
MARINE CORPS HISTORICAL REFERENCE PAMPHLET

**U. S. MARINE CORPS
CIVIL AFFAIRS IN I CORPS
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH VIETNAM
APRIL 1966 - APRIL 1967**



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U. S. MARINE CORPS CIVIL AFFAIRS IN I CORPS

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by

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Historical Division
Headquarters, U. S. Marine Corps
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First Lieutenant Jack G. Downing, Company I, 3d Battalion, 4th Marines, receives a warm welcome in a village of Quang Nam Province from those who General Lewis W. Walt has called, "the future of Vietnam." (Photo courtesy of the author).

PREFACE

Every Marine who has served in Vietnam has been heavily involved in efforts to improve the situation of the Vietnamese people. The civil affairs actions of the III Marine Amphibious Force have been every bit as important as the combat actions. In this reference pamphlet, which follows an earlier history of the first year of Marine Corps civic action in Vietnam, the story of the second year of civilian aid policies, programs, and activities is related.

The pamphlet is based largely on sources available in the Washington area, in particular the records of Marine units serving in Vietnam. Interviews with participants in the actions described were particularly fruitful. In some cases, documents from which information was taken are still classified, however, the information used in the text is unclassified.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

<u>Chapter</u>	<u>Page</u>
Preface.....	iii
About The Author.....	iv
Introduction.....	1
I. Background Through the First Year of U. S. Marine Corps Civic Action in Vietnam, March 1965 - March 1966.....	3
II Beginning of the Second Year for the Marine Corps in I Corps.....	19
III U. S. Marine Corps Civil Affairs in I Corps, July - August - September 1966.....	36
IV U. S. Marine Corps Civil Affairs in I Corps, October - November - December 1966.....	62
V U. S. Marine Corps Civil Affairs in I Corps, January - April 1967.....	87
Appendix A - Interviews.....	110
Appendix B - Abbreviations.....	111
Appendix C - A Selected Bibliography of Indo-China/ Vietnam Books.....	113
Notes.....	123

Introduction

The use of civic action by the Marine Corps to accomplish its assigned mission is nothing new. Examples of how the Marines have employed civic action in the past can be found by reading accounts of their exploits during the 1920s in Haiti, Nicaragua, and the Dominican Republic. From these accomplishments and astute observations made by men such as Major Earl H. Ellis and others, accounts of "lessons learned" about civic action can be found recorded in the Small Wars Manual of 1940, which points out:

"The motive in small wars is not material destruction. It is usually a project dealing with the social, economic, and political development of the people. It is of primary importance that the fullest benefit be derived from the psychological aspects of the situation. That implies a serious study of the people, their racial, political, religious, and mental development. By analysis and study the reasons for existing emergency may be deduced; the most practical method of solving the problem is to understand the possible approaches thereto and the repercussion to be expected from any action which may be contemplated. By this study and the ability to apply correct psychological doctrine, many pitfalls may be avoided and the success of the undertaking assured."(1)

With the basic concept of small wars in mind, the Manual of 1940 goes on to point out:

"The purpose should always be to restore normal government or give the people a better government than they had before, and to establish peace, order, and security on as permanent a basis as practicable. In so doing one should endeavor to make self-sufficient native agencies responsible for these matters. With all this accomplished, one should be able to leave the country with the lasting friendship and respect of the native population."(2)

The concept of civic action may be simply stated, but the organization and application of carrying out an effective program becomes a difficult matter. This difficulty in application can be seen through the scope and magnitude of the U. S. Marine Corps civic action effort in the I Corps area of South Vietnam. There the Marine Corps came face-to-face with the age old problem of guerrilla warfare; winning the confidence of the population which is vital in defeating the insurgent. It was in the field of winning the confidence of a large civilian population, while at the same time fighting a war, that the

Marine Corps was least prepared when its troops landed in South Vietnam.

Lieutenant General Victor H. Krulak, who was Commanding General of FMFPac (Fleet Marine Force, Pacific) was aware that the Marine Corps needed a stronger capability for carrying out a civil affairs program. In the 1st Marine Brigade, at Hawaii, there was only one Civil Affairs Officer. During Operation Silver Lance, a west coast landing exercise in the spring of 1965, General Krulak focused emphasis on civil affairs by making it a part of the operation. (3)

The Marines had no formal organizational structure for carrying out large scale civic action projects when they landed at Da Nang in March of 1965. It did not take them long to realize that if they were to carry out successfully their mission they would have to deal with the civilian population in their midst. Fortunately for the Marine Corps, it learned early in the war that the important battles were not necessarily fought in open confrontation with the enemy. The battles of lasting importance would be fought against the Viet Cong infrastructure in the villages and hamlets throughout the country.

Lieutenant General Lewis W. Walt, who was the Commanding General of the III Marine Amphibious Corps, recognized early in 1965 the necessity of doing something about the large population around the Da Nang Airfield. He had stated, "I had a survey made and found that 180,000 civilians were living within 81mm mortar range of the airfield, so the Marines went into the Pacification business." (4) Necessity being the mother of invention, the Marines expanded their civic action program throughout I Corps in South Vietnam by every means possible. By the end of their first year in South Vietnam, the Marines had built an impressive civic action program compared to their modest beginning.

CHAPTER I

Background Through the First Year of U. S. Marine Corps Civic Action in Vietnam, March 1965-March 1966

On 8 March 1965 two battalion landing teams of the 9th Marine Expeditionary Brigade arrived at Da Nang, South Vietnam. The prelude to this U. S. Marine Corps landing was the many events that had taken place in Vietnam during the year 1964 and the early part of 1965.

It was during this period that the South Vietnamese government suffered severely from lack of internal stability. This instability was marked by a change in top government leadership at least seven times. Riots, demonstrations, and attempted coup d'etats had created a situation which was allowing the Viet Cong (VC), with the help of the North Vietnamese government, to make significant gains throughout the South.

The VC terrorist activity had doubled in 1964, and this and other VC-initiated incidents were taking their toll of the Army of the Republic of Vietnam (ARVN). One third more ARVN troops were killed in 1964 as opposed to 1963 and the enemy troop casualty rate dropped by 19 percent from the 1963 total.

During 1964 the North Vietnamese Army (NVA) began to go south in greater numbers. By the end of the year it was estimated that 12,000 NVA troops had infiltrated down the Ho Chi Minh Trail in Laos, a figure which represented a 50 percent increase over the 1963 total. With this large NVA troop movement and Viet Cong activity, I Corps (the northernmost region in South Vietnam) began to come alive with enemy activity. As the Government of Vietnam attempted to counter this activity, armed conflict between the ARVN and enemy forces began to grow. The number of enemy attacks and the number of enemy killed in the Republic of Vietnam showed its greatest increase in the I Corps Tactical Zone (ICTZ) during 1964. Another indication of enemy activity in I Corps was shown by the increase in terrorist attacks. While terrorism increased 100 percent nationwide from 1963 to 1964, it increased 525 percent in the ICTZ.

During 1964, not only did terrorist activity pick up throughout South Vietnam but it was evident that these attacks were becoming increasingly directed against American civilian and military personnel. On the 3d, 7th, 9th, and 11th of February such terrorist activity accounted for 10 Americans killed and 76 wounded. On the 3d of May and the 1st of November terrorist attacks accounted for 4 Americans killed and 8 wounded. One of the strongest blows came on Christmas day 1964 when an American living quarters was bombed. In this attack, 2 Americans

were killed and 108 Americans and Vietnamese wounded. These incidents, coupled with the attack by North Vietnamese torpedo boats in August against U. S. naval vessels in the Gulf of Tonkin, set the stage for the eventual U. S. Marine Corps landing in South Vietnam.(1)

During 1964, important decisions were made concerning the possibility of U. S. military troop movement to South Vietnam. By March, the United States had realized that previous hopes of a quick and favorable peace were premature. General Maxwell D. Taylor, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, pointed out that the Viet Cong had made significant gains as a result of the internal problems existing within the South Vietnamese government. It was also noted that the Strategic Hamlet Program had failed at effectively protecting the Vietnamese peasant from Viet Cong activity.(2)

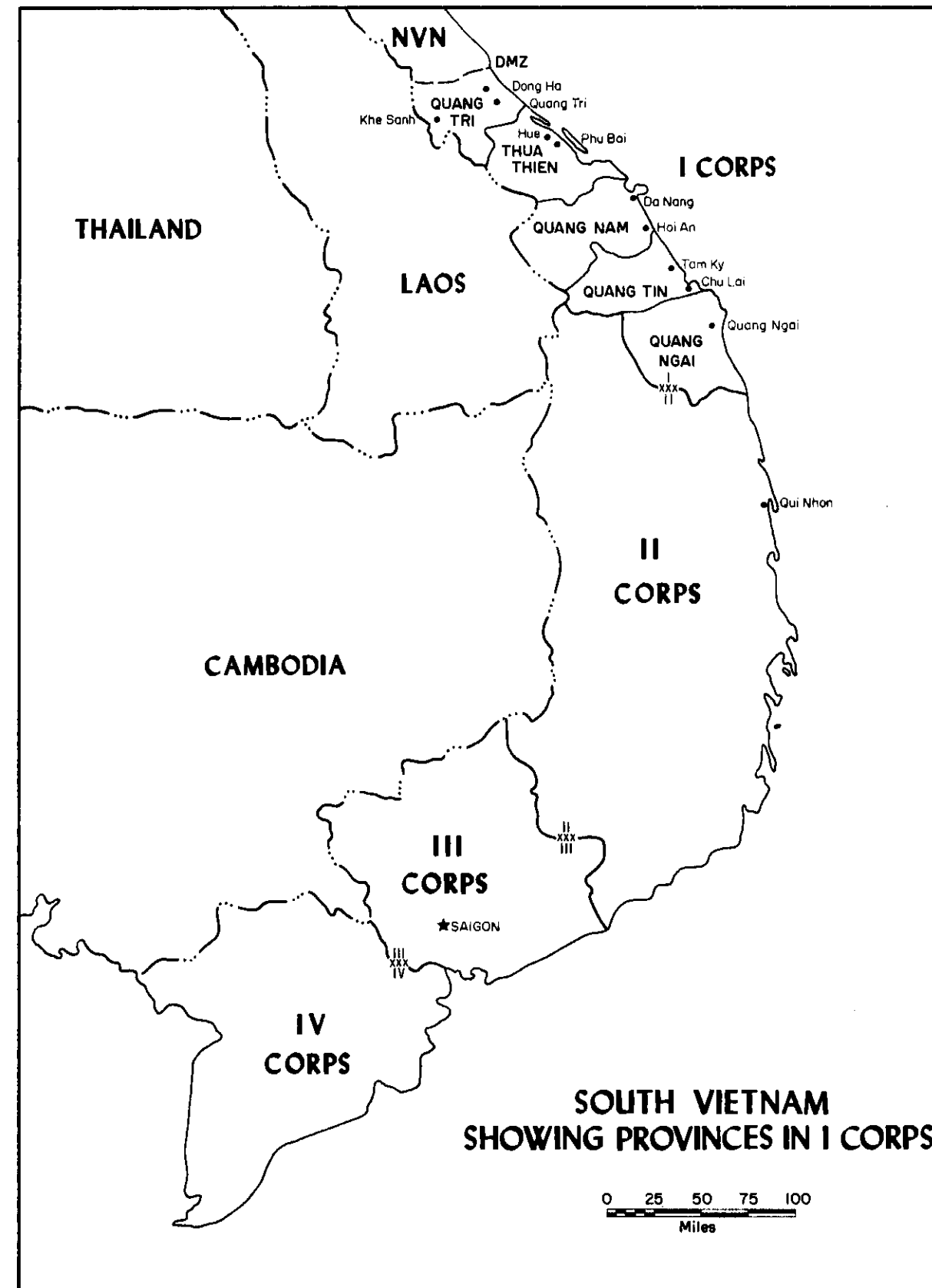
By June 1964, General William C. Westmoreland had assumed command of USMACV (United States Military Assistance Command, Vietnam). On 23 June, General Maxwell D. Taylor became Ambassador to South Vietnam replacing Henry Cabot Lodge. At the closing of the year 1964, the American advisory effort in South Vietnam stood at 20,000 troops.(3)

In 1965 the conflict continued to expand as the Viet Cong attacked the U. S. compound at Pleiku on 7 February. President Lyndon B. Johnson ordered the evacuation of U. S. dependents from South Vietnam on 8 February and on 10 February the VC destroyed the U. S. enlisted quarters at Qui Nhon.(4)

In mid-February, the Joint Chiefs of Staff sent their recommendation to the Secretary of Defense concerning the deployment of U. S. Marines to South Vietnam. It was their recommendation that the 9th Marine Expeditionary Brigade (MEB) be deployed to Da Nang, South Vietnam, and another brigade be sent from Hawaii to Okinawa. These units were to move with combat support and combat service support and air. On 27 February, the Joint Chiefs of Staff relayed to CINCPAC (Commander-in-Chief, Pacific) and COMUSMACV (Commander U. S. Military Assistance Command, Vietnam) that approval had been given to deploy the 9th Marine Expeditionary Brigade to South Vietnam.(5)

The Marines Land

On the morning of 8 March 1965, the 3d Battalion, 9th Marines landed over Red Beach-2, Da Nang, South Vietnam, with the primary mission to defend the Da Nang Air Base. On the same day the 1st Battalion, 3d Marines began to arrive by air from Okinawa. On the 9th of March, 1st Marine Aircraft Wing elements already in Vietnam came under operational control of the 9th MEB. The Marine build-up continued throughout the month of March. By the end of the month, the 9th Marine Expeditionary Brigade had a total of 4,685 men within the Da Nang Tactical Area of Responsibility. This TAOR consisted of



8 square miles with a civilian population of 1,930.(6)

On 10 April, elements of the 2d Battalion, 3d Marines landed over Red Beach-2 in Da Nang. That same day elements of VMFA-531 began to arrive at the Da Nang Airfield. On the 14th of April elements of the 3d Battalion, 4th Marines landed over Red Beach-2 in Da Nang and the remainder of the battalion landed at Hue/Phu Bai on 15 April 1965. At Hue/Phu Bai, the 3d Battalion, 4th Marines was assigned the mission of airfield defense along with the protection of the U. S. Army's 8th Radio Relay Unit. The 9th MEB's strength by the end of April was over 6,000 men with TAORs established at Da Nang and Hue/Phu Bai.

The last major Marine landing of the initial build-up in South Vietnam came during the month of May 1965. During the period of 7-12 May, three Marine battalions landed at Chu Lai, approximately 50 miles southeast of Da Nang. Just prior to the Chu Lai landing, the entire Marine organization in Vietnam was redesignated the III Marine Amphibious Force under the command of Major General William R. Collins. This command consisted of most of the 3d Marine Division and the 1st Marine Aircraft Wing. By the end of May 1965, the Marines had established three TAORs throughout the I Corps area in South Vietnam. These three Tactical Areas of Responsibility, Hue/Phu Bai, Da Nang, and Chu Lai, contained 17,567 Marines.(7)

Throughout the remainder of the calendar year the Marine force continued to grow in I Corps. By the end of December 1965, the Marines had more troops committed to combat in South Vietnam than any other time since World War II.(8)

The Marines' First Efforts at Civic Action in Vietnam

During the first two months ashore in South Vietnam, the Marines had little time for carrying out organized civic action. The Marines' area of responsibility was small and their contact with the civilian population was limited. The initial spread of good-will was more of a spontaneous people-to-people effort carried out by the individual Marine.

Throughout the month of May 1965, civic action began to pick up with the expansion of the Marine Corps responsibility in I Corps. During this month, the three Marine TAORs expanded to 239 square miles with a civilian population of approximately 77,000 persons.

Early in May 1965, Major Charles J. Keever arrived in Vietnam and became Civil Affairs Officer for the III Marine Amphibious Force. He immediately began to develop plans for carrying out a coordinated effort in civic action. Contact was made with the Vietnamese government officials and United States private relief organizations in the area. Major Keever made visits throughout the Marine TAORs and contacted local

villagers to learn of their way of life and their needs. Armed with this information about the villagers and what the Marines were doing in civic action, he was better prepared to give concrete direction to the Marine Corps civic action program.

The importance of civic action by the Marine Corps was realized during a clearing operation in Le My village in the Da Nang TAOR. Between 4-10 May 1965, the 2d Battalion, 3d Marines was engaged in clearing the Viet Cong from Le My. After the initial operation was over, the battalion commander realized that his gains would soon become losses unless he could also eradicate the Viet Cong infrastructure within the village. On 11 May 1965, after most of the Viet Cong had been driven out of Le My, the first Marine pacification program began in earnest.(9)

During June 1965, great impetus was given to the Marine civic action program under the guidance and leadership of Major General Lewis W. Walt. On 4 June 1965, General Walt had assumed command of the III Marine Amphibious Force from Major General William R. Collins. From the start General Walt began to show interest in the Marines' effort to support the Vietnamese Rural Construction Program. This interest is reflected in a Marine Force order dated 7 June 1965, which states in part:

Civic action will be conducted as needed and/or requested in a guest-host relationship with the government of the Republic of Vietnam. Reliance will be placed upon agreement and cooperation for the achievement of mutually advantageous objectives of the two governments.(10)

Throughout June 1965, Marine units in their three TAORs had made considerable progress with their civic action programs. The most predominant civic action effort being carried out by the Marines at this time was the Medical Civil Assistance Program (MEDCAP). This program was initially carried out by the Navy corpsmen who accompanied Marine squads on patrols throughout the populated areas within the TAORs. As the Marines passed through the villages and hamlets, the corpsmen would render whatever medical assistance they could with their limited resources. The MEDCAP program later expanded into regularly scheduled sick calls within the villages and medical aid stations were set up to accommodate the seriously ill.

South Vietnam, with a population of approximately 15 million people is more than 75 percent rural with most of its population situated in the lowland and coastal areas.(11) This predominantly rural populace had long suffered from inadequate medical care. Many reasons contributed to this neglect; Viet Cong terrorism, insufficient sanitation, and a shortage of competent medical personnel. When the Marines began to give medical treatment to the villagers, they hit upon a program that

eventually paid off in tangible results with combat intelligence about Viet Cong activity in the ICTZ.

By the end of June 1965, the Marine civic action program was beginning to coordinate its efforts with the many United States government relief agencies in Vietnam. This coordinated effort gave support to the Vietnamese Rural Construction Program which had for one of its goals the elimination of the VC infrastructure within the village and hamlet. One reason for the continued growth of the Marine civic action program during June was the expansion of the III Marine Amphibious Force Tactical Area of Responsibility (TAOR), which now stood at 335 square miles with a civilian population of 124,876.(12)

On the 1st of July 1965, the Viet Cong made their boldest move against the U. S. Marine forces in I Corps. Early in the morning they launched a mortar and demolition attack against the Da Nang Airfield. This attack proved to be successful in destroying aircraft parked on the airstrip and creating confusion inside the Marine defensive perimeter. From this attack it became apparent that the Marine TAOR would have to be expanded to include the heavily populated area to the east and south of the Da Nang Airbase from which the attack came. General Walt requested permission from General Nguyen Chanh Thi, Commanding General of I Corps, to make such an extension. A few days later, the request made by General Walt was granted and the Marines began to compete directly with the Viet Cong for the friendship and support of the Vietnamese in the fertile rice-growing area adjacent to the city of Da Nang.

From the expansion of the Marine TAOR at Da Nang, the civic action program received a new challenge. The populated area southeast of the Da Nang Airfield was infested with VC political cadre, who were supported by the local guerrillas and who had received little opposition to their rule up to this time. General Walt realized that just extending the physical boundaries of the Marine TAOR to include the populated area southeast of the airfield would have little effect in preventing another attack by the VC unless the cooperation and confidence of the peasants could be won. With this idea in mind, the Marines launched a strong civic action program in the area to win the cooperation and confidence of the people. The initial progress was slow, but eventually the people responded to the Marines' efforts to help them and they began to come forth with information about enemy activity in the area.(13)

The Marine Corps civic action program continued to grow throughout the month of July. The Medical Civic Action Program continued to treat hundreds of Vietnamese daily. The Navy corpsmen distributed large quantities of soap, a rare item to the Vietnamese peasant, hoping that its use would help cut down infection and the spread of disease. Adequate sanitation was almost nonexistent in the Vietnamese village, so the corps-

men initiated a program of instruction to teach good hygienic practices.

The Marines began to initiate building programs that were designed to give the villagers new schools, wells, and hospitals. The Catholic Relief Service contributed material support in the form of Bulgar (a type of parched crushed wheat) to be distributed to the Vietnamese through the Marine Civic Action Program. By the end of July 1965, other relief organizations in I Corps were beginning to contribute to the Marine civic action effort by providing needed material to carry on the program. Organizations such as USOM (United States Operations Mission), CARE (Cooperation for American Relief Everywhere), and HANDCLASP (a U. S. Navy people-to-people program since 1962) eventually became a major source of supply for carrying on civic action. Aside from the professional organizations that were contributing support, thousands of U. S. citizens responded to letters from friends and relatives serving with the Marine Corps in I Corps and began to send goods to help the Vietnamese.

The assessment of the effectiveness of the Marine Corps civic action program by the end of July 1965 could best be measured through the willingness of the peasantry to give information about VC activity. Vital to this assessment was the understanding that civic action programs without adequate security to protect the peasant from Viet Cong terrorism had little chance of success. Security, when combined with good civic action, became a potent force in combating the guerrilla and destroying the VC infrastructure within the village and hamlet. On several occasions the Marines did receive good information about VC movement and acted upon this information with considerable success.

By the close of the first five months in South Vietnam, the Marines had expanded their areas of responsibility from the initial 8 square miles with a population of 1,930 to 417 square miles with a population of 198,840. The Da Nang TAOR now encompassed an area of 254 square miles with a population of 55,699, and Hue/Phu Bai had an area of 61 square miles with a population of 17,601.(14)

U. S. Marine Corps Civic Action Growth
August-December 1965

During the next five months many innovations and changes took place in I Corps that profoundly affected the Marine Corps civic action program. By early August 1965, the Marine Corps civic action effort had expanded to the point where coordination with other U. S. agencies in I Corps was imperative if good support was going to be given to the Vietnamese Rural Construction plan. Realizing this need, General Walt and Mr. Marcus J. Gordon, Regional Director for USOM in I Corps, gave

guidance for the creation of the I Corps Joint Coordinating Council. When this Council held its first meeting on 30 August 1965, it represented the first working regional council of its kind in South Vietnam. Although the council had no directive-making authority or material resources of its own, the influence of its members made it the most effective group for carrying out the total pacification program in I Corps. (15)

During the last part of August and throughout the month of September 1965, two other major events occurred that gave impetus to the Marine Corps civic action program and supported the rural construction effort; Operation GOLDEN FLEECE, and the development of the Combined Action Program. GOLDEN FLEECE was a program that was designed by the Marines to protect the Vietnamese peasant against Viet Cong during their autumn rice harvest. For a number of years the VC had depended on the local peasantry to supply them with food and other material resources. During the rice harvesting season the VC would levy a heavy "tax" on the peasant against the amount of rice produced. Through the use of terror and extortion, the VC had, in the past, been successful in taking what he considered to be his "fair-share" of the rice produced and had gone almost unchallenged in this activity. With the Marines protecting the rice harvest in Da Nang and Chu Lai in the autumn of 1965, the VC were denied a great portion of this valuable source of food supply. Since, initially, the Vietnamese villagers had asked the Marines to help them protect their rice harvest in the face of VC reprisal, it was another indication of the growing confidence the peasant was developing toward the Marines. (16)

To the north of Da Nang at Hue/Phu Bai, the 3d Battalion, 4th Marines, was in the process of organizing the first joint action company. This program integrated Marine rifle squads with Vietnamese Popular Force Platoons to provide continuous local security for the villages and hamlets within the TAOR. From the start, the joint action company concept proved to be successful and became an important organization for combating the guerrilla in his own "backyard" and destroying the VC infrastructure in the villages and hamlets. By the end of August 1965, the first joint action company was in operation at Hue/Phu Bai. Later, as the program expanded to include Da Nang and Chu Lai, the name was changed to reflect the organizational structure and became known as combined action companies. (17)

During August and September 1965, another program developed in the United States that gave material support to the Marine Corps civic action program in South Vietnam. Members of the Division of Reserve in Washington, D. C. worked out an agreement with the CARE office in Washington to coordinate an effort to provide the III Marine Amphibious Force with the necessary supplies to carry on their civic action program. On the 13th of September 1965, this program was officially launched

by the Commandant of the Marine Corps, who stressed the value and importance of the program. General Walt, who at the time was CG, III MAF, stated, "It was one of the most important assets for carrying on civic action in I Corps." (18) By 3 January 1966, the Marine Corps Civic Action Fund had contributed over \$100,000 to the Marine civic action effort in South Vietnam.

During October 1965, a major organizational change took place within III MAF headquarters that brought more continuity to the civic action program. The Civil Affairs Section of the special staff became the fifth general staff section. With this change in designation, the Civil Affairs Officer became the G-5 for III MAF and eventually was charged with the responsibility of coordinating both civic action and psychological operations. Shortly thereafter, the 3d Marine Division and the 1st Marine Aircraft Wing designated G-5 sections to coordinate their civic action programs. By the end of the year, regiments and battalions, when available manpower permitted, had established S-5 sections to coordinate civic action effort in their assigned areas of responsibility.

During November and December 1965, III MAF continued to coordinate its civic action program with the Vietnamese program of rural construction. Although the Government of Vietnam (GVN) had suffered several setbacks in attempting to carry out its program of rural construction in Quang Nam Province, one of its national areas of priority, it was the considered opinion of III MAF that the program must succeed if South Vietnam was to survive and become a viable republic. With this opinion in mind, the I Corps Joint Coordinating Council used its influence to step up all civic action programs in support of rural construction.

One overriding fact continually presented itself about the success or failure of civic action in rural construction programs; no success was possible without adequate security. Lack of security had been one of the major problems of the Vietnamese pacification effort. The peasant in the rural areas, who must live with the VC both night and day, is reluctant to overtly support any program that does not provide adequate security for himself and his family against VC terrorist tactics. Since the political action teams, the teams responsible for carrying out rural construction, were poorly equipped and trained to fight the VC, they were unable to provide the necessary security required to convince the peasant that his government could, in fact, protect him from the VC.

By the end of December 1965, the Marine Corps Combined Action Program was proving that the original concept was a sound one. The platoons of the combined action companies, operating throughout different villages and hamlets, were able to provide the necessary security to carry out a continuous civic action program in their areas. Also, the Marines were able to provide the necessary training and guidance to improve the Popular Forces combat efficiency. As the Marines and Vietnamese ate, worked, lived, fought, and suffered hardships as an integrated unit in the combined action platoons, they posed a most formidable threat to the VC's control of the peasant.

At the close of the calendar year, great strides had been made in civic action since the Marines first came ashore on 8 March 1965. One way the progress was measured was by attempting to keep a statistical account of what went on in the civic action program. An example of the statistics by the end of December 1965 showed:

Persons given medical treatment.....	199,631
Pounds of food distributed.....	142,756
Pounds of soap distributed.....	46,535

The statistics do not tell the whole story of civic action and many people disagree with their validity; but one thing is certain, that the comfort the Marine Corps civic action program brought to the Vietnamese peasant in I Corps was more than he had before the Marines arrived.(19)

The End of the First Year January-March 1966

The period January through March 1966 closed out the first complete year of Marine Corps civic action in South Vietnam. The last three months of this year ashore continued to produce more change and reexamination of programs and projects under way. By January 1966, the Marine areas of responsibility had grown to 948 square miles containing a population of 506,732 and 109 villages. With this expansion in the Marine TAORs and the responsibility for a greater number of Vietnamese villages within those TAORs, the contact with Vietnamese efforts at pacification continued to expand. In January 1966, the Vietnamese revamped their rural construction plan of 1965 and attempted to regain some of their losses under a new plan designated as revolutionary development. The new plan of revolutionary development was designed to give better coordination, greater security, and a more dynamic philosophy for the political action teams working within the villages and hamlets. In February 1966, the Vietnamese government, in an attempt to give impetus to its pacification effort in Quang Nam Province, gave it the designation of Revolutionary Development National Priority Area of I Corps. The Marine Corps threw its support behind the

program and offered help whenever it could. Lack of security for the political action teams and a political upheaval in I Corps, which began in March, caused severe setbacks for the program. The III MAF, through the coordinated effort of the I Corps JCC, was able to provide support for the development of a New Life Hamlet Program in the Da Nang area. The New Life Hamlet Program was a part of the revolutionary development concept for destroying the VC infrastructure and returning the populace to the care of the government.

