

Australian Army Training Team
Vietnam (AATTV)

Narrative, Annexes
1 - 30 April 1964

Series: AWM95 - Australian Army
commanders' diaries

Item: 1/2/23

COMMANDERS DIARY
NARRATIVE

UNIT/FORMATION AATTV

COMMANDING OFFICER Col F.P.SERONG, OBE.

This form will be enclosed with the annexes in AF C 2119. If this is not available the cover will be prepared in manuscript.

MONTH AND YEAR APRIL 1964

SECRET

Place and grid reference	Day of Month	Hour	Event or information	Annex letter and enclosure number
	1		Depressing daily MACV staff briefing. Apparently some confusion between Embassy and MACV on who is responsible for running the war. SIHANOUK has withdrawn demand for General Conference. Announced that we (2 Air Division) have authority to engage hostile aircraft. Reception by CG 2 Air Division - Brigadier General ROWLAND.	
	2		BANGKOK assessment of VC strength in LAOS makes prospect of successful VN action there doubtful.	
	3		Left eye in bad shape. Tested. Need glasses.	
	4		Departure WO SULLIVAN, who did a fine job. Letter from General YARBOROUGH, Fort Bragg, asking me to come over and address Senior Officers Course early Jun.	
	5		Weather hot. Town quiet.	
	6		General MAC ARTHUR died last night. A great man and a great soldier. To VUNG TAO to inspect Special Political Cadres School (Captain JARRATT) and Junk Force Base. School is now well organized and produces a useful cadre. It remains to be seen whether they are used effectively in the provinces, and how they will fit in with the several other Civic Action private armies. Junk Force is very sick. Ships rotten with teredo and sailors recruited from inland peasants.	
	7		Lt Col MONAGHAN replacement Dep Comd for Lt Col MCNAMARA arrives. Also pay representative from AUSTARM (Sgt LUMSDEN) to check records. Interior Minister KY resigned yesterday, reportedly because of quarrel between Dai Viet parties and RMC on appointments of Province Chiefs. Dinner at British Embassy for General Sir Stephen WEIR, NZ Ambassador. Briefed him on situation, which is deteriorating. He agrees.	
	8		Debriefed Major DA COSTA who is most unhappy about new US Senior Advisor at PHU BAI (Lt Col PEDERSON), who has apparently set about imprinting his personality on this establishment immediately on arrival, and upsetting time-tested procedures and positions.	

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9

To NHA TRANG (Helio courier) with Donald MURRAY of British Embassy, thence by road to Ranger Training Centre DUC MY, primarily to meet two new US Senior Advisors - Major SMITH, RTC and Lt Col KRIEL, LAM SON. Food monotonous, area security a little more tense; training satisfactory; incoming battalions in bad shape for officers. Instructed Major KENNEDY to establish liaison with local Province Chief and Sector Advisor, so that he doesn't get caught napping. To PHU BAI in C45, arriving 1815. Inspected night training.

10

Inspected training. Senior Advisor I Corps (Col WOHLER) also present. Meanwhile took temperature of AATTV/PEDERSON position. This installation has run down somewhat in the last few months - since the departure of NEWELL.

11

Departure of Major DA COSTA, who has done a splendid job at PHU BAI. Advised of recommendation for Soldier's Medal for WO COLLINSON for heroism in saving a drowning VN soldier at KHAM DUC. Publication of orders for amalgamation of MACV/MAAG.

12

13

Big battle in CAMAU. Two VC battalions, and later a third, attacked district capital of KIEN LONG in CHOUNG THIEN province. Overran it, disembowelled District Chief, murdered his wife and infant son, plus several hundred inhabitants. GVN reaction weak.

14

Conference with General TIMMES on future position of AATTV after re-organization. Not affected.

15

Accepted general invitation from British Ambassador for AATTV personnel to attend Queen's Birthday reception. Signalled AHQ to extend Captain BOILEAU for one month, on account of the difficult operational position in QUANG NGAU. Arrival of Sgt HUSBAND.

