

Australian Army Training Team  
Vietnam (AATTV)

Narrative, Annexes  
1 - 31 August 1962

**Series:** AWM95 - Australian Army  
commanders' diaries

**Item:** 1/2/3



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. SEBONG. OBE.

SECRET

MONTH AND YEAR.. AUGUST. 1962.....

Place and grid reference	Day of Month	Hour	Event or Information	Annex letter enclosure and number
SAIGON	1 Aug		I visited General TIMMES, Chief MAAG and Section Chiefs. I finalised details of troop dispositions with Colonel CAVANAGH, MAAG Army Section.	
SINGAPORE			The unit visited FARELF Jungle Warfare School	
SAIGON	2 Aug		I arranged publicity for the arrival of the unit on 3 August. Checked briefing lecture by Major KRAMER, US Army, who is to attend the forthcoming CGS Exercise in CANBERRA. Visited Minister THUAN, Secretary for Defence, with the Australian Ambassador.	
SINGAPORE			Unit paid by FARELF. Pay included an advance of one week plus an advance of 60 \$US to cover the first months messing at US establishments. The latter amount is to be recovered at the end of a member's tour of duty. Pay had been arranged to take place in SAIGON on 5 August, but a signal from the Embassy SAIGON advised that no \$US were available. In the event the Paymaster, Aust Army Force, FARELF, had no alternative but to obtain the necessary \$US currency in CHANGE ALLEY SINGAPORE.	

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COMMANDEERS DIARY  
NARRATIVE

Army Form C2118

UNIT/FORMATION  
AUSTRALIAN ARMY TRAINING TEAM  
REINAM

MONTH AND YEAR... AUGUST 1962

COMMANDING OFFICER

SECRET

Place and grid reference	Day of Month	Hour	Event or Information	Annex letter enclosure and number
SINGAPORE	3 Aug	1020	The unit departed SINGAPORE by PANAM Flight 808. (Singapore) the Australian Commissioner Singapore, had directed that publicity was to be avoided and that the unit was to emplane in civilian clothes. Members changed into uniform in flight.	
			HQ Aust Army movement instruction 1/62 of 28 Jul 62	
SAIGON		1230 (SVN Time)	The unit arrived at Tan Son Nhut airfield.	5
			The reception was admirably planned and executed. Considerable publicity was given to the arrival. The reception party included the Australian Ambassador and members of the Embassy Staff including the Services attache, Lt Col HOPTON, and US Officers Major General WEEDE and Brigadier General EGGLESTON plus other US officers who were directly concerned in reception and fostering.	
			Members of the unit were accommodated temporarily at the Majestic Hotel which is currently being used by the US as a Transit Centre.	
SAIGON	4 Aug		Activities as per attachment 5	

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COMMANDEERS  
NARRATIVE

Army Form C2118

AUSTRALIAN ARMY TRAINING TEAM VIETNAM  
UNIT/FORMATION

SECRET

MONTH AND YEAR..... AUGUST, 1962 .....

COMMANDING OFFICER.....

Place and grid reference	Day of Month	Hour	Event or Information	Annex letter enclosure and number
SAIGON	5 Aug		Activities as per attachment 13	
	6		Nonimal roll of detachments	16
	7		Orientation at detachments outstations and at HQ MAAG.	
	8&9		Lt Col MANN DSO moved to US Army Section Training Inspection Team HQ MAAG	
			Maj L. T. Fitzpatrick MBE and WO. J. Vezgoff moved to Adjutant Division HQ MAAG.	
			I attended a conference with General Paul D. Harkins Commander MACV and reported that members had settled in at their new stations.	
			I also discussed with General Harkins requests I had received from Vietnamese Cabinet Ministers for advice General Harkins agreed that I should accept these requests, discuss them with him and return an agreed line on them.	
	13 Aug	0600	I departed Tan Son Nhut airfield by military aircraft for HUE for the purpose of visiting the Civil Guard Training Centre at Hiep Khanh and I Corps Training Centre, Phu Bai.	
		0830	Lt Col MANN DSO departed for a visit to the Ranger Training Centre at Duc My.	
PHU BAI	14 Aug	0800	I moved by road from Phu Bai to visit Hiep Khanh	

