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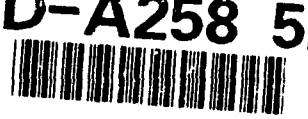

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LIGHT INFANTRY DIVISION: COORDINATION, SYNCHRONIZATION, AND INTEGRATION FOR SEARCH AND ATTACK OPERATIONS

A thesis presented to the Faculty of the U.S. Army Command and General Staff College in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree

MASTER OF MILITARY ART AND SCIENCE

by

WILLIAM C. MCMANUS, MAJ, USA
B.S., Auburn University, Auburn, Alabama, 1979

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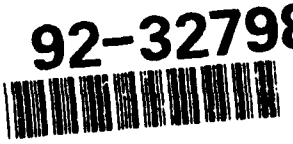

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The purpose of this thesis is to determine how best to coordinate, synchronize, and integrate a light division's assets for search and attack operations. Recognizing the current absence of division-level search and attack doctrine, this thesis assesses the need for doctrine of this type. First, the relationship between search and attack operations and search and destroy operations of Vietnam is explained. Next, the study analyzes the lessons learned from Vietnam search and destroy operations, Rhodesian operations, a Marine Corps search and attack study, and Joint Readiness Training Center search and attack missions. The analysis continues with comparison of two replies by light infantry divisions to questions pertaining to search and attack operations. The study concludes that search and attack operations at the division level would best be called "conduct counterguerilla operations." In addition, the study describes the conduct of this operation using the battle operating system framework.

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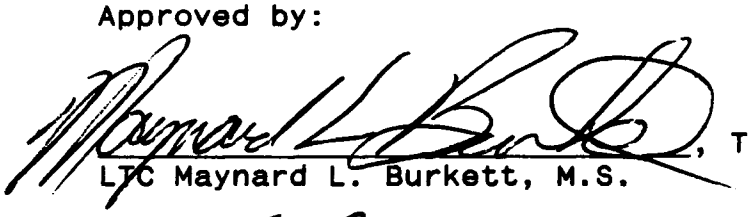

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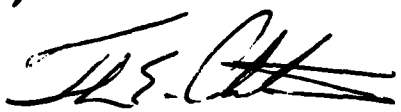

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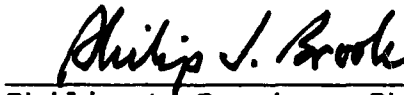

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The opinions and conclusions expressed herein are those of the student author and do not necessarily represent the views of the U.S. Army Command and General Staff College or any other governmental agency. (References to this study should include the foregoing statement.)

ABSTRACT

LIGHT INFANTRY DIVISION: COORDINATION, SYNCHRONIZATION, AND INTEGRATION FOR SEARCH AND ATTACK OPERATIONS by MAJ William C. McManus, USA, 113 pages.

The purpose of this thesis is to determine how best to coordinate, synchronize and integrate a light division's assets for search and attack operations. Recognizing the current absence of division-level search and attack doctrine, this thesis assesses the need for doctrine of this type. First, the relationship between search and attack operations and search and destroy operations of Vietnam is explained. Next, the study analyzes the lessons learned from Vietnam search and destroy operations, Rhodesian operations, a Marine Corps search and attack study, and Joint Readiness Training Center search and attack missions. The analysis continues with comparison of two replies by light infantry divisions to questions pertaining to search and attack operations. The study concludes that search and attack operations at the division level would best be called "conduct counterguerilla operations." In addition, the study describes the conduct of this operation using the battle operating system framework.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter One: Introduction 1

Chapter Two: Review of Literature 10

Chapter Three: Research Design 29

Chapter Four: Analysis 35

Chapter Five: Conclusions 95

Appendix 106

Bibliography 108

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Section One: Background

With the introduction of light infantry divisions into the army in 1983, several new concepts were introduced such as urban archipelago defense, seamless web defense, the baited attack, and search and attack. Most of those concepts have been eliminated, but search and attack operations continue to be a part of light infantry operations. Most recent Joint Readiness Training Center rotations include at least one search and attack operation.[1] During Operation JUST CAUSE, 2nd Brigade, 7th Infantry Division, conducted a brigade-level search and attack operation.

The Infantry Center at Fort Benning, Georgia, published doctrine on search and attack operations upon the creation of the light infantry division. The Infantry Center continues to update that doctrine and has developed current search and attack doctrine for brigade level and below. Search and attack operations are included in the approved final draft of FM 7-20 with search and attack as a technique of movement to contact.[2] There is, however, considerable debate as to the validity of the mission at

division level. Currently, there is no division-level search and attack doctrine. Light infantry divisions have had few opportunities to operate as part of a Corps and, therefore, have not seen the division mission "conduct search and attack operations." In division training exercises the division staff tasks brigades to conduct search and attack operations and oversees the brigades' execution of that mission against brigade level doctrine. Additionally, the only conflict involving a light infantry division since their formation was Operation JUST CAUSE, and the scope of the operation was not large enough to warrant division level search and attack operations.

Section Two: The Problem and Its Significance

Although there has been considerable debate about the validity of search and attack operations as a division mission, there is a growing consensus that emerging doctrine should facilitate planning and control of search and attack operations by elements of the division. The purpose of this study is to determine through a historical analysis how a light infantry division can best coordinate, synchronize, and integrate its assets to conduct search and attack operations. The conclusion obtained through this analysis is an integral part of determining the type of doctrine needed to conduct divisional search and attack operations. With the downscale of today's army, a greater reliance on contingency forces and the need for rapid deployment, light

infantry forces are in demand. There remains considerable work to be accomplished in determining how light divisions can best operate and be employed.

Section Three: Definition of Terms

In order to appreciate the significance and impact of this study, it is necessary to understand the relationship between search and attack operations of today and search and destroy operations during Vietnam. The term search and attack is not defined in doctrinal manuals but is explained in FM 7-20 (draft) as a "decentralized movement to contact technique" and "it is most often used in a low-intensity conflict against an enemy operating in dispersed elements."[3] For the purpose of this study, search and attack operations are defined as an offensive operation conducted for the purpose of locating, fixing and attacking enemy forces. The term search and attack was introduced in June/July 1984 at Fort Benning, Georgia, by doctrine and training developers for light infantry operations. Search and attack was developed as a light infantry movement to contact in an effort to maximize the limited firepower of light infantry and capitalize on light infantry's mobility and stealth. Doctrine developers saw search and attack as a rebirth of search and destroy, although the last word was changed to attack. The doctrine developers believed this word change would allow the light commander more options (such as neutralize, fix, suppress) than the term "destroy."

In addition, doctrine developers did not wish to reintrcduce the much maligned term "search and destroy."[4]

In June 1964, Military Assistance Command Vietnam introduced the term "search and destroy operations" initially to describe one of the basic combat operations conducted by South Vietnamese military forces. The term was soon associated with combat operations conducted by United States forces.[5] The notes used in preparation of the search and destroy operations chapter of "Tactical and Material Innovations Vietnam Studies" provided additional insight into the origin of the term "search and destroy." A full explanation concerning the term and its use prior to US troops being committed in Vietnam is included in this chapter's notes. Originally, the term "search and clear" was used. This term was found to be inadequate because, although search focused on the difficulty of locating the enemy, clear did not convey the correct meaning of the operation. Destroy was added for two reasons. First, it focused on the traditional infantry mission to destroy the enemy forces. Second, due to lack of terrain objectives, it focused on the destruction of the enemy force as the objective.[6]

General William C. Westmoreland provided a very functional and widely accepted definition of search and destroy operations as operations designed to "find, fix in place, fight and destroy (or neutralize) enemy forces and their base areas and supply caches."[7] Another consideration

was that search and destroy was used to describe both the United States' military strategy in Vietnam and the military tactical-level operations. There was considerable argument during Vietnam over the strategy of search and destroy operations, but the tactics of search and destroy operations were effective. In this study, search and destroy is only used in a tactical context. The reason the term "search and destroy" is no longer used provides additional understanding of the term. Fortune Magazine printed an article in April 1968 alluding to the possibility that search and destroy operations provided priority for destructive, wasteful, and often counterproductive operations in the bush.[8] Westmoreland eliminated the use of the term in April 1968 because the term had become so distorted and unclear to the public. He stated that the public believed it to be "aimless searches in the jungle and destruction of property."[9] It is important to note that the term was eliminated because it was misunderstood and politically unpopular, as opposed to being tactically unsound.

Both search and attack and search and destroy operations are generally conducted on a nonlinear battlefield. Search and attack is conducted, in most cases, in an area of operations defined as

> that portion of an area of conflict necessary for military operations. Area of operations are geographical areas assigned to commanders for which they have responsibility and in which they have authority to conduct military operations.[10]

An area of operations is very similar to a tactical area of responsibility (TAOR) in which search and destroy operations were conducted in Vietnam. A tactical area of responsibility is defined as

> a prescribed area which has been assigned specifically to a commander who is responsible for, and has the authority to act on, the development and maintenance of installations, the control of movement, and the conduct of tactical operations with troops under his control.[11]

Two present-day doctrinal missions have several of the elements of search and attack and search and destroy operations. These missions are: reconnaissance in force and movement to contact. Reconnaissance in force is defined by FM 101-5-1 as

> a limited-objective operation conducted by at least a battalion size task force to obtain information, and to locate and test enemy disposition, strengths, and reactions. Even though a reconnaissance in force is executed primarily to gather information, the force conducting the operation must seize any opportunity to exploit tactical success.[12]

This definition adequately covers the search portion of a search and attack and could be used to define a division mission in which the light division's brigades would conduct search and attack operations. However, this definition is lacking in prescribing the attack portion of a search and attack and fails to impress upon the commander the importance of the attack of the enemy elements to fix and defeat them. Search and attack at brigade level and below is currently considered a technique of movement to contact. Even this placement appears lacking because movement to

contact is defined as "an offensive operation designed to gain initial ground contact with the enemy or to regain lost contact."[13] This definition does allude to the search portion of search and attack, but, like reconnaissance in force, it lacks clarity in explaining the key element of attack. Movement to contact in the conventional sense is most often found with hasty attack. For the light infantry commander search must go hand in hand with attack. These two terms are mutually supporting and can not stand alone.

Section Four: Limitations and Delimitations

This study is limited as a result of not using any classified information. This was done to allow the widest readership possible. In the case of several classified documents, review of the classification was requested and those documents which were downgraded to unclassified were used in this study. However, some documents were not downgraded and, therefore, are not included. Only plainly labeled unclassified portions are included.

This study is delimited in two ways. First, it only considers search and attack operations in a low-intensity conflict. Search and attack is primarily conducted in low-intensity conflict generally against guerrilla forces, but the concept could be applied in mid-intensity conflicts against dispersed or disorganized enemy forces. Although there is merit in considering search and attack across the conflict continuum, it is beyond the scope of this research

study. Second, this study applies only to the true light infantry divisions. The 82nd Airborne Division and the 101st Air Assault Division are also light elements, but this study does not completely apply to those divisions because of their organizational differences with the light divisions.

CHAPTER 1
ENDNOTES

[1]This information was obtained by review of the last 18 months of the Joint Readiness Training Center take-home packets on file at the Center for Army Lessons Learned at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas.

[2]US Army, Infantry School, "FM 7-20, The Infantry Battalion," Approved Final Draft, (Ft Benning, GA: US Army Infantry School, 1991), 3-41.

[3]Ibid, 3-41.

[4]MAJ James M. Moon, interview by author, tape recording, Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, 19 December 1991. Major Moon was a light infantry doctrine writer for 3 years at Fort Benning, GA. He spent one year conducting certification of light infantry. He served 4 years in the 7th Infantry Division (Light) as a special assistant to the Commanding General researching heavy/light operations, a battalion S3, a brigade S3 and a battalion XO. He has been to NTC 7 times to observe heavy/light rotations and JRTC once. He also participated in Operation JUST CAUSE as a brigade S3.

[5]Harry G. Summers, Jr., Vietnam War Almanac, (New York: Facts on File Publications, 1985), 32, 308.

[6]John H. Haye, Jr., Tactical and Material Innovations Vietnam Studies, Chapter 15, "Search and Destroy Operations," unpublished author's notes, (Washington: US Department of the Army, 1975), no useful page number.

[7]William C. Westmoreland, Report on the Vietnam War, Section II, Report on Operations in South Vietnam January 1964-June 1968, 91.

[8]John M. Mecklin, "An Alternative Strategy for Vietnam," Fortune (April 68), 99.

[9]Westmoreland, Report on the Vietnam War, 91.

[10]US Army, FM 101-5-1, Operational Terms and Symbols (Washington: Department of the Army, 1985), 1-6.

[11]Republic of Vietnam Armed Forces, Joint General Staff, US Military Assistance Command, Vietnam, "Combined Campaign Plan 1968(U)" (Saigon, Vietnam, 1967), R-9.

[12]FM 101-5-1 (1985), 1-60.

[13]Ibid, 1-49.

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

There are a large number of sources available that provide information pertinent to the research of search and attack operations. Search and destroy operations were widely published during the Vietnam Era and numerous published accounts are available. Search and destroy literature consists of books providing a general overview of search and destroy operations, handbooks and monographs of the Vietnam Era, and after-action reports and lessons learned compiled from actual missions. Since search and attack is a relatively new term, available literature was far less than that available on search and destroy operations. Search and attack literature falls into two categories: recent monographs by Command and General Staff College students and brigade and battalion doctrine manuals. There are also several other written sources worthy of review.

Bernard B. Fall's Street Without Joy: Insurgency in Indochina 1946-63 provided excellent background data as to the environment in which search and destroy operations developed. Cedar Falls-Junction City: A Turning Point, written by Lieutenant General Bernard W. Rogers, provided a

thorough account of what occurred during the largest search and destroy operation in Vietnam. The book described each phase of the operation but was lacking in lessons learned needed to complete this study. The book also spent considerable time discussing small unit actions. Although excellent reading, these small unit actions provided few insights into search and attack operations.

Summons of the Trumpet was a frank straightforward analysis of the Vietnam War. David Palmer clearly explained search and destroy operations and summarized the term's history until its demise.[1] He explained in detail the difficulty of completely clearing areas of operations of enemy forces through the use of a search and destroy operation. He also discussed tactical doctrine and the changes that occurred during the war. One portion was particularly interesting and noteworthy.

