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OPERATIONS OF THE III CORPS RANGER GROUP (ARVN), IN A SEARCH AND DESTROY MISSION (OPERATION TOLEDO) WHILE OPCON TO THE 173D AIRBORNE BRIGADE, ON 14 AUGUST - 1 SEPTEMBER 1966, IN LONG KHAN, PHUOC TUY PROVINCE, REPUBLIC OF VIETNAM. (PERSONAL EXPERIENCE OF A RANGER GROUP STAFF ADVISOR.) (U)

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SCOPE

This monograph describes the participation of the III Corps Ranger Group Task Force, consisting of the 33d and 35th Ranger Battalions, during Operation TOLEDO. It is a descriptive account of the unusual actions and problems encountered by Vietnamese Rangers and their advisors while under operational control (OPCON) of an American parent unit, the 173d Airborne Brigade.

INTRODUCTION

There is a portion of Phouc Tuy Province in Vietnam notoriously known as the Mao Tao Secret Zone which had never before been penetrated by American forces. (See Figures 1 and 2) The area was believed to contain elements of two Viet Cong (VC) main force regiments. This area plagued the intelligence officers at II Field Force Headquarters in Long Binh, III Corps, and beckoned the general's staff to take action, to send the first allied units into the "secret zone" and to disclose the identity of the VC and their clandestine bases.

The 173d Airborne Brigade was selected to conduct the search and destroy operation, commencing 14 August 1966. The brigade had acquired a long and impressive list of accomplishments since its arrival as the first American army unit in Vietnam. Headquarters II Field Force, in an unprecedented decision, also directed that the 173d be augmented by Vietnamese Rangers and that the Rangers were to be under operational control of the 173d commander, Brigadier General Paul F. Smith.

Vietnamese units had previously been attached to American combat units in combined operations, but the Vietnamese retained their own controlling headquarters and operated under the orders of their own Vietnamese commander. Never before had a Vietnamese unit been completely under the operational control of a U. S. Army unit. The operation was somewhat of an experiment. If the OPCON idea proved successful, it could serve as a basis for conducting similar future operations with Vietnamese and Americans fighting together in a truly united and singularly directed effort.

The III Corps Ranger Group, normally used as the Corps reaction force, consisting of the 33d and 35th Ranger battalions (ARVN), was selected to fulfill the requirement. The two Ranger battalions had an enviable reputation for battlefield excellence. They were respected and highly recommended by the III Corps Senior Advisor.

173D AIRBORNE BRIGADE PLAN

Operation TOLEDO was directed at locating and destroying VC and NVA forces and installations in the Mao Tao Secret Zone in Long Khanh, Binh Tuy and Phuoc Tuy Provinces. (See Figures 1 and 2) To accomplish this mission, General Smith utilized a task organization consisting of three maneuver battalions, a task force of forty pieces of supporting artillery, mostly 105mm (Tow), and a task force of two Vietnamese Ranger battalions. The two augmented Ranger battalions operated under their usual headquarters, III Corps

Ranger Group. The group was designated "Task Force Ranger," with a combined strength slightly larger than that of a full strength U. S. Infantry battalion. All orders came from the 173d, through the Task Force Headquarters, to the two battalions.

The operation was to commence initially with three battalions of the 173d and Task Force Ranger conducting search and destroy operations within their designated areas of operation (AO). Each battalion and the Ranger Task Force would be given specific AO's to search. (See Map "A") After a thorough search of the first AO, each battalion would conduct an air assault into a new AO. (See Map "B") It was envisioned that this search and destroy process would continue until the entire "Secret Zone" had been completely searched. (See Figure 2)

THE EXISTING SITUATION

The 1st Australian Task Force was already conducting Operation TOLEDO prior to the commitment of the 173d and the Rangers. The Australians made heavy contact with an estimated one to two reinforced VC battalions. This clash resulted in 245 VC KIA, body count. The enemy force was determined to be elements of the 275th VC Regiment and 860th Local Force Battalion, reportedly on their way to attack the 1st Australian Task Force base camp. With indications that the remnants of these two enemy regiments could be trapped following the Australian encounter, Operation TOLEDO shifted to the south and east. A VC rallier, Mr. Ho

(not his real name), a high ranking officer of a VC division, provided detailed information about base and logistical installations and the two VC regiments. This information was passed to the 173d. At this time, the 173d was incorporated into Operation TOLEDO. Their primary mission was directed toward finding the VC and the installations that Mr. Ho had disclosed.

The climate within the AO was typical of tropical zones affected by monsoons. Winds were gentle to moderate, with strong gusts during rainstorms. Rainfall was normal for August, occurring mainly during the late afternoon. Visibility was generally good, except for early morning fog which usually dissipated by 0800 hours.

The terrain is characterized by steep mountains (some of the very few in III Corps), dense jungles, and surrounding, rolling hills. (See Figure 8) Much of the area consisted of double canopy jungle of fifty to sixty feet of overhead foliage. A portion of the AO included rubber plantations.

Although it was not known at the inception of the planning, the area was literally infested with malaria-bearing mosquitoes. This hazard later proved costly in terms of casualties to both sides.

THE RANGER GROUP PLAN

On 12 August 1966, the advisors of III Corps Ranger Group were called to receive an operations order from the headquarters of the 173d Airborne Brigade. Meanwhile, their Vietnamese counterparts

were summoned by the III Corps G-3 to receive the order attaching them to the 173d for an extended operation, probably not to exceed ten or twelve days, beginning 14 August 1966. The advisors received the written order from General Smith's staff and were given maps and coordinating guidance to initiate the operation. The 173d requested the necessary helicopters, to transport the two Ranger battalions, and the preliminary meeting adjourned.