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COM M A N D E R S D I A R Y  
N A R R A T I V E

Army Form C2118

UNIT/FORMATION  
COMMANDING OFFICER

**SECRET**

MONTH AND YEAR... AUGUST 1962

Place and grid reference	Day of Month	Hour	Event or Information	Annex letter enclosure and number
HIEP KHANH				
HUE		1530	I departed HUE for SAIGON arriving there at 1900 hrs	
SAIGON	16 Aug		I had an RO published laying down the Powers of Authority in relation to members integrated with US Training Teams.	16
QUANG NGAI	17 Aug		First contact with VC was made by Capt J. B. Healy and Lt P. R. Young of the Danang Detachment with Combined Studies. Details of this contact were not known until 20 August and then only by chance through the officer in charge of administration. Maj L. T. Fitzpatrick MBE, who learnt of the action when attending the daily briefing at the Tactical Information Centre at HQ MAAG, I was away visiting DUC MY at the time and was advised by priority signal by the administrative officer. <del>Details are included in the report attached.</del> AHQ was informed immediately by the administrative officer through the Australian Embassy channels of communication, although the correct channels which had been arranged for such eventualities was through the US Communications system. The	X

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MONTH AND YEAR... AUGUST 1962

COMMANDING OFFICER

**SECRET**

Place and grid reference	Day of Month	Hour	Event or Information	Annex letter enclosure and number
			Administrative officer had not been informed of this arrangement.	
		1730	Lt Col MANN DSO returned from DUC MY	
			Capt I. McKay R Aust Inf attached to the Jungle Training School FARELF visited Saigon with a visiting unit of the Malay Navy.	
	20 Aug	0800	I visited Nha Trang and Duc My accompanied by Capt I. McKay.	
			Signal to AHQ regarding first contact which occurred on 17 August.	
	21 Aug	1930	I returned from Duc My	
			Lt Col MANN DSO visited HQ III Corps and ARVN Field Command	
			Capt Healy and Lt Young reported at HQ MAAG	
	22 Aug	0800	Lt Col MANN DSO visited the Infantry and Armoured Schools at Thu Duc.	
			\$US 5000.00 was obtained from the Naval Disbursing Office on presentation of a cheque forwarded through the Embassy from AHQ. The cash was deposited with the Embassy for safe custody.	
	23 Aug		Capt Healy and Lt Young returned to Danang.	
	27 Aug	0730	I visited Danang.	

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NARRATIVE

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**SECRET**

MONTH AND YEAR..... AUGUST 1962.....

UNIT/FORMATION.....

COMMANDING OFFICER.....

Place and grid reference	Day of Month	Hour	Event or Information	Annex letter enclosure and number
	28 Aug	1930	I returned from Danang.	
	31 Aug		Lt Col MANN DSO visited Duc My to pay the members of the Australian detachment. Maj L. T. Fitzpatrick MBE and WO2 Vezgoff visited Danang, Phu Bai and Hiep Khanh for pay purposes and general liaison.	
	31 Aug	2230	An ambush occurred in the training area about 3000 KM from the Training Centre at Phu Bai. No Australians were directly involved although Capt R. I. George, who had been moving with the ARVN Company as an advisor during a night company attack exercise, left the company on completion of the exercise and moved back independently a few minutes ahead of the company. He apparently passed through the ambush position. Report No. 1 to AHQ for the month of August 1962	7

CONFIDENTIAL

WAR DIARY

ENCL 5

SCHEDULE OF ACTIVITY FOR RECEPTION OF AUSTRALIAN ARMY COMPONENT-  
VIETNAM

3 August 1962

- 1225 Estimated time of Arrival Tan Son Nhut on Pan American Flight PA 818 from Singapore.
- NOTE: Personnel will be met on board airplane and escorted to VIP lounge where they will be briefed as to administrative processing and schedule of activity while in Saigon.
- 1300-1400 Clear through customs, claim baggage and move by bus to billets.
- 1400-1430 Assignment of billets, deposit luggage and wash up.
- 1430-1515 Lunch.
- 1515-1600 Movement to and shopping at Post Exchange.
- 1600-1700 Movement to dispensary for check of medical records.
- 1700 Return to billets. Personnel are free until following morning.

