

Australian Army Training Team
Vietnam (AATTV)

Narrative, Annexes
3 - 31 May 1963

Series: AWM95 - Australian Army
commanders' diaries

Item: 1/2/12

This form will be enclosed with the annexes in AF C2119. If this is not available the cover will be prepared in manuscript.

COMMANDERS DIARY
NARRATIVE

Army Form C2118

UNIT/FORMATION.....
COMMANDING OFFICER COL F. P. SERONG, OBE

MONTH AND YEAR... MAY 1963

Place and grid reference	Day of Month	Hour	Event or Information	Annex letter enclosure and number
Saigon	3		Preparation for visit to USA by self.	
			Handover to Lt Col Mann.	
			Passed current Strategic Estimate to COMUSMACV for forthcoming SECDEF Conference.	
			Maj Fitzpatrick and WO Vezgoff visited Nha Trang for pay and liaison.	
	4		Interview with President Diem accompanied by Ambassador. Reported separately.	
			Very long and interesting 0900-1500 hrs. Covered whole scope of war.	
	5		Called to Palace for further interview with President, 1500 - 2100. Apparently intended as a briefing by him to me in view of Washington visit.	
			Visit of former Lt Col Callinan, DSO (TIMOR) --currently a consulting engineer in Melbourne.	
	6		Departure for Manila. Inspected Clark AFB Hospital. Made liaison arrangements with Manila Embassy for possible future evacuation AATTV personnel.	
			Maj Fitzpatrick and WO Vezgoff returned from Nha Trang.	
	7		Replacements due today but none showed up.	
	9		RAAF Dakota arrived to assist in aid to Montagnard scheme.	

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COMMANDERS DIARY
NARRATIVE

Army Form C2118

MONTH AND YEAR..MAY 1963.....

UNIT/FORMATION.....

COMMANDING OFFICER COL F. P. SERONG, OBE.....

Place and grid reference	Day of Month	Hour	Event or Information	Annex letter enclosure and number
Saigon	10	1000	Conference at Embassy ref bomb threat. Ambassador decided to close Embassy until following Monday. Communications to External Affairs, Canberra to be sent through STARCOM COMCAN system.	
			Maj Fitzpatrick called on Mrs. Serong and Ambassador.	
			WO II Williams arrived from Hiep Khanh.	
	11	1500	Lt Col Mann attended second conference at Ambassador's residence concerning information received that the Ambassador was the prime target. Op Immediate signal sent through U.S. - Aust Army channels to Dept of External Affairs, Canberra.	
			WO Vezgoff and Sgt Phillips provided additional security at Ambassador's residence until 2400 hrs. Maj Fitzpatrick moved to Rex BOQ where bedside phone was available and remained in close contact with MACV communications centre for weekend.	
	13		Lt Col Mann and Maj Fitzpatrick checked Embassy doors prior to reoccupation by staff.	
			Lt Col Mann attended conference with Ambassador on security aspects of the Ambassador's residence. Attended by Mr. Mc Cabe from U.S. Embassy who advised on security precautions.	
			WO II Williams returned to Hiep Khanh.	

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COMMANDERS DIARY
NARRATIVE

UNIT/FORMATION.....

COMMANDING OFFICER COL. F. P. SERONG, OBE

MONTH AND YEAR. MAY 1963.....

Place and grid reference	Day of Month	Hour	Event or Information	Annex letter enclosure and number
	14		Conference on distribution of Australian aid by RAAF. Monthly report to AHQ.	16
	15		Lt Col Mann and Maj Fitzpatrick interviewed by Mr. Zel Rabin at Embassy. Rabin taken to MACV and introduced to PIO where arrangements were made for his itinerary.	
			Capt Wade arrived for an attachment to Trung Lap. Lt Clarke arrived for R&R to Bangkok.	
	23		Lt Clarke arrived back from Bangkok.	
	24	1230	Maj J. A. da Costa and WO II B. Sullivan, the first two replacements, arrived.	
	25		Maj da Costa and WO II Sullivan began series of briefings at HQ MAAG.	
			Lt Clarke returned to Phu Bai. Capt Wade returned from Trung Lap	
	27		Briefings for new arrivals continue at HQ MAAG. Capt Wade returned to Duc My	
	28		Capt Clunies-Ross arrived from Phu Bai to meet his successor, Maj da Costa	
	29		Capt Clunies-Ross, Maj da Costa, and WO II Sullivan visited Duc My	
	30		WO II Vezgoff departed to Nha Trang for pay. Capt Young arrived from Danang.	
	31		WO II Williams arrived from Hiep Khanh en route to Australia.	

AUSTRALIAN ARMY TRAINING TEAM

VIETNAM

REPORT No. 10

FOR THE MONTH OF MAY 1963

BY

COLONEL F. P. SEBORG, OBE, COMMANDING

INTRODUCTION

1. What should have been a satisfactory month has been marred by conflict between the Buddhist leadership and the GVN. This has been the subject of a report by the Ambassador, so I will not recapitulate the events - which began in Hue, two days after my departure.

