

Australian Army Training Team Vietnam (AATTV)

Narrative, Annexes
1 - 29 September 1962

Series: AWM95 - Australian Army
commanders' diaries

Item: 1/2/4

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Army Form C2118

C O M M A N D E R S D I A R Y

N A R R A T I V E

SECRET

MONTH AND YEAR... SEPTEMBER 1962

UNIT/FORMATION. Australian Army Training
Team - Vietnam
COMMANDING OFFICER. Col F. E. SERGON...
OBE

Place and grid reference	Day of Month	Hour	Event or Information	Annex letter enclosure and number
	1		<p>Major General Paul CULLEN DSO ED Commander COMMZ departed</p> <p>Subsequent to his departure I have had two messages from General CULLEN expressing his appreciation of the arrangements made for him during his visit.</p> <p>It was a hasty programme with more breadth than depth and confined to the hinterland of Saigon. However he did get a good briefing, some useful interviews with senior officers and met several local residents whose opinions should help him form a background.</p>	
	3		<p>Had a very detailed visit to CHU CHI (the "Show Place" strategic hamlet) with Major CONG of Civic Action Ministry. I formed the impression that the controlling group of citizens had lapsed into inertia. Several basic procedures are neglected. This undoubtedly is a phase that must come in the full development of the concept, but the time is not yet.</p>	
PLEIKU	4 - 6		<p>Visited II Corps at Pleiku and Kontum I saw one aggressive regiment. I noted that four of the nine regiments in the Corps are on mobile operations of sorts. This is good in the present context.</p>	

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C O M M A N D E R S D I A R Y

N A R R A T I V E

SECRET

MONTH AND YEAR.....

UNNISIA-ARMY TRAINING AREA VIETNAM

UNIT/FORMATION.....

COMMANDING OFFICER. Col. F. B. SERONG...
OBE

Place and grid reference	Day of Month	Hour	Event or Information	Annex letter enclosure and number
			The Montagnard resettlement programme is breaking down from poor food distribution in the Kontum area. This could be serious and I have warned both General Harkins and the Minister for Civic Action.	
Saigon	6		Capt Tinkler of Hiep Khanh asked permission to visit Saigon to discuss some problems between himself and US personnel. I told him that time (in this case 8-10 weeks) would remove this problem and that much of it was two sided Lt Col W. D. Jamieson of the Australian Staff College, who has been visiting under British auspices, called. He has had a useful trip but somewhat restricted due to UK affiliation.	
	8		Talked to the Minister for Civic Action. I advised him to insert checking trains to visit Strategic Hamlets at three monthly intervals after the departure of the initial cadre.	
PHUOC TUY	10		Visited Phuoc Tuy province with Major CONG landing at Vung Tau (Cap St Jacques) by L20. It is a well conducted area. One old, but good, strategic hamlet (the very first and	

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COMMANDERS DIARY

NARRATIVE

Army Form C2118

MONTH AND YEAR..... SEPT 62

AUSTRALIAN ARMY TRAINING TEAM - ATNAM

UNIT/FORMATION.....

COMMANDING OFFICER Col F. B. SERONG
OBE

SECRET

Place and grid reference	Day of Month	Hour	Event or Information	Annex letter enclosure and number
			the people are proud of it). Operation "SUNRISE" I fear, is too big. When it is completed I wonder whether the first attack will come from the outside, or inside. The province personnel, CG and SDC, are very grateful for gifts of Australian milk. Part of the British Mission (HINDMARSH) was visiting at the same time. The party included some Malays who opined that "its different from Malaya and you need to keep flexible" How very true. Planning here is sound and apparently well in hand.	
			Monthly Report for August to AHQ	8.
PHU BAI	11		I visited Phu Bai. All is well.	
LAO BAO	12		Reconnaissance of Route 9 to Laos border post at Lao Bao. Special Forces project nearby. Lao Bao is a former French political prison. Many unlocated AP mines around.	
HIEP KHANH	13		Change of COs is projected. Reduction of US personnel being effected - also at Phu Bai. Necessary therefore for Australian personnel to take an increased part in administration.	
HUE			Most of Capt TINKLER's problems solved. I attended a dinner given by the Minister for Civic Action for General UNDERWOOD's visiting party. Received a letter from the CGS.	

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NARRATIVE

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MONTH AND YEAR..... SEPT 62

SECRET

AUSTRALIAN ARMY TRAINING TEAM VIETNAM

UNIT/FORMATION.....