During the first quarter of the new calendar year, civic action proved its worth for the first time in conjunction with large combat unit operations. During Operation MALLARD, conducted southwest of Da Nang, and DOUBLE EAGLE, conducted south of Chu Lai, civic action and psychological warfare teams coordinated their efforts and made an important contribution to success. With these activities being conducted in heavily populated areas, collection points were set up to provide for the comfort, care, and safety of the people caught in the combat zone. During MALLARD, 35 tons of rice were returned to the people which had been taken by the Viet Cong. In DOUBLE EAGLE, 27 tons of food were brought in specifically to feed the people in the area of operation.

It was found during these operations that both civic action and psychological operations (PsyOps) working together could be mutually supporting for maximum benefit and that both programs were best carried out through close coordination with Vietnamese officials in the area. Unilateral programs of Marine Corps civic action, while providing immediate assistance to the local populace, would not provide the necessary essentials to give the peasant a positive identification with his own government. Until such an identification could be made by the peasant and confidence developed in the local government's ability to care for him, it was unlikely that any civic action effort would have a long range lasting benefit. During the Vietnamese New Year 1966, known as Tet Nguyen Dan (TET), which extended from 21-23 January, Marine Corps civic action and PsyOps were closely aligned with Vietnamese revolutionary development in an attempt to convince the people of the importance of allying themselves with the government. Themes were carried out which stressed: (1) the Viet Cong (VC) were losing the war; (2) the GVN had the resources to govern the people best; (3) the GVN could provide a more abundant life than the VC; (4) the VC were the real enemies of the people; and (5) VC who surrendered would be received with open arms, the Chieu Hoi (Open Arms) Program initiated by the Vietnamese government in 1963 to encourage defection from the VC ranks. Since TET, an important holiday throughout Vietnam, focused importance on family ties and veneration of the family ancestors, a direct appeal for defection was made to members of the VC by stressing the importance of family ties, separation from their family, and the hardships they were enduring and inflicting upon the people. The program proved to be successful and

during TET several defections occurred in the ranks of the VC. These returnees, or ralliers to the government cause, were reunited with families and given an opportunity to start a new life in support of the GVN.(20)

During February 1966, the Marine Corps civic action and PsyOps programs received an additional boost by the arrival of the 3d Marine Division Band and Drum and Bugle Corps. This unit, eager to help in any way, presented concerts for the Vietnamese people and received a warm response. The drum head design, used by the Drum and Bugle Corps, set the theme that was designed to express the mood of their performances; two flags, United States and Vietnamese combined, with a hand shake symbol and the words "Friendship through Music," written in Vietnamese. Marines also began to include music appreciation along with the English classes being taught in an attempt to appeal to the Vietnamese interest in music and drama.

By the end of February 1966, Medical Civic Action had fully recovered from the slowdown created by TET and was once again treating hundreds of Vietnamese daily. One of the most important programs conducted by medical civic action was the training of Vietnamese medical personnel. This effort was designed to train volunteers and other people selected for the program in medical aid and sanitation procedures and to help provide an additional source of needed medical personnel to work in the villages and hamlets. The Vietnamese Minister of Health agreed to hire personnel coming out of the training, if they were approved in advance. This provided an income for those Vietnamese trained in the program. During the month of February, Navy corpsmen trained 16 health workers, two volunteer nurses, and four volunteer medical assistants. At the same time, General Walt, who was helping support the Buddhist schools and orphanages in the Da Nang area, had contributed over \$9,000 to these programs by the end of February. The money which was used for this support came from III MAF's Reserve Civic Action Contingency Fund.(21)

Throughout March 1966, the Marine Corps continued to apply a new technique, initially started in February 1966, by the 3d Marine Division, which coordinated civic action, psychological warfare, and combat power. These efforts which combined Marine Corps and ARVN forces in an operation to destroy the VC influence in selected hamlets and restore government influence, were called County Fair operations. County Fair operations, using the concept of the cordon and search method which had been initially started by the 9th Marines in August 1965, in the Da Nang TAOR, proved quite successful in seeking out the Viet Cong infrastructure within the selected hamlets where they were conducted. Essentially, the operation consisted of a Marine unit moving into position early in the morning around a selected hamlet and establishing a cordon to prevent the escape of any VC attempting to get out of the hamlet. At first light,

ARVN troops and political cadre of the GVN would enter the cordoned area and move all of the civilians to a pre-designed collection point where they would be fed, counted, and identified, given propaganda lectures, drama presentations, and shown movies.

While this military/civic action was going on, ARVN troops would thoroughly search the hamlet for hidden tunnels, food, ammunition, weapons, and VC who might be hiding within the hamlet. The key to success in County Fair operations, aside from the civic action aspect, lay in the ability to set up the cordon with stealth for maximum surprise of the VC. Civic action efforts were designed to favorably impress the civilian populace in whose hamlet the government operation was being conducted. It was also desirable that continuous security be provided, whenever practicable, for the hamlet where the operation had taken place to prevent reentrenchment of VC influence and possible reprisal against those civilians who might have cooperated in providing intelligence about VC activity. The County Fair operations were so successful that by the end of March 1966, they were considered standard type operations conducted by Marine Corps units in South Vietnam.

The concept and development of combined action companies and County Fair operations exemplified how far the Marines had come in developing techniques that would effectively support the Vietnamese revolutionary program and represent Marine Corps civic action in its hardest and most aggressive state. By the close of March 1966, the Combined Action program was operational in the Da Nang TAOR. This combined action company, initially started in February 1966, followed the organizational pattern of the first company which began in Hue/Phu Bai in August 1965. These companies consisted of combined action platoons (CAP) which had an organizational structure that provided for a composite unit of 50 men; one 14-man Marine rifle squad with a Navy corpsman and a 35-man Vietnamese Popular Force platoon. Although these units did not always operate at full strength, they continued to be an effective force for carrying out civic action projects and providing security in the villages and hamlets where they lived.

As the first full year came to a close for the Marine Corps in I Corps Area of South Vietnam, III MAF was attempting to make an evaluation of its effectiveness in support of the Government of Vietnam. Throughout the year, statistics had been collected pertaining to combat operations, patrols and ambushes, civic action projects started and finished, commodities distributed, money spent, and medical treatment and training given. Not until February 1966 was III MAF able to make a satisfactory correlation between these statistics and the progress of the war. In February 1966 III MAF initiated an evaluation system that tied civic action to revolutionary development in an attempt to measure the degree of total pacification in the

villages within the Marine TAORs. This system assigned specific points to each category covered on a Pacification Progress Chart and defined its degree of importance. The general categories are broken down as follows:

- | | |
|--|------------|
| 1. Destruction of Organized VC military forces... | 20 points |
| 2. Destruction of VC infrastructure..... | 20 points |
| 3. Establishment of local security..... | 20 points |
| 4. Establishment of local Government..... | 20 points |
| 5. Completion of initial New Life Hamlet Programs..... | 20 points |
| Total | 100 points |

(Complete breakdown on Chart I) (22)

The month of March 1966 marked the first anniversary of large Marine Corps units ashore in South Vietnam. Within the past year Marine Corps civic action had moved from the initial people-to-people effort by individual units and individual Marines, to a well-coordinated, highly-organized program with leadership and direction residing in the I Corps Joint Coordinating Council.

After a full year in Vietnam, the Marine Corps had developed effective principles of civic action and had the organizational structure for carrying them out. As the year ended it was obvious that much had been learned about the process and procedure for carrying out organized civic action and psychological operations that would best support the development of a viable government in South Vietnam. It also became clear that civic action programs that were started and not finished were worse than no programs at all. To give the peasant a gleam of hope by initiating projects and then fail to follow through on them only intensified the frustration already present. It became basic procedure to carry out all civic action programs, whenever possible, through the local Vietnamese officials on the scene. Unilateral programs of civic action had a tendency to make the Marine Corps the benefactor of the peasants' good will, which did little or nothing for the support of his own government.

A knowledge of what the peasant wanted in the way of civic action projects became an important factor in the success of any project started. To indiscriminately build without consulting the peasant on his wishes and needs proved less than successful in many cases. On every project started, an effort would be made to enhance the prestige of the village chief or hamlet elder by bringing him into the planning and execution of the program. It was through gaining the respect and confidence of the local officials at the lowest level that civic action would produce the most lasting effect in support of revolutionary development. Marine civic action programs were to be designed not only to help the people but to be practical enough to be carried on by the people after American units left the area. It did little

CHART I
PACIFICATION PROGRESS INDICES

- | | |
|---|--------|
| 1. DESTRUCTION OF ORGANIZED VC MILITARY FORCES | POINTS |
| a. VC local/main force units destroyed or driven out | 15 |
| b. GVN/FWMAF capable of defending the area | 5 |
| Total | 20 |
| 2. DESTRUCTION OF VC INFRASTRUCTURE | |
| a. Census completed | 2 |
| b. VC infrastructure discovered and destroyed or neutralized | 8 |
| c. GVN intelligence network established | 5 |
| d. Census grievance teams completed interviewing each family | 2 |
| e. Principal grievances processed | 3 |
| Total | 20 |
| 3. ESTABLISHMENT OF LOCAL SECURITY | |
| a. Defense plans completed | 2 |
| b. Defense construction completed | 3 |
| c. Local defense forces trained and in place | 12 |
| d. Communications established with supporting unit | 3 |
| Total | 20 |
| 4. ESTABLISHMENT OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT | |
| a. Village Chief and council elected and functioning | 4 |
| b. Village chief lives and sleeps in the village | 3 |
| c. Hamlet chiefs and councils elected and functioning | 4 |
| d. Hamlet chiefs live and sleep in the hamlet | 4 |
| e. PsyOps and public information service established | 3 |
| f. Village statutes enacted | 1 |
| g. Village social and administrative organization completed | 1 |
| Total | 20 |
| 5. COMPLETION OF INITIAL NEW LIFE HAMLET PROGRAMS | |
| a. Necessary public health works, required to meet initial needs of populace, completed | 4 |
| b. Necessary educational requirements, to satisfy initial needs, have been met | 4 |
| c. Necessary agricultural works completed | 4 |
| d. Adequate ground transportation into and out of the area has been established | 4 |
| e. Necessary markets established | 4 |
| Total (23) | 20 |

good to start high caliber programs and then leave them without technical know-how or resources for completion. Whenever possible, local talent and manpower should be used to develop a sense of pride and ownership in the project being carried out. It was found that the peasant was much more inclined to protect property against VC attacks when there was a personal feeling of ownership involved.(24)

Mr. Gilbert H. Sheinbaum*, USAID Liaison Officer to III MAF, has commented on the success of the Marine Corps civic action program during its first year in country by pointing out eight significant developments which he believed contributed to it. These factors were as follows:

- (1) command support for civic action;
- (2) designation of civil affairs officers in all units down to at least battalion level;
- (3) assignment of geographic areas of responsibility to individual units;
- (4) close collaboration with local Vietnamese officials at all levels;
- (5) attention to the basic needs of the people;
- (6) joint U. S.-Vietnamese rather than unilateral efforts;
- (7) programs which can be easily sustained over a period of time, and which hopefully can and will be replaced by GVN programs;
- and above all, (8) for civil affairs officers to have an active interest in the local community and good common sense.(25)

With these "lessons learned" and observations made about the first year of Marine Corps civic action in South Vietnam, the second phase of Marine Corps efforts was launched in I Corps at "winning the hearts and minds" of the peasant and the destruction of the Viet Cong.

*Mr. Gilbert H. Sheinbaum was a USAID Liaison Officer to III MAF during its first year in Vietnam and was a participant in and close observer of military action.

CHAPTER II

Beginning of the Second Year for the Marine Corps in I Corps

The Changing Concept Of Civic Action

As the Marine Corps entered into its second year of operations in I Corps, many events had transpired since the beginning of the calendar year, January 1966, which were to have a profound effect on the conduct of these operations. From the Honolulu Conference in February, between the U. S. President, Lyndon B. Johnson, and the leaders of South Vietnam, Chief of State, Nguyen Van Thieu and Premier Nguyen Cao Ky, came the Honolulu Declaration. This declaration, issued on 8 February 1966, renewed the United States' pledge to support the Government of Vietnam in carrying on the fight against the insurgent forces. Strong emphasis was placed upon the importance of every phase of "nation building," with the primary interest of the people in mind. The declaration pledged renewed dedication to eradication of social injustices, development of a stable economy, and the building of a true democracy for the people of a war torn land.(1)

In an address before the Association of School Administrators in Atlantic City, New Jersey, on 16 February 1966, President Johnson reiterated the United States' pledge to the Government of South Vietnam. President Johnson pointed out that during the year 1966, every effort would be made to step up the program of building schools and training teachers to fill the schools, "for the real revolution is to build schools, and through them, build a new nation." Emphasis was to be placed upon the training of doctors, nurses, and health workers and on creating reforms in agriculture, which was basic to the needs of the rural populace. Support was pledged to continue to supply the South Vietnamese Army with adequate equipment to fight the Viet Cong and elements of the North Vietnamese Army, who were infiltrating into South Vietnam. Protection and security for the rural populace against VC terrorism and a concentrated effort to destroy the VC infrastructure were important themes of the President's address. President Johnson concluded by saying:

There is a job of liberation from disease, liberation from hunger, and liberation from ignorance. Unless this job is done, a military victory in South Vietnam would be no victory at all--only a brief delay until the aggressor returns to feed on the continuing misery of the people. We have the military might to win a war but the

building of a better society is the main test of our strength--our basic purpose. Until the people of the villages and farms of that unhappy country / South Vietnam / know that they personally count, that they are cared about, that their future is their own--only then will we know that real victory is possible."(2)

The Honolulu Declaration pledged support to the entire country of South Vietnam in its pacification efforts, and the Marines in I Corps were making every effort to assure that this pledge would be fulfilled. The capability for carrying out extensive programs that would support the revolutionary development plan of South Vietnam had been one of the Marines' major accomplishments during their first year in country.

Lieutenant General Lewis W. Walt returned to Da Nang on 9 March 1966 after a short visit to the U. S. where he was promoted from major general to his new rank. He reassumed command of III MAF and began making plans for stepping up the Marine Corps civic action effort in I Corps. General Walt's agreement with the precepts of the Honolulu Declaration was evidenced by the emphasis placed upon the importance of winning the war within the villages and hamlets from the time he became Commanding General of III MAF. General Walt was interested in seeing that the school program go forward in I Corps since he was convinced that South Vietnam would have little chance of survival without well-educated leaders. It had always been the practice of the VC to harass, terrorize, and assassinate the capable leaders of the villages and hamlets under the guise of doing the peasant a favor by getting rid of corrupt government officials. School teachers had been one of their main targets for assassination. It was General Walt's intention, in the new year, to use his civic action program and combat capability in continuing support of Vietnamese revolutionary development, thereby making it a more effective program in destroying the VC infrastructure and restoring capable leadership within the villages and hamlets in I Corps.(3)

With the growth of total pacification in I Corps since March 1965, and the United States' renewed dedication to support this effort at the Honolulu Conference in February 1966, III MAF, in the new year, moved toward a larger concept of civic action. The transition from a somewhat disjointed people-to-people effort at civic action to a coordinated multi-program more aptly became known as "civil affairs." The concept of civil affairs gave a broader view to the Marine Corps efforts at pacification and support of Vietnamese revolutionary development in I Corps. The I Corps Joint Coordinating Council added new committees for better cooperation and coordination of the many projects underway; civil affairs officers were designated down through the battalion level, and unit areas of responsibility were assigned to prevent duplication of effort; all of these pointed to the magnitude of the Marines' involvement in civil

affairs activity in South Vietnam.

The concept of civil affairs as employed by the Marine Corps in South Vietnam, while contributing to the welfare of the populace and supporting the efforts of the Government of Vietnam, did not carry the old connotation generally associated with civil affairs---military rule with domination of the local government and the people. The Marine Corps civil affairs programs were designed to support the host government in every way, and were to eliminate any idea of the old post-World War II definition of civil affairs, which pointed to military control by a dominating foreign power.

U. S. Marine Civil Affairs Continues In I Corps in the Face of Political Crisis

A political upheaval in March 1966, caused by the removal of General Nguyen Chanh Thi as commanding general of I Corps, created problems for Marine Corps civil affairs activities. Although the crisis did not have a nullifying effect upon the Marine efforts at "winning hearts and minds," it did hamper these efforts. The major problem area was the inability to support effectively Vietnamese revolutionary development in the midst of the growing political crisis. There had been some encouraging signs prior to the dismissal of General Thi, that the Ngu Hanh Son pacification project, located in the southern part of Da Nang, would begin to make satisfactory progress, even though it had continually suffered from a lack of proper organization and effective security to protect the government cadre working in the area.* The I Corps Joint Coordinating Council (JCC) continued to meet weekly throughout the month of March and continued to provide the necessary coordination between all agencies, both U. S. and GVN, carrying out programs in support of the pacification effort. The committees that had been organized to function under the direction of the I Corps JCC to coordinate civil affairs activity continued to work in their respective areas of responsibility and to produce significant progress with the projects they were carrying out. The Port of Da Nang Committee was working on plans for a joint civilian/military effort at expanding and improving the utilization of the port facilities which would expedite the movement of ships and materiel coming into Da Nang to support the war effort. Plans for the military and civilian development of the port were coordinated with the Vietnamese at the local level and a mutual agreement was arrived at to implement this program of expansion.

* The Ngu Hanh Son Pacification project is the Vietnamese National Priority Revolutionary Development Area in the I Corps Tactical Zone. Located in Quang Nam Province, it is in the southern part of the Da Nang tactical area.

The Education Committee continued to work at providing the necessary impetus to improve the school programs. One of its major projects was the Vocational Training School in Da Nang. The school was significant because it provided an educational opportunity for the Vietnamese to improve their economic lot. Many of the graduates were employed by civilian agencies and military organizations to fill new jobs being created as a result of the growing demand for technically-trained personnel in South Vietnam. The Education Committee was also working on the improvement and expansion of vocational training facilities, on the upgrading of qualified instructors, and on better teacher salaries. It was pointed out by the committee that there was a shortage of funds specifically designated for salaries and there was no provision for paying teachers who were employed in self-help schools. Emphasis was placed on the fact that payment of salaries was a continuing requirement and that standard provisions should be made in the GVN budget to cover this.* In the Da Nang area considerable help was being provided by USAID and the Naval Support Activity in providing scholarships for needy children.

In the month of March, the continuing growth of medical assistance to the Vietnamese people and their responsiveness to this program was a positive indicator as to the importance of providing such a service. During the month, 48 MEDCAP teams provided 95,891 medical and dental treatments to 76,656 Vietnamese citizens in 158 locations throughout I Corps. The medical training being carried on by III MAF showed no signs of retardation during March as a result of the political crisis. At the Hue Medical School, 30 students were instructed in medical emergency procedures and a like number in dental emergency procedures. The training of health workers and volunteer nurses continued with the number reaching 21 and 2 respectively by the end of the month. This medical instruction was provided by doctors and corpsmen from III MAF. CARE, HANDCLASP, and the Catholic Relief program continued to contribute goods to III MAF for distribution to needy Vietnamese families which were increasing as a result of the growing number of refugees in I Corps. (5)

Throughout March, the Marines continued their COUNTY FAIR and GOLDEN FLEECE operations. The 9th Marines, which initiated the technique for carrying out County Fair operations, along with other units, continued to work with ARVN troops in searching out the villages and hamlets in an attempt to identify the VC sympathizers and destroy the Viet Cong infrastructure

* Since a great percentage of the schools in South Vietnam are private schools and the student has to pay a fee to attend, teachers salaries are provided for by the payment of such fees. However, the village public school, whenever there was one, often lacked adequate funds to support a full-time teacher.

within these villages and hamlets. GOLDEN FLEECE operations, another program initially started by the 9th Marines, were once again protecting the rice harvest against Viet Cong efforts to take the rice from the peasants. The success of these operations, COUNTY FAIR and GOLDEN FLEECE, which had been so successful in 1965, would depend upon the availability of ARVN troops and the cooperation of the Vietnamese Military Command in I Corps, both of which could be seriously affected by the growing political crisis. The Pacification Progress System, initiated in February 1966, was by now believed to be an adequate instrument for measuring the pacification status of villages and hamlets in I Corps. As March passed into April 1966, evaluation showed that there had been increases in all three Marine TAORs in respect to areas falling within the 60 percent level of pacification. (6)

By the 1st of April the Marine strength in Vietnam had risen to 51,905 men. This increase was due primarily to the arrival of elements of the 1st Marine Division, which were being located in the Chu Lai TAOR under the command of Major General Lewis J. Fields. General Fields assumed operational control of all Marine ground forces in the Chu Lai TAOR, which encompassed responsibility for Quang Tin and Quang Ngai Provinces in the I Corps Tactical Zone. With the growing number of Marine personnel and larger areas of responsibility with greater numbers of Vietnamese civilians to care for, civil affairs activity passed into the second quarter of the new calendar year faced with the growing political crisis throughout the country.

The political crisis that had begun in March reached a new peak of intensity during April 1966. Throughout April there were anti-government demonstrations in all major cities within five provinces of I Corps. During the month, the political situation vacillated between near civil war during the first part of the month to a relative calm by the end of the month. While the Marines were able to avert many incidents created by the crisis and deal skillfully with those encountered, one overriding fact remained present; the political crisis had taken its toll of the Marine pacification effort. Large unit combat operations were little affected, but the battle for winning the peoples' friendship remained in a state of flux. Nevertheless, the Marine Corps civil affairs programs continued to function as best they could in spite of the political crisis. By the end of April, it could be seen that even though there had been setbacks and few gains, it was still plain that the battle in the hamlet to win the confidence of the peasant was the one battle that had to be won.

U. S. Marine Corps Civil Affairs Activity
During the 2d Quarter of 1966
April, May, and June

While the political crisis in South Vietnam was receiving the greatest amount of attention, both by the press and those concerned with settling the crisis, the somewhat less publicized and often overlooked effort to stabilize the country by improving the plight of its populace continued to be carried on in the ICTZ by personnel concerned with advancing pacification. Although April was a most trying month in attempting to push forward civil affairs programs, many of these obstacles were overcome through the dependable organizational structure of the I Corps Joint Coordinating Council and dedicated concern on the part of these individuals who were charged with the responsibility of carrying on the "other war."

The I Corps JCC was able to meet only twice during April, as a result of the political crisis. The two meetings held provided an opportunity for discussion of the problems and the progress that was being made in pacification. It was pointed out during the two meetings that the Public Health Committee had been severely restricted in its operations as a result of the upheaval. However, the medical monitor of III MAF had been able to work up a training syllabus for rural health workers. The committee was advised that the syllabus would be submitted to the Central Government for approval and, if accepted, would become the basic instrument for training public health workers. The growing emphasis placed on providing medical services for the Vietnamese people was marked by the arrival of the first increment of the USAID-hired medical team made up of Cuban refugees. This team was to be assigned to Quang Ngai Province in support of the district dispensaries at Tu Nghai and Son Tinh. The medical team included a surgeon, a general practitioner, a dentist, and a male nurse. USAID representatives to the I Corps JCC also announced that the surgical team at Da Nang Provincial Hospital was functioning and was providing needed surgical assistance to many Vietnamese civilians. It was also noted in the medical area that the pediatric clinic, supported by the 3d Marine Regiment, had been expanded to care for a maximum of 31 children simultaneously. Significantly, the Vietnamese parents of the children now were showing enough confidence in the medical personnel to allow the children to remain in the clinic unaccompanied.

For many months, III MAF had been concerned about improving the educational facilities and opportunities for the Vietnamese people. Colonel Eric S. Holmgrain, G-5 for III MAF, remarked that the educational program promised to be one of the most hopeful programs yet developed in view of the long range benefits it would provide for the country. While the Da Nang Polytechnic School had received new financial support through funds approved by the Central Government, Rear Admiral Thomas Weschler, Commander

of the Naval Support Activity in Da Nang and a member of the I Corps JCC, announced that NSA intended, in the near future, to establish and equip a technical school in Da Nang-East. The stated purpose of this school was to provide technical training for Vietnamese adults, aged 18 to 45, and the graduates would help fill the critical shortage of technical personnel needed by the U. S. Military, U. S. civilian contractors, and the local economy. (7)

Further impetus was given to the educational programs during April by a meeting held at III MAF under the direction of the G-5. This meeting was called to determine the number and location of classrooms to be constructed by the joint U. S. Marine Corps Reserve/CARE program, in the Da Nang TAOR. Those in attendance at the meeting, USAID representatives, G-5, 3d Marine Division, and G-5, III MAF, discussed all aspects of the Vietnamese government school program in the Da Nang area. Consideration was given to the number of schools available, schools approved for construction, teacher availability, students not in school, and the availability of III MAF sponsors to support educational growth. A tentative agreement was reached at the meeting whereby III MAF would build four secondary school classrooms and 16 elementary school classrooms in 11 locations within the Da Nang TAOR. The final decision was to be made on the building program after coordination with the sponsoring units. At this meeting it was also agreed that III MAF would assist in the repairs of all damaged schools within its TAORs. During April, similar meetings were held at Chu Lai and Phu Bai to coordinate local programs of school building within these areas of responsibility. (8)

The problems of logistics to support the civil affairs program were intensified during the month of April. The port facilities at Da Nang suffered for nine days during the month from the virtual suspension of activities resulting from the political crisis. MEDCAP supplies began to reach a critical level in I Corps areas during the month; the supplies available were barely sustaining the program's activities. (9) The III MAF was able to report by the end of the month that 43 MEDCAP

* The importance of coordinating school programs cannot be over-emphasized since it is of paramount importance to bring the local Vietnamese officials into the planning phase. It was found that the arbitrary erection of school classrooms on a unilateral basis by III MAF often failed to achieve the desired objectives. Classrooms built without teachers to fill them and construction without participation on the part of the local populace often left classrooms vacant. The desired objectives were best accomplished through bilateral construction programs of the self-help type; Vietnamese supplying the needs and manpower and Marine units supplying the material and technical assistance. Evans Interview.

teams did operate in 134 locations and administered 74,752 medical and dental treatments to 58,373 Vietnamese civilians.* These figures represented a 23.4 percent decrease in the numbers of civilians seen and treated during the month of March. During the same reporting period, III MAF also stated that 43 health workers and 2 volunteer nurses had received informal on-the-job training and that 26 senior medical students at the Hue Medical School had been given formal training in medical and dental emergencies by doctors and dentists of the command.(10)

Logistic relief was in sight, however, when it was reported to the I Corps JCC by Mr. Mark Gordon, Regional Director for USAID and a member of the I Corps JCC, that large amounts of USAID cargo had arrived in Da Nang harbor and off loading capabilities had reached 75 percent and would soon reach 100 percent. According to Mr. Gordon, the priority cargo was fertilizer since distribution had to be made throughout the ICTZ prior to the next rice planting season, and that requirements for fertilizer had reached 5,000 tons per month.** It was also reported that 897 tons of rice had arrived at the Da Nang port as a gift from West Germany to be distributed to the people in I Corps.(11)

By the end of the month commodity contributions to support III MAF in its civil affairs program resumed from CARE, Catholic Relief Service (CRS), and HANDCLASP.*** Some of the contributions made by CARE during the month included 10,000 school kits, 5,000 replacement kits, 500 woodworking kits, 500 bags of rice, and 70 mason kits. The Catholic Relief Service contributed 12,000 pounds of Bulgar wheat for distribution, and HANDCLASP contributed 5,900 pounds of miscellaneous commodities. By 30 April USAID, CARE, and CRS had all resumed full operation and as port conditions permitted, the backlog of commodities required to support the III MAF's civil affairs programs were being received.(12)

* While there was a percentage breakdown available of the types of illnesses treated, no indication was made as to the nature or extent of treatments administered.

