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(U) One noted example of the enemy's proficiency was the "Australian Incident" of January 6, 1968.

(U) As a battalion of the 2nd Brigade of the U.S. 25th Infantry Division conducted a search and destroy operation in northern Tay Ninh Province, an intruder entered its communications net.

(U) The intruder claimed to be Australian, part of the Australian "173rd unit," operating near the American battalion. The intruder said that his unit was engaged in a separate search and destroy mission, and was "about 23 meters" north of the Americans.

(U) The intruder spoke with an Australian accent, was using the U.S. battalion's correct callsign, and used normal communications procedures. However, the intruder was unclear during challenge and authentication procedures. Also, the American battalion commander, LTC John Henschman, did not believe that an Australian unit was as close as the intruder claimed. When asked his exact location, the intruder said he couldn't give it because he was using a different set of maps than the U.S. battalion had.

(U) LTC Henschman instructed his radioman to keep the exchange with the intruder going, and, with alternate communications, established that no Australian units were in Tay Ninh Province.

(U) With this information, Henschman plotted the likely locations the intruder could be communicating from and called artillery fire down on the places. The intruder quickly asked that the Americans stop firing on friendly forces, then the communications broke off abruptly.

(U) Later searches of the area found some abandoned enemy bases, but no evidence of an "Australian unit."

(U) Because the U.S. battalion was immediately suspicious of the intrusion into its net, the communicators did not give away sensitive information. The only adverse consequence of this contact was a delay in sending or receiving valid messages.

(U) The "Australian Incident," however, demonstrated that the enemy had acquired deep knowledge of U.S. communications, both general and unit specific. Worse, the enemy was capable of mounting sophisticated deception operations to elicit confidential information or misdirect U.S. actions.

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