

Series: AWM95
Australian Army commanders' diaries
[Vietnam]

Headquarters units

Item number: 1/4/4

Item: Headquarters, 1 Australian
Task Force

Narrative

Duty Officer's log

[1-31 Jul 1966]

COVERING LETTER

Reference No.....

To: OIC, Military History Section, AHQ.

1. I enclose Commanders Diary (AF C 2118) (Adapted) as indicated at Part 2.

2. Please return receipt below.

(Signature) *[Signature]*

Appointment.....

(OC Unit or senior staff officer)

SECRET

ORIGINAL
~~DUPLICATE~~

Strike out where
not applicable

COMMANDERS DIARY

OF

Unit or Formation HQ 1 AUSTRALIAN TASK FORCE

From 1 JULY 1966

To 31 JULY 1966

INDEX

Narrative (AF C 2118)

ANNEXES

- * A Duty officer's log
- * B Messages connected with log
- C Operation orders and instructions issued
- D Operation orders and instructions received
- * E Sitreps issued
- F Orders of battle and location reports issued
- G Intelligence reports and summaries issued; appreciations made
- H Administrative orders and instructions issued
- I Administrative orders and instructions received
- J Administrative reports and bulletins; ammunition returns; field strength returns
- * K Standing orders issued
- L Commander's policy and demi-official letters
- M Action reports (if required)
- N Other papers, eg, maps and diagrams, air photos, reports from sub units
- O Periodical summaries of operations
- Z Top Secret Supplementary Diary

Enclosure Numbers

338	to	606
FRAG O	1-2-66	to 1-6-66
OPLAN	2/66	to 31 JULY
	1 JULY	to 31 JULY
R723/1/8	to
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R17/1/1	to
	to
SOPS	1	to 2
	to
	1	to 4
	to
	to

† NIL
† RETAINED
† Despatched to

on.....

* Only to be included during operations.
† Cross out whichever is not applicable.

COMMANDERS DIARIES INSTRUCTIONS

AIM

1. The aim of a Commanders Diary is to provide data on which to base future improvements in Army training, equipment, organization and administration, and to furnish historians with a record of the activities of units and formations in operational and non-operational periods in peace and in war.

GENERAL

2. Entries are to be made daily on AF C 2118 (Adapted) each entry being initialled by the officer detailed to keep it.
3. Commanders Diaries will conform with the rules for drafting orders given in "Staff Duties (Australia)" Chapter 2, Section 12.

RESPONSIBILITY

During Non-operational Periods

4. A Commanders Diary is to be compiled by commanders of all formations.

During Operational Periods (1)

5. A Commanders Diary is to be compiled in duplicate by:
 - a. Commanders of all formations.
 - b. Each branch of the staff at formation headquarters commanded by a brigadier or above.
 - c. Heads of services not below the rank of lieutenant colonel.
 - d. Personal staffs and officers holding special appointments.
 - e. Unit commanders.
 - f. Commanders of a detachment of a unit when so ordered.

COMPILATION

6. Both original and duplicate copies are to consist of:
 - a. Cover (AF C 2119) (Adapted).
 - b. Index as printed on cover.
 - c. Narrative (AF C 2118) (Adapted).
 - d. Annexes as shown in the Index.
7. All details of the unit or formation (if a detachment is concerned, the name of the parent unit), period covered and enclosure numbers of the annexes are to be shown on the cover. If there has been a change of command since the last report, the date of assumption by the new commanding officer is to be included.
8. The annexes are to be assembled in the groups shown on the cover. If there are no enclosures for an annex NIL will be entered on the cover. If additional annexes are convenient for a particular headquarters, starting at B.

for operations form Annex "Z", "TOP SECRET" the document. It is to be prepared and disposed of as

ENTS

s as well as map references), establishment, equipment
orders given.
e day's fighting, including company movements.
mander with regard to equipment, tactics, organization

tential importance.

o officers, men and equipment.

ment captured.

employed in the time not accounted for. The type of

and to save work as much information as possible is to
ments issued and received, routine returns, etc. All
and the time of receipt or despatch is to be given.

re annexes, but need not give a precis of any of them.

