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Police Administration Division

24 April 1958

E. C. Updike, Head, Civil Guard Section

Field Trip to Rung-Sat, Long-An Province,
11 April 1958

On 11 April 1958, Mr. E. C. Updike and Interpreter Nguyen-Ngoc-Cam, accompanied Colonel Le-Khuong, Director General of the Civil Guard, on a field trip to the Rung-Sat District, Long-An Province. This district is South of the Saigon area along the Saigon River. The word "Rung" means jungle and "Sat" means near; therefore, the actual meaning of the word is jungle near the sea.

The entire district of Rung-Sat is approximately one-third muddy jungle and two-thirds water. The population consists of about 4,000 residents and 2,000 transients, fishermen, etc.

The inspection party consisted of the Director General, Lt. Col. Huynh-Van-Tu, Inspector of Zone II; Major Ky-Quan-Than, Medical Officer; Captain Le-Xuan-Dieu, Plans & Operation Officer; Lt. Nguyen-Van-Thien, Secretary to the Director General; and Second Lt. Ruan, Psychological Warfare Officer.

The Rung-Sat District is the last stronghold of the Binh-Xuyen rebels after they were driven from Saigon. There is some Viet-Cong and Binh-Xuyen activity in this area at the present time.

The inspection party arrived at the Nha-Be docks about 15 kms south of Saigon at 8 A.M. and embarked on three gunboats which were borrowed from the military of Long-An Province. The party continued south along the Nha-Be River for about 90 minutes and arrived at the first post of Civil Guard. The Rung-Sat District is covered by one company of Civil Guard of 158 men which has 6 posts throughout the district.

The first post in the district is at the Village of Bong-Gieng. There are 15 men stationed at this post. Each man has a French rifle and they had one automatic rifle. The post is a typical antiquated French fort made of mud thatched huts and barbed wire. They had no communications and no transportation. The men were poorly uniformed and their condition could be described as very poor. In questioning the men at this post it was found they have to walk about 2 km to a village to secure fresh water

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fit for cooking and drinking. They have to purchase this water from their own salaries at a cost of VN\$3.50 per gallon.

The inspection party left this post and continued on for about 20-25 km and stopped at the second post named Ong-Nghia. At this post there are listed 14 men; however, 7 of the men were attending school. Each had one French rifle and stated they had sufficient ammunition. This post is also an antiquated French mud fort located at the junction of three rivers. They have no communications and no transportation. In questioning the men at this post as to their duties, they stated the principal duty was to control smuggling and traffic on the river. The question was put to the officer in charge as to how he could control the river without means of transportations. He stated, well, he had to guard the beacon light which was located next to the fort. It was pointed out that this could be shot out by a high powered 22 rifle. He had no answer to this. Conditions at this post could be described as terrible. The men cannot walk from the post due to the mud and the lack of boats for transportation. It was pointed out to the inspection party by the undersigned that this was a useless installation.

The inspection party continued about 25 km and arrived at company headquarters at Hoang-Dieu. At this station there is a village of about 300 families. Upon arriving at the dock it was found that large welcoming signs for the Americans and the Director General had been put on the pillars at the dock and a large Vietnamese flag on one side and a large U.S. flag on the other side. About 40 school children were lined up to greet the inspection party. The school children were being taught by members of the Civil Guard. The camp was clean and neat according to the standards of Vietnam. The village fathers who had lunch with the inspection team stated the village was founded about 4 years ago. Fishing is very good and they make a good living at their trade, selling their fish to commercial boats from Saigon which call periodically. They stated it was impossible to raise any vegetables, that all the water is salt and as the water rises it covers the entire land area. When they have high water the village company headquarters is totally surrounded. Company headquarters has no transportation but has one radio set which gives them contact with Civil Guard provincial headquarters at Long-An.

After leaving the company headquarters, the inspection team inspected the post at Dinh-An about 18 km from company headquarters. There were 10 Civil Guardsmen at this point. The conditions at this post could be considered desperate. No communication, no transportation--it is an old French mud fort; buildings are falling down and the men cannot get away from this post due to the mud and water. The men were poorly uniformed and in very sad

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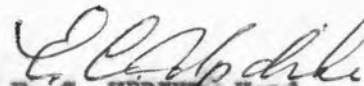
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condition. Some of the men had their wives and children living at the post.

The inspection party returned to Nha-Be about 5 P.M.

CONCLUSIONS:

After a complete inspection of this district there is no question but that the Civil Guard in this area is in deplorable condition as to transportation, communications and equipment. From conversations with the Director General there is no question but that if this company discontinued its outposts and was quartered at company headquarters, patrol tactics would do a much more efficient job in policing this area. It would also afford the children of the Civil Guardsmen the opportunity of an education and would assist greatly the morale of this company. It is difficult for the undersigned to ascertain how any organization can keep men stationed in such areas and under such conditions without total desertion from the force. This inspection trip revealed to the undersigned the poorest conditions ever observed of the Civil Guard.


E. C. UPDIKE, Head
Civil Guard Section

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