From: Lieutenant R. A. FRANK, USNR
To: Chief Navy Section, Military Assistance Advisory Group, Vietnam

Subj: After Action Report on Completion of Tour

Ref: (a) Navy Section MAAG, Vietnam Instruction 5216.7

1. In accordance with reference (a) the following report is submitted:

a. Situation at the Time of Arrival. Upon arrival in Vietnam, I was assigned as a ship rider for LSMs 400, 401, 402, and 403. In February of this year LST 500 was placed under my cognizance. These ships successfully participated in many small amphibious raids in the delta region with the VNMC and Viet Hai. In addition to fulfilling the primary operational mission, the LSMs carried ammunition and general cargo to various northern ports as well as Con Son and Phu Quoc Islands. During June 1962, 945.9 tons were lifted to these ports. With the exception of LST 500, all of the ships were originally under the French flag and transferred to Vietnam in 1955. Some equipment such as the evaporators, refrigerators, boilers and fathometers had not been operated since that time and were in a poor state of repair. Lack of sufficiently trained personnel hampered "on-board" repairs and caused the ships to rely quite heavily on the Naval Shipyard. In order to avoid implication of a disastrous situation at the beginning of my tour, it must be repeated the ships were operating and basically fulfilling their mission, although they were neither up to U. S. standards in many ways or fully utilizing their maximum capability.

b. Significant Accomplishments

(1) Personnel. The shortage and experience level on men in the critical rates of RM (ET), RD, EM, and EM is less now than a year ago. The experience level has been raised by the aid of the MTT-7 personnel during their tour in Vietnam (last half of 1962); the cooperation of the Naval Shipyard shop advisors and time. The shortage of RM (ET) and RDE has been alleviated by the Nha Trang Naval School. One year ago, there were no RM (ET) aboard the ships I advised. Today, there is at least one aboard each ship. Furthermore, there are presently at least three radio-man aboard each ship which will enable the ships to have a 24-hour radio watch which will, in turn, raise the level of VNN communications. Also

(2) Spare Parts and Material Improvements. Considerable advancement has been made in this area. Some overhauls for LSMs 401 and 402 were completed while the other ships have conducted their allowance lists and are presently conducting their own inventories. In conjunction with this project a parts list for the Pathfinder Radar on board LST 500 was requested from the manufacturer and will enable the ship to correctly identify its radar spare parts which will lessen the time of repair to this commercial gear. Equipment which is not supportable and beyond
repair has been removed from the ships. The boilers aboard LSMs 400 and 401 have been removed and will be replaced by more efficient electric water heaters when available. As the other LSMs go through overhaul this "shipalt" will be accomplished on them. Removal of the fathometer installations without transducer assemblies has been recommended. It has been learned LSMs 400 and 401 fall in this category.

Additional equipment installed on the LSMs and LST which has increased their capability is the RED/TED, UHF transmitter and receiver. This has been installed on all the ships in the past year and has, for the first time, given the VNN a UHF capability.

(3) Publications. The MAAG publication concerning the preventative maintenance and operation of diesel engines, which was written both in English and Vietnamese has been promulgated and accepted by the Vietnamese. The amphibious doctrine has been resubmitted to MAAG for approval.

(4) Operational Improvements. The formation of a coordinated logistic scheduling conference which published a monthly transportation schedule, together with the addition of two LSTs in the VNN has enabled the VNN to carry 5,202.8 tons of ammunition and general cargo during March 1963. This is an increase of about 4,300 tons from June 1962. In conjunction with the logistic missions of LSMs, a program of beaching reconnaissance has been formulated. One day during a logistics mission, the LSM is assigned to survey a possible landing site and a report similar to the U. S. amphibious beaching report is submitted.

c. Comment and Recommendation

(1) On-board Repair of Casualties.

Comment: The on-board repair capability and preventative maintenance program, although improving, is not yet compatible with the U. S. standards. Improvement of this situation will lessen the dependence of the ships on the Navy Shipyard, gain experience for the ship's company, and enable the ships to spend more time employed.

Recommendation: It is recommended the screening of job orders to the Navy Shipyard from Sea Forces ships be delegated to an officer with diesel background as a primary duty. The counterpart of this officer will be the Sea Forces Maintenance and Material Officer through whom all work requests must pass before approval. Work requests that are within the ship's capability should be denied regardless of the amount of time a ship is scheduled to be in port. In the long run this will aid the ships to become more self-sufficient.

(2) Logistic Commitments and Scheduling

Comment: The recent formation of a transportation schedule has aided the VNN to utilize their logistic capability. However, with the addition of an LST and LSM within the next twelve months, the scheduling procedures must change in order to keep pace and avoid wasted time.
Recommendation: JGS has formed a new logistics lift instruction with the formation of a logistics planning staff for all the services. It is recommended an advisor from Navy Section N-4 be assigned to the VNN member of the scheduling staff in order to aid in planning. Sea Forces will then have the primary responsibility to make available the required number of ships at the appointed time.

Comment: It is possible the JGS logistics instruction will not be functioning within the next few months. In the interim the dual authority of VNN N-3 and N-4 over the ISMs and ISTs should be eliminated. It has happened in the past N-3 and N-4 would delegate the same ship simultaneously pursue two different missions. Since N-3 is the senior staff member, the logistic schedule of N-4 would be disregarded. This is both inefficient and demoralizing.

Recommendation: It is recommended one man have the authority to change any planned movement of a ship. Whether it be VNN N-3 or N-4 is immaterial, as long as one man only has the authority.

d. Current Situation. The VNN operational readiness has rapidly improved. The ships are fulfilling their mission with a high degree of proficiency; however, as the repatriated ships become older and more ships arrive in Vietnam, the engineering difficulties will still be paramount. Constant emphasis on preventative maintenance and an increase of the "on-board" repair capability is mandatory in order to maintain the highest state of readiness. This is one of the basic problems a ship rider must cope with and it includes supply, spare parts, and scheduling. When this situation improves the operational readiness of the VNN will improve.

Cleanliness aboard the ships, correct painting and metal preservation procedures have improved during my tour and, in my opinion, can be now relegated to a minor problem position. The area of endeavor now is "how many trips a month can the ships make", versus "can the ships make a trip this month?"

Very respectfully,

R. A. FRANK

Copy to:
A34