** One of the major programs being carried on in I Corps by USAID to improve the living conditions of the Vietnamese peasant was in the area of agricultural development. This program gave assistance both of a technical and material nature. (Personal interview with Mr. Mark Gordon, former Regional USAID Representative to I Corps, 25 July 1968, Washington, D. C.)

*** On 9 April, all American civilians were ordered evacuated from the ICTZ. With this order, USAID, CARE, CRS, and International Volunteer Service ceased to function as commodity distribution sources. By 20 April the restrictions on travel had been lifted and a return to normal operations was beginning. (III MAF Command Chronology, April 1966.)



Vietnamese farmers carry a bag of rice to a Marine LVT for transport to a warehouse during GOLDEN FLEECE crop protection operations. (USMC Photo #A185785)



During Operation COUNTY FAIR 1-3 in May 1966, a Marine distributes rice to Vietnamese village women. (USMC Photo #A187025)

The success of the Vietnamese Revolutionary Development Program in I Corps, which had been of major concern to III MAF, showed further signs of deterioration during April as a result of political tensions. Although there were six Vietnamese Armed Propaganda Teams (APT), ranging in size from 21 to 38 persons, operating within the Ngu Hanh Son Priority Area, little significant RD progress was observed during the month.* The RD program, which was designed by the GVN to win the support of the rural peasantry away from the Viet Cong, had suffered many setbacks in the past months. Any progress that had been made was due to the result of a few dedicated persons working within the program. During the political crisis in I Corps, however, few RD cadre remained aloof from the political maneuverings. While attempts were made to complete projects underway, there were few signs that new project plans would be made in the near future and this would continue to create breakdowns in the RD effort. Colonel Cach, the ARVN I Corps Deputy Chief of Staff for Rural Construction, was hopeful that Major General Nguyen Duc Thang, Secretary of State for Revolutionary Development/Rural Construction, would soon visit the ICTZ, and, along with the new Province Chief for Quang Nam, bring about a rejuvenation in the National Priority Area. The only other hopeful sign for the RD program in Quang Nam Province during the month of April came with the announcement that four full strength Revolutionary Development Pacification Cadre Teams (59 people to an RD Team), who would be graduating from the Vung Tau Training School on 1 May, would be assigned to the Ngu Hanh Son Area.(13)

During April, III MAF and civil affairs personnel were not solely concerned with the building of schools, distribution of commodities, providing medical services and training, and supporting the many self-help projects being carried out by the Vietnamese people. They were also concerning themselves with two major counter guerrilla type operations which had provided successful support to the total civil affairs program in the past. Throughout the month, GOLDEN FLEECE and COUNTY FAIR operations continued to be effective in destroying the enemy, disrupting the VC infrastructure, and securing large portions of the rice harvest for the Vietnamese peasantry.

* The GVN programs of Rural Construction/Revolutionary Development had produced many names over the past months for the groups assigned to carry out these programs. Names such as Agrovillage Cadre, New Life Hamlet Cadre, Mobile Administration Cadre, Rural-Political Cadre, Armed Propaganda Cadre, Peoples Action Team, and Revolutionary Development Cadre, all represent the same basic effort under these titles. (See LtCol Richard C. Kriegel, USMCR, "Revolutionary Development," Marine Corps Gazette, v. 5, no. 3 (March 1967), pp. 35-43, hereafter Kriegel, "Revolutionary Development."

The rice harvest had barely begun by the end of March, but by the latter part of April, the crop had encompassed such a large area in I Corps that GOLDEN FLEECE II, under the direction of III MAF, was involving a number of Marine units in the operation. The support given to the peasants by the Marines in the harvesting of their rice consisted of patrolling around the areas, providing security for the workers to and from the fields, and transporting the harvested rice to protected sites. One of the most successful operations of this type conducted in April was carried out by the 3d Battalion, 4th Marines in the Hue/Phu Bai area. During a 16-day period in mid-April, 3/4 made possible the harvesting and storage of 93 tons of rice, without any reported losses. It was estimated that this amount of rice was enough to feed more than nine Viet Cong battalions for one month.(14)

While GOLDEN FLEECE II was successfully protecting the rice harvest during April, a COUNTY FAIR operation, being conducted by Company M, 3d Battalion, 9th Marines along with elements of the 3d Battalion, 51st ARVN Regiment, was proving to be just as successful. During the early morning hours on 26 April, Company M surrounded the hamlet of Thanh Quet (5) in the Da Nang TAOR. At first light, elements of the ARVN regiment entered the hamlet, collected all the people, and moved them to a pre-designated, centralized area. With the people collected, a census was taken, identification cards checked, medical treatment administered to the sick and ailing, political lectures given, commodities distributed, and the people fed. While the pacification effort was taking place, ARVN troops searched throughout the hamlet for hidden Viet Cong, stored weapons, and any other concealed supplies and equipment that could be used by the VC. The search operation uncovered a Viet Cong force hiding in the vicinity of the Marine blocking force. Upon discovery, the VC attempted to break out of their precarious situation and a fire fight ensued. As this COUNTY FAIR operation came to a close on 28 April, the brief but fierce engagement had resulted in 45 Viet Cong killed, 17 VC captured, and 14 weapons seized. A further blow was inflicted by the destruction of 25 tunnels in the vicinity of the hamlet, used for hiding the VC, as well as an unknown amount of supplies. During the same operation, two VC turned themselves over to the GVN for rehabilitation.(15)

During the month, other COUNTY FAIR and GOLDEN FLEECE operations were being carried out in I Corps. Early in the month, one COUNTY FAIR operation accounted for a VC hamlet leader and his entire cadre being killed or captured while attempting to slip through the line of encirclement. On 27 April the 1st Battalion, 5th Marines, a battalion landing team (BLT) of the 7th Fleet Special Landing Force (SLF), was committed in Operation OSAGE in the Phu Loc area near Da Nang. Its mission was to conduct search and destroy operations along with rice harvest protection within its assigned area. Success was being achieved by the end of April in denying the rice harvest to the Viet Cong.

The operation was terminated on the 2d of May. The importance of COUNTY FAIR and GOLDEN FLEECE operations, not only as a means for the physical destruction of the enemy but also as added support for pacification, continued to show its value as more Vietnamese peasants reciprocated by providing good intelligence about VC activities within the rural areas. (16)

In an effort to win the support of the populace in the countryside, the civil affairs personnel were also incorporating in their pacification program psychological operations as another instrument in the war for the minds of men. As other programs of pacification had suffered in April, resulting from the tensions surrounding the unstable political situation, likewise, psychological warfare (PsyWar) operations were severely affected. VC efforts at creating not only anti-government but anti-American agitation began to rise and much of the VC terrorism was directed at undermining the GVN and Marine Corps pacification effort. Abduction and assassinations were frequent and by the end of the month 21 such murders of village and hamlet officials had been recorded.

As the month closed and operations were returning to normal, there were hopeful signs that the losses could be regained during May, provided that the political situation remained stable. Aside from the purely statistical evaluation of the civil affairs program, there were growing signs that positive results could be obtained by protecting the peasant in the countryside and providing him with the necessary help to improve his social and economic conditions. These positive results would only be achieved by the GVN making available dedicated personnel to work with the Marine Corps in carrying out programs of pacification.

Encouragement was received when General Dinh, the new I Corps Commander, agreed to furnish III MAF with more Popular Force troops to continue to build the already successful Combined Action Program, although the number of troops needed continued to fall below the minimum requirement by the end of the month. Nevertheless, immediate steps were taken to increase the number of combined action companies by seven, which would raise the number to nine such integrated units working throughout the Marines' areas of responsibility. The success of the combined action companies and the civil affairs programs, by the end of April, was reflected through the Area Pacification Status Report, which was a result of the use of the recently established (February 1966) Pacification Progress System. On 30 April, the HES showed that the 1,185 square miles now making up the Marines' TAORs with 144 villages and a population of 694,489, were consistently moving toward the plus side of pacification. (17)

Pacification Continues as the Political Crisis Grows

May-1966

The Marine Corps had begun to regain the ground that had been lost in pacification resulting from the political crisis in April. While the situation remained tense in the ICTZ during the first part of May, tensions spiralled to new heights by the end of the month.

The I Corps JCC held its first meeting on the 3d of May and continued to concern itself with the backlog of commodities that were still on hand resulting from the labor problems and restricted distribution caused by the crisis. Other concerns of the council were centered around the school program, public health, agricultural advancements being made, self-help projects underway, the employment of psychological warfare in support of COUNTY FAIR operations, and the current status of the Vietnamese RD program. The solidarity of the council was evidenced by the representation of all major organizations, both military and civilian, U. S. and Vietnamese, who were once again meeting in a unified effort to produce tangible and effective programs of lasting benefit for the Vietnamese people, against the backdrop of a highly charged and emotionally unstable political situation.

Of special note at the first meeting was the announcement that the ARVN PsyWar Battalion would not be able to support COUNTY FAIR operations in the near future, due to other commitments; that a training program was being prepared by USAID for use in post-election training of village and hamlet chiefs; that a meeting would be held on 4 May to discuss the coordination of civic action between NSA and the city of Da Nang; and that the RD Cadre scheduled for Ngu Hanh Son area on 1 May would be delayed until 22 May. The second council meeting, held on 10 May, was a continuation of the same basic concerns of the previous meeting, with the exception that note was made that the special committees operating under the direction of the I Corps JCC were finding it difficult to hold their meetings, due to the political turmoil. It was also announced at this meeting by Major General Keith B. McCutcheon, Commanding General of the 1st Marine Aircraft Wing and Chairman of the I Corps JCC, that it would be the last time that he would meet with the Council, since Major General Louis B. Robertshaw, his relief as wing commander, would become the new chairman. General McCutcheon commented that his chairmanship of the council had been one of the most enjoyable aspects of his tour of duty in Vietnam. (18)

While the I Corps JCC was holding its meetings during the first two weeks of May, other civil affairs and counter-guerrilla operations continued to push forward the pacification effort. GOLDEN FLEECE operations were continuing to deny the VC access to the rice harvest along with providing protection for the

peasant against terrorist and reprisal attacks by the enemy. Six COUNTY FAIR operations were conducted during the month with one of the most successful operations starting on 9 May. Two Marine companies, in conjunction with two ARVN companies, were successful in routing the Viet Cong out of Le Son (2) and Thi Cam (1) in the Da Nang TAOR. While these operations were proving to be an added asset to pacification, one problem continued to threaten their future success; lack of ARVN personnel to work in conjunction with Marine units carrying out these operations.

The combined action units were also continuing to represent a major threat against the VC infrastructure and terrorist activity. These units had repeatedly received their "baptism of fire" while protecting the villages and hamlets in which they were living and operating and were showing that they could withstand the strongest VC thrusts which were attempting to dislodge and demoralize them. A lack of Popular Force troops to implement this program could seriously hamper its future growth. This shortage, which General Dinh was attempting to alleviate, nevertheless remained a constant problem to the Marines throughout May.(19)

With the Marines providing the villagers with substantial help, the people themselves began to show more initiative. The rise of self-help projects during May, along with the ability to carry out census taking, the establishment of intelligence nets within the villages, the development of defensive plans for the villages, and the establishment of local and governmental public information programs, attested to the desire of the people to continue to work at programs already started even though little material assistance was being given by the GVN as a result of the extended political crisis. As the villagers' confidence grew in the Marines' sincerity and willingness to help them provide a better life for themselves, a new high was recorded in May in the amount of information received from Vietnamese concerning VC activity.

Examples of such information received during the month can be seen by the following reports:

South of Da Nang, two young Vietnamese informed a reconnaissance patrol that they had just observed VC burying ammunition in an irrigation ditch nearby. At the identified spot, Marines uncovered two boxes of freshly oiled and belted machine-gun ammunition.

After a group of ten families had resettled, at their own request, inside the Marine secure area at Chu Lai, a youth from one of the families offered to lead a patrol to a concealed cave in his former hamlet, where he said seven VC had hidden during the move. When that cave was located and destroyed, entrances to two others were revealed. The armed VC inside the caves were killed and one was captured, along with seven weapons

and a quantity of clothing and ammunition.

There were numerous other reports during the month which provided the Marines with good intelligence information and directly contributed to the saving of many Marine lives.(20)

The I Corps JCC, which continued to meet during the last two weeks of May, attempted to resolve these problems caused by the continuing political disturbances. At the council meetings on the 25th and 31st of May, it was pointed out by the USAID representative that a critical problem existed at the Port of Da Nang due to the lack of workers and trucks available for unloading and transporting cargo. It was anticipated that this difficulty could be solved as the political crisis diminished in the area. Consideration was given to the necessity of helping the Vietnamese clean up debris and repair the damage that had occurred in the city in the wake of the crisis. Comment was made that the Vietnamese Revolutionary Development Program in the Ngu Hanh Son area had been hampered as a result of the Armed Propaganda Cadre having been withdrawn to guard the Hoa Vang District Headquarters. However, these people would soon be returned to the area and continue their work. It was also pointed out that the Mayor of Da Nang had organized a Special Welfare Committee to aid casualties and families of casualties which occurred during the recent unrest.* Food supplements, clothing, and other commodities were to be included in the aid provided to these families. Colonel Cach, one of the ARVN representatives on the Council, stated that General Hoang Xuan Lam would become the new I Corps Commander on the 31st of May. Brigadier General Jonas M. Platt, Chief of Staff, III MAF and a member of the Council, pointed out that although the current political crisis had created adverse conditions which had hampered meetings of the council and its committees, that a continuation of present policy and cooperation between various agencies was necessary and that they should continue to call on each other for help as needed.(21)

In an effort to make an assessment of significant accomplishments in pacification during May, III MAF relied upon the records kept by those units directly engaged in carrying out civil affairs programs. There were definite signs that some progress had been made in providing security and assistance to the Vietnamese people. Some of these accomplishments were reflected by the fact that the Marines had provided vocational training for some 5,800 Vietnamese, many of whom were refugees

* Lieutenant Colonel Le Chie Cuong replaced Dr. Man as Mayor of Da Nang. Dr. Man had been arrested on the 23d of May, with the fall of the "Struggle Forces" in Da Nang. (Personal interview with Mr. Roger E. Burgess, USAID Province Representative to the city of Da Nang during the political crisis, Washington, D. C., 23 July 1968.)

with no previous technical skills. In a joint effort with the Vietnamese civilians, the Marines provided help in the construction of 7 wells, 11 schools, 5 dispensaries, and 3 bridges. There were also gains over the previous months in the number of village chiefs and councils functioning, village chiefs living in their homes, village markets established, and local village defense forces trained and in place.(22)

The concern of III MAF in improving the health conditions of the Vietnamese people remained as one of the major civil affairs efforts during May. Plans were made to provide formal dental instruction for students at the Hue Medical School starting in September. This program was to be carried out by the dentists of III MAF who would provide a training program consisting of weekly lectures and field trips which would include practical experience in carrying out dental procedures. Direct medical assistance was provided for the people by the undaunted efforts of MEDCAP teams who continued to operate in conflict-ridden areas. These teams were able to operate in 173 locations throughout the ICTZ and administer 67,913 medical and dental treatments to 58,651 Vietnamese civilians. A breakdown of the number of medical and dental treatments within each Marine TAOR showed that 40,106 treatments were administered in Da Nang, 21,304 in Chu Lai, and 6,503 in Phu Bai. While these totals represented an increase over the number of treatments provided during the month of April, it was believed by the personnel of III MAF that more could have been accomplished in this area had it not been for the on-going political crisis in I Corps.(23)

Attention was focused by III MAF on stepping up support for the Vietnamese Chieu Hoi (Open Arms) program.* This endeavor which had long been established by the Vietnamese Government had been plagued by alternate success and failure in the past, due primarily to the ambivalent attitude of those charged with the responsibility of carrying out the program. III MAF was convinced that this program provided another avenue for carrying out pacification and stepped up plans to provide support for its growth. These plans consisted of providing support for the building of new Chieu Hoi centers which would increase the handling capability of the Hoi Chanhs (returnees). Support was also given in the planning and execution of Psychological Operations in an effort to create a greater number of defections from the ranks of the Viet Cong.(24)

While May represented another frustrating and troublesome month for III MAF in carrying out civil affairs programs, it was hoped that within the month of June a better environment would be present, but this hope was not fully realized.

* An accurate account of the development of the Chieu Hoi Program can be found in Nighswonger, Pacification, p. 159.

Pacification Grows as the Political Crisis Declines

June 1966

Those military leaders who had supported the anti-government forces in their abortive attempt to bring about the downfall of the Ky regime were charged and punished for their actions by the GVN. General Thi, the principal figure, whose dismissal as I Corps Commander on 10 March had precipitated the political crisis, was allowed to leave the country.(25)

While civil disturbances resulting from the political crisis did not create the most favorable environment for carrying out pacification efforts in I Corps during the month of June, the Marines continued to carry on their civil affairs programs with notable progress. The apparent success of these programs in destroying the Viet Cong's efforts in the villages was marked by the appearance, for the first time, of Viet Cong shock troops whose mission was specifically designed to step up assassinations of Vietnamese Pacification Team members and increase terrorism in the villages and hamlets in an effort to disrupt and hamper the Marine Corps Civil Affairs Programs.(26)

The I Corps Joint Coordinating Council was able to meet four times during June. Two of its special committees, the Public Health Committee and the Commodities Distribution Committee, were also able to meet and carry on the business of providing services to the Vietnamese people. Reports given at these meetings focused emphasis on problems to be solved and successes being achieved throughout I Corps in pacification. One of the major problems being dealt with was an excessive shortage of trucks and truck drivers to maintain adequate distribution of goods being received at the Port of Da Nang. This shortage, along with the fact that distribution of goods throughout the countryside had been severely hampered due to the political crisis, prompted a fear that if the problem was not solved as soon as possible a rice shortage could develop in certain areas depending upon resupply by overland carriers. Although the possibility of a rice shortage was most apparent in Thua Thien and Quang Tri Provinces, major relief was available in these areas by the end of the month as Marines were able to secure and open more roads for travel. USAID was able to deliver 50 truck loads of rice to Hue on 22 June, and 50 truck loads of rice to Quang Tri Province on 23 June.(27)

A major rice shortage was also averted in the Dien Ban District, Quang Nam Province. Inspired by the example of the Marines, an ARVN unit, Company B, 104th Engineer Battalion, at the request of village, district, and province officials, assisted in the rebuilding of a coffer dam to provide water irrigation for the rice crop. Without this assistance in rebuilding the dam, the rice crop would have been completely lost.(28)

The III Marine Amphibious Force continued to emphasize the importance of education for the Vietnamese people and the necessity of fostering defections in the Viet Cong ranks, and to place strong emphasis on the school building program and the supporting of the development of Chieu Hoi Centers. It was realized that the current political crisis would probably have a negative psychological effect in creating defections among the ranks of the Viet Cong and every effort was made to step up the PsyWar campaign to avert such a setback.

Of special importance in the education program was the opening of the technical school being sponsored by the Naval Support Activity in Da Nang. Classes began on 1 June, with school sessions running from 1400 to 1800, six days per week. The initial enrollment at the school consisted of 57 students, all of whom were refugees. The instruction being given at the school centered around the practical skills of carpentry, heavy equipment operation, and truck driving. Plans were made to continue the training program throughout July and August with increased instruction amounting to eight hours a day. Also, efforts were being made to expand the student body to 200, which would include students other than refugees. With this expansion, instruction in typing and sewing was to be added to the school's curriculum. In an effort to improve and encourage the growth of the school, the Naval Support Activity attempted to find qualified Vietnamese instructors to teach the skills being offered. Further planning called for a transportation service to be set up for the students, thereby providing convenient and accessible travel to and from the school. While the technical school at Da Nang represented a major accomplishment in support of educating the Vietnamese in skills which would enhance their capability for employment and economic gain, it was by no means the only education program moving forward under the civil affairs effort. Throughout the needy areas of I Corps, the Marines continued their programs of building and repairing schools and providing instruction whenever and wherever possible.(29)

The Chieu Hoi program, which had suffered from many inadequacies over an extended period of time, received renewed support during June. Increased allotments of money to enhance the program were released from the GVN to the provinces for construction of new centers and the improvement of old ones. III MAF and USAID personnel continued to provide impetus and physical support for this program and plans were being finalized for the development of a new Regional Chieu Hoi Center to be built in Da Nang.(30)

During June, the Marines in I Corps continued to push forward their programs in psychological warfare, which were proving to be a major asset in supporting the overall civil affairs effort. Colonel Eric S. Helmgrain, who was the senior Civil Affairs Officer for III MAF, suggested that every opportunity be taken

by all of the PsyWar agencies to publicize the accomplishments by the ARVN in the field of civil affairs. It was felt that such publicity would not only continue to uplift the civil affairs effort, which had been suffering for a number of months from lack of leadership and interest on the part of ARVN commanders, but would also have a positive effect on the Vietnamese civilians who had long recognized their own military's lack of interest in their welfare.

With encouragement and assistance from the Marine command, the ARVN in I Corps stepped up their own programs of PsyWar and civil affairs. A major reorganization to enhance coordination took place during June by the ARVN as their PsyWar and civil affairs activities were combined under the direction of a PsyWar battalion. With this reorganization and new emphasis by the ARVN in the area of civil affairs, a concerted effort was made to improve not only the civil affairs projects that would materially assist the ARVN dependents but the civilian communities as well. This action was well received by the Marine command, which was fully aware that any long term and lasting civil affairs effort would have to be of a bilateral nature and not unilateral. It was due to this knowledge that the Marines had long been encouraging the ARVN to become actively engaged in civil affairs programs, which would hopefully improve their status within the civilian community.(31)

A major program being carried on under direction of the I Corps JCC by the representatives of the Joint U. S. Public Affairs Office, was the Census Grievance Cadre, made up of enlisted Vietnamese and located in Quang Nam Province. These people were principally operating outside the city of Da Nang and directing their efforts at the peasants in the outlying countryside. There were cadre located in 80 different hamlets and plans were being made to provide coverage for the city of Da Nang and 192 hamlets. The objective of the cadre was to collect vital census statistics within each hamlet. They were also charged with the duty of mapping each dwelling area, listing every person living in that area, identifying each family element, and determining political affiliations, where possible. The cadre also had the responsibility of soliciting grievances from the people, thereby providing a direct source of information to be used by all agencies concerned with improving the conditions of the civilian populace. Questions asked the civilians by the cadre were: (1) what has the GVN done for you?; (2) what can the GVN do for you?; (3) what has the GVN done to you? The desired results from knowing the grievances of the people would be the improvement of population and resource control, the discovery of VC cadre living within the hamlets, and the determination of the needs and grievances of the people. These cadre were another means whereby the peasant in the countryside could be made aware that his government was indeed concerned about his needs and desires and that efforts were being made to redress his grievances.(32)

Support came for the civil affairs programs on 12 June with the arrival of the U. S. Army 29th Civil Affairs Company, which was attached to and worked under the direction of III MAF. Upon its arrival, the company began to conduct an orientation course which acquainted its members with all of the agencies, both military and civilian, which were carrying on civil affairs projects throughout the five provinces in I Corps. It was pointed out at one of the monthly meetings of the I Corps JCC that the 29th Civil Affairs Company would perform an important function in refugee resettlement and the settling of foreign claims, both of which were growing as a result of the war. MACV granted authority for the establishment of a Foreign Claims Commission in I Corps. The officer in charge of the 29th Civil Affairs Company Legal Team was selected to be the claims commissioner. With the Legal Team's expertise, it was estimated that the commission could process approximately 90 percent of the foreign claims submitted in the area, which would be of great benefit to the Vietnamese people and a positive contribution to the overall civil affairs effort. The Refugee Team of the 29th Civil Affairs Company was assigned to advise and assist the GVN authorities in providing for the needs of these people. It was estimated that near the district headquarters in Dai Loc, Quang Nam Province, 17,335 refugees had gathered as a result of displacement brought on by combat operations within their village and hamlet areas. This was only one of the many areas throughout I Corps where refugees were gathering, and the GVN needed all the help it could receive in dealing with this growing problem.(33)

At the close of the month, III MAF made an assessment of the civil affairs program in I Corps, to attempt to measure its effectiveness against the problems faced during the 2d quarter of 1966. While the program had received its greatest setbacks during the political crisis, it appeared that this problem had been solved and that increased progress could be made in the following months. June had produced a 54 percent increase over May in medical assistance rendered to the Vietnamese people, and, while commodities distribution had been slowed down during the month, the USAID, CARE, CRS, and HANDCLASP programs continued to function as a vital source of support for the Vietnamese people. The school program, which was receiving considerable attention from III MAF, began to move forward with the opening of the Technical School at Da Nang, and plans were being made to expand the entire program of education for Vietnamese adults as well as children.(34)

COUNTY FAIR operations were carried on in June which increased the number of villagers being screened and identified for security purposes. This type of operation, along with other civil affairs efforts, produced an increase in the number of villages meeting the criteria to be classified as 80 percent pacified. In June, 22 additional villages with an estimated population of 182,335 moved into this 80 percent classification.

There were increases in the number of roads made secure for transportation, village markets being developed and opened, public information programs operating within the villages, and local defense systems functioning within the villages and hamlets to provide security against Viet Cong terrorist attacks. The Combined Action Program continued to grow with 37 combined action platoons operating throughout Marine areas of responsibility by the end of the month. Major impetus was given to this program during June with the integration of five Vietnamese Regional Force companies operating in the Da Nang area. General Lam, the ARVN I Corps Commander, was impressed by the past success of the program and indicated that ARVN support to the program would be increased. If General Lam was able to produce the necessary Vietnamese personnel to augment the Combined Action Program, III MAF planned to have 74 combined action platoons and 10 combined action companies operating in the ICTZ by the end of 1966. The Marines continued to provide support in the area of rice harvest protection, which not only allowed the Vietnamese farmer to harvest his rice in safety but also had the effect of driving the main force enemy units out of the mountains to the coastal lowlands area to secure food, thereby making them more vulnerable to Marine offensive operations. The Marines continued to put pressure on the Viet Cong with their combat operations in an effort to stem the rice flow to the main force enemy units. Operation JAY, a search and destroy operation, was able to demolish an enemy base-camp where the Marines found 130 tons of rice which had been stolen from Vietnamese farmers. The rice was seized and given to Vietnamese officials for redistribution to needy families within the area.(35)

The total evaluation for June by the III MAF revealed that while progress had been slow in many areas of pacification the overall program showed signs of growth and progress. The most encouraging sign was that the civil affairs programs had met severe adversity, especially during the political crisis; and yet continued to function in an organized and coordinated way. Members of III MAF believed that the total pacification effort in I Corps was showing signs of maturity and sophistication, which had not been present during the first year of operation.(36)

CHAPTER III

U. S. Marine Corps Civil Affairs in I Corps

July-August-September 1966

The Marines in I Corps continued to concentrate on pushing forward the civil affairs program which they had been developing. The political crisis had been stabilized and the Vietnamese political and military functions were returning to normal. The III MAF was hopeful that renewed interest and energies could be applied to furthering pacification in all areas of the ICTZ. The Vietnamese major efforts at pacification, known as Revolutionary Development, became a major interest of III MAF. A new Revolutionary Development Center had been established in I Corps for the purpose of training new cadre to work in the program and there was evidence that Major General Nguyen Duc Thang, the man in charge of Revolutionary Development for the GVN, would exert the type of leadership and influence needed to see that the program succeeded.

