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COUNTRY : SOUTH VIETNAM (SVN)

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SUBJECT : Evacuation of US Wounded from
The Battlefield

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S U M M A R Y

US wounded soldiers found on the battlefield were accorded equal medical treatment as the VC wounded. They were carefully bandaged and carried to the medical camp away from the fighting area. The security regarding a wounded American consisted of a one man guard and being tied on his litter if he made an escape attempt. The VC were told not to shoot escapees but to pursue and recapture them. They were of more value alive than dead. If a VC were caught maltreating a wounded American, he was severely criticized.

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None

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1. US wounded soldiers discovered after a battle were accorded the same medical treatment as the VC wounded which included battlefield treatment to stop the bleeding. Cadres were supposed to have indicated that dead US soldiers were to be buried where they were found. Source had not heard of any such burial. Instructions had been given to combat and transportation units not to hurt the US wounded but to give them the best medical attention and transport them with care. There was no special unit assigned to evacuate the US wounded. If it were necessary to carry the US wounded it would be done regardless of the weight of the patient. Three or four VC would alternate in carrying the litter. Usually the US wounded were found after the VC wounded; however, all the wounded were to be evacuated in order of being found. Weapons were taken from the US wounded immediately. While being transported to the medical camp two kilometers from the battle area, the US wounded were carried by two men and guarded by a third. Source did not believe they could succeed in escaping; however, if a wounded prisoner did attempt to escape the VC were to chase but not shoot the escapee. A wounded soldier could not run very far, and an American soldier was of more use alive than dead. Source thought the Americans would be used for "investigation", but had no knowledge of what actual use was made of the prisoners. 1.3(a)(4)
2. Wounded American prisoners were given the same medical treatment as the VC's at the medical camp. If the Americans did not eat rice, they were given milk. Source did not know the security precautions taken regarding US prisoners in the camp, but no special camp area was designated for them. Once the American wounded were treated in the camp they were not detained for interrogation or for extensive medical treatment but were evacuated from the camp as soon as possible. Source believed the wounded would be too tired at that time to be of any use for interrogation. The wounded, whether VC or American, were evacuated from the camp in the order in which they had been received for treatment. They were moved out gradually in litters and hammocks. There was no special team for American evacuees. American soldiers were moved to an unknown location and it was not known whether it differed from the VC location. Bearers did not return to the medical camp.
3. If a VC did not treat a wounded American well, he would be punished. The following were considered offenses: lack of attention such as jarring (bumping into a tree) while transporting the injured; failure to bandage a wounded man; threats to the injured such as saying he would not be bandaged; and a show of anger toward the injured. Other VC would hear the threat and report it to a superior; such cases of maltreatment and threats were rare. If there were misdemeanors, the guilty VC member would be publicly criticized before the company. The first offense was not recorded on the VC's record but repeated offenses were recorded and punishment by public criticism in front of battalion personnel. A persistent offender would lose the trust of his superiors, be removed from his job and put under surveillance. 1.3(a)(4)

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