

STATEMENT BY SERGEANT ROBERT G. NEELY, 1834208, USMC

On 25 February 1968, I was assigned along with GySgt. Frank H. ALMEIDA, to go to Hue to move the remaining pieces of equipment from the Detachment #5 area to a secure area at Phu Bai, 14 miles south of Hue.

We arrived on the afternoon of 26 Feb 68 and made contact with MACV Advisory Team #3 officials as ordered by AFVN, Saigon.

After visiting the site of Detachment #5, and having been there some two weeks prior to this sorty, I noticed that, although some security had been provided (by PRU troops), the majority of the equipment secured by GySgt. Daniel DYLEWSKY, on the previous trip, had been either tampered with or removed altogether. The first indication of further looting was that the lock we had put on the CONEX had been broken and a substantial amount of organic engineering supplies (e.g. coaxial cable, power cable, a vacuum cleaner, a signal generator and related gear) had been removed from the CONEX.

Further investigation revealed that the other parts of the Detachment #5 working area had been ransacked again. The office of the OIC was in ruins on the first visit and on the second visit, I noticed that even some of the furniture seen on the first visit was missing. It was evident that looters were carrying off heavy equipment and well as personal and more portable items.

In the Detachment #5 engineering room, a large amount of tubes, parts and related items were strewn about the floor and the immediate surrounding area. More looting was evident here also. The person or persons responsible for the ransacking of this immediate area were very thorough in their search. Tube containers had been opened and their contents dumped on the floor. All pieces of equipment, office chairs, work tables, etc., were gone. They had been there on the first visit. Only the slide filing cabinets remained intact in this portion of the detachment's working area.

The van had remained locked and no evidence of attempted forced entry was shown. We opened the van and visually established that it had suffered no ill effects. The next morning, however, we noticed that two of the tires on the left side of the van had been punctured by shrapnel and had to be changed before transporting the van to Phu Bai.

The next morning, (26 Feb 1968) we gave the area a physical inventory of the remaining items and packaged them for shipment to Phu Bai. We salvaged anything of value or use and placed it in the van or CONEX. This took the best part of the next two days. We were forced to secure early in the afternoon, because of sniper fire and terrorist activity in the portion of the city in which the Detachment was located.

After recovering all usable gear, we made a final inspection of the area of responsibility to make sure we left nothing of any possible use. At this time, we removed an air conditioner from the OIC's office, electrical wiring, power cables and antenna couplings to preclude their use by others.

Our next problem, and by far our largest drawback, was the lack of adequate and available transportation. As included in the report submitted by GySgt. ALMEIDA, we first prevailed upon MACV sources in Hue. It was soon apparent that no such transportation was available in the city. The MACV advisors tried to give us the needed assistance, but there just wasn't any such transportation in the area. We needed a heavy tractor to pull the van and also a 6X6 to haul the CONEX and extraneous gear.

After contacting our base unit (OIC, Danang) for advice, we were directed to exploit MACV-Forward officials at Phu Bai. I caught the first available transportation (Roughrider Truck Convoy) to Phu Bai and reported to Colonel Donahoe, USMC. After explaining the problem, the Colonel and a Major Underwood, USA, both of the MACV-Forward information office, contacted transportation officials. It was established that the required transportation would be dispatched to Hue and the Detachment #5 area on the first available convoy the next morning (27 Feb 1968). With this mission accomplished, I returned to Hue, via convoy, and reported to GySgt. ALMEIDA.

The next morning the vehicles arrived at 0800. We secured the van and CONEX (loaded aboard the vehicle by a forklift provided by the USN-LCU ramp at Hue) and joined the early afternoon convoy back to Phu Bai.

Later that afternoon, we turned the equipment taken to Phu Bai over to the AFVN representatives sent there from Saigon. We then secured transportation back to Danang and reported to OIC, Danang.

Respectfully submitted,

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