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SUBJECT: Command Health Report for June 1969 (RCS MED-3 (R-4)) 338-81-826/

Commanding General  
United States Army Vietnam  
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*Command Health Report  
(USARV) (69)*

A. Health of the Command

1. Personal Hygiene

(a) Physical condition of troops: Most major consolidated and individual Command Health Reports describe the physical condition of US Army personnel as adequate or satisfactory while a few reports indicate the physical status of their personnel as being excellent. The overall health of the command remains at a satisfactory level although there were again increases in total disease admissions. (See Tab A).

(b) Sanitary discipline: The following selected comments are included because it is felt that they most accurately describe the level of sanitary discipline and personal hygiene among US Army personnel.

The 1st Infantry Division reports: "Sanitation standards remain at a high level throughout most of the Division base camp areas. Some units have reached, and continue to maintain, superior sanitation standards. These units are examples of what good command emphasis can accomplish in improving the living conditions and morale of the troops. The sanitation of NDP's and fire support bases continues to present problems. The Division Surgeon plans to visit these areas as often as air transportation will permit. Any difficulties of a medical nature should be brought to his attention so that corrective action can be initiated at this level. Sanitation teams should make frequent inspections of their unit areas and report the results to the Medical Operations Officer for his action."

The 4th Infantry Division makes this comment on personal hygiene: "With a few exceptions personal hygiene is adequate. The monsoon season presents particular difficulty in maintaining clothing resupply. Some units, the tactical situation permitting, have periodic rotation of troops through fire

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bases or trains area for rest, clean-up, drying out and a change of clothes. The 1/14 Infantry reports such a policy and also supplies a change of clothing every four days and socks every two days. The 1/35 Infantry reports a similarly successful program which allows also health education, dental check-ups, and other medical activities."

The status of sanitary discipline within the 11th Armored Cavalry Regiment is described as follows: "Sanitary discipline is generally good but continued command support is still needed in the field locations. Increased emphasis on field sanitation teams with a proposed plan to have squadron MSC officers assume more supervisory control over the teams is hoped to improve sanitation in the field."

From the 3d Brigade, 82d Airborne Division comes this report: "The sanitary discipline within the Brigade is good. Because of operational conditions in some of the areas; i.e., inundated areas, personal hygiene is sometimes less than desirable but it is good as can be expected under existing conditions. Adequate shower facilities are available in all permanent installations and fire bases. There is a fly problem around one of the fire bases (Hardcore, 1/508 Infantry). This is due mainly to the civilian garbage dumps surrounding the fire base. This will continue to be a problem until the garbage sites can be destroyed or relocated. Trash and garbage cans are covered within the fire base itself and field sanitation is excellent. Arrangements are being made through Brigade Vietnamese Liaison Officer to look into the possibility of relocating garbage sites away from the fire base. Rodent control seems adequate. There were only two rat bites on post during this period. There are adequate rat traps within the Brigade."

Finally the 1st Infantry Brigade, 5th Infantry Division (Mech) reports: "Rodents have not been a major problem in base camp areas, primarily because of good area sanitation. Sanitation of bunker areas on camp perimeters has been of variable quality. Food and refuse in bunker areas will attract rats which in turn attract snakes, creating a hazard to those on guard duty. Pacific Architects and Engineers have assumed the Post Engineer functions of entomology and rodent control at Red Devil and LZ Sharon. They have set out rodent anticoagulant bait boxes on these bases and refill them at scheduled intervals. Steps have been taken to insure better police in perimeter bunkers. They have also assumed responsibility for insecticide spraying of messhalls at these bases. General area sanitation, final water monitoring before consumption and waste disposal are still under the responsibility of each company through its Field Sanitation Teams."

(c) Bathing facilities, adequacy of clothing and status of training in personal hygiene and field sanitation: The 1st Infantry Division Surgeon states: "Some units continue to need work on their shower drainage systems. Several small marshes, heavily populated with insects, have been found in the

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are again meaningless due to the constant variation of numbers and locations of collecting stations, and the inability of units to timely process all collections. Trends are important, and even with the inaccuracies it can clearly be concluded that mosquito populations are sharply increasing in locations affected by the monsoon rains. Total numbers identified this quarter were: 7582 for April, 13,060 for May, and 28,830 for June. Disease and epidemiological data found elsewhere in this report indicate the continuing rise of known and suspected mosquito-borne diseases in RVN.

