From: Lt. J. M. J. L. 587337/1100, USA
To: Chief Navy Section, HA/G, Vietnam

Subj: After Action Report on completion of tour; submission of

Ref: (a) NAVSEEXTMAD 1506 5216.7

1. In compliance with reference (a) the following After Action Report on completion of tour is submitted.

2. Situation at time of arrival. Since reporting to Chief Navy Section, HA/G on 4 June 1962, I have served as the first operational and Readiness Advisor 25th River Assault Group, Can Tho, and as the first, Senior Naval Advisor 42nd, (formally 33rd), Tactical Zone, Mac Lieu, (formally located Can Tho).

   a. Senior Naval Advisor 42nd Tactical Zone. This billet was established in September 1962, for the purpose of gaining naval representation in operational planning on tactical operations directed against the Viet Cong, conducted at the 21st Div. Joint Planning Level. Prior to this time the Commander of the 25th River Assault Group, (who exercise naval operational control of the 25th ARVN Can Tho, and the 26th ARVN Long Xuyen), was seldom, if ever, consulted in the operational planning phase of an operation. The naval mission was simply dictated by the Division Commander without consulting, or giving the River Assault Group commander the opportunity of representing the naval viewpoint, concerning the most effective means of employing the boats to accomplish the assigned mission.

   (1) Significant accomplishments and current situation. As a direct result of the establishment of this billet, the Commander of the 25th River Assault Group was provided the avenue through advisory channels, previously lacking through Vietnamese channels, to participate on the all important operational planning level, as an equal partner with the other Vietnamese combat arms. During the past 10 months, the Commander of the 25th RA/G has represented the 25th and 26th's in the 42nd Tactical Zone on all joint tactical operations, (including naval elements), planned and executed by the 21st Division, and is now performed as a matter of routine procedure.

   b. Operational and Readiness Advisor 25th River Assault Group, Can Tho. The boats of the 25th River Assault Group, Can Tho, were being employed on operations in support of the 21st Div. The situation in major areas was as follows:

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(1) Personnel: The authorized personnel strength of 158, (base and boats), per river assault group, as authorized by the 4/6th existence, was inadequate to properly man the boats under operational combat conditions. (After reevaluation of the manning level the 4/6 was increased to 172).

(2) Equipment: Adequate equipment was on board to accomplish the assigned mission, except in the area of communications, the A/GRC 9's, (A/F-10-34's), afforded the means of boat to boat communication, however individual boats could not communicate directly with ground/air units on operations, as the A/GRC 9 frequency range is not compatible with the AD-10 which is used by all ground/air units.

(3) Facilities: Base facilities were in an acceptable condition, and adequate to support the 25th River Group. (Recently the facilities have been greatly improved with the completion of the new pier).

(4) Logistical: Although a satisfactory number of spare parts were on board for renewal of the units, the record keeping, ordering procedure and procurement was noticeably slow.

(5) Maintenance: Scheduled upkeep periods were non-existent, hence the overall maintenance condition of the boats was a bare satisfactory. Hull preservation of the majority of the boats was unsatisfactory in part, due to existing over improperly prepared boat and hull surfaces.

3. Significant improvements accomplished during the tour: The most significant improvement accomplished is considered to be the training, experience and professional knowledge acquired by the river group through actual participation in over 15 major joint combined tactical operations, (plus numerous lesser operations), directed against the Viet Cong. This experience gained by the individual boat crews during the past year, under combat conditions, provides a sound basis from which to train others and build on in the future. Other significant improvements noted are as follows:

a. Operational effectiveness:

(1) Specifically this application of experience and professional knowledge has resulted in a considerably higher standard of operational efficiency and effectiveness, in execution of assigned missions both in support of, and jointly with the 21st Division, as well as on independent operations, than existed a year ago.
(2) On joint operations the 25th River Assault Group now employs a joint advisor radio net (JAR-10), common to air/ground/River Group units. Through the establishment of this net, the various advisors, using airborne relay (A-L), have been able to add appreciably to the flow of information to the command (C), and provide the means of rapidly coordinating and exploiting enemy contact gained.

(3) A1 have been established aboard command boats providing up-to-date visual displays of the joint tactical situation as it develops.