When the advisors returned from the 173d briefing, they were met by their enthusiastic counterparts, anxious to hear the details of the plan, for this was their first American controlled mission. It was an unusual switch in advisor-counterpart relationships. As the S-3 Advisor to the Ranger Task Force, I recognized the opportunity to prepare a complete operation order in correct format with the assistance of my Vietnamese counterpart, the Ranger Group S-3. The united effort became an excellent vehicle in teaching him the proper preparation of an operation order. We worked closely in finalizing the order, using the 173d Airborne Brigade order as our format. We spent the good part of the day translating the order and rewriting it for the Ranger Task Force. Basically, the order delineated our responsibilities in relation to the 173d, the air movement to the first AO, and a phasing of the impending operation. The order also included a map of the initial area of operation. (See Map "A")

The following day the Vietnamese commander presented his order to Captain Hoa, 35th Ranger Battalion Commander, and Captain Van, 33d Ranger Battalion Commander. Meanwhile, I gave the same order to the advisors of both battalions, Captain Donald Soland, 35th Ranger Battalion, and Captain Stanley Shanyfelt, 33d Ranger Battalion. The order stated that after the two battalions reached the staging area in An Loc near Xuan Loc, they were to be airlifted to landing zone, LZ YANKEE (YS756985), where they would commence their search and destroy operation. (See Map "A") During this same period, the Task Force Headquarters would be flown to position GRANADA. (See Map "A")

The ground maneuver plan was simple. After the heliborne assault the two battalions would move abreast, 35th on the left, 33d on the right, searching as they moved toward their "objectives." (See Map "A") These were simply "goose eggs" specifically designated by my counterpart as control measures to keep the battalions moving in the desired direction. They were by no means to be misconstrued as our sole objectives. The battalions of the 173d searched their AO's in much the same fashion.

The plan generally won the approval of the Rangers. There was, however, a certain skepticism on the part of the Ranger Group Task Force Commander, Major Hoa, who predicated there would be little contact in the assigned AO. I asked him why he felt as he did.

He replied, "No VC in that area now." When asked to explain further, he mentioned that he believed that because the forward command post of the 173d had already entered the area and artillery had been flown in one day ahead of the maneuver battalions, the VC would have had ample time to vacate the area.

RANGERS' PREPARATION

The base camp of the two Ranger battalions was located in Bien Hoa. The Rangers purchased their foodstuffs there for the first six days of the operation. The battalions were capable of sustained operations, up to six days, with their initial food supply. Each man carried his own six-day supply of rations. It was not a large or burdensome load, as would be the case if a GI were to carry six days of rations in addition to his other paraphernalia.

It should be remembered that the Vietnamese diet consists mainly of rice as its staple. A few pounds of rice, carried in a sock or plastic bag, a little dried fish, fresh vegetables, and some cooked meat, are usually all that is necessary to sustain a Vietnamese Ranger for almost one week. He must, however, receive a resupply of fresh meat and vegetables at the end of this period.

Resupply planning included provisions for purchasing food from the local economy. There would be no villages in the operation area where the soldiers could buy their own food. The battalion S-4's would

purchase the food for them. The cost of the food would simply be deducted from the Rangers' monthly food allowance.

A basic load of ammunition, similar to a U. S. basic load, would accompany the Rangers into the LZ. Double loads of ammunition were sent by vehicle to Xuan Loc, the Brigade Trains area. All resupplies were planned to be airlifted to the Rangers on a scheduled and as-needed basis. Other planning, such as troop ground movement, actions on the LZ, and searching procedures, was carried out routinely. The Rangers had years of experience in these search and destroy operations. All that remained to be done was for each individual to prepare his own equipment and arrive at Ranger Group Headquarters on time to board their transportation.

Each platoon leader gave his platoon a briefing as to what was expected of each soldier and reminded him that he would be supported by Americans. This, of course, meant prompt medical evacuation. It was as if the Rangers were being psychologically prepared for the ensuing operation. It appeared that they liked the idea of being attached to the 173d Airborne Brigade.

NARRATION

Since the intention of this monograph is to emphasize the peculiarities encountered while under an OPCON environment, the following descriptive account of daily activities will be primarily directed toward

specific events relative to the relationship between the Rangers and the 173d Airborne Brigade. The narration will follow a chronological sequence beginning with the first day the Rangers entered the operation, 14 August 1966, and continuing until their release from OPCON, 1 September 1966. Those days that are omitted are done so deliberately so as not to bore the reader with insignificant events, unrelated to the main topic of this study.

A POOR START (14 AUGUST)

(C) Early in the morning of 14 August 1966, the Rangers stood by to load their trucks, when word was received from III Corps to hold the truck convoy. The Rangers were to be transported by truck from Bien Hoa to a grass airfield in An Loc near Xuan Loc. (See Figures 3 and 4) The highway from Bien Hoa to An Loc was supposed to be secured by troops from the 10th Division (ARVN). Coordination with the 10th Division, later redesignated the 18th Division because of the "number ten" connotation, was the responsibility of III Corps Headquarters. The necessity to insure that the road be secured by 0530 hours was somehow overlooked. Elements of the 10th Division finally declared the road cleared at 0730 hours.

The advisors were understandably anxious. This was their first OPCON mission and already a "fowl-up" had occurred. Station time had to be postponed. Forty helicopters averted their scheduled landing at An Loc and returned to Xuan Loc for refueling. Eventually, the two battalions arrived at the pickup

zone and awaited the return of the helicopters. Meanwhile, their trucks returned to Bien Hoa, unescorted.

The old French airstrip at An Loc, located in the middle of a rubber plantation, provided an excellent marshalling and pickup area. (See Figure 3) Unexpected by the advisors, American Pathfinders arrived at the airstrip to insure an orderly loading of the helicopters. Heretofore, the Rangers and their advisors had always accomplished their own loading. When the Pathfinders began grabbing Vietnamese soldiers by their arms, leading them to precise, seven-man lines, confusion and resentment arose. The Pathfinders were sure that the Vietnamese would "screw the whole works up" and that the "little bastards did not know anything."

The helicopters came again and, as the Vietnamese officers expected, some helicopters carried seven, others six or eight. Those straight lines, so fervently requested by the Pathfinders, turned into a force of scurrying Rangers, running around seeking space on an overloaded helicopter. The first lift took off with six empty helicopters. Time scheduling was important to Americans, but to the Vietnamese the mission had already been delayed for more than two hours, so what was wrong with another two minutes? The confusion finally came to an end when the advisors intervened and rid the area of all Pathfinders and organized the remaining lifts with the aid of their counterparts. (See Figure 4)

After four lifts of twenty helicopters each, the Rangers were on their way toward their first objective, LZ YANKEE (YS756985). Miraculously, only sixteen men were left behind. A special lift later deposited these poor soles on the wrong LZ.