SECRET

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	16		Lunch at Ambassador ANDERSON's for Minister RENOOF of the Washington Embassy, who is passing through on SEATO business. Asked him to watch the US end of the current contretemps on awards and decorations for AATTV.	
	17		Paymaster-in-chief despatched \$8000 without comment. Interesting to see if this continues. Lucky we didn't take his first attack lying down. Briefed J1 MACV (Capt TVEDT, USN) on Australian position on decorations and awards. Continued negotiations with J3 MACV for a HQ position for Major MURPHY. Secretary RUSK and General WHEELER visiting.	
	18		Briefed Captain TEAGUE and WO STEWART.	
	19		Rightest coup in LAOS because of "government neglect of economic welfare of the people." This is double-talk for describing a disagreement between PHOUMI NOSOVAN and the coup leaders on the distribution of profits of the VIENTIANE casino. Now to see the reaction of SOUPHANAVONG and the Pathet Lao.	
	20		Lt Col MCNAMARA to SINGAPORE for R&D briefing. Three AATTV members to the battalion at MALACCA for KAPYONG Day, via DANANG, UBON, BUTTERWORTH.	
	21		British Embassy Reception for Queen's Birthday.	
	22		LAOS still unsettled. Big powers trying to re-establish status quo, with surprising unanimity. NGO DINH CAN sentenced to death by a kangaroo court in SAIGON.	
	23		Conference with CH MAAG, General TIMMES, on the shape of his new temporary appointment as advisor to Minister of Interior.	
	24		Received CONARC signal on my visit to US. Now await approval from CANBERRA.	

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	25		ANZAC Day. Good reception at Ambassador's residence, at which AATTV was well represented. WESTMORELAND announced to succeed HARKINS.	
	26		Debriefed Capt PETERSEN of BAN ME THUOT on situation in DARLAC province. Autonomy is raising its head. Dai Viet making considerable progress among the middle seniority officers and officials.	
	27		Briefed Ambassador with particular reference to Dai Viet activities. Signal from CANBERRA approving new method of incident reporting, and refusing permission for US Visit.	
	28		Attended graduation exercises of Chinese High School - a worthy project.	
	29		Discussed a revised strategy for the war with Ambassador LODGE. Accepted. Referred to WASHINGTON. General KHANH is sick - chronic stomach trouble, which presumably is nervous in origin. Understandably! You need both physical and mental robustness to last the distance in this business.	
	30		To I Corps with NES (Deputy Chief of Mission, US Embassy). L 23. Weather good, visibility fair. First stop ASHAU. Warned off "in enemy hands". This was an exaggeration, apparently effected by Senior Advisor I Corps to get some action from GVN on clearing the VC from the neighborhood of the strip. (They hit WESTMORELAND's aircraft a few days earlier). On to KHE SAHN, where we saw the work of WO's ROONEY and DONKIN. Most impressive. They are re-capturing the original CIDG spirit, which has been sadly missing since the Strike Force have come to be manned by hooligans from the cities. To PHU BAI. Lt Col KERKER in hospital with kidney trouble. Station much improved since replacement of PEDERSEN. Almost back to its former standard. Hygiene not the best, however. Some cases of dysentery. NES had opportunity to see conditions of VN soldiers. Some fool had removed two battalions in training and committed them in DO XA fiasco. To DANANG. Briefed at I Corps. Overnight stay with Captain TEAGUE, BOILEAU and BURROWS. Briefing and facts were rather at variance, according to AATTV members who attended. Atmosphere of euphoria doesn't match the operational situation.	

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AUSTRALIAN ARMY TRAINING TEAM

VIETNAM

REPORT NO. 21

FOR THE MONTH OF APRIL 1964

BY

COLONEL F. P. SERONG, OBE, COMMANDING

GENERAL.

1. The trends reported in March continue. Erosion of RVNAF manpower is serious. A number of large and successful actions have been launched by the VC, with a corresponding number of large, and rather less successful actions by the GVN. I see no sign of the KHANH government having progressed towards gaining the support of the people.

REDEPLOYMENT OF HIEP KHANH GROUP.

2. Action on this redeployment is now complete, on the lines indicated at para 4 of Report No. 20.

3. The work of AATTV members with these Special Forces detachments continues to gain favorable comment.

COMMENDATION.

4. I have been particularly impressed with the work of WO MC COURT who, while recovering from his recent pangi wound, and partly immobilized, has launched a programme of night ambush training for village defenders. Already this programme has altered the tactical picture in his area.

5. I have had my attention drawn to the outstanding work of WO SWANSON and WO COOK, respectively of the DONG DA Weapons and Tactics Committees. This confirms my own observation. The recent successful operations by 2 Division owe much to the work of these two AATTV members.