> When contact was made, American units, preoccupied with avoiding casualties, generally fell back into a defensive perimeter to call for air and artillery. Tactical maneuvers to roll up open flank or strike an exposed rear were usually attempted only by the enemy. Not that field manuals were changed. Not even that service schools taught the new doctrine. But, in practice in Vietnam, US Army policy was to locate the enemy with infantry and then attack him by fire.[2]

This problem will be discussed and further developed later in this study.

Andrew F. Krepinevich, Jr.'s book The Army and Vietnam was extremely useful in preparing this study. Not only did he analyze the conduct of the war in Vietnam, he

compared the lessons learned to today's light infantry divisions and the army in general. This fairly recent book, published in 1986, was critical of the army's orientation toward mid-intensity or conventional war. Krepinevich postulates that the US military was unprepared in Vietnam and remains unprepared for unconventional warfare today. In his opinion, light infantry division mid-intensity missions have overshadowed preparation for low-intensity conflict missions. His discussion of light infantry capabilities, especially in the area of intelligence assets, was particularly intriguing.[3]

The book, Infantry in Vietnam, edited by Albert P. Garland for Infantry Magazine in 1967, provided a small unit leader's look at the war in Vietnam. Portions of the book describe the difficulty of locating and engaging guerilla forces and some operations resemble search and destroy. However, the book appeared to be biased to the infantry and army's point of view.

A helpful reference source that outlined the sequence of operations during Vietnam was the Vietnam War Almanac by Harry G. Summers, Jr. This source provided the date of the introduction of search and destroy as a term and reinforced the explanation of why the term was dropped from use.[4] Another work by Summers was On Strategy: The Vietnam War in Context. This book also gave a broad overview of the Vietnam War. It explained some of the thought processes behind search and destroy operations. It further explained

that even when General Westmoreland had the term "search and destroy" dropped, he felt there was no alternative to search and destroy and continued to conduct those operations under a different name.[5]

One of the best overviews of search and destroy operations was contained in a monograph written by John H. Haye, Jr., called Tactical and Material Innovations, Vietnam Studies. In chapter 15, "Search and Destroy Operations," there was a comprehensive review of search and destroy operations. The Combined Arms Research Library at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, has on file the author's notes and drafts used in preparing the monograph. The author's notes, many of which were not included in the final draft, provided useful information to locate additional sources. The monograph answered the research question as to why the term "search and destroy operations" was no longer used.

The War Managers written by retired American Brigadier General Douglas Kinnard was a detailed report concerning a survey the author conducted in 1974 of 173 general officers who had held command positions during the Vietnam War. Although a lengthy survey, the general officers' responses concerning search and destroy tactics and large-scale search and destroy operations provide some interesting ideas. The generals were assured of complete anonymity and, thus, were candid in their responses.[6]

The document prepared by the Military Assistance Command in 1967 called Counterinsurgency Lessons Learned

No. 62: Salient Lessons Learned provided clear concise information pertaining to the lessons learned on search and destroy operations. This document provided numerous techniques that were successful and gives an example of a specific operation where one technique led to an extremely favorable outcome. This strongly worded document gave the impression of being a speech on successful search and destroy operations. Parts of this document were copied exactly from the Handbook for US Forces in Vietnam, produced two years earlier by the same Military Assistance Command. The handbook had a foreword by Westmoreland which states:

> I have summarized in this handbook certain basic techniques and procedures which have evolved out of several years of combat operations against this enemy. The guidance furnished in these pages, when followed, will increase the effectiveness of our forces and preclude a repetition of past mistakes.[7]

This handbook explained the steps necessary to conduct a search and destroy operation and, in most cases, the reason the operation should be conducted in the prescribed manner. This particular source stressed that there was usually a lack of intelligence available and it explained how to correct that problem. This handbook provided the preferred procedure of how higher commands expected search and destroy operations to be conducted in Vietnam.

Operation Junction City Vietnam 1967 provided a more recent viewpoint on search and destroy operations. This battlebook was written for the Command and General Staff

College in 1983 by a coalition of six authors. It provided an overview of works on this search and destroy operation and an excellent bibliography of unit after-action reports from the operation. It also provided a caution for consideration on reviewing these works as follows:

> ...they had to be approached with caution as the personal biases of the authors concerning American involvement in the war heavily influenced their approaches and conclusions.[8]

The opinions of the authors who prepared this battlebook did not appear favorable to search and destroy operations, and much of their analysis was a repetition of information from Cedar Falls-Junction City: A Turning Point.

One of the most interesting pieces of reference material in this research was The Systems Integration Study and Testing conducted by Cornell Aeronautical Lab, Inc., in 1969. Unfortunately, this study was still classified confidential and therefore only the unclassified portions appear in this study. However, the Cornell Aeronautical Lab study provided an indepth analysis of search and destroy operations compiled by reviewing the after-action reports and lessons learned from Vietnam. In order to expand one's knowledge of search and destroy tactics, this study was extremely helpful.

Probably the most beneficial literature to this study was a review of the unit after-action reports from combat operations in Vietnam. Each report was organized in

generally the same basic format. They usually began with an overview of the operation and restatement of the unit mission. Each report then provided a chronological list of day-by-day activities of the unit during the reporting period. This was followed by the commander's analysis and general lessons learned. Each subordinate command report followed, and the senior representative of each supporting command (artillery, engineers, combat service support) reported sequentially. Some reports included comments from their higher headquarters responding to their lessons learned. In some instances, corrective actions taken to resolve the reporting command problems were listed.

Lessons Learned, Headquarters, United States Army Vietnam from 1968 contained a combat lessons bulletin dated September 1967. This bulletin was the only information contained in this lessons learned report of use in this study. This bulletin provided an excellent review of how to search for Viet Cong elements and indicators of where the enemy would be.[9]

The Lessons Learned, Headquarters, I Field Force Vietnam 1967 had a review of fire support lessons learned that applied to this study. However, the following year's report Lessons Learned, Headquarters, I Field Force Vietnam 1968 provided little useful information in the main body of the report. At the end of the report, however, there was a letter of instruction to US observers assigned to observe Republic of Korea forces during combat operations in

Vietnam. The questions the observers were tasked to answer included "what size unit is optimum in search and destroy operations?"[10] This letter of instruction was followed by an analysis of how Republic of Korea forces performed and a detailed review of their search and destroy operations.

An early Vietnam report on lessons learned was provided in 1966 by the 1st Infantry Division covering the period 1 January to 30 April 1966. In addition to addressing division operations, this report contained a number of additional reports prepared by the 1st Infantry Division's subordinate headquarters. One of the most interesting portions of this report was provided in the Commander Notes Number One written by Brigadier General William E. DePuy. He stated emphatically that commanders would always have a reserve available and that the term "pinned down" would no longer be used by elements of the division.[11] DePuy's discussion related to fire and maneuver and firepower aspects of search and destroy operations. He also stated under "no circumstances will forward elements in contact, withdraw in order to bring artillery fire on the VC."[12] This statement was in direct contradiction with the views of other commanders on how to best bring the US Army firepower advantage to bear on the enemy and David Palmer's description of search and destroy operations mentioned above. Two of the subordinate headquarters reports are of note. Operation CRIMP's discussion of the time it took to conduct search and destroy operations and Operation MALLET's

discussion of how that operation was planned were important to this study.

Operation COCOA BEACH, Headquarters, 3rd Brigade, 1st Infantry Division, although only a one brigade search and destroy operation conducted from 3 March 1966 to 6 March 1966, provided insight into the optimum size force for conducting search and destroy operations. In addition, this report reinforced the need for a responsive reserve and showed how quickly a search and destroy mission could change to a pursuit.[13]

Another well written 1st Infantry Division report was the after-action report from Operation MASTIFF which was a two brigade search and destroy operation conducted in February 1966. The value of this report was in its discussion of intelligence, blocking positions and use of artillery. The division conducted extensive planning, expected heavy contact with the enemy and were surprised by light enemy contact. The division's analysis of why the enemy was not located was an important lesson which still has application today.

The 1st Infantry Division lesson learned report for the period 1 August 67 to 31 October 1967 included a number of search and destroy operations. This report was one of the few reports that provided a breakdown of battalion missions by day. This particular type of data showed the complexity of search and destroy operations and the time spent on other requirements such as base security instead

of search and destroy operations.[14] Artillery marching fires ahead of advancing US columns were also presented as a lesson learned and the use of the division long range reconnaissance patrol units was discussed. This particular report contains perhaps the most controversial lessons learned of any report considered in this study.

One of the most readable reports available was the 1st Infantry Division's after-action report from Operation JUNCTION CITY. It provided insight into Viet Cong countersweep operations used to thwart the 1st Infantry Division's search and destroy operations. The report also discussed use of mechanized forces in support of search and destroy operations. During this same basic time frame the 1st Infantry Division also prepared a lessons learned report for the period 1 Feb 67 to 30 Apr 67. Of particular note in this report was a table of days spent by the battalions conducting each type of mission including search and destroy operations. It also contained information on combat service support resupply operations and base camps.

A detailed and well-prepared report reviewed to prepare this study was the after-action report on Operation SAM HOUSTON prepared by the 4th Infantry Division in 1967. This report included excellent discussions of search techniques, mutual support between units conducting search and destroy operations, fire bases, firepower and maneuver. It identified "...that immediate application of firepower, when significant contact is established, is the decisive

factor."[15] The report also stated that "mutual support between units in search and destroy operations is synonymous with reaction time."[16] Detailed operations overlays and task organizations are contained in this report. This report was complemented by the Operation Sam Houston After-Action Critique Notes. These notes were a written transcript of commander's comments during the after-action review on Operation Sam Houston. The comments of each brigade commander, both Assistant Division Commanders and the Commanding General's are included. This critique of Operation SAM HOUSTON was presented to the Commanding General of I Field Force and was an outstanding summary of the lessons learned. The Commanding General's comments on fire and maneuver, firepower, battalion fire bases and long range reconnaissance patrol were most interesting.

The lessons learned report written by the 25th Infantry Division concerning Operation GADSDEN during February 1967 (a prelude to Operation JUNCTION CITY) was poorly written and difficult to follow. The analysis of the use of artillery support and aviation was the most important information contained in this report. Another 25th Infantry Division report provided some interesting facts, although the operation was conducted by only a brigade-size element. Operation PAUL REVERE provided an interesting report concerning use of a technique called "checkerboarding."[17] It also provided additional information concerning artillery support coordination.

Although the unit was only brigade size unit, 173rd Airborne Brigade (Separate) contributed a significant number of lessons learned to this research. Operation TOLEDO conducted from 10 August to 7 September 1966 has a detailed review of each day's mission during the operation. This review shows how the unit developed the search and destroy operation including such items as the location of brigade jump command posts. Like many other lessons learned reports from Vietnam, this also highlighted the need for responsive field artillery support and the shortcomings of military intelligence assets. The 173rd participation in Operation ATTLEBORO was relatively minor; however, several interesting lessons learned were gleaned from the report of the action. The units located a number of abandoned base camps, which is probably due to the enemy intelligence gathering capability. This report emphasized the use of long-range reconnaissance patrols. The problem of controlling searching elements in this rugged terrain was pointed out in the after-action report.

> Although all forces must be mutually supported during an operation, if two or more are allowed to operate in close proximity to one another, confusion in activity could result in friendly forces firing on one another.[18]

Operation DENVER, conducted by the 173rd Airborne Brigade in 1966, included search and destroy operations. This report was important due to its analysis of the time required to conduct search and destroy operations and the coordination needed between the field artillery and intelligence assets.

The Operation JUNCTION CITY, Headquarters, 173rd Airborne Brigade (Separate) report showed the tremendous amount of aviation support needed during Operation Junction City. This report further explained in detail the fire support requirements of Operation JUNCTION CITY and concentrated on fire support of air assault operations. Emphasis was again placed on the brigade's successful use of long-range reconnaissance patrols.

Fortune Magazine articles titled "How the Battle Got Turned Around," written in April 1967 and "An Alternative Strategy for Vietnam," written in April 1968, provided a civilian perspective of search and destroy operations. The first article was a positive assessment of search and destroy and Westmoreland's conduct of it. This article contained a review of Operations CEDAR FALLS and JUNCTION CITY. It postulates the US Army had the ability to fight a counterinsurgency war. However, the second article was a stinging indictment of search and destroy operations and was the article that supposedly prompted Westmoreland to eliminate the term search and destroy. In addition, the article recommended an alternative strategy and the removal of Westmoreland as commander. The impact of the Tet offensive may have caused this article to be extremely negative of the US war effort.

In the area of search and attack operations, the amount of literature available was significantly less than the information on search and destroy operations. A review

of the Marine Search and Attack Battalion Study led to the discovery that the Marine Corps' version of search and attack operations and the US Army's version were quite different. The Marine Corps version was related to target acquisition, while the Army's was related to combat operations. Despite this difference, portions of the Marine Corps' study were still applicable to this study.

Several recent monographs by students in the School of Advanced Military Studies provide a more current view of light infantry operations. "Operational considerations for the Employment of a Light Infantry Division in a Contingency Scenario" written by Major Robert J. Reese provided an overview of expected employment of a light infantry division. Both Reese's study and this research consider a light infantry division only in low-intensity conflicts. His possible scenarios for use of a light infantry division were particularly intriguing. Major Danny M. Davis' monograph titled "Infantry Attacks: Operating Principles for the Offensive Employment of Modern Light Infantry Units" has one section which is of merit to this study. Major Davis' conclusions for employment of light infantry forces furnishes a survey of aspects of employment of light forces in combat. This research provided several considerations of employment of light infantry units useable in conducting a review of battlefield operating systems in light infantry operations. Of particular interest in studying employment of light infantry divisions intelligence assets, was a

monograph written by Major Albert Bryant, Jr., called "Blind Man's Bluff? A Look at the Tactical Reconnaissance Capabilities of the US Army's Light Infantry Division." Major Bryant took a detailed look at light infantry intelligence capabilities and built a case that they were lacking in many respects. In addition, he considered intelligence use in Vietnam in search and destroy operations. One of his observations was:

> US counterinsurgency operations in Vietnam confirmed the importance of tactical reconnaissance in conducting counterinsurgency warfare. Where tactical reconnaissance was properly performed and integrated with maneuver planning, US forces could be employed with efficiency, thereby preserving the force while achieving decisive results.[18]

The monograph prepared by Randy J. Kolton entitled "Anticipation and Improvisation: The Firebase Concept in Counterinsurgency Operations" provided an interesting view of current tactical doctrine for counterinsurgency operations and the application of the fire base concept in today's light infantry operations. The author pointed out the need for the US Army to be prepared to conduct counterinsurgency warfare. He concluded "commanders should recognize...that the fire base is integral to offensive and defensive actions."[19] The author used Huba Wass de Czege's combat power model as criterion for the conduct of his analysis.