4 August 1962

- 0730-0745 Movement to MAAG Conference Room.
- 0800-1100 MAAG Briefing.
- NOTE: Briefing will consist of welcome by COMUSMACV, CHMAAG and/or Chief, US Army Section; discussion of intelligence, VN Organizational structure, and highlights of significant operations; discussion of training objectives, policies and procedures and medical and informative briefings.
- 1100-1115 Discussion by Senior Officer, Australian Army Component-Vietnam.
- 1115-1130 Return to billets.
- 1215-1430 Movement to and lunch with Australian Ambassador. (149 Rue Pasteur, dress Working Uniform).
- 1430-1445 Return to billets. Saturday afternoon - No duty requirements.
- 1815-2000 Movement to and participate in reception by Australian Attache (68 Ngo Dinh Khoi, dress civilian suit).

5 August 1962

Sunday - No duty requirement.

6 August 1962

- 0730-0815 Enroute to Tan Son Nhut Airport, move to supply compound and draw individual weapons and field equipment, except the two members for Da-Nang who remain in Saigon.
- 0815-0930 Movement to Tan Son Nhut Airport. Depart for field assignments by special airplane.

CONFIDENTIAL

AATTV - NOMINAL ROLL OF DETACHMENTSSAIGON

Col F. P. Serong, OBE  
 Lt Col A. S. Mann, DSO  
 Maj L. T. Fitzpatrick, MBE  
 WO II J.E. Vezgoff

DUC MY - Ranger Training Centre

Maj L. G. Clark, MC  
 Capt B. Wade  
 Sgt J. Flannery  
 Sgt R. L. Weir

DANANG - Combined Studies

Capt J. B. Healy  
 Lt P. R. Young

PHU BAI - I Corps Training Centre

Capt A. Clunies-Ross  
 Capt K. E. Sticpewich  
 Capt R. I. George  
 Lt J. R. Clarke  
 WO II A. C. Toghill  
 WO II K. J. Hebblewhite  
 Sgt W. Kennedy  
 Sgt A. A. Young  
 Sgt R. Simpson  
 Sgt R. Robinson

HIEP KHANH - Civil Guard Training Centre

Capt B. R. Tinkler  
 Capt R. E. Hagerty  
 Capt M. M. Thompson  
 Lt I. J. Gollings  
 WO II R. E. Perkins  
 WO II B. M. Quee  
 WO II L. A. Williams  
 Sgt J. Cochrane  
 Sgt R. Pincott  
 Sgt W. Hacking

28/62  
S. P. Serong

AUSTRALIAN ARMY TRAINING TEAM, VIETNAM

REPORT NO. 1

FOR THE MONTH ENDING 31 AUGUST 1962

BY

COLONEL F. P. SERONG

COMMANDING

AHQ

1. EMPLOYMENT OF TEAM

All members are fully integrated and had commenced the duties of their appointments within ten days of arrival. Their duties are well within their capacities. They are handling them with confidence. The senior U.S. advisors at each location inform me that they, and the U.S. MAAG personnel, are more than satisfied with the professional standard of the Australians.

A detailed list of current appointments is attached at Appendix A. These appointments are of local significance only, and will change from time to time to meet the personnel situation at each location. It is my intention, having regard to the need to maintain a balance between continuity and variety, to exchange certain individuals between posts from time to time.

I am particularly pleased with the employment that has been arranged in the first instance, for Lt Col Mann. Col Mann is one of two Lieutenant Colonels (teamed with Lt Col Bolling, US Army) who had a small group of officers inspecting training installations, and reporting to Chief MAAG. This appointment will give him quickly a wide and deep knowledge of the entire military structure of the Vietnamese forces; and it is one to which he is well fitted to make a most effective contribution.

head

2. STATE OF TEAM

The men have been well received and have adjusted quickly to their new environment. Their relations with their US counterparts are well founded on mutual respect and a high degree of mature common-sense, plus a scale of hospitality and goodwill on the part of the U.S. personnel that goes far beyond any reasonable expectation.

There is a little chafing at local movement restrictions imposed by ARVN for personnel security reasons, particularly among the young officers, who would like to go hunting in the hills and cannot. They will get over it.

Mail, so far, has been slow. This is a matter of fitting in to the system. It will work itself into an acceptable pattern in the next few weeks.