DISPOSAL

13. **Original Commander's Diary.** This is to be forwarded monthly, unless otherwise ordered, by the seventh day of the succeeding month direct to AHQ.

14. **Duplicate Commander's Diary.** This must be clearly marked as a duplicate. It is to be sent separately from the original to AHQ one month after the original has been despatched but not before the former has been acknowledged.

15. When overseas, both copies of diaries are to be sent through the Army Records organization in the overseas theatre but at different times.

16. **TOP SECRET Supplementary Diaries.**

a. The documents referred to in Paragraph 9 together with a list of them made out on AF C 2118 (Adapted) must be placed in separate cover (AF C 2119) (Adapted). All details must be filled in and the cover clearly marked in red: "ANNEX Z — OFFICER ONLY". It may be convenient to group the papers by appendices.

b. Supplementary diaries must be forwarded under the normal rules for TOP SECRET correspondence, to AHQ. The inner envelope must be plainly marked:

TOP SECRET

ANNEX Z to

Commanders Diary of..... (Formation or Unit)

From..... to..... (Dates)

c. The duplicate supplementary diaries must be despatched as shown in Paragraph 14 as soon as receipt of the original has been acknowledged.

COI MANDERS DIARY NARRATIVE

UNIT/FORMATION HQ 1 ATF

MONTH AND YEAR JULY 66.

REFERENCE MAP VIETNAM 1:50,000 SHEET 6429-IV-NE

COMMANDING OFFICER Brig. Jackson

Place and grid reference	Date	Time	Event or information	Annex letter and enclosure number
			<p>The Task Force had a very full programme during the month, including three major operations and three minor operations, continuation of TAOR patrolling and further development of the base area. All operations had the dual aims of destroying enemy forces and installations in our area of responsibility and of extending the protective umbrella between the VC major forces and the areas of dense civic population.</p> <p><u>OPERATIONS:</u></p> <p>Operation ENOGERA concluded successfully and all tunnels and fortifications in LONG PHUOC Village YS4565 were destroyed and the great majority of caches removed or destroyed. This completed the destruction of an enemy battalion sized base and although the patrol battle for this rich fruit growing area will continue with decreasing intensity, the enemy is now prevented from deriving extensive supplies of food from the village and surrounding countryside.</p> <p>Operation SYDNEY I and II were completed successfully by 5 RAR. This has completed the search of the NUI NGHE mountain area YS3972 to our NW, increased the area under our control, and is a step towards opening Interprovincial Route 2. Highlight of the operation was the successful</p>	

This form is to be enclosed with the annexes in AF-C 2119 (Adapted).

CC MANDERS DIARY NARRATIVE

AF - C 2118 (Adapted)
Revised Jun, 1965

UNIT/FORMATION.....

MONTH AND YEAR.....

REFERENCE MAP.....

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Place and grid reference	Date	Time	Event or information	Annex letter and enclosure number
			<p>cordon and search of DUC MY Village YS449729. The battalion sized cordon was infiltrated during the hours of darkness and company search party went into the village at 0620H. At the same time Psy Ops aircraft overhead warned the villagers that the area was surrounded and to remain in their homes. Total VC casualties were 4 VC KIA by body count, 4 WIA, 4 VCC, and 15 VCS. Significant factor seems to have been the positioning of the cordon silently during the hours of darkness. This should serve as a useful "dress rehearsal" for future larger operations of this type.</p> <p><u>OPERATION HOBART</u> was conducted in the Eastern portion of the TAOR. Initially it set out to encircle and sweep an area where 3 SAS SQN patrols had reported an occupied VC camp. This was to be followed by destruction of tunnels and caches in LONG TAN Village YS4866. The first part of the operation was very successful, two major contacts being made with what appeared to be, on both occasions, a VC company. Both actions took place in very dense country at ranges of 20 to 30 metres. Between these two contact areas a well prepared battalion position was found and destroyed. Total VC casualties were 7 VC KIA by body count, 4 KIA possible, 23 WIA. Documents taken from one of the VC KIA established</p>	