6. As attachments to this report (Copy 1 only) I have included the following letters of commendation:

- (a) Letter of commendation for 240036 Maj J. M. DA COSTA.
- (b) Letter of commendation for 22424 WO2 B. J. SULLIVAN.

HEALTH.

7. There has been a minor outbreak of amoebic dysentery at DONG DA among AATTV and MAAG personnel. All concerned have recovered and returned to duty. It is suggested that all AATTV personnel on RTA be examined thoroughly for residual effects of this and other troubles.

MORALE.

8. Excellent.

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WELL-BEING

. Allowances. Several months have now elapsed since the Austarm inquiry into AATTV allowances scales was made. There has been no indication of relief. Meanwhile all Commissary prices have increased approximately 10 per cent.

10. Decorations and Awards. AHQ will have received my separate submission on this subject. This matter gives rise to discontent and criticism. It is important to the well-being of this Force that either a form of recognition of their operational service be effected or an appropriate reason provided why this should not be done.

VISIT TO UNITED STATES, COMD AATTV.

11. The to and fro signals on this matter were noted.

CURRENT ACTIVITIES.

12. Dong Da (Phu Bai)
 2 Bn 6th Regt - Completed 4th week of 5 weeks training.
 2 Bn 2nd Regt - Marched in.
 CCL - Two companies completed 1st week of 9 weeks training.
 Recruits - Two companies completed 1st week.

At the end of the month, 2/6 and 2/2 Bns by a unilateral decision on the part of ARVN were removed from training to take part in an operation in QUANG NGAI. This was most unfortunate, but not unusual.

13. Special Forces, CIDG (Village Defense)

No Change.

CAM DUC will in future be spelt KHAM DUC.

Personnel based at KHE SANH and AN DIEM will find themselves detached from time to time, as the need arises, to other parts within the DANANG group, notably ASHAU, KHAM DUC, and TARAU.

As the CIDG programme attracts more Montagnard villages, the Special Forces "A" Teams will move further to the WEST.

14. DUC MY

38 Ranger Bn completed its 6 weeks course.

23 Ranger Bn continues its 6 weeks course.

Basic Ranger Training continues.

JMS Course No. 13 completed.

15. VUNG TAO

Special Cadre Course No. 1 completed.

Special Cadre Course No. 2 commenced.

16. ATTACHMENTS

Captain CLARK and WO CHINN attached 1 Div for operations 18 - 28 April.

CONCLUSION

The war is approaching a climactic stage.

F. P. Searcy

Col.
Comd, AATTIV.
May 64

15

DISTRIBUTION:

- AHQ (8)
- COMUSMACV
- AUST EMBASSY
- AUSTARM SINGAPORE
- DANANG DET (4)
- DONG DA DET
- DUC MY
- DIARY (2) ✓
- FILE

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ANNEX "A" to
AATTV Report No. 21.

ARRIVALS

Number	Rank	Name	Scheduled date of arrival	Actual date of arrival	Station
1117	Lt Col	J. G. MONAGHAN	15 May 64	7 Apr 64	SAIGON
36275	Sgt	J. HUSBAND	15 Apr 64	14 Apr 64	DONG DA
28878	Sgt	J. R. STEWART	15 Apr 64	17 Apr 64	DONG DA
35803	Capt	I. C. TEAGUE	15 Apr 64	17 Apr 64	DANANG

DEPARTURES

Number	Rank	Name	Scheduled date of departure	Actual date of departure	Station
240036	Maj	J. M. DA COSTA	15 Apr 64	11 Apr 64	DONG DA
22424	WO2	B. J. SULLIVAN	15 Apr 64	4 Apr 64	DONG DA

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ANNEX "B" to
AATTV Report No. 21.

10

CASUALTIES

52385	W02	J. S. MC COURT	Panji stake penetrated instep of right foot. Wound healing satisfactorily.
52693	Capt	N. F. DE LA HUNTY	Slight facial wound from bullet.