The I Corps Joint Coordinating Council, which had not been able to meet regularly during the past months of crisis, began to meet once again on a regular schedule to provide dedicated leadership in coordinating the many agencies dealing with civilian relief in the I Corps area. Due to a revision of the committees that had been functioning under the direction of the JCC, a more coordinated effort was generated that provided greater success in solving problems and providing services to those in need of such help. The committees, which were designated to function under the direction and support of the I Corps JCC, were Public Health, Psychological Warfare, Education, Commodities Distribution, Port of Da Nang, and Roads Committee. These committees had their own organizational structure and reported periodically to the I Corps JCC concerning their areas of responsibility or whenever immediate help was needed from the council.(1)

Many of the civil affairs programs began to show significant progress during July. The educational program, which was a major civil affairs effort in I Corps, continued to expand its activities in both the construction of classrooms and the provision of instruction for the people. Eighty-eight rooms were being built with emphasis on the construction of secondary and technical training facilities. A report by Rear Admiral Thomas Weschler to the I Corps JCC indicated that 204 students were attending the summer technical training classes and that several of the students who were completing the welding course had been hired by the Dillingham Dredging Company to work on projects in South Vietnam. Their employer had indicated that the hired students were more skilled at their trade than any welder already

on the payroll. Successful employment of these students indicated that the educational program was providing a major avenue through which economic improvement could be afforded to the Vietnamese people.(2)

Representatives of local religious schools met in July to explore the possibility of creating and establishing a scholarship program for meritorious students in the religious schools. The basic objective of the program was to identify superior students and finance their education to become school teachers. It was believed by members of III MAF present at the meeting, that financing for this program could come from the Chaplain Funds of III MAF units. A survey of these funds revealed that a sum in excess of \$18,000 had been previously donated in direct support of the local religious organizations during Fiscal Year 1966.(3)

The Chieu Hoi program in I Corps began to move forward during the month as Lieutenant Colonel Thanh, the new Vietnamese I Corps Deputy Chief of Staff for Political Warfare, announced that the Vietnamese Minister of Information and Chieu Hoi had approved the plan for the construction of a new Chieu Hoi Center to be located in Da Nang-East. The GVN provided a budget of five million dollars to fund the program and the initial construction was to begin during mid-July.

The importance of the Chieu Hoi program was restated at a meeting of the I Corps JCC during July by Mr. Ogden Williams, the Chieu Hoi representative for the American Embassy in Saigon. Mr. Williams briefed the council on the history, progress, and current requirements of the GVN program. He pointed out that since the beginning of 1966, 10,500 ralliers had responded to the program and that projected estimates were that 20,000 would respond to the GVN's call for repatriation by the end of the calendar year. He pointed out that many people working in the pacification effort now believed that the combined total of ralliers and prisoners might be a better indicator of progress in the war than the total number of enemy killed. Mr. Williams stated that in August, 45 Philippine advisors would arrive in the RVN to work in the provinces with the Chieu Hoi Program and that all agencies should give priority to upgrading the program since its value had been well demonstrated.(4)

New programs continued to be generated in the area of medical assistance and public health which greatly enhanced the living conditions of the Vietnamese people. Plans were made to continue training students in the medical program at Hue University and increased effort was put forth to train rural health workers who could go into the countryside and administer medical aid to those who had no access to medical facilities. In a statement of principles, the Rural Health Workers Education Program set forth two main objectives to be accomplished. The first objective was to produce a trained Vietnamese cadre capable of working with the Vietnamese people,

to improve health and sanitation standards, and to treat the ill. The second objective was aimed at producing a cadre of well trained personnel capable of training others in their skills thereby providing for perpetuation and growth of the program. The training course was to run 12 weeks for each class with 200 hours devoted to intensive medical instruction, 40 hours to practical work in dispensaries or clinics, and 24 hours devoted to examinations. The class room instruction was to be taken at the Da Nang Polytechnic School and the cycle of instruction was to graduate 400 trained workers per year.(5) While this program would increase the medical services offered to the Vietnamese people, III MAF continued to concentrate on providing immediate medical help through its medical civic action program. MEDCAP patrols continued to go out daily and render service to the people on the spot, in the hamlets and villages within the ICTZ. During the month, 106,808 civilians received on-the-spot medical treatment by 64 MEDCAP teams operating in 297 different locations throughout I Corps. These treatments represented an 11.7 percent increase over those administered during the month of June. Plans were also being developed to construct a new dental facility in Da Nang to help meet the dental needs of the Vietnamese. An indication of this need can be found in the record of treatments provided by the 1st, 3d, and 11th Dental Companies during the month of July. Dental services provided to the Vietnamese people for the month were 4,357 treatments, along with 9,237 procedures.(6)

The 29th U. S. Army Civil Affairs Company, which had arrived in I Corps during June, had become fully operational by the end of July. Teams from the company were assigned by III MAF to Marine regiments throughout the ICTZ and became immediately involved in providing professional support to these commands. Assistance was given in many areas such as refugee handling, agricultural advice to the Vietnamese farmers, and surveys to discover the needs of the people. One such survey, conducted by the Food and Agriculture Team of the 29th Civil Affairs Company, found that there was a shortage of fertilizer for use by the farmers located inside the Marines' TAORs. This information was made available to the I Corps JCC and the USAID Regional Agricultural Representative, resulting in immediate attention being brought to the problem. With the establishment of the Claims Commission in I Corps, Captain V. P. Anderson, U. S. Army, the Team Leader of the Legal Team of the 29th Civil Affairs Company was named the Foreign Claims Commissioner. Captain Anderson proceeded to establish a claims office in the Da Nang area where his services would be readily available to the local Vietnamese people. The Claims Commissioner was granted the authorization from MACV to process and adjudicate claims arising throughout the ICTZ, up to and including \$1,000. Claims for more than the authorized amount and combat claims were processed through previously established channels. Personnel of the 29th Civil Affairs Company were also helping the Marines provide assistance to the 27,239 refugees located in the Dien Ban and Dai Loc Districts of Quang Nam Province. Food, clothing, shelter,

and medical treatment were being provided by III MAF and civilian agencies to these people and plans were developed for resettling as many of them as possible and providing for their needs until they could become self-sustaining.(7)

In an effort to generate personnel for the continued development of the Combined Action Program, III MAF supported the GVN in carrying on their Motivation Indoctrination Program (MIP). It was a known fact that the Combined Action Program had not grown at the rate III MAF had hoped it would. This lack of growth was the direct result of inadequate numbers of Popular Forces available for augmentation into the program. This lack of availability of PF's was due to many circumstances, one of which was the high desertion rate which had existed. In an effort to solve this desertion problem and bolster the general morale of the PF's, the GVN had initiated a program of motivation and indoctrination whereby the PF's could be made aware of their important contribution to the war in providing security for the villages and hamlets. During this training, the PF's were also given instruction in military skills and made aware of their role in the Combined Action Program. In July, 50 Popular Force platoons totaling 1,988 soldiers underwent MIP training which brought the total number of trained PF's in I Corps up to 7,663. During the month all ARVN sector training centers and the Dong Ha National Training Center in Thua Thien Province operated at full capacity while carrying on this training. A special program was initiated at the Hoa Cam Training Center on 25 July, which provided a seven-week English language course designed to meet the needs of PF soldiers who were to be assigned to the U. S. Marine Combined Action Companies. The III MAF was hopeful that this type of training would provide for an increase in PF personnel so that the Combined Action Program could continue to grow and maintain the outstanding success it had achieved in the past months.(8)

In an effort to reach more people and bring them under the pacification program, III MAF stepped up its COUNTY FAIR operations. During July, 20 COUNTY FAIR operations were conducted throughout the ICTZ with favorable results. The success of these operations prompted III MAF to plan for 10 COUNTY FAIR operations per month in the future, provided that the necessary Vietnamese forces were available to support these operations. While COUNTY FAIR operations reflected an important joint program in carrying on pacification in I Corps, III MAF continued to innovate and develop new avenues for carrying on its civil affairs programs. A statement of the magnitude of its commitment by July 1966 in pacification revealed the objectives of III MAF's programs in assisting the GVN in the area of nation building. These objectives were set forth with the following considerations:

1. Establish Village Security.
 - a. Train local defense forces.
 - b. Complete village defense plans.

- c. Establish village defense nets.
- d. Establish village PsyWar and Public Information Programs.

2. Establish Village Governments.

- a. Encourage village census.
- b. Assist in installing government officials.
- c. Restore security for village officials.
- d. Maintain close contact with village officials.

3. Improve Local Economy.

- a. Assist in establishment of local markets.
- b. Protect the rice harvests.
- c. Improve communications.

4. Improve Public Health.

- a. Give medical treatment.
- b. Evacuate critically ill.
- c. Give medical training.
- d. Feed hungry Vietnamese.

5. Improve Public Education.

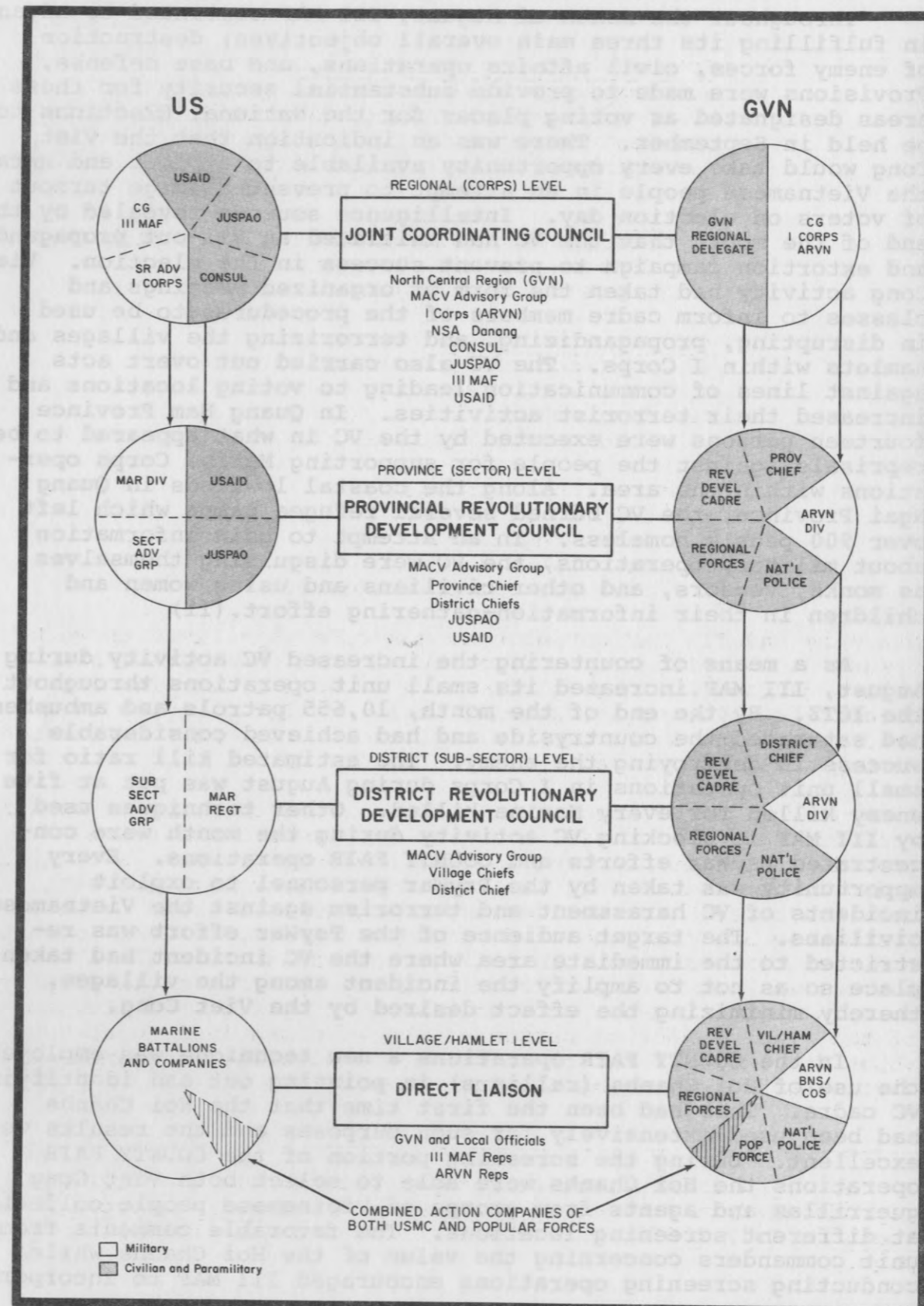
- a. Support students.
- b. Teach English language.
- c. Help build schools.
- d. Give vocational training.

Not only had III MAF established concrete objectives to work toward in carrying on pacification, it had also established a well-organized and highly effective means for carrying out these objectives. The organizational structure for carrying on its nation-building activities is depicted on the chart designated as Organization For Pacification In ICTZ.(9)*

At the end of the month, the people in the City of Da Nang were treated to a special event as the Seventh Fleet Band provided a concert for the enjoyment of the Vietnamese civilians and other personnel. It was reported by Rear Admiral Weschler, that the concert was well attended and well received by the Vietnamese and that the band wanted to give additional concerts the next time they were in the port of Da Nang. While the concert was not designed to fulfill any specific civil affairs role, such spontaneous acts of kindness typified the attitude of the great number of personnel who were genuinely concerned about developing a better relationship with the Vietnamese civilians and providing for their needs.(10)

* The organizational chart for pacification in the ICTZ was reproduced from FMFPac, Operations of U. S. Marine Forces, Vietnam, July 1966. This chart is found on the following page.

ORGANIZATION FOR PACIFICATION IN ICTZ



August 1966

Throughout the month of August, III MAF continued to advance in fulfilling its three main overall objectives; destruction of enemy forces, civil affairs operations, and base defense. Provisions were made to provide substantial security for these areas designated as voting places for the National Elections to be held in September. There was an indication that the Viet Cong would take every opportunity available to exploit and harass the Vietnamese people in an attempt to prevent a large turnout of voters on election day. Intelligence sources revealed by the end of the month that the VC had initiated an all-out propaganda and extortion campaign to prevent success in the election. Viet Cong activity had taken the form of organized meetings and classes to inform cadre members of the procedures to be used in disrupting, propagandizing, and terrorizing the villages and hamlets within I Corps. The VC also carried out overt acts against lines of communication leading to voting locations and increased their terrorist activities. In Quang Nam Province fourteen persons were executed by the VC in what appeared to be reprisals against the people for supporting Marine Corps operations within the area. Along the coastal lowlands in Quang Ngai Province, the VC burned several refugee camps which left over 900 people homeless. In an attempt to gain information about military operations, the VC were disguising themselves as monks, vendors, and other civilians and using women and children in their information-gathering effort.(11)

As a means of countering the increased VC activity during August, III MAF increased its small unit operations throughout the ICTZ. By the end of the month, 10,655 patrols and ambushes had saturated the countryside and had achieved considerable success in destroying the enemy. The estimated kill ratio for small unit operations in I Corps during August was put at five enemy killed for every Marine killed. Other techniques used by III MAF in blocking VC activity during the month were concentrated PsyWar efforts and COUNTY FAIR operations. Every opportunity was taken by the PsyWar personnel to exploit incidents of VC harassment and terrorism against the Vietnamese civilians. The target audience of the PsyWar effort was restricted to the immediate area where the VC incident had taken place so as not to amplify the incident among the villages, thereby minimizing the effect desired by the Viet Cong.

In the COUNTY FAIR operations a new technique was employed by the use of Hoi Chanhs (ralliers) in pointing out and identifying VC cadre. This had been the first time that the Hoi Chanhs had been used extensively for such purposes and the results were excellent. During the screening portion of the COUNTY FAIR operations the Hoi Chanhs were able to select both Viet Cong guerrillas and agents from groups of Vietnamese people collected at different screening locations. The favorable comments from unit commanders concerning the value of the Hoi Chanhs while conducting screening operations encouraged III MAF to incorporate

their use in future COUNTY FAIR operations. Although Viet Cong initiated incidents showed an increase during August over the past month of July, 266 as compared to 256, III MAF was able to counter these incidents in such a way that progress continued to be made in pacification.(12)

During August, the I Corps JCC made considerable progress in extending its influence throughout the ICTZ. At the first meeting on 2 August, Mr. Mark Gordon, Regional Director for USAID, had made such a suggestion that the JCC not concentrate solely on providing services for the secure areas within the Marine TAORs or the major cities within I Corps. He pointed out that the JCC as an overseeing body for pacification could better perform its functions by considering all projects in the context of the whole ICTZ. Mr. Gordon argued that there was a need for a closer integration of the many different types of GVN cadre into the normal functioning of the growing local governments. While the initial pacification efforts by the GVN were the responsibility of the Revolutionary Development Cadre, there was a need for other services to be provided such as agriculture, public works, and social welfare. In an effort to provide the various governmental services which would be needed long after the RD tasks were to be completed, all concerned agencies in pacification should aid in the development of cadre programs to fulfill the future services required.

Members of the council agreed with Mr. Gordon's concept and indicated that future endeavors of the council would be expanded in order that a greater influence could be exerted for the accomplishment of new programs. The first move in this direction was made by General Robertshaw who suggested that one regular monthly meeting of the I Corps JCC be held at a province capital city, where representatives of the Province Team and GVN Province Officials could talk with the Council. Although the I Corps JCC had top-level representation from all agencies involved in pacification, both from the U. S. and GVN, it was felt that by travelling to the provinces each month, the council could better learn of the problems being faced by those people who were carrying on pacification programs at the grass-roots level. It would also provide an avenue for extending the council's influence throughout the ICTZ and hopefully generate an even greater dedication and commitment to the pacification effort by those who were charged with the responsibility of carrying forth the programs in the villages and hamlets.

Since the council was in agreement with General Robertshaw's suggestion, the I Corps JCC convened one of its monthly meetings, that of 23 August, at the Provincial Headquarters in Quang Tri Province. At this meeting Lieutenant Colonel Nguyen Am, the Province Chief, invited General Robertshaw to address the group. General Robertshaw told the assemblage that the I Corps JCC was glad to have the opportunity to meet with them and was anxious to learn about their problems and provide help in any way possible. He pointed out that the council planned to work with

the province representatives throughout I Corps in solving their problems and that the council planned to visit each of the five provinces, one each month, on a continuing basis. General Robertshaw assured those present that problems presented in meetings, such as the one being held, would receive careful consideration by the council. After the meeting was over, members of the council agreed that it had been successful and that a significant achievement had been made in extending the influence of the I Corps JCC throughout the ICTZ.(13)

Another milestone was reached by the JCC when on 30 August 1966 it celebrated its first anniversary of operation. At the meeting held that day, the council passed by unanimous vote a revised statement of its mission, composition, and functions which was to supersede any such previous statements.* Although the statement pointed out that the council in no way was a substitute for existing organizations and agencies carrying on pacification in I Corps and that it had no directive-making authority or funds to support programs, the composition of the membership of the council allowed for it to be a powerful and effective instrument for furthering pacification in I Corps. As Lieutenant Colonel Donald L. Evans, Jr., the council's recorder recalled, it had "no directive power nor funds," but "its members were able to exert influence in the right places at the right times which made it one of the most effective groups concerned with pacification in Vietnam."**

The committees working under the direction of the I Corps JCC were able to report favorable progress being made in all areas of pacification within the ICTZ. Major construction was being carried on to repair bridges and roads which would improve supply lines to outlying areas and allow for an increased flow of goods and services to these areas. It was important to keep the lines of transportation open, not only for expediting distribution of commodities to the villages and hamlets but also for facilitating movement of the Vietnamese people to and from their market areas. The destruction of roads and bridges by the VC, in an effort to cut off and isolate the people from civil affairs programs was being combated by III MAF and other agencies operating in I Corps. It was a daily occurrence for Marine minesweeping teams to patrol over the major supply routes in an attempt to discover VC mines that had been planted during the night. Engineers from different Marine units throughout the ICTZ provided valuable assistance in bridge repair and road maintenance. With coordination and professional expertise, the Road Committee was able to function in such a way that an increased level of supplies was able to reach the Vietnamese people during the month.

* A copy of the new guidelines governing the I Corps JCC was reproduced from its Minutes, and is found on the following pages.
** Lieutenant Colonel D. L. Evans, Jr., USMC, was the recorder for the I Corps Joint Coordinating Council in South Vietnam during 1966.

STATEMENT OF MISSION, COMPOSITION AND FUNCTIONS

I CORPS JOINT COORDINATING COUNCIL

30 AUGUST 1966

1. ORIGIN. The concept of this council was formulated jointly by Lieutenant General L. W. Walt, USMC, Commanding General, Third Marine Amphibious Force, and Mr. M. J. Gordon, Regional Director, U. S. Agency for International Development. The first meeting was held on 30 August 1965. The official name of the council, "I Corps Joint Coordinating Council", was adopted by the Council on 6 September, 1965. The Council unanimously adopted a proposal to install as Chairman, the Commanding General, First Marine Aircraft Wing, and to install as Deputy Chairman the Chief of Staff of the Third Marine Amphibious Force, during the Council meeting of 15 November 1965. The Chairman represented Lieutenant General Walt in the capacity of Senior Advisor, I Corps.

2. MISSION OF THE COUNCIL. The mission of the I Corps Joint Coordinating Council is:

- a. To be familiar with the Government of Vietnam's Revolutionary Development Program in the I Corps Tactical Zone/1st Region.
- b. To determine requirements for cooperation and support between agencies and to recommend methods or procedures to meet such requirements.
- c. To facilitate the coordination of Revolutionary Development in the I Corps Tactical Zone/1st Region by minimizing duplication of effort and mutual interference between agencies engaged in or supporting the overall effort.
- d. To serve as a forum for the exchange of information and suggestions between all agencies engaged in or supporting the overall effort in the I Corps Tactical one/1st Region.

3. COUNCIL MEMBERSHIP. The I Corps Joint Coordinating Council is composed of representatives of the following:

- a. Government of Vietnam, I Corps/1st Region.
- b. I Corps Advisory Group, MACV.
- c. III Marine Amphibious Force.
- d. U. S. Agency for International Development, 1st Region.
- e. Joint U. S. Public Affairs Office, 1st Region.
- f. U. S. Embassy (POLAD).

- g. Naval Support Activity, Da Nang.
- h. MACV, Combined Studies Division.

4. MISSION OF COMMITTEES. Each Committee, within its assigned field or area of functional interest, will:

- a. Become familiar with the Government of Vietnam's plan for their functional field in the I Corps Tactical Zone/1st Region.
- b. Monitor the development of the Government of Vietnam and United States plans pertaining to their functional field and execution of same.
- c. Determine problem areas in their functional field.
- d. Determine the capability of Government of Vietnam and United States agencies to provide assistance.
- e. Promote liaison between Government of Vietnam and United States agencies engaged in their functional field.
- f. Keep the Council advised of problems and the overall progress within their functional fields.
- g. Prepare and present to the Council at regular or special meetings, recommended lines of action to improve the coordination of United States/Government of Vietnam activity within their functional field.

5. COMMITTEES. Currently the Council has authorized the formation of committees in the following functional areas of interest:

- a. Public Health.
- b. Psychological Warfare.
- c. Education.
- d. Commodities Distribution.
- e. Port of Da Nang.
- f. Roads.

6. FUNCTIONS. The Council and its committees are not substitutes for the formal organizations now existing in the I Corps Tactical Zone/1st Region. They have no directive authority and no funds. They are strictly a means of coordinating existing plans and programs, and lending support and assistance to the creation or approval of additional programs or projects in order to promote and expedite Government of Vietnam's Revolutionary Development program in the I Corps Tactical Zone/1st Region. The Council can be of material assistance by keeping key personnel apprised of developments in the overall program, by eliminating mutual interference between programs or agencies, by minimizing duplication of effort, and by promoting efficiency and economy of effort.

The Public Health Committee was able to report that public health and medical treatments to the Vietnamese people continued to progress at a desired level. An outbreak of plague in Quang Tin and Quang Ngai Provinces had been checked through mass immunization. In Quang Ngai alone, over 3,300 cholera inoculations had been given in one week. With an adequate supply of vaccine on hand, it was felt that incidents of the plague would continue to subside and that health workers would be able to prevent excessive cases of the plague from developing in the future. The need for an increased number of rural health workers was of constant concern to the Public Health Committee during August. They made many recommendations to the I Corps JCC in an effort to alleviate the problem. Increased facilities and personnel for training rural health workers was one of the major problems to be dealt with, along with increased pay for those health workers already in the field. More health workers were trained during the month, as the Quang Tin rural health workers training course convened at the Da Nang Polytechnical School. Although the Quang Tin class was unscheduled for the month, provisions were made and financing supplied by USAID and other agencies, in order that the students could complete their training. Medical and dental treatment to the Vietnamese people through the III MAF Civil Affairs Program increased throughout the ICTZ during August. Large numbers of Vietnamese people were treated for medical and dental problems at collection points during COUNTY FAIR operations and construction was underway on several new medical facilities that would improve and increase III MAF's capability for providing medical assistance to seriously ill Vietnamese. (14)

Educational training and assistance for the Vietnamese continued to reflect the dedication and hard work of the personnel who were working in this civil affairs program. Lieutenant MacDonald, USN, the civil affairs officer of the Naval Support Activity in Da Nang, reported that the Da Nang Technical School was moving forward with its vocational training classes and that the performance of the trainees far exceeded earlier expectations. During the month, nearly 200 students from the refugee vocational class were trained in sewing, typing, auto mechanics, driving, sheet metal and welding procedures, electricity, and carpentry. These students were efficiently trained in their chosen skills so that upon graduation they could become gainfully employed. (15)

Another major achievement for the educational program came on 13 August with the formation of a Joint Religious Scholarship Committee in Da Nang. Three representatives from the Buddhist, Catholic, Cao Dai, and Protestant religions were to constitute the committee. A constitution was drawn up and official permission granted by the Mayor of Da Nang for the Committee to function within the city. The purpose of this Committee was to select qualified candidates for higher education and provide scholarship subsidy. Those students who were to receive scholarship aid would make a commitment to return to their home areas as teachers. Funds

for the scholarships were to be provided by the Chaplains' Civic Action Fund and the committee would also solicit financial support through its own resources. The initial plan called for 25 scholarships to be provided for the 1966-1967 academic year.

In another area of educational support, III MAF increased its school building program in an effort to provide as many classrooms as possible during the new school year. A continued search was carried on by civil affairs personnel to find school teachers who would be available to provide their services once the classrooms were completed and ready for occupancy. In the past, when Vietnamese school teachers could not be found, many Marines had volunteered to devote off hours to provide classroom instruction for the Vietnamese children. It can readily be pointed out that such spontaneous and unselfish acts of kindness on the part of the individual Marines were major assets in advancing the overall civil affairs effort.(16)

In other areas of support to the Vietnamese people, the Port of Da Nang continued to handle and process large quantities of goods being received in shipment for distribution through the CARE, CRS, and HANDCLASP programs. The major problems involved in the unloading of ships, which had created a backlog of supplies on the docks in past months, were being solved, thus allowing greater quantities of USAID agricultural supplies to reach the Vietnamese farmer in time to improve his rice crop. Progress was also being made in providing goods and services to the large number of refugees now living in secure areas throughout the ICTZ. In order to deal more effectively with the growing number of refugees, USAID and the American Red Cross launched a joint program whereby Red Cross personnel joined by their Vietnamese counterparts would work together in ministering to the needs of the refugees. An American Red Cross team arrived during the month, and was assigned to work with the refugees in Quang Ngai Province. A refugee resettlement housing project began in Quang Nam Province in the area of An My (3) that would provide housing for a portion of the Dai Loc refugee population. The construction was being carried on by 130 refugee workmen and by the end of the month, 30 houses had been completed and fitted for occupancy. Plans were made for the refugee families who were to settle in the An My (3) area to participate in the Vegetable Garden Program which was being developed as a source of employment and as a means to provide adequate food for those families who were moving into the area.(17)

As the month came to a close, important progress had been made in the RD programs both in Quang Nam and Quang Ngai Provinces. Much of the area which had previously been considered under VC control had been cleared and made secure by U. S. Marine and South Korean Marine combat operations. With the area cleared of major VC activity, RD cadre were able to move in and begin work on behalf of the GVN. Revolutionary Development progress in the Ngu Hanh Son National Priority Pacification Area was considered on the rise, as more Vietnamese civilians living within

the area openly gave support to the RD effort. An economic boost was provided for this area with the contribution of a saw mill assemblage by the World Relief Commission. A site was selected about 7 miles northwest of Da Nang, in an open section of timberland, to put the saw mill in operation. The mill was capable of producing 8,000 board feet of lumber per day when operated by a team of two men and it was anticipated that the mill would become the basis of a new industry for the area.(18)

September 1966

September proved to be an action-packed month for III MAF and other organizations carrying on civil affairs activity in the five provinces of I Corps. Major activity was centered around the National Elections which were held on 11 September, GOLDEN FLEECE Operations, which proved to be the most successful ever conducted in I Corps, and new innovations and progress being made by the I Corps JCC and the Committees working under its direction. There were growing signs of a large North Vietnamese Army (NVA) buildup along the Demilitarized Zone, (DMZ, located at the 17th Parallel). In an effort to inform and educate the civilians in I Corps about the importance of their participation in the elections, III MAF in conjunction with the I Corps ARVN Command conducted a massive psychological campaign. The major emphasis of this campaign was placed on encouraging all eligible voters to go to the polls and vote on election day and countering VC propaganda designed to inhibit voter participation. In a move to provide protection for the Vietnamese civilians against VC propaganda, harassment, and terrorist attacks, III MAF from 1 to 11 September put into the field nine infantry battalions to conduct search and destroy operations. These operations were mainly conducted away from major populated areas in an effort to screen these areas and prevent NVA and VC main force units from moving in and terrorizing the population prior to and during election day. On the day of elections, Marine combat and civic action personnel stayed away from the polling places to prevent any incidents that could be eventually used as VC propaganda. They did, however, assist the ARVN security units located along the roadways leading to and from the polling areas. Marine assistance in providing such security was an important factor in countering the number of VC incidents which occurred on election day.*(19)

* On September 11, the day of the National Election, there were only 34 Viet Cong incidents reported throughout the five provinces of I Corps. While the number of VC incidents may seem excessive for a one day period, it should be noted that these incidents were unsuccessful in preventing a record turnout of voters at the polling areas.