6. Medical Zoology Section

(a) Small animal processing: Five hundred and twenty-eight (528) rodents were processed during the month of June.

(b) Plague analysis: Rodent spleens, flea pools and serology samples were forwarded to the Institute of Pasteur at Nha Trang or Saigon for plague analysis. Serology of a Bandicota indica (a large rat type rodent) from Long Binh Post was plague positive. No spleens or flea pools were positive for plague.

(c) The overall average number of fleas per rodent (flea index) continued to increase as April was 0.59, May was 0.95 and June was 1.2. Whereas, this overall index may be inaccurate and of questionable value it is interesting to note that off-post the index was about 3.0 while on-post it was only 0.7. The only similarly significantly high individual location index was at Cam Ranh Bay off-post with a 3.07 which though high is down from the 3.97 of May.

(b) Rodent mites were of significance in the Cu Chi area. A marked increase in Leptotrombida mites indicates a greater than usual danger of scrub typhus in that area.

7. Aerial Dispersal of Insecticides

(a) Air Force C-123 "Ranch Hand": Both C-123 aircraft continued in use. The target interval varied, but is approaching the desired of 10 days. The following missions were flown in the month of June. The number accompanying the area indicates the number of missions if more than one: Phu Cat (3), Hue/Phu Bai (3), Duc My (6), Da Nang (6), Ninh Hoa (3), Phan Rang (3), Chu Lai (4), Bien Hoa (2), Ap Nam/Phuoc Tho (3), Tan Son Nhut (2), Long Binh (4), 199th FSBs, Cam Ranh (2), Dong Ha/Quang Tri (3), and Pleiku. A total of 15,775 gallons of 95% malathion was applied to the areas listed in the 46 missions completed.

(b) Helicopter Spraying: Eight Agavenco insecticide sprayers finally arrived. Four each were assigned to the 20th and 172d Preventive Medicine Units respectively. The rigs as received were unsuitable for ultra low volume (ULV, which is 0.5 lb/acre) application of malathion. Commendable

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work has been done by MAJ Waddell, Staff Entomologist, 20th Preventive Medicine Unit to calibrate the rigs using available nozzles and components. Due to his success helicopter spray missions should begin sometime in July.

(c) Unauthorized Aerial Spraying:

(1) Helicopter herbicide sprayers continue to be used for the unauthorized dispersal of insecticides in contradiction to the provisions of MACV Directive 40-10.

(2) From 28 February 1968 thru 1 March 1969, USAF, PA&E, and Preventive Medicine Unit activities utilized or had in stock at the end of this period about 3960 55-gallon barrels of 57% malathion. However, USA Inventory Control Center, Vietnam figures show that 8686 barrels were issued during the same period. Approximately 260,000 gallons of CONCENTRATED malathion appears to have been used by unauthorized sources.

(3) Authority and thus responsibility for helicopter application of insecticides has been delegated to the commanders of the preventive medicine units and detachments. Such missions must be conducted under the supervision of a medical entomologist. Such authority has not been granted to major tactical unit chemical officers or even surgeons.

NOTE: When helicopter application of insecticides are deemed advisable by the unit surgeon the nearest preventive medicine unit, detachment or section should be contacted. A list of such preventive medicine units, their addresses, and telephone numbers is contained in Appendix I, Change 1 to USARV Regulation 40-12.

8. Pesticides

(a) Safety and Toxicology: As malathion is an insecticide with acute dermal toxicity of approximately one half that of DDT all supervisors of personnel handling malathion must adhere to the provisions of USARV Regulation 40-47.

(b) Shortages of several items continue to exist. All instances of insecticide supply problems at any level should be documented and forwarded direct to Headquarters, USARV, Office of the Surgeon, ATTN: Entomology Consultant, APO 96375.