LONG RANGE RECONNAISSANCE PATROLS (LRRPs)

Within the 4th Infantry Division, an extensive Long Range Reconnaissance Program has been established to enhance the tactical and operational capabilities of the division by means of accurate, timely intelligence of immediate tactical value. The elements which have been established within this program, Long Range Reconnaissance Patrols (LRRPs) and Hawkeye teams, operate as 4-5 man units. LRRPs are charged with missions to observe and report enemy movements and activities. To accomplish this they are employed in areas where enemy forces are likely to be found. Such areas are river crossing sites, supply and infiltration routes, enemy base areas, trails and abandoned US fire bases. LRRPs also provide valuable information on terrain which is used on future operations. The lack of enemy sightings within an area is considered as important as positive information. Hawkeyes are normally employed in a hunter-killer team role in conducting ambushes to inflict the maximum casualties possible as well as the destruction of vital supplies and equipment. Employment of these teams in areas where the enemy feels secure is especially damaging to his morale. The normal missions of LRRPs and Hawkeyes can be interchanged. Experience has shown that Hawkeyes are also a source of valuable intelligence even while in their hunter-killer role.

LRRPs and Hawkeyes are employed within the overall scheme of operations of the division. They are normally targeted where it is believed the enemy is located. Such areas include areas vacated by friendly forces, and suspected or known enemy base areas, infiltration routes or trails. The team is employed for a period of 3 to 5 days in an area. As they
are used in a reconnaissance role, the teams are to avoid detection and to observe and report all enemy activity and presence within the area. This requires a minimum of movement or activity which may result in detection and compromise of the LRRPs presence as well as avoiding villages or other populated areas. In addition to scheduled reporting, the teams report, immediately, any significant sightings. When the situation dictates it, LRRPs act as artillery forward observers or call in air strikes without being compromised and, in fact, to prevent compromise. Hawkeyes, in their normal role, are employed in areas where the enemy is believed or known to move. They are effective in disrupting supply and eliminating small enemy units. Their employment as a stay-behind force as an ambush force along trails or stream crossing sites, and especially in those areas where the enemy feels secure, must have an adverse effect on his morale. These teams are also employed to take advantage of their intelligence gathering capability.

There are four LRRP platoons organized within the division. Each consists of a headquarters, eight LRRP teams and three Hawkeye teams. The headquarters provides overall coordination and control for the platoon with the capability to establish radio relay sites in support of the patrols. Each LRRP is a five man team consisting of a team leader, assistant team leader, pace man, point man and compass man. While this is the normal composition of the team, it is not uncommon that a four man team be used. Hawkeyes, however, are organized as four man teams consisting of a team leader, assistant team leader and two indigenous team
members. One such platoon is assigned to each brigade to support that particular brigade while the fourth team is assigned to the cavalry squadron in support of the division as a whole.

With normally 4 to 5 men participating on a mission, what each carries becomes important to the team as a whole in the performance of this mission. Each man will carry his individual weapon and sufficient ammunition, a knife, a compass, map, three to five canteens of water, rations, a jungle sweater, extra socks, notebook and pencil, salt pills and medical supplies. In addition each man carries five hand grenades with WP, smoke and CS or CN distributed among the team members in addition to three fragmentation grenades, each man carries. These items are packed into a rucksack or attached to the individual's web gear. Additional equipment carried by the team includes two AN/PRC-25 radios, and M-79 grenade launcher with six to nine rounds distributed among team members, maps, binoculars, a camera, flare pistol, marker panels, a signalling mirror, weapons cleaning equipment and blood expander units. Special equipment such as a strobolite, starlight scope or climbing rope is carried if needed for a particular mission.