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APPOINTMENTS

1. SAIGON
Col F. P. SERONG: Comd
Lt Col R. G. P. S. MCNAMARA: Dep Comd, Advisor O&T Div
Lt Col J. G. MONAGHAN: Replacing Lt Col MCNAMARA
Capt C. L. T. MC DONAGH: Adm Off
WO2 J. C. SWANSON: Adm WO
2. DANANG (CSD)
Capt G. F. BOILEAU: Combined Studies
Capt A. B. PETERSEN: Detached Ban Me Thuot
Capt P. C. JARRATT: Detached Vung Tau
Capt I. C. TEAGUE: Replacing Capt G. F. BOILEAU
3. DANANG (Special Forces)
Maj J. M. MURPHY: "C" Team Nha Trang
Capt J. J. BURROWS: "B" Team Danang
Capt N. F. DE LA HUNTY: "A" Team An Diem
WO2 J. W. ROUGHLEY: "A" Team An Diem (detached Ashau)
WO2 B. STOKES: "A" Team An Diem (detached Ashau)
WO2 J. S. MC COURT: "A" Team An Diem (detached Tarau)
WO2 D. W. DONKIN: "A" Team Khe Sanh
WO2 R. E. ROONEY: "A" Team Khe Sanh
WO2 R. J. COLLINSON: "A" Team Khe Sanh (detached Kham Duc)
4. DONG DA
Maj I. G. MC KEOWN: Senior Australian Advisor, Adv S.3
Capt R. L. POLLARD: Chief Tactics Committee
WO1 R. A. BANDY: Tactics Committee
WO2 R. W. COOK: Tactics Committee
WO2 K. G. CONWAY: Tactics Committee
Capt R. J. MOYLE: Chief Weapons Committee
WO1 G. E. CHINN: Weapons Committee
WO2 A. D. CRAIG: Weapons Committee
Capt R. CLARK: Chief General Subjects Committee
Sgt J. HUSBAND: Replacing WO2 J. C. SWANSON detached from Dong Da
Sgt J. R. STEWART: Replacing WO2 R. W. COOK
5. DUC MY
Maj R. G. KENNEDY: Senior Australian Advisor, Senior Training Advisor
Capt G. D. W. IRVINE: Chief Basic Ranger Committee
WO1 H. D. CLIVELY: Advisor, Jungle, Mountain, Swamp School
WO2 D. C. DALTON: Advisor, Jungle, Mountain, Swamp School
WO2 D. J. NEVILLE: Unit Training Committee

ANNEX "D" to
AATTV Report No. 21.

LOG OF INCIDENTS

Date	Location	Occurrence
23 Apr 64	AN DIEM	Our AN DIEM patrol, which Capt DE LA HUNTY is accompanying as training advisor, came under fire. One member suffered gunshot wounds to the chest.
24 Apr 64	ASHAU	A CV-2 aircraft carrying General WESTMORELAND was fired at when about to leave ASHAU. WO2 STOKES and WO2 ROUGHLEY, US personnel and Strike Force personnel were on the perimeter of the airstrip and were present at the limited fight which took place. Eight rounds struck the aircraft wounding some of the occupants. No casualties amongst the ground troops.
28 Apr 64	AN DIEM	Patrol made contact with VC. During this action Capt DE LA HUNTY received a facial wound from a round. The injury was slight and Capt DE LA HUNTY continued to perform his duties as training advisor.
29 Apr 64	AN DIEM	The same patrol engaged a VC sub-unit of approximately squad size. One US Special Forces member suffered a gunshot wound in the thigh and was evacuated for surgery.

HEADQUARTERS
DONG DA NATIONAL TRAINING CENTER
HUE - VIETNAM

APO 4182 02th April 1964

SUBJECT: Letter of Commendation
TO: Major DA COSTA, Jose M. S.3 Advisor at Dong Da
THROUGH: Senior Advisor MAAG PHU BAI

Dear Major DA COSTA, Jose M.

During the period from 7-6-1963 to 05-4-1964, you were appointed to the Dong Da National Training Center as S.3 Advisor.

In the above mentioned period of time, you, in application of your professional abilities and experiences, put all of your effort to co-operate and help this Training Center to fulfil its job.

In the domain of technique as well as specialist, your assistance resulted in outstanding successes. Your actions and the result achieved reflect great credit upon yourself and the Australian Army.

In the name of all Officers, NCOs and EM of the Dong Da National Training Center and myself, I sincerely thank you very much, I wish you the best luck, happiness and the success in your new assignment.

TRAN-HUU-TU
Infantry Lieutenant Colonel
Commandant the Dong-Da National
Training Center