(4) An increased awareness of, and ability to more effectively counter enemy initiated attacks, particularly those involving underwater mine explosions, has been developed in the individual boat crews.

b. Leadership.
A definite improvement in the tactical chain of command is now in evidence. This has resulted in an improved attitude toward more aggressive leadership. Accelere ted interest has been shown in the joint operational readiness, correcting obvious discrepancies and encouraging subordinates to take the initiative. As an example, the insignias which were attached, (one of which has since been detached to Lt. Xuyen), have improved and progressed so that defensibility has replaced relativity, interest for lack of ready attitude and preparedness for apprehension. They now take charge of, and conduct an independent group of boats on operations.

c. Equipment: As stated previously, no means existed for individual boats to communicate directly with ground/air units on combat operations due to incompatibility of communication equipment. Through constant liaison with the Senior River Forces Advisor and Commander River Forces, this unsatisfactory situation was rectified in February 1963 with the delivery of 19 T.C-10's to each River Assault Group. The T.C-10's have proven invaluable, and are now being effectively utilized for communications with air and ground units on combined operations.

d. Supply: Stock cards have now been made up and attached to each individual spare part listing the stock number and the name of the spare part, translated in English-Vietnamese-French, which provides a rapid and efficient means of identification and accounting.
4. Comments and Recommendations.

a. **Comment**: Operational control of the 21st, 23rd, 24th and 25th River Assault Groups is still exercised by the respective A.W. Division Commanders, and the IV Corps commander, rather than the Y.P. This continues to result in less than optimum employment of the boats, and imposes difficulties and delays in meeting scheduled upkeep, repair, overhaul, and training periods.

**Recommendation**: Action be taken by higher authority to obtain approval of the proposed re-organization of the Y.P, which provides for the operational control to be exercised by the Y.P rather than the A.W. Division Commanders.

b. **Comment**: An "overhaul exchange" was established for the River Forces in order to maintain the number of operational boats at 15% in each River Group. As boats are sent to Kaiser Shipyard for scheduled overhauls, the "exchange" is not providing a replacement boat, consequently the river assault Group is continually operating at reduced strength with less than a full allowance of boats.

**Recommendation**: Action be taken through the River Force Commander to provide the full allowance of 15 boats to the river Group at all times.

c. **Comment**: A limited number of organic troop operations under the control of the 25th RAG have been conducted and have proven successful.

**Recommendation**: Continued emphasis should be placed on the importance of increasing the tempo of these organic troop operations, particularly at the Tactical Zone and IV Corps levels.

5. Current Situation.

a. When LT G.M was relieved of command a month ago, LT A assumed the command of the 25th River Assault Group, in addition to his primary billet of Naval Liaison Officer to IV Corps. No definite date has been given when a replacement will be ordered in. Since each billet is a full time job, a replacement should be provided to command the 25th at the earliest possible time.

b. Although still short of the authorized allowance of 172, the personnel situation has improved during the past three months, increasing from a previous six month on board average of 125 to 140 men. There are presently 159 officers and men on board.
c. Although considerable improvement in the material condition of the boats is in evidence, continued attention to the proper preparation of the hull and boat surfaces prior to painting, or the coat of the advisor is necessary.

d. Continually at least one, and at times two boat crews are receiving practical training in the River Force Coxswains Course in Saigon. Locally between operations, a formal training program has been implemented, consisting of classroom lectures, and when feasible practical application, on a weekly schedule basis covering the areas of seamanship, weaponry, engineering maintenance, and communications. Due to the constant turnover of personnel, continued effort is necessary in this area.

e. Most of the 15th are presently operating on a regular patrol duty attached to Company at both Can Chau near the Cambodian border, and at Nha Trang in the Kien Province. Continued emphasis should be placed on the importance of utilizing the boats on patrol duty between tactical operations.

f. It has repeatedly proven the efficiency of the individual boat crews, trained to a point they can be depended on to accomplish minor repair necessary to keep the boats operational on extended operations of two or three weeks duration.

g. The 25th River Assault Group is an operationally effective naval force capable in all respects of performing the assigned mission of supporting both 11th Corps and 21st Division operations, independent operations, and effecting patrol of inland waterways in the 43rd Tactical Zone of the Delta.