Communications used by the LRRPs have not been free of problems. Typically, when operations are conducted in mountains with heavy forests and adverse weather conditions exist, communications problems are present. The test of three radios tried by the LRRPs, the AN/PRC-74, the AN/PRC-64 and the AN/PRC-25, has proven to be the latter. This is not to say that the AN/PRC-25 is the answer because it is considered to be too heavy and does have range and a line of sight limitation in transmissions.
The AN/PRC-74 was found to be heavier and more cumbersome to put into operation. Our experience has not shown an appreciable advantage in range while the availability of AM nets outside of the platoon is sparse. The ability to get into other FM nets with the AN/PRC-25 has proven to be helpful in the past when contact could not be achieved on the patrol's primary net. The AN/PRC-64 has a highly desirable size and weight for LRRP operations but our experience has shown that the range of this radio when operated in the Central Highlands is not acceptable.

Each LRRP Platoon member enters an extensive training program upon assignment to a platoon. The individual training phase of this program varies, recognizing the different acquired knowledge and skills of newly assigned members. Basically, this phase is oriented toward the training of members in needed skills for patrol activities. These include map reading, use of the compass and terrain navigation; escape, evasion and survival techniques; communications training; first and self aid; camouflage and use of concealment; observation techniques and reporting; adjustment of fire support to include air strikes, and infiltration and exfiltration techniques. Hawkeyes receive additional training in ambush techniques and sniper training. Once the individual has acquired the necessary basic skills, he is assigned to a team, usually with persons having operated as LRRP's. Training within the team provides a media to maintain and increase the skills acquired in the individual phase. It also enables the development of that necessary ingredient, teamwork, where each member learns to understand his function within the patrol and knows what to expect from the other members. When the team has reached the desired state of proficiency, it is employed on one or possibly two missions in the
vicinity of a base camp as a part of the team training. Upon the comple-
tion of these missions, our experience has shown that the patrol is ready
to perform in progressively more difficult missions. Training never stops,
however, as a continual program within each team is conducted to increase
their proficiency. Another stage in training is the MACV Recondo School.
Attendance is based upon quotes and an individual's demonstrated pro-
ficiency and motivation. The division conducts a pre-Recondo School for
persons selected to go to the Recondo School. The basis of this school
is a thorough review of map reading, use of the compass and terrain
navigation. In addition the individual must demonstrate that he is physically
able to meet the stringent requirements of the school. In essence the
pre-Recondo School insures that only the best qualified and most highly
motivated men are sent to the MACV Recondo School.

This training has provided teams which have provided invaluable
support to the operations of the division. The following three accounts
of patrol activities depict how this support has been rendered:

**OBSERVATION AND CONTACT**

**OR DISEMBARK ACTIVITY 23-24 FEB 69 NEAR CAMBODIAN BORDER**

During the period 15-17 February 67, Operation Sam Houston continued
with seven separate contacts with NVA elements being reported west of
the De San river in the Kontum Panhandle.

Four of these contacts took place west of the Han Sathay river. Of
the seven, four were also considered to major contacts, that is, in-
volveing 15 or more NVA troops. Five captives were apprehended as a
result of these contacts. During interrogation, four of the captives
revealed a possible reorganization within the eastern Highlands front.

Further confirmation of this probability was required.
The fact that the enemy had conducted seven attacks within two days at three widely separated locations indicated that the enemy had deployed two or possibly three regiments in the Panhandle.

A LRRP team from the 2d Bde was given the mission to locate and observe well used enemy trails in the Bde AO and to report all enemy activity observed. The LRRP team selected moved out and set up to observe a previously selected trail habitually used by the enemy in operation Paul Revere IV, approximately 2-3 kilometers from the Cambodian border. Recently received reports by aerial reconnaissance had established it was again being used.

On 23 Feb, as the team deployed towards its preselected observation point, an enemy base camp with 15 bunkers, and two trails used within the preceding 24 hours were found. Within the base camp Sgt. Sanders's team heard NVA talking and smelled smoke. While observing this camp 11 NVA were sighted moving along a trail leading into the camp carrying three RPG's, a large amount of rice, and ammunition.

The patrol reported an estimated NVA force of 40 to 50 men were in the camp. At 2030 hours 23 NVA were observed departing the area and moving in an east-southeast direction carrying automatic weapons, SKS, and carbines, and what appeared to be mortars and sacks possibly containing mortar ammunition. Sgt. Sanders called an artillery strike on the camp and moved his team to follow the 23 NVA soldiers. The results of the artillery strike were unknown.

