

Feb 70

R459/1/1

See Distribution list:

VC/NVA FOOD SUPPLIES

1. Continual evidence states that the enemy is facing a critical shortage in rat. FWMAF ops have effectively sealed the maj entry exit pts within 1 ATF TAOR.
2. Docus/PW/Hoi Chanhs state that rice, flour, and tinned goods are almost non existent in some main force units. Consequently the en has been forced to forage for food from the jungle and where possible the civ population.
3. All edible foodstuffs aval in the jungle should be treated as potential food sources and in particular the fol:
 - a. Bananas. Captured docus from 74 NVA Arty Regt and 274 Regt that these are popular for foragers even in the unripened state as the en will cook them. It appears that the stem of the tree can also be eaten as a type of cabbage. Banana groves should be treated as potential ambush sites and when possible the fruit destroyed. Gen the bananas are too close to civ population and plentiful water supplies.
 - b. Tapioca, Bread Fruit, Bamboo Shoots. Tapioca is not normally found growing wild, however part cultivation will be encountered in the AO. These will be either of resettled civ or en origin. These with Breadfruit and Bamboo shoots are known to be eaten by the en. Whereas it is difficult and in fact some cases impossible to destroy these sources sign of the en retrieving them should be looked for.
4. The en appears to be foraging in small parties and in some cases individuals have been sent on there own. It cannot be overstressed that the en will eat anything he can find. Other sources are:
 - a. Waste Aust Rat. The en is digging up Aust rubbish pits. 5 RAR have killed VC who were carrying C Rat that had been punctured and burnt and were maggot infested.
 - b. Destroyed Caches The en is scrap ing rice from the ground after spilling by Aust tps. A sect comd of HQ Staff 74 NVA Arty killed by Aslt Pnr Pl was carrying 4 lbs of rice of which 3lbs were dirt.
5. If the present state of food difficulties cont the en will be forced into error. The fol pts should be considered:
 - a. To obtain any sustinance at all the en must drift to the civ populated areas. He may still live in the jungle but in areas close to cultivation and civ hamlets.
 - b. Most of the jungle fruits require water to afford a resemblance of taste. This should be considered in relation to en camps.

- c. Main force units cannot afford to deploy close to civ areas for fear of detection, but their resup parties will. Small camps on the periphery of AO Napier are potential staging areas for these parties.
- d. Bushman Scouts will give much more local info as to what can be and will be eaten by the en. They should be consulted on this subject.
- e. The cont need for complete destruction of our rat is stressed. In addition tps should be meticulous in their destruction of captured food. It will be time consuming but essential.
6. The bulk of en mov into AO Napier has been for food resup, though there is evidence of transit mov. Most mov has originated from the North, West, South West, and South. The en is making strenuous efforts to avoid contact and consequently is moving in small gps with maximum use of cover.

for *DF Byler*
(W. FAIRHEAD) CAPT
Capt
IO 6 RAR/NZ (ANZAC) Bn

Distribution:

OC A Coy
OC B Coy
OC V Coy
OC D Coy

Info:

OC W Coy
IO 1 ATF
INT 6 RAR (REAR)
File (3)
Comds Diary (5)