After Action Report, 20 March 1968.

41. CICV Study, ST 68-09, Logistics Fact Book, 14 April 1968.

42. 5th Special Forces Group (Airborne), Lessons Learned, 20 April 1968.

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Chief, US Naval Adv Gp;  
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Corps (1 to each Sr Adv  
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| 2 - President, Naval War College | 1 - JCB Library, USMC             |
| 5 - COMDT, USAINTS               | 1 - FTD (TDB)                     |
| 5 - COMDT, USAARMS               | 1 - USA Combat Dev Com            |

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| 6             | 11 Apr 62   | Operations in Phuoc Thanh Sector to Relocate Civilians  |
| 7             | 18 Apr 62   | Operation DAN TIEN VIII                                 |
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| 52 | 22 Nov 65 | Operational Employment of the Mity Mite Portable Blower |
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