As the team tracked the 23 NVA they observed other groups of NVA, 3 to 9 men to a group, all dragging heavy sacks. The LRRP team evaded and continued to track the large group. At 0300 hours on 24 May the team
was uncovered by two NVA who came up behind them taking the team under fire. As the LRP team was fired upon they evaded and returned the fire killing the two NVA. 3rd Platoon now became the hunted, as the 23 NVA were heard doubling back. They quickly withdrew to the north, and requested extraction which was accomplished without incident.

The team report established that the NVA were maneuvering within the area of the 1/22nd FSB which later received heavy mortaring.

CHU GO MOUNTAIN

Chu Go mountain, a prominent terrain feature located east of the Pleiku SF Camp, had long been suspected as being occupied or used by the VC. NVA activity in the western half of the 4th Div AO had precluded the possibility of a SAR operation being conducted in the Chu Go. In April, contacts with elements of the 55B Regt near Hanoi raised the question again of NVA operating in the Chu Go. Red Haze and Vn missions were flown with resulting indications that the area was being used.

2d Bde, 4th Inf Div gave LRP 2E the mission to go into the Chu Go mountain area and determine the nature of the enemy activity, in the area. This was not an unusual mission for LRP's but in this instance, because of the lack of knowledge of the area, an experienced team was selected for the mission. Three other experienced LRP members comprised the remainder of the team. The team was inserted 190930 April vic ZA 189056 without incident.

The decision to send an experienced team proved to be a wise one when, on 28 May, after patrolling in the mountain area Sgt. Milley's team observed three armed NVA, who were well camouflaged. Rather than uncover his team by firing small arms Sgt. Milley called for artillery which caused
three secondary explosions in the target area. To avoid detection
the team moved to another area and set up a night location. The
following morning the team heard an NVA patrol moving toward their position.
Eliciting to stay and ambush rather than attempt to evade, the team estab-
lished a hasty ambush. The NVA walked into the ambush and 7 NVA were
killed of the 12 observed.

The NVA were well trained and executed immediate defensive tactics.
Hand grenades were exchanged and both LRRP 2E and the NVA broke contact.
All four members of the LRRP team received slight wounds from enemy
grenades. Sgt-Willey maneuvered his team to a preselected LZ and called
for extraction.

**Observation**

**4th Div LRRP Activities-Combat along IA AYUN River**

VC initiated activities to the east of the 4th Division base camp
increased during the latter part of May. As a result of this activity
operation SkillDill was planned. As the planning for the operation
progressed 4th Division LRRP team 4D was given the mission of maintaining
surveillance of suspected VC crossing site on the Ia Ayun river. The
nature of this mission required the team to move into the preselected area,
establish an observation post, and report all activity observed. LRRP 4D
was inserted by helicopter on the evening of 2 June. Sgt-Beeman established
radio contact with the insertion helicopter, received an all clear and moved
his team to its observation post overlooking the suspected crossing site
on the Ia Ayun river. On 9 June Sgt-Beeman's team observed a total of
21 individuals moving northwest from the crossing point, a log foot bridge
spanning the river, and a total of 42 individuals moving east across the bridge.
A large number of the individuals sighted were armed with individual weapons.
Sightings continued for the next two days with a total of 64 individuals sighted moving on 10 June and 59 sighted on 11 June.

The team noted that on all three days movement had been to the northwest during the morning hours, and to the east during the afternoons and evenings, with no movement detected at night.

After four nights and three days in position, HARP team 4B was extracted at 121045 June 67.

The team had been extremely successful in accomplishing the primary mission of a long range reconnaissance patrol.

It had been inserted and concealed itself without detection, and for a period of 89 hours had reported on all activity within sight or hearing. As a result of the team's observations and reports the pattern of suspected VC movement was definitely fixed in one portion of the SME-ELL area of operations and the heliborne assault forces of the 4/503 Inf that occupied the area were provided with specific targeting data prior to their commitment.