COMMANDING OFFICER Col. F.B. SERONG OBE

Place and grid reference	Day of Month	Hour	Event or Information	Annex letter enclosure and number
			giving guidance for ministerial relationships and SEAFO.	
			Acquittances for pay messing & billeting expenses and TA to Paymaster in Chief. Total \$US 3449.16 SVN 34,927.	
SAIGON	14		Arranged with HSAS for personal house procurement. Lt Col MANN DSO arranged for a jeep to be made available for HQ personnel. Jeep actually belongs to the Training Inspection Team. Australian Embassy advised that Cambodian sources report a Viet Cong directive that "Australian experts be shot on sight".	
	15		Farewell dinner to Brigadier CLEFT, Chief of Canadian Section of ICC and welcome to his successor, Brigadier PECK. Dined by one CHIN WONG (local Chinese millionaire) who suggests that the economy of SVN is grinding to a halt.	
LONG XUYEN	17		Visited Long Xuyen Province with Major Cong. Local hills (karst outcrops) are occupied by the Viet Cong. Checked hamlets, agrovilles and Cambodian border from the air. I satisfied myself that, in this area at least, the cross border traffic is domestic.	

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NARRATIVE

UNIT/FORMATION...VNAM

MONTH AND YEAR... SEPT. 62

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COMMANDING OFFICER Col F. B. SERONG ...
OBE

Place and grid reference	Day of Month	Hour	Event or Information	Annex letter enclosure and number
			Insurgents here include Cambodian bandits who are not VC, but occasionally collaborate.	
BEN CAT			Major L. T. FITZPATRICK MBE and WO J. VEZGOFF accompanied the Ambassador, Mr. B.C.HILL, to Ben Cat by helicopter.	
PHU BAI	18		<p>Lt Col A.S. MANN DSO departed for a training inspection visit to I Corps area.</p> <p>I spoke to Brigadier General EGGLESTON, Chief of Army Section, HQ MAAG, regarding Lt Col OLSEN, I Corps, who is sick and regarding the production of jungle boots. I warned him against these for long duration patrols.</p> <p>I arranged to work up a satisfactory SOP for Terminal Guidance Beacons with Lt Col JOHNSON, Army Aviation MAAG, and Capt RIVIERE of Army Aviation, MACV.</p> <p>Attended a dinner given by General HARKINS to General DALEY (Research and Development) WASHINGTON.</p>	
	20		Visit of General, Sir Stephen WEIR, NZ Ambassador.	
	21		Monthly Senior Advisors Conference at MAAG. Spoke briefly on ambushes.	

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AUSTRALIAN ARMY TRAINING TEAM VIETNAM

UNIT/FORMATION.....

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COMMANDING OFFICER. Col. F.B. SERONG...
OBE

Place and grid reference	Day of Month	Hour	Event or Information	Annex letter enclosure and number
	24		Visited Qui Nhon with Major Cong. Saw Force Republicaine and "Combat Hamlets". Major L. T. FITZPATRICK MBE and WO VEZGOFF departed for Nha Trang.	
	25		Briefing by General SHARP, Commanding Marine Corps.	
	27		Departed for HUE accompanied by WO VEZGOFF who will pay detachments at Danang, Phu Bai and Hiep Khanh. Bad typhoon damage at Phu Bai and Hiep Khanh is causing some delay in training. I was able to stop a move to relieve Major STANOWICH, Senior Advisor at Hiep Khanh. This would have been most unfortunate from every point of view. Col DENNO, Senior Advisor I Corps arranged. Overall situation in Hiep Khanh is now quite good.	
	28		Returned to Saigon.	
	29		Discussed future strategic policy with General PUTNAM (JS).	

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Mar. 1962

Australian Army Training Team, VIETNAM
Report No.2
For Month Ending 30 September 1962
by
Colonel F. P. STRONG
Commanding

AHQ.