2. The centre of activity of this conflict has moved from Hue to Saigon, and the Phu Bai, Kiep Khanh, and Danang detachments are not likely to find themselves effected. They are operating in conformity with the overall MAAG instructions to advisory personnel, which limit off duty movement.

3. The conflict has come as a surprise to everyone, including the participants. The ingredients for such a conflagration have, of course, always been present, and their presence has been the subject of comment by observers from time to time, but there had been no attempt to ignite the pile. Now, both the extreme right and left have been caught flat-footed; and, while anxious to make something of it, have not succeeded in harnessing it. The Buddhists lack leadership. The GVN is, currently, unpromising. This latter is unfortunate. Much face is involved; but an understanding and conciliatory attitude by GVN could appear to be their only way out of a very nasty situation.

AMNESTY PROGRAMME

4. The VC defection rate has been stepped up during the five months of 1963. For the week 14-20 May, the figure was 69 defections bringing the total since 1 Jan 63 to 1594 compared with a total 1596 for all of 1962. The increase in operations in both I and II Corps and the food denial programme are having a marked effect.

HEALTH

5. Apart from the usual minor stomach complaints, the health of the team remains satisfactory.

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MORALE

6. Morale continues high. As attachments to this report (copy no. 1 only), I have included:

- (a) Letter General H. K. Eggleston, Ch, to Comd, AATTV (Annex A).
- (b) Letter Lt Col Bolling to Lt Col A. S. Mann, DSO (Annex B).
- (c) Letter Senior Advisor, Hiep Khanh to Maj B. R. Tinkler (Annex C).

WELL BEING

7. Information on the new Scale of Allowances is now to hand. This is under study. Its arrival removes one worry area.

8. Similarly, arrival of posting orders for WOs and sergeants has enabled individuals to make personal plans, and alleviated another cause of concern.

GENERAL

9. Arrivals. New arrivals (Annex D) have been briefed and despatched on area orientation circuits which will give them an appreciation of in-country training problems before they reach their stations.

10. Unfortunately the time programme is not being maintained. Certain members are now overdue. I am reluctant to delay the departure of original team members while awaiting their replacements, and will not do so unless the effect of arrival delays embarrasses me seriously.

11. It is essential that AATTV be advised of Security Status of each new member at least one week before his arrival.

12. Weather. Belatedly, the wet in the South has begun.

13. Public Relations. Mr. Zell Rabin, Editor, Sydney Sunday Mirror, arrived in Saigon on 14 May 63. He interviewed the Australian Ambassador on the morning of 15 May 63 and Lt Col A. S. Mann, DSO and Maj L. T. J. Fitzpatrick in the afternoon. He intended visiting Bus on Monday 20 May 63 and returning on the evening of 21 May 63, accompanied by Lt Col Mann. However, he suffered a severe stomach disorder on both Sunday and Monday and cancelled the trip. He departed for Cambodia at the end of the week and did not interview any other members of AATTV.

14. Relief Supplies Distribution. This programme made considerable advances during May, several distributions having been made by Capt P. R. Young and Maj B. R. Tinkler's groups. RAAF Butterworth contributed with a C47, which added to the programme's impact. June should see the final distribution of presently available stores completed. This has been one of our most worthwhile efforts and will be the subject of a separate report.

15. Cmdr, AATV. Departed 6 May 63 for lectures and consultations at Fort Bragg (Special Warfare Centre), Department of State, Defense and Army, Washington; Central Intelligence Agency, and Special Forces groups.

16. Contact. Capt P. R. Young and WO II B. M. Quee came under light harassing fire while leading a Relief Supplies convoy near Tra My (Quang Tin Province) 26 May 63. No casualty. Reported by signal at the time.

17. Distribution. Your instruction to re-direct copy for Defence Representative, Singapore to Cmdr, AUSTARN is noted.

CONCLUSION

18. A useful month, in which AATV has been well occupied, but, overall, clouded by the Buddhist problem.

[Handwritten Signature]

(P. P. SERGEE)
Colonel
Commanding

12 June 63

DISTRIBUTION:

ARQ (4)
COMMUNICACY
Asst Embassy
Austarn, Singapore
Pai Ba Det
Kiep Khanh Det
Dac My Det
Da Nang Det
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Annex "D" to
Australian Army Training Team
Vietnam
Report No. 10

ARRIVALS

Number	Rank	Name	Scheduled date of Arrival	Actual date of Arrival	Station
240036	Maj	J.M. DA COSTA	21 May 63	24 May 63	Phu Bai
28358	Capt	C.L.T. McDONAGH	7 Jun 63	7 Jun 63	Saigon
22424	WO II	B. SULLIVAN	21 May 63	24 May 63	Hiep Khanh
1337	WO I	C.C. MILLS	7 May 63	7 Jun 63	Saigon

DEPARTURES

Number	Rank	Name	Scheduled date of Departure	Actual date of Departure	Station
26631	WO II	L.A. WILLIAMS	3 Jun 63	3 Jun 63	Hiep Khanh
4637	WO II	B.M. QUEE	17 Jun 63	17 Jun 63	Hiep Khanh
52636	SGT	R.L. WEIR	3 Jun 63	17 Jun 63	Duc My

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