Considered as an integral part of any mission is reporting on the sightings and results of the mission. Significant intelligence sightings are reported immediately as a spot report. Within 24 hours following the completion of the mission, the patrol is required to submit a written report giving a narrative account and the results of the patrol. These reports are, in fact, intelligence reports which provide valuable information for future operations and are often the only source of information on a given area.

To promote the HREPs/Hawkeyes and to obtain the most qualified soldiers on a voluntary basis certain evolutions have been adopted. To enhance the prestige of a platoon member and identify him with an elite unit, a distinctive
uniform has been adopted. This consists of the authorization to wear a
bush hat in base camp with an identifying hat band showing the platoon to
which he belongs. Being a member of an elite unit and the product of a
highly selective program, the LARP member has earned the right for priority
consideration for promotion as he becomes eligible. An additional out of
country R&R has been authorized for LARP Platoon members as a reward for
their voluntary service in these often hazardous operations. Finally,
under normal circumstances, a team is provided a minimum of 36 hours, fol-
lowing a mission, to rest and recover from the fatigue and tension inherent
with their missions. It has been found that with these documents a ready
source of highly qualified volunteers is available.

The Division's experience to date has provided several important lessons.
It has been found that prior planning and staggering of personnel entering
the LARP platoons is necessary to resolve the adverse effect on operational
capability and assets resulting from a concentration of DESOEs during a
given time frame. It has been determined that a tendency toward impatience
on the part of the US soldier has had an effect on the success of many mission.
Rather than being able to remain for an extended period of time in one
position where the possibility of compromise is remote, he tends to
want to move which, of course, increases chances of discovery.

The division employs indigenous personnel within Hawkeyes and in
certain instances within LARP's. While there was some hesitancy at first on
the use of these individuals, experience has shown that their native abilities
are a definite asset to the team. They are considered to be essential in
operations as their characteristics and knowledge of the area and customs
compliment the skills of the US soldier in forming a well-rounded team.
The fact of the matter is that we desire more of these individuals.

Especially during patrols of a duration of more than three days, emphasis must be placed on the establishment of definite schedules for rest and sleeping to ensure a 24-hour alert. During periods of lesser duration, it has been found that the alertness of the team is at a peak with many not requiring or desiring to sleep. As exhaustion appears after the 3 day period the maintenance of an alert posture has proven to be a real problem.

As explained in the earlier discussion on communications, there exists a need for a lightweight radio, which is not limited by line of sight transmissions and with a range in excess of the AN/PRC-25 which is preferred when considering present equipment. In this same area, it has been determined that as a part of the planning for a LRP mission consideration must be given to use of alternate means of communications, in the event of the loss of the primary means. The ability to net with other units in area has proved to be one solution.

Finally, proper reporting procedures have been found to require continual and increased emphasis. With the recent changeover of many LRP personnel such emphasis is all the more important to obtain accurate and complete reporting. Failure in this area results in more time spent in radio transmission and detracts from the mission. All personnel must be instilled with the need to report what is seen, completely, and as a matter of course.
While there is room for improvement, the LRP and Hawkeye programs within the division must be considered successful. They have obtained information of the enemy in areas where only forces on the ground could have been successful. This information has provided the basis for productive operations in the past and will continue to do so in the future.

To date, 4th Infantry Division LRP's and Hawkeyes have performed on 503 missions which have produced 340 intelligence sightings. The absence of an intelligence sighting is considered as significant as the occurrence of one on a mission, in-supporting-division-operations. Seventy-three enemy contacts have occurred during LRP/Hawkeye missions producing 75 enemy KIAs, confirmed. This latter figure, in many cases, is deceiving as in many instances a confirmed body count cannot be achieved. Only six extractions of teams have been made under fire which is attributed to the skill of teams in escaping and evading following a contact and the firepower available within a team to break contact. Also of note is that of the large number of missions performed, only one LRP member has been killed in action.