WELL BEING

1. The team continues to enjoy the best of good relations with its US colleagues, Vietnamese counterparts and the civil community. During the month under report, having settled in, it is beginning to make an effective contribution to the overall effort - a contribution which is the subject of much favourable comment, included among which were some very encouraging and appreciative observations by Major General Richard Weede (USMC), Chief of Staff MACV at a MACV staff briefing last week.
2. The edge of a typhoon struck the Hue area on 25 Sep & very severely damaged troop accommodation and training facilities at both Phu Bai and Kien Khanh.
3. A nasty ambush with several GVN personnel lost occurred on the Nha Trang - Duc My road in the same week.
4. A report has been received from Cambodia (published in a Cambodian/Chinese vernacular newspaper) that VC in Vietnam have been instructed to regard Australian team members as priority targets who should be shot on sight. This low grade story has brightened up the lives of the lads-if that were necessary. They appear to regard it as a compliment. In all the areas of our concern there has been a slight but discernable increase in the scale of insurgent activity. This is largely reaction. Details of employment of members of the AATTB are shown in Appendix A.

HEALTH

5. My reply to the AHQ signal message on plague will have been noted. This is a very minor outbreak and as such is not uncommon in the area, but it is surprisingly early in the year. There is no cause for alarm; but wisely, the most complete precautions have been directed - and affected. (MAAG directive enclosed)
6. Minor injuries continue and occasional gastro-intestinal troubles. List is attached at Appendix B.

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MORALE

7. Good. The men at Phu Bai and Hiep Khanh find the pace a little slow particularly with the enforced inactivity after the recent typhoon damage and also as both establishments are at an early phase of the training cycle.
8. We have begun programmed visits to Saigon. These are a welcome, and essential, break from the environment of the training establishments. They are however, extremely expensive & it is unlikely that the men will be able to afford as much of such recreation as we can provide. This also applies to the scheduled recreational visits to Hong Kong. The need for such a break exists and the provision of passage facility is appreciated but to take advantage of it will strain the man's economy.
9. I am about to take advantage of an offer by the Special Forces to attach individual WOs & NCOs to specific projects for short periods (on temporary detachment from their normal stations) for observation of the Special Forces Village Defense programme. In addition to providing some necessary/both of scene & occupation, this will give these men an insight into one of the theatres most significant military developments - the harnessing of the military potential of the hamlet of which there are thousands.
10. Captain Clunies Ross, during the last week of September was the first Australian officer to be included in the new MAAG programme which provides the opportunity for officer stationed in training establishments to observe some of the large preplanned operations. He accompanied the Senior Advisor I Corps, who was himself observing a regimental sweep South of Da Nang.

GENERAL

11. It is my opinion that, in the perspective of twelve months from now, the month of September of this year will be seen as the point at which this war turned in the Government's favour. This statement is based on the following indications:
 - a. a rise in the number of ARVN operations of significant scope particularly in III Corps
 - b. the stature & growth of the strategic hamlet programme & the failure of the VC to block it,
 - c. the clearly apparent logistic problems of the VC
 - d. the considerable increase in intelligence material now coming spontaneously the people.

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RAAF DAKOTA

12. There is no information held here on the arrival date of this aircraft. If there is any way in which we can help RAAF with the launching of their part of this project, we should be happy to provide the maximum assistance. They may be assured of a warm welcome.

F. P. Serong

F. P. SERONG
Colonel

5 Oct 62

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Appendix A to
Australian Army Training Team - VIETNAM

Report No. 2

APPOINTMENTS OF DETACHMENTS

Reference Appx A to Report No.1

1. DUC MY Detachment

No change.

2. HIEP KHANH Detachment

Capt Tinkler : Chief Tactics Committee
Assistant Operations Officer
President Mess Council

Capt Thompson : Chief, Weapons Committee
Recreation & Special Services Officer
Bar officer

Capt Hagerty Chief, General Subjects Committee
Mess Officer

Lt Collings Tactics Committee
Motor Officer
Officer responsible for Intelligence Briefings

WO. Perkins Sergeant Major of Centre

WO. Quee Weapons Committee
Recreation & Special Services

WO. Williams Operations Sergeant, Mess Council member

Sgt. Cochrane General Subjects Committee
Water & Generator Attendant

Sgt. Hacking Tactics Committee, Water
& Generator attendant

Sgt. Pincott Motor NCO.

3. PHU BAI Detachment

No change

4. DANANG Detachment

No change

Appendix B to
Australian Army Training Team-VIETNAM
Monthly Report No.2

CASUALTIES

WO Perkins HIEP KHANH Detachment admitted to 8 Field Hospital DANANG with strained back on 21 Sep; discharged 25 Sep.

Sgt Flannert DUC MY Detachment sprained ankle; foot in plasters; remaining on duty.