In an area near Da Nang, on 11 September, a combined action platoon with the assistance of the Vietnamese National Police intercepted and captured 12 confirmed VC and detained 60 Viet Cong suspects who were moving to interfere with the elections. As election day closed, there was general agreement among most observers that the election had been a resounding success, and that the NVA and VC had been effectively thwarted in their attempts to prevent the GVN from electing a National Constituent Assembly. The voter turnout in I Corps was most indicative of III MAF's efforts in support of the election process. Out of an estimated 814,000 eligible voters in I Corps, over 710,000 voters went to the polls and cast their ballots. The total percentage voter turnout in I Corps was between 87 and 89 percent. It was reported that the nationwide turnout of voters on election day far exceeded all predictions and that the ICTZ had recorded the highest percentage of voters of any of the Tactical Zones in South Vietnam. The success of the elections and the large voter turnout in the ICTZ was hailed by members of III MAF as a sign of civil affairs progress in pacification and a major defeat for the VC guerrilla and the operation of the VC infrastructure. (20)

After the National Elections were over and throughout the remainder of the month, there was a rise in VC-initiated incidents within the ICTZ, which was essentially attributed to the fact that the VC were attempting to regain their losses resulting from the success of the elections. The VC stepped up their propaganda campaign in a divisive effort to create dissension between Marine and ARVN forces and alienate the civilians from III MAF's civil affairs programs. Many of the VC propaganda leaflets were printed both in the Vietnamese and English languages in order to mark the individual Marine as one of the audiences for the propaganda effort. The VC also launched six terrorist attacks on different refugee camps throughout the ICTZ, seeking and burning the dwellings, which left many refugees homeless. Before the month had ended, the VC reign of terror had accounted for seven assassinations and five kidnappings of village officials within the ICTZ. (21)

In an effort to counter the increased enemy activity and support the Vietnamese RD program, III MAF stepped up its PsyWar, COUNTY FAIR, and GOLDEN FLEECE operations, along with increasing its total number of small unit operations. The PsyWar Operations conducted after the elections were directed toward informing the people of the results of the elections and the importance of these results. Emphasis was also placed on uniting the people behind the GVN's RD programs and the destruction of the VC infrastructure operating within the villages and hamlets. There were 14 COUNTY FAIR operations conducted during September in areas made secure by small unit operations. These operations were responsible for introducing increased numbers of Vietnamese civilians to the III MAF and ARVN civil affairs programs. As usual, food, clothing, medical and dental assist-



Hospitalman 3d Class Louis I. Patetsky of the 1st Marine Division passes out a bar of soap to a tiny schoolchild in Thanh My Trung village. (USMC Photo #A369256)

ance, and entertainment were provided for the people who were brought to collection points. Considerable success was achieved with these operations in identifying covert VC cadre who were operating within the populated areas. (22)

There were three GOLDEN FLEECE operations conducted by III MAF during the month, which afforded rice harvest protection to thousands of farmers and denied the enemy a valuable source of food supply. In past years the VC had counted on their ability to extort from the Vietnamese farmer enough rice during the harvest seasons to refurbish his food supply. Since the arrival of the Marines, this extortion activity had been considerably reduced in I Corps. The month of September produced the greatest denial of rice to the VC since the beginning of GOLDEN FLEECE operations.

From 17 through 27 September, the 1st Battalion, 7th Marines under the command of Major Littleton W. T. Waller II, conducted GOLDEN FLEECE 7-1 in an area south of the Song Ve and east of Highway Number One, 23 kilometers southeast of Quang Ngai City in the vicinity of No Duc District.* Prior to the battalion moving into the area, intelligence estimates indicated a considerable buildup of enemy forces. These estimates showed that there were two main force enemy battalions along with two enemy local force companies operating within the rice harvest area. The two enemy battalions were listed as C-19 located within Dam Thuy (2) and C-17 located just west of the district headquarters. Total enemy strength was given as 700 main force and 200 local force troops. Later it was found that a C-18 local force company was also operating in the area. When the Marines from 1/7 arrived in their area of operation, they found that the population which was considered to be under GVN control received them warmly. In the villages and hamlets where VC activity had been strong and where little civil affairs activity had taken place, the Marines were greeted with suspicion and distrust. In many of these villages and hamlets, there were signs urging the ARVN, RF, and PF forces to kill Americans. These propaganda signs were written both in the Vietnamese and English languages.

The results of the 10 day operation in the destruction of enemy forces and protection of the rice harvest indicated that III MAF forces had learned and refined rice harvest protection techniques, which would provide a basis for the expansion of the rice protection program. The overall record of GOLDEN FLEECE 7-1 showed that 244 VC had been confirmed killed, with the probable

* The Command Chronology of the 1st Battalion, 7th Marines for September 1966 shows that Lieutenant Colonel F. S. Wood was the Commanding Officer until the 3d of September, at which time Major L. W. T. Waller II, assumed command of the battalion. Major C. A. Folsom was the Executive Officer and Captain R. Savage was the Civil Affairs Officer for the battalion.

kill of an additional 56. There was one VC confirmed and 215 probables in the wounded category, along with one VC captured and 30 Viet Cong suspects detained for interrogation. Material losses to the enemy consisted of an assortment of military weapons and gear recovered from the enemy dead and 727 tons of stolen rice uncovered in an enemy cache. Marine combat casualties consisted of one killed and 19 wounded, but there was no material loss to the battalion during the operation. The mission of the battalion was successfully accomplished as over 8,400 tons of captured and harvested rice, an amount sufficient to support 31,000 Vietnamese civilians for a year, was denied to the enemy.

In the same area during the past four years, Vietnamese officials stated that 90 percent of the rice crop had been confiscated by the VC. As a result of the Marines' protection, the VC had been able to extort only about 30 percent of the total rice harvest, most of which was taken prior to the beginning of GOLDEN FLEECE 7-1. The battalion commander of 1/7 attributed the success of the operation to every Marine in the battalion knowing his job and the concept of the operation, quick reaction to good intelligence, and deep patrolling on the part of the company commanders, close coordination with Vietnamese officials and U. S. Army Sub-Sector Advisors, and daily conferences with all personnel involved in the operation to assure the best possible utilization of the Marine forces protecting the harvesters. It is interesting to note that during the entire operation not one Vietnamese farmer became a casualty, nor did any worker leave the fields from fear of VC attack. The battalion commander also pointed out that the operation was a complete success in the eyes of the men of the battalion and that great benefit had come from the close association with the Vietnamese people. It was believed that the wide variety of tasks performed and the success of the mission would contribute significantly to the combat readiness and morale of the battalion. As the Marines were preparing to leave the area, the people expressed their appreciation for the work and protection that had been provided and presented gifts to the commanding officer. When a Marine truck convoy arrived to transport the battalion back to its base camp area, between three and five thousand people were present, with banners flying, to bid farewell to the Marines. (23)

During September, the I Corps JCC was able to meet four times with one of the meetings being held at Thua Thien Provincial Headquarters. At the meeting in Thua Thien, the Chairman of the I Corps JCC explained to the Vietnamese officials and others present, the mission and policies of the council and its reason for traveling once a month to a different province to hold a meeting. The Province Chief of RD, along with other military, civilian, U. S., and ARVN officials, gave a detailed explanation to the council of the civil affairs activities going on in Thua Thien Province. It was pointed out that the RD program was undergoing a structural revision in the province which would enable the program to put more cadre into the field to enhance

the pacification effort. Problems presented to the council centered around the needs of a training program for village and hamlet chiefs, the need for an increase in the number of rural health workers, and an increase in the supply of construction material. After these problems were presented, General Robertshaw, Chairman of the Council, assured the Province Chief that every effort would be made by the council to assist him in solving the problems that had been put forth. Pacification efforts in Thua Thien Province had been advancing at a steady pace and the council was anxious to provide whatever help it could in order for the progress to continue. The Province Chief assured General Robertshaw that an all-out effort was being made to continue the progress and improve the programs.(24)

A major innovation took place during the month as the I Corps JCC moved to establish joint coordinating councils in each of the five provinces. General Robertshaw, General Platt, and Mr. Gordon explained at a meeting of the I Corps JCC that the establishment of a joint coordinating council in each of the five provinces was visualized as mirroring the operations of the corps area council. These councils would be structured so that their organization, mission, and functions would provide for a high level of coordination at the province level, similar to that being carried on by the I Corps JCC at the regional level. It was pointed out that the Province JCC would not be subordinate to the I Corps JCC, but rather function independently of the council while performing its task in the province. Membership in the Province JCCs would probably parallel that of the I Corps JCC, since most of the organizations were represented at the province level. Before the month had ended, the members of the I Corps JCC had voted unanimously to approve the establishment of the Province JCCs. A meeting was held on 27 September at the 1st Marine Division Command Post in Quang Tin Province with representatives of the Provincial Teams of Quang Ngai and Quang Tin Provinces attending. This represented the first organizational meeting of the proposed Province JCC and initial efforts were directed toward determining the mission, composition, functions, and frequency of future meetings. The meeting held to organize the Province JCCs represented a significant accomplishment in the development of civil affairs and provided an avenue for a stronger coordinated effort at total pacification.(25)

Material assistance and guidance provided by the civil affairs personnel of III MAF continued to improve and increase the services rendered to the Vietnamese people. Major emphasis was continuing to be placed on providing good medical assistance, improved educational programs, and refugee relief. Success was also being achieved by III MAF in influencing ARVN participation in the pacification effort. General Lam, Commanding General of I Corps, and General Thang, Minister of Revolutionary Development, were impressed by III MAF's civil affairs programs. They advised their representative to the I Corps JCC to inform the council that major revisions and reorganization were taking place to improve the ARVN Civil Affairs and RD programs and that command

attention would be brought to bear on all phases of pacification. Evidence of the increased interest in pacification came during the month, as plans were made by the ARVN to provide one special military medical team to work in each of the five provinces. These teams would have two basic missions; to provide MEDCAP treatments while visiting various communities, and to provide training for rural health workers. Such a program would have the effect of extending medical services to the Vietnamese people living in the rural areas, services which had principally been provided by the III MAF Medical Civic Action Program.(26)

There was growing indication during September that the North Vietnamese Army was preparing to make a major thrust across the Demilitarized Zone and enter South Vietnam with massive numbers of combat personnel. Such a move by the NVA would represent its first large scale confrontation with Marine combat units operating in I Corps. It was the opinion of General Walt and other members of his staff that the NVA buildup along the DMZ was a direct result of the successes being achieved in pacification in I Corps. Although other tactical considerations were involved in the NVA moves, reliable intelligence sources had indicated that the III MAF civil affairs efforts had placed a tremendous strain on VC guerrilla operations and that the VC infrastructures operating within the villages and hamlets of I Corps were becoming progressively ineffective. The buildup of NVA was therefore designed, in part, to force III MAF to move large numbers of Marine personnel into the northernmost area of I Corps in order to block a possible thrust across the DMZ. Such a move would draw heavily on the number of III MAF's units and personnel who were actively engaged throughout the five provinces of I Corps in carrying on civil affairs programs. With this move of Marine personnel to the DMZ, the VC hoped to regain the initiative with their guerrilla operations and re-establish control over the villages and hamlets through a strengthening of their infrastructure.(27)

During September, III MAF did conduct several large scale operations and continued others which had begun during the month of August. Operations such as HASTINGS, PAWNEE, MACON, and PRAIRIE produced significant successes in the destruction of enemy forces and materiel. Between four and six Marine battalions operated in the area of the DMZ and continued to counter NVA attempts at entering South Vietnam in mass. These operations drew heavily on the number of Marine battalions available for carrying on pacification as did the need for large numbers of Marine personnel required for base defense. The momentum of the civil affairs programs, however, allowed for continued progress in pacification.(28)

Lieutenant Colonel Evans, drawing on his experience on the I Corps JCC, pointed out that by the time large numbers of Marine personnel began to operate in the vicinity of the DMZ, III MAF's civil affairs programs were well established and continued to

function, despite the reduced number of personnel who remained available to work directly in the programs. Those personnel who remained directly involved in the civil affairs programs, within each of the five provinces of I Corps, doubled up on their workload and dedicated themselves to the success of the programs. While some areas may have suffered from lack of personnel to work in the civil affairs programs, the movement of Marine personnel to the DMZ area allowed for an expansion of the program. As Marine operations began to clear and make secure populated areas within Quang Tri Province, civil affairs efforts were directed at providing services for those Vietnamese civilians who had previously been subject to Viet Cong control.* (29)

Evidence that III MAF could carry on its total civil affairs effort, despite the movement of large numbers of Marines to the north, was indicated by the monthly account of projects started, projects completed, and services rendered to the Vietnamese within the total ICTZ. Marine MEDCAP teams were able to operate in 222 locations and provide medical and dental treatment to thousands of ailing Vietnamese civilians, many of whom were evacuated to hospitals and other medical facilities supported by the civil affairs program. Informal training was given to a number of Vietnamese rural health workers and nurses and an outbreak of the plague was checked in the Chu Lai TAOR. Effective plans were put into operation which would allow for the inoculation of scores of Vietnamese civilians as a preventative measure against the future spread of the disease. The educational program continued to progress as more schools came under construction and classroom facilities were completed. The refugee relief efforts were enhanced by the completion of 78 of the 90 houses planned in An My (3), which would provide housing for approximately 450 of the refugees located at Dai Loc. In addition, the III MAF civil affairs personnel were providing material and financial support for the planning and construction of increased numbers of houses in order to improve the living conditions of the Vietnamese refugees. (30)

The Marines' civil affairs efforts were not only centered around the large projects which were being organized and carried out, but were also reflected in the many spontaneous acts of goodwill which would lighten the burden of the Vietnamese people. An example of this occurred on 29 September, when the City of Da Nang sponsored a party for 4,000 Vietnamese children in celebration of the Mid-Autumn Festival. At this party, the 1st Marine Aircraft Wing Band provided entertainment, III MAF provided

* Quang Tri Province is the northernmost province in I Corps, with its northern boundary located along the Demarcation Line, (DMZ). It was in this province that the major Marine Corps buildup took place to counter the attempts of the NVA to cross the DMZ. It was in Quang Tri Province that the Marine base at Khe Sanh was subsequently established.

toys and candy for the children, and the Naval Support Activity, Da Nang contributed other material support which made the party a resounding success. Acts of friendship such as those demonstrated at the party served as catalysts for III MAF in its attempts to win the support of the Vietnamese people. (31)

Before the month had ended, additional help was provided to III MAF's pacification efforts and combat effectiveness with the establishment of a ROK Marine base camp in the southern portion of the Chu Lai TAOR.* Upon their arrival in the Quang Tin Province, the ROK Marines established and built a base camp, conducted a GOLDEN FLEECE operation which protected the harvesting of 68 tons of rice, and conducted two battalion search and destroy operations. The ROK Marines also launched programs of pacification which would provide medical, dental and other material assistance to the Vietnamese people living within their area of operation. By the end of September, six villages in the Korean Marines' area of operation were classified 60 percent or higher on the III MAF Pacification Scale, with an additional five villages rating in the 40 to 60 percent category. (32)

The importance of total pacification in South Vietnam was transmitted to President Lyndon B. Johnson in a report prepared by Mr. Robert W. Komer, Special Assistant to the President for Pacification. The September document entitled "The Other War in Vietnam-a Progress Report," reflected the advances and setbacks which had occurred in pacification throughout South Vietnam since the Honolulu Conference in February 1966. A portion of the report which reflected the pacification efforts being carried on in I Corps indicated that significant progress had been made and that the commitments made to the GVN during the Honolulu Conference were being fulfilled.** The successes in pacification throughout I Corps, as reflected in Mr. Komer's report, were due in large part to the officers and enlisted personnel working in III MAF's civil affairs programs. The prominent leadership and foresight of the members of the I Corps JCC, and the sincere and dedicated concern of the Commanding General of III MAF in providing for the needs of the Vietnamese people, created the necessary impetus for making I Corps during September one of the most pacified areas in South Vietnam.

* ROK is the abbreviation form normally used to identify military personnel of the Republic of Korea. The ROK Marine Corps units serving in Vietnam have proven themselves to be extremely capable in combat against the enemy and in supporting civil affairs programs. ** "The Other War In Vietnam-a Progress Report," can be found in the Department of State Bulletins, v. LV, nos. 1424-25, dtd 10 and 17 October 1966. A copy of the report can also be obtained by writing the Information Staff, Agency for International Development, Washington, D. C. At the time of the writing of this report, Mr. Henry Cabot Lodge was the U. S. Ambassador to South Vietnam, Mr. William Porter was the Deputy Ambassador, and Robert W. Komer was Special Assistant to the President for U. S. Pacification in South Vietnam.

CHAPTER IV

U. S. Marine Corps Civil Affairs in I Corps October-November-December 1966

The North Vietnamese Army (NVA) buildup along the Demilitarized Zone, which had initially begun during the latter part of July, continued to put pressure on III MAF personnel requirements for pacification during October.* Before the month had ended major changes had taken place in the location of Marine personnel throughout the ICTZ. The 3d Marine Division moved from the Da Nang area north to Phu Bai and assumed responsibility for operations in Thua Thien and Quang Tri Provinces. The 1st Marine Division moved from the Chu Lai area to Quang Nam Province and located in the Da Nang area, while retaining control of the Chu Lai TAOR under the direction of Task Force X-Ray. With this move, the 1st Marine Division assumed responsibility for operations in Quang Nam, Quang Tin, and Quang Ngai Provinces. This shifting and redistributing of Marine personnel afforded III MAF a greater flexibility and improved command control for carrying on operations in an expanding ICTZ. In October, U. S. Army units arrived in I Corps and were placed under operational control of III MAF for combat operations. The 4th Battalion, 503d Airborne Infantry Regiment, 173d Airborne Brigade, was assigned to direct operational control of the Commanding General of the 1st Marine Division for deployment within the Da Nang TAOR. This battalion functioned essentially as a Marine battalion in conducting small unit operations within its assigned area of responsibility. Battery A of the 2d Battalion, 94th Artillery Regiment, U. S. Army, which was also assigned to the operational control of the 1st Marine Division, was placed in the Chu Lai TAOR to provide additional fire support for combat operations within that area. The 2d Battalion (-), 94th Artillery Regiment and the 1st Battalion, 40th Artillery Regiment were assigned to the direct operational control of the Commanding General of the 3d Marine Division. These units were placed at a 3d Marine Division combat base located at Dong Ha in Quang Tri Province. The movement of these U. S. Army artillery units to the Dong Ha combat base significantly increased the fire support capability available to Marine units operating within Quang Tri Province and along the DMZ. The artillery coverage provided a firing fan which covered the entire area from Laos to the South China Sea and greatly reduced the enemy's maneuvering capability within the area.(1)

* The Demilitarized Zone (DMZ) is situated at the 17th Parallel and stretches 40 miles across Vietnam from the South China Sea on the east to the Laotian border on the west. It is approximately six miles in width and was established by the Geneva Accords in 1954 to serve as a buffer zone between North and South Vietnam.

While III MAF had been effective in blocking any mass invasion by NVA troops across the DMZ with its own buildup of Marines in Quang Tri Province, the pace of pacification, although not stopped, was definitely slowed down.* Another condition which adversely affected pacification progress during the month, was the arrival of the monsoon season in I Corps. The coastal plain rivers and streams throughout the ICTZ presented flood conditions. In many areas of the ICTZ roadways became submerged and were often unusable as bridge structures were swept away by the flood. The III MAF had to cope with a growing number of refugees whose homes had been swept away by the flood waters in the coastal lowlands.(2)

The III MAF had concentrated the majority of its civil affairs efforts in the coastal lowlands, since this area was the most heavily populated within the ICTZ. The establishment of lasting and solid civil affairs programs had been a chief aim of III MAF while attempting to establish firm U. S. and GVN influence in this area. This concept was based on the premise that successful elimination of the enemy, development of stronger village and hamlet defense systems, stabilization of the economy, and the establishment of functioning local government comprised of individuals who lived in those villages and hamlets and who were responsive to GVN control would enhance the programs.**(3) The III MAF objective of establishing firm U. S. and GVN control in the coastal lowlands of the ICTZ reflected the six goals set at the Honolulu Conference in February 1966, to be accomplished by the end of the year. In an effort to fulfill these goals, III MAF had constantly worked at improving and implementing the Vietnamese Revolutionary Development Program.***(4) Unless

* By the end of October, the III MAF troop buildup in Quang Tri Province and along the DMZ, which had started in July 1966, accounted for approximately 10,000 Marines committed to combat operations within that area.

** The total area of the ICTZ in October 1966 covered approximately 10,440 square miles with the coastal lowlands covering approximately 3,340 square miles of the total area. While the coastal lowlands represented only a small area of the total ICTZ, it was the source for all the salt, fish, and virtually all the 470,000 tons of rice produced within the ICTZ. Living within the coastal lowland areas were approximately 2,400,000 of the 2,700,000 Vietnamese people living throughout the ICTZ. The remainder of the ICTZ is mountainous, with very little food production of any kind, and contains about 10 percent of the Vietnamese population.

*** In brief terms, the six goals set at the Honolulu Conference in February 1966, which were to be accomplished by the end of the year were: (1) attrition by year's end of VC/NVA forces at a rate as high as their capability to put men into the field; (2) increase the percentage of VC/NVA base areas denied use from 20 percent to 50 percent; (3) increase the critical roads and railroads open for use from 30 percent to 50 percent; (4) increase the population in secure areas from 50 percent to 60 percent; (5)

the RD program could be made to succeed the possibility of generating popular support for the GVN, especially in the rural areas, was less than promising. There was no doubt that the Marines were generally being well received by the Vietnamese people and were making an important contribution to the welfare of the people through their civil affairs programs. Unfortunately, the attitudes of the Vietnamese people towards the Marines were basically non-transferable to the GVN, which often allowed the Marines to be more accepted among the people than the government they were committed to support. While III MAF was gratified by the favorable attitudes of the Vietnamese people and considered this an indication of civil affairs progress, there was still the realization that if an effective pacification program was to succeed, a greater commitment to this effort was necessary on the part of the GVN.(5)

In an attempt to assess the progress being made in Vietnamese Revolutionary Development, III MAF developed a grading scale similar to the one developed earlier to measure pacification progress. The grading scale was designed to cover five major areas with varying programs worth different value points under each major area. Using the grading scale, III MAF was able to reduce qualitative objectives into quantitative analysis on a monthly basis concerning the RD program. The monthly quantitative analysis was then used as a basis for measuring "firm GVN/US influence" within the villages and hamlets which were undergoing pacification through the efforts of the Marines and the GVN. In supporting the RD program, III MAF attempted to strike a counterbalance between the objectives set forth in the Revolutionary Development Indices.* For instance, the establishment of local government could not proceed satisfactorily within the villages and hamlets unless the destruction of the VC guerrillas and their infrastructure reached a significant level. In order to define a "significant level" of achievement which would indicate RD progress, III MAF established that when a 60 percent level of achievement could be measured on the Revolutionary Development Indices "firm GVN/US influence" had

pacify the four selected high priority areas, increasing the pacified population in those areas by 235,000; (6) ensure the defense of all military bases, political and populated centers, and food production areas now under government control.

* The new grading scale being used during October 1966 to measure quantitatively the progress of the Revolutionary Development program was called the Revolutionary Development Indices For Computation of Progress Towards Goals. This measuring instrument was essentially the same, in areas covered with value points assigned, as the Pacification Progress Indices which were developed and used by III MAF in the earlier part of the year. Both Indices are set up on a 100 point basis with the achievement of 60 points out of the total 100 representing pacification progress. Reference is made to the Pacification Progress Indices on page 14.

been established in the area undergoing pacification. In a move to eradicate enemy base camps within the ICTZ in support of the RD program, III MAF conducted several large unit operations in the Do Xa area located in the western part of Quang Ngai Province. Intelligence sources had indicated that the enemy base camp in the Do Xa area was the largest within the entire ICTZ and III MAF had selected it as a prime target area for fulfilling the second goal of the Honolulu Conference. By the end of October, Marine forces operating in the Do Xa area had been successful in defeating large numbers of the enemy and were continuing to pressure enemy units operating in the area, in an effort to neutralize the base camp.(6)

The decrease in civil affairs activity during the month, resulting principally from the monsoon season and the shifting of Marine personnel into the DMZ area, was felt most sharply in the areas of MEDCAP treatments, food distribution, and project construction.* Although there were diminished or unchanged levels of pacification existing in certain areas of activity during the month, other areas had new innovations and were making progress. The I Corps JCC met four times during October, and continued to concentrate on providing the necessary coordination between all agencies involved in pacification, and the establishment of the Province JCCs. One of the council's regular meetings during the month was held at the Quang Tin Provincial Headquarters in Tam Ky. At this meeting the members of the I Corps JCC were briefed by Vietnamese officials on the state of the province security and the progress being made in Revolutionary Development. The Vietnamese officials also briefed the council on the plans made for carrying on RD during calendar year 1967. At the meeting, the Chairman of the council assured the Province Chief that the council would do all within its power to support the new program of Revolutionary Development. He also stated that the development of the Province JCCs would be a significant asset in coordinating all agencies at the local level in support of the forthcoming RD program for 1967.(7)

General Walt had issued instructions concerning the early establishment of the Province JCCs to the commanding general of each Marine division, the sector advisor in each I Corps Province, and the senior advisor with each I Corps ARVN division. The instructions were to inform those who would be directly involved in providing assistance to the Province JCCs of the importance of the program and the basic concepts of its operation. The GVN decision to strengthen the RD efforts would require closer coordination and cooperation at the province level. Since the

* Compared with September, MEDCAP treatments decreased 21 percent during October, construction projects dropped 91 percent, and food distribution was down 64 percent. Persons living in areas of at least 60 percent pacification remained the same during October as they had been in September, where there had been significant gains during the preceding months.