The Ranger Group Task Force Headquarters, including myself, flew to Position CASTILE (YTG28112), to meet with General Smith and his staff. (See Figures 5 and 6) Our arrival was marred by a rude sergeant, obviously unaware that the Vietnamese were attached to the 173d for the operation. He stopped the Ranger Commander and me at the entrance to the TOC and said indignantly, "Sir, they can not come in here." My counterpart understood English and sensed the implication of the sergeant's words. My embarrassment turned to anger and the ensuing verbal exchange was nothing akin to a polite greeting of professional soldiers. Fortunately, General Smith arrived following the incident and extended his welcome to the Vietnamese Commander, Major Hoa. The General sensed the importance of reestablishing rapport and personally conducted Major Hoa on a tour of the TOC tent, introducing him to his staff. The two officers expressed a mutual respect for each other, a respect that continued throughout the operation.

DISREGARDED INFORMATION (14-16 AUGUST)

At 1000 hours, 14 August, the two Ranger battalions completed the planned air assault on LZ YANKEE without contact. (See Figure 7) They moved south on parallel axes of advance within AO-3. The movement to the

"goose egg" objective began. This was to be the pattern of events for the rest of the day and the next. (See Map "A") The Ranger battalions moved slowly compared to the Americans. Each battalion took ample time to conduct small saturation patrols. This searching procedure, by necessity, required that the main body of the battalion move slowly while small squad and platoon sized patrolling continued around them.

As the sun rose on the morning of the sixteenth, the first significant contact of the operation was made by the 35th Ranger battalion with an unknown number of VC, resulting in two VC killed and, most important, seven North Vietnamese captured. An initial interrogation revealed that the prisoners had recently entered South Vietnam and that nearly half of their unit was suffering from malaria. All seven were junior officers and victims of malaria. They offered little resistance to being captured. The Rangers also found several maps and overlays of enemy base camps which were extracted from documents the men carried. These were forwarded to the 172d Military Intelligence Detachment for immediate investigation. A battalion-sized attack plan for an LZ, not far from the area of operations, with an alternate plan for a road ambush was also forwarded. The North Vietnamese officers told of a rendezvous they were to make within twenty-four hours. They spoke of the horrors of experiencing U. S. B-52 bomb strikes. Between the bombing and the malaria, their numbers had been

reduced to an effective fighting strength of only fifty percent.

All of the information was forwarded to the 173d Brigade S-2. If the information they gathered was to be exploited, they would have to react rapidly, certainly within the next twenty-four hours. They knew the probable location of the rendezvous and that the North Vietnamese Army (NVA) unit was quickly enfiltrating the area of operation in small groups of five to ten men each. Nevertheless, for some reason a plan to react was not developed and an order to pursue was not given. Instead, the operation continued as planned, continuing on to the next "goose egg" and the next, irregardless of the fact that the NVA unit the brigade sought was no longer in the area.

SLIM PICKINS (17-22 AUGUST)

Task Force Ranger continued its search and destroy operation within the AO-3. They had several small and brief encounters with the enemy, but few casualties occurred on either side. However, they captured a considerable amount of supplies and foodstuffs by thoroughly searching the few small hamlets that were scattered throughout the area. Almost without exception, the Rangers received sniper fire from these small hamlets. The response by the Rangers was always the same. They searched the huts and left them in ashes. This procedure netted over three hundred tons of rice, miscellaneous supplies, documents, a few weapons, mines, and grenades. Usually, the rice and ammunition and anything of intelligence value, were confiscated. The rest was destroyed.

The systematic burning was condoned and encouraged for several practical reasons. Firstly, the entire area had long been a VC stronghold. All peasants living in the AO had been warned repeatedly that the area was considered hostile and that all persons should leave the area or suffer persecution. Secondly, when hostile fire was encountered from the huts, it was assumed that the hamlet was harboring insurgents. Villagers fled from the hamlets with their soldier-husbands when government troops entered the area. Thirdly, the order to burn the hamlet was solely a Vietnamese decision, agreed to by the local district chiefs.

As the operation progressed into the second week, it became apparent that the systematic, slow search technique of the Rangers was beginning to show dividends. They had already killed and captured more of the enemy, seized and destroyed more weapons and supplies than the combined efforts of all three American battalions.

By 22 August, the Ranger Task Force had returned to LZ YANKEE and was airlifted back to the LZ at An Loc. Here they were resupplied with fresh foodstuffs and given a much deserved rest for the night. The Rangers had been operating in the thick brush for two weeks. They were not used to these comparatively long operations. Their own Vietnamese controlled ventures seldom lasted longer than three to six days. The Rangers were weary, footsore, and in need of fresh food. They had not forgotten what their commanders had said, "We will be back in Bien Hoa in about ten days." To make matters worse, An Loc was

situated on Highway 1, only two hours by bus from their home station, Bien Hoa.

While the Rangers were relaxing at the An Loc rubber plantation, word was received that they would would be airlifted to a new area of operations so that they might conduct another search and destroy operation, this time in AO-10. (See Map "B") Replacements were brought in and plans were made for the following morning's air assault. With this turn of events, several of the Rangers went A.W.O.L. It was ironic that the seventy replacements received that afternoon just about covered the number of A.W.O.L.'s.

MUTINY (23-30 AUGUST)

On 23 August, the Task Force entered the new AO by helicopter, at LZ RED, with no contact. (See Map "B") The evening of 23 August brought a rude awakening shortly after dusk. An Air Force forward air control pilot spotted what he believed to be several VC campfires. Without coordinating with the 173d Airborne Brigade Tactical Operations Center (TOC), he directed his on-station jets to attack the target with 250 pound bombs and napalm. What he did not realize was that the "VC campfires" were actually the cooking fires of the 33d Ranger Battalion preparing their evening meal. The jets swooped down on the unwarned Rangers and delivered four 250-pound bombs and two tanks of napalm before the Ranger advisor could contact the pilot and frantically call off the strike.

