AUSTRALIAN ARMY JOURNAL

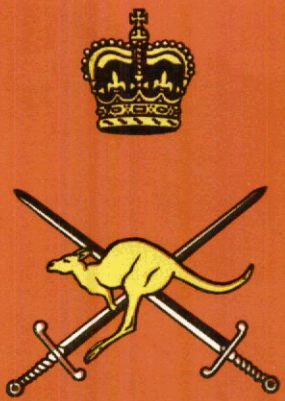

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Photo Australian War Memorial, Canberra.

MOSA GORGE

FRONTISPIECE

Throughout the fighting in New Guinea in World War II the maintenance of supplies to the forward areas was one of our most serious problems. In a mountainous, jungle covered, undeveloped country where road building was slow and difficult, the aircraft and the native carrier constituted the chief means of supply. In the early days of the fighting on the Kokoda Trail insufficient aircraft were available, and suitable dropping zones hard to find in the precipitous Owen Stanleys. In this period the native carrier was virtually the only means of taking supplies forward and bringing the wounded back. Later, when more aircraft became available, it was seldom possible to find landing grounds or dropping zones close behind the forward troops. Nearly always supplies were taken over the final stages by native carriers.

The picture shows a line of carriers taking supplies through the Mosa Gorge to troops in the Finisterre Mountains.

THE MALAYAN CAMPAIGN 1941-42

THE BATTLE FOR JITRA DECEMBER, 1941

Lieutenant Colonel S. P. Weir, MC,
Royal Australian Infantry

TOWARDS the end of 1961, 1 RAR undertook a number of studies of the battles fought in North Malaya. These were prompted by the interest shown in the battalion in the recently published book "Singapore, The Japanese Version" by Colonel Tsuji, and by the fact that on some of our unit exercises we found much evidence of the war.

Four company teams were formed for detailed ground reconnaissance of the selected areas. When this was completed a battlefield tour was arranged during which the main features of the battles were discussed

This series of four articles is intended to supplement the information already available, and it is hoped that it will stimulate study of subsequent battles in Malaya.

Background

In May 1941 III Corps allotted 11 Indian Division two alternative tasks:—

(a) An advance into Siam to seize and hold Singora, and

(b) The preparation of a strong defensive position at Jitra in North Kedah.

These two roles were in no way compatible. The advance into Siam, "Operation Matador", involved a very rapid advance by road and rail through a neutral country to seize Singora and hold it against land or seaborne attack. Not only had the troops to be specially trained for the different topographical conditions on the east coast, but their whole organisation had to be adjusted to meet the peculiar needs of the operation. Defence stores and bridging equipment would have to be taken with the force. So much detailed administrative planning by both the Corps and Divisional Staffs was necessary to make "Matador" a feasible proposition, that preparation for the alternative defensive role was relegated to the background.

The two brigades of 11 Division, 6 Indian and 15 Indian, prepared tented camps in the rubber estates south of Jitra, from where they could either

move quickly across the frontier 18 miles north and on to Singora or occupy the defensive line at Jitra. Divisional Headquarters and service units deployed south of Gurun, 30 miles to the rear.

In the months before the Japanese attack, units prepared and trained for their primary task, Matador, but because local labour was not made available they spent valuable time in preparing the defences on the Jitra line. By December the training cycle had not turned very far. Basic training in Indian units was inadequate, particularly for night operations. Even worse, brigade and divisional training had not been possible owing to the late arrival of artillery and signal units. In consequence commanders and their staffs had not had sufficient practice in handling their formations in the field.

Standby for Matador

On 6 December, when 11 Division was ordered to stand by for Matador and units moved to their assembly areas, the Jitra defensive line was far from complete.

For 48 hours, in pouring rain, the troops remained poised for their thrust into Siam. Two battalions were standing by alongside their trains at Anak Bukit, two were in their camps with their trucks loaded, and two were deployed near the frontier 18 miles north of Jitra.

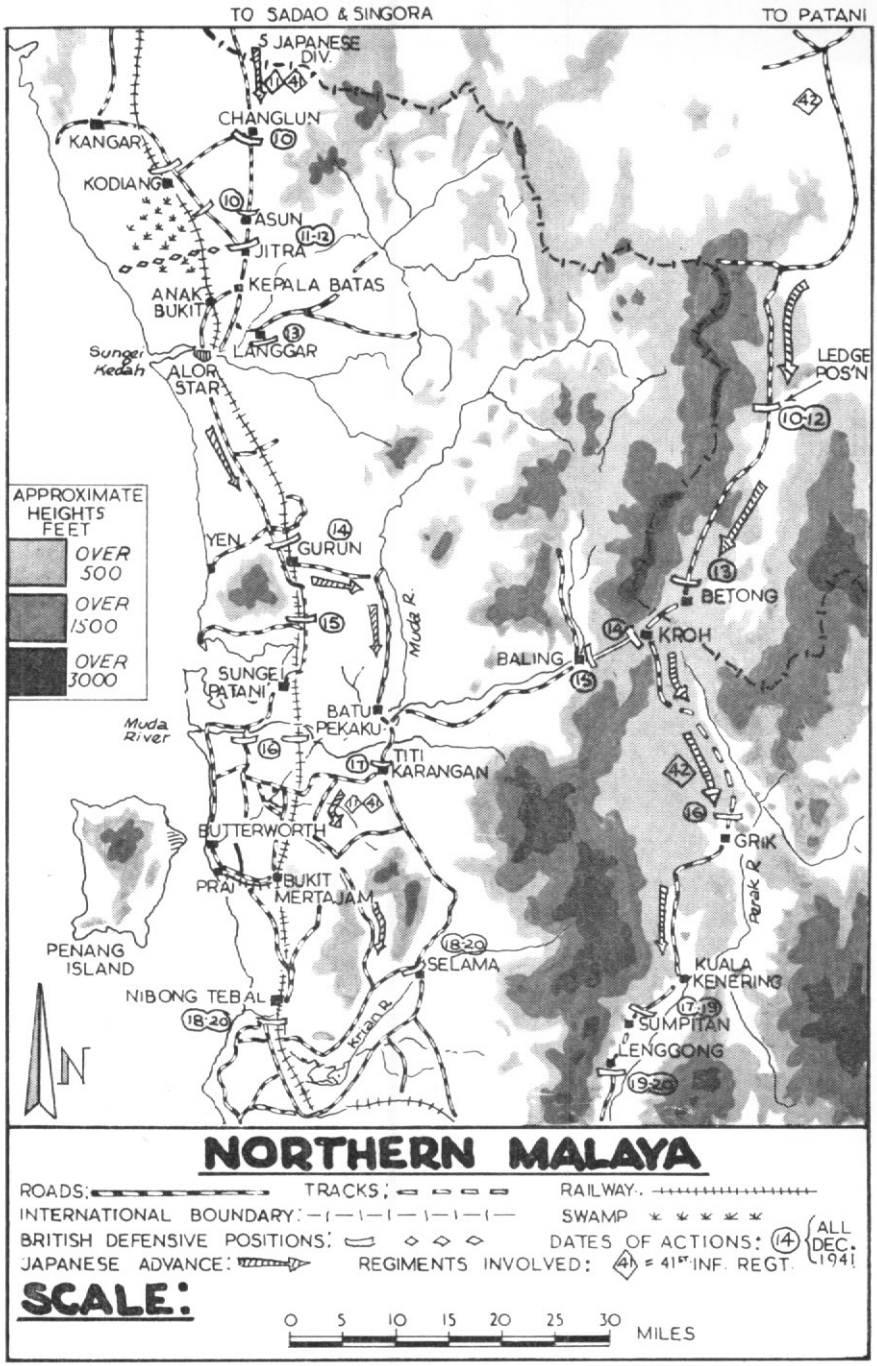
Matador Abandoned

At 1330 hours on 8 December, ten hours after the Japanese had started landing at Singora, 11 Division was ordered to abandon Matador and occupy the Jitra position. At the same time the corps commander ordered that the selected position at Gurun, 30 miles south of Jitra, should be prepared for defence as soon as possible. 28 Indian Brigade was placed under command of 11 Division, and moved by train from Ipoh 160 miles south that evening.

The two battalions which had been waiting by their trains had seen from two miles away the first destructive raids by the Japanese air force on to the Alor Star airfield at Kepala Batas. Further air attacks had by the evening of the 8th put out of action more than half of the 110 British operational aircraft deployed in North Malaya.

In theory it should have been easy for the Division to revert to the defensive even after being keyed up for offensive operations for so long. In practice this was not so, for the transport arrangements for a rapid advance to Singora and the need for speed in launching the operation were such that the normal organisation of the two brigades had to be adjusted for their particular tasks. The adoption of the defensive therefore was delayed whle the division reverted to its normal organisation, at the same time as it occupied the Jitra position.

To add to his difficulties, the Divisional Commander, Major General Murray-Lyon, was controlling the operations of Kroh Column (two battalions) in the Kroh area 60 miles west of Gurun. At 1500 hours 8 December one battalion of this force advanced into Siam to delay the



NORTHERN MALAYA

ROADS: TRACKS: RAILWAY:
INTERNATIONAL BOUNDARY: SWAMP
BRITISH DEFENSIVE POSITIONS: DATES OF ACTIONS: (14) ALL DEC. 1941
JAPANESE ADVANCE: REGIMENTS INVOLVED: (41) = 41ST INF. REGT.

SCALE:

0 5 10 15 20 25 30 MILES

thrust by the Japanese 42 Regiment from Patani which was aimed at isolating 11 Division in the north. At the same time the Divisional Commander sent forward a mobile covering force from 1/8 Punjab of two rifle companies and the carrier platoon, with a section of two 2-pounder anti-tank guns and two sections of engineers.

The Covering Troops Battle

At about 2100 hours on 8 December first contact was made with a Japanese mobile column near Sadao 10 miles inside Siam. The Japanese attacked immediately and forced the Punjabis to withdraw with light losses. Unfortunately these losses included a marked map of the Jitra and Changlun defences.

The mobile troops then fought a delaying battle in which they thoroughly demolished every bridge and culvert, and made the enemy fight for the crossings. During the night 9th/10th December, closely followed by the Japanese advanced guard, they withdrew across the frontier and passed through the forward elements of 1/14 Punjabs, a battalion of 15 Brigade.

This delaying force withdrew slowly to Changlun carrying out successful demolitions on the narrow road which in this area passed through thick jungle. On the evening of the 10th they joined the rest of their battalion which had been ordered forward from its outpost position at Asun to impose delay at Changlun. This was part of the plan to impose delay north of Jitra until first light on the 12th, to give time for 6 and 15 Brigades to prepare and occupy their positions. 2/1 Gurkha Rifles (less one company), from 28 Brigade had been placed under command 15 Brigade to help in this task. This enabled Brigadier Garrett to relieve 1/14 Punjab at Asun and concentrate them forward at Changlun.

The Japanese Forces

In planning the conquest of Malaya, Lieutenant General Yamashita, the Commander of 25 Army, gave the task of destroying the British forces in North Malaya to 5 Infantry Division. This division was composed of specially picked troops and for over 20 years it had been expert in landing operations. "It had moveover an illustrious tradition. Its officers and men took precedence in battle and were brimming over with confidence".[1]

It is no surprise then that the mobile column, sent forward to contact the enemy, from their first clash a Sadao on the night of the 8th should have pressed forward with such boldness and determination. They were all imbued with a sense of urgency and the 1100 kilometres to Singapore did not seem too difficult a target to obtain in the 100 days set. However, once across the frontier and on the narrow jungle lined roads leading south they found that effective demolitions were going to impose undue delays. Colonel Tsuji, Chief of Operations and Planning Staff, 25 Army, sums up the problem as follows:—

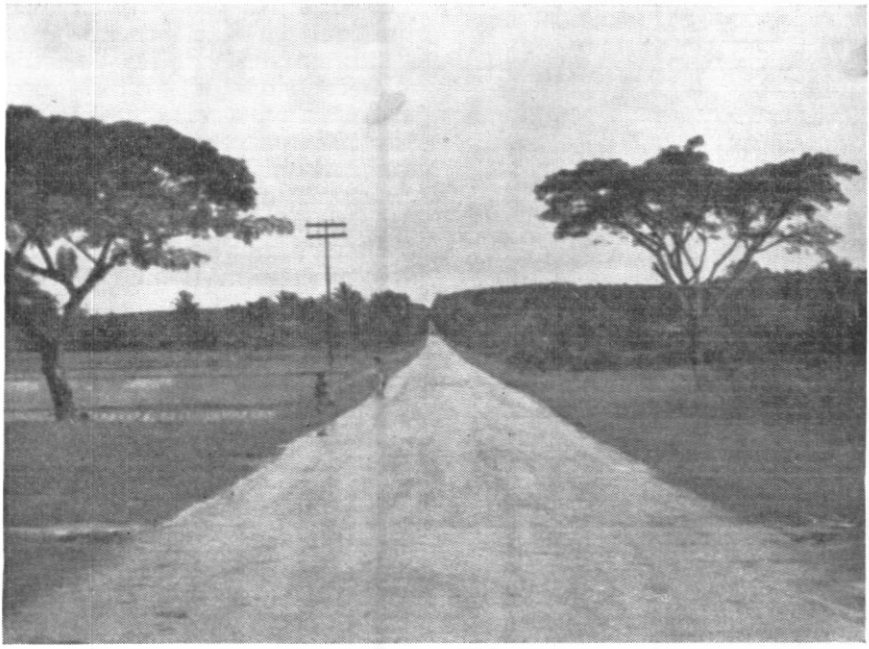
"The enemy has the choice of the battlefield, and our whole

1. Singapore, the Japanese Version. Colonel Tsuji, page 56.

plan would have to be thought out in accordance with his movements. The accurate estimation of the tactics and efficiency of the enemy and the fearless devising of measures for their defeat on the actual ground are the most excellent means for the achievement of victory. Subsequently our tactics and leadership for the Malayan campaign were determined according to the observations made at the commencement of hostilities".

The tactics devised to overcome the British delaying techniques were for the leading infantry to seize a bridgehead to protect the engineer repair party, whilst the artillery neutralised the enemy guns covering the demolition. When repairs to the bridge had been effected, or a crossing made, the infantry were to make a sudden attack in the evening using darkness or heavy rain to gain surprise. The b r e a k t h r o u g h column of tanks, guns and infantry then burst through the unbalanced enemy to seize the next bridge before it could be demolished.