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			<p>them as members of the D445 Battalion, the Provincial Mobile battalion. Heavy blood trails and drag marks indicated much higher enemy casualties. This is the first time the TASK FORCE has contacted sizable enemy elements, other than local guerillas. He was found to be much more skillful than the local guerilla, capable of quick offensive reaction and rapid manoeuvre. D445 appears to be a well trained and well led force. This was also the first time that enemy mortars were used at close quarters. One or more 61mm mortars were used and this carried out an effective search of the area in which "B" Coy was deployed in contact. The round which landed close to A Coy HQ and wounded the ^{se}OC and CSM appeared to have been a fluke. The enemy used bugle calls as some sort of signals. These were heard from three separate points. The search of LONG TAN Village did not reveal as much enemy activity as was expected. Apparently an ARVN Operation in the village itself in March this year was more thorough than anticipated. Also the village was geographically between the enemy battalion sized bases in LONG PHUOC and East of LONG TAN. Operation HOBART was cut short and 6 RAR returned to base in order to make 5 RAR available for search operations to WEST of the</p>	

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			<p>the Task Force base area. The move back was by helicopter commencing at 1600H and being completed by last light. Lift was conducted under very adverse conditions of weather and light and was very well done both by 6 RAR and the US Army helicopter company.</p> <p>The extensive patrol operations carried out by 5 RAR during the next four days to the NE and WEST of the TASK FORCE base were necessary as reports from a variety of sources strongly indicated that a large VC force had penetrated into the TAOR from the NW and was located close in to the WEST and NW. These operations revealed that although several enemy patrols had been in the area it was most unlikely that any larger forces had been.</p> <p>Minor operations were conducted during the period as follows.</p>	
	16 JULY		1. Operation BRISBANE, 16 July to 18 July, was a move by 6 RAR along	
	TO		Route 15 to a general area YS3065 in an attempt to make contact with a	
	18 JULY		large VC force reported to have been there by reliable sources. The battalion searched the area for three days but did not find trace of any large VC force. I decided to withdraw them at this point.	
			Although there were no significant contacts the time was not wasted. We learned a great deal about the area West of BARIA and North of Highway 15.	

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			<p>We were able, secretly, to introduce SAS patrols into the hill mass NW of BARIA after attempts to introduce them from other directions had failed and the battalion group movement itself was a very useful ground mobility exercise.</p> <p>2. Another minor operation conducted during the period was Operation GAUNTLET, which was the escorting of Battery A 2/35 Artillery Battalion US from LONG BINH to the Task Force Area, where it is now located, and for the return of the empty vehicles. The battery has settled in well and no problems have been experienced in fire coordination through the 1 Field Regiment Tactical CP. Battery A is a Medium Battery of six 155 Howitzers SP. The additional range and weight of shell provided are very valuable, the noise factor is somewhat disturbing.</p> <p>3. Two ROADRUNNER Operations were conducted, one via BARIA YS3862, along Route 15 to PHU MY YS2574, the other via BARIA to LONG HAI YS4450. These operations consist of the move, along roads of an APC element with air cover and artillery support and with an infantry element in APC's following as an immediate ground reaction force. Additional infantry are maintained at a high state of readiness in the base for movement by</p>	

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			<p>helicopter. The aim is to demonstrate to the VC and civil population that the VC does not have control of the roads as he boasts. Since LONG HAI is a seaside village and former holiday resort, units taking part in the Operation took swimming costumes and took advantage of the opportunity for a swim. The 5 RAR Regimental Band played during lunch, much to the enjoyment of the local population.</p> <p>SAS Base Camp was moved to a new location in the Task Force Area for two reasons.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">a. When large numbers of patrols are out, insufficient personnel for perimeter defence. Personnel rest is essential.b. Desirable to have SAS Operations centre closer to Task Force TOC. <p><u>ADMINISTRATION.</u></p> <p>Progress on the base camp is going well but roadwork is still being hampered greatly by heavy rain. Development on the airstrip is proceeding slowly as it is also being hampered by monsoon rains. It was found necessary to excavate a garbage dump in the base area because it was</p>	