The approved final draft of FM 7-20 was a solid improvement on doctrine for battalion-level search and attack operations. This manual placed search and attack

operations as a technique of movement to contact. The purpose and considerations for conducting search and attack operations were included in some detail. The field manual brought to light the battalion level aspects of search and attack, but it did not address considerations of higher level operations.

Another work of note related to search and attack operations was the book by a Rhodesian Lieutenant Colonel, Ron Reid Daly, on operations conducted in Rhodesia between 1973 and 1980 entitled Selous Scouts: Top Secret War. This book provided a list and description of a number of operations conducted in Rhodesia, some of which have aspects of search and attack operations. The situation in Rhodesia might be considered similar to future operations of light infantry units worldwide. Lieutenant Colonel Daly strongly emphasized the intelligence needs of counterinsurgency operations.

A Savage War of Peace by Alistar Horne discussed counterinsurgency warfare in Algeria between 1954 and 1962. Although written from a national level perspective, portions of the book provided some understanding of French-style search and attack operations.

Clearly, the information on search and destroy and search and attack operations is diverse and somewhat controversial. The perspectives and reports of the authors involved, however, provide a picture of how search and destroy operations were conducted and how search and attack

can be conducted. With this information the research question will be addressed and answered in the following chapters.

CHAPTER 2
ENDNOTES

[1]David Palmer, Summons of the Trumpet (New York: Ballentine Books, 1978), 169.

[2]Ibid, 181-182.

[3]Andrew F. Krepinevich, Jr., The Army and Vietnam (Baltimore: The John Hopkins University Press, 1986), 273-274.

[4]Harry G. Summers, Jr., The Vietnam War Almanac (New York: Facts on File Publications, 1985), 32, 308.

[5]Harry G. Summers, Jr., On Strategy: The Vietnam War in Context (Strategic Studies Institute, vs Army War College, Carlisle Barracks, PA, 1982), 106.

[6]Douglas Kinnard, The War Managers (Hanover: The University Press of New England, 1977), 10, 45.

[7]US Army, Handbook for US Forces in Vietnam (San Francisco, CA: Military Assistance Command Vietnam, 1965), Foreword.

[8]Lorenz, G. C.; Willbanks, J. H.; Petraeus, D. H.; Stuart, P. A.; and Crittenden, Operation Junction City Vietnam, 1967, (Fort Leavenworth, KS: Combat Studies Institute, US Army Command and General Staff College, 1983), 1.

[9]US Army, Lessons Learned, Headquarters United States Army Vietnam (Washington: Adjutant General's Office, 1968), 102-103.

[10]US Army, Lessons Learned, Headquarters, I Field Force Vietnam (Washington: Adjutant General's Office, 1967), 2.

[11]US Army, Lessons Learned, Headquarters, 1st Infantry Division (Washington: Adjutant General's Office, 1966), Commander Notes #1.

[12]Ibid.

[13]US Army, Operation Cocoa Beach, Headquarters, 3rd Brigade, 1st Infantry Division, (Washington: Adjutant General's Office, 1966), 7.

[14]US Army, Lessons Learned, Headquarters, 1st Infantry Division (Washington: Adjutant General's Office, 1967), 12.

[15]US Army, Combat Operations After-Action Report Operation Sam Houston (Washington: Adjutant General's Office, 1967), 39.

[16]Ibid, 35.

[17]US Army, Lessons Learned Z (Headquarters, 3rd Brigade Task Force), 25th Infantry Division (Washington: Adjutant General's Office, 1966), 1.

[18]US Army, Operation Attleboro Headquarters, 173rd Airborne Brigade (Separate), (Washington: Adjutant General's Office, 1966), 15.

[19]Albert Bryant, Jr., "Blind Man's Bluff? A look at the Tactical Reconnaissance Capabilities of the US Army's Light Infantry Division," Master of Military Art and Sciences Thesis (Fort Leavenworth, KS: US Army Command and General Staff College, 1987), 37.

[20]Randy J. Kolton, "Anticipation and Improvisation: The Firebase Concept in Counterinsurgency Operations" (Master of Military Art and Science Thesis, US Army Command and General Staff College, 1990), 1, 40.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH DESIGN

The US Army has become very adept at conducting after-action reviews and ensuring that lessons learned are recorded. In the cover letter to the lessons learned report of the 25th Infantry Division, Major General Kenneth G. Wickham, who was the Adjutant General for I Field Force, stated: "The information contained in this report is provided to insure that the Army realizes current benefits from lessons learned during recent operations."[1] The purpose of this study is to ensure that the US Army benefits from the lessons learned from historical examples in order to determine how best to conduct search and attack operations. Although the US Army has some excellent lessons learned files, sources outside the army must be reviewed and analyzed to insure full coverage of this subject. The basic methodology used to answer the research question is to compare historical lessons learned to today's requirements for search and attack operations.

The first consideration was to determine which search and destroy operations from Vietnam would be useful for review. Three basic questions were useful in deciding to review an operation. First, was it classified as a

search and destroy operation? Review of the unit mission statement was informative prior to review of the operation. Many operations were not classified as a search and destroy operation but were conducted similar to one. Other possible terms were "combat or offensive sweep, reconnaissance in force, and spoiling attack."[2] A prime consideration was to ensure the commander conducting the operation believed he was on a search and destroy operation and, therefore, followed search and destroy doctrine. The second question was interrelated to the first question. Was the mission really a search and destroy operation? This question could generally be answered by a review of the concept of operations for the mission. Some missions contained several phases of which only one phase was a search and destroy mission and did not truly represent a search and destroy operation. The third question was what size elements were involved in the operation? Some missions which were classified as division search and destroy operations were conducted with a small search and destroy battalion-size element, for example. Although, some of the search and destroy operations reviewed by this study were not truly division size, effort was made to focus on operations which were representative of division-size search and destroy operations. These operations generally had at least two brigades conducting search and destroy operations.

The above questions were instrumental in deciding which of the possible lessons learned or after-action

reviews to analyze, but were of little help in considering other search and destroy material from Vietnam. Most of this material came from higher levels of command, and all were reviewed. The operations considered from Rhodesia and Algeria were reviewed to obtain their general flavor and an understanding of their basic mode of operations. However, the bulk of this study used information from the lessons learned from search and destroy operations of Vietnam.

To analyze the information for this study it is necessary to focus on lessons learned from research of the operations. This method placed primary importance on the commander's assessment. The material was reviewed to capture lessons learned that were important for today and discard lessons learned concerning problems not important in this research like pay and radio equipment. On the average, out of a list of ten lessons learned noted by a commander, only two or three would be applicable to this study. Once the commander's lessons learned were reviewed, the subordinate commander's reports were reviewed to validate the commander's assessment. Each of these reports were used to focus on the battlefield operating system.

From the initial study of search and attack operations, and in an effort to validate the definition of search and attack operations formed by this study, a memorandum was prepared and sent by the committee chair to the light infantry divisions for their comments. This memorandum (contained as an appendix to this thesis)

explains in general terms search and attack operations, its purpose and characteristics. Although prepared early in the research phase, most of this memorandum was very accurate. This memorandum was supported by the reply from the 10th Mountain Division. The Division's reply to the memorandum agreed with its comments, and the Division's answers to the questions posed by the memorandum provided a useful addition to this research.

The general criteria for review of the information researched in preparation of this study is the Battlefield Operating System. Each lesson learned falls into one of the battlefield operating systems categories of intelligence, maneuver, fire support, mobility/countermobility, air defense, combat service support or command and control. There is sufficient information available on all battlefield operating systems with the exception of air defense. None of the historical operations selected had any significant enemy air threat. This was and is an aspect of the nature of low-intensity conflict; thus, the US Army could expect a relatively low threat of enemy air attack. Since the findings of this study would be inconclusive, air defense will not be considered.

The strength of conducting the study as outlined above was that the information obtained should be of practical use to the battlefield light division commander. Recommendations on employment of the light division were obtained through an analysis of successful previous

missions. The conclusions of the study could be used to produce doctrine on how a division commander can best conduct search and attack operations, which will be founded on experience of history.

The weakness of the approach was that it relies heavily on the writing of commanders about how their unit performed on missions they commanded. A normal human trait, most commanders preferred to downplay their unit's failures and proclaim their successes. It is difficult to ascertain if a commander was doing this, but a review of higher commander's impressions helped in gleaning the truth. A benefit of this situation is that the commanders noted innovations in their writings that clearly worked. These innovations may be useable on the modern battlefield.

CHAPTER 3
ENDNOTES

[1]US Army, Lessons Learned, Headquarters, 25th Infantry Division (Washington: Adjutant General's Office, 1969), 1.

[2]William C. Westmoreland, Report on the Vietnam War (Section II, Report on Operations in South Vietnam, Jan 64-June 68), 91.

CHAPTER FOUR

ANALYSIS

The review of lessons learned and after-action reports was critical to developing an understanding of search and attack operations. This chapter has two primary parts. First is the review of after-action reports of search and destroy operations conducted in Vietnam. This includes operations of the 1st Infantry Division, the 25th Infantry Division, the 4th Infantry Division and the 173rd Airborne Brigade (Separate). In addition, several lessons learned reports were considered from echelons above divisions. Second is the analysis of additional search and attack information. This includes the Marine Corps version of search and attack operations, Joint Readiness Training Center operations and the replies to search and attack questions from light infantry divisions.

1st Infantry Division

The first 1st Infantry Division operation reviewed was Operation MASTIFF conducted in February 1966. This operation was conducted by a two brigade size force which conducted operations in the vicinity of the Michelin Rubber Plantations. The two brigades (2nd and 3rd) were assigned

zones of operations in an effort to destroy the enemy forces supposedly trapped by the Saigon River. In the overview of the operation two important notes are made. First, the brigades were inserted by both helicopters and ground tactical convoys. Second, the division established a forward artillery support fire base to support the operation.[1]

The division made a strong effort to create a deception plan for this operation which included overflights by reconnaissance aircraft of the deception plan area.[2] Fifty-eight sorties dropped 77,500 pounds of ordnance in support of the deception plan and B52s supported the deception operations.[3] However, when the brigades entered into the areas of operations no major engagements occurred.[4] There are three possible reasons why the enemy was not encountered. First, the enemy was not really there before the operation. Second, the operation failed to trap the enemy. Third, the deception plan failed to work and allowed the enemy to withdraw prior to the operation. The 1st Division's report did not support the possibility that the enemy was not there because the division located 22 recently evacuated enemy base camps. The possibility of a failure in the deception plan does not seem to be supported. In fact, the division commander stated, "the deception plan was excellent and effectively complemented the actual plan."[5] The answer appears to be that the division was unable to

trap the enemy against the river. The 2nd Brigade Commander stated, "In all operations conducted to date, the use of a blocking force in conventional disposition has proved futile."[6] Also, ineffective were attempts to block enemy escape routes through the use of artillery.[7]

Another interesting point which related to the optimum size of a search and destroy operation was presented by the 3rd Brigade commander. "The Brigade Commander felt that with such a large force being deployed into the area that the VC would not stand and fight unless trapped by US troops, or protect a vital base camp area."[8] This belief (knowing the difficulty of trapping the enemy) may have, in fact, led in later operations to sending out a small US force in order to draw an enemy attack. Then the higher command would respond with a large reaction force to destroy the enemy.

Another 1st Infantry Division mission, Operation COCOA BEACH, conducted by 3rd Brigade from 3 to 6 March 1966 had similar comments as those above.

> Operation COCOA BEACH reinforced the belief that small battalion size search and destroy operations in the brigade TAOR are more likely to produce contact with a large VC unit than large Brigade and division size operations.[9]

The 3rd Brigade commander sent 2/28th Infantry Battalion into the brigade TAOR and it was attacked by an NVA regiment. The 3rd Brigade responded with 1/28th Infantry, artillery and close air support. The 3rd Brigade commander

changed the COCOA BEACH plan because "the enemy had been located" and the "operation changed from search and destroy operations to a pursuit and destroy mission."[10] Despite the fact that many enemy soldiers escaped, the brigade commander declared this mission a complete success. An analysis of this action provides several lessons. First, sending small elements into enemy territory to make contact with an enemy of unknown size may lead to those elements being attacked by a much larger force. With the decentralized nature of searching for the enemy, the ability to concentrate the searching forces, respond with fire support immediately, and bring in sufficient reinforcements is absolutely essential. The 3rd Brigade commander emphasized the importance of passing current intelligence to the reaction force and initiating pursuit as soon as the enemy began to withdraw.[11] Logistical support of search and destroy operations was also deemed critical. Two hours after 2/28 Infantry was attacked, they requested an emergency ammunition resupply. The report points out that units on search and destroy operations moved with as light a load as possible due to the terrain. The requested ammunition was delivered by air, but cost 6 personnel killed and a UH1D destroyed. Additionally, during all four major contacts by the brigade, emergency resupply of ammunition was requested during each. This illustrates that planning of rapid resupply of essentials

such as ammunition to light infantry forces may be an extremely difficult and dangerous operation.

As mentioned in Chapter Two, the Lessons Learned, Headquarters, 1st Infantry Division from the period 1 January to 30 April 1966 provided an interesting dilemma in how to react to the enemy contact. Brigadier General DePuy's outlawing of the term "pinned down" shows one extreme of a difficult balancing act.[13] Ground commanders must maneuver against the enemy force and should not pull back into a defensive perimeter and call for artillery or close air support, as mandated by General DePuy, when they have acceptable odds over the enemy forces. (Underlined portion is added for emphasis.) Nowhere in General DePuy's Commander's Note 1 does he discuss the underlined portion above. The ground commander must develop the situation in a search and destroy operation when contact is made with the enemy force and use all assets available to destroy the enemy. The higher commander must provide these assets and reinforcements as necessary and refrain from making decisions on who is "pinned down" with the stroke of a pen. The ground commander must balance the use of maneuver to fix the enemy force and then apply fire power from small arms or any larger weapon to destroy the enemy. This problem was seen in several operations and illustrates some of the difficulties of fighting a guerilla type force which is sometimes a phantom and the oversupervision in Vietnam where

a commander in a helicopter could watch a battle and judge the ground commander sometimes unfairly.