Health has been good. Four cases of mild diarrhoea, and one injured knee (twisted jumping from a jeep - three days no duty). One minor case of blood poisoning - three days in Nha-Trang hospital.

Paying has been effected. Dollar problem is solved.

### 3. RECEPTION

Reception arrangements in Saigon, and transit arrangements in Singapore left nothing to be desired. Planning and implementation were excellent.

### 4. INCIDENTS

AHQ will have received one cablegram and one signal message describing the Healy/Young contact of 17 July. I am now able to advise, in amplification, that the two officers concerned were invited to accompany a small party of U.S. Army officers helicopter borne who were inspecting logistic installations in the I Corps area, for territorial familiarisation. Engine failure occurred in transit between two such installations. The speed of re-action of the ARVN helicopter-borne relief party was a feature of the incidents. Both officers conducted themselves creditably. *August*

I should mention that the report of this incident arrived in Saigon while I was absent in Duc-My. It took some time to reach me. Meanwhile, the Administrative Officer aware of the need to inform AHQ quickly, but, at that stage not fully aware of the necessary mechanics, dispatched the cable through Embassy channels. My signal message followed on my return. These are mild growing pains. They will disappear. A further incident, not coming within the category calling for a special signal but worth mentioning here, occurred at Phu Bai. On the night of 30 August 1962 at 2230 hours, one company of ARVN infantry was ambushed by the VC, within the training area. The company was returning from night tactical training. Casualties were two ARVN soldiers killed and eight wounded. VC strength was estimated at from four to five men, firing light automatic weapons. No Australian personnel were directly involved in the action.

Captain George had been with this group and departed from the training area a few minutes before the incident.

There will probably be several such reports.

### 5. PUBLICITY

A full coverage of the contingent's arrival was provided in local English French, Chinese, Vietnamese and Service newspapers, and Radio Hanio. Little since.

6. RAAF DAKOTA

Any information on the movements of this vehicle would be appreciated.

7. CONCLUSION

The end of the month has been designated as an Assassination Period with the targets a short list of distinguished local residents. Receipt of my Report No. 2 will indicate that the project has been less than completely successful.

Copies:  
COMUSMACV  
Embassy  
File  
Diary (2) ✓

*F P Lewis*

Colonel  
Commanding

31 August 64

Appendix A  
Australian Army Training Team, Vietnam  
Report No. 1

APPOINTMENTS OF DETACHMENTS

1. The Australian Training Team is divided among five sections:

a. Saigon  
Colonel Serong  
Lt Col Mann  
Major Fitzpatrick  
WO II Vozgoff

b. Duc My Ranger Training Center

Major Clark  
Capt Wade  
Sgt Weir  
Sgt Flannery

c. Da Nang Special Forces

Capt Healy  
Capt Young

d. Phu Bai

Capt Clunies-Ross  
Capt George  
Capt Sticpewich  
Lt Clark  
WO II Foghill  
WO II Hobbwhite  
Sgt Robinson  
Sgt Simpson  
Sgt Kennedy  
Sgt Young

e. Plep Khanh

Capt Tinkler  
Capt Thompson  
Capt Hagerty  
Lt Gollings  
WO II Perkins  
WO II Quise  
WO II Williams  
Sgt Hacking  
Sgt Pincott  
Sgt Cochrane

2. The roles which the AATT have been allocated within these training centers are as follows:

3. Duc My - Major Clark, Chief Training Advisor at Ranger Training Center. This involves presenting advice to the Commandant (Colonel Son), through the Senior Adviser (Major Harper) on the following subjects:
  - a. Conduct of the Jungle Swamp and Mountain School.
  - b. Ranger replacement training.
  - c. Ranger unit training.
4. Capt Wade is Deputy Chief Advisor to the Jungle, Swamp and Mountain School, this involves assisting the Chief JSMS Advisor (Capt McKenzie) in advice to the Commandant, JSMS (Capt Hai) in training at
  - a. Base camp
  - b. Swamp camp
  - c. Mountain camp
  - d. Jungle camp
5. Sgt Weir is N.C.O. Advisor on swamp training, in addition he is N.C.O. Advisor on the weapons committee responsible for weapon training including construction and use of all firing ranges.
6. Sgt Flannery is N.C.O. Advisor on jungle training, in addition he is N.C.O. Advisor to the Tactics Committee which is responsible for squad, platoon and company field tactical training. The supervision and training of the newly raised demonstration platoon is included in this task.
7. Da Nang - Capt Healy has <sup>control of</sup> commanded a training programme for the Security Company of the Nong Son Coal Mines. This includes weapon handling, patrolling, ambushes, security and intelligence training. Most members of the company have had previous military experience and are absorbing instruction readily.
8. Capt Young has assisted in the training of a Civil Action Group and will assist in the training of a ARVN Ranger Company.
9. Hiep Khanh - The members have been divided into three main committees.