"How was my strike?" asked the Forward Air Controller (FAC), expecting the Ranger advisor to access the "VC damage."

"You just dropped the whole load on my headquarters," replied Captain Stanley Shanyfelt, the Battalion Advisor.

"Oh my God."

Upon investigation it was found that the pilot had not bothered to check where the "friendlies" were located. Fortunately, three of the bombs were duds. One exploded beyond the camp, and the napalm tumbled over the heads of the horrified Vietnamese and their advisors. Miraculously, only four men were slightly wounded.

That evening the Rangers were understandably nervous. Harrassing and interdictory fires from an American 175mm gun were being fired in support of the 35th Ranger Battalion, located some three kilometers to the southwest. (See Map "B") The rounds fell more than two thousand meters from the 33d Ranger Battalion, but that meant little to the Rangers who were already frightened. The rounds sounded closer as the noise echoed through the jungle. The firing was halted at the insistence of the 33d Ranger Battalion Commander.

The following morning as the soldiers were preparing to break camp, a F-104 pilot flew low over their position, turning on his afterburner as he did so. The incident was completely coincidental, nevertheless, the Rangers were nearly scared out of their pants, breaking and running for the nearest cover. It was not a deliberate attempt on the part of the pilot to scare the soldiers. He was merely checking the area, but it was rather difficult to convince the Rangers of that.

After two more days of walking, searching, and burning huts, the spunky little soldiers of the 33d Ranger Battalion were getting tired, angry and, in general, were feeling sorry for themselves. An undercurrent of dissension was building within the ranks, especially among the younger officers. Soldiers were beginning to complain about their sore feet, empty stomachs, and paining heads. The advisors were being given disdainful looks and the attached American artillery FO's were being blamed for the air strikes and loud artillery.

The situation reached serious proportions when three officers, representing the soldiers, told their commander that they absolutely would not walk any further and that the men wanted to return to An Loc.

The commander and his advisors attempted to alleviate the tense atmosphere by calling for medical assistance to attend the various ills of the Rangers. Several soldiers were indeed ill and suffered from blisters and trenchfoot. These men were promptly evacuated. Their evacuation only served to worsen the situation. As the others witnessed their buddies being evacuated, they feigned illness in an attempt to be evacuated.

By nightfall, 26 August, one hundred Rangers complained of illness, using a real or imaginary excuse to be evacuated by helicopter. It should be explained that at this time scores of Rangers from both battalions had progressed to the recognition stage of malaria which they had earlier contacted. Only a handful actually were diagnosed as malaria casualties. The rest were, at that moment, unaware

they had the disease. Within three to seven days later, ninety-two Rangers were hospitalized with malaria, six of whom died.

The mutinous situation reached serious proportions when Captain Shanyfelt was told by his close friend and counterpart, Major Van, that the officers and men of his battalion were demanding that they be returned to An Loc and that he could no longer guarantee the safety of the four American advisors.

Captain Shanyfelt very wisely requested that he and his team be airlifted out of the area. His request was approved and a helicopter was dispatched to extract the team. If the team received fire from the Vietnamese, the door gunners were ordered to return the fire with their machineguns. Fortunately, the team was not hindered and they left the area and the mutinous Rangers behind. This action, of course, meant that the Ranger Battalion was now left solely on its own, with absolutely no air, artillery, or logistical support. Without American assistance, they were in a vulnerable position.

The problem was later resolved by a visit to the battalion by the III Corps Commander, Major General Khan. After a good deal of personal psychology and persuasion on the part of General Khan, the Vietnamese agreed to continue their mission and to reinstate their American advisors. The mutiny was quelled and events were back to normal, at least for a while.

The Rangers were also offered American "C" rations for the remainder of the operation. This single act seemed to lift their spirits considerably. They ate all

their stomachs could hold.

COORDINATION (31 AUGUST - 1 SEPTEMBER)

Operation TOLEDO, in respect to the Ranger Task Force, was characterized by aggressive and fruitful searching but seldom did a day go by without a few problems. Most of these problems were closely associated with coordination. A notable example occurred on 31 August. The 35th Ranger Battalion was ordered by the 173d Headquarters to conduct a road-clearing operation of Highway 2 from Ngai Geao, north to an airstrip at Xe Cam My. (See Map "B") This was to be their last operation prior to being released from OPCON. As the battalion began the search, they encountered "enemy activity" approximately three kilometers north of Op Ngai Geao. Before fire could be exchanged, the Ranger Task Force Headquarters checked to see if, by chance, an American unit could possibly have been located in the wrong area of operations.

"Don't fire!", was the reply of the 173d Tactical Operations Center. "That is one of our artillery batteries."

Through the grace of God no one was injured. What could have been a disastrous friendly engagement was luckily avoided.

The Ranger Task Force was released from OPCON of the 173d Airborne Brigade at 0800 hours, 1 September 1966. Transportation from Xuan Loc to Bien Hoa had not been definitely prearranged; but after several hours of waiting, aircraft, personally requested by Brigadier General Knowles of II Field Force, arrived to transport the weary Rangers home.

The organic battalions of the 173d continued Operation TOLEDO for another week with comparatively insignificant contact. The operation terminated with the return of the brigade to Bien Hoa on 7 September 1966.

RESULTS

Operation TOLEDO was directed toward locating and destroying VC/NVA units in the Mao Tao Secret Zone. The introduction of the 173d Airborne Brigade and the Ranger Task Force probably disrupted the plans and movements of VC/NVA units in and around the AO. The VC in the area generally elected not to fight. Of the ninety-five contacts, thirty-six were made by the Rangers. None were with elements larger than a VC platoon. In every case, the VC fled after initial contact.

Extensive use of air strikes and artillery forced the VC to abandon several base camps and storage areas, leaving behind large quantities of equipment, weapons, and foodstuffs. Probably the most significant aspect of Operation TOLEDO was the capture of food and materials.

The statistical results of Operation TOLEDO serve to emphasize the significant contribution the Vietnamese Rangers made to the success of the search and destroy operation. A comparison of the results of the three American battalions and the Ranger Task Force, indicated that the Rangers accomplished their duties well. In fact, they even surpassed the Airborne soldiers in many areas in spite of their considerably smaller force.