Two other operations contained as appendixes to this 1st Division report were worthy of note. Operation CRIMP, conducted by 3rd Brigade, provided insight into the time required to conduct a proper search of a TAOR. This operation, conducted from 8 to 10 January 1966, allowed only a small amount of time for units to operate in their first area. The brigade had the following observation:

> The rapid search and destroy operation during the period 8-10 Jun 66 forced units to skim over areas that might have yielded VC, weapons or equipment. It was not until 11 Jan 66, when a bn [battalion] base camp was established and methodical searching was initiated, that quantities of weapons, VC and documents were uncovered. Operations should be phased to exploit the opportunities uncovered during the search as opposed to time/date phasing.[14]

Considerable time was required to conduct a proper methodical search in a TAOR. In addition, a short quick search would most likely produce little of value while exposing the unit to attack by enemy forces. It was key and essential during successful search and destroy operations to allow sufficient search time.

A variation on this same theme was found in Operation MALLET conducted by 2nd Brigade. In order to ensure that proper time for searching was available, the unit developed each additional phase of the operation based on what they had gathered in intelligence and experience from the previous phase.[15] This was probably not possible

in every case; however, it reinforced the need for a methodical search with adequate search time available.

The 1st Infantry Division's lessons learned report from 1 February to 30 April 1967 included Operation JUNCTION CITY and Operation TUCSON. This report presented a breakdown of battalion days by mission showing what missions battalion participated in during this time period of major search and destroy operations.

BATTALION DAYS BY MISSION[16]

	CARE Maint	Base Sec	S&D Ops	Road Sec	Jungle Clr	Convoy Escort	S&S/Ops Enroute	
Feb	21	66	79	32	9	0	35	10
Mar	20	89	64	147	0	23	17	18
Apr	12	129	69	68	0	0	10	12
	53	284	212	247	9	23	62	40

This table appears to indicate that of the 930 battalion days available, 212 were spent on search and destroy operations, or just 23%. The amount of time required in other activities of a search and destroy operations is immense. Despite participating in the largest search and destroy operation of the Vietnam War the division spent more time on the tasks of base security and road security. This information supports the belief that only a small portion of the division actually participated in search and destroy operations while the majority of the division supported that effort.

This lesson learned report also supported the opinion that time/date phasing of a search and destroy operation is unsatisfactory. This report stated

> Operations should be planned so that in the event a large base camp, tunnel system or supply cache is found, additional time can be allotted to thoroughly search and destroy the area.[17]

This further emphasizes the need for adequate time to search.

One of the most astounding facts contained in this report was the use of civilians by 3rd Brigade. Inside their base perimeter they used 1034 Vietnamese personnel as follows: 250 Pacific Architect and Engineers, 169 concessions, clubs or individual caretakers, 615 as permanent or temporary laborers.[18] Although this seems to be an extremely high number, the division's extensive use of host nation assets certainly assisted in preparing base camp support areas and could possibly have freed infantry units to participate in combat operations.

Operation TUCSON presented an interesting report of engineer support to search and destroy operations. Because search and destroy operations were normally conducted in restrictive terrain and away from the improved road network a certain amount of mobility improvement could be expected. In a six-day period during Operation TUCSON two engineer companies "...built two timber trestle bridges, put in 6 fords and 3 AVLB sites, and improved 33K's of road."[19] Although this probably was not a normal operation period,

engineer units were heavily involved in mobility improvement, landing zone clearing, land clearing and base fortifications among other responsibilities.

The 1st Infantry Division's experience in Operation JUNCTION CITY provided additional helpful lessons. Reinforced in this report was the insistence of the units in responsive 105mm artillery support. The division was adamant that all units be within 105 mm support range at all times.[20] In order to provide this responsive fire support it was necessary to establish fire base from which the artillery could support. An excellent consideration on fire bases was that they should be mutually supporting.[21] This was done so that if a fire base should come under attack another fire base could provide fire support to the base under attack. Mutually supporting fire bases was a standard planning consideration of search and destroy operations.

Armored and mechanized forces were used in Operation JUNCTION CITY. These type forces were employed generally on road security and convoy escort during the daylight hours and base perimeter defense at night.[22] This nontraditional use of mechanized forces was reported to be successful and provided an effective use of armored and mechanized forces despite the terrain restrictions.

A caution was provided by the division to units entering a TAOR to conduct operations. Due to extensive enemy use of mines, the division suggested varying the

method of entering an area.[23] If areas were always entered by air the enemy would mine landing zones and if entry was always by ground the enemy would mine trails and roads. Therefore, a combination of both entry techniques forced the enemy to spread their assets and provided the greatest chance for friendly success.

From 1 August 1967 to 30 October 1967, the 1st Infantry Division participated in a number of search and destroy operations to include Operation PORTLAND and Operation SHENANDOAH II. Again, a battalion days by mission breakdown was available as follows:

BATTALION DAYS BY MISSION[24]

	S&S Ops	Base Sec	S&D Ops	Road Sec	Jungle Clr	Air Assault	Clr Rte Enroute	
Aug	5	138	76	8	23	13	23	24
Sep	24	171	61	0	9	0	1	20
Oct	0	89	171	10	12	11	0	17
Total	29	398	308	18	44	24	24	61

This table points out that of 914 possible battalion days, only 308, or 34%, were spent on search and destroy operations. Although this is a higher figure than the report during the Operation JUNCTION CITY period it still shows only one-third of the division was involved in search and destroy operations at a time.

In an effort to provide more useful intelligence during this time period, the division G2 consolidated a number of his overlays into "goose eggs." The "goose eggs"

were of two types, active in the past as of some previous date or currently active. This method was used to present a clearer, more useable intelligence picture to the field commander.[25] The commander could then orient his search and destroy operations against the goose eggs locations, rather than trying to interpret all of the overlays into a meaningful intelligence picture. This appeared to be a successful technique.

Another unique technique employed by the division was in AO strike operations during this period. The division rotated battalions into AO strike under operational control of the 1st Brigade.[26] It was not presented in the lesson learned report whether or not this technique was successful. The probable advantage of this technique was the brigade became very familiar with the TAOR and could easily plan the battalion missions.

A controversial technique employed in this time period was the use of marching fires. In an effort to deliver close effective fire, the division advocated placing marching fires to the front and flanks of an advancing column. Once contact was made the artillery would be brought in close to destroy the enemy. This method may have been effective against the particular enemy tactic, but must have created a significant signature as to where US forces were operating. This problem of how to counter Viet Cong flanking tactics returns to the earlier fire and maneuver

discussion of General DePuy's Command Note 1 of this chapter. In order to prevent being flanked, a US unit must quickly maneuver to fix the enemy and not allow themselves to be maneuvered against.

The use of the division long-range patrol assets was successful during this period. Several points concerning long-range patrol use were noted. First, it was desirable to insert the terms prior to major operations to gather needed intelligence and focus search operations. Extensive coordination was required between the long-range assets and representatives of the operational areas, artillery, air support, etc. This is still presently conducted by ranger-type patrols in detail and taught at the Ranger School. Third, the long-range patrol unit was considered elite and a volunteer unit.[28] This is similar to the organization of the light infantry division long-range surveillance detachment company of today. The long-range reconnaissance patrols were an essential intelligence gathering asset in search and destroy operations.

The 1st Infantry division provided many useful lessons learned during the years 1966-1968. Some of these lessons parallel experiences of other units during the same period. Other lessons diverge from the experiences of other similar units as related by their after-action reports.

25th Infantry Division

The experiences of the 25th Infantry Division provided a number of facts concerning search and destroy operations and interesting techniques. The 25th Infantry Division provided a brigade-size force to Operation PAUL REVERE I-IV conducted generally from 1 August 1966 through 31 October 1966. The first note of interest is the division stated the area of operation for PAUL REVERE II encompassed 2040 square miles.[29] This was an extremely large area of operation and pointed out that generally search and destroy operational areas were much larger than those of conventional operations. In addition, brigade-size force could not be expected to hold that large of an area clear of enemy forces and could only be expected to attempt to find and destroy enemy forces. The brigade used a technique called "checkerboarding" in the conduct of this operation. This technique involved moving from one 10,000 meter grid square to another. The brigade stated this technique had proved successful in the past and was being continued. It should be noted that there was no reference to focusing the search on enemy forces and only "checkerboarding" was used and presented as successful.[30] This technique was interesting because it was not an intelligence driven search and destroy operation. The question then emerged as to why it was considered successful. The following is a list of

enemy activity provided by the general report on the brigade operations by time period.

26 August-10 Sept	"1 enemy platoon size force sighted"
11 Sept-27 Sept	"No significant contact"
28 Sept-18 Oct	"Despite concentrated search efforts the period was noted by its lack of significant contact"
18 Oct-31 Oct	"light to moderate enemy contact"[31]

In addition to the above information the brigade reported 54 friendly killed in action and 464 enemy killed in action.[32] It is difficult to believe that 464 enemy could have been killed by a brigade who characterized its operations as above. The technique of "checkerboarding" does not appear successful with such limited contact reports. The period of 11 September through 18 October appears to fit the description of aimless searches in the jungle. "Checkerboarding" does not seem to be a suitable technique for search and destroy operations.

A final caution of the 25th Infantry Division's report on Operation PAUL REVERE was on enemy activity. The brigade reported the enemy employed trail watchers and monitored the movement of friendly forces. The brigade learned this information from enemy prisoners of war and this explained how the enemy would locate and attack friendly units after dark.[33] Search and destroy units by

nature of the operations are in a nonlinear environment and subject to enemy contact from all directions. A difficult task in search and destroy operations was to conceal a friendly unit from location by the enemy. This challenge still remains today.

Operation GADSDEN was a four phase search and destroy operation conducted from 2 February 1967 to 21 February 1967. Although this mission was characterized as a search and destroy operation the division mission read: "To conduct opns in Western War Zone C to find, fix and destroy VC/NVA forces and installations."[34] This mission statement reads like a definition of search and destroy operations; however, it does not state "conduct search and destroy operations." A mission statement saying conduct counterguerilla operations in the TAOR could have accomplished the same thing. This information could possibly affect the division mission in today's search and attack operations.

The artillery support during Operation GADSDEN was centralized and provided fire support from fire support bases. This method of operation provided maximum coverage of the area of operations and was an important facet of the operation. The division reported that this concept was well received and proven effective.[35]

Operation GADSDEN showed the importance of aviation assets adding to the mobility and flexibility of ground

combat units. The report emphasized the ability to quickly responded to the changing tactical situation and stated platoon to battalion-size air mobile operations were conducted. Helicopter gun ships were also used to provide fire support. Aviation assets were key and in some cases essential to search and destroy operations not only in mobility and firepower, but reconnaissance, medivac and command and control. Almost every after-action report reviewed noted a shortage of aviation assets.[36] During Operation Gadsden units were provided with a hot A ration meal a day delivered by helicopter.[37] Although this was probably effective at raising morale, airlift of meals gave the enemy another way to pinpoint friendly forces locations.

An analysis of additional divisional search and destroy operations provided reinforcement of lessons learned already noted. In addition, some new material was introduced by other units. In the case of the 4th Infantry Division, considerable additional information was obtained from an analysis of Operation Sam Houston.

4th Infantry Division

Operation SAM HOUSTON was conducted from 1 January until 5 April 1967 along the Cambodian border. The operation consisted of extensive search and destroy operations which produced numerous contacts with the enemy

forces. Major contacts occurred primarily during February.[38]

The division task organization changed at least thirteen times during the three-month operation. A representative task organization is presented in Figure One from February 1967. The two brigades were used to conduct search and destroy operations and were augmented with direct support artillery, engineers, civil affairs, signal assets, military police, aviation assets (1st Bde) maintenance, and forward air control. TF (Task Force) 1-69 Armor and 1-10 Cav where organized to provide route security, although they did participate in some search and destroy operations. TF 108 Inf and TF 308 Inf provided fire base security for the artillery assets in their respective task forces. An important fact is the division task organized the available assets down to the maneuver units to include some aviation assets.

The artillery task organization was particularly intriguing. A number of provisional headquarters were formed to provide fire support to the task forces. For example, Figure One shows a 5-16 artillery headquarters under division artillery control and a 5-16 artillery provisional headquarters operating under the control of TF 1-8 Inf. The division artillery had to frequently change the fire support missions of the division as maneuver units crossed boundaries of other units. Mutually supporting fire

Figure One: 4th Inf Division Task Organization effective 19 February 1967. (After-Action Report-Operation Sam Houston, Incl 3, 6-7.)

1st Bde, 4th Div
HHC, 1st Bde
2-8 Inf
2-35 Inf
6-29 Arty (Prov) DS
  A/4-42 Arty
  C/2-9 Arty
Co A, 4th Engr(-)
Co 1-8 Inf (Opcon)
Tm #9 41st CA Co
Tm1 Tm1B/124th Sig Bn
1st Plat 4th Mp Co
C1 Sec B 4th Med Bn
Contact Tm D/704th Maint Bn
Bde Avn Sec
FAC Party

TF 1-69 Armor
1-69 Armor(-)
C/3-4 Cav(-)
Plat, 1-8 Inf
B/3-6 Arty DS
B/7-13 Arty (Atch 3-6 Arty)

TF 1-8 Inf
1-8 Inf(-)
5-16 Arty (Prov) DS
  A/6-29 Arty
  B/6-29 Arty

Div Troops
HHC, 4th Inf Div
4th Eng Bn(-)
4th Avn Bn(-)
124th Sig Bn(-)
43d Cml Det
29th Mil Hist Det
41st CA Co(-)
33d Inf Plat (Sct Dog)(-)
4th Div TACP
4th MI Det
4th MP Co(-)

2nd Bde 4th Div
HHC, 2nd Bde
1-12 Inf
1-22 Inf
4-42 Arty (Prov) DS
  B/4-42 Arty
  C/4-42 Arty
  237th Radar (Opcon)
Plat, Co B, 4th Eng Bn
TM #8, 41st CA Co
3d Det 374th RRC
2nd Plat, 4th MP Co
C1 Sec, C/4th Med Bn
Contact Tm, C/704th Maint Bn
FAC Party

TF 1-10 CAV
1-10 Cav(-)
Co, 1-69 Armor (Opcon)
Co, 1-69 Armor (Opcon)
Plat, 1-8 Inf
3-6 Arty(-) DS

TF 3-8 Inf
3-8 Inf
C/6-29 Arty DS

Div Arty
HHB, Div Arty
6-14 Arty(-) GS (Opcon)
  A16-14 Arty GSR 4-42 Arty
  Arty (Prov)
5-16 Arty(-)
  A/5-16 Arty GS
  C/5-16 Arty GS
  D/5-16 Arty GS
Plat/B/6-29 Arty
235th Radar (Opcon)
Plat, 1-8 Inf

DISCOM
HHC & Band
4th Admin Co
704th Maint Bn(-)
4th Med Bn(-)
4th S&T Bn(-)

bases were utilized and were considered successful. The division had sixty-six 105's, twelve 155's, ten 8-inch and six 175 howitzers supporting which fired 230,647 rounds during the three-month operation.[39] The average rounds fired per tube was 2454 while the daily average across the division was approximately 2562 rounds.