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			<p>found that the original one attracted so many scavengers and became a security problem. Disposal of rubbish within the Task Force is a serious administrative problem.</p> <p>All personnel are now under tentage, but only a very small proportion of floor boards have been available so far. Preparatory survey has been completed for the erection of Command Post buildings and these will be erected as soon as the materials and manpower are available.</p> <p>7 We are suffering critical shortage of such basic items as spare parts for A, B, and C vehicles, and clothing. At one stage during the month, 14 APC's were grounded awaiting spare parts. Apparently some of these parts have to come from AUSTRALIA. Ordnance scalings of this nature arrived in the theatre much too late and long after 30 days scaling with units had been used. 1</p> <p><u>GENERAL COMMENTS.</u></p> <p>Both Battalion Commanders have expressed their dissatisfaction with the OMC. There have been a number of reports of VC being hit at close range by OMC fire without being stopped. I have requested HQ AFV to take action to have all OMCs in the Task Force replaced by Armalite (M16).</p>	

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			<p>Because of its high muzzle velocity, in spite of the fact that it is only .22 cal, one hit from this weapon is usually sufficient to stop a VC at ranges up to 300 metres.</p> <p>I am concerned about the lack of MG's for the defence of the base camp when a battalion goes out on an operation taking their GPMG's with them. A variation to entitlement to overcome this problem was submitted last month, but as yet has not resulted in action.</p> <p>3. The question of a more flexible approach to our doctrine of only firing when you see a target is under revision. The problem occurs when troops are fired on in dense country, and go to ground and then do not return the fire because they cannot see a target. If they stand up to continue, they draw more fire. I have given permission for fire to be directed in the general area of the enemy, when specific targets cannot be located, with the provision that junior leaders must not lose fire control and must always retain ability to stop or re-direct fire.</p> <p>4. Still having problems with the RAAF over the use of HU 1B helicopters. They seem to lack a sense of urgency in control of their operations. An order to them seems to be the basis of discussion rather than something</p>	

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			<p>they act on immediately. On one occasion they specifically disobeyed a direct order from me regarding the number of door gunners required to be included in crews for a particular task, without so much as an explanation. I have had this out with Air Commodore DOWLING and Group Captain RAW. There is still a difference in basic thinking between Army and RAAF. The situation as I see it and have presented it is:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">a. The helicopter is an integral element of the ground battle, and its tactical employment should be determined by the ground commander provided he takes into full account air advice as to flying safety and technical matters.b. The ground commander is in the best position to assess danger to aircraft from enemy ground action, particularly when his own troops are deployed on the terrain into which the helicopters are required to operate.c. The problems of aircraft employment and control are considerably different when they concern a relatively small number of helicopters compared with a larger and more comprehensive range of transport, fighter or bomber aircraft operating in support	

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			<p>of a ground force.</p> <p>The situation is further complicated by the geographical separation of the Task Force from the helicopter base in particular as the senior RAAF officers and GLO live at VUNG TAU and communications between VUNG TAU and HQ 1 ATF at NUI DAT are unreliable. I believe that until ⁹ Sqn can be based in the Task Force area the following interim measures are necessary:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">a. That RAAF have a greater degree of faith in HQ 1 ATF and in particular accept Army assessment of ground threat to their aircraft.b. That the GLO Section move from VUNG TAU to 1 ATF and brief crews in the forward area, sending an officer daily to Vung Tau to keep crews in the general ground picture. In addition, it will be necessary to relay sufficient information to RAAF VUNG TAU to ensure that aircraft move forward with general information as to their likely task, and with correct aircraft configuration.	

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			<p>c. That either a more senior RAAF officer live in the forward area or RAAF responsibility be more decentralized. The performance of crews when on missions and acting within restrictive RAAF instructions, is good.</p> <p>5. SAS Operations. Although not otherwise mentioned in this narrative due to the high security classification imposed, continue to be extensive and very successful.</p> <p>6. Pace of operations has been heavy and infantry soldiers, in particular 5 BAP, are starting to feel the strain. I have been able to overcome this in part by obtaining the use of the R and C Centre, VUNG TAU for 48 hour rest periods for them, and the Battalion delaying their next battalion operation into BINH BA by three days. I hope that pace of operations can be eased after September but basically the problem stems from only having two battalions in the force.</p> <p>Heavy rain has persisted throughout the month and delayed the development of the TASK FORCE base, the introduction of basic troop comforts, such as tentage and Scale A accommodation. However, much has been achieved, and</p>	