1. Personnel Losses: (C) (Friendly)

	US	ARVN Rangers
KIA	7	2
WIA	45	11
MIA	0	0
Non battle dead	4 (helicopter crash)	6 (malaria)
Non battle injured	23	13

2. Equipment Lost or Destroyed: (Friendly) (C)

Trucks, various	6	0
Radios, various	6	0

3. VC/NVA Forces (Losses)

Personnel:

KIA (body count)	3	5
KIA (possible)	1	0
VCC	3	8 (6 officers, NVA)
VCS	61	19
Weapons (various):	35	7
Ammunition (various):	128,000 rds	2,000 rds

Foodstuffs:

Polished rice (tons)	11.7	34
Paddy rice (tons)	.5	289.3
Wheat (pounds)	0	50
Salt (tons)	0	6.6
Peanuts (large bags)	0	10
Sugar (tons)	0	2.5
Cooking oil (gallons)	0	2
Tea (large bags)	0	100
Nuc Mam (bags)	0	130
Oxen	0	4

Installations:	US	ARVN Rangers
Base Camps	9	1
Huts	75	100
Tunnel Systems	5	5

A few days after the 173d Airborne Brigade returned to Bien Hoa, a small ceremony was held by General Smith honoring the Vietnamese Rangers for their participation in Operation TOLEDO. General Smith was also presented a small plaque by the Ranger Task Force Commander. General Smith had prepared for the occasion; and he, in turn, presented Major Hoa with a plaque and extended his appreciation and congratulations to the assembled Rangers. He expressed his desire that they might fight the VC together again in the future.

The General's considerate act of appreciation has not been forgotten. His bronze plaque still stands on the desk of the III Corps Ranger Group Commander as a memento to the mutual venture.

ANALYSIS AND CRITICISM

1. Task Organization

The two augmented Ranger battalions were ideally suited for Task Force organization. Each battalion had, in addition to its own staff and headquarters company, the necessary support to conduct sustained operations. This support was provided by the Ranger Task Force Headquarters. The Task Force Headquarters was augmented by III Corps units to include a communications platoon, engineer platoon, corps surgeon, attached medics, and artillery forward observers. All of these elements, with the exception of the extra medics and FO's, were in general support (GS) of the two battalions. The combined strength

of the supporting units was approximately 120 men.

The important point here is that a Ranger Task Force has most everything it needs when it is attached under operational control of an American unit. However, they are dependent upon American helicopters for resupply. Additionally, the 173d Airborne Brigade provided medical evacuation, artillery fires, and psychological warfare support. All of these things are within the capability of the Ranger Task organization, but they are better provided by Americans, as was the case during Operation TOLEDO. The Rangers were not a logistical burden to the Americans.

2. Operations Order

The Rangers seldom prepared a complete, formal operations order. Receiving a completed order from the Americans was an enlightening experience. However, the order had not been translated and a considerable waste of time was necessary to rewrite the order in Vietnamese. The Airborne Brigade has organic translators and is equipped to translate lengthy documents. The order should have been translated prior to presenting it to the Vietnamese.

The very fact that the Rangers received an order from Americans insured that the operation was thoroughly planned and that very little coordination and support was left to chance. Usually, the Rangers were prone to improvise and short cut whenever it was possible; consequently many operations were not adequately prepared in advance.

3. Providing Rangers with "C" Rations

As the operation progressed into its second week, the idea of using "C" rations became far more economical and practical than the usual aerial re-supply of live chickens, fresh vegetables, dried fish, and fowl-smelling nuc mam, a particular disgust to pilots. The Rangers, being OPCON to the 173d, could have received "C" rations exactly like the GI's. This was done later in the operation with varied reaction. Most of the Vietnamese preferred the "C" rations, especially since they did not have to pay for the food. To others, apparently the change to the rich American diet, although tasty, was the primary cause for an outbreak of diarrhea.

4. Use Of Pathfinders

The Rangers were not aware that the 173d was going to provide Pathfinders on the helicopter pickup zone (PZ) at An Loc. The Pathfinder team was not familiar with the Vietnamese or their language. They pushed and shoved the Vietnamese and cursed and yelled at them, all to no avail. The Ranger advisors, on the other hand, were experienced in heliborne operations with the Rangers and knew equally well how to organize PZ's. Advisors always explained the plan for pickup to their counterparts and then stepped back and advised and assisted their counterparts in the organization of the PZ. This arrangement allowed for considerably less confusion and animosity, and seldom did it fail to be successful. The Pathfinders were primarily responsible for the mass confusion at the An Loc PZ which was not resolved until the advisors

forcefully stepped in and assumed the responsibility. Figure 4 shows graphically how well the Rangers organized the PZ when they accomplished the task themselves, with a minimum of advisor guidance and with no assistance from Pathfinders.

5. Rapport

The confrontation between the 173d Airborne Brigade sergeant at the TOC tent and the Vietnamese major could have seriously impaired the cooperation of the Vietnamese had not General Smith intervened, recognized the implications, and corrected the poor first impression. The soldier should have been informed that the Rangers were going to be attached to their Airborne Brigade. They could have been encouraged to establish a friendly and helpful atmosphere whenever they encountered the Rangers or their officers. Very few Americans acknowledged the Ranger officers with the usual customary courtesies, such as a salute or a respectful "sir." The superiors, not the soldiers, were to be blamed for not briefing their men on the recognition of Vietnamese ranks and on the importance of military courtesy toward allies. Initial rapport and good impressions are serious considerations when working with Vietnamese Rangers.

6. Reaction to Intelligence

Probably the most discouraging event during the entire operation was the fact that intelligence information gained by the Rangers from captured North Vietnamese officers was not exploited. Maps, documents, and verbal statements, all correlated to indicate the exact area where the enemy would rendezvous. The information was

fresh, substantiated and reliable. Furthermore, the information was confirmed by the advisors. Nevertheless, the operation continued as planned, without explanation and without further success.

Two weeks later, after the Ranger Task Force was released, General Smith relocated his battalions in the exact area described by the prisoners. As might be expected, by this time the reaction was far too late and netted little results. The fresh, empty base areas that the 173d found further substantiated that which the Rangers forwarded to the general two weeks earlier.

7. Operation Length

Americans are capable of sustained field operations. They have the body constitution to endure hardship and the logistical system to insure necessary comforts. The Rangers, on the other hand, can only conduct a continuous field operation for a period of seven to ten days. They must receive fresh food, and they must be allowed to recuperate, as their comparatively frail bodies need nourishment and plenty of rest to revitalize. This rest period should be approximately one to two days. Then they can resupply with another initial stock of fresh food and continue for another seven or eight days. The longer the operation, the shorter these sustaining periods last.

Operation TOLEDO taxed the Rangers beyond their limit. Their normal body functions were exhausted. Their usual resistance to local disease and illness collapsed. Stragglers, and actual casualties were the result. Their need for medical attention and evacuation was far in excess of normal practice. Over ninety Rangers contacted

malaria, and fifty-two had fevers of varied origin.

8. Lack of Coordination

The air strike on the Rangers was an unfortunate accident. Under the circumstances, however, it could have been avoided. No prior coordination had been made to insure the pilots were aware of the exact location of all friendly units, not solely the American units.

American units, by necessity and by common practice, periodically report their position. This procedure is also applicable to the Vietnamese Rangers. The location of the Ranger battalions had been reported and posted on the TOC map. Instead of confirming the Rangers' location by asking the Vietnamese Liaison Officer or his American counterpart seated only twenty feet away, the Air Force Liaison Officer (ALO) approved the air strike by his silence as the FAC directed the strike.

The ALO was positive no units from the 173d were in the area where the FAC had sighted the "VC campfires", but he had not bothered to concern himself with the whereabouts of the Vietnamese Rangers.

This lack of coordination and concern for the Vietnamese was further exemplified by the incident when the American artillery battery was placed within the Rangers' area of operations, without first notifying the Rangers. Had the artillerymen fired on the Rangers, the results would have been disastrous. Neither element knew the other was there. The point I am attempting to emphasize is that there was no conscious effort on the

part of the 173d to coordinate with the Rangers.

9. Courtesy Call

General Smith's token of appreciation to the Rangers in the form of a formal visit and presentation after the operation, was a masterpiece of diplomacy. The Rangers were proud of their contribution to Operation TOLEDO. They were especially pleased to hear the general express his appreciation for their performance.

The Rangers enjoyed working with the 173d Airborne Brigade. They had never received such immediately responsive medical evacuation, ammunition and logistical resupply. They did not enjoy the long duration of the operation, but they did recognize the advantages the Americans could offer during combined operations.

"The Rangers are ready to go again," said my counterpart, "but maybe we rest for one month first, O K?"

TRAINING IMPLICATIONS

1. One benefit of using a Ranger Task Force for an OPCON mission is that the organization requires little special support from the parent unit. A Ranger Task Force is primarily a self-supported unit, and when necessary, it is capable of conducting independent operations with a minimum of outside assistance.

2. The American officer having operational control of a Ranger unit should offer the Rangers a supply of

"C" rations for the duration of the operation.

3. Pathfinders should not be utilized with Vietnamese Rangers. Ranger advisors are more than adequately prepared to accomplish the necessary tasks for helicopter pickup. Advisors are the logical liaison between Rangers and helicopter pilots.

4. Prior to the attachment of Rangers to an American unit, all members of the parent unit should be instructed in the necessity to establish a friendly rapport. They should also be briefed to recognize Vietnamese rank and instructed that they should extend the same courtesies toward allied officers that they extend to their own officers.

5. Rangers often strive to impress Americans with their capabilities. Their performance of duty is generally more enthusiastic and aggressive when they are attached to American units. In short, an OPCON mission is beneficial to both the Rangers and the Americans.

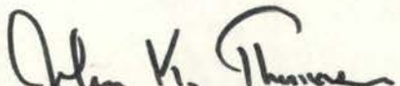
6. Intelligence must be exploited as expeditiously as possible. When Rangers forward information through their advisors to an American parent unit, the information should be given the same credibility as that forwarded by an American unit.

7. During lengthy OPCON missions, provisions must be made to resupply the Rangers every seven days and to allow for a recuperation period of one day for every week of sustained operations.

8. All combined USA-ARVN OPCON operations should include a joint Tactical Operations Center. American TOC

representatives must make a conscious effort to coordinate all action with their Vietnamese counterparts. This joint TOC not only insures unity of effort, but also protects the allies from unintentional encounters with American air and artillery.

9. It is appropriate and diplomatically advantageous to conduct a formal visit and presentation to the supporting Ranger unit after the operation. A sincere "thank you" in the nature of a plaque or valorous decoration will long be remembered and will encourage the Rangers to participate in future OPCON missions, should their assistance be requested again.



JOHN K. THOMAS
Captain, Infantry

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2. Operational Report for Quarterly Period Ending 31 October 1966. (Headquarters, II Field Force Vietnam). (SECRET - Extracted portion unclassified).

3. Davis, John F., Major, personal interview on 3 May 1968. (Medical Advisor to III Corps, 1966).

4. Jones, Melven, Captain, personal interview on 11 June 1968. (Assistant Senior Advisor, 35th Ranger Battalion during Operation TOLEDO).

5. Parker, Arthur, Captain, personal interview on 7 June 1968. (Assistant Senior Advisor, 33d Ranger Battalion during Operation TOLEDO).