The unit's list of lessons learned was lengthy. The division report supported the use of search patterns like the "cloverleaf, starburst and zig-zag."[40] When describing search methods the report focused on company and platoon operations, which again emphasized the small unit nature of search and destroy operations. The report stressed that each plan for a search and destroy operation must contain a provision for a reaction force of sufficient size and a means to quickly assemble search elements.[41] Friendly company-size elements were employed within one to three hours walking distance of each other to facilitate mutual support. This technique was used for several reasons. The enemy was of superior size in the area of operation. The enemy could quickly reinforce and know friendly strength and locations. The terrain was rugged with few landing zones. The size and location of the reaction force was based on the size of friendly search elements, suspected size of enemy elements and the terrain.[42]

As brought out by previous division reports, a second search of previously searched areas usually produced contact with enemy forces. Enemy forces operating against

search and destroy tactics would attempt to move into search areas after friendly search elements had departed. This points out the important fact that search and destroy operations did not clear the area for any extended period of time because the enemy would frequently and quickly reoccupy.[43]

In the case of battalion firebases and forward support areas, the longer they were in place, the heavier they became. The division recognized that firebases and forward support areas would accumulate larger and larger quantities of supplies and make themselves more comfortable the longer they stayed in place. This made them extremely difficult to move and, in some cases, tied up maneuver units guarding a no longer needed base until all supplies could be backhauled out. A recommendation was made in both cases to reduce the stockage levels prior to displacement.[44]

The use of recondo patrols (similar to long-range recon patrols) was "essential in gaining a comprehensive intelligence picture of enemy forces operating within the division AO.[45] Long-range patrols were again emphasized in greatly assisting the division commander in intelligence gathering. The division used an average of seven patrols a day and this freed ground maneuver units for other missions.[46] The division commander's comments in the after-action review on Operation SAM HOUSTON were highly complementary of the recondo patrols and stated the need to keep experienced veterans in these units. The recondo units were employed at battalion, brigade and division level.[47]

the use of the term "pinned down" made just a year earlier. opinion on actions on enemy contact than the 1st Infantry Division Commander, General DePuy. Brigadier General Glenn D. Walker, the Assistant Division Commander for maneuver stated "after contact is made, the commander on the ground must initiate fire and maneuver to destroy the enemy. Maneuver can and should commence after a unit gains fire superiority."[48] The ground commander's development of the situation was key in bringing to bear the division fire support capability. The report from the ground commander on the enemy location and disposition could then be used to determine the need for reaction forces and fire support. Walker's further comments on firepower were equally strong, though possibly misguided. He stated "security saves lives and finds the enemy. Firepower destroys him. We have unlimited air, artillery, mortars and gunships. The secret is to use them all."[49] This application of fire support probably produced overkill of the enemy forces and may have created additional logistical problems. However, the use of firepower was key in search and destroy operations. Maneuver against the enemy was also considered key although seldom actually conducted in practice.

General William R. Peers, the Division Commander, stated "If we are going to beat the enemy in the jungle, we must take full advantage of our supporting firepower and avoid man to man engagements."[50] This comment was directly contradicted by General DePuy's comments which had outlawed

the use of the term "pinned down" made just a year earlier. Peers further explained the need for "large, massive volumes" of fire support.[51] In Peers remarks, which may have been a case of the Division Commander acting as a platoon or company commander, he discussed a situation where a commander had only fired 60-70 rounds of artillery fire support in an engagement. Peers believed the commander should have used between 800-1000 rounds.[52] Considering Peers had a division directive that a battery should not have more than 1500 rounds on hand, 800-1000 rounds in one engagement would have considerably depleted the firing battery stockage level.[53]

Operation SAM HOUSTON, in the words of Peers, was "eminently successful."[54] The validity of the 4th Infantry Division reporting has been questioned. Colonel David H. Hackworth questioned the reporting of the 4th Infantry Division during Operation PAUL REVERE IV which preceded Operation Sam Houston. Hackworth stated "there was almost no correlation between the official army report on PAUL REVERE IV and what actually happened on the ground."[55] Hackworth made his appraisal of the 4th Infantry Division during a visit of the division as an escort officer for General S.L.A. Marshall. However, the 4th Division experienced a turnover of senior leadership during Operation SAM HOUSTON to include the Division Commander, the Chief of Staff, both Brigade Commanders.[56] There has been no

questioning of the 4th Infantry Division reporting of Operation Sam Houston.

173rd Airborne Brigade (Separate)

In contrast to the 4th Infantry Division, the 173rd Airborne Brigade was an experienced US unit having arrived in South Vietnam in May 1965.[57] Although only a brigade-size unit, the 173rd's operations and lessons learned provided insight into search and destroy operations and repeated many of the lessons learned of other division-size US forces. Since the 173rd was a separate brigade, the operations of the brigade resembled division operations at times. The brigade also operated as an attachment to a division in operations such as ATTLEBORO and JUNCTION CITY where the 173rd was under control of the 1st Infantry Division.

Operation DENVER was a three-phase operation conducted from 10-25 April 1966 by the 173rd. Although no major engagements were fought, this operation represented a standard search and destroy operation. The 173rd moved into and occupied Song Be Airfield by air from 10-13 April. The actual search and destroy portion of the mission was conducted from 14-21 April. The brigade redeployed from 22-25 April. The 173rd made 44 contacts with enemy forces during the operation. The enemy initiated 29, or 66 percent. This high percentage of enemy initiated contact appeared to be normal and the 173rd after-action report made no further comment.[58]

The brigade's supporting artillery was located at the brigade support base (at the Song Be Airfield) and placed in a general support role of the brigade. Based on the situation and mission, batteries would be tasked in a direct support role to support specific portions of the operation. This required several displacements of batteries to forward firebases within range of certain operations.[59] The importance of army aviation to support search and destroy operations was evident in Operation DENVER. Units on combat operations were resupplied by road when possible. However, army aviation units flew 161 sorties of supplies and delivered 65 tons of supplies.[60] In addition, 1429 combat assault sorties were conducted. The types of missions included combat assault, command and control, aerial reconnaissance, psychological operations, aerial artillery observer and medical evacuation flights.[61]

During the search and destroy operations, the brigade rotated the battalion that secured the brigade base camp area. The brigade only had one battalion forward conducting search and destroy operations at a time. The battalion securing the base camp would send out local patrols.[62] The 173rd, as with other units, emphasized "there is little advantage to be gained by a quick search and destroy operation. A unit needs time to do a thorough job."[63] Another important lesson was to ensure coordination between the intelligence assets and field artillery to promptly engage targets of opportunity.[64]

Also conducted in 1966 by the 173rd, Operation TOLEDO was another solid example of a search and destroy operation. Generally, one battalion secured a forward brigade base and at least one battalion conducted search and destroy operations.

The usefulness of reentering a previously search area was again highlighted this operation. After searching an area the brigade would leave stay-behind forces to ambush the enemy when they attempted to reoccupy. This technique was stated to "have proven to be invaluable."[65] This technique capitalized on the enemy's desire to return into previously occupied areas.

Although the brigade stated there were no delays experienced in fire support, the lack of air corridors complicated the ability to fire artillery missions. In order to properly support units in contact with responsive artillery support, use of air corridors and strict adherence of those corridors by aviation elements was essential.[66] During this operation, conducted from 10 August to 7 September 1966, army aviation flew 6941 sorties in support of operations.[67] The sheer volume of aviation required considerable airspace management.

As in Operation DENVER, enemy forces again initiated the majority of contacts. Of a total of 95 reported contacts, 58 were initiated by the enemy or 61 percent.[68] Although the search and destroy operations caused enemy contact, the enemy generally started with the initiative.

In the area of combat service support, Operation TOLEDO was slightly different. Most of the brigade's logistical support was delivered by road during this operation. However, resupply of forward infantry battalion and fire support bases was conducted by air. Resupply during the operation required 748 UH-1 sorties and 163 CH-47 sorties.[69] Again, the large requirement for army aviation assets was seen in this operation.

Shortly after the completion of Operation TOLEDO, the 173rd participated in Operation ATTLEBORO from 7-20 November 1966 under the control of the 1st Infantry Division. The 173rd participation was relatively small because one battalion was held out of the operation as the II Field Force Reserve.[70] However, 173rd joined this operation, which was in progress, on very short notice. The 2/503 Inf was in base camp and assembled on 4 hours notice to deploy into the operation.[71] This highlights the rapid reinforcement required at times to support search and destroy operations.

Due to the nature of search and destroy operations, at times, units converged in close proximity in an attempt to fix and destroy the enemy. This type of operation was extremely difficult to control. Commanders were challenged to keep friendly units from directly firing on each other and ensuring that artillery fire was called only on enemy forces.[72] Besides recommending that units only operate in their own areas of operations, this was one of the few times

search and destroy operations needed centralized control from higher headquarters.

During this operation extensive use of long-range reconnaissance patrols was again proven useful and effective. In addition, the brigade used reinforced squad size patrols to further cover the area. On several occassions, units of the 173rd uncovered recently occupied enemy base camps, some of which still had warm food.[73] This points out that the enemy security was able to provide early warning to enemy units prior to the arrival of friendly forces. This ability may have been one of the reasons the enemy initiated more contacts than friendly forces.

The 173rd Airborne Brigade's (Separate) participation in Operation JUNCTION CITY was most noted because of the first combat parachute drop conducted by US forces in 15 years. The 173rd operations were generally standard to search and destroy operations of the brigade. The aviation assets to support the brigade continued to be large--a daily average required of 123 flight hours.[74] The brigade stated aviation assets were adequate; however, E troop, 17th Cavalry complained that "owing to a lack of sufficient helicopters, the Long-Range Reconnaissance Patrols of the Cavalry Troop could not be employed effectively."[75] This problem was noted even though the brigade was supported by two aviation battalions.[76] This was another instance of lack of helicopter support to

long-range reconnaissance assets degrading the ability of an important intelligence collecting asset.

Another interesting aspect in Operation JUNCTION CITY was the rate of friendly initiated contacts. Despite the commitment of almost three divisions into the area of operations still only 40 percent of the contacts were initiated by units of the 173rd.[77] The enemy was still able to fight as they had in the past. This pointed out the difficulty of seizing the initiative and forcing the enemy to run into established blocking positions. The 60 kilometer cordon proved to be ineffective in holding the enemy inside and was another argument against the need for large search and destroy operations.[78]

Artillery fire was used to prepare landing zones prior to air assault of friendly units. As in previous missions on enemy contact artillery would be fired on the enemy to block escape routes. In some cases marching fires were used in front of advancing infantry units and may have reduced instances of enemy contact. The difficulty of coordinating tactical air strikes with artillery was pointed out and reported because of the length of time after an artillery check fire before the tactical air hit the target.[79]

Echelons Above Division

While the reports of division and brigade-size units provided the majority of information for this research, the

reports of higher headquarters were interesting and useful. I Field Force controlled at times elements of 1st Cavalry Division, 4th Infantry Division, 25th Infantry Division, 101st Infantry and others. The reports of I Field Force brought together lessons learned of units under their control and provided interesting information.

Field artillery was probably one of the most effective elements of search and destroy operations. However, most artillery fire was unobserved. This was probably due somewhat to the nature of the terrain and operations. Many division reports had emphasized the need for accurate artillery fire which could generally be produced by an observer adjusting the rounds on target. One quarterly report for I Field Force stated of 46,976 artillery missions only 4391 were observed. Slightly less than 10 percent of the rounds were observed.[80] Many of those unobserved missions were harassing and interdiction fire, but many of the artillery had to have been fired without knowledge of whether or not the location contained enemy forces. In the same quarterly report the difficulty was discussed in fire support coordination due to the number of friendly units and civilians in the area of operation.[81]

Even at the field force level the importance of allowing adequate time to conduct the search was seen as critical. Republic of Korea forces' performance in Vietnam was considered outstanding.[82] Keys to their success

included taking their time and moving only when the unit was ready."[83] At times, an area of operations would be searched three or four times. Republic of Korea forces were also assigned smaller areas of operations than US units.[84] In contrast to the Korean units, US units believed "...detailed searching was a lot of hard work with little or no prospect of success."[85] In successful search and destroy operations a methodical thorough search was required. Military Assistance Command Vietnam further emphasized the usefulness of resweeping an area of operations.

> On 20 January 67, Operation TEB TAN BINH, a search and destroy operation in GIA DINH Province, west of Saigon, was conducted by the 2nd and 8th Airborne Battalions. One battalion made a sweep and the other battalion followed over the same area about four hours later. The second battalion surprised an estimated two companies of VC that had come out of their holes thinking the operation was over.[86]

Resweeping appeared to be highly successful and definitely pointed out that even when a unit had swept an area it could not be considered clear of enemy forces.

The final lesson learned from units was in the amount of intelligence a commander would possess prior to entering a search and destroy mission. "Most of these operations [search and destroy] were conducted without prior information on the enemy."[87] Despite the vast resources of the US intelligence community the overall command in Vietnam assumed that "the commander must necessarily produce his own intelligence as he goes."[88] This was probably the reason commanders frequently stated how valuable their long-range

reconnaissance assets were. Operations had to be initially planned to develop the intelligence picture. This caused operations to take longer since the intelligence picture would not become clear until "a week or two."[89] This also led to search and destroy operations being developed on the ground during the operation.