GVN Revolutionary Development Program was planned and implemented at the province level, III MAF civil affairs personnel felt that the Province JCCs were a necessity. General Lam was in favor of the Province JCC's concept and indicated that ARVN command attention would be directed in support of the program. (8)

The first meeting of a province JCC was held on 24 October in Thua Thien Province. The other provinces were in the process of organizing their Joint Coordinating Councils and General Platt advised all members of the I Corps JCC to provide as much help and encouragement as possible to get the Province JCCs organized and functioning, since the GVN Revolutionary Development Plan for the calendar year 1967 had been promulgated. General Platt also recommended to the council that a briefing team be formed for the purpose of widely disseminating information contained in the GVT Plan. This team was to consist of representatives of III MAF, USAID, JUSPAO, CSD, and possibly any other interested agencies and brief down to the battalion level. Its mission was to foster a greater coordinated effort at the grass-roots level for supporting the future RD program. Major General Nguyen Duc Thang, the Minister of Revolutionary Development for the GVN and one of the principal architects of the 1967 RD Program, indicated that the new RD Program would receive greater funding to provide for more cadre personnel and the developing of an improved training program. General Thang stated what he considered to be the deficiencies of the 1966 RD Program and disclosed that the Program for 1967 would be directed at correcting those deficits. (9) The points he cited were:

1. Lack of security--1,400 RD cadre killed or wounded during the first nine months of 1966.
2. Lack of peoples' participation--cadre were building in the hamlets without the help of the people.
3. Lack of coordination between GVN programs--GVN programs needed to be closely monitored to prevent:
 - a. construction of hamlet schools where there were no teachers.
 - b. construction of dispensaries where there were no medical personnel
4. The program had been too much of a numbers game--quantity rather than quality in the pacification of hamlets in 1966.
5. Weak cooperation between the ARVN, the provincial administrators, and the RD cadre--lack of coordination and cooperation most pronounced at the hamlet and village level.
6. Lack of follow-up--a gap was created when the RD Teams moved on to another village or hamlet, leaving the people in the last village or hamlet feeling deserted.

7. The lack of overall doctrine--no common language for the RD Program--over half of the RD cadre had not been introduced to current RD philosophy and were operating under doctrine received as Peoples Action Teams (PAT) or Rural Political Cadre (RPC).

The candid appraisal of the 1966 RD Program by General Thang indicated that the GVN was facing up to its deficiencies in the area of pacification and in the new year would become more conscious of its importance as a means for defeating the enemy. General Thang laid down four principles of action for the RD cadre to follow. These were:

1. Cadre would be the link between the people and the GVN.
2. The people are the main force and the cadre are their guides.
3. The old life is to be destroyed and in its place a new life is to be created. The result of the creation of a new life would be the New Life Hamlet.
4. The cadre are guided by the Ministry of Revolutionary Development Policy and Doctrine and by the will of the people.* (10)

During October, the Chieu Hoi program continued to make progress as 172 ralliers defected from the VC ranks and came over to the side of the GVN. This number of defections in a single month represented the highest total ever reported in I Corps, to that time. The PsyWar Committee discussed measures on how to improve the Chieu Hoi program and encourage families with members serving with the VC to assist in bringing those members back to support of the GVN. (11) It was important that the Chieu Hoi program provide economic and educational opportunities for the returnees along with aid and security to their families. The PsyWar Committee listed three essentials for a successful psychological warfare program to bring about VC defections. These essentials were:

1. Military strength of the GVN and the Free World Allies.

* It should be noted that General Thang in discussing the RD Program for 1966 was taking into consideration the total RD Program in South Vietnam. The progress being made within the ICTZ by RD cadre was the direct result of the efforts being made by III MAF in eliminating the deficiencies put forth by General Thang.

2. Provisions for security of Vietnamese families whose members are potential ralliers.
3. Availability of training and employment for the returnees.

One of the strongest suggestions of the Committee was for a stepped-up vocational training program for the ralliers. In order to make the initial appeal to the potential ralliers, an information program was suggested which would exemplify the theme of the GVN pursuing a just cause and showing that Communism was based on false theories. Psychological appeals such as home sickness, broken promises of Communist bosses, and exploitation of the VC's fear of hunger and death would be increased in an effort to bring about more defections. Consideration was given to the effectiveness of the drama teams which had been operating throughout the ICTZ. It was pointed out that some of the drama team members had written stories showing the sacrifices of the American and Free World Forces in the war. A proposal was made that these stories should be published in book form for nation-wide distribution. (12)

The value of the Chieu Hoi program and the importance of encouraging defections from the Viet Cong was apparent during the month as Hoi Chanhs (ralliers) continued to provide intelligence information and work with COUNTY FAIR operations. The assistance provided by the Hoi Chanhs on COUNTY FAIRs was considered an important element in their overall success. Since Hoi Chanhs were proving to be reliable and were well equipped to assist the Marines in countering VC activity, a new program was initiated during October which called for Hoi Chanh participation.

Major General Herman Nickerson, Commanding General, 1st Marine Division, decided that a trial program should be initiated whereby Hoi Chanhs would join Marine units in the field and work as scouts on patrols and combat operations. Six Hoi Chanhs, all of whom were volunteers who had worked with Marines on past COUNTY FAIR operations, were initially assigned to work with the 1st and 9th Marines. The program called for the Hoi Chanhs to wear uniforms, carry weapons, receive pay, and live, eat, and work with the Marines. They would accompany the Marines on patrols and sweeps to identify VC hiding places and routes of escape. In addition, the Hoi Chanhs would speak with families who had members serving with the Viet Cong and explain the merits of the Chieu Hoi program. In order to develop an atmosphere of esprit de corps, General Nickerson named the Hoi Chanhs working in the program, "Kit Carson Scouts." Before the month had ended, the Kit Carson Scouts were showing that the confidence expressed in them by the general was well founded.* (13)

* In an interview with Lieutenant General Herman Nickerson, Jr., during August 1968, he stated that from the beginning the "Kit



While the children wait, men of the 2d Battalion, 9th Marines open boxes of books and school supplies donated to the school at Le Dong, 12 miles south of Da Nang. (USMC Photo #A187651)



Gunnery Sergeant Lon V. White of the 2d Battalion, 11th Marines watches an excited young girl try a dress from a gift of American-style clothing distributed to villages north of Chu Lai. (USMC Photo #A369742)

The Marines in Quang Tri Province were able to carry on civil affairs efforts despite the monsoon rains and the growing NVA buildup. Major efforts at pacification were directed at eight villages around the forward logistic base at Dong Ha. The Marines were able to provide the villagers with medical assistance, food and clothing, and developed construction projects which would materially assist the local populace. A bridge at Cam Lo which was destroyed by the VC in January 1965 was rebuilt by the Marines. Until the bridge was repaired the only means of crossing the river was by ferry boat, and this presented problems during the monsoon season. On the day the bridge was opened, the villagers showed their appreciation by voluntarily clearing fields of fire for the Marines so they could better protect the bridge from VC attack.(14)

As the month was drawing to a close, important gains had been recorded in many of III MAF's programs which would assist the onward movement of pacification. The Combined Action Program grew as two more combined action platoons were activated for operation within the ICTZ. The total Combined Action Program by the end of October showed 50 platoons and 6 company headquarters in operation through the tactical areas of III MAF.

A refugee resettlement project in Thu Bon Hamlet was completed as 300 structures were opened to care for approximately 1,500 people.(15) Other refugee resettlement projects being carried on at Ai Dong, Phung Trung, and Hoa Luc in the Quang Nam Province continued to receive assistance from III MAF civil affairs personnel. Work at the Ai Dong refugee resettlement project was severely hampered by flood waters which resulted in a loss of much of the work previously done. Provisions were made to replace the materials lost at the project through III MAF's civil affairs assets.(16) Medical personnel involved in the civil affairs programs provided inoculations for a large number of Vietnamese civilians in an effort to keep the incidence of plague at a low level. Medication and inoculations were also provided for a variety of other diseases which were on the increase within the ICTZ. The Naval Support Activity in Da Nang completed and opened three deep water piers which would greatly increase the handling capability for supplies being received at the port. It was reported by Admiral Weschler that the new piers, which were 600 feet long, would accommodate ships with a 34-foot draft and would increase handling capacity by 5,440 measured tons per day.(17)

Carson Scouts" proved their worth in assisting Marines in the field. Through the knowledge of VC tactics, the Scouts were able to save many Marine lives as well as assisting in the destruction of enemy forces. General Nickerson stated that the name "Kit Carson Scouts" was given to the Hoi Chanhs working with the Marines because the Hoi Chanhs were good scouts in the tradition of Christopher (Kit) Carson (1809-1868), the U. S. frontiersman, Indian agent, and soldier. The name was also designed to create a feeling of confidence and belonging which would enhance the morale of the Hoi Chanhs.

As October passed into November, 6 of the 18 Marine battalions operating in South Vietnam were located in Quang Tri Province generally along the DMZ. With these Marine battalions removed from the counter guerrilla and pacification campaign in the other four provinces of the ICTZ, the remaining units in those areas were required to extend their own operations to fill in the gaps. The cost of the northward movement of six Marine battalions to the pacification effort was justified as the Marines were able to contain the NVA on the DMZ and provide an adequate level of civil affairs activity which continued progress towards fulfilling the six goals of the Honolulu Conference of 1966. The northward movement of the Marines under the most trying of circumstances demonstrated the great logistic flexibility which III MAF had developed. This capability indicated that an adequate logistic base was available to support all of the activities in which the command was engaged.(18)

November 1966

The I Corps JCC and the committees functioning under its direction were faced with many problems during November, which required skillful decision making for continuing coordinated pacification efforts within the ICTZ. In the area of public health, there developed a shortage of funds to pay rural health workers and provide for the continued training of health workers. The immediate problem was effectively solved by a donation of the required funds from the Chaplains' Civic Action Fund. There was a critical shortage of civilian doctors in I Corps to cope with the growing medical needs of the populace. It was pointed out by the Public Health Committee that in-country training facilities were inadequate to maintain the number of doctors desired and that GVN salaries for working in the government program were inadequate to attract the type of personnel required. It was also pointed out by the committee that out-of-country training of doctors had not produced the desired results because the doctors were not receiving training which was compatible with medicine as it was practiced in South Vietnam. Indications were that temporary relief for the problem would come through a plan devised by the American Medical Association which would send doctors to South Vietnam for the purpose of teaching Vietnamese student doctors a curriculum more compatible with existing in-country medical practices.

In an effort to check an outbreak of the plague in East Da Nang, III MAF medical personnel assisted Vietnamese personnel in carrying on a campaign to inform the citizens about plague protection. Inoculations were stepped up and 1,500 pounds of diazinone dust were dispensed in the area where the plague was most intense. A rat trapping program was developed to encourage the Vietnamese people to destroy the rats in their areas, since rats were the prime carriers of the plague. In several fishing villages in Quang Ngai Province, projects were started whereby villagers would trap rats and turn in their tails in return for 100 grams of rice. Members of the Public Health Committee felt

Title: Bounty on Rats (health poster)
Campaign: Civil Affairs
Target: Civilian Population

1. R E W A R D

2. Prevention is much better than cure.

Flies, mosquitoes and especially rats carry many diseases.

Mosquitoes give you malaria; flies give you many kinds of stomach diseases and rats are the cause of deadly plagues.

There have been epidemics already in Quang Nam Province caused by rats. They cause Bubonic Plague which kills men, women, and children by the hundreds.

To save your loved ones from dying a horrible death, as victims of the plague, you must eliminate the rats right away.

A reward of 100 grams of rice is offered for every rat, dead or alive, that you take to your village-chief. So in addition to eliminating the great danger of the rats, you will have rice to reward your efforts.

Help the children, men and women of this community live free of disease. Bring as many rats as you can catch. You will be rewarded 100 grams of rice for every rat you bring to the village-chief.*

29th Civil Affairs Company

* The above information was extracted from a Public Health poster which was distributed to the Vietnamese people within the ICTZ. The poster was to inform the populace of the growing plague problem and the need for eliminating rats. The poster distributed to the Vietnamese people was published in their native language.

that if the program could be extended to many areas and produce results, the rat problem would be considerably reduced. When the French were in Vietnam, they had required each family living in a rat-infested village to produce and turn in two rat tails weekly. So intense was the French program in attempting to prevent plague outbreaks that the two rat tails required each week from Vietnamese families were looked upon almost as a tax requirement. The rat trapping program may have had its humorous side, but the seriousness of the growing plague threat to the Vietnamese civilians and military personnel constituted a major medical problem which had to be dealt with.

Aside from the medical treatment provided to the Vietnamese people in the hospitals and dental clinics operating under the direction of III MAF-assigned personnel, civil affairs MEDCAP teams operated in 210 locations within the ICTZ, during November. The MEDCAP teams were successful in providing informal on-the-job training to 55 health workers, including nurses, and inoculated over 6,000 persons for various diseases as a preventative medicine measure. (19)

The Education Committee concerned itself during the month of November with developing plans to support needy children, to reduce the increased shortage of teachers resulting from the Vietnamese military draft, and to develop new educational programs. A document was drawn up to be signed by the school teachers which would indicate the students who were deserving of help. The document would also indicate the number of children who belonged to families who were financially unable to support their education. It was anticipated that a Marine battalion would then sponsor one or more schools, depending on the number of students qualifying for aid. The students would receive 250 Vietnamese dollars per month to continue their schooling. A Marine officer would visit each family who had a sponsored child, in order to assure a coordinated effort for the program. The Education Committee brought to the attention of the I Corps JCC the need of a program to exempt trained school teachers from the Vietnamese military draft. The shortage of teachers for secondary schools was reaching the critical point in I Corps and something had to be done to retain trained teachers on the job. The I Corps JCC was able to convince General Lam of the needs existing for the retention of teachers in I Corps and he intervened in a case where 20 teachers had been drafted and requested a temporary deferment. The GVN policy was not to exempt teachers from the three year draft. (20)

Plans were also being made by the Education Committee to set up a model school for public health and to introduce health education to both the teachers and students. It was suggested by the committee that physical education and courses in hygiene be introduced into the educational curriculum in an effort to improve the health conditions of the Vietnamese school children. A program was being developed which would provide for the estab-

lishment of an education camp to care for a number of school age children who were on the streets and running afoul of the law. There was discussion concerning the growing number of refugees in I Corps and how the school needs of the refugee children could best be served.* There was a definite need for establishing refugee schools within the ICTZ and III MAF civil affairs personnel along with USAID personnel were working on solving the problem.(21)

The Chairman of the Education Committee outlined for the I Corps JCC the two USAID-financed scholarship programs designed to provide college training in the United States for qualified students. The Leadership Training Program provided an opportunity for 100 selected students with demonstrated ability to receive from one to two years of college training in specific fields such as Medicine, Law, and Education for approximately 1,200 students. Knowledge of the English language was not a prerequisite since a special six month language training course would precede the college training, if required.(22)

The Commodities Distribution Committee concentrated its efforts during November on improving coordination between the many programs involved in commodity distribution. As the civil affairs programs expanded in the ICTZ, it became increasingly difficult to completely eliminate all duplication of the pacification efforts. In an attempt to prevent uncoordinated and autonomous programs of pacification from developing, attention was given to improving and keeping open the lines of communication between all U. S. and Free World forces and civilian agencies who were carrying on civil affairs programs within the ICTZ. The committee was advised that there was considerable need in Thua Thien Province for gift items for Christmas and Tet which were to be distributed to orphans, poor families, and widows of RF and PF personnel. The III MAF Chaplain also advised the committee that there had not been a Christmas Trains and Trucks (ACTT) campaign during the year to collect items for distribution to the Vietnamese people, but that donations of items would continue coming from the United States through Project HANDCLASP. The committee set into motion plans for collecting food, clothes, toys, and other items for distribution to the Vietnamese people during the coming holiday season. Lieutenant MacDonald, USN, announced to the committee that preparations were under way for carrying out "Operation Foodstuff" during December. The U. S. Navy would provide 10,000 pounds of canned foods to ARVN troops in outlying areas and the Vietnamese Air Force would air drop

*Major Brantly, Team Leader of the Displaced Persons Team of the U. S. Army 29th Civil Affairs Company attached to III MAF, reported during October 1966 that his team survey indicated that there were approximately 240,000 refugees located within the ICTZ. The obstacles confronting refugee resettlement, according to Major Brantly, was a lack of security and the lack of available land suitable for resettlement.

the canned foods to the troops.(23)

The I Corps JCC received many reports during November which reflected the overall design of pacification being carried on within the Marines' areas of responsibility. Mr. Earl Young, USAID Military Liaison Officer for I Corps, reported that he had completed a four-day visit to military units located in Quang Tri Province. Mr. Young indicated that he was favorably impressed with the widespread understanding of the concept of civic action which he found during discussions with individuals in lower level units. He also indicated that the techniques being used to insure wide dissemination of information concerning civic action programs were impressive. A report was received from the Region I Field Representative for CARE, which pointed out that CARE operations in the RVN began in 1954, with a program of assistance designed to aid the refugees who moved south of the 17 Parallel. Food assistance, tools for development, blankets and clothing packages had been distributed to refugees since the inception of the program. The groups receiving CARE aid included individual needy, refugees, Regional and Popular Force widows and orphans, welfare institutions, charity and military hospitals, and victims of disasters. The basic food commodities provided by CARE were rice and salt, which were purchased in-country to help the South Vietnamese economy. Tools and equipment were provided to the Vietnamese people through the components of the standard CARE kits. The CARE supplies which were available for distribution in I Corps consisted of:

Midwifery Kits	Needle Trade Kits
Midwifery Replacement Kits	Sewing Kits
Blacksmith Kits	Elementary School Kits
Woodworking Kits	Resettler's Kits
Classroom Supply Kits	Textile Packages
Physical Education Kits	Sewing Machines
Mason Kits	

The report also pointed out that CARE assistance was not intended to stand alone, but rather to be interwoven into the overall assistance effort of other organizations and agencies. The majority of CARE supplies were distributed in coordination with and through the U. S. Military Civic Action Program and III MAF represented this major effort in I Corps.(24)

Mr. Mark Gordon, USAID, informed the council of a critical need to provide 10,000 tons of fertilizer to Quang Tin and Quang Ngai Provinces for use on the new rice crop which was to be planted during the month. I Corps was an area deficient in rice and USAID had imported 100,000 tons of rice to the area during the past year to help feed the populace. Mr. Gordon pointed out that one ton of fertilizer would increase the rice yield by three or four times, and by providing the needed fertilizer it would be possible to grow as much as 40,000 additional tons of rice and proportionately reduce the import requirement. Ferti-

lizer had been in short supply in I Corps during the past year for a number of reasons, including lack of sufficient transport means and VC interdiction of roads and the railroad. Port improvement work being conducted at Chu Lai had prevented normal resupply of the two southernmost provinces. Due to the flood conditions in the Delta area, fertilizer which was to have been sent there was still aboard deep-draft ships in Saigon Harbor. Mr. Gordon stated that if USAID could arrange to have 10,000 tons of fertilizer brought to Da Nang, help would then be needed to transport it to Chu Lai and to make distribution to the provinces. Admiral Weschler informed the council that if USAID could arrange for the shipment of the fertilizer to Da Nang, the Naval Support Activity would provide the sea-lift requirements to move the fertilizer to Chu Lai. Before the month had ended large quantities of fertilizer had arrived in I Corps and were being distributed to the needy Vietnamese farmers through the cooperative efforts of the members of the I Corps JCC.(25)

The effects of III MAF's total pacification programs continued to be demonstrated during the month through COUNTY FAIR Operations, combined action growth, Chieu Hoi, and RD support, and the establishment of Province JCCs. The four COUNTY FAIR operations which were conducted enabled III MAF to reach a rural populace which had generally been dominated by Viet Cong influence. The number of operations was far below the monthly level desired by III MAF, but the problem of inadequate GVN support continued to persist. A future increase in the number of such operations was anticipated with the announcement from the ARVN I Corps Commander that 25 of his 32 battalions would ultimately be committed in support of COUNTY FAIR operations. The Combined Action Program, which had also suffered from lack of GVN support in supplying the necessary Popular Force troops, was able to make modest gains. Two combined action platoons were activated during November, which brought the number of platoons operating under the 8 combined action company headquarters to 52. The 55 platoons represented six less than the number scheduled by III MAF for activation during the month. The year end goal of III MAF was to have 74 combined action platoons operating within the ICTZ.(26)

A Chieu Hoi village located in the Phu Bai area continued to grow as the Marines provided assistance in developing new programs which would benefit the Hoi Chanh living at the village. Efforts were directed at providing an adequate water supply and hygienic improvements, the construction of a dispensary, a school, and an animal husbandry cooperative. The Marines were providing tools, technical assistance, and lumber while the Hoi Chanh provided the physical labor. By the end of November, a dispensary was in operation, four new wells had been dug, two 160-gallon showers had been installed, a carpenter shop was in operation, and a secondary school was under construction. The Chieu Hoi village also had a fish pond and a pig farm, both of which were stocked, and there were 80 acres of farm land under-

going development for truck farming.*(27) There were many Marines who contributed to the success of the Chieu Hoi village at Phu Bai, but one Marine stood out above all others, Gunnery Sergeant J. L. McDonald. Sergeant McDonald gained permission from his commanding officer to work with the Hoi Chanh and he completely dedicated himself to improving the living conditions within the Chieu Hoi village. Many of the programs and construction projects carried on in the village were the direct result of his tenacity and exceptional leadership. Sergeant McDonald was able to win the confidence of the Hoi Chanh through his sincerity, understanding, and a genuine appreciation for their way of life. As his reputation grew among the local populace, more ralliers appeared at the village. So successful were this one Marine's efforts that the Chieu Hoi village was often referred to by the local Vietnamese as "McDonald's Village." A United States Congressional party which visited the village claimed it to be the best and most prosperous in all of South Vietnam.(28)

In order to provide security for the residents of villages and hamlets in the rural areas and to assure protection for civil affairs projects, III MAF provided continuous support for the development of rural communication facilities. For adequate security to exist, it was necessary to have a rapid interchange of information between the hamlets and villages. The villages must also be able to communicate rapidly with military forces in the area in order to assure swift assistance in time of need. During the month, 38 villages were credited with having reliable communications between the hamlets, village headquarters, and district headquarters. In addition, 50 villages had partially completed communication facilities and a number of other villages were beginning the initial stage of construction.(29)

The members of the I Corps JCC who had been diligently working for the establishment of Province JCCs saw their efforts materialize during the month. By the end of November, Province JCCs had been established and were functioning in four out of the five provinces. Quang Tri Province was still in the process of organizing a council, but indications were that a council would be functioning by early December. In general, membership on the Province JCCs follows that of the I Corps JCC. Representatives included the Province Chief who was the Chairman of the Council and his staff assistants for security, administration, and Revolutionary Development, along with ARVN officers. Repre-

* The GVN Chieu Hoi amnesty program allowed for an enemy who voluntarily gave himself up, other than in battle, to qualify as a Hoi Chanh. The Chieu Hoi program consisted of a 45-day curriculum of reeducation and motivational lectures and limited training in a skill, if desired. Following the reeducation and training program, a Hoi Chanh was resettled on a piece of farm land with his family or the GVN would assist him in finding employment in his trade. From January through November 1966, 1,386 of the enemy entered the Chieu Hoi program in I Corps.

representatives to the council also included the provincial representatives of USAID and JUSPAC, the MACV Sector Advisor, and a representative from the senior Marine headquarters in the province. In addition, a representative from the Combined Studies Division of MACV sat on the councils and in Quang Ngai Province the ROK Marines were represented.* The councils began to develop plans which would be implemented in support of the Revolutionary Development program and established lines of communication between all agencies who were concerned with the RD effort.** (30)

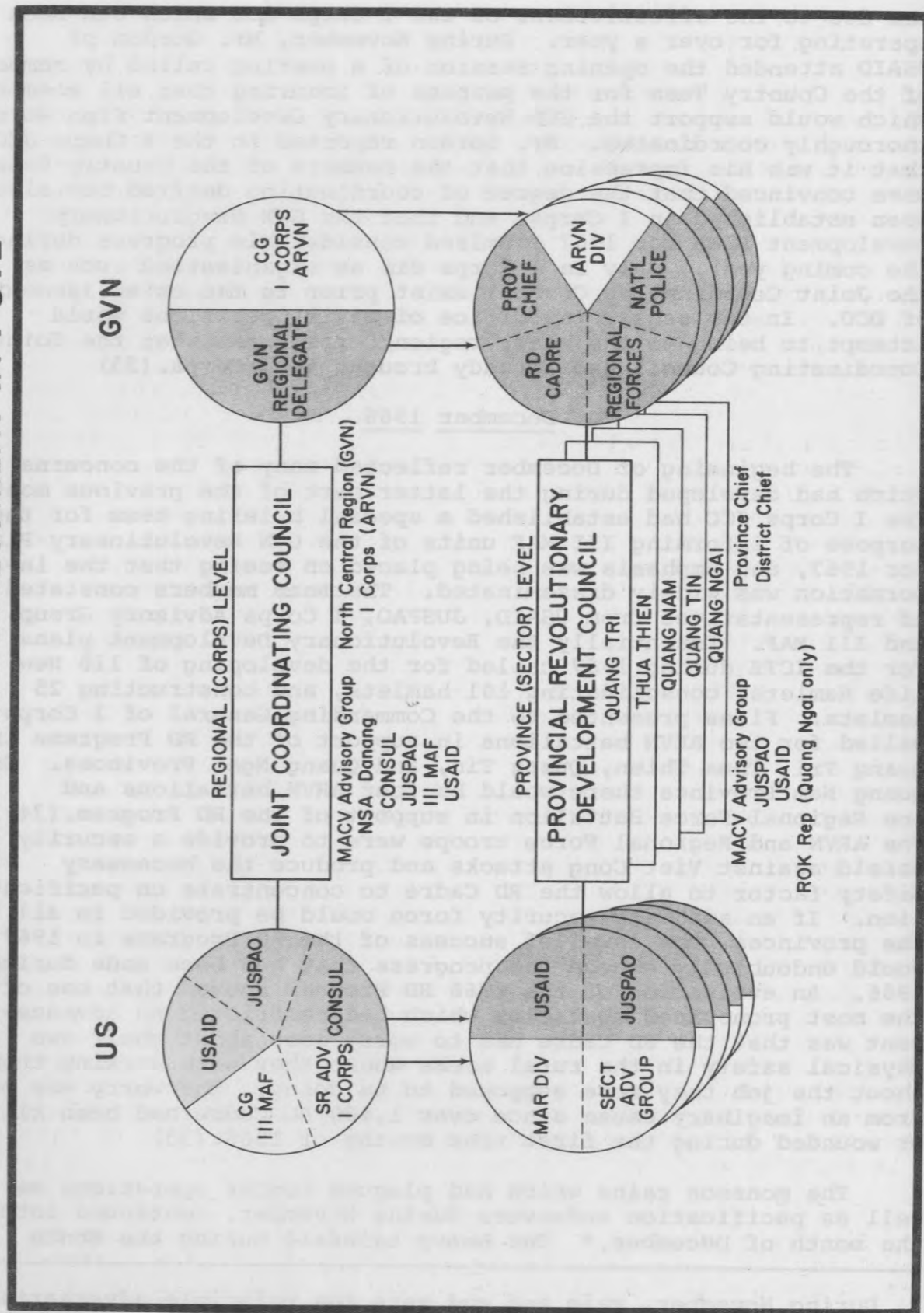
By the end of November, a major reorganization of United States agencies involved in pacification and RD support was taking place throughout South Vietnam. At the United States Embassy in Saigon, plans were being initiated which would bring into being an organizational structure which would be more functional in support of the total pacification efforts going on throughout South Vietnam. Since the initial U. S. military buildup in South Vietnam, the size of the U. S. pacification support efforts had grown to an almost unmanageable proportion. There were literally dozens of organizations, both military and civilian, which were engaged in administering to the needs of the Vietnamese people throughout the entire country. In some areas, a coordinated effort had been established in order to prevent waste and duplication of programs, but in other areas coordination was less than that desired. In order to provide for a more coordinated effort in support of pacification programs, especially the Vietnamese RD program, during the calendar year 1967, the Office of Civil Operations (OCO) was officially established on 1 December 1966. The organizational structure of OCO included elements from the Joint United States Public Affairs Office, Office of Special Assistant to the Ambassador (OSA), and United States Agency for International Development and placed all field personnel of these agencies working throughout South Vietnam under the direction of the Deputy U. S. Ambassador and Director of OCO. The Operational Divisions of OCO were: (1) Refugees; (2) Chieu Hoi; (3) RD Teams; (4) Public Safety; (5) PsyOps and Information; and (6) New Life Development. On 1 December, with the official establishment of the Office of Civil Operations, approximately 1,000 U. S. personnel and 128 million U. S. dollars and 4 billion Vietnamese piasters in programs were absorbed by the new organization. (31)

While the Office of Civil Operations had been established to coordinate all U. S. civilian agencies and organizations involved in supporting the Vietnamese Revolutionary Development Program, the impact of organization was less in I Corps than in the other Region/Corps areas. The reason for the limited impact

* The Combined Studies Division of MACV was responsible for advising the GVN on Revolutionary Development Cadre matters.