LEGEND:

- NATIONAL BOUNDARY
- PROVINCE BOUNDARIES
- DISTRICT BOUNDARIES
- NATIONAL CAPITAL
- AUTONOMOUS CITY
- PROVINCIAL CAPITAL
- DISTRICT HEADQUARTERS

PROVINCE	PROVINCIAL CAPITAL	PROVINCE POPULATION
BIEN HOA	BIEN HOA	325 000
BINH DUONG	PHU CUONG	237 000
BINH LONG	AN LOC	80 000
BINH TUY	HAM TAN	61 000
HAU NGHIA	KHIEM CUONG	228 000
LONG AN	TAN AN	398 000
LONG KHANH	XUAN LOC	127 000
PHUOC LONG	PHUOC BINH	60 000
PHUOC TUY	PHUOC LE	105 000
TAY NINH	TAY NINH	258 000

SPECIAL CAPITAL ZONE

PROVINCE	CAPITAL CITY	POPULATION
GIA DINH	GIA DINH	981 000
SAIGON	SAIGON	1 518 000

ESTIMATED AS OF OCT . 1966

SCALE: 1:1,000, 000

0 25 50 STATUTE MILES

0 25 50 KILOMETERS

Figure 2. III Corps - Area of operation outlined in red.

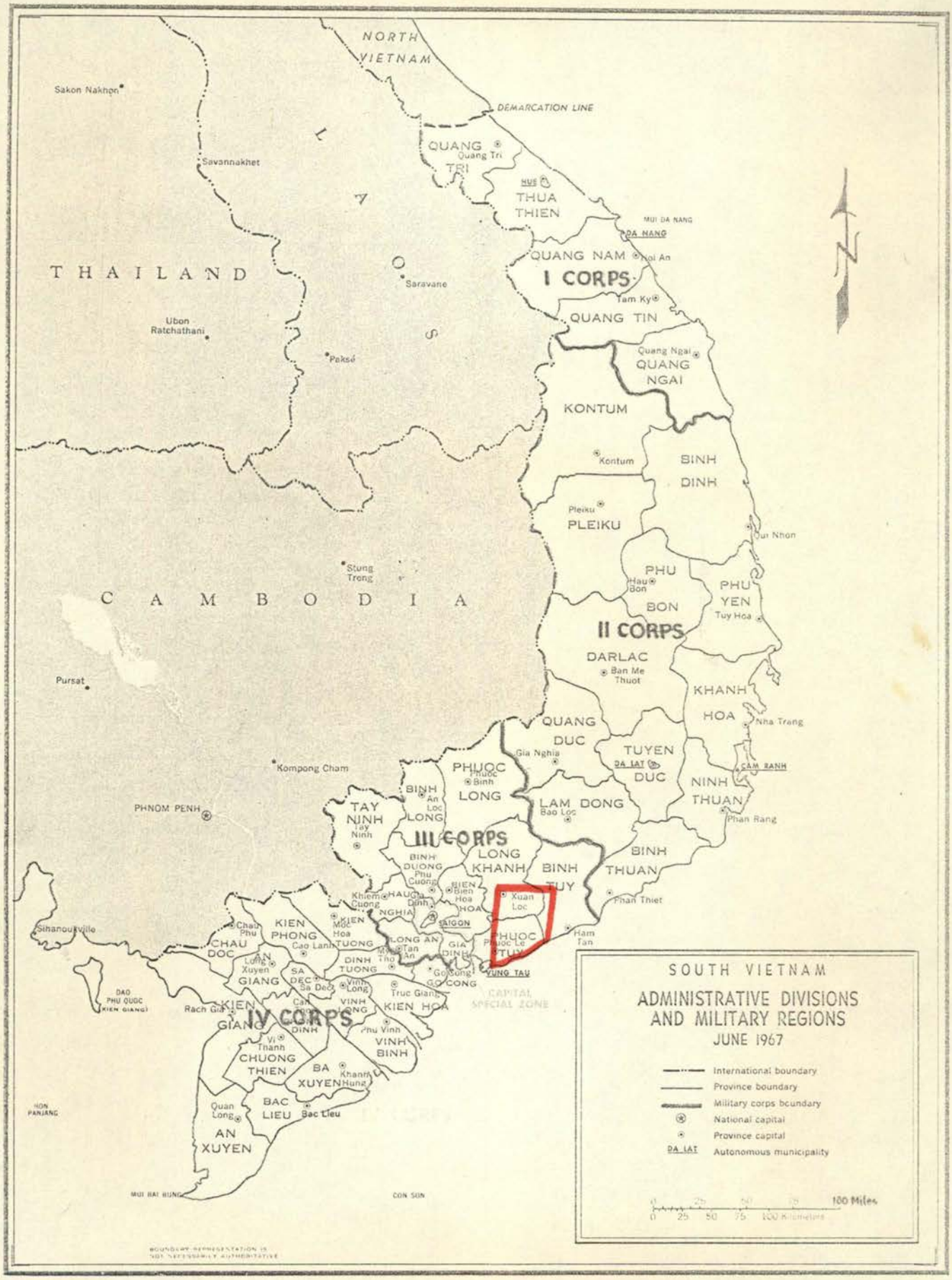

Figure 1. Vietnam - Area of operations outlined in red.

UNITED STATES ARMY INFANTRY SCHOOL

Operations & Plans Division

Ranger Training Command

Fort Benning, Georgia

PART TWO: EFFECTIVE WRITING GRADE KEY (MONOGRAPH CONTENT)

TO: **CPT John K. Thomas** Date **9 Aug 68**

Roster No **155**

IOAC
~~XXXX~~ **3-69** Fac Adv Gp **12**

1. Your monograph was assigned to me for a technical review of the content. I have evaluated your monograph for accuracy of content, originality of thought, significance of contribution, and validity of your analysis and criticism. My review did not consider irregularities in monograph techniques or errors in writing.

2. I graded each major heading of your study according to the standard USAIS five-point grading system. In addition, I made specific comments under those headings which contained serious errors or exceptionally fine work.

a. INTRODUCTION: (I) II III IV V

The information presented in your introduction must be historically correct and based upon a sound evaluation of factual information, not on personal opinion.

Comments: **Your monograph is outstanding; however, I see no constructive benefit in including a few classified facts requiring the entire monograph to be classified.**

b. NARRATION: (I) II III IV V

The narration should be an accurate and objective presentation of facts. Though much of the information presented in the narration is based on personal observation of the author, any discrepancies in the discussion of documented information were noted.