The Japanese were using two types of tank, a medium tank of 16 tons which mounted a 57 mm. tank gun and two 7.7 mm. machine guns. Their light tank was of about 8 tons with one 37 mm. tank gun and one 7.7 mm. machine gun. Both types were in tank companies, each of 10 tanks.



Looking north along road from right hand company 1/Leicester.

Changlun

Changlun, 8 miles from the frontier, is the first village inside Malaya on the main road. It is 10 miles north of the defence line at Jitra. A dirt road to the west joined the Jitra-Kangar road at Kodiang 11 miles away. The ground around the village was fairly flat and in 1941 there was rubber for about a mile in every direction. 300 yards south of the crossroads a concrete bridge spanned a stream about 30 feet wide.

It was here on the night of 10th December that 1/14 Punjabs, with under command a mountain battery of 8 Breda 75 mm. guns and a section of two 2-pounder anti-tank guns, occupied a hasty defensive position. Next morning at about 0800 hours the two companies forward of the crossroads were attacked by Japanese infantry. Heavy pressure forced the defence to close in behind the stream across the road and the concrete bridge was blown. Two of the Breda guns deployed forward in an anti-tank role were lost.

Since the role of the battalion was to delay the enemy without getting too involved, Brigadier Garrett, who was up at Changlun, ordered a withdrawal to the main position. At 1500 hours the Divisional Commander altered this and ordered the battalion to occupy an intermediate position 6 miles back, and to hold it overnight. This position was two miles forward of the 2/1 Gurkha position at Asun. The Punjabis began moving to their new position in heavy rain and poor visibility confident that the demolition at Changlun would give them ample time to deploy. However, they had not counted on the speed with which the enemy engineers would repair the bridge and allow the Japanese vanguard to follow up.

At 1630 hours, in heavy rain, ten medium tanks followed by two companies of lorried infantry broke through the rearguard on the narrow road running through an avenue of rubber trees. Driving straight through the column firing in all directions, the Japanese tanks scattered the Punjabis and overran both the anti-tank and mountain guns before they had time to unlimber. They then crushed the carrier platoon. It was the speed and weight of armour which decided the issue and caused the disintegration of 1/14 Punjab, for few of the soldiers had ever seen a tank. Although about 200 men, including the Brigadier, got back to the division next day the battalion played no further part in the battle for Jitra. In addition eight mountain guns and two of the precious 2-pounders were lost.

Asun

Three miles south of this first disaster the three companies of 2/1 Gurkhas waited in the darkening gloom for news of the fighting. They were covering nearly two miles of front behind the swamp and stream at Asun. Concrete blocks to form an anti-tank obstacle were positioned at the road bend forward of the 30 foot span concrete bridge which had been prepared for demoli-

tion. The leads from the charges on the bridge in this case ran back about 100 yards to the firing point.

It was still raining heavily at 1830 hours when the leading Japanese tanks swept through the Gurkha outposts with headlights blazing. The leading tank was knocked out at the road bend by anti-tank rifle fire causing it to block the road north of the bridge. Before the charges could be blown a cyclist rode over the bridge and cut the leads with his sword. The Japanese infantry quickly debussed and vigorously attacked the company holding the road. At the height of the battle an engineer officer lost his life in trying to blow this vital bridge.

Pressing on in the darkness the Japanese infantry isolated Battalion headquarters after overwhelming the centre company. An attack across the swamp against the right company was effective. These quick deep thrusts made an orderly withdrawal impossible, but some of the Gurkhas fought their way out, and small parties reached the main position, over two miles back, next day.

In less than an hour a second battalion had disintegrated. All of its transport and weapons were lost but above all its morale was shattered. The Japanese had meantime moved their disabled tank and pressed forward towards the main position.

The Kodiang Road

On the left flank of the divisional front the covering troops of 6 Brigade, two companies of 2/16 Punjab, had withdrawn on the 10th to Kodiang, 12 miles north-west of Jitra. Late on the afternoon of the 11th these covering troops and two companies of 1/8 Punjab from the outpost were ordered back to the main position. Just after last light as they approached the bridge at Manggoi, held by the left company of 1 Leicesters, the officer in charge of the demolition mistook them for Japanese and blew the bridge. Since it could not be repaired in the time available, all the transport together with seven anti-tank guns and four mountain guns had to be abandoned. These losses, coupled with the disasters on the main road, had serious effects both on morale and on the conduct of the defensive battle.

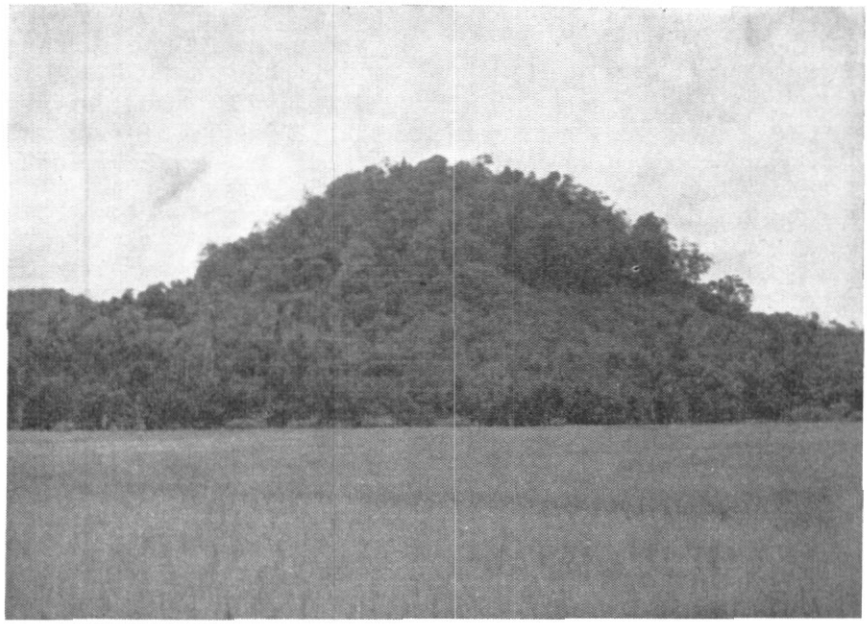
The Main Position

The main position at Jitra had been sited nearly six months before with 15 and 6 Brigades holding a 16 mile wide line from the edge of the jungle across the swamps and paddy fields to the sea. It was the best tactical position available for the defence of the reconstructed Alor Star airfield at Kepala Batas.

A general description of the whole Jitra position follows, with more detail on the 15 Brigade sector than the rest as this is where the battle was fought.

15 Brigade Sector

The layout in the right sector held by 15 Brigade was — right 2/9 Jats, left 1 Leicesters and rear 1/14 Punjabs. From the map the deployment looks to be



Looking south towards right hand company 2/9 Jats

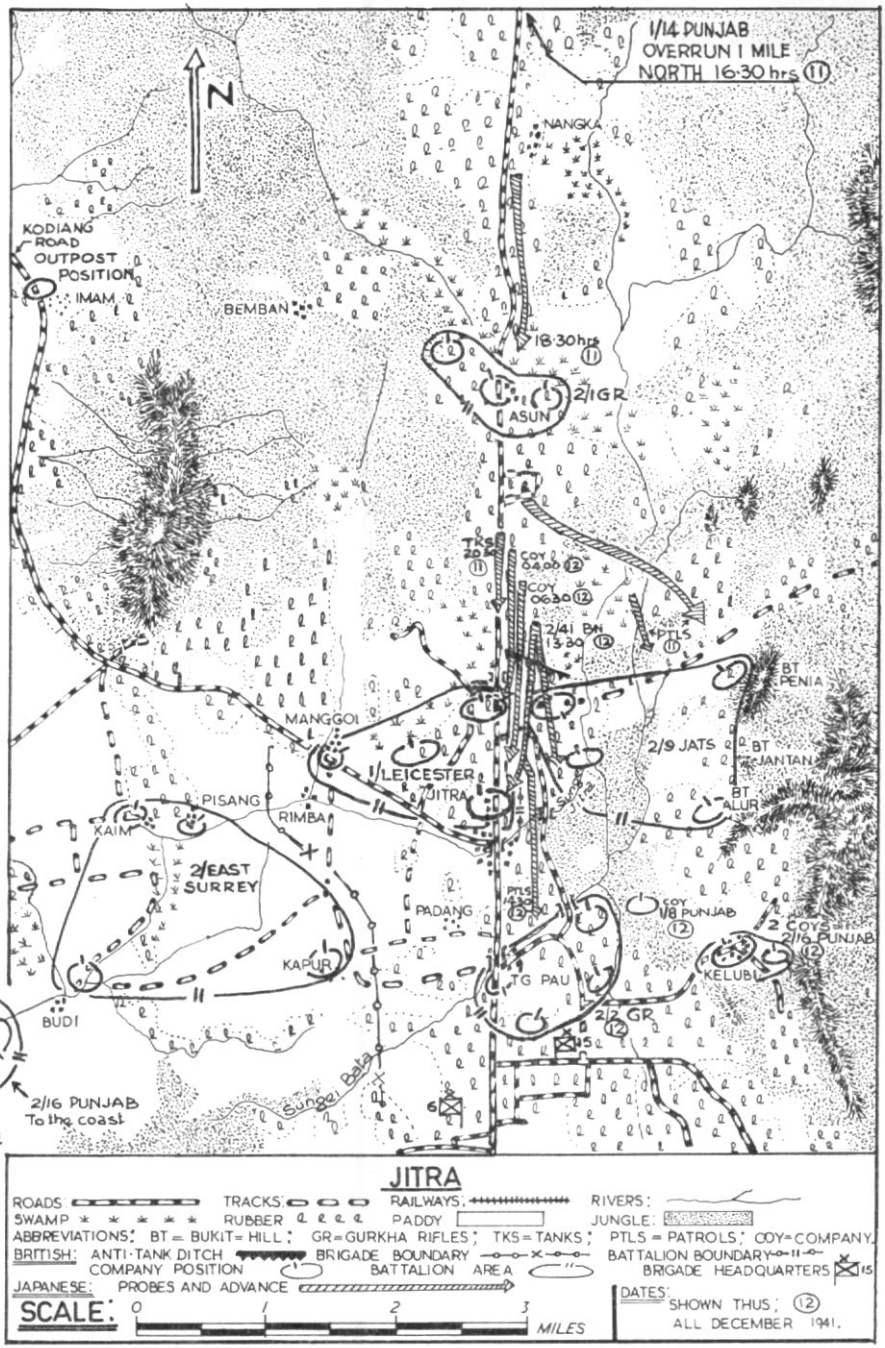
quite orthodox, but on the ground there are many faults.

2/9 Jats on the right held four isolated company areas. The right company was sited in rubber close to the jungle edge with fields of fire across the extensive flat padi swamp. On its right a steep jungle-clad knoll rose to 500 feet and then merged into the mass of rough, almost impassable country rising to 1500 feet.

The left forward company was nearly 2000 yards away across the swamp. This company, like all the companies directly involved in the battle, was widely dispersed. Its platoons were about 300 yards apart on a fairly flat ridge in a rubber plantation in which the trees were then about 12 inches in diameter and about 20 feet apart. On 8th December the Kedah Public Works Department was still digging a ten foot deep anti-tank ditch 1200 yards across the flat ridge to their front. This was still something of an obstacle when inspected by 1 RAR 20 years later, even though the area has now been planted with rubber.

The two rear companies were on slight rubber-covered spurs separated by about 1500 yards of swamp, and over a 1000 yards in rear of the forward companies. Not one company could support any of the others.

On the left of 2/9 Jats and deployed to cover the two roads leading into Jitra, was 1 Leicesters. Their right company was dug in astride the main road on


N
1/14 PUNJAB
OVERRUN 1 MILE
NORTH 16·30 hrs (11)
NANGKA
KODIANG
ROAD
OUTPOST
POSITION
IMAM
BEMBAN
18·30hrs (11)
2/1 GR
ASUN
TKS 20 (11)
COY 04·00 (12)
COY 06·30 (12)
2/41 BN 13·30 (12)
PTLS (11)
BT PENIA
MANGGOL
2/9 JATS
BT JANTAN
1/LEICESTER
JITRA
BT ALUR
PISANG
KAIM
RIMBA
2/EAST SURREY
PTLS (12)
COY 1/8 PUNJAB (12)
2 COYS 2/16 PUNJAB (12)
PADANG
KAPUR
TG PAU
KELUBI
BUDI
2/16 PUNJAB
To the coast
Sungei Bata
2/1 GR (12)
15
6
JITRA
ROADS
TRACKS
RAILWAYS
RIVERS
SWAMP
RUBBER
PADDY
JUNGLE
ABBREVIATIONS: BT = BUKIT = HILL; GR = GURKHA RIFLES; TKS = TANKS; PTLS = PATROLS; COY = COMPANY
BRITISH: ANTI-TANK DITCH
BRIGADE BOUNDARY
BATTALION BOUNDARY
COMPANY POSITION
BATTALION AREA
BRIGADE HEADQUARTERS
JAPANESE: PROBES AND ADVANCE
SCALE: 0 1 2 3 MILES
DATES: SHOWN THUS; (12)
ALL DECEMBER 1941.

a gradual forward slope, the right platoon east of the road in scattered rubber and scrub covering the bridge and the small swamp to its front. The other two platoons were in rubber on the left of the road covering across the large swamp and protecting a concrete pillbox on their left. This company position was a strong one, well sited, well dug and quite heavily wired. It was supported from about 800 yards back by the rear company which was astride the road in rubber near the crest of the low ridge. This too was a strong position with good fields of fire and extensive diggings. Fighting pits were connected to both section and platoon centres by deep crawl trenches.

The centre company, 500 yards to the left of the right company, was dug in on the rubber edge overlooking the wide swamp to the front. A concrete pill box, one of many still intact in the position in 1961, was well protected by a platoon dug in nearby.

1200 yards to the left and separated from the rest of the battalion by swamp was the left company of 1 Leicesters. This company was dug in around a village on a slight bump astride the Kodiang road at Manggoi. It will be recalled that the bridge at this position was blown prematurely on the night of the 11th.

The reserve position in 15 Brigade, prepared by 1/14 Punjabs, was south of the Sungai Bata two miles back. Except for posts on the stream bank the position was in rubber.

6 Brigade Sector

6 Brigade sector extended from just west of the Kodiang road 18,000 yards to the sea. The right battalion, 2 East Surrey, was dug in on small hillocks in the swamp. 2/16 Punjab position extended from the railway line to the coast. Between one company astride the railway and one near the coast were several miles of canal, patrolled by parties from the remainder of the battalion, which was to come into reserve on completion of its covering role.