** A graphic portrayal of the organizational structure of the Regional and Provincial Organization for Revolutionary Development in the ICTZ is found on the following page.

REGIONAL AND PROVINCIAL ORGANIZATION FOR REVOLUTIONARY DEVELOPMENT IN I CTZ



was due to the effectiveness of the I Corps JCC which had been operating for over a year. During November, Mr. Gordon of USAID attended the opening session of a meeting called by members of the Country Team for the purpose of insuring that all elements which would support the GVN Revolutionary Development Plan were thoroughly coordinated. Mr. Gordon reported to the I Corps JCC that it was his impression that the members of the Country Team were convinced that the degree of coordination desired had already been established in I Corps, and that the GVN Revolutionary Development Plan for 1967 promised considerable progress during the coming year. Only in I Corps did an organization such as the Joint Coordinating Council exist prior to the establishment of OCO. In one sense, the Office of Civil Operations would attempt to bring to the other region/Corps areas what the Joint Coordinating Council had already brought to I Corps.(33)

December 1966

The beginning of December reflected many of the concerns which had developed during the latter part of the previous month. The I Corps JCC had established a special briefing team for the purpose of informing III MAF units of the GVN Revolutionary Plan for 1967, and emphasis was being placed on seeing that the information was widely disseminated. The team members consisted of representatives from USAID, JUSPAO, I Corps Advisory Group, and III MAF. Essentially the Revolutionary Development plans for the ICTZ during 1967 called for the developing of 110 New Life Hamlets, consolidating 101 hamlets, and constructing 25 hamlets. Plans presented to the Commanding General of I Corps called for two ARVN battalions in support of the RD Programs in Quang Tri, Thua Thien, Quang Tin, and Quang Ngai Provinces. In Quang Nam Province there would be four ARVN battalions and one Regional Force Battalion in support of the RD Program.(34) The ARVN and Regional Force troops were to provide a security shield against Viet Cong attacks and produce the necessary safety factor to allow the RD Cadre to concentrate on pacification. If an adequate security force could be provided in all the provinces, the level of success of the RD Programs in 1967 would undoubtedly exceed the progress that had been made during 1966. An evaluation of the 1966 RD Program showed that one of the most pronounced obstacles which had restricted RD advancement was that the RD Cadre had to worry more about their own physical safety in the rural areas where they were working than about the job they were supposed to be doing. The worry was not from an imaginary cause since over 1,400 RD Cadre had been killed or wounded during the first nine months of 1966.(35)

The monsoon rains which had plagued combat operations as well as pacification endeavors during November, continued into the month of December.* The heavy rainfall during the month

* During November, rain and mud were the principle adversaries in Vietnam. The northeast monsoon, more severe than in 1965,

inundated the low altitude rice lands in all of the Marines' TAORs resulting in the roadways becoming impassable to almost all types of transportation except tracked vehicles.(36) The combination of flood conditions and impassable roads was effective in isolating large numbers of Vietnamese people from any contact with III MAF civil affairs personnel. Numerous Marine units which sent out MEDCAP teams reported that once the MEDCAP teams had reached their destination few, if any, Vietnamese would turn up for medical treatment because of the inclement weather. The heavy cloud coverage which was persisting over the ICTZ produced unfavorable flying conditions and adversely affected the resupply capability in the outlying areas. Fortunately, III MAF received a shipment of MEDCAP supplies from Saigon, and by using the vehicles that could move under the prevailing weather conditions, immediate distribution was made to the units sending out MEDCAP teams. The shipment and distribution of medical supplies filled nearly all the requirements of the MEDCAP teams and provided adequate assets for them to continue operating. Even though direct efforts were being made to reach the outlying populace and provide needed services for them, there was a decline in the number of Vietnamese who received such services during December. The indices which were used to indicate trends in the civil affairs activity reflected by the end of the month a decrease of 15.7 percent in medical treatments administered, a 26.9 percent decline in soap distribution, and a 37.4 percent decline in food distribution.*

The downward trends which were recorded in some of the III MAF civil affairs programs during December reflected the existing weather conditions considerably more than they did VC activity. Increased emphasis on small unit operations during the month was effective in preventing the VC from gaining any major initiative within the ICTZ. There was a slight increase in VC propaganda, subversion, and terrorism over the past month, but in general these activities were restricted due to the Marines' quick reaction capability. The ability of the enemy to move about within the ICTZ without fear of Marine engagement was observed during the truce at Christmas. Within this forty-eight hour period, III MAF units reported forty-nine VC truce violations. Another truce period was observed at the end of the month in recognition of the New Year. The New Year truce began on 31 December and on the same day a major sighting of approximately 1,000 well-armed VC, carrying mortars and machine guns, was made in Thua Thien Province. During the New Year truce period U. S. Marine units reported a total of sixty-one VC truce violations throughout the ICTZ. The III MAF maintained its posture of readiness to react to enemy action while maintaining defensive positions during both truce periods.(37)

delivered during the month more rain on the ICTZ than normally falls on Washington, D. C. during a two-year period.

* Percentage totals for any given month were drawn on a comparative basis from the highest percentage totals of any previous month or months.

Major innovations which had occurred and had been implemented by III MAF during the past months continued to pay dividends during December. The five COUNTY FAIR operations conducted in areas made secure by Marine combat operations produced significant results in defeating VC objectives within the villages and hamlets in the outlying areas of the TAORs. These operations were also successful in providing needed medical assistance and other material goods to the Vietnamese people, besides allowing III MAF and ARVN personnel to conduct psychological indoctrination in an effort to gain GVN support among the people. The operations conducted during the month fell short of the established goal of 10 per month which had been set. The failure to reach the desired goal was due not to the unwillingness of III MAF to provide the necessary support for the operations, but to the lack of GVN personnel who were necessary to conduct a successful COUNTY FAIR operation. Laboring under these conditions, III MAF had been able to conduct successfully 88 COUNTY FAIR operations during 1966.(38)

The Kit Carson Scout program which had been initiated within the 1st Marine Division under the leadership of General Nickerson continued to prove to be an ingenious innovation. The Kit Carson Scouts, carefully selected Chieu Hoi returnees who voluntarily participated in Marine counter guerrilla and psychological warfare operations, were successful during December in assisting Marine units in uncovering VC hiding places, identifying guerrillas, and delivering pro-GVN speeches to known VC families. By the end of the month, 19 Kit Carson Scouts were employed by III MAF and future plans called for the number to be increased to 50 by April 1967 and 100 by July 1967. This planned increase was the direct result of the successes of the first 19 scouts. Since the initiation of the program during October, the scouts' familiarity with the terrain and VC tactics had led to the killing or capture of 47 VC, the capture of 16 weapons, and the discovery of 18 mines and tunnels. There was little doubt by personnel of III MAF who were concerned with the selection of Kit Carson Scouts that the projected number of scouts for the coming year could be found. This optimistic view was due partly to the fact that in December alone, 171 of the enemy rallied to the cause of the GVN. This figure represented the second highest during 1966.* The total number of returnees who were repatriated through the Chieu Hoi program in I Corps during 1966 was 1,531.(39)

The principal concerns of the I Corps JCC during the month were directed at providing support for the committee working under its direction, providing information about the newly established Office of Civil Operations, and devising new means for increased support of the GVN Revolutionary Development

* The highest number of returnees for a single month in I Corps during 1966 occurred in the month of October when 172 enemy rallied to the cause of the GVN.

Program.(40) In addition to these concerns, the council was involved in providing assistance to the newly established Census Grievance Office in Da Nang, supporting Christmas programs for the Vietnamese people, and aiding the villagers who were the victims of a Flying Tiger plane crash, which occurred on 24 December in a heavily populated area surrounding the Da Nang Airfield. The members of the council were advised that each corps area would be assigned an OCO coordinator with the rank of Deputy Ambassador, and that Deputy Ambassador Koren would be assigned as the coordinator for I Corps. The council received a report from the Public Health Committee stating that the plague was on the increase in several areas. In order to reduce the plague threat, USAID provided assistance in securing the necessary vaccine to administer to the populace. Continued assistance was also being provided to the Vietnamese farmers by USAID, to insure that they would have the necessary fertilizer to improve their rice yield.

The new plans for the GVN Revolutionary Development Program were discussed throughout the month by the council and plans were drawn up to inform all Marine units of the necessary support that would be required to implement the program. Information was provided to the council concerning the establishment of a Census Grievance Office which was established in the City of Da Nang. This office would conduct the Peoples Aspiration Program in the City of Da Nang and would refer appropriate grievances to the Mayor of Da Nang. The council stated that it was willing to assist the newly established program and considered it to be a worthy addition in fulfilling the needs of the people.(41)

During the Christmas season, every effort was made to insure that the Vietnamese adults and children within the ICTZ would have an enjoyable holiday. A total of 22 children's Christmas parties were sponsored by the Naval Support Activity, on behalf of the Christian organizations located within the City of Da Nang. Approximately 12,000 gifts were distributed to the Vietnamese children at these parties. In addition, III MAF provided approximately 18,700 toy packages plus various other items received from Project HANDCLASP and private donors for similar parties conducted throughout the ICTZ in Marine-controlled areas, excluding Da Nang.(42)

The untimely crash of the Flying Tiger aircraft on 24 December required direct assistance from the civil affairs personnel of III MAF. Immediate efforts were made to provide medical treatment for the injured and food, shelter, and clothing for the destitute. Marine personnel assisted in searching the rubble for bodies and providing a general clean-up of the area. Members of the I Corps JCC assisted the victims of the plane crash by providing, through the agencies they represented, necessary material items which would help in rebuilding homes and resettling families. The council also

directed its efforts at seeing that legal claims obligations owed to the plane crash victims were met. It was the council's desire to have all the claims paid before TET, if possible.

By the end of 1966 the influence of the I Corps JCC had been felt in all phases of civil affairs activity. The council had become directly involved in guiding, supporting, and encouraging the growth of no less than 26 separate programs of pacification throughout the ICTZ.(43) Other civil affairs programs being carried on by III MAF during the month which materially assisted the Vietnamese people centered around the self-help projects which had been developing over the past months, a stepping up of all phases of the academic and vocational educational programs, the initiation of new programs to provide for the welfare of the Vietnamese youth, and an increasing effort at resettling refugees.*

In order to provide for an increased capability at producing necessary material for self-help construction projects, CARE had procured a set of Korean plans for a cement block-making machine. These machines, which were eventually to be locally produced, would not only increase the capability of producing material which would be used in the construction of schools and other structures, but would increase the quality of the material being used. By the end of the month, three machines were in operation and were turning out approximately 400 blocks a day for use in III MAF's civil affairs construction projects. This process was being carried on by Vietnamese refugees through the sponsorship of the 7th Engineer Battalion which was located at Red Beach, near Da Nang. In this capacity the operation was serving a dual civil affairs purpose. It provided needed construction material for building projects and it provided employment for the refugees.(44)

The importance of providing educational opportunities for the Vietnamese youth continued to be of prime interest to III MAF during December. General Walt had long been convinced that the future of South Vietnam ultimately rested in its youth. He was vitally concerned with all civil affairs efforts which were directed toward providing educational assistance to these Vietnamese. General Walt was able to provide the necessary impetus, which had been essential for establishing a wide range of programs directed at improving and increasing educational opportunities for the Vietnamese youth who were living within the ICTZ. The Marines' support for education, other than the school building programs, was being provided by the Marine Scholarship Program. This program called for Marine units within the ICTZ to support from one to seven scholarship students who had been selected on the basis of scholastic attainment and

* A summary account of the I Corps Joint Coordinating Council's activities for the year 1966 can be found attached to the Minutes of the I Corps JCC for January 1967.

financial need. In addition, indispensable funds were being provided by the Marine Corps Reserve project which had begun in 1965 and was being facilitated in cooperation with CARE; it was able to provide on-the-spot financing for many of the civil affairs projects being carried on by III MAF. The Civic Action Fund, which had been set up to receive cash donations from any one concerned with financially supporting civil affairs projects, had continually received praise from the civil affairs personnel. General Walt indicated that it was one of the III MAF's major assets in carrying on civil affairs programs.(45)

In a related area for providing support for the children within I Corps, the Education Committee of the JCC had established a Subcommittee on Youth Activities. This subcommittee was composed of U. S. and Vietnamese representatives from both military and civilian organizations concerned with the civil affairs activity in I Corps. At the December meeting of the subcommittee, plans were discussed for establishing a Boy Scout camp and providing periodic sports tournaments which would increase organized and supervised recreational activities. Plans were also discussed at the meeting concerning the repair of basketball and volleyball courts and the possibility for future construction of additional facilities. The establishment of the Youth Activities Subcommittee represented another avenue through which coordinated and concentrated effort could be directed by civil affairs personnel at providing for the welfare of the young people of South Vietnam.(46)

The refugee population in I Corps, which had been increasing over the past months due to a number of conditions other than those produced by combat operations, showed no appreciable decline during December. By the end of the month it was estimated that over 282,000 refugees were living throughout the ICTZ. In order to provide for the needs of the refugees, III MAF continued to increase its efforts at providing food, clothing, and medical assistance along with establishing self-help projects. In addition to providing services to the 48 refugee camps located within III MAF's areas, major accomplishments had been made at resettling refugees.* Through Marine supervision and assistance, five refugee hamlets had been developed which provided homes for a number of the refugee families. As the new year approached, indications were that the refugee population would continue to grow and III MAF civil affairs personnel began to make plans for assisting the inevitable influx.(47)

As the year 1966 came to a close, III MAF was able to evaluate its many efforts at pacification. There had been a number of setbacks due to the prolonged political crisis which had occurred in I Corps, the constant shortage of Vietnamese troops to support

* There were approximately 100,000 refugees living in the 48 refugee camps within the Marines' area.

the COUNTY FAIR and Combined Action programs, and the unusually severe monsoon season. With all of the adversity, however, there had been significant accomplishments made in providing for the welfare of the Vietnamese people. Not only had III MAF successfully blocked the NVA's attempted advance across the DMZ but it was also able to record major advances in a number of its civil affairs programs. The record showed that many ingenious innovations had taken place during 1966 which had a positive effect on improving as well as expanding the overall civil affairs efforts. As III MAF looked toward the new year, there was an ever growing conviction by all personnel concerned with pacification that many profitable lessons had been learned during the past year and that the problems to be faced during 1967 would not only be met, but would successfully be overcome. (48)

CHAPTER V

U. S. Marine Corps Civil Affairs in I Corps January-April 1967

During January 1967, III MAF initiated the largest number of small unit operations that had been launched since the Marines' arrival in I Corps, South Vietnam. These operations were designed to place increased pressure on the Viet Cong and counter his activities in the villages and hamlets throughout the countryside. It was anticipated by III MAF that as more populated areas came under its control, civil affairs programs would be initiated in those areas to provide for the welfare of the people. Before the month had ended, the III MAF small unit counter guerrilla operations had been effective in eliminating VC activity in many areas, allowing for a general upward trend of civil affairs activity to take place.

Another factor which contributed to the upward move was a break in the adverse weather conditions which had hampered progress over previous months. Major supply routes became accessible for travel and roadways leading into the rural areas became sufficiently dried to permit the passage of MEDCAP teams and other civil affairs personnel into their areas of operation. As the flood waters receded and the outlying countryside became accessible for travel, the Vietnamese people became more responsive to the services provided for them. This resulted in a large number of Vietnamese being treated by MEDCAP and DENCAP teams. The improved mobility conditions also facilitated an increase in the number of commodities distributed to the Vietnamese people within the ICTZ. In some areas of civil affairs activity, increases were reported as high as 48 percent while the total number of Vietnamese receiving all types of aid during the month increased by 20 percent over the previous month. In order to improve economic conditions for the Vietnamese people, III MAF introduced new economic programs in several of the village and hamlet areas. These programs included the organizing of farmers associations and hog production. Plans were also underway for establishing fishing projects which would improve the yield of the Vietnamese fishermen. Success of these projects was considered highly probable by III MAF since all sponsoring units were directing command attention toward their implementation. (1)

The I Corps JCC, which had enjoyed considerable success during 1966, moved with renewed vigor during the first month of the new calendar year in support of the growing programs of pacification within the ICTZ. At one of its meetings in January, the council officially stated its composition, mission, and goals to be achieved during 1967. These were essentially the same as those stated during the celebration of the first anniversary of

operation in August 1966. At the request of Brigadier General Hugh M. Elwood, Chief of Staff, III MAF, a chronology of significant events of the past year of operation of the I Corps JCC was compiled by Lieutenant Colonel Evans, the recorder of the council.* This chronology not only indicated the magnitude of the involvement of the I Corps JCC in support of pacification during the past year, but also served as a reference point for the future involvement of the council during the new calendar year.(2)

The endeavors of the I Corps JCC during the month were directed at receiving the many recommendations and progress reports being supplied by the committees which were directly concerned with the different civil affairs projects which were being carried on within the ICTZ. The council was especially concerned with the formation of the recently established Office of Civil Operations, plans which were being developed to support the forthcoming TET Holiday, and the support being provided for the Vietnamese RD Program. Mr. Gordon, who had become the Deputy Regional Director for OCO in I Corps, reported to the council that Ambassador Koren, the Regional Director, would not become a member of the council and that Mr. Gordon would be his personal representative at the council meetings. With the I Corps JCC and OCO working together, an even greater coordinated effort could be directed at fulfilling the total pacification objectives for I Corps. Before the month had ended, the personnel working under the direction of OCO had intensified their efforts in support of programs designed to help the Vietnamese people and win their support for the GVN. Of special significance was the support provided by OCO in facilitating the shipment of coal out of the An Hoa Industrial Complex in Quang Nam Province to the City of Da Nang. Coal shipments had been a major problem during the past months due to the lack of available transportation and weather conditions. In a coordinated effort with U. S. Air Force personnel, OCO was able to secure the services of C-123 aircraft for transporting coal. OCO assured the management officials of the An Hoa Industrial Complex that every effort would be made to reach their goal of moving 60 tons of coal prior to TET.(3)

In order to provide for a concentrated psychological warfare campaign prior to and during TET, the I Corps JCC worked at providing a coordinated effort between all agencies and personnel concerned with PsyWar. TET, the Vietnamese Lunar New Year period, was considered to be the most important holiday of

* General Elwood became the Chief of Staff of III MAF on 7 December 1966. In this capacity, General Elwood had also replaced General Platt as a member of the I Corps JCC. General Platt's last meeting with the council was on 29 November 1966 at which time he expressed his pleasure in having been a member of the council and his faith in its continued success. (JCC Minutes, 29 November 1966).

the year. It was during the TET period that the Vietnamese held their traditional family gatherings with major emphasis being placed on family solidarity and the reverence of ancestors. It was also during this period that the Vietnamese serving with the Viet Cong were most vulnerable for appeals to defect and rally to the support of the GVN through the Chieu Hoi program. In establishing a maximum effort for creating defections within the ranks of the VC, the council supported programs which would assure a wide dissemination of information about the advantages of rallying to the cause of the GVN. This information was not only directed at Vietnamese families who had friends and relatives serving with the Viet Cong, but direct appeals were made to the VC by use of radio and loudspeaker broadcasts and PsyWar leaflets dropped in known VC areas. The PsyWar leaflets were dropped to stimulate the awareness of family separation during TET and create a longing to return to family and friends living within Marine and GVN-controlled areas. In addition to these leaflets, safe conduct passes were dropped which would assure any VC wanting to defect that he could receive safe passage through Marine and GVN-held areas and would be turned over to a Chieu Hoi Center for repatriation. The I Corps JCC also coordinated efforts in establishing enough collection points throughout the ICTZ with the necessary provisions to take care of those VC who would voluntarily return to the control of the GVN. This coordination was vital, since the existing Chieu Hoi centers were inadequate to care for a large influx of returnees.(4)

Although the TET holiday was not scheduled to begin until 9 February, the effectiveness of the PsyWar campaign was readily apparent by the end of January. The total number of ralliers who voluntarily surrendered for the Chieu Hoi program within the ICTZ during the month reached 238. While all five provinces within the ICTZ received ralliers during the month, the greatest number of VC defections occurred in Quang Nam and Quang Ngai Provinces with Quang Nam reporting 84 returnees, which represented the highest number of defections in any one province. In order to sustain the momentum of PsyWar which had been attained during January, the Commanding General of III MAF directed all of his unit commanders to expand and intensify psychological operations during the forthcoming period of TET. It was anticipated by III MAF that a larger number of VC defections would occur during that period than had occurred over the previous month.(5)

The importance of providing the necessary support to assist the GVN in carrying out its Revolutionary Development plans for 1967 was a major item of interest to all U. S. agencies and organizations in I Corps during January. Members of the JCC were anxious to see that the RD Program got off to a good start since the initial efforts would probably set the tone for subsequent efforts throughout the year. During January, Dr. Chi, Quang Nam Province Chief, and other Vietnamese officials briefed the council on the progress being made and problems encountered

in initiating the new RD plans.

Several problems had developed which could adversely affect future progress if they were not solved. The problems presented to the council for consideration were centered around a lack of funding by the GVN to sustain important projects underway, insufficient training on the part of some RD Cadre Teams to effectively initiate and carry through New Life Hamlet development, and the inability of many of the village and hamlet chiefs to analyze effectively the needs within their areas and submit the required documents for initiating self-help projects. Problems had also developed in providing enough funds and personnel to deal effectively with the growing number of refugees and ralliers who were coming into GVN-controlled areas. These problems were met head-on by members of the I Corps JCC and assurance was given to the local Vietnamese officials responsible for carrying on RD within I Corps that every effort would be made by the council to alleviate the problem areas and sustain RD progress. Knowing the type of support that had been provided by the I Corps JCC during the past months, the Vietnamese officials expressed their appreciation to the council and confidence in its ability to provide the necessary coordination and support for assuring RD progress throughout the new calendar year. (6)

During January, the many grass-roots civil affairs projects which had been initiated by III MAF in direct support of the Vietnamese people continued to develop and record significant progress. The cement block-making project being sponsored by Marines of the 7th Engineer Battalion was in full operation and turning out a superior quality of blocks to be used for construction in civil affairs projects. Expansion plans were underway which would not only provide for an increase in production but would also increase the number of refugees being used to carry on the project.

The vocational school at Da Nang was making progress in training refugees for skilled employment. Training in masonry and plumbing was to be added to the curriculum and the problem of providing sufficient funds to keep the school going had essentially been solved. By the end of the month, 472 refugees had received enough training in various skills to qualify them for economic employment and a new class of 250 students was due to convene. Assistance was also being provided by the vocational training program through an office which had been established to help the skilled graduates find the employment they desired.

In the area of public health and medical assistance, III MAF medical personnel continued to concentrate on providing preventative medicine in an effort to reduce the plague problem and check the outbreak of other diseases. The medical personnel of III MAF were convinced that for a lasting benefit to be derived by the Vietnamese people from the programs they had

initiated, a greater number of Vietnamese would have to be sufficiently trained to carry on the programs. It was of primary concern to the medical personnel that they get the Vietnamese actively involved in providing for their medical and public health needs rather than solely relying on the Marines' civil affairs assistance programs. Indeed, the entire self-help concept which had been initiated by the civil affairs personnel of III MAF was directed at developing self-reliance on the part of the Vietnamese for carrying on all civic programs and projects which had been started by the Marines and other agencies dealing with pacification in I Corps. Whether this objective could be sufficiently accomplished within the near future was a matter of speculation, since the services and support of III MAF and other agencies were continually being called upon to provide for the crucial needs of the civilian populace. Just how these needs were to be met was demonstrated during the month as plans were developed for the expansion of the Provincial Hospital at Tam Ky in Quang Tin Province. The 60-bed hospital was to be renovated and expanded to a facility which would accommodate between 160 and 180 beds. The primary funds and supplies were to be provided by USAID and the renovating and construction was to be provided by the 30th U. S. Naval Construction Regiment. As indicated by the total civil affairs involvement, this endeavor represented just one of the many coordinated efforts at supporting projects which were underway throughout the ICTZ. (7)

As January was passing into February, the personnel under the command of III MAF continued to put pressure on the VC, both in the field and in the villages and hamlets, through skillfully conducting counter guerrilla operations and effective civil affairs programs. The Marine units in Quang Tri Province were continuing a successful containment of the NVA along the DMZ area, but indications were growing that more Marines would have to be sent into the area in order to counter any major thrust directed at I Corps by the NVA. Increased efforts were also being directed at intensifying the PsyWar program for February, since the observance of TET would be held from the 9th through the 12th of that month. As January closed out, there were changes made in the structure of the membership of the I Corps JCC. At the council meeting held on 31 January, the members unanimously adopted the proposal which would make the Assistant Regional Director for New Life Development, OCO, 1st Region, a member of the council and Mr. Gordon, Deputy Regional Director, OCO, 1st Region, the deputy chairman of the council. It was pointed out by the chairman of the council that two of its regular military members would be changed because of new duty assignments. Admiral Weschler and Colonel Holmgrain would be returning to the United States for duty, Colonel John T. Hill would replace Colonel Holmgrain as G-5 of III MAF and Rear Admiral Lacy would replace Admiral Weschler as Commander of Naval Support Activity, Da Nang. The new members would assume their responsibilities on the council at its first meeting in February. (8)

February 1967

Throughout the month of February, III MAF was effective in meeting the Communist challenge both in the field and within the populated areas of the ICTZ. In order to provide the necessary prerequisite for carrying on civil affairs programs, that of security, III MAF launched nearly twice as many small unit operations, patrols, ambushes, and clearing procedures as it had during January. In addition to the numerous small unit operations, which effectively saturated the areas of VC guerrilla activity, III MAF conducted thirteen combat operations, battalion size or larger, which were successful in inflicting severe damage to the enemy's capability of impeding pacification progress. By the end of the month, the U. S. Marines had recorded some of their highest totals in regards to enemy engaged, killed, and captured. These combat operations during February covered the entire month except for a four-day truce period during the TET holiday, 8-12 February, at which time the Marines maintained a posture of readiness to react while holding defensive positions. During the four day TET truce period, which was to be observed by both sides, the Marines recorded approximately 141 VC truce violations within the ICTZ. These violations resulted in casualties being inflicted to both sides and presented demonstrable evidence both to the Marines and the Vietnamese people of the untrustworthy character of the Viet Cong.