TACTICS

Capt Tinkler  
 Lt Gollings  
 WO II Williams  
 Sgt Pincott

WEAPONS

Capt Thompson  
 WO II Quee  
 Sgt Cochrane  
 Sgt Hacking

GENERAL SUBJECTS

Capt Hagerty  
 WO II Perkins

10. In addition the following members have extra regimental duties as indicated:

WO II Williams - Member Mess Council  
Sgt Cochrane - Water Plant Attendant

11. Phu Bai - The members have been allocated to three committees:

LIGHT WEAPONS COMMITTEE

Capt Sticpewich  
Lt Clark  
WO II Teghill  
Sgt Young

HEAVY WEAPONS COMMITTEE

Capt George  
WO II Hebblewhite  
Sgt Kennedy  
Sgt Robinson

INTELLIGENCE AND RECONNAISSANCE  
AND SPECIAL SUBJECTS

Sgt Simpson

War Diary

PERSONAL & CONFIDENTIAL

AUSTRALIAN ARMY TRAINING TEAM-VIETNAM  
Saigon, Vietnam

17 August 1962

Dear T P

Apart from the formal monthly report, I shall endeavour to keep up to you a D/O letter of the type I used to write from Rangoon.

STAGING IN SINGAPORE:

Well handled by the Aust Army Forces People in Singapore. Barrack accommodation a little crowded, but not too bad. They went to Nee Soon, in the centre of the Island, instead of Changi, which we had planned originally.

Arrival was exactly on time, and the group were off the airfield and into the buses in five minutes.

Commissioner Singapore was worried about publicity and requested that the group leave Singapore in civilian clothes with no publicity. Apparently this sensitivity derived from the Malayan position. We complied. It meant changing into uniform on the aircraft, but that was simple, if a little hilarious.

Typhus injections were given in Singapore where they are routine.

OWN MOVEMENTS:

Meanwhile, after the arrival of the troops in Singapore, I had gone ahead to Saigon. I arrived on schedule, was met by Chief of Staff MACV, 21c MAAG, the Ambassador and Attache all old friends.

Next day I checked in with General Harkins (MACV) and General Timmes (MAAG) who had returned by then from up country. Also with Defense Secretary Thuan and the Interior Secretary.

The work plan arranged with General Harkins is, after a month or so of orientation, for me to prepare a schedule of projects that I can work on, and then he and I will arrange them in priority list. Personal contact, 2 1/2 hrs a day access. Very satisfactory.

Next week I shall spend with the group in the field to check on their settling in, the following four weeks, I'll be moving around the country, observing operations. After that I'll be ready to go into business.

RECEPTION:

Planning and preparatory arrangements were smooth and comprehensive resulting in a well conducted reception. Chief of Staff MACV, and 21c MAAG again, with a large number of senior officers.

Large press coverage. I gave a press conference. It went to every ones satisfaction including the Ambassador, who sat in, and the MACV man (title so far unknown) whose responsibility it is to see we say the right things. As both of them went out of their way to congratulate me on it, we can assume it was all right.

The Australian Community, small though it is, turned to very well and took the boys in hand. Lunch by the Ambassador, reception by the Attache, Sunday recreational activities by the local residents.

Once again accommodation was rather tight for the weekend while all were here.

#### OUT FITTING:

No problems. I was surprized to find the U. S. Army still does not issue steel plated boots, though they have some in development. They have some contracts let to Japanese manufactures to put a steel insert within the sole of a rubber and canvas boot that looks like the Malayan jungle boot.