Search and Destroy Lessons Learned by Battlefield Operating System

The previous after-action reports presented a picture of search and destroy operations in Vietnam. These operations were interrelated and specific patterns appeared by which these operations were characterized. Each lesson learned fit the various battlefield operating systems and provided a formula for conducting search and destroy operations.

Maneuver

According to FM 71-100, Division Operations, the objective of division-level maneuver is "...to place or move battalion and brigade-sized combat elements into positions where they can bring direct and indirect fires to bear on the enemy..."[90] In search and destroy operations this was done by first establishing a support base close to, or in the area of, operations. The commander would then establish liaison with local civilian authorities or US units in the area to coordinate the operation and gather intelligence.

Aggressive combat patrolling would be conducted into areas of suspected enemy activity. Once contact was made quick reaction forces and fire support would be employed to destroy the enemy.[91] This was the plan of search and destroy operations.

The commander's assessments in the after-action reports in this study generally listed their operations as successful. A clearer picture of the success of the execution of search and destroy tactics was provided by general officers who held command positions in Vietnam. The execution of search and destroy tactics were considered superior by 7%, adequate by 35%, and leaving something to be desired by 51% of the generals (7% did not answer).[92] Considering the adverse nature of the Vietnam War, a positive response by half of the general officers on search and destroy tactics was a strong endorsement.

A critical consideration was the use of deception plans in search and destroy operations. Examples abound in search and destroy operations where friendly search elements located recently abandoned enemy base camps. This was primarily caused by the signature of friendly forces entering an area of operations and the enemy intelligence and communication ability. This was particularly a problem in large-scale operations; however, the problem was not unusual in small operations. An adequate deception plan seems to have been imperative in supporting search and destroy operations.

For the most part search and destroy tactics were small-unit operations. Divisions normally employed less than one-third of the division's maneuver units on search and destroy operations at a time. By 1967, ninety-six percent of engagements occurred at company level or below.[93] Twenty-eight percent of general officers felt that the use of large-scale operations, such as Cedar Falls, was correct early in the war and 21% felt those type operations should have been continued. However, 42% felt they were overdone from the beginning.[94] Some generals commented that the large operations were "ineffective due to enemy intelligence activities."[95]

Numerous after-action reports pointed to the ineffectiveness of blocking positions in containing the enemy. These blocking positions were bypassed by the enemy easily. This appears to be due to the enemy's experience and ability in moving in this type of terrain and the enemy intelligence network's ability to locate friendly positions. An interesting note was that blocking positions continued to be used despite the frequent reports of the ineffectiveness of this technique.

One of the most obvious successful techniques was resweeping an area of operation. Although this method was time consuming, another look through an area generally found enemy and equipment previously overlooked. This technique appeared to be seldom used but highly successful.

Due to the decentralized, spread out nature of the search, the search elements were vulnerable to enemy attack. This necessitated the use of quick reaction forces and mutually supporting search elements. A standby reserve with mobility, either aviation or ground, was an essential part of every search and destroy operation. The size of this force was dependent on the suspected size of the enemy forces. Search elements were employed close enough together to be mutually supporting. Generally these elements were within one hour walking distance of each other or close to a landing zone where they could be moved by air. The search elements were not employed as close to each other so as to cause friendly fire contacts.

Armored and mechanized forces were beneficial to search and destroy operations. These elements would provide firepower for base camp security. Capitalizing on their mobility and firepower, these units would provide convoy escort, protect engineering projects, responded to enemy contacts as a reaction force and generally provide road security. In limited situations these elements effectively participated in search and destroy operations when the terrain allowed.

When the enemy forces were located generally "...the infantry took cover while massive firepower support attempted to destroy the insurgents."[96] This was generally the way contact with enemy forces during search and destroy operations was resolved. Commanders, like General DePuy,

tried to get units to maneuver against the enemy and close with the enemy and destroy with infantry. Most units, however, would pull back from the enemy and engage with fire support. Difficult questions concerning which of these techniques produced the highest friendly casualties and which was more successful against the enemy need to be resolved. Units which pulled back from the enemy were generally flanked and attacked from the flanks and rear. In addition, once those units pulled back the employment of fire support was unobserved and, therefore, less effective. Units which maneuvered against the enemy took casualties from a hidden enemy who would shoot and then withdraw. Also, when the friendly unit was in close proximity of the enemy, fire support could not be effectively employed without endangering friendly forces. Neither of these techniques in their truest form seem to have been effective. The answer appears to be a combination of both techniques based on the commander's assessment of the situation.

Mobility, Countermobility and Survivability

The priority of engineer effort during search and destroy operations was almost always mobility operations. Road building, road improvement and landing zone clearing involved considerable effort. Due to the lack of development and rugged terrain engineering units were frequently

involved in these activities. In addition, engineer units were heavily involved in clearing mines from roads.

The second priority was survivability. This consisted of construction and improvement and base camps. Bunkers were built and obstacles were emplaced to protect these facilities. This was a continuing activity due to the frequent displacement of units.

Two other types of engineering projects were also conducted in Vietnam during search and destroy operations. Civilian assistance projects such as reconstruction of civilian housing were conducted. Engineer units were involved in large-scale jungle clearing operations in operations like Cedar Falls. Some of these operations were conducted using defoliate, but still considerable effort was expanded clearing jungle with bulldozers and Rome plows.

Fire Support

The challenges of fire support in search and destroy operations were considerable. In search and destroy operations, and responsive fire support was absolutely critical. With maneuver units spread out over large distances, artillery units generally provided fire support using the firebase concept. Units quickly learned that these firebases needed to be mutually supporting of each other as a protection measure.

Field artillery assets were generally centralized to support search and destroy operations. However, when the

situation dictated, artillery units were tasked organized to support a specific search and destroy mission. This required the use of innovative procedures such as mixing the type of howitzers in battery. This provided both large and small caliber support of a specific operation. The use of provisional headquarters was effectively used as another innovative approach.

With units operating in close proximity, unsure of their exact location due to the difficulty of navigation in rugged dense terrain, fire support coordination was extremely difficult. This challenge was overcome by centralized coordination of field artillery fires to verify unit locations prior to firing the mission. In some cases, fire missions had to be approved at division level prior to engagement. This reduced the responsiveness of artillery fire.

In addition to field artillery assets, close air support, army aviation, and naval gunfire provided fire support to search and destroy operations. The combined use of field artillery and close air support (fixed or rotary wing aviation) was difficult and generally caused a lull in fire support that allowed an enemy to escape or, in some cases, move closer to friendly units. Frequent examples of enemy "hugging tactics" used to stay close to friendly elements and, therefore, prohibited artillery or close air support fires, were often seen in search and destroy operations. Improvement in the coordination of these

assets, without jeopardizing the air assets safety, was a significant problem in Vietnam.

Another problem identified was the lack of air corridors or the air unit's disregard for airspace control measures. This created a problem requiring check fires of artillery during close air support. A reduction of the effectiveness of fire support was often experienced because of this critical mistake.

The use of artillery assets in a counter mortar role was effective in supporting search and destroy operations except when friendly mortars were firing. The counterfire radar was unable to discern between the friendly and enemy rounds. Therefore, the friendly mortars had to ceasefire before an accurate location of the enemy mortars could be obtained.

Intelligence

Intelligence gathering in search and destroy operations was primarily conducted by human assets. The use of agents or captured enemy personnel was critical to developing a clear intelligence picture on the enemy units. The use of long-range reconnaissance units proved to be a highly successful means of gathering information on the enemy's operations. During search and destroy missions, long-range reconnaissance units generally received priority on excellent veteran personnel. When used most effectively,

the long-range reconnaissance units had dedicated or highly responsive aviation support.

In most cases search and destroy operations were conducted with limited intelligence available on the enemy's disposition and strength. The search portion of the operation would develop a clearer picture of the enemy forces over a period of time. This clearer picture would focus the search. As the locations of enemy units were made known, close coordination between fire support, maneuver units and intelligence assets effected to engage and destroy the enemy. Due to the large volume of information collected on enemy forces, some intelligence units produced overlays with just "goose eggs" of enemy activity rather than a large number of separate overlays. This type of overlay was the forerunner of pattern analysis in counterinsurgency operations of present day.

The counterintelligence plan was a difficult task to perform in search and destroy operations. The enemy's ability to gather and pass information on friendly forces greatly increased the difficulty of engaging enemy forces on friendly terms. Examples abound of friendly units locating recently vacated enemy base camps. To deny the enemy intelligence on friendly operations greatly increased the opportunity for success in search and destroy operations.

Combat Service Support

Combat Service Support of search and destroy operations was characterized by supporting from secure base

camps and the use of aviation assets to lift supplies forward to maneuver units, move maneuver units rapidly, and extract casualties. This technique stressed the availability of aviation assets to move the supplies and personnel.

Responsive resupply was critical to the combat success of maneuver units. Since the maneuver units traveled with light loads, expedient resupply was essential. Again this procedure required responsive aviation lift assets to conduct this resupply.

The combat service support elements were also involved in conducting civil affairs assistance. Civil affairs units were required at most command levels. Combat Service Support was involved in activities like refugee movement (sometimes using aviation assets) and Medcap (Medical Assistance to Civilians). These activities impacted upon the ability of units to conduct search and destroy operations due to the resources removed from combat operations.

Command and Control

The most important lesson learned from Vietnam search and destroy operations was the amount of time required to conduct a proper search. In order to be successful, commanders had to allow sufficient time to thoroughly search an area. Operations would not be time or

date phased, but would allow flexibility to respond to information gained or enemy activity.

Control measures played a critical part in search and destroy operations. Units were generally assigned areas of operation instead of sectors. Due to the need to rapidly concentrate maneuver units, control measures like linkup points and rally points were essential. Control measures to control fires of converging forces in rugged terrain were required to reduce the possibility of fratricide.

There was a general lack of designating the main effort in search and destroy operations. The priority generally went to the unit in contact. This was a result of having only one unit in contact at a time, because of the nature of the enemy's tactics. Considering the decentralized operations, divisional assets would be allocated to brigades or battalion task force to the lowest level suitable.

Analysis of Other Search and Attack Information

The Marine Corps Search and Attack Concept

Although not the same as the US Army Concept, the Marine Corps search and attack concept, developed in the mid-1970's, was an interesting addition to this research of search and attack operations. The Marine search and attack concept involved designing a unit which could "locate, engage, and defeat/destroy hostile forces through the

effective application of integrated combat systems which take full advantage of advancing technology."[97] This included analyzing search capabilities, attack capabilities and appropriate command and control assets. This Marine Corps study looked into the future in an effort to project what a Marine Corps search and attack battalion organization and doctrine would be in the late 1970's and early 1980's.[98] In 1976 the Commandant of the Marine Corps approved four and disapproved five of the recommendations of this Marine Corps study. The approved recommendations generally concerned equipment. The disapproved recommendations were related to further research and organizational changes.[99]

The primary mission of a search and attack battalion was stated to "detect, acquire and energy illuminate the targets for attack by larger more lethal firepower means at their disposal."[100] This technique was not designed to eliminate the infantryman. It planned to allow him to attack the enemy without close combat, except as a last resort.[101] This technique was an example of an attempt to use technology to reduce the loss of life required in close combat attacks.

Several of the marine study findings were particularly interesting. The requirement to integrate command and control and fire support was designed to allow prompt attack of the enemy forces once they were located. Fire support would have been a prelude to any close combat by infantry. The goals of this concept included "more

effective mission accomplishment, reduced frequency and duration of close combat, reduced friendly casualties and a faster rate of advance."[102]

This Marine Corps study followed in the same thought process as some search and destroy operations. The infantryman would locate the enemy and then bring fire support against the target. This reduced the infantryman's first role from "close with and destroy the enemy" to that of a forward observer. This was in direct contrast with General DePuy's requirement to always maneuver against the enemy. The Marine Search and Attack battalion study provided another look at an extreme end of the spectrum of search and attack operations. Current army doctrine for battalion-level search and attack operations provided by FM 7-20 (Draft), left the commander's options open on this point. The commander's options included conducting a hasty or deliberate attack or employing indirect fire or close air support. The decision on what to do would be left to the maneuver commander.[103]

Since the recommendation to implement the Marine search and attack battalion into Marine doctrine was disapproved, this concept went too far to the extreme. Even though the Marine Corps did not agree with the findings of this Marine study; the Marine Corps found useful some of the equipment developments. These included considerations for remotely piloted vehicles and adding the squad automatic weapons (an army research development).

The Rhodesian Counterinsurgency Operations 1973-1980

Although the operations of the Selous Scouts in Rhodesia does not parallel US doctrine, the success of their operations required consideration in this research. According to Rhodesian military reports activities of the Selous Scouts accounted for 68% of insurgent kills.[104] The Selous Scouts were organized to eliminate terrorism and terrorists (this was how the insurgents were called) both in Rhodesia and neighboring countries.[105] In order to complete the required mission, the Selous Scouts used turned insurgents and African soldiers to conduct reconnaissance and infiltrated enemy camps. Once the insurgents were located, attacks would be organized against the insurgents using fire support, airmobile or ground attacks.

The importance of the Rhodesian operations was in their effective use of human intelligence gathering capabilities. In the planning of Operation MANYATELA, described as a reconnaissance and attack in January 1977, the Selous Scouts only had air photographs to use. These showed only paths in the area and failed to confirm the position of the insurgent camp. The Selous Scouts placed reconnaissance teams into the area who pinpointed the enemy location and effectively directed the assault against the camp.[106] This is only one example showing that the use of long-range reconnaissance was absolutely key to Rhodesian counterinsurgency operations.