In a move to obstruct U. S. pacification and GVN Revolutionary Development progress, the VC increased their propaganda and subversion activity. Much of the VC propaganda was directed towards the Marines as well as the civilian population and carried the general theme of calling on the United States to put an end to the "Johnson-McNamara dirty war of aggression." In efforts to isolate the villages and hamlets and strengthen the influence of the infrastructures, the Viet Cong carried out sabotage activity against lines of communication and acts of terrorism were directed against village and hamlet officials. These efforts on the part of the Viet Cong, however, generally fell short of achieving their desired goals, since the Marines were able to counter many of the efforts while at the same time providing support for Revolutionary Development and increasing their own civil affairs activity.* (9)

* Two incidents which occurred during February 1967 within the ICTZ, while not directly related to pacification, were of special significance. On 21 February, Dr. Bernard Fall, noted authority on Southeast Asia and particularly Vietnam, was killed by an enemy land mine while accompanying a combat operation east of the "Street Without Joy" in Thua Thien Province. He was accompanying a Marine platoon of Company A, 1st Battalion, 9th Marines. The second incident occurred on the morning of 27 February, with an enemy-launched rocket attack against the Da Nang Air Base. The 140mm rockets used by the enemy in attacking the airbase marked

Over the past months, III MAF had been responsible for the development of many programs and innovations which had considerably enhanced its ability to reach the Vietnamese people and provide for their needs. During this time, however, the civil affairs personnel had come to realize that just providing material goods to the Vietnamese people was insufficient for achieving the type of pacification desired. One ingredient that was sometimes missing, yet which was vital to achieving the desired results, was a positive attitude on the part of the individual Marine toward the Vietnamese people. In order to better understand Marine attitudes toward the Vietnamese people and to change any negative attitudes into positive ones, if possible, the Personal Response Project was initiated. This project was initiated as early as October 1965 by FMFPac, but the project remained in a data collecting stage until July 1966, at which time III MAF began to implement the program within its areas of responsibility. The first stages of the program were characterized by surveys taken throughout the ICTZ which were designed to reflect a representative sample of the Marines' attitudes towards the Vietnamese people. There were also lectures and discussions carried on by the chaplains of III MAF, in an effort to acquaint the Marines with the significance of the Vietnamese culture and style of life. A Platoon Leader's Personal Response Notebook was put together and distributed to small unit commanders. The notebook was to be used by these officers as a guide for instructing the Marines under their command in the ways of the Vietnamese people. (10)

A major advance was made in carrying on the Personal Response Project, when in February 1967 the 3d Marine Division established a Personal Response Council and a Personal Response Contact Team. This council and team were responsible for initiating a variety of programs which were directed at improving the relationships between the Marines and the Vietnamese citizens, essentially through eliminating any negative attitudes on the part of Marines. (11)

The following statement best describes the purpose and objectives of the U. S. Marine Corps Personal Response Project:

The Personal Response Project is a systematic effort toward attitudinal improvement in intercultural relations. By discovering the ways in which people of another culture relate their religious and ethical value systems to daily life the project develops effective anticipation of acculturative problems. Such anticipation and understanding is one of the keys to the elimination of offensive behavioral patterns toward indigenous citizens. It is expected that appropriate mutual assistance between Marines and the citizenry will be a by-product of increased under-

the first occasion on which the enemy had employed that type of weapon against U. S. personnel in South Vietnam.

standing and contributory to the elimination of local guerrilla forces in an insurgency environment.

The objectives of the Personal Response Project are to: assist military personnel to respond to the predisposition of indigenous citizens to act in concert with their social, religious, and cultural value systems; identify the expression of these value systems and the motivation implicit in them; and recognize that the lives, relationships, and actions of indigenous citizens are of the same importance as those of all other human beings. (12)

Although it was during the month of February 1967 that important direction was given to the Personal Response Project by making it a part of the command responsibility of small unit leaders and the development of a Personal Response Council and Team, an evaluation of the results and effectiveness of the project has to be deferred until a later accounting. Marine and Navy personnel, who had been closely associated with the project's beginnings praised it highly, however, and indicated that the project had already fulfilled a major role in advancing pacification within South Vietnam.* (13)

The psychological operations conducted during February by III MAF, ARVN, and OCO personnel proved to be extremely successful in reaching their desired target. One result of the PsyOps was that 279 Viet Cong defected from their own units and rallied to the cause of the GVN. Upon interrogation, the ralliers were consistent in stating that they had heard loudspeaker appeals and had seen leaflets describing the Chieu Hoi program and that these appeals had been effective in convincing them to return to the control of the GVN. It was reported by those who interrogated the ralliers, that the VC who came over to the GVN during February showed a deeper understanding of the advantages offered by the Chieu Hoi program than those who had been interrogated during previous months. This information was considered to be a reliable indication of the effectiveness of

* Lieutenant General Lewis W. Walt, USMC, has pointed out that the Personal Response Project was one of the most important programs developed in I Corps to assist pacification efforts. Major General Jonas M. Platt, USMC, has stated that in his opinion, the Personal Response Project is, "the heart of the civil affairs effort." Captain Robert E. Mattingly indicated that at the grass-roots level the Personal Response Project was fulfilling a vital need that had long been present. Lieutenant Commander Richard A. McGonigal, USN, who is a Navy Chaplain and one of the principal architects of the Personal Response Project, has pointed out that the success of pacification in future wars of counterinsurgency as well as the present one going on in South Vietnam will ultimately have to be measured in part by the success of programs such as Personal Response. Commander McGonigal is currently involved in research and study on how to better improve and implement the Personal Response Program.

the coordinated endeavors of those who were carrying out the psychological operations. The importance of providing good psychological operations was reiterated by a report given to the Psychological Warfare Subcommittee by the personnel of OCO. It was pointed out that the existing situation in Vietnam could basically be described as a political war in which every effort had to be directed at assisting the Vietnamese in building a strong and viable nation. The report also stated that the success of the RD and Chieu Hoi programs was of vital importance in the nation-building process and that the success of these operations required the concentrated support of psychological operations. The magnitude of the coordinated psychological effort during February could be seen through the many diversified projects which were being carried on: assisting in the relocation of a number of Vietnamese people; supporting tactical operations in the form of leaflet drops, audio-visual teams, combat loudspeaker teams, and Armed Propaganda Teams; and directing support to the six COUNTY FAIRs conducted. Personnel from the 1st Military Police Battalion conducted movie festivals in which a total of 329 movies were shown to the people and the Vietnamese Cultural Drama Team conducted 59 performances in different locations within the ICTZ. As a result of the PsyOps success that had been achieved during January and February, the initial campaign which had been initiated in anticipation of the TET Holiday was extended until 25 March. (14)

During the four-day TET Holiday, III MAF civil affairs personnel concentrated on distributing food, clothing, and other supplies to the Vietnamese people. These supplies were largely distributed in the form of gifts as a means of showing respect for the cultural and traditional significance of the holiday. General Walt visited several of the ARVN hospitals during the holiday season and distributed numerous comfort kits to the patients. These visits were well received as the patients expressed their gratitude to the Commanding General of III MAF for having taken time off from a demanding schedule to pay them a visit during their most important holiday. The atmosphere during the TET Holiday, throughout the ICTZ, was charged with friendship and respect being reciprocated both by the Marines and the Vietnamese people. (15)

One incident, which typifies the many such occurring during this period, developed on the first day of TET in the Da Nang TAOR. The Vietnamese people living in a village near Company A, 1st Battalion, 26th Marines approached the Marine area on the first day of TET bearing food. The commander of Company A was informed by one of the village officials that people had come with food in a gesture of appreciation for what the Marines had done for them and hoped that they would join them in celebrating their most sacred holiday. Before the holiday season had ended, a number of men from Company A had visited and eaten in the homes of the villagers and the villagers had visited and eaten with the Marines in their company area. The many acts of friendship



First Lieutenant Ellsworth J. Turse, Jr., S-5 of the 7th Engineer Battalion, helps a Vietnamese boy draw water from a newly constructed well built with material supplied by the battalion. (USMC Photo #371518)

and good-will which were being exhibited toward the Marines by the Vietnamese people were taken as a positive indicator that pacification progress was being made at the grass-roots level. (16) They also signified the importance of developing a strong Personal Response Program. For in the final analysis, the success or failure of the Marines' efforts at pacification would ultimately rest on the shoulders of the individual Marine and the attitudes exhibited, day by day, toward the Vietnamese people in the performance of his duties. (17)

As a result of the improved weather, which continued to prevail throughout February, III MAF's efforts at providing medical assistance to the people living in the rural areas continued at a steady pace. The only noticeable reduction of the responsiveness of the Vietnamese people toward the MEDCAP and DENCAP teams was during the four-day holiday period. This lack of responsiveness was attributed to the Vietnamese concerns with carrying on their celebrations during TET, because in all other areas of III MAF's civil affairs endeavors there were marked increases in activity and progress.

In order to provide assistance to the GVN in carrying on their civil affairs programs in I Corps, III MAF increased its activity in providing both physical and moral support for those programs which had been undertaken. There was hope by III MAF that the ARVN lack of interest for carrying on civil affairs programs, which had long been indicated by apathy and resistance at the grass-roots level, would be overcome and that increased pacification progress could be made. Indications of what the future could hold were observed by III MAF before the month had ended as the GVN increased its efforts for participating in civil affairs through the use of its RD Cadre Teams. The Cadre Teams, which had become directly involved in civil affairs projects, proved to be a welcome addition. The Vietnamese people were very receptive to their efforts and communication was much improved since there was little or no language barrier. In another area where the Vietnamese were continually demonstrating their value in support of III MAF, were the ralliers who were serving within the Kit Carson Scout program. During the month, the scouts serving with the 1st Marine Division proved to be invaluable in directing Marine tactical units in the field. They were teaching the Marines how to read trail signs which would indicate whether VC mines or booby traps had been planted in the areas where the Marines were operating. The scouts, for example, taught the Marines that a bamboo tree bent over a trail with a small amount of paint on the back side would usually indicate that the trail had been booby trapped from that point onward. Such information was undoubtedly responsible for saving the lives of a number of Marines who otherwise would have been lost. The mutual respect which was visibly growing between the scouts and the Marines with whom they served was a prime indication of the esprit de corps which the program had developed. (18)

The ingenuity of the field Marines, which had been the mainstay behind the Marines' first efforts at pacification in I Corps had somewhat become overshadowed by the growth of the elaborate and complex organizational structure developed for carrying on pacification, but it remained evident during the month of February 1967. Notable indications of this ingenuity occurred in the Vietnamese village of Hoa Tho, located southwest of Da Nang in Quang Nam Province. It was in this area that the 3d Tank Battalion of the 3d Marine Division, under the command of Lieutenant Colonel William R. Corson conducted a highly successful and unique experiment in pacification. Through the energetic leadership and ingenious ability of Corson and the enthusiasm of the Marines serving under his command, a rapport was established between the Marines and villagers of Hoa Tho which produced significant benefits for both. One of the major benefits derived by the people living in Phong Bac hamlet, one of the four hamlets of Hoa Tho village, was an improved economic base. This was a result of a fishing cooperative which the Marines initiated and helped to develop through showing the people how to substantially increase their fish catch out of the Song Cau Do.* (19)

Further to the north, in the Phu Bai area of Thua Thien Province, Staff Sergeant Calvin D. Brown was providing the leadership for molding the combined action platoon in Thuy Phu village into one of the most effective CAPs operating within the ICTZ. Sergeant Brown and his CAP Marines were able to win the respect and confidence of the villagers not only by meeting the VC in the rice paddies and defeating them in battle, but most importantly, by demonstrating their respect and concern for the villagers and their way of life. Sergeant Brown pointed out that the CAPs operating throughout the ICTZ were a potent force in reducing the effectiveness of the VC infrastructure. This was accomplished in providing assistance to the PFs by teaching them military skills and in providing day-to-day on-the-spot assistance to the Vietnamese people. Since the Marines who were assigned to the CAPs essentially lived with the people, it became very important that such a close association breed contentment rather than contempt. Sergeant Brown also pointed out, that to do an effective job with the people you had to be willing to devote time to learning and understanding the culture and life style of the Vietnamese. This included the acquired ability to communicate with the people in their own language. The responsiveness of the Vietnamese seemed to increase when

* An informative account of the pacification efforts conducted by the 3d Tank Battalion is found in a document written by Lieutenant Colonel William R. Corson, USMC, entitled, "Phong Bac Hamlet: Case Study in Pacification." This is the record and the pacification program of the 3d Tank Battalion of the 3d Marine Division, during the period September 1966 through February 1967 in Phong Bac hamlet of South Vietnam. See also: William R. Corson, The Betrayal, (New York: W.W. Norton & Co., Inc., 1968).

they knew you were taking the time to learn and understand their ways rather than presenting yourself as their savior with the gift of the 'American way.' The objective of the Marines serving with the CAPs was "to work themselves out of a job" by providing the type of assistance to the people which would increase their self-reliance, their safety, and their overall well being. The Marines were working to make the villages and hamlets in which they were living and operating a better place to live than before they arrived. Through the understanding and dedication of Sergeant Brown and his ability to communicate this to the Marines under his leadership and to the Vietnamese with whom he lived and worked, significant progress was made in pacifying the village of Thuy Phu and the surrounding area. (20)

The major concerns of the I Corps JCC and its committees during February remained centered upon providing, along with OCO, the necessary coordination and support for carrying on the many diversified programs of pacification which had developed in I Corps. The council's reports indicated that major progress was being made in support of Revolutionary Development and that the Vietnamese had developed a program which would provide the necessary security for the RD Cadre Teams operating within the rural areas. Other reports to the council indicated that the fertilizer problem within I Corps had essentially been solved since the necessary fertilizer had been distributed to the Vietnamese farmers within the various province areas and that the future rice crops would be sufficient for providing for the needs of the people. If, however, the rice crops proved to be insufficient for providing the necessary rice required to feed the people, the program of importing rice into the area would continue.

One major factor, which had improved the handling and distribution of supplies to the Vietnamese people was the increased capability of handling such supplies at the Port of Da Nang. The personnel of the Naval Support Activity had worked long and hard hours at developing programs and projects which would increase the overall performance of its assigned mission. By the end of the month, the work was paying important dividends for all concerned. A record number of vital supplies were handled, distributed, and stored for immediate and future use within the ICTZ.

A representative of OCO informed the council that plans were being developed for establishing three vegetable farms within the ICTZ, which would produce the amount and variety of vegetables required to support the U. S. military needs in the area. From this project, many Vietnamese farmers would receive employment and invaluable training in modern farming methods. Other advantages, which would benefit the people, would be that new food items would be introduced into the area which would undoubtedly be sold in Vietnamese markets, thereby creating a demand by the local populace which would remain after

the military demand had diminished or ceased; that increased use of vegetables by the populace would improve public health; and that prices of vegetables in the local markets should be considerably decreased, since many varieties of vegetables being used had to be imported into the ICTZ from other sections of the country. Thus, the design of the project could produce significant and lasting benefits for the Vietnamese people.

In another area of interest, the council was informed by Colonel Hill that III MAF had completed the draft of a Standing Operating Procedure (SOP) for Emergency Relief which would provide for immediate reaction in the event of accident or disaster situations. It was also announced that the 1st Marine Aircraft Wing had established an Air-Mobile Contingency Reaction Force for response to emergency situations and that the force would be used as the initial reaction unit in conjunction with the SOP for Emergency Relief. This would provide immediate assistance to those areas which suffered disasters, such as plane crashes within populated areas. By the end of the month, the I Corps JCC had covered a wide spectrum of events which were taking place in pacification and plans were continually being developed by the council for advancing those programs and projects which had been undertaken during the ensuing months. (21)

March-April 1967

The months of March and April placed many new demands upon the resources of III MAF in combating the enemy and providing for the needs of the people. In addition to the new problems which developed and required immediate attention, many of the old problems continued to persist and inhibit certain areas of development. The major problems being faced by III MAF during the two months were centered around an increase in enemy activity designed to disrupt the election of the village and hamlet officials scheduled for April, disasters which occurred in Vietnamese populated areas, the refugee situation which was becoming almost insurmountable, and the confusion and complexity which existed within the GVN's organizational structure for supporting pacification.

The month of April marked the second full year of Marine activity within I Corps and although III MAF could point with pride to many successful achievements which had been accomplished by the Marines over the past two years, there was little time for such reflections in view of the rising urgency of the present. In order to meet the challenge of the increasing enemy activity in all five provinces, III MAF increased its number of small and large unit operations. These operations were successful in inflicting severe losses to the enemy, both in materiel and personnel. Of the 13 large operations conducted during March, 7 of them were conducted within TAORs which had substantial VC activity. Increased enemy activity was most noticeable during March in Quang Tri, Thua Thien, and Quang Ngai Provinces. In

all of these areas the enemy maintained a consistent attempt to disrupt Revolutionary Development and U. S. pacification efforts. In Quang Ngai, the enemy strenuously attempted to control the populated areas and the high food producing area around Mo Duc. The locations and targets of the enemy activity indicated that the VC, would, in all probability, make even greater attempts in the future at thwarting pacification, particularly in the coastal regions. Such indications were also taken as a sign that the pacification efforts were making progress and curtailing the enemy's plans for taking over the populated and food producing areas.

The enemy had been largely unsuccessful in his open encounters with Marine forces although his ability at conducting propaganda activity and terrorist attacks against helpless civilians remained relatively high. During the month of March, such activity appeared in the form of indoctrination courses directed against ARVN and U. S. military personnel. Over the same period, VC terrorist attacks were mounted in surprise proportions to instill terror in the local populace, disrupt RD activity, and hamper the village and hamlet elections which were to begin on 2 April. These terrorist attacks resulted in the destruction of 117 homes in a refugee camp located in Thua Thien Province and repeated assassinations and kidnappings of former VC who had been employed by the RD program and other Vietnamese who were suspected of betraying the VC cause. Other enemy-initiated activity during the month accounted for 14 VC attacks against subsector and district headquarters. Three of the Vietnamese district headquarters within the ICTZ were completely overrun by the enemy and sustained heavy casualties.

Early in the morning of 15 March, the Da Nang Air Base was hit by its second 140mm rocket attack. An estimated 8 to 10 rounds impacted in an area on one of the runways. A Marine reaction force was dispatched with all speed to seal off the area and attempt to locate the enemy rocket launching sites. Twenty-four rocket firing points were found, with two of the rocket launchers still in position. Later on during the day, an additional 31 launchers, together with 11 140mm rockets and 8 cannisters were recovered in and along the banks of the Song Yen in Quang Nam Province. When the find was made, it was discovered that rockets were still inserted in five of the launchers. The Marines who discovered the enemy launch sites reported that freshly made craters were present and that the initial counterbattery fire by the Marine artillery units had probably created the craters, thereby interrupting the enemy fire mission and causing his hasty retreat from the area. The enemy capability estimate for the month as reported by III MAF indicated that the enemy was able to launch multi-regimental attacks, conduct small unit harassing operations against isolated outposts, interdict lines of communication, and terrorize the local population in many areas of the ICTZ. Although the estimate had credited the enemy with significant attacking and

harassing capability, the fact remained that he had paid a heavy price on occasions when he had challenged the Marines in open battle and had generally failed in attempts to halt civil affairs programs. (22)

By March 1967, the I Corps JCC and the Office of Civil Operations were working in full cooperation to advance the total pacification efforts of the U. S. and GVN. Many of the OCO personnel were members of the council and the committees functioning under its direction, which was resulting in a constant flow of information and interchange of ideas on how best to serve the needs of the Vietnamese people. There were many needs brought before the I Corps JCC during the month which would require its assistance if they were to be solved. The most pressing problems involved transporting a sugar mill from Saigon to Quang Ngai Province and assisting in establishing its operation, repairing a saw mill located within Quang Tin Province and the training of operators to keep the mill running once it had been repaired, and assisting the City of Da Nang with its trash disposal. The council was able to resolve the trash problem by coordinating arrangements for the purchasing of garbage trucks from Saigon, training the drivers for the trucks, and providing a location for a garbage dump.

In other areas of interest to the council, it was reported that OCO had arranged for the establishing of a rock crusher in I Corps, which could be of great assistance in providing material for construction projects, and that the Army-Air Force Exchange system had granted permission for introducing handicraft products from the Hue Vocational Training Center into the post exchange system. In the reports received by the council from its various committees, there were indications that problems continued to persist in checking the plague, which resulted not so much from the lack of medical treatment being provided to the Vietnamese but from the lack of knowledge in identifying their health problems and reporting for treatment in time to reduce infection. All avenues were being explored to reduce the problem and bring it into more manageable proportions.

A problem had developed in the Refugee Vocational Training School in Da Nang. Due to a breakdown in funding from the GVN, the teachers at the school had not been paid for their services since 31 December. As a result of this, the school would be closed on 1 April unless funds could be found to keep the school operating. The problem was taken under investigation by OCO, and it was anticipated that funds would be found to keep the school open. The refugee increases within I Corps had been mounting over several months and during March it continued to present one of the most challenging problems to the I Corps JCC. At the council meeting on 14 March, General Lam was in attendance and requested the council to continue to evaluate the refugee problem and assist him in finding a solution. The chairman of the council informed General Lam that an all-out effort would continue and that all avenues would be thoroughly explored which

might possibly lead to a solution of the problem. (23) By the end of March, the 29th Civil Affairs Company was using its Displaced Persons Team to revise the chart of all refugee camps and the refugee population living within the ICTZ. The project was due for completion during April and statistics had already indicated that 4,992 new refugees had arrived in the ICTZ during the month. (24)

Direct civil affairs assistance to the people, which was being provided by III MAF personnel, continued to rise during the month of March. With the continued good weather conditions, MEDCAP and DENCAP teams provided a record number of treatments in the populated areas. The distribution of soap, food, and clothing was also on the increase. Major construction projects such as building and repairing schools, digging wells, repairing the roads, and constructing livestock pens were increasing on all civil affairs agriculture projects and relief supplies were being distributed to a large number of displaced persons. The U. S. Marine Corps Reserve Civic Action Fund, operating in a joint relationship with CARE, continued to be a major and vital source for carrying on III MAF's civil affairs activity. During March, a total of \$16,515.00 of these funds was spent in providing for civil affairs activities which were directly aimed at relieving the needs of the people. (25)

The Emergency Relief plans, which had been drawn up by III MAF during February, received their first crucial test during March. Relief was administered to victims of disasters in several locations during the month. Two of the relief operations were of special significance. A seven-man team from Marine Aircraft Group-11 provided immediate relief to the injured and homeless persons of Ap Moi Hamlet, after a fire had destroyed the hamlet. The assistance which was provided consisted of commodities distribution, medical treatments, and temporary shelters which were erected soon after the fire had been extinguished.

The most extensive relief operation took place at Long Vei in the Huong Hoa District of Quang Tri Province. On the evening of 2 March, Long Vei was mistakenly bombed by two friendly aircraft which resulted in a number of the villagers being killed and wounded and the destruction of over 140 homes and buildings. A U. S. Army Special Forces camp, which adjoined the village, also sustained hits as a result of the bombs being dropped. Initial assistance was provided to the villagers by members of the Special Forces Detachment A-101. A III MAF unit, Sub Unit 5, Headquarters Battalion, 3d Marine Division, was notified of the unfortunate attack and immediately dispatched assistance into the stricken area. Approximately 20 minutes after the bombing, 4 Marine Corps helicopters were on the scene and commenced MEDEVAC operations, but bad weather and ground fog in the area halted the helicopters after their initial effort. A KC-130 aircraft was able to land near the village and evacuated 53 of the injured before the weather closed in and halted all

air operations. Although aircraft were unable to provide continued immediate relief, a convoy of Marine trucks from the 12th Marines and Sub Unit 5 of the 3d Division arrived on the scene and evacuated more than 100 of the injured to the base at Khe Sanh. Further evacuation attempts were prevented on 2 March as a result of two VC mortar attacks which were launched against the base at Khe Sanh.

On 3 March, KC-130 aircraft were able to land in the stricken area. By mid-morning, all of the injured who required evacuation were airlifted to hospitals in Phu Bai and Da Nang. On the same day, relief supplies furnished by III MAF began to arrive in Long Vei by KC-130s. These supplies included rice, bags of salt, pots and pans, eating utensils, cooking oil, tool kits, and lumber. Much of this material was furnished to the disaster area by OCO and the World Relief Commission. In further attempts to provide assistance to the stricken area, U. S. Navy and Marine Corps heavy equipment was dispatched to the scene on 3 March to aid in rescue and relief work. The 1st Marine Aircraft Wing Contingency Relief Force (CRF) also arrived the same day and made a significant contribution to the relief operation. The CRF provided labor and security and assisted in the distribution of food and the burial of the dead. The U. S. Army 29th Civil Affairs Company provided coordination assistance in the area until 21 March. By that time the primary coordination for relief and rebuilding efforts had reverted to the U. S. Advisors for the GVN. Even though a change had been made for coordinating the relief work, U. S. Navy and Marine Corps trucks and heavy equipment, along with their operators, remained in the area and continued the rebuilding of Long Vei village.(26)

The psychological operations during the month remained effective in reaching the people living within Viet Cong-controlled areas. By the end of March, 165 new ralliers in I Corps had turned themselves over to the GVN for Chieu Hoi indoctrination. The ralliers who came into the Chieu Hoi program consistently reported that they had heard loudspeaker appeals and had seen leaflets explaining the advantages offered by the program. Many of the ralliers also reported that some of the Vietnamese who were serving with the VC were anxious to join the cause of the GVN but were afraid that if they defected the VC would kill them or members of their families. An important PsyOps technique, movie festivals, which had been developed for reaching the people within the villages and hamlets, continued to be an effective means for establishing good relations during March. A typical festival opened with a speech by the village or hamlet chief who informed the people attending of the purpose of the festival. The speaker usually told the villagers that the festival was being presented as a means of expressing the appreciation of the local Marine unit for the cooperation the people had given and to provide entertainment. After the speech was given, a cartoon, a feature film, and an educational film were usually shown. During reel changes of the film, traditional

Vietnamese music was played or a short speech made by a local rallier. By the end of the month, the movie festival concept had expanded so rapidly, with numerous requests for festivals coming in from many different areas, that it was becoming increasingly difficult to fulfill the requests, due to a lack of audio-visual teams. The OCO PsyOps personnel, who supplied the films for the festivals, were directing their attention to solving the problem, since the festivals had proven so successful.(27)

Many of the problems which had confronted III MAF during March were resolved during April. Throughout the month of April, III MAF continued its stepped-up combat activity to counter the enemy attacks which were becoming increasingly directed at disrupting pacification efforts. It continued to appear that the VC had singled out the RD Program in general and the RD Cadre Teams in particular for intensified efforts at destruction. It was also evident that the VC was giving major attention to disrupting the village and hamlet elections which were being held in I Corps. Although enemy activity was present throughout the ICTZ during the month, the most intensive activity was centered in the northern portion of the ICTZ, specifically within Quang Tri Province.

In an attempt to further the enemy cause, the VC continued a steady program of propaganda and terrorism within the rural village and hamlet areas. Their propaganda leaflets were once again directed against the U. S. and ARVN personnel and the rural pacification program. Many noticeable acts of terrorism were directed against the Vietnamese people. In Quang Nam Province, 12 villagers who were candidates for election were kidnapped. In Thua Thien Province, the VC mortared a Vietnamese village which resulted in several casualties. In other areas throughout the ICTZ, the VC also carried out acts of assassination and abduction of Vietnamese nationals who had announced their candidacy for their village and hamlet elections. These acts indicated the enemy's ability to strike fear in the hearts of the defenseless and unsuspecting, but in doing so, the enemy continued to pay a heavy price for such activity.

The III MAF increased its small and large unit operations during April. The small unit counter guerrilla operations during the month resulted in approximately 1,067 enemy contacts which further resulted in 635 confirmed VC deaths. The large unit operations conducted by III MAF also produced marked results in reducing the enemy's capability for sustaining open combat with Marine forces. One of the most important aspects of the combat operations conducted during the month was the blocking and reducing of concentrated enemy efforts directed at destroying pacification programs.(28)

By the end of April, III MAF and the I Corps JCC had completed the first month of what was ultimately to become the third year of Marine pacification efforts within I Corps. The major civil affairs activity during April was directed toward

improving those programs and projects which had suffered degrees of recession over the past months. The level of MEDCAP and DENCAP treatments remained relatively the same as during the previous month but indications were that in numerous other civil affairs efforts progress was being made. One of the most significant concerns of the civil affairs personnel of III MAF was the extensive planning that was going on to formulate a program for the movement and resettlement of approximately 20,000 refugees within or near the DMZ area to locations further south within I Corps, in order to permit unrestricted military operations in the north. This move was of vital importance due to the large enemy buildup along the DMZ which had been growing over the past several months. In planning for the move of the refugees, III MAF was giving consideration to the construction of temporary housing, wells, medical facilities, transportation, and security. There were also many other contingencies that were being planned for the move and the operation was due to get underway during May. (29)

During the month, there was a change in the regular membership of the I Corps JCC. Of the changes that took place one was the result of a combat casualty. On 19 April, near Tam Ky in Quang Tin Province, Colonel John T. Hill, G-5, III MAF, was wounded and subsequently evacuated to the U. S. on 26 April. On 27 April, Colonel George O. Ross assumed the duty as G-5, III MAF, and became a regular member of the I Corps JCC. (30)*

The important items covered by the I Corps JCC during the month were centered around many of the problems that had been presented to the council during March. The council received word that the problem of payment for the teachers at the Da Nang Polytechnic School, which provided vocational training for refugees, had been solved by OCO. Mr. Gordon advised the council that OCO had taken cognizance of the situation to include the back pay for the teachers and the reestablishment of financial support for the teