

B Coy

PL 500
1000
BIRMAL
27 Aug 65

8.

LESSONS LEARNED
IN
FAST OPERATIONS

1. Ambush techniques. Ambushes can be well laid, planned and correctly positioned but still fail. Common deficiencies are:-

- a. Noise discipline. Common faults are coughing, talking, movement, and clattering of eqpt.
- b. Springing an ambush too early
- c. Lack of sufficient fire power placed correctly in the ambush posn to deny the VC his escape routes.
- d. Failure to pursue by fire when the VC jump into the underbrush.
- e. Failure to quickly exploit and search the immediate area for casualties and dead.
- f. Failure to establish a pre-planned search of the area.
- g. Failure to provide illumination in conjunction with a sweep after the ambush.
- h. Failure to block off the opposite sides of tracks and escape routes.
- i. Failure of sq cooms to utilize spotlights (lack of notes)

Section Ldrs must be capable of calling in sq fire when necessary.

2. VC escape methods. The VC when cornered underground or when discovery is imminent will eject a grenade from a hole or aperture and in the resulting confusion, try to escape.

3. Searches. Routine village searches have NOT been successful in discovering the VC or his caches. The most successful means has been to occupy a village for an extended period of time (10-14 days) forcing the VC out of hunger and thirst to come out of his hiding place. Other points which are necessary are:-

- a. Always leave a sleeping force.
- b. Avoid being channelised by fences, parties or hedges.
- c. If the village is taken, VC are probably still around.
- d. Booby traps are found mainly:
 - (1) On gates
 - (2) Amongst rubbish, on boards, near parties and along tracks. Mines are normally found where normal work does NOT take place.

4 PL *[initials]*
5 PL *[initials]*
6 PL *[initials]*

OC *[initials]*
2 IC *[initials]*
CSM *[initials]*
SP Sec. *[initials]*

PL Comd be prep to discuss these pts (& any others they have) in the near future. *[initials]*

e. Ensure the fol are searched:-

- (1) Rafters
- (2) Thatched roofs
- (3) Rice bags
- (4) Hay stacks
- (5) Dung piles
- (6) Walls

f. When villagers or VC are found hiding in tunnels or bunkers, have locals try to talk them out.

Conclusion. A thorough search technique should be devised and all tps trained in its use.

4. VC Staging areas. When conducting search ops, ambushes or patrolling ops, particular attention must be paid to tracks, re-entrants and bases of hills and creeks. The VC use tracks almost exclusively. Most areas are a complex of tracks with which the guerrilla is usually familiar, thereby facilitating his movement. When he sets up a staging camp it is normally close to fresh water. Flowing creeks at the base of a hill are normally favorite staging sites.

Conclusion Constant pressure can be applied to a guerrilla by hitting his staging camps, eventually forcing him to de-activate the area.

5. Night firing The VC is familiar with his area through local knowledge and thorough recce.

Conclusion All tps should have night firing practice.

6. VC tacs. VC tacs and techniques are designed to exploit concentrated forces and disrupt planned ops. They are willing to offer bait eg snipers seen at a distance or smoke from fires, to draw patrols into ambushes or booby trapped areas, or to draw them away from base camps and other facilities.

Conclusion Whilst NOT decreasing the necessity for aggressive re-action to contact, patrol comds must assess the possibility that the contact was deliberately designed to draw the patrols to action.

7. VC Mors The VC are preparing covered mors pson for use without base plates. The VC dig a cylindrical, angled hole into which the tube is inserted for firing. A rock or block of wood is used as a rigid base. The hole is angled so that NO aiming is required onto the selected tgt. In this way several quick rounds can be fired leaving the concealed wpn behind.

Conclusion. Sub units have already been instructed to report on th ese holes.

8. Repetition of activity. Sub units comds must assess repetition of activity both within and outside a ptl base. This includes such seemingly innocent actions as having a regular time to clean wps, clean teeth and go to the latrine. In counter-insurgency warfare, NO habit is a good habit.

Conclusion. Repetition of activity must be avoided

9. Ammo Ammo deteriorates rapidly in tropical areas, especially linked belts which rust overnight. Carrying belted linked draped over the body in mexican bandit style accelerates the corrosion. THIS HABIT IS NOT ACCEPTABLE IN B COY.

Concl usion. Proper storage must be practiced and ammo checked daily.

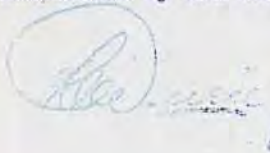
...../3 Tunnel characteristic

10. General Characteristics. Most tunnels are NOT constructed for defence but are normally used as hiding places. The following characteristics are common:-

- a. All tunnel entrances are camouflaged
- b. Traps, spikes, pits and mines are placed near the tunnels to discourage searching tps from continuing their search.
- c. Booby traps are normally placed inside tunnels near the entrances .
- d. Wooden lids, strong enough to support the earth covering them and NOT fall in if trodden upon from the covers for tunnels.
- e. Earth excavated from tunnels is spread evenly over the surrounding area and covering it with leaves and grass.
- f. On the perimeter of areas where ground tunnels exit, VC units and guerrillas organise combat structures and trenches to prevent or impede tp mov into the area.

11. Convoy ops Convoy ops must be thoroughly coordinated to incl int, comms, air and arty sp and provision for reaction forces. This must be coordinated at the highest level.

- a. NO route is proof against ambush
- b. Routine must be avoided.
- c. Effective comms are essential
- d. Sentries are necessary and tps in the convoy must be prepared to react rapidly when dismounted.
- e. Succession of cmd must be understood by all concerned.


 Capt
 IO 1RAR

Distribution List G

202. ~~The~~ to Bao Trai with the rest of the br on the following afternoon. The br remained at Bao Trai for briefing and rece until the morning of 8 Jan 66.

Operation 1/66 (HOB0 woods)

203. This operation was conceived with the aim of capturing the Cholon Gia Dinh Saigon VC HQ. 173 Bde conducted the operation with a subsidiary operation by 1 Inf Div in the ~~the~~ Triangle area. 1 Rtd's mission was to occupy a blocking position against sweeps by 1/503 and 2/503 Bns. However the blocking posn proved to be the location of the HQ and 1/503 and 2/503 therefore carried out subsidiary searches to the North and South of the area.

204. (See Day Op Analysis 1/66. Instead of using letter paragraphing continue with numerals.))

Local Pths

under command of Sgt V. HADJIMERSKY
1 RTR

205. On 16 Jan, 4 Pl ^{1 RTR} ~~up~~ the "Toto" and laid ambush that night at GR 015 204 which although outside 1 RTR Toto had been cleared by OC B Coy with Dai Uy Thien (District Chief Tam Phu) at 1700hrs that day.

—, ~~to the ambush~~ the pl moved into the new sector under the cover of darkness and shortly after the ambush was set, ^{muffled} voices could be heard moving downstream by boat.

—, In the early hours of the fol morning (17 Jan), ^{muffled}