Another important facet was the synchronization of air strikes and ground assault against the insurgents. Knowing that the insurgents would attempt to flee, the encirclement of enemy forces was key. However, dense brush made the containment of the enemy as difficult as it had been in Vietnam. Operations had to be closely controlled as units converged and fire support was coordinated from aerial platforms.[107]

The intelligence problem of Rhodesia was similar to the problems of the Vietnam War. In Rhodesia military intelligence was "geared toward conventional rather than unconventional war tasks."[108] There is considerable evidence that points out that currently light infantry divisions of the US Army focus on conventional war instead of the role of gathering human intelligence.[109] The Selous Scouts were so successful that they were increased and more light infantry forces were placed in direct support of the Selous Scouts to further utilize their tremendous intelligence gathering capability.[110]

Joint Readiness Training Center Search and Attack Missions

Joint Readiness Training Center (JRTC) exercise results and operation orders furnished an engaging review of current search and attack doctrine. Even though the JRTC missions are conducted at battalion level, they still provide insight into the challenges of search and attack operations. Two rotations from 1990 were examined as

representative examples of search and attack operations at JRTC. The first battalion was tasked to conduct search and attack operations in an area of operations approximately 36 to 38 square kilometers in size. The task force consisted of a light infantry battalion of four rifle companies (which included a company from another battalion), a scout platoon, a mortar platoon, an attached engineer platoon, two stinger teams, a GSR team and a rembass team. The task force commander stated he wanted the companies to primarily operate at squad level and mass only to attack. The task force commander further asserted that units would search during the day and ambush at night. The task force commander planned to protect the force by using "stealth, deliberate movement and austere logistics."[111]

The task force successfully developed an effective search plan by breaking down the battalion area of operations into company areas. A critical shortcoming, mentioned frequently in Vietnam search and destroy operations, and present in this operation, was that the companies were not mutually supporting. In addition, the task force was not able to quickly concentrate its combat power to attack enemy elements located by a successful search. The task force employed all four companies in the search effort and maintained only a platoon-size reserve. The battalion could have improved its success by maintaining a company in reserve as a reaction force to engage located enemy elements quickly. This was repeatedly pointed out in Vietnam after-

action reports and reemphasized in this recent search and attack operation.

The difficulty of coordination in a non-linear combat environment was observed in the ambush of the mortar platoon by a friendly unit. The mortar platoon was moving through an area of operation without having coordinated with the owning unit and moved into a friendly ambush. This indicated a lack of understanding of operating in a nonlinear environment without relatively secure rear areas. In a conventional environment the mortar platoon would have been able to move behind friendly lines with relatively less concern of engagement by friendly forces or enemy forces. However, movement security should be considered imperative in a search and attack operation.

The second battalion was given a larger area to conduct search and attack operations of approximately 50 to 52 square kilometers. This battalion was organized with three rifle companies and normal supporting assets. Although assigned to conduct search and attack operations, the battalion commander chose to assign his companies to "conduct offensive operations in AO to seek and destroy enemy forces and disrupt his supply lines."[112] In addition, the battalion commander planned to "rest during the day and search and ambush at night."[113]

Failing to specify the mission was a search and attack caused confusion. At least one company commander was

unsure what the mission was. Search and attack is such a different type mission that planning and execution can only be conducted when the mission is clearly a search and attack. A mission to conduct offensive operations or even clear in zone does not provide a suitable explanation of what the real mission is that must be conducted.

Another significant point was the battalion commander's decision to conduct "search and ambush" at night and rest during the day. While not becoming predictable in military operations has always been important, search and attack operations appears to be more effectively conducted in daylight hours. The increased ability to control forces and the ease of identification makes daylight search and attacks easier. This is not to say that all search and attack operations should be conducted in daylight. With the large number of night vision devices available to modern light infantry forces, search and attack operations can be conducted at night.

This battalion also experienced many of the same problems pointed out from Vietnam search and destroy missions. Aerial resupply operations were poor. This once more points to the importance of aerial resupply in these type of operations. The combat service support planning and execution was termed "inflexible." The support effort was unavailable to react to immediate resupply requests in a timely manner. Once again fire support was difficult to

conduct in this nonlinear environment and improper clearance of fire support "resulted in numerous fratricides."[114]

The failure of the intelligence system to locate key enemy elements was presented as a major factor in the failure of the battalion to accomplish the search and attack mission successfully. An interesting contributing factor to this failure was the scout platoon being used to conduct "offensive operations" instead of information gathering. The scouts, as were the line companies, were tasked to report certain information, but intelligence gathering was not their first priority. The first task force had effectively used the scouts on a zone reconnaissance mission during the battalion search and attack. The failure to use the scouts effectively was in contrast to the effective use of these type assets in search and destroy operations in Vietnam.

An interesting divergence from search and destroy operations of Vietnam was present in the operation order for this search and attack. The commander's intent included the statement that the unit "will also continue positive relations with the local civilian population."[115] In all after-action reviews from Vietnam considered in this thesis, no statement of this type was present. Clearly the inclusion of this statement pointed to a change of thought process in dealing with civilians in search and attack operations. Despite the difficulty in determining how this

intent was to be executed, the inclusion of this intent was noteworthy.

This relatively short review of Joint Readiness Training Center search and attack operations provided excellent background material for considering the replies from the light divisions to the questions concerning search and attack operations.

Division Responses on Search and Attack Operations

The memorandum sent to light infantry division explained some preliminary findings of this thesis and posed five questions relating to search and attack operations (see Appendix). In both cases the G-3 section prepared the reply and the Assistant Chief of Staff, G-3 signed them. The two replies have different view points of search and attack operations, which shows once more the difference of opinions relating to search and attack doctrinal needs. An analysis of how the divisions answered the questions and the contrast between answers provided further evidence pertaining to search and attack operations.

The first question concerned the difference between search and attack operations and movement to contact. The 7th Infantry Division (7th ID) reply stated that search and attack is clearly "a subset of movement to contact."[116] The 7th ID based this opinion on the draft FM 7-20 which states the relationship. However, the 10th Mountain Division (10th MT) reply clearly stated there is a difference in both

execution and planning. In explanation, the 10th MT pointed out that a movement to contact is oriented on terrain and march objectives while search and attack is not. The division further stated "that a set direction of travel and time table is not used in search and attack operations."[117] The 10th MT described the relationship as follows: "Movement to contact is a centralized maneuver culminating in a hasty or deliberate attack; search and attack is a decentralized maneuver culminating in a deliberate or hasty attack."[118] Clearly search and destroy missions in Vietnam were different from conventional movement to contact. In fact, if there was no difference, why would an army who wanted to fight a conventional war invent the search and destroy concept. The FM 7-20 (draft) placement of search and attack as a subset of movement to contact was probably an attempt to find a place to put search and attack more so than because of a natural relationship. In fact, the common doctrine writing relating to both movement to contact and search and attack in FM 7-20 was relatively short. The explanation of the search and attack technique was considerably longer. The relatively short discussion of common points and the longer description of differences provided validation of consideration difference in both execution and planning of the two missions.

The next question considered whether a corps commander could issue a light division a mission to conduct search and attack operations. In both cases, the divisions

were in agreement that this should not be done. Each of the divisions felt that this was too specific a mission statement. The 10th MT Division stated quite correctly that rarely would a division commit the preponderance of a division's combat power to a search and attack operation.[119] The 7th ID recommended that the corps commander convey his intent with a statement like "clear the zone of enemy forces."[120] An analysis of this statement reveals that it could possibly be misinterpreted and appears to reflect a linear orientation on the battlefield. The 10th MT suggested the possible consideration of using "conduct counterguerilla operations."[121] This type of mission statement coupled with a clear commander's intent would allow the division commander latitude in planning the operation while still achieving the correct results. The division commander could commit a suitable sized force to search and attack operations and organize logistic operations to support the element. In addition, base defense, cordon and search, traffic control points and other related missions would fit into this mission statement of "conduct counterguerilla operations."

The third question was designed to further explore the differences or similarities between search and attack and movement to contact. Here the two replies were contradictory. The 7th ID felt search and attack was clearly a technique of movement to contact, while the 10th MT believed the missions were different enough to warrant separate

classification. Several of the prime differences in the two missions pointed out by the 10th MT were intriguing. Movement to contact was designed to gain and maintain contact with the enemy and rapidly develop the situation. Movement to contact generally has march objectives and axis of advances. Progress would be controlled through the use of generally time-oriented phaselines.[122] Most of these type control measures have little utility in search and destroy operations. In fact, the review of search and destroy operations lessons learned shows the above control measures as being unsuited to search and destroy operations.

The questions on the relationship between search and attack and search and destroy operations attempted to see if the divisions knew, and to what extent they believed, search and attack and search and destroy operations were related. Only one division answered this question by stating there was very little difference. However, the division believed the difference in current operations and search and destroy was in the effort to "avoid alienating the civilian population" and the carefully defined rules of engagements.[123] Both of these modern-day realizations would have truly increased the success of search and destroy operations in Vietnam.

The final question of the memorandum concerned the need for division-level search and attack doctrine. Once again the division replies were in contrast. The 7th ID concluded that doctrine was needed and it should be in

agreement with the structure of FM 7-20. The 7th ID saw merit in consideration of the combat support and combat service support elements of search and attack operation. Key among these considerations were decentralized, highly responsive resupply operations and dedicated aviation assets.[124] Both of these were essential ingredients of successful search and destroy operations. The 10th MT saw little value in division-level search and attack doctrine but wanted an "all encompassing doctrinal manual on low-intensity conflict and counterinsurgency operations."[125] The 10th MT was concerned that division-level search and attack doctrine could lead to the micro management which was all too prevalent in Vietnam.

The replies of the two light division further indicated the considerable debate concerning the mission of search and attack. Nevertheless, the replies were in agreement that some type of doctrine was needed to support this type of operation. The lessons learned from Vietnam, the Marine search and attack study, Rhodesian operations, the Joint Readiness Training Center and these memorandums provide conclusions as to what the doctrine should be.

CHAPTER FOUR
ENDNOTES

[1]US Army, Operation Mastiff, 1st Infantry Division, (Washington: Adjutant General's Office, 1966), 1.

[2]Ibid, 5.

[3]Ibid, 13.

[4]Ibid, 3rd Bde Report, 3.

[5]Ibid, 18.

[6]Ibid, 2nd Bde Report, 7.

[7]Ibid, 18.

[8]Ibid, 3rd Bde Report, 3.

[9]US Army, Operation Cocoa Beach, Headquarters, 3rd Brigade, 1st Infantry Division, (Washington: Adjutant General's Office, 1966), 7.

[10]Ibid.

[11]Ibid.

[12]Ibid, 6.

[13]US Army, Lessons Learned, Headquarters, 1st Infantry Division, (Washington: Adjutant General's Office, 1966), Commanders Note 1.

[14]Ibid, Incl 14, 9.

[15]Ibid, Incl 17, 4.

[16]US Army, Lessons Learned, Headquarters, 1st Infantry Division, (Washington: Adjutant General's Office, 1967), 8.

[17]Ibid, 3rd Bde Report, 9.

[18]Ibid, 3rd Bde Report, 7.

[19]Ibid, Incl 9.

[20]US Army, Lessons Learned, Headquarters, 1st Infantry Division After-Action Report-Operation Junction City, (Washington: Adjutant General's Office, 1967), 19.

[21]Ibid, 1st Bde Report, 19.

[22]Ibid, 19.

[23]Ibid, 20.

[24]US Army, Lessons Learned, Headquarters 1st Infantry Division, (Washington: Adjutant General's Office, Dec 1967), 12.

[25]Ibid, 20.

[26]Ibid, 1.

[27]Ibid, 18.

[28]Ibid, 22-23.

[29]US Army, Lessons Learned, (Headquarters, 3rd Brigade Task Force), 25th Infantry Division, (Washington: Adjutant General's Office, 1966), 1.

[30]Ibid, 1.

[31]Ibid, 9-13.

[32]Ibid, 14.

[33]Ibid, 32.

[34]US Army, Lessons Learned, Headquarters, 25th Infantry Division, Combat Operations After-Action Report, Operation Gadsden, (Washington: Adjutant General's Office, 1967), 5.

[35]Ibid, 16.

[36]Ibid, 32.

[37]Ibid, 55.

[38]US Army, Lessons Learned, Headquarters, 4th Infantry Division After-Action Report-Operation Sam Houston, (Washington: Adjutant General's Office, 1967), 16-17.

[39]Ibid, 2-4.

[40]Ibid, 35.

[41]Ibid, 35.

[42]Ibid, 36.

[43]Ibid, 37.

[44]Ibid, 39, 44.

[45]Ibid, 41.

[46]Ibid.

[47]US Army, Operation Sam Houston After-Action Critique Notes, (Washington: Adjutant General's Office, 1967), 51-52.

[48]Ibid, 44.

[49]Ibid, 45.

[50]Ibid, 47.

[51]Ibid.

[52]Ibid.

[53]Ibid, 48.

[54]Ibid, Introduction.

[55]David H. Hackworth and Julie Sherman, About Face, (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1987), 569.

[56]After-Action Report-Operation Sam Houston, Inclosure 2.

[57]David Palmer, Summons of the Trumpet, (New York, Ballentine Books, 1978), 106.

[58]US Army, Lessons Learned Headquarters, 173rd Airborne Brigade (Separate), (Washington: Adjutant General's Office, 1966), 2.

[59]Ibid, 10.

[60]Ibid, 13.

[61]Ibid, 12.

[62]Ibid, 3, Annex A.

[63]Ibid, 16.

[64]Ibid.

[65]US Army, Operation Toledo, 173rd Airborne Brigade, (Washington: Adjutant General's Office, 1966), 46.

[66]Ibid, 3.

[67]Ibid, 5.

[68]Ibid, 12.

[69]Ibid, 40.

[70]US Army, Operation Attleboro, Headquarters, 173rd Airborne Brigade (Separate), (Washington: Adjutant General's Office, 1966), 1.

[71]Ibid, 14.

[72]Ibid, 15.

[73]Ibid.

[74]US Army, Operation Junction City, Headquarters, 173rd Airborne Brigade (Separate), (Washington: Adjutant General's Office, 1967), A-4.

[75]Ibid, Tab B, 40.

[76]Ibid, Tab B, 3.

[77]Ibid, Tab B, 9.

[78]G. C. Lorenz; J. H. Willbanks; D. H. Petraeus; P. A. Stuart; B. L. Crittendon, "Operation Junction City Vietnam, 1967", (Advanced Battle Analysis, US Army Command and General Staff College, 1983), 36.

[79]Operation Junction City, Headquarters, 173rd Infantry Brigade (Separate), Tab B, 4.

[80]US Army, Lessons Learned, Headquarters I Field Force Vietnam, (Washington: Adjutant General's Office, [MAR] 1967), 55.

[81]Ibid, 66.

[82]US Army, Lessons Learned, Headquarters I Field Force Vietnam, (Washington: Adjutant General's Office, [MAY] 1967), Inclosure 10.

[83]Ibid, 3.

[84]Ibid.

[85]US Army, Lessons Learned, Headquarters, United States Army Vietnam, (Washington: Adjutant General's Office, 1968), 104.