1/8 Punjab, the reserve battalion of 6 Brigade, had prepared a position in the rubber south of the Sungei Bata and west of the road. From the 8th it had commitments forward. Two companies and the carrier platoon had been over the border on the main road, whilst the other two companies were in an outpost on the Kodiang road.

Reserve Brigade

28 Indian Brigade (2/1, 2/2, 2/9 Gurkha Rifles) had joined the Division as the reserve brigade on the morning of the 9th. 2/9 Gurkhas were given the task of protecting Alor Star and Sungei Patani, but the other two battalions were allotted positions in rear of the main line. Next day, it will be recalled, 2/1 Gurkhas were sent forward to the outpost position at Asun.

General Description

The main divisional position now about to be assaulted by 5 Japanese Division was a series of company defended areas and concrete machine gun posts protected by barbed wire. Most were

well concealed from the air but few were mutually supporting. In fact most of the platoon positions were so far apart that they were unable to support the other platoons in their company areas. When the troops occupied them on the 8th all had been extensively flooded by two days of monsoonal rain. A lot more rain had fallen by the night of the 11th when the troops awaited the Japanese onslaught. There had been time to erect more barbed wire and to lay signal cable, but only above the sodden ground. The anti-tank ditch to the east of the road remained incomplete but some anti-tank mines were laid to supplement it. Concrete blocks were positioned on each road and ambush parties had been sited to take advantage of these tank obstacles. The bridges on both roads into the position had been prepared for demolition.

The Atmosphere Before the Battle

It should be remembered that only two of the nine battalions in the division were British; three others were Gurkhas, three Punjabis and one Jat. All had cause by the evening of the 11th to be bewildered. Five days before they had been standing by for Matador. After two days of discomfort in the rain they deployed to their flooded defensive positions. Heavy Japanese air attacks against Alor Star airfield close behind had disturbed them, and the premature denial scheme by the RAF on the 10th which produced loud explosions and a pall of smoke from the airfield gave further cause for alarm. On the 10th, too, they received news of the disastrous loss of the "Prince of Wales" and the "Repulse".

The full measure of the calamities to their front late on the afternoon of the 11th had not reached them when night fell.

Major General Murray-Lyon reacted to the serious losses forward by placing Brigadier Carpendale of 28 Brigade in command of 15 Brigade in place of Brigadier Garrett, who was missing with 1/14 Punjabs. 2/2 Gurkhas of 28 Brigade were placed under command of 15 Brigade to give it a reserve. As the only other battalion of 28 Brigade, 2/9 Gurkhas, was already committed to a protection role to the south, there was no divisional reserve.

Japanese Attacks

Two hours after overwhelming 2/1 Gurkhas at Asun the leading tanks of the advanced guard with their headlights on overran the forward patrol of the Leicesters at the roadblock. Two tanks, disabled by anti-tank fire, blocked the road a little further on. This allowed the Leicesters to hastily prepare a further obstacle of tree trunks, mines and wire about 300 yards north of the now demolished bridge on the main road. Defensive fire falling on the Japanese column caused the infantry to debus. Patrols quickly probed the front and after making contact with the left forward company of the Jats they began to feel for the right flank.

During the night the Jats were heavily sniped, and inaccurate reports were sent back to brigade headquarters that the enemy

had occupied two knolls to the right rear of the Jat position, Bukit Jantan and Bukit Alor. These reports caused Brigadier Carpendale to conclude that there was a distinct danger of the Japanese enveloping his right flank. Without reference to the Divisional Commander, who was miles away to the rear, he asked Brigadier Lay (6 Brigade) for assistance. Lay responded by placing two companies of his reserve battalion (1/8 Punjab) and, later, two companies of 2/16 Punjab, at his disposal. Carpendale then ordered his own reserve battalion, 2/2 Gurkha Rifles, to occupy a position on the line of the Sungei Bata from the bridge on the main road eastwards. He placed one company of 1/8 Punjab on their right, and sent the two companies of 2/16 Punjab to the Kampong Kelubi area to strengthen the rear of his right flank. These moves were completed before first light. The second company of 1/8 Punjab was ordered to hold the line of the Sungei Jitra east of the main road in rear of the left of the Jats, but was recalled before it reached its position.

Meanwhile a Japanese patrol to the east of the Leicester company astride the main road reported at about 2200 hours that "The line of advance through the enemy fortified position is not difficult. There are wire entanglements but there are gaps between them, and the enemy troops are not yet in position. It seems as if a night attack would be possible".

An infantry company attacked on a narrow front east of the road and penetrated the forward company position. An immediate counter-attack failed to dislodge them. Just before first light a second Japanese company was thrown into this battle but a counter-attack at dawn supported by carriers drove them out. At about 0600 hours, in heavy rain, another Japanese company supported by fire from tanks near the road and the anti-tank ditch, launched a frontal attack east of the road in the gap between 1 Leicesters and 2/9 Jats. They quickly penetrated about 600 yards on to the rising ground to the east of the road and overran an isolated artillery observation post on the forward slope. The Leicesters counter-attacked, but failed to dislodge the enemy who made no attempt to exploit his unexpected success in the gap between the battalions. The unoccupied crest about 300 yards ahead was less than 1000 yards from the vital bridge over the Sungei Jitra. Determined to remove this serious threat, Brigadier Carpendale again asked 6 Brigade for help. He was given the Headquarters and the remaining two companies of 1/8 Punjab. A deliberate counter-attack with artillery support was ordered. Moving to the attack part of the battalion passed close to the headquarters of the 2/9 Jats who mistaking them for the enemy, opened fire. This unfortunate incident caused a delay which resulted in the loss of the planned artillery support, and when at 1000 hours the attack was eventually launched it failed with heavy loss, the commanding officer being killed.

It was only early on the morning of the 12th that the Divisional Commander learnt of the night's activities. At 0900 hours he went forward to 15 Brigade Headquarters, and, from information available there, concluded that an enveloping movement round his right flank was in progress. Owing to the loss of the two battalions on the 11th and Carpendale's action in committing, without his authority, all the reserves of 6 Brigade during the night, he had no reserves available with which to influence the battle. His troops were tired and dispirited. Miles away to his right rear his forces at Kroh were being pushed back by superior enemy forces supported by tanks. This made him anxious about his communications and he decided that now was the time to seek permission to withdraw the division to a previously selected position at Gurun, 30 miles to the rear. As the Corps Commander was on his way by train to Singapore this request was therefore referred to Malayan Command. General Percival believed that such a withdrawal would have a most demoralising effect upon both the troops and the civilian population, and would also immediately prejudice chances of denying the west coast airfields to the enemy. Consequently he ordered the battle to be fought at Jitra.

By the time this decision was notified to Murray-Lyon the commander of the Japanese 9 Infantry Brigade (11 and 41 Regiments) had arrived at the front. About midday he ordered 41 Regiment to relieve the advanced guard and to put in a night attack to the east of the road, while 11 Regiment attacked simultaneously across the swamp on the west of the road. However, before these orders could be implemented the 2 Battalion of 41 Regiment, part of the advanced guard, attacked into the gap between the Jats and Leicesters, and against the left forward company of the Jats. After fierce fighting they overran this company and forced the left rear company to withdraw southwest. Penetrating quickly they enlarged the wedge held since early morning by the company of the reconnaissance regiment and attacked the reserve company of the Leicesters through the rubber east of the road. By 1430 hours Japanese patrols had thrust two miles inside the position and engaged the 2/2 Gurkhas on the Sungei Bata. Parties which had been cut off the previous day, among them Brigadier Garrett, were now coming in and were being used to reinforce the Bata line.

With both 2/2 Gurkhas and 1 Leicesters holding firm, the Brigade commander launched a quick counter-attack by the carrier platoon (16 Bren guns in tracked vehicles) of 2 East Surreys sent by 6 Brigade, against the enemy on the ridge east of the road. This temporarily checked the enemy's attempt to envelop the Leicester's right.

British Reaction

The fighting died down by 1500 hours and when the General visited 15 Brigade Headquarters

he found Brigadier Carpendale full of confidence that the Japanese had shot their bolt for the day. As the flanks of both the Jats and the Leicesters were by now dangerously exposed he had planned that during the evening the former should withdraw to fill the gap between Kelubi and the right of the Punjabis on the Sungei Bata, and the latter should concentrate west of the main road and north of the S. Bata from where they could counter-attack eastwards next day. He had even suggested to Brigadier Lay that 2 East Surreys should counter-attack on the left (northern) flank of the Leicesters. The Divisional Commander approved this plan, except for the proposed use of the East Surreys, for he required them as a divisional reserve and for other tasks. He then visited 6 Brigade Headquarters about two miles away in the rubber west of the road. There he ordered the Brigade Commander to move the two companies of the East Surreys nearest the railway five miles by train to Anak Bukit to protect the bridges over the Sungei Kedah at Kepala Batas 3 miles to the north east. As soon as the Leicesters had linked up with the 2/2 Gurkhas the remainder of 2 East Surreys was to withdraw into reserve on the Alor Star airfield at Kepala Batas.

Meanwhile Carpendale abandoned his plan for concentrating the Leicesters for a counter-attack and, deciding to give them a defensive task instead, ordered them at about 1515 hours to withdraw to a line from Kampong Rimba, along the Sungei Jitra to within half a mile of the main road, and thence due south through Kampong Padang to the Sungei Bata. The CO of the Leicesters, who felt secure in his existing defences and who had suffered only 30 casualties, protested, pointing out that the new line had no depth, ran through paddy fields and had not been reconnoitred. His representation was of no avail and their withdrawal began at 1600 hours. It was completed with great difficulty and some confusion just after last light at 1915 hours. The only means of communication that the battalion then had with its companies and with brigade headquarters was by runners in dark and unknown country. This was to have serious consequences. The Jats withdrew as planned except for the right forward company to which no orders were sent, owing to false reports that it, too, had been overrun.

Further Request for Permission to Withdraw

When at about 1800 hours on his way back to his own headquarters, Major General Murray-Lyon reached the main road about a mile south of the Bata bridge he found a scene of panic amongst the transport, caused by false reports that tanks had crossed the Sungei Bata. Back at his own main headquarters near Alor Star half an hour later reports awaited him that the Leicesters had been attacked as they were withdrawing, that the Jats had been overrun and that the enemy was attacking 2/16 Pun-

jabs at Kalubi — all of which were quite untrue. Worse still 3/16 Punjab (Krohcol) had reached Kroh with its strength reduced to 350.

Realising that there was a distinct danger to his communications since Krohcol was unlikely to hold the enemy in the Kroh-Baling area for more than two to three days, the GOC appreciated that he could not delay for long a withdrawal well to the south. He therefore decided that a withdrawal during the night behind the Sungei Kedah at Alor Star had become essential, and at 1930 hours, again asked for permission to fall back to the position covering Gurun.

Having now arrived in Singapore, Lt. Gen. Heath, after consulting with Lt. Gen. Percival, replied through his Advanced Headquarters at Bukit Mertajam that the task of 11 Division was to fight for the security of North Kedah; that he estimated it was opposed by one Japanese division at most; and that the best solution seemed to be to halt the advance of the enemy tanks on good obstacles and dispose the forces of 11 Division so as to obtain considerable depth on the roads and to obtain scope for its superior artillery. In passing this message to 11 Division by telephone, III Corps Headquarters gave Murray-Lyon discretion to withdraw from the Jitra position and told him that they would take direct command of Krohcol from midnight that night. He was told, too, that "reserves for employment in the divisional area were being expedited".

The Withdrawal

At 2200 hours Murray-Lyon issued orders for the withdrawal to the south bank of the Sungei Kedah at Alor Star, to begin at midnight. In the dark and rain and without transport, the tired, ill-trained and dispirited troops began to march the 13 miles between the Bata line and the river at Alor Star. Units were widely scattered, and their means of communication quite inadequate. Only one road and the railway ran back across the flat, flooded swamp and paddy to the only two bridges at Alor Star. In the circumstances it is not surprising that the withdrawal proved disastrous.

Some sub-units, including two companies of 1 Leicesters, did not receive their orders to withdraw and were still in position the next morning; these got away next day in small parties, but lost most of their equipment. Many units, fearing congestion on the road and the possibility of meeting enemy tanks, decided to make their way back across country. Some units made their way along the railway to Alor Star; others made for the coast hoping to be able to move south by boat and rejoin the division later. Many guns and vehicles were abandoned in the mud and much equipment was lost. None of the dumps of food, petrol or ammunition was destroyed.

Japanese Reaction

By last light the Japanese preparations for their divisional night attack had been completed. They were therefore in no position to react quickly when they realised about last light

Anti-tank ditch

that the forward positions had been abandoned. The blown bridge on the FDLs, scattered mines on the road, and the anti-tank ditch held up their tanks and vehicles. The bridge over the Sungei Jitra had also been blown. It was thus shortly after midnight before they attempted to rush the bridge over the Sungei Bata, only to be repulsed by 2/2 Gurkhas. Further attacks followed until the bridge was finally blown at 0200 hours and 2/2 Gurkhas withdrew through the rearguard from 2/9 Gurkhas who had moved up from the south that evening. The Japanese kept the pressure on but after a sharp fight the rearguard broke contact at 0430 hours and withdrew over the Sungei Kedah at Kepala Batas. The two bridges were then blown.

Losses

The action at Jitra was a major disaster for the British forces in Malaya. 15 Brigade emerged from the battle barely 600 strong and 1 Leicesters alone of its units had any carriers or mortars left. The 6 Brigade fared less badly, but it had suffered serious losses in men and equipment. In 28 Brigade 2/1 Gurkhas were reduced to one company and both 2/2 and 2/9 Gurkhas had lost over 100 men each. Two commanding officers and 25 other officers had been killed or lost. Losses of guns, vehicles, and

signalling equipment were heavy, and particularly serious in some instances owing to lack of reserves in Malaya from which to replace them. The loss of morale was more serious, and many of the men who remained with or later rejoined the division were badly affected by their experiences and unfit for further action in the near future.

Japanese losses were light and, according to their records, were 27 killed and 83 wounded.

Comments on the Battle

General

The main body of the Japanese 5 Division was not involved in the Battle for Jitra. Why then was the advanced guard of the division which consisted of the Divisional Reconnaissance Regiment less one light tank company, and one battalion of 41 Regiment, a company of 10 medium tanks and some mountain guns and engineers, able to drive 11 Indian Division from its prepared positions at Jitra in just over 24 hours?

Undoubtedly the basic strategic errors of:—

(a) Allotting the primary role for the defence of Malaya to the air force,
(b) Siting forward airfields without serious regard to ground defence,
(c) Planning for "Matador" and
(d) Burdening the GOC 11 Division with the responsibility for Krohcol,

all contributed to the defeat at Jitra, but these cannot be blamed for the appalling performance put up by 11 Division.

In my view there were five main causes — faulty dispositions, lack of training, poor control, low morale and above all Japanese boldness and determination. These and others are dealt with in detail below.

Dispositions

When the defence was laid out originally there were only two brigades available. Four of the six battalions were deployed on a line from the edge of the mountains to the sea. Every possible approach was being covered. In assessing the threat it was correctly appreciated that the Japanese force would include tanks, but it was never really thought that a landing would be made during the north-east monsoon when rough seas would impede landings and when heavy rain would flood the swamps and paddy fields. The line, laid out in the dry season, consequently covered the whole front to the sea. No modification was made even when most of the front became impassable for tracks and wheels. This wide dispersion allowed the Japanese in their initial thrust to penetrate a gap in the lightly held FDLs and thrust two miles through without any serious opposition. The forward battalions, open to defeat in detail, were then withdrawn. This situation should never have arisen. Since it was only along the roads that the Japanese could use their tanks and vehicles, the division ought to have been deployed in depth to cover these approaches. Infiltration by enemy infantry around the flanks could have been dealt

with by patrols. A tighter defence would never have permitted a break-in by troops in the advanced guard despite the shortcomings in training and in the capability of the defenders to put up a really active defence including co-ordinated counter-attacks.

In the 15 Brigade sector there were five forward companies on a 7000 yard front. The right hand company of 2/9 Jats was quite isolated, 2000 yards from the left forward company. It was open to defeat in detail, and in the event was so remote and out of contact that it had been given up for lost and was not told to withdraw on the 12th. The obvious approach into the position was along the ridge held partly by the left company of the Jats. The three platoons of this company were so far apart that they could not support each other in the gloomy rubber plantation. 500 yards to their left was the right company of the Leicesters. About 100 yards of this gap was swamp but the rest was good going in rubber. It was into this gap that the first enemy probes were made early in the morning of the 12th. This penetration was extended that afternoon by the battalion attack which caused the loss or abandonment of the two forward battalion positions.

The main fault in the layout of the two forward battalions was that neither of them could fight effectively as battalions. The 2/9 Jats had four widely dispersed company localities. These were not well sited to hold the ridge which ran through the left forward company, nor did these companies link up effectively with 1 Leicesters on their left.

1 Leicesters had two major tasks — to hold the main road from the north, and to hold the road from Kangar. This second task was an unreasonable one to give to the battalion holding the main approach. This isolated company played no part in the battle, and after moving 500 yards south to Rimba on the afternoon of the 12th, was not told of the withdrawal and thus lost. Sited in depth as an integral part of the battalion layout, it would have contributed immeasurably to the strength on the main road.

Control

The fate of these battalions leads to the next point — control. This was bad from top to bottom. On the 11th, 12th and 13th General Heath was remote from the battle and not able to exercise on the spot at Jitra his authority and perspective as corps commander in the direction of the battle. The divisional commander, too, was out of touch with much of the battle due to poor communications at his headquarters at Alor Star, and due to the fact the he was not kept informed of events. Anxiety about the threat to his flank from Kroh haunted him *throughout the battle, particularly* as communications with Krohcol were poor. The premature redeployment of reserves by Brigadier Carpendale without reference to the divisional commander robbed Murray-Lyon of any means of influencing the

battle at the critical stage. These moves, made in haste by the Brigade Commander without verification of reports from junior leaders, contributed largely to the defeat. They were a reflection on training, but Brigadier Carpendale cannot be blamed for the 15 Brigade failings in this matter or accurate reporting. He can be blamed, however, for prematurely committing all of the divisional reserves without consulting his divisional commander. Poor communications could possibly have caused this. If so it was the divisional commander's responsibility to be in a position where he could keep in touch with events. His preoccupation with Krohcol has already been mentioned.

Training

Due mainly to the constant calls to return trained men to India to help raise new units, and to the low standard of recruit received in exchange, the basic training of units forming the division was inadequate. The standard of junior leaders, many of whom couldn't speak the language of their soldiers, left much to be desired. There was hardly time to train junior leaders and build up that confidence which good leadership combined with skill in the use of weapons, alone can give.

Brigade and Divisional training had not taken place; consequently commanders and staffs had had no practice in handling their formations. It is not surprising that, when battle was joined, demolitions failed or were ordered prematurely. Worse still, lack of training and experience resulted in inaccurate reports of enemy movements being sent back which led to commanders making false appreciations of the situation and to the faulty use of reserves. Night training, as so often is the case, had been neglected, and it was in this field that the Japanese excelled.

Morale

If confusion and bewilderment are a measure of morale then the troops of 11 Division had cause to start the battle with very shaky nerves. The decision to abandon Matador at the very last moment and hastily move into the positions prepared on the Jitra line had a bad psychological effect on the troops. Japanese air activity to the rear, which on the 10th caused the hurried abandonment of the Alor Star airfield which they were deployed to defend, did little to raise morale, and of course the tragic loss that same day of the great ships "Prince of Wales" and "Repulse" was a sorry blow.

Persistent rain, which flooded their trenches and made the positions in the rubber even more gloomy than usual, did nothing to improve morale. However, it was the disasters on the afternoon of the 11th which did most harm to both morale and to the whole defensive structure. The continually underrated Japanese, "who couldn't even beat the Chinese after four years", suddenly in three hours overwhelmed the two battalions charged with imposing delay forward of at least another 36 hours. The

shock use of tanks against these partly-trained troops, most of whom had never seen a tank, came as a complete surprise and produced panic amongst the Punjabis. It did little to stiffen the resolve of the defenders who knew that they were not fully ready to meet the Japanese onslaught. Within hours the Jats on the right had experienced all of the Japanese jitter tactics designed to demoralise the enemy. Their defences were probed; they were shouted at, sniped at and outflanked. So effective were these methods that, by first light on the 12th, eight companies had been redeployed to meet a non-existent threat on the right. Daylight brought no improvement in the morale of the Jats, for before the day was over they had fired on the flank of the 1/8 Punjab counter-attack and disrupted it, had withdrawn their left rear company without a fight, and abandoned their intact right forward company without confirming the report that it had been overrun.

The British War Historian sums up the state of morale in Indian units when he says: "What is surprising is not that new units in the early stages of the Japanese war failed to stem the Japanese advance, but that they fought as well as they did!"

Japanese Superiority

The Japanese advanced guard fully deserved their over-whelming victory. From the outset they showed drive and determination that was not matched by the 11 Indian Division. They moved at great speed and used their tanks boldly. Measures to overcome obstacles and make crossings passable were quick and effective. Rapid deployment drills on contact and the ability to exploit unexpected success unbalanced the opposition and kept them on the wrong foot. Their ability to operate at night and in the rain paid handsome dividends. Darkness held no terrors for them, and to die gloriously for the Emperor was their highest reward.

Conclusion

Five days after landing at Singora the Japanese had broken through the only prepared defence line in Malaya and the 11 Indian Division had largely disintegrated. With the Japanese air force in command of the air and their navy supreme at sea, it is no surprise that the confidence of troops and civilians alike in the defences of Malaya should have been seriously shocked. It was the beginning of the end in Malaya.

TANK DESIGN CONTEST

The United States Armor Association is sponsoring a tank design competition, and has asked this Journal to publish details of the competition with a view to obtaining entries from as wide a field as possible. These details, together with a copy of the entry form, are set out below.—Editor.

Wanted!

A Future Main Battle Tank For The U.S. Army

"I AM convinced that the modern Army demands a new and revolutionary change in tank development philosophy". So spoke Lieutenant General Arthur G. Trudeau, the Army's Chief of Research and Development at the Association of the United States Army Tactical Mobility Symposium held at Fort Knox, Kentucky, last November. General Trudeau then went on to propose a tank design contest to be sponsored by the US Armor Association.

Our Executive Council has voted to participate with the Army's Research and Development people, as co-sponsors of a tank design contest in search of "a future main battle tank". Details of the contest have been formulated by a committee of representatives from the Department of the Army, United States Continental Army Command, the United States Army Armor Centre and the US Armor Association.

What kind of tank does the Army need? Can you answer that question?

We've all had our say over many a social drink as to what kind of tank we need. We've all told our buddies, brutally on occasions.

Now, how about telling the Army? If your idea is worth a hoot — and you've been claiming for years that it is — we have people waiting to listen. More important to you personally, the US Armor Association will award a $500 US Government Savings Bond to the first place winner and $300, $200, and $100 in bonds to the next top three entries.

Start collecting your thoughts. What do you think the main battle tank should look like? What should it be able to do? How heavy should it be? Air transportable? How big a crew? What type of weapons should it mount? Should it be able to fly? How much armour? What kind? Where? What type of engine? Transmission? Tracks? Jot down your ideas and start making sketches.

You might consider a few of those ideas which General Trudeau mentioned at Fort Knox. How long must we continue to use in our tank designs, a turret arrangement conceived before World War II? Shouldn't we place our armour where it can protect men and vital equipment, and not worry about protecting such bulky components as the breach, the recoil mechanism and similar relatively "hard" items?

How long are we going to stand still, or rather, "sit still", on top

of a suspension system which cuts our cross-country mobility to a rough, really rough, dozen miles an hour? Why must we have a track with a life of only 2,000 miles tied to a 50-ton body? How long are we going to wish we were in the Navy every time we see a ditch full of water in front of an Army tank? What do you think?

To make this contest more than a dreamer's flight of imagination, remember that we want practical ideas. Don't think this means we are stifling your imagination and initiative; far from it.

That is enough to get you started. Remember that the ideas you submit, whether a vehicle, an entire weapons system, or components thereof, could well be the key to the main battle tanks you'll be seeing in the Army of the future. Details of the contest and an official entry blank are set out below:—

Objective

We believe that the role of the main battle tank will continue for the foreseeable future. We are also convinced that you have new and worthwhile ideas as to how this role can best be fulfilled. Consequently, the purpose of this contest is to develop ideas for a combat vehicle, or component thereof, which will substantially increase the shock effect of Armour in operations over all types of terrain. While its configuration and the time at which it might be issued to troops are not overriding factors, you should attempt to aim your effort at a successor for today's tank.

Rules

1. With the exception of the Rules Committee and the final judges, the contest is open to all who desire to enter.

2. Ideas or designs submitted will not include classified military information. If new ideas submitted appear to require classification, the Rules Committee will undertake such classification as appropriate.

3. Ideas or designs may be simple in format and, where used, only rudimentary sketches are necessary.

4. Ideas or designs may be for an entire weapons system, a vehicle, or components thereof.

5. Contestants may submit as many ideas or designs as they desire; however, only one prize will be awarded to any one individual.

6. Each idea or design will be accompanied by a signed official entry form or a facsimile thereof. Official entry forms will be published in ARMOR magazine and will also be available from other agencies.

7. Receipt and evaluation of designs and ideas does not imply a promise to pay, a recognition of novelty or originality, or a contractual relationship such as would render the US Armor Association or the United States Government liable to pay for any use of the information contained in entries to which either the Association or the Government would otherwise be lawfully entitled. However, unless otherwise entitled, neither the Association nor the Government has any

intention of using without proper compensation any information contained in entries in which contestants may have property rights and will, in the evaluation process, take all reasonable precautions to restrict the information contained in entries to those persons officiating in the contest and evaluating the merits of entries.

8. **Entries must be received by 31st August, 1962, to be considered for an award.** Entries will not be acknowledged or returned.

9. At the conclusion of the contest, all entries will be turned over to the United States Government by the US Armor Association.

Judging

Entries will be judged by a committee of members of the US Armor Association. Their selection will be final and binding.

Prizes

1. First Prize $500; Second Prize $300; Third Prize $200; Fourth Prize $100; all in US Government Savings Bonds.

2. In addition, each of the top ten contestants will receive an appropriate certificate and a two-year honorary membership in the US Armor Association.

3. Winners will be announced in the November - December 1962 issue of ARMOR magazine.

4. Awards will be presented by appropriate representatives of the US Armor Association on Armor's birthday, 12th December, 1962.

Official Tank Design Contest Entry Form

Secretary, United States Armor Association, 1757 K Street, NW Washington 6, DC.

Sir:

Attached is my entry for the US Armor Association Tank Design Contest. I understand that the receipt and evaluation of my design or idea does not imply a promise to pay, a recognition of novelty or originality, or a contractual relationship such as would render the US Armor Association or the United States Government liable to pay for any use of the information contained in my entry to which either the association or the Government would otherwise be lawfully entitled. However, I further understand that, unless otherwise entitled, neither the Association nor the Government has any intention of using without proper compensation any information contained in my entry in which I may have property rights and will, in the evaluation process, take all reasonable precautions to restrict the information contained in my entry to those persons officiating in the contest and evaluating the merits of my entry.

.....

(Signature)

.....

(Printed or typed name)

.....

(Address)

.....

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(Date)

BERLIN AND THE WEST

BERLIN is a long way from Australia, and it is understandable that a great many people should think that what happens there is of no particular interest to this country. Press reports of the recurring crisis probably attract little more than a passing glance, since it is not readily apparent that events in Berlin can have any direct or indirect bearing on events closer to home. Yet Berlin provides us with a clear-cut example of Soviet cold war tactics at work. Besides, Berlin is one of the pressure points between East and West, between two civilisations holding totally different concepts of man, where the results of the local struggle could have far-reaching consequences for the world.

The direct confrontation of East and West at Berlin has not allowed the divided city to escape our attention for very long. The crisis of 1948-49, which brought the war-time allies to the brink of armed conflict, was followed by a decade of comparative calm. Nevertheless in this period, in all the negotiations between the Soviet and the West, Berlin has been the most intractable problem. Then in 1958 Soviet manoeuvring created another crisis, and in 1961 Russian and American tanks faced each other across a chalk line down the middle of a street. This explosive situation should have shown us the importance attached to Berlin by both sides. At any rate it led to a build up of armaments on both sides of the iron curtain.

It is probably true to say that the Berlin problem originated in the incredible policy of unconditional surrender pursued by the Allies in World War II. Translated into reality, unconditional surrender meant total occupation of enemy territory. It was natural enough that the Allies, in seeking a formula to convert the idea into a reality, should agree to divide Germany into zones to be occupied by their respective armed forces. The trouble was that when the whole country was divided into four zones — British, American, French and Russian — Berlin was deep in the Soviet Zone. Although not particularly important as a city, Berlin, as the capital of Germany and the nerve centre of the Nazi system, was tremendously important to all the Allies. Each of them wished to share in the occupation of the enemy's capital, a symbolic action which had frequently been accomplished

without evil consequences in the past. Not much trouble was experienced in arriving at an agreement to divide Berlin, like Germany as a whole, into four occupation zones. However, since it was impracticable to physically isolate the four sectors in a single city, it was agreed that the overall government would be in the hands of a Kommandatura consisting of representatives of the commanders-in-chief.

These agreements made it abundantly clear that Berlin, although situated *in* the Russian zone, *was not a part of that zone.* The agreements established the legal right of the Western Allies to station troops in Berlin. Unfortunately the rights of access to the occupation sectors were not set down in writing though they were clearly enough implied. Considered in relation to the atmosphere of allied amity which prevailed at the time, and the Russian assurances that they "understood" the agreements to carry the right of access, this omission is understandable enough. We did not know the Russians half so well then as we know them now.

The war-time amity between the Eastern and Western Allies collapsed with the unconditional surrender of Germany. In a very short time it became apparent that Russia and the Western Allies were divided on fundamental issues, and that a struggle between them was going to develop. From the beginning of this new era the Soviet Government made it quite clear that, so far as they were concerned, there could be only one end to the coming struggle — total Russian victory.

Effective government by the Kommandatura lasted only a few weeks. On 7th July, 1945, the Soviet representative announced that Soviet provisioning of the city could soon cease. This step threw upon the Western Allies responsibility for bringing in supplies for the inhabitants of their respective sectors, while the Soviet looked after its own sector. Thus from the very beginning, Berlin was economically divided into two separate cities. As time went on the economy of West Berlin, occupied by the Allies, tended to become tied to the economy of West Germany, while that of East Berlin tended to become tied to the economy of East Germany, occupied by the Russians.

Russia made her first attempt to force the Allies out of Berlin in 1948-49 when she closed all the land routes into the city against all Western traffic. Apparently the Russians thought that since Berlin depended on outside supplies for its daily bread, the Allies would either have to withdraw, sit tight and watch the inhabitants of their sectors starve and freeze to death, or attempt to force food convoys through the blockade. To the discomfiture of the Soviet, the Allies did none of these things. Marshalling every available cargo-carrying aircraft, they supplied their zones with food and fuel by air through a severe winter. It was a remarkable achievement.

Up till the time when the Russians instituted the blockade

on 18th-19th June, 1948, Berlin was governed by a representative Assembly and a single administration subject to the control of the Kommandatura. By the time the blockade was lifted in May 1948 the Western and Eastern sectors each had a well-established administration of its own. Thus a city already divided economically became divided politically as well.

Just before the blockade the Allies and the Russians had introduced separate currencies for their respective occupation zones. During and after the blockade the Western and Eastern sectors of Berlin became tied to these currencies. This, of course, tended to widen the economic division of the city. In the course of time these divergent economic interests tended to strengthen the political and social links between West Berlin and the German Federal Republic on the one hand, and between East Berlin and the emerging German Democratic Republic (Communist) on the other.

The hardening of the line of division between East and West through central Europe, especially after the Federal Republic joined the NATO Alliance in 1955, placed West Berlin in a precariously isolated position. Nevertheless, though separated from the Federal Republic by 110 miles of hostile territory, through which came all but one per cent. of the supplies for its 2.2 million people, it prospered. Its production index rose from 32 in 1950 to 152 in 1959. War damage was cleared away, new buildings constructed and efficient transport systems established. The well-fed and well-dressed population had at its disposal shops and emporiums filled with consumer goods. In brief West Berlin has all the appearances of any prosperous city in the Western world.

In sharp contrast East Berlin remains a dreary, war scarred region where supplies of all sorts are scarce and expensive.

As the years passed West Berlin became a token of the Allies obligation to re-unite Germany, a refuge for anyone who wished to leave the Soviet zone, and a shop-window for the West in the heart of the hostile but still accessible East. Inevitably the divided capital of the former Reich became the symbol of German national aspirations, and for the West as a whole, the symbol of resistance to Soviet encroachments.

On 27th November, 1958, the Soviet proposed that West Berlin should be made a demilitarised free city under a four-power guarantee. The acceptance of this proposal would have involved the destruction of Allied war time rights and the withdrawal of Western troops from the city. Withdrawal would certainly have been followed by West Berlin's economic and political absorption into the German Democratic (Communist) Republic. This would have been a gross betrayal of the peoples of West Berlin and of the Federal Republic. Further afield the betrayal would have very seriously undermined the degree of credibility which governments

and peoples subject to Communist pressures could place in assurances of Western support. Acceptance would have signified to all the world a striking Soviet victory and an equally striking Western defeat. For these reasons the Western governments rightly rejected the proposal.

The next crisis developed in two phases. On 4th June, 1961, Mr. Khrushchev handed the United States President a memorandum in which he threatened to make a separate peace treaty with the German Democratic (Communist) Republic, and to hand over control of all the routes of access to Berlin to his East German vassals. Khrushchev backed up his demands with announcements of reinforcements for the Russian forces in Europe and the general stepping up of Soviet military strength.

While the Western governments were co-ordinating their policies against this background of threats, the East German government suddenly put a stop to freedom of movement between East and West Berlin. On the night of 12th-13th August they built a wall of concrete and wire through the heart of Berlin along the dividing line between the Eastern and Western sectors. This action effectively divided the city into two mutually inaccessible parts. In taking it the Communists sought to demonstrate the end of four-power control and the absorption of East Berlin into the German Democratic (Communist) Republic.

Behind the building of the wall lies the story of economic failure in East Germany. While the Federal Republic has prospered, the Democratic (Communist) Republic has remained more or less stagnant. East Germany is notoriously the unhappiest of the Soviet satellites. In the spring of 1961 industrial production was falling far short of targets, agricultural collectivisation had resulted in chronic food shortages, and the waiting lists for consumer goods were endless. A discontented population was being held in check only by the exertions of the secret police and the presence of massive Russian forces. Nevertheless, before the building of the wall it was always possible to slip across to the liberty and prosperity of the West. In the 12 years of the Democratic Republic's existence over 2,000,000 of its people fled to the West through the Berlin escape hatch, very many of whom were doctors, engineers, teachers and other specialists. Before the wall was built East Germany was virtually the only civilised country with a declining population; a condition of affairs extremely damaging to the republic's economy and to Communist prestige.

The firm and unequivocal response of the West has checked Soviet pressure for the time being. The situation remains stabilised along the dividing wall. So long as the West maintains its firm posture it is unlikely that the Communists will attempt an open assault against West Berlin. Indirect assault is more likely, a steady nibbling

away of the bases on which West Berlin has been able to live and prosper, each step barely perceptible, none in itself of sufficient gravity to enable the West to draw a line on which to fight. Yet somehow or other the West must draw such a line. For, no matter how it is accomplished, if West Berlin falls to the Communists, Western prestige and integrity will suffer a severe blow throughout the world.

— E.G.K.

The article "Finding Your Way" by Lt. Col. C. L. Thompson, MBE, included in the February 1962 issue of the Journal contained some comments on the availability of text books on map reading, which require further explanation.

The current text books on this subject are "The Manual of Map Reading, Air Photo Reading and Field Sketching" series. This consists of

Part 1, Map Reading, 1955
Part 2, Air Photo Reading, 1958
Part 3, Field Sketching, 1957

As the techniques associated with this subject change slowly, these manuals represent a recent and completely up to date series.

Ten thousand copies of Part I were issued in 1957. This generous issue placed in units a number of copies equivalent to one for each officer. In units where publications records are properly kept, most of these clearly written and well-bound volumes will still be available.

No requests have been received since the initial issue for release of any of the available central reserve stocks of the manual.

Parts 2 and 3 were issued in September 1960 and March 1959 respectively on a somewhat less lavish scale, but the same comments otherwise apply.

THE BLOODY HANDS OF THE VIET CONG

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BECAUSE of the strong light it focuses on the shadowy world of Communist terror in Southeast Asia the editors have undertaken to condense the State Department's "white paper", issued early in December under the title "A Threat to the Peace — North Vietnam's Effort to Conquer South Vietnam". In preparing this condensation, the editors have largely concentrated on military and quasi-military aspects of the report and have drawn both from the body of the publication and its appendices.

The Communist programme to seize South Vietnam relies on every available technique for spreading disorder and confusion in a peaceful society. Today it may call for the murder of a village chief known to be unfriendly to the Communists; tomorrow it may produce an attack in battalion strength against an outpost of the Army of the Republic of Vietnam. No tactic, whether of brutal terror, armed action, or persuasion, is ignored. If mining a road will stop all transport, who cares that a school bus may be the first vehicle to pass? If halting rice shipments means that many people go hungry, perhaps they will blame it on the government. If people object to paying taxes to both the Communists and to the government in Saigon, they are urged to refuse the latter.

The basic pattern of Viet Cong (Vietnamese Communist) activity is not new, of course. It operated, with minor variations, in China, and Mao Tse-tung's theories on the conduct of guerrilla warfare are known to every Viet Cong agent and cadre. Most of the same methods were used in Malaya, in Greece, in the Philippines, in Cuba, and in Laos. If there is anything peculiar to the Vietnam situation, it is that the country is divided and one-half provides a safe sanctuary from which subversion in the other half is directed and supported with both personnel and material.

What follows is a study of Viet Cong activities in South Vietnam and of the elaborate organisation in the North that supports those activities. The Communists have made the most elaborate efforts to conceal their

role and to prevent any discoveries that would point an accusing finger at them for causing what is happening. But their efforts have not been totally successful.

In such a large-scale operation there are always some failures. There are defections. There are human frailties and some misjudgment. In major military operations prisoners are taken and documents are seized. All these and more have occurred in Vietnam. Over the years the authorities in Saigon have accumulated a mass of material exposing the activities of the Viet Cong.

This report is based on an extensive study of much of that material. It relies on documentary and physical evidence and on the confessions of many captured Viet Cong personnel.

The specific cases cited herein have been presented, as they occurred, to the International Control Commission (ICC) in Saigon by the Government of the Republic of Vietnam.

What emerges from this study is a detailed, but by no means exhaustive, picture of Viet Cong operations and of the programme of the Communist government in Hanoi to win power over all Vietnam. The Government of the United States believes that picture should be presented to the world.

Viet Cong Activity in the South

The Military Pattern

The pattern varies from village to village, from district to district, depending on the extent of Viet Cong control. But the variations are minor. In general, the organisational framework of the Viet Cong military units is quite standardised throughout South Vietnam.

There are three kinds of Viet Cong (VC) soldier. One is based on the village. He receives no pay. Generally he works at his job — usually as a farmer or fisherman or labourer — during the day. At night or in emergencies he is available for assignment by his superiors. The Viet Cong like to have at least five and preferably ten guerrillas of this type in each village. In villages largely controlled by the Viet Cong, a full squad (10 to 16 men) is usual. A village squad is likely to have a few land mines at its disposal and two or three rifles or submachine guns. Knives, machetes, spears, or other weapons are more common than modern firearms.

Half-time, irregular forces are organised by the Viet Cong at the district level. There are generally several companies of 50 or more men in each district. These troops receive half pay and so must work at least part time to eke out a living. They are both better equipped and better trained than the village guards.

It would be a mistake to assume that the Vietnamese villagers are searching out Viet Cong agents in order to enlist as local guards or irregular soldiers. Undoubtedly there are some volunteers. But the record shows that many young Vietnamese are dragooned into service with the VC. Some are kid-

napped; others are threatened; still others join to prevent their families from being harmed.

Last summer, an American radio correspondent (CBS) interviewed a young Vietnamese who had been captured in an action against the Viet Cong in Kien Phong Province. The "volunteer" Pham Van Dau, was only 17 years old. The reporter asked him why he had joined the Communists. He replied: "Because they took my father away for 10 days and tried to force him to join their organisation. But my father refused. Then they took me and forced me to co-operate. They threatened to kill my father if I refused. That is why I joined them".

Similar statements have been made by hundreds of young men who either deserted the VC ranks or surrendered to the Republic of Vietnam forces.

The hard core of the Viet Cong military organisation is the full-time regular unit usually based on a province or region. These are well-trained and highly disciplined guerrilla fighters. Soldiering is their job and they do it effectively. They follow a rigid training schedule that is roughly two-thirds military and one-third political in content. This compares with the 50-50 proportion for district units and the 70 per cent. political and 30 per cent. military content of the village guerrilla's training.

Some of the regular VC forces have been introduced from the North in units. Moreover, the leaders of regular VC units are almost exclusively men trained in North Vietnam although many are natives of the South.

Money to pay the regular VC units comes from a variety of sources. "Taxes" are extorted from the local population. Landowners and plantation operators often must pay a tribute to the VC as the price for not having their lands devastated. Similarly, transportation companies have been forced to pay the VC or face the threat of having their buses or boats sabotaged. Officials and wealthy people have been kidnapped for ransom by the VC. The VC have often stopped buses, taken the money and valuables of all on board, given them a lecture on the "glories of Communism", and turned them loose.

For the most part the VC have concentrated their attention on individuals and isolated or poorly defended outposts. They have killed hundreds of village chiefs and other local officials. In the past year, however, and particularly in the last few months, the VC have moved into larger unit operations. Several attacks have been carried out in battalion strength or more against fairly large units of the South Vietnamese Army.

Among the favoured targets of the VC have been police stations, self-defence corps units, civil guard outposts, and small units of the South Vietnam Army. By hitting such targets suddenly and in superior force, the VC are able to assure themselves a supply of arms and ammunition. This reduces their dependence on the long supply line from the North. The weapons of the VC

are largely French or US made, or handmade on primitive forges in the jungles.

The Communists have avoided any large-scale introduction of Soviet-bloc arms into South Vietnam, for this would be too clear evidence of their direct involvement. However, as the armed forces of the so-called Democratic Republic of Vietnam have been re-equipped with new weapons from the Sino-Soviet bloc, their old weapons have helped supply the Viet Cong in the South.

The size of the Viet Cong regular units has grown steadily in recent years. Once estimated at approximately 3,000 men, the strength of the full-time Viet Cong elite fighting force is now believed to be at least 8,000 or 9,000 organised in some 30 battalions. An additional 8,000 or more troops operate under the leadership of regular Viet Cong officers at the provincial or district level. These figures do not include many thousands of village guards, political cadres, special agents, bearers, and the like. The pace of infiltration of officers and men has jumped markedly since Pathet Lao victories in Laos have assured a relatively safe corridor through that country into western South Vietnam.