Comments:

c. ANALYSIS AND CRITICISM: I (II) III IV V

The analysis should be based on current military doctrine. If the analysis and criticism takes exception with current doctrine, the author should substantiate his views with cogent reasons. **The paragraph on pathfinders was repetitious of the paragraphs on the same subject in Narration.**

Comments:

d. LESSONS LEARNED: (I) II III IV V

The lessons learned should be based upon the analysis and criticism. They must be valid, military "DOs" and "DON'Ts" which are based on the particular operation described, but which have a general application for the type environment in which the operation took place.

Comments:

The title "Training Implications" doesn't seem to be an improvement over lesson learned.

e. BIBLIOGRAPHY: (I) II III IV V

The bibliography must contain a list of sources consulted, regardless of whether they are cited as references. Although documentation of much of the material presented in a personal experience monograph is not possible, the analysis and criticism and the lessons learned should be compared to current military doctrine which must be documented.

Comments:

f. VISUALS: (I) II III IV V

A complete set of visuals, such as tables, charts, illustrations and maps, must be included to illustrate the operation. The visuals must be accurate and include the necessary information outlined in the Effective Writing Program Outline for Advanced Courses.

Comments: **The caption for figure 6 is not clear. The maneuver on Map B is difficult to follow.**

Fred J. Hillyard

FRED J. HILLYARD
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CPT, Infantry
rank branch

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committee

545-6463
phone number

THOMAS 2K.

UNITED STATES ARMY INFANTRY SCHOOL
Office of the Director of Instruction
Instructional Methods Division
Fort Benning, Georgia 31905

PART III: EFFECTIVE WRITING GRADE KEY (Monograph Technique)

TITLE:

1. A monograph title must include the name of the organization conducting the action described, the type of action being described, the inclusive dates of the operation, the major campaign of which the operation was a part, and the job title of the author while he participated in the operation.

TITLE PAGE:

2. The title page must contain the USAIS heading, the date, the monograph title, and the author's name, class, roster number, and advisor group number.

TABLE OF CONTENTS:

3. The table of contents should itemize the major headings of the monograph and the corresponding page numbers. It should also include the subheadings of the introduction and narration, and the attached appendices, maps, and visuals.

INTRODUCTION:

4. The introduction should discuss the friendly and enemy situation which existed prior to the execution of the operation.

5. The operations of higher levels of command should be discussed in sufficient detail in the introduction so that the reader sees the action in proper perspective.

6. The introduction should include the unit's plan of the operation in sufficient detail to permit easy comprehension of the execution described in the narration.

7. The introduction includes a complete discussion of the unit's preparation for the operation. The emphasis placed on specific aspects of the preparation should parallel the narration. Details concerning preparations which did not have a significant bearing on the operation should be avoided.

NARRATION:

8. The narration should be organized so that the reader can understand the scheme of maneuver. If the narration is not logically organized, the reader will have difficulty following the sequence of events. Although the actions of the subordinate units must be included, they must not obscure the sequence of events and the pattern of maneuver in a maze of detail. The actions of subordinate units must be included without interrupting the flow of the narration.

9. Not all actions or situations are of equal value to the military historian. By emphasizing particular actions, he interprets the relative importance or impact of certain actions in relation to the overall operation. Emphasis can be achieved by repetition, position, or proportion.

10. The narration of a monograph must be completely unified, and it must be so limited in scope that all significant evidence bearing on the subject can be carefully examined. An incomplete or superficial narration will materially lessen the value of a monograph, because the author will most likely fail to bring out important military lessons and points. The operations should be described in all possible detail: enemy information available, formations used by the unit, details of the terrain, the methods of conducting the approach march, the problems encountered, ranges at which firing was conducted, methods of advance, use of cover, methods of supply and evacuation, use of communications, casualties and replacements received, and similar matters.

ANALYSIS AND CRITICISM:

11. In the analysis and criticism, the author should analyze the techniques, methods, procedures, tactics, and strategy employed by the unit being discussed and compare them to accepted military doctrine. The analysis is based upon material presented in the preceding parts of the monograph. The criticism should be a summary of the conclusions reached in the analysis. Although most of the analysis and criticism should pertain to the particular unit being discussed, if the actions of the enemy unit are deserving of criticism, they should also be analyzed and criticized.

TRAINING IMPLICATIONS:

12. The lessons learned are brief statements which summarize the principal military lessons illustrated in the monograph. The lessons should be worded briefly and carefully. They should be gems of knowledge which sum up and emphasize for the reader the valuable principles and techniques which were developed or reinforced in the discussion of the action. Care must be taken to avoid confusing lessons learned with lessons relearned or reinforced. Each lesson should be described in a separate paragraph to avoid confusion. The lessons should apply to the particular operation; they should be drawn from the analysis and criticism.

BIBLIOGRAPHY:

13. There is no single way to document a paper. However, authorities agree that consistency and completeness in a paper are essential. The bibliography of a monograph must be logically arranged and complete, and each entry must adhere to the established format. Footnotes must be accurate and consistent.

VISUALS:

14. The monograph must include the visuals, maps, and illustrations necessary to properly illustrate the operation described.

15. Visuals, illustrations, and maps must be clearly identified. Maps must be drawn using the correct symbols and colors for various features and objects. Arrows and troop symbols must be used so that the reader can easily follow the routes and movement of the units being discussed. Every map must have a title, a legend, a directional arrow, and a graphic scale.

16. Maps must be attached to the monograph in a fold-out fashion, so that the maps will, when unfolded, be entirely visible, and no portion of the maps will be covered by the typed document. In addition, the maps must be progressive. In other words, the maps should be constructed so that the area depicted on each map can be located in relation to a preceding map.

FORMAT:

17. The monograph must be assembled in accordance with the directions set forth in The Writing Program Outline for Advanced students.

TAB E

Figure 3. An Loc Pickup Zone (PZ)

Figure 4. Rangers on An Loc PZ

TAB
D

Figure 7. LZ YANKEE

Figure 8. Mao Tao Secret Zone (Area of Operations)

Figure 9. Advisors and counterparts of Task Force Ranger on Operation TOLEDO

TAB E

Figure 5. Position CASTILE, Headquarters 173d Airborne Brigade

Figure 6. General Paul F. Smith with Commanding Officer of Task Force Ranger (2d from right and his counterpart) (PSN CASTILE)