[86]US Army, Counterinsurgency Lessons Learned No. 62: Salient Lessons Learned, (San Francisco: Military Assistance Command Vietnam, 1967), 10.

[87]Ibid, 8.

[88]Ibid, 9.

[89]Ibid, 11.

[90]US Army, FM 71-100, Division Operations, (Washington: Department of the Army, 1990), pp. 1-16.

[91]Counterinsurgency Lessons Learned No. 62: Salient Lessons Learned, 11.

[92]Douglas Kinnard, The War Managers, (Hanover: The University Press of New England, 1977), 45.

[93]Andrew F. Krepinevich, Jr., The Army and Vietnam, (Baltimore: The John Hopkins Press, 1986), 192.

[94]The War Managers, 45.

[95]Ibid.

[96]The Army and Vietnam, 197.

[97]John A. Rogers, Marine Search and Attack Battalion Study, Phase I (1977-1982), Vol I-IV, War Games Post Games Analysis Report, (Quantico, Va: Marine Corps Development and Education Command, 1974), I-3.

[98]Ibid.

[99]Ibid, cover letter.

[100]Ibid, C-1.

[101]Ibid, C-2.

[102]Ibid, I-4.

[103]US Army, "FM 7-20, The Infantry Battalion," Approved Final Draft, (Fort Benning, Ga: US Army Infantry School, 1991), 3-46.

[104]Ron R. Daly, Selous Scouts: Top Secret War, as told to Peter Stif, (London: Galago, 1983), 330.

[105]Ibid, 47.

[106]Ibid, 249-250.

[107]Ibid, 300.

[108]Ibid, 23.

[109]Andrew F. Krepinevich, Jr., The Army and Vietnam, (Baltimore: The John Hopkins University Press, 1986), 274.

[110]Daly, 331.

[111]The results of JRTC missions cannot be directly referenced due to the policy of the Center for Army Lessons Learned (CALL). The CALL policy allows for no reference to a particular unit and, therefore, all references to JRTC results will be generic in nature.

[112]Ibid.

[113]Ibid.

[114]Ibid.

[115]Ibid.

[116]Mithcell M. Zais, Assistant Chief of Staff, G-3, 7th Infantry Division (Light), to Maynard L. Burkett, Chief, Division Doctrine Team, Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, February 1992.

[117]F. L. Hagenbeck, Assistant Chief of Staff, G-3, 10th Mountain Division (Light), to Maynard L. Burkett, Chief, Division Doctrine Team, Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, 10 Jan 1992.

[118]Ibid.

[119]Ibid.

[120]Zais to Burkett.

[121]Hagenbeck to Burkett.

[122]Ibid.

[123]Ibid.

[124]Zais to Burkett.

[125]Hagenbeck to Burkett.

CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSIONS

> Low-intensity warfare represents the most likely arena of future conflict for the Army, and counterinsurgency the most demanding contingency.[1]

The light infantry division was designed for strategic mobility but could expect to operate and fight in the low-intensity counterinsurgency environment described above. Considering the possibility of future conflicts of this type, the light infantry division's ability to conduct search and attack operations is critical. Recognizing the austere organization of a light infantry division, each element of the battlefield operating system is key to the division's success. A significant factor in coordination, synchronization, and integration of those elements is understanding the mission statement.

Search and attack is definitely different enough from movement to contact to warrant separate classification. Search and attack operations are nonlinear in nature and movement to contact is linear. Search and attack is oriented on enemy forces while movement to contact is generally oriented on terrain. Differences in logistic support and control measures also warrant separate classification.

Division-level search and attack operations differ considerably from battalion and brigade operations. Historical examples show that operations like search and attack are decentralized and conducted at small unit levels. Additionally, history provides examples that in a division-level search and attack type operation, only approximately one-third of the division actually conducts search and attack at a time. Therefore, a more appropriate mission for division-level search and attack may be in a mission statement like "conduct counterguerilla operations." The corps commander providing such a statement would have to state his intent to either destroy the enemy, deny the enemy terrain, protect key areas or collect information in agreement with the concepts presented in FM 7-20 (draft).[2] The division would task brigades to conduct search and attack operations. The control of these type operations would be facilitated by division-level doctrine.

Maneuver

The division could conduct counterguerilla operations as a three phase operation. As an example, in phase one the division establishes a secure base of operations. In the initial stage this may be an airhead line or a portion of a defense with other division-size units. In this phase the division's long-range surveillance detachment and reconnaissance squadron are inserted in the division area of operation to gather specific intelligence on the

area of operations. In phase two, forward operating bases and fire support bases are established to support decentralized brigade and battalion operations. A detailed as possible picture of the enemy situation is developed by aggressive reconnaissance. In phase three one reinforced brigade is committed against the enemy as the main attack in a search and attack operation. One brigade(-) secures forward operating bases, firebases, main supply routes in support of the main attack. One brigade maintains the airhead line or the portion of the corps perimeter, securing the division rear area, and providing the division reserve.

The main attack is then weighted with priority of aviation, intelligence and fire support assets. The maneuver of the division is characterized by an aggressive reconnaissance effort to locate and then destroy enemy elements in the area of operations. At each level the division maintains a rapid reaction force that can react quickly to location of enemy elements. The division develops a plan designed to deceive the enemy as to the size and location of friendly search units. Deceiving the enemy is difficult since the insurgent's intelligence gathering is generally outstanding and the signature of US forces is great. The initiative is seized by quickly reorienting search efforts in response to changes in the enemy plan.

Defense of key installations and base areas is important. However, terrain retention missions are an exception and not the rule. Denying the enemy freedom of

movement in the area of operations is more important than retaining terrain. Division planning provides assets to the forward combat elements to facilitate quickly maneuvering and massing firepower against the enemy.

Intelligence

Intelligence assets are instrumental to successful search and attack operations. The use of the Long-Range Surveillance Detachment and reconnaissance squadron are key to the division's success. The division would plan the use of these elements to support the main search and attack effort. These elements should receive priority of support where possible. Both elements are vulnerable to the enemy and costly to replace and, therefore, their employment should be closely monitored by division. The reports of these elements must be quickly processed and disseminated to the brigades. The Long Range Surveillance Detachment and the division reconnaissance squadron are critical human intelligence gathering assets. Human intelligence processing and dissemination is the main effort of the intelligence community in this type of operation. However, other collection means still provide useful information. Of great importance is the rapid processing and dissemination of intelligence from these collection assets. In some cases the all-source production section of the division should be colocated with the forward brigade headquarters or Division Tactical Command Post to provide realtime intelligence. The

processed intelligence would then be sent back up the chain to the division. This realtime intelligence could greatly increase the reaction capability of the division.

Fire Support

The fire support capability of US forces provides an incredible combat multiplier in this type operation. Field artillery assets can be successful in centralizing and supporting this type operation from firebases. These firebases should be mutually supporting. Fire support control measures are key and must be used to prevent fratricide, while not preventing responsive fire support. A critical consideration in this type operation is counterbattery and countermortar fires. Once an enemy firing element is located, counterfire should be fired and rapid ground engagement conducted. Air corridors should be coordinated for preplanned and immediate air support requests. Massing of field artillery assets in support of the main search and attack effort facilitates the ability to fire multiple batteries in support of the unit in contact and to cut off enemy withdrawal routes. Close air support is used to weight the main effort. Attack helicopters are best used under operational control of the searching units and, therefore, available to quickly respond to targets of opportunity.

Mobility, Countermobility and Survivability

Engineer operations in support of search and attack operations will focus on mobility of the force. This is due to the rugged terrain and underdeveloped road network where counterinsurgency operations are normally conducted. Light division engineer units will normally require augmentation in order to successfully accomplish this mission. Engineer units will also conduct survivability operations preparing defense positions for base camps and firebases. The light division engineers are better prepared to support this type of mission than mobility operations. The engineer effort must be tied together to support the whole force and not fragmented to such an extent that it becomes ineffective.

Combat Service Support

The combat service support effort must learn to operate in a nonlinear environment. Most resupply to forward units involved in search and attack operations will be conducted by air. Considering the vulnerability of convoys to insurgent attack, resupply is safer by air. Considerable planning and flexibility must be present to conduct extensive aerial resupply. Logisticians must consider that the combat units are moving with as light a load as possible and prepare for emergency resupply operations. Supplies should be sent forward on request and large stockages should not be allowed to accumulate in forward operating bases. Limited ground and air transportation could be wasted repositioning required supplies.

Command and Control

At division level command and control of counterinsurgency operations is a very difficult task. The division commander must allow his division to operate in a decentralized manner and avoid the temptation to micromanage. The division assets should be tasked to the lowest level appropriate to the mission and in most cases placed in direct support of the search and attack elements. Elements like the Long-Range Surveillance Detachment may be effectively used in direct support of a brigade or even a battalion in these decentralized operations. The division must resist the desire to hold back assets and proactively support the search and attack main effort. Operations should be planned with sufficient search time available. Units should be assigned areas of operations in order to conduct search and attack operations. Missions should be flexibly planned and changed as necessary to capitalize on the developing intelligence picture. The division should insure comprehensive rules of engagement are developed and enforced. Operations should impact as little as possible on the civilian population and be coordinated with the civil affairs effort.[3]

Properly conducted search and attack operations are essential to destroying an insurgent's ability to fight. These type operations present a significant challenge to light infantry division forces. Comprehensive doctrine should be developed to guide the conduct of this operation by light infantry divisions.

Relationship to Previous Studies

Two previous studies agree in principle with the conclusions of this thesis. The School of Advanced Military Studies Monograph titled Blind Man's Bluff: A Look at the Tactical Reconnaissance Capabilities of the US Army's Light Infantry Division by Major Albert B. Bryant, Jr. assessment of the use of intelligence agrees with this thesis. Bryant strongly supported increasing reconnaissance assets of the light division and agreed that the focus would be human intelligence. Major Randy J. Kolton's monograph Anticipation and Improvisation: The Firebase Concept in Counterinsurgency Operations supports the conclusion of using the firebase concept in current light infantry division operations.

Suggestions for Future Research

Since this thesis is the first analysis of search and attack operations, there are a number of possible areas for future search. Considering the growing US military involvement in counterdrug operations, an analysis of the possible use of search and attack operations in support of counterdrug operations would be an interesting study. The search for hidden drug processing centers could possibly be facilitated by search and attack operations. Additionally, some insurgents are using drug operations for support. Light infantry forces have already been used along the United States/Mexico border as a deterrent to drug

transportation across the border. Do light infantry search and attack operations have any utility in counterdrug operations? This is an interesting question.

The use of engineers, aviation and armor or mechanized forces in support of search and attack operations could use additional study. Austere light engineer forces building roads and civic action projects is not feasible; therefore, a study of a Corps support package could be beneficial. The competition for aviation assets in a search and attack operation is considerable. How much aviation and what priorities of the aviation unit best support search and attack operations? Most studies in the past have focused on what armor or mechanized augmentation a light division needs to operate in mid to high intensity. Additional research is needed as to what type of armor/mechanized augmentation is needed for a mission like search and attack operations and what is the best role for those forces. A general study of the Corps augmentation of a light infantry division in a counterguerilla operation would be a valuable research topic.

Summary

In conclusion, this thesis has shown the relationship between search and destroy operations of Vietnam and search and attack operations which might be required of current light divisions. The lessons learned from search and destroy operations and other related operations provide

strong indications of how search and attack operations might best be conducted at division level. Application of these lessons should facilitate future success of light infantry division counterguerilla operations.

CHAPTER 5
ENDNOTES

[1]Andrew F. Krepinevich, Jr. The Army and Vietnam. (Baltimore: The John Hopkins University Press, 1986), 274.

[2]US Army, "FM 7-20, The Infantry Battalion," Approved Final Draft, (Ft Benning, GA: US Army Infantry School, 1991), 3-41.

[3]The problem of coordinating combat operations and the effort to win the "hearts and minds" of the population has been a difficult task during historical counterinsurgency operations. Combat operations which alienate the civilian population are extremely detrimental to the counterinsurgency effort as a whole. The US Army's efforts in search and destroy operations in Vietnam did not support the pacification effort in any way. In future counterinsurgency operations more effort must be expended to synchronize operations like search and attack with the effort to separate the civilians both physically and mentally from the guerilla.

APPENDIX

MEMORANDUM ON SEARCH AND ATTACK OPERATIONS

MEMORANDUM FOR: LTC Burkett, CTAC 16 Oct 91

SUBJECT: Search and Attack Operations

1. Purpose: This paper is to outline some thoughts about search and attack operations and receive input from Light Infantry Division's leadership regarding search and attack operations at Division level.

2. Background: I am preparing a master's thesis on search and attack operations at division level. Currently there is no doctrine on how a light infantry division conducts search and attack operations as a division. The Infantry Center has produced doctrine for battalion and below.

3. The following is a definition, purpose and characteristics of search and attack operations prepared through my initial research. This is provided to see if there is general agreement.
   A. Definition: An offensive operation conducted for the purpose of locating, fixing and attacking enemy forces.
   B. Description: Search and attack operations are normally conducted by light infantry forces in a low intensity conflict environment in restrictive terrain when conventional movement to contact is deemed inappropriate.
   C. Purpose: (Taken from FM 7-20 Final Draft)
      1. Destruction of enemy
      2. Area Denial
      3. Force protection
      4. Information collection
   D. Characteristics:
      1. Non-linear battlefield
      2. Dispersed enemy forces
      3. Restrictive terrain
      4. Friendly forces must have a mobility advantage over
         enemy forces.
      5. Centralized planning with considerable use of graphic control measures to prevent fratricide and facilitate massing to attack. Decentralized execution to allow commanders initiative and allow expeditious attack of located enemy forces.

6. Difficult CSS operations. Armed convoys or aerial resupply a must.
7. Intelligence assets focus search efforts. Search forces provide information on where to attack.
8. Normally conducted in an area of operations, but can be conducted in sector.

4. Questions:
A. Is there a difference between movement to contact and search and attack?
B. Should a light infantry division be given a mission by a Corps CDR to "conduct search and attack operations" or instead "clear in zone or attack in zone"?
C. Should search and attack be a separate mission or a movement to contact technique?
D. What is the difference between search and attack operations and search and destroy operations from the Vietnam era?
E. Do we need doctrine on how a light infantry division conducts search and attack operations?

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Major, Infantry

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