There are good reasons to think that Laos now provides not only a route into South Vietnam but also a safe haven from which Viet Cong units operate. Laos-based units of the Viet Cong are believed to have played an important role in large-scale attacks by the VC in the highlands north of Kontum and near Ban Me Thuot this summer and fall and perhaps in assaults in the northern Provinces of Quang Nam and Quang Ngai.

In addition to providing a channel for troops and agents, the infiltration routes from North Vietnam into the South are used to transfer supplies and equipment. Much of the food needed by the VC is acquired locally through "taxation" or outright seizure. Armed attacks provide many of the weapons and much of the ammunition. But shipments from the North supplement these sources. There is also regular traffic across the mountain trails and by sea-going junks which supplies the VC with material for clothing and uniforms, medical supplies, communications equipment, tools, generators, and all the many things required by a fighting force in the field.

The Political Pattern

The content and methods of Viet Cong political activity leave no doubt as to its Communist orientation. In a transparent effort to give their movement a cloak of respectability and of popular support, the so-called "Front for Liberation of the South" was formed late last year. Within the front are separate "liberation" organisations — for youth, for the peasants, for workers, for intellectuals, for women, indeed for every significant segment of society in South Vietnam.

However, seized documents, propaganda pamphlets, and in-

doctrination leaflets picked up throughout South Vietnam make clear that the Lao Dong (Workers) Party, that is, the Communist Party, is the vanguard of the "liberation" movement. As those familiar with the Communist movement know, this means that the "liberation" movement is directed by the Communist Party. The Lao Dong Party of the South is part of and controlled by Ho Chi Minh's Lao Dong Party in the North.

The Viet Cong organisation in the South follows the familiar Communist pattern. The basic unit is the cell of a few persons in a village or neighbourhood. Village units are subordinate to the district headquarters and these in turn are controlled by the provincial party headquarters. Above the latter are the regional or zonal headquarters which take their directions from Hanoi.

The pattern of political indoctrination is what one would expect — concentration on studies of "socialism", meaning Communism; praise for and identification with the programme and progress of the Ho regime in the North; promises of support for the "liberation" movement by the "socialist camp"; criticism of the "imperialists", "warmongers", and "colonialists" and their "puppets".

Through their propaganda the Viet Cong seek to appeal to every group in the South with promises of special attention — "autonomy" for minority tribal groups, land and freedom from usury for the peasants, education for the youth, "freedom" for the intellectuals, and so forth.

In addition to the party organisation itself, close ties are maintained with the military units through a system of political officers assigned to all units down to the platoon. Party members often serve as part-time guerrillas. They provide additional eyes and ears for the military units, supplying reports on Government of the Republic of Vietnam (GVN) military establishments and troop movements. They may be assigned to collect money or to gather food for the Viet Cong.

The Use of Terror

While professing sympathy for the needs and hopes of the people, the Viet Cong has resorted to the most brutal forms of force and coercion in carrying out its programme. It has sought by every available means to frustrate the efforts of the authorities in South Vietnam to provide the people with social services. It has made no secret of its determination to destroy if possible the legally elected government in South Vietnam and to place that country and its people under the control of Hanoi. It promises improvements but does what it can to prevent those very improvements if they are carried out by non-Communist authorities.

Assassination, often after the most brutal torture, is a favoured Viet Cong tactic. Government officials, schoolteachers, even wives and children have been the victims. Literally hundreds of village

chiefs have been murdered in order to assert Viet Cong power and to instill fear in the populace. The list of atrocities is long.

A particularly brutal example was reported from Vinh Binh Province the first week in November. The chief of Cau Ke district, Le Van Kghia, was killed when his car hit a Viet Cong mine. Killed with the district chief were his wife and two other persons. The official's two children, aged one and three, miraculously survived the blast, but they were killed on the spot by the Viet Cong who had prepared the ambush.

Kidnapping is another criminal technique commonly used by the Viet Cong. Often the victims are never heard from again. Sometimes they are returned after sufficient ransom has been paid. At times this method is used to get recruits when efforts at persuasion fail.

Recently, in a gesture of utter contempt for the ICC, which is charged with overseeing enforcement of the Geneva Accords in Vietnam, the Viet Cong kidnapped Col. Hoang Thuy Nam, chief of the South Vietnam liaison mission with the ICC. He was seized by a group of armed men at his farm less than ten miles from Saigon. Appeals for his release went unheeded. The ICC refused to raise its voice in protest. Ten days later his body was found floating in the Saigon River. It bore the marks of awful torture inflicted before his death. It was a ghastly crime that shocked Vietnam and civilised people everywhere.

Any official, worker, or establishment that represents a service to the people by the government in Saigon is fair game for the Viet Cong. Schools have been among their favourite targets. Through harassment, the murder of teachers, and sabotage of buildings the Viet Cong succeeded in closing more than 200 primary schools in South Vietnam in 1960, interrupting the education of more than 25,000 students. The number is reported to have risen to almost 400 in recent months.

Hospitals and medical clinics have often been attacked as part of the anti-government campaign and also because the attacks provide the Viet Cong with needed medical supplies. The Communists have encouraged people in rural areas to oppose the work of the government's anti-malaria teams, and some of the workers have been killed. Village and town offices, police stations, and agricultural research stations are high on the list of preferred targets for the Viet Cong.

In short, anything that spells order or security for the people of the South is anathema to the Viet Cong unless it be VC "order" or VC "security", anything that represents service or public welfare becomes a target, and a man who serves his government and his people is likely to have his name inscribed on the Viet Cong's "wanted" list.

In 1960 the Government of the Republic of Vietnam claimed that about 1,400 local government officials and civilians were assassinated by the Viet Cong.

Approximately 700 persons were kidnapped during the year. In the first six months of 1961 more than 500 murders of officials and civilians were reported and about 1,000 persons were kidnapped. The number of acts of terrorism carried out by the Viet Cong in recent months exceeds last year's levels according to authorities in Saigon.

Organisation of the Viet Cong

The Viet Cong operation in South Vietnam has the backing of an elaborate organisational structure in North Vietnam. The Ho Chi Minh regime has shown that it is ready to allocate every resource that can be spared — whether it be personnel, funds, or equipment — to the cause of overthrowing the legitimate government of South Vietnam.

Military Organisation

Military affairs of the Viet Cong are the responsibility of the armed forces high command in North Vietnam under close supervision from the party. These responsibilities include selection of key targets, operational plans, assignments of regular units, training programmes, military communications, tactical intelligence, supplies, and the like.

The subordination of the Viet Cong military effort to the political leadership of Communist cadres is clear. General Vinh is the junior member of the Committee for Supervision of the South in Hanoi. Brig. Gen. Nguyen Don, in charge of military affairs in the South-Central Interzone, is responsible to Tran Luong, a member of the Lao Dong Party's Central Committee and secretary general of the interzone executive group. The same is true in Nambo, where military affairs chief Nguyen Huu Xuyen is the subordinate of political boss Muoi Cuc.

Intelligence Organisation

A key element in the Viet Cong effort is an elaborate organisation in Hanoi called the Central Research Agency (CRA) (Cuc Nghien-Cuu Trung-Uong). Though it handles Hanoi's intelligence effort on a worldwide scale, the main focus of its operation is on South Vietnam. The Research Agency is able to draw on the intelligence capabilities of both the Lao Dong Party and the Armed Forces for information, personnel, and facilities. The CRA reportedly operates under the close personal scrutiny of Ho Chi Minh himself.

Considerable information on the organisation of the CRA has become available from captured Viet Cong agents and from the work of intelligence agents of the Republic of Vietnam. Much of this information cannot be made public for security reasons. But it is possible to describe the CRA organisation and its operations in broad outline.

The headquarters of the CRA in Hanoi is divided into six main sections, not including a special code unit. The six sections are responsible for administration, cadres, communications, espionage, research, and training.

Also operating under the direct supervision of CRA headquarters are a number of special


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KAIHWA FU
HENAN FU
WATLAM
LINA NEU
SZEMAO
HA GIANG
CAO BANG
NANNING
TAIPING FU
KOCHOW
LAI CHAU
LAOKAY
NORTH VIETNAM
LANG SON
LIMCHOW
PHONG SALY
DIN LAP
MON CAY
TIEN YEN
BURMA
DIEN BIEN PHU
SON LA
VAN YEN
HANOI
SEPT PA
LUICHOW
MUONG SING
HOA BINH
HAIPHONG
BAN HWEI SAI
SAM NEUA
MUONG LAN
NAM DINH
Gulf of Tonkin
LUANG PRABANG
NINH BINH
THANH HOA
HAINAN
KIUNGCHOW
MONG SWI
KIENG KHOUANG
PHU DIEN
NAN
VANG VIENG
VIENTIANE
VINH
HA TINH
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SARAVANE
YASOTHON
QUANG NGEI
PAK SONG
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SURIN
SISAKET
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PLEIKU
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KHONG
VOBONSU
BINH DINH
WATANA
SISOPHON
ANGKOR
SIEM REAP
STUNG TRENG
SOUTH VIETNAM
TUY HOA
BATTAMBANG
KAMPONG KLEANG
CAMBODIA
TONLE SAP
BAN ME THOUT
KAMPONG THOM
KRATIE
NINH HOA
CHANTABURI
TRAT
SNOUL
DALAT
NHA TRANG
KAMPONG CHAM
BUDUP
Gulf of Siam
KAS KONG
PHNOM PENH
PHAN RANG
PHAN RI
SRE UMBEL
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centres for overseas operations. One such centre is responsible for maintaining intelligence channels to overseas areas. It operates through special units at Haiphong and at Hongay which have contact with Hong Kong, Paris, and other overseas points.

A second special centre is based in Vinh and is responsible for VC intelligence operations in Cambodia and Laos. A third centre handles activities along the "demarcation line", the border with South Vietnam. This unit is based in Vinh-Linh in south-east North Vietnam. This centre is responsible for sending agents and supplies to the South by sea, across the demilitarised zone, and along mountain trails through Laos. The CRA maintains intelligence bases in Laos and other neighbouring countries.

Inside South Vietnam the Viet Cong are known to have a large intelligence network. Some of its units are responsible for receiving and sending on agents arriving from the North. They feed and give instructions to groups infiltrating into South Vietnam. They take delivery of equipment and supplies received from the North and relay them to Viet Cong units in the South.

Some CRA units specialise in infiltration by sea routes. Others are responsible for controlling overland routes across the demilitarised zone and through Laos.

Many Viet Cong agents have been captured in the city of Saigon. They have exposed the extensive effort by the CRA to penetrate all Republic of Vietnam government agencies, foreign embassies, and other specialised organisations.

Evidence of External Support of the Viet Cong

The authorities in North Vietnam — the central government, the army, the Central Research Agency, the Lao Dong Party — have gone to elaborate lengths to conceal their direct participation in the programme to conquer and absorb South Vietnam. In part, these efforts are designed to help preserve the fiction that the armed uprising in the South is an internal matter. In part, too, the effort appears a concession to that amorphous factor called "world public opinion". In addition, the Communist leaders in Hanoi probably would like to be able to adopt a posture of outrage, should the methods being practised by them in the South ever be turned against them in the North.

To help conceal the identity of its agents going into the South, a special section of the Central Research Agency in Hanoi is kept busy producing false identification papers, forged boat registration certificates, draft cards, and other documents. Military personnel are supposed to turn in all identification papers before they move across the South Vietnam border. Weapons of Soviet-bloc origin are generally shunned and Viet Cong troops entering the South usually are supplied with French weapons dating from the Indochina war or US equipment captured in Laos or

in attacks on military units in South Vietnam.

However, no effort at concealment carried out on such a huge scale can ever be completely successful. Viet Cong agents have been captured or have defected. VC officers and soldiers have surrendered or been taken prisoner, South Vietnamese agents have uncovered much valuable information on the Viet Cong operation. Other sources have provided additional details.

Over the years, the government of South Vietnam has tried to bring details of this picture of subversion and covert aggression to the attention of the world. Primarily, it has done so by presenting evidence, as it was acquired, to the International Control Commission. Almost 200 letters detailing more than 1,200 incidents — everything from acts of sabotage or cases of assassination to large-scale military actions by the Viet Cong — are in the International Control Commission files. Thus far that body has not investigated any cases of subversion, just as it has not uttered a word of protest over the kidnapping and murder of Colonel Nam.

The reasons for this inaction are obvious. The Polish member of the ICC will not favour any investigation that might embarrass the Viet Cong. The Indian chairman of the Commission has taken the view that any actions by the group should be supported by both the Polish and the Canadian members. This approach has prevented the ICC from enforcing effective control over any violation of the Geneva Agreements on Vietnam, whether it be subversion in the South or illegal introduction of Soviet-bloc military goods from the North.

For the past three years the government in Saigon has published annual reports on Viet Cong actions and atrocities in order to focus attention on the deepening tragedy of a people who want to be left alone but who have become the target of Hanoi's plan for conquest. These accounts of accumulating horrors in the Vietnam countryside do not make pleasant reading. But they throw some much-needed light on the "convert or destroy" methods of the Viet Cong.

Infiltration of Agents

One of the ways in which the Viet Cong and the authorities in Hanoi violate the sovereignty and territorial integrity of South Vietnam is the introduction of espionage agents into the South. Sometimes these agents travel by fishing junks operated by the Special 603d Maritime Unit in Dong Hoi or by other infiltration groups. Others travel south along one of the many secret infiltration trails through the demilitarised zone, or through Laos. They may stay in the South for only a day or two — long enough to deliver and/or pick up messages — or they may go on extended assignments.

The An Don Case

On the evening of June 5th, 1961, a patrol craft of the Tourane Naval District cruised along the shore of An Don, a

waterfront area in Tourane on the north-east coast of South Vietnam. Its mission: to check on any suspicious persons or vessels. As the patrol approached a junk, one of the inspectors saw a familiar face. The inspector knew the young man's mother and knew that he had been missing for some time. Under questioning, the young man, Truong Van Hao, confessed. He and his four companions were taken into custody.

It was an important arrest. Interrogation of the prisoners disclosed the following.