Unfortunately I don't know how our development on this thing is proceeding. Could I be informed? With perhaps a sample pair or two (size  $7\frac{1}{2}$  !).

#### BRIEFING:

A morning on talking over the local scene was useful. An officer from each up-country station came down to meet the groups and escort them back Very helpful.

#### DEPARTURE:

Slightly delayed because someone had stolen the aircraft; but another came forward a little latter; and all departed. Subsequently, they have been reported safely arrived.

Healy and Young remain down here for a few days local instruction before proceeding to Danang. Both got some useful extra instruction in Singapore, as well.

#### MONEY:

There has been some confusion, with letters and cables going forth and yon about placing dollars with the Embassy here. Unfortunately it had not been made clear to Canberra that:

- a. The Embassy holds no dollars up to now.
- b. No bank here is permitted to hold or issue dollars.

The only people who have dollars are the U. S. Embassy, and, as from now, our own. I hope our finance people can be made to understand this, and stop looking for other ways of giving us dollars.

I think I missed a trick here in my liaison visit. I should have arranged for the U. S. Embassy or Army, to make dollars available to our Embassy on request, against a Washington, Canberra adjustment. That could be done, even now. But, to make sure we don't default on our mess bills, it will be necessary to send dollars monthly in the diplomatic bag. (Later - dollars being obtained by arrangement with MAAG).

GOSSIP:

I see on the CINC PAC-MACV Signals that Admiral Felt is asking what news of New Zealanders for Vietnam. Also he asks does MACV want an Australian Air Force Officer, they were about to rush off "NO" but I asked them to alter it to "Not at this stage" to avoid blocking future traffic. It appears that Admiral Felt's recollection of the Canberra Conference is a little blurred. He thinks our Air Force has undertaken (in principal) to provide an Air transport element (plural Aircraft) for general use, as distinct from the single Dakota, for special use.

RAAF DAKOTA:

Last heard, in Singapore, this aircraft was standing by waiting for the conclusion of an agreement between Dept of Air, Canberra and some anonymous authority in Vietnam. This suits the RAAF Butterworth very well because it gives them a spare Dakota, and they'll be happy for it to go this way indefinitely.

Likewise, they are preparing an arrangement that, for the aircraft's to and fro journey, Butterworth to Saigon, it goes via the RAAF installations in Thailand. Unfortunately, they are within their rights, though it is far outside the spirit of arrangement in which we visualized (over optimistically) that the return flight would be Saigon/Singapore/Butterworth.

ADVISE TO VN GOVT (GVN):

I have been asked by the Interior Minister and the Civil Affairs Minister, both of whom have certain direct responsibilities in the conduct of operations, to advise them more specifically, to make myself available on request from them to discuss such aspects of their administration as they might want my help on.

This of course, puts us right where we came in on the Quang Ngai project. So I acknowledged their request politely, and said, I'd be orienting myself for some time yet. I reported this to General Harkins next day. He said it was a good thing, and proposed that I encourage them, discuss it then with him, then go back and give them our agreed upon answer. So that's cleared up.

RESPONSIBILITY OF MACV:

The anomalous arrangement whereby General Harkins commutes between here and Bangkok with a H. Q. in each place is becoming daily more unwieldy. It is looking like another H. Q. may be formed to sit on top of both MAC Thai and MACV, almost certainly located Saigon.

Today after we'd talked about the GVN (above) business, General Harkins invited me to accompany him from time to time on his Thai visits. A general invitation; nothing specific. May be a while before I'm clear of local commitments to develop that angle, but it should be useful.

STATUS OF FORCES AGREEMENT:

You will have received my cable by now. There is not much more that can be said outside of what Ambassador Hill and I have put in our respective cables. Knowing these people (he rather better than I) we both feel that it is essential to spell out a certain amount of detail-in fact, as the Americans have done. The short Canberra version left almost every thing to the goodwill of whoever may be responsible at the time. This will not do. We need this for times of stress, and in times of stress, goodwill temporarily evaporates.

In particular, as I cabled, specific mention of customs exemption is critical. Without that, the whole basis of our logistic support against repayment (to say nothing of the actuarial basis of our allowances) is in jeopardy.

CONCLUSION:

Things are in hand and going well. I'm looking forward to welcoming you on your final visit.

Yours sincerely,

*Ted Searcy*