Nguyen Chuc, alias Nguyen Thi, 34, was the leader of the group. A lieutenant in the North Vietnamese Army, he had fought with the Viet Cong against the French. After Geneva, in 1955, he went north though his native village and his family were in the South. Between June 1959 and June 1961 he had made 17 trips to South Vietnam on espionage missions. He was a member of the Viet Cong maritime liaison group in Dong Hoi, a port on the east coast just north of the 17th parallel. His assignments included transporting agents from North to South and South to North and carrying messages and secret material from and to espionage units in the South.

Chuc and the others all carried false identification papers, including draft cards, fisherman's licenses, and election cards. The registration papers for their boat also were forgeries as were the logbooks. Found aboard the Viet Cong junk were a miniature camera of German manufacture; a Japanese-made transistor radio; 8,260 piasters (about $112) in South Vietnamese money; 20 sheets of blank paper presumed to carry invisible writing; a book on taxation policy and economic development in Vietnam published by the government in Saigon but not available to the public at the time of seizure; a copy of the latest Cong Dan yearbook (1960-61) published in Saigon which contained the names, addresses, and other data on all leading South Vietnamese officials.

The An Don case is but one of many instances of infiltration of agents and couriers from North Vietnam into the South. On June 15th the South Vietnamese intercepted seven junks coming from the North with 36 persons aboard. The latter carried forged papers. On June 17th six boats with 29 persons aboard were picked up by a patrol unit off Thuan An.

Infiltration of Military Personnel

If the traffic in espionage agents into the South has been a serious problem, the infiltration across South Vietnam's borders by VC military forces, officers and men, sometimes in organised units, has assumed ominous proportions. Sometimes they travel by junk from the North. More often they have moved into South Vietnam along secret trails that cross the western portion of the demilitarised zone, a mountainous region of heavy forests. Now, with much of Laos in Communist hands, infiltration trails through that country have been used increasingly by the Viet Cong.

The Calu Case

On March 29th, 1961, a unit of the Vietnamese Army located and destroyed a Viet Cong base at Calu, near Thuong Trung in the northern Province of Quang Tri. The Calu post was a way station on an infiltration route from the North. It was a place where entering Viet Cong personnel could stop for food and rest before moving farther south. Calu was Station No. 8 on the trail. Station No. 2 was on the North-South border at Bo Ho Su; presumably Station No. 1 was the jump off point just north of the border. Another identified post on the trail was No. 25 at Ba Ngai in southern Quang Tri.

Thirteen Viet Cong personnel were killed in the fight at Calu. Documents, maps, and some medical supplies were captured as well as rice and other food stocks. Most of the documents were Communist indoctrination and study pamphlets of a kind that can be found at any VC position. But several captured documents were of particular significance.

One notebook found at Calu contained a careful daily record of rice and other foods received and consumed at the post. A second notebook contained a daily record of meals served with full notations of the number of Viet Cong who passed through the post on their way into South Vietnam. Analysis of the records shows that 1,840 Viet Cong entered the South along the Calu trail during the period from October 1960 to March 1961.

In the attack, Vietnamese Government forces also captured the notebook of a Viet Cong official, probably the commander of the Calu post. The document discusses many details related to infiltration activities. Included are records of weapons sent in over the secret trail for distribution to VC units in Quang Tri Province, in VC Zone 5, and in other areas.

The notations are in a simple code which Vietnamese intelligence analysts had little trouble interpreting because they had seen it before. The notebook listed the following war material as entering for distribution to Zone 5:

115 light machine guns and 75,054 rounds of ammunition
78 sub-machine guns and 26,758 rounds of ammunition
2,342 rifles and 488,388 rounds of ammunition
421 grenades
138 packages and 11 cases of explosives.
287 cases of mines
382 cases of bombs
148 boxes of gunpowder.

The following were sent in for use in Quang Tri:

40 light machine guns.
80 sub-machine guns
12 pistols
308 rifles and 73,204 rounds of ammunition
24 grenade launchers
115 grenades.

Supplies listed in the notebook for distribution to other areas:

35 light machine guns and 3,664 rounds of ammunition
243 sub-machine guns and 88,314 rounds of ammunition

702 rifles and 209,274 rounds of ammunition
502 kilograms of explosives
201 cases of mines
75 cases of bombs
9 boxes of gunpowder.

South Vietnamese authorities estimate this quantity of military hardware could supply at least 30 regular companies of infantry. They are convinced that some of this equipment was used by the Viet Cong in their attack on Vietnamese Army outposts near Dakrotah in late 1960 and against Government units in the Kontum region early in September (1961).

There is a small but interesting sidelight to the Calu officer's notebook. On one of the back pages there is an entry in the Russian language. It is the name and address in Moscow of a Vietnamese, presumably a friend of the notebook's owner.

The Le Hoa Case

Le Hoa is a Viet Cong corporal. He was born in 1931 in the village of Duc Lan in Quang Ngai Province. During the Indochina war he was a member of the village defence corps. He later was recruited by the Viet Cong as a member of the district guard in Mo Duc. When the war ended, he went to North Vietnam with his unit. In June 1956 the Mo Duc unit was disbanded and Le Hoa was assigned to the 803rd Regiment of the North Vietnam Army.

In June 1961, Le Hoa and eight members of his company were ordered to report to regimental headquarters. There they were told they had been picked for special training and would join the "liberation" forces in the South. After one month of training, the group boarded trucks at their training camp located at Vinh and began their journey to South Vietnam.

By truck and on foot they moved southward until they reached the Ben Hai River which divides North and South Vietnam. They crossed the river on July 22nd according to Corporal Hao's account. He reported passing through Thua Thien, Quang Nam, and Quang Ngai Provinces.

The corporal told his interrogators that he decided on October 8th to desert the Viet Cong. He was captured on October 12th by two members of the self defence corps in Binh Dinh Province.

South Vietnam authorities are skeptical of parts of Le Hoa's story. They believe he gave false details of the route his unit took into the South in order to protect his comrades who might follow. They doubt, too, that he decided to defect. Rather they think he became separated from his unit during an action, wandered aimlessly through the jungle for days, and then, weak from exhaustion and lack of food, lost any desire to resist capture. But that he was a Viet Cong soldier and that he came from North Vietnam as he claimed, there can be no doubt.

The Diary of Nguyen Dinh Kieu

In an action near Dakakoi on September 26th, 1961, armed forces of the Republic of Viet-

nam killed a number of Viet Cong. Among the dead was a VC Captain Nguyen Dinh Kieu. A diary was found in his pocket. The first entry was dated May 30th, 1961; the final one, September 15th.

The first section of Captain Kieu's diary contains organisational charts and other data on the VC company he commanded. The second section (37 pages) contains the captain's notes on his journey from North Vietnam to the South, on travel conditions, troop morale, political indoctrination, and other subjects.

The Kieu diary contains four separate organisational charts of the company, apparently reflecting periodic revisions caused by losses through combat, illness, and defections, and by the addition of new men. There are individual notations on the men listing their ages, dates of entry into the army, party membership, and other details. The total strength of Kieu's unit ranged from 56 to 69 men, though at one point in his diary he noted that he had only 37 "effectives".

Captain Kieu and his Viet Cong company began their journey to the South on June 15th, 1961. By June 29th, Captain Kieu and his men had reached the major Pathet Lao and Viet Cong base at Tchepone, where Soviet planes have been flying in supplies from Hanoi for several months. The company rested there for several days. On July 18th they crossed the border into South Vietnam.

"From this day on, I am in the Fatherland again", wrote Captain Kieu.

During the next 2 months Captain Kieu and his company operated in the Provinces of Quang Nam, Quang Ngai, and Kontum. They took part in the fighting around Konbrai early in September. A few days later Kieu noted the receipt of new weapons for his company — 15 sub-machine guns, 4 machine guns, 6 automatic rifles. On September 15th, the date of the final entry, the company was preparing defensive positions and planning propaganda activities among the people north of Konbrai. Eleven days later Captain Kieu was killed in action.

The Use of Laos by the Viet Cong

The Viet Cong long have used infiltration routes through Laos and along the Vietnam-Lao border to send personnel from North Vietnam into the South. Now, with their friends of the Pathet Lao in control of an increasing number of villages and roads in eastern Laos, the Viet Cong are able to move units of considerable size across the border without fear of exposure or opposition.

North Vietnamese Forces in Laos

The government in Hanoi has angrily denied charges that some of its military units were engaged in the fighting in Laos. It has claimed these were provocative allegations without foundation in fact. Intelligence reports and the testimony of prisoners captured in Laos tell a different story.

Since December (1960), North Vietnam has been the base from which the extensive Soviet airlift of supplies to the Pathet Lao has operated. North Vietnamese technicians have been instructing the Pathet Lao in guerrilla warfare and in the use of artillery. But beyond this, troops of the regular Army of North Vietnam have been stationed in Laos for training purposes and to conduct combat missions.

Nguyen Van Nham, a lieutenant in the North Vietnamese Army was captured during the battle of Van Mieng in Laos. He identified himself as an officer of the 335th Division of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam. Vi Van Sang, who handled an 81 mm. mortar, was captured in the battle of Pha Tang. He said he belonged to the 925th Battalion of the North Vietnam Army. Ne Tong, a private, second class, was picked up in the fighting at Nong Het. He told interrogators he was a soldier of the 120th Regiment of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam Army.

These pieces of evidence merely reinforce reports gathered from many sources that there were, indeed, North Vietnamese soldiers in Laos. The principal units involved were the 335th Division; its component regiments — the 83rd, 280th, and 673rd; the 120th Independent Regiment; and the 359th Frontier Guard Regiment.

Infiltration through Laos

The presence of North Vietnamese units in Laos is disturbing to the government of South Vietnam on two counts. First, it means that much of north-eastern and south-eastern Laos is under control of the Communists. Second, and even more upsetting, is the knowledge that regular units of the North Vietnam Army are in a position to move readily into South Vietnam to fight with the Viet Cong whenever the high command in Hanoi decides they are needed.

The fact is that for some time, particularly since the cease-fire went into effect in Laos in May, Viet Cong fighters have moved with increasing frequency into South Vietnam through the Lao corridor.

In a fight with the Viet Cong in the central highlands, near the village of Daktrum on September 3rd, 1961, South Vietnamese forces killed a VC soldier. In his pocket was found a small, homemade diary. In it he had jotted down remembrances, personal experiences, notes to his wife or sweetheart, and comments on things as varied as the weather and the Communist Party.

The diary is headed "Do Luc", presumably the VC soldier's name or alias. It bears the notation H-602, presumably a personal or unit code designation.

Some of the notations are significant. Do Luc recalled his days fighting with the Viet Cong against the French and his decision in April 1955 to leave his family and friends behind and move to the North. In December 1960 he was ordered to

Captured Documents Reveal Communists' Use of Organised Guerrillas Against Viet-Nam Villages

A copy of the Military Plan of the Provincial Party Committee at Baria was captured from the Viet Cong in May, 1961, and translated portions of it are here reproduced from the State Department report. Baria is the former name of Phuoc Tuy province in South Vietnam.

The responsibilities and duties of armed groups:

In order to carry out the present policies of the Party to meet the new situation: increase armed activities to the level of political activities and the policies appropriate for each region — in base areas, armed intervention or activities are the mainstay; in rural areas armed activities should be at the same level as political activities; in towns and cities, political activities are the most important.

To carry out the policies of the Party appropriate to the new situation, the common task of armed units of the military forces is to press forward measures to overcome encircling pressures, propaganda under armed protection, and military attacks on the enemy in a continuous, spreading and well co-ordinated manner to serve the needs of the revolution. Weaken and annihilate enemy military forces, then regroup for recovery. Build up our forces.

Concrete activities:

1. Overcome encircling pressure; co-ordinate closely with the political branch to carry out plans for this purpose.

However, we must move forward with determination, planning places for concentration, targets and areas of activities. Forces at the district level should co-ordinate with a number of villages having guerrilla and people's militia security forces. Wipe out the enemy in one area at a time under the guise of liberating the people in that particular area. Concentrated forces of a district should co-ordinate to establish a beachhead in a village or inter-village. 21/22 and 55 be prepared for a beachhead with support from the forces of T. Village forces under encircling pressure and having guerrilla groups must progress into inter-village formations.

Squads in charge of villages and agrovilles must carry out assassination missions right at the centre to immobilise the enemy. Prime targets should be security forces and civil action district officials, hooligans and thugs. Besides, propaganda under armed protection must be carried out on a regular basis with a view to establishing bases.

go with his unit to Laos to help "destroy the reactionary gang of Phoumi-Boun Oum (General Phoumi Nosavan and Prime Minister Boun Oum)".

When the fighting slowed in Laos, he was sent to South Vietnam to join the Viet Cong effort. He noted crossing the Laos-Vietnam border on May 4th, 1961, and in June he wrote of his feelings at being back once again in Quang Nam Province, VC interzone 5, which he had left six years before.

Do Luc was but one of many Viet Cong soldiers who moved into South Vietnam through Laos.

On September 18th, 1961, in Saigon national police arrested a man named Vo Van Tan, alias Vo Hoa Mi, during a routine check of identification documents. A member of the Viet Cong, Tan had moved to the North at the end of the Indochina war. In April of this year, he said, he was assigned to a special 250-man battalion, Independent Battalion No. 2, to fight in South Vietnam. After six weeks of training designed to familiarize them with US weapons and guerrilla tactics, Tan and his unit left Hoa Binh Province in North Vietnam on June 20th. They marched south along the Laos-Vietnam border and through the Lao Province of Khammouane.

They entered South Vietnam across the border of Quang Nam Province. Then they moved south through the provinces of Kontum and Darlac to the area west of Ban Me Thuot.

Tan told his interrogators that he decided to defect after his battalion suffered heavy losses in a fight on August 26. He stole 95,000 piasters (about $1,292) from the battalion finance section and made his way to Saigon. He was arrested during a document check at the An Dong bus station.

The increased use of the Lao corridor by the Viet Cong is responsible for much of the heightened pace of VC activity in the central highlands region and in the northern provinces of South Vietnam. As noted earlier, there have been at least five major attacks by VC forces of from 500 to 1,000 men in those areas in recent months. South Vietnamese patrols operating along the Vietnam-Laos border have had several engagements with VC units moving toward the highlands from Laos.

It should be noted, too, that Soviet transport planes flying from North Vietnam have been airlifting supplies into Tchepone, only 20 miles from the Vietnam border in east-central Laos, since spring. Military equipment has been landed at the Tchepone airport and has been dropped by parachute as well. The Tchepone region is believed to be a major base of operations for the Viet Cong and the Pathet Lao. The airport there was improved in mid-September and the frequency of flights by Soviet transports has increased since then.

The Policy of the Forcible Seizure of Power

At the end of 1960 a South Vietnam unit attacked and

seized a Viet Cong district headquarters in Dinh Tuong Province. One of the casualties was a VC district commissioner named Nguyen Van Van. He had in his possession a notebook in which he had recorded the outline of a VC training course. Among other things, he noted the following:

"Our purposes: To incite the people to rise against the US-Diem clique in order to achieve the objective of the revolutionary liberation of the South. The enemy is now implementing a dreadful policy to oppress the people (for example, decree No. 10/59, agrovilles, etc.). The people should stand up and fight against them, using all means, legal and illegal, political and military . . . .

"Whether we should resort to the use of arms or not depends on the actual situation at the moment. This should not occur too early or too late, and it is only up to the Central Committee to determine when the time is appropriate and reach a decision.

"The revolution in the South at the present time has two possibilities:

"—general uprising to seize power.

"—a long-term armed struggle.

"But our final objective is a general uprising to seize power".

The Policy of Violence

In an attack on a Viet Cong establishment in Long An Province on August 15th, 1961, a Republic of Vietnam Army unit seized a document containing instructions to the VC provincial committee from the Inter-Province Committee of the Central Region.

The document analysed certain shortcomings in VC activities and urged that they be corrected. It also issued specific instructions as follows:

1. Special caution should be used in handling members of the civil guard who defected to the Viet Cong. "They might be spies". Such persons should be subjected to thorough investigation for a period of 3 months.

"After this period", the instruction added, "if the case remains suspicious, immediately liquidate the suspect to avoid further trouble for the revolution".

2. "Step up extermination activities against traitors. All those refusing to have rice collected, to pay taxes or make money contributions to the Front can be considered reactionaries and punished like other traitors".

3. "Step up activities (aimed at) encircling and paralysing strategic roads, means of communication used for transporting rice, pigs, and charcoal, such as canals and most particularly inter-provincial road No. 4. These activities are aimed at ruining the economy of the enemy, of raising the cost of living in the city of Saigon".

The document noted that the VC in Long An and Dinh Tuong had sunk during the month of June five boats carrying charcoal and eight carrying rice and confiscated three truck-loads of pigs. These actions were cited as "deserving our praise".

The Present Danger

The Communist programme to take over South Vietnam has moved into a new and more dangerous phase. Political and propaganda activity has been stepped up. More important, the Viet Cong have advanced from relatively small actions and hit-and-run tactics, common to the early phase of a guerrilla-type operation, to the employment of larger units and more sophisticated strategy.

In the military field a series of carefully planned and well-executed moves by the RVN military forces in the delta region caused heavy casualties among the Viet Cong and set back their timetable. But they retaliated with a number of major attacks in the North and in the central highlands. For the first time, Viet Cong units of 500 to 1,000 or more troops were thrown into action at a number of points — at Dakha, north of Kontum; near Ban Me Thuot; at Phuoc Vinh; and in the northern Provinces of Quang Nam and Quang Tri.

That the Viet Cong have stepped up their efforts to win control in the South is evident. However, this development did not come as a surprise to officials in the Saigon government. The acceleration had been accurately forecast in a number of documents captured from the Viet Cong earlier in the year. One of the most detailed and specific of these documents was seized on May 12th at Hat Dich in Phuoc Tuy Province.

The document bears the title "Military Plan of the Provincial Party Committee at Baria". (Baria is the former name of Phuoc Tuy). It described in minute detail plans for building up the Viet Cong guerrilla force in the region. It set as the party's goal recruitment of at least 36,000 "volunteers" for guerrilla action in Baria, to be divided into four battalions, three independent companies, and two platoons, with a reserve force of six companies and two platoons. Some of the recruits would be used for espionage communications, liaison, and sabotage.

The Baria military plan gives a good indication of Viet Cong ambitions and methods of organisation.

The meaning of a Viet Cong Victory

For the people of South Vietnam the meaning of a Communist victory is obvious. They would join their compatriots in the North within the Communist orbit. They would take their place alongside the North Koreans, the Tibetans, the Hungarians, the East Germans, and others in the conformity of an "order" ruled by Moscow and Peking.

Those who had opposed the Viet Cong would swiftly be eliminated. "Land for the tillers" would become "land for the state". Promises of "autonomy" for minority people would be forgotten except by the disillusioned highland tribes themselves. Absolute political control would rest with the Communist Party. In short, the pattern of Communist domination and dictatorship would be imposed

over the entire country, and 14 million able and energetic people would find themselves in the "socialist camp".

For Vietnam's neighbours the consequences of a Communist victory in all Vietnam would be far-reaching. It would doubtless seal the fate of Laos, where the Communists already control about half the country. Cambodia's precarious neutrality would be subjected to heavy and steadily increasing pressure. Thailand, too, would have to expect to see the tactics used in Laos and in Vietnam directed against her.

The present balance of forces between independent and Communist states in Asia would be tipped perilously if Vietnam, Cambodia, and Laos fell under Communist domination. What then would be the prospects for Thailand and Burma, for Pakistan and India, for Malaya and Indonesia?

If the Viet Cong effort proves successful in Vietnam, other states with Communist neighbours are likely to be exposed to similar covert and overt methods of aggression. It is not logical to expect that the Communists will abandon techniques that prove successful. Conversely, failure in Vietnam might prove an important deterrent to repetition elsewhere.

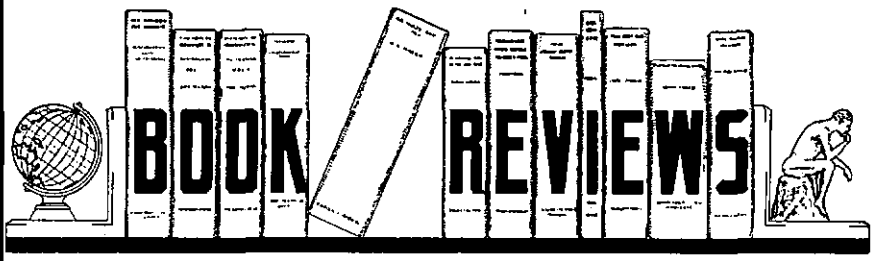
The Need for Action

The responsibility for meeting and overcoming the Viet Cong threat falls primarily on the people of South Vietnam and on their government. Their stake is by far the largest of all those involved. It is their country, their lives, their future that are most directly in danger.

The Republic of Vietnam must cope with aggression that almost daily increases in intensity and scope. As units of larger size have moved in from the North, the nature of the war in South Vietnam has changed from one of an almost entirely guerrilla character toward one with the proportions of conventional warfare. The size of engagements fought recently testifies to the accelerated pace of Viet Cong infiltration.

To overcome this steadily growing threat will require courage, intelligence, energy, and imagination. But these are all qualities that the people of South Vietnam have in abundance. The government of the Republic has recognised the necessity to step up its effort to meet the increasing threat from subversion and covert aggression.

North Vietnam, in guiding and supporting the Viet Cong effort, has had the full backing of Moscow, Peking, and the rest of the Communist world. It is too much to expect that the people of South Vietnam would be able to oppose this massive threat without outside support. The United States and other friendly countries have already contributed much to the cause of strengthening South Vietnam's military and economic programmes. In the face of heightened efforts by the Viet Cong, more assistance may be needed. The problem here is to work out co-operatively the kind of assistance programme that is likely to prove most effective in meeting the present danger.



MILA 18, By Leon Uris, (William Heinemann Ltd., London and 317 Collins Street, Melbourne).

Leon Uris has written a long book (539 pages) which has enjoyed remarkable success overseas. The reason for this is not hard to fathom for Uris knows, from his past successes with "Battle Cry" and "Exodus", that violence and furtive, illicit sexual encounters make a best seller and cause the Hollywood film moguls to call for their contract lawyers.

Unfortunately, it is this preoccupation with making the best seller lists that transforms what might have been a really outstanding book into merely good reading. It is only in the last quarter of the novel that it becomes a piece of stark, realistic and truly exciting writing.

"Mila 18" is the story of the liquidation of the 500,000 Warsaw Jews by the Nazis. Confined within the walls of the ghetto are Jews of all kinds — pacifist, complacent, dishonest, degraded, deeply religious, communist, noble, violently aggressive and even sadistic. The treatment meted out to this motley collection by a self-designated master race, demonstrates how basely inhuman some humans can become. The monsters are mostly German, but there is a sprinkling of filth from other races — Poles, Ukrainians, Latvians, Czechs and Jews themselves.

Uris tells us how the Nazis moved into Poland with the connivance of the Russians and how they methodically set about exterminating the "sub-human" Jewish population. The Warsaw Jews at first looked on the Germans as just another group of overlords to be dealt with and tolerated until they went away and things returned to normal.

Too late the Jews realised that things would never be normal again. At first many volunteers were recruited for German labour groups. These people were not, however, transported to factories and farms, but straight to the gas chambers and ovens of Majdanek and Auschwitz. When, inevitably, this became known in the ghetto the flow of volunteers ceased and the Germans collected their "labour groups" by force.

The Jews went into hiding and the Nazis found great difficulty in rounding up candidates for liquidation. It was then that typically German sophistry came into play. The rations available to the Jews were so minute and living conditions so appalling

that the Jews who continued to exist, the Germans reasoned, must be diseased or if they were healthy must have resorted to criminal activities to obtain food. Thus, they were completely justified in wiping out these criminals and sub-humans.

It is here, at the beginning of the "final action", that the book becomes real. The ghetto inhabitants, now reduced to some 40,000, decide to resist. Being convinced that they are faced with extinction, the dissident groups agree on a common course of action, all indecision is dissipated and the fanciful notions that the Germans can be expected to behave in a civilised manner are dispelled forever. With a pitiful collection of small arms, either stolen or bought on the black market, supplemented by home made grenades and land mines, this despised rabble is able to hold out for an incredible 42 days.

The important thing is not that they are able to defy 8,000 trained and efficient troops supported by tanks, artillery and air force, but that for the first time the Jews fought back. They fought back and demonstrated for themselves that the German military might could be humiliated before the whole world. Only a handful of survivors emerged from the sewer which ran under 18 Mila Street, but it is from this incident that the revival of militant Jewry stems. When Uris tells of these last days the full horror of the ghetto grips the imagination and the desperate, suicidal heroism makes the nerves tingle.

The book is recommended to all who favour the modern type of best-seller. For those who have stomachs strong enough for the horror, degradation and barbarism the last part of the book is recommended as one of the finest pieces of writing encountered for some time.

WO 1 A.D. Turner, RAAEC.

THE ROYAL NEW SOUTH WALES LANCERS, edited P. V. Vernon. (Royal NSW Lancers' Association, c/o RAAF Club, 338 Pitt Street, Sydney).

One of the unfortunate characteristics of the Australian Army is its neglect of its early history and the story of its development over the last 150 years. Partly as a result of this neglect, and partly as a result of the numerous reorganisations, most of our units lack that tradition of service which is such a powerful factor in the building of morale. Because most of our reorganisers, particularly our more recent ones, have paid little attention to the importance of continuity of regimental life, few of our units have historical roots from which to draw the sap of regimental esprit-de-corps.

The Royal NSW Lancers is one of the few Australian units which can trace its origin to the early colonial days. When the British troops were withdrawn from New South Wales in 1870, a regular artillery battery and two units of regular infantry were raised to replace them. A few years later volunteer militia artillery and infantry units were raised, but cavalry was neglected until an ex-sergeant

of the 4th Dragoon Guards, one Robert Roland Thompson, arrived in Sydney in 1884, and set about the business of having cavalry added to the military establishment. Captain M. M. Macdonald, an Indian Army officer living in retirement in Sydney, gave his enthusiastic support. After much canvassing, a meeting of interested persons was held at the Oxford Hotel at the corner of King and Phillip Streets — later the birthplace of the Imperial Service Club — at which it was resolved to form a volunteer cavalry troop. The first parade took place at Moore Park in December, and on 3rd January, 1885, the existence of the "Sydney Light Horse Volunteers" was formally gazetted. The volunteer cavalry movement spread rapidly throughout the country, and by early 1886 there were troops of light horse at Illawarra, West Camden, West Maitland, Ulmarra, Grafton and the Upper Clarence.

In 1885 the original Sydney troop was armed with the lance and designated "The Sydney Lancers". From that time until the present day the unit has enjoyed a continuous existence under various designations and is now known as 1/15 Royal New South Wales Lancers. Its regimental guidon bears battle honours from the South African War and the two World Wars.

The editors of this book have spared no pains in assembling a mass of information of great interest not only to past and present members of the regiment, but to all Australian soldiers who are interested in the history of their Army. Probably much of this information is not readily available elsewhere.

Our well-paid volunteers of today may be surprised to learn that their early predecessors received no pay at all, and provided their own horses, uniforms and saddlery. When the regiment sent a tournament team to the United Kingdom in 1893 the members paid their own fares and all other expenses. It is perhaps worth noting that in both England and Ireland members of the team won an impressive number of first, seconds and thirds in competition with regular troops.

In those early days, before the benefits of a high standard of living began to bear so heavily upon us, attendance at annual camp was around the 100 per cent. mark. And it was not always easy to get there either. On one occasion a country squadron had to swim three flooded rivers before reaching railhead. Apparently they took that sort of thing in their stride in the good old days. Now we have to go to great expense to train troops to do less — and cart them to and fro in luxurious transport. Perhaps guerrilla warfare would not have presented so many problems to the commanders of those troops.

When the Commonwealth assumed responsibility for defence after federation the regiment became the 7 Australian Light Horse Regiment (NSW Lancers).

In World War I four light horse regiments—1, 6, 7 and 12—were raised in New South Wales

for overseas service. The 7 served on Gallipoli and in Sinai and Palestine. In the reorganisation which followed the conclusion of hostilities the NSW Lancers, as the senior mounted unit in the Commonwealth, was designated 1 ALH Regiment (NSW Lancers) and awarded 19 World War I battle honours. Later the regiment was amalgamated with the 21 ALH, and in 1936 became a motorised machine gun regiment.

Soon after Japan's entry into World War II the regiment was converted to tanks, and participated in the fighting in the Finschaffen area and in the final campaign in Borneo. In the pentropic division reorganisation of 1960 the unit became an armoured regiment with the designation 1/15 Royal New South Wales Lancers.

The editors are to be congratulated on the fine job they have done in assembling this record of military service. From first to last the story of their regiment is set in the wider story of the Australian Army, and therefore in the still wider story of the growth of the nation from the early colonial days. It is a most valuable contribution to Australian military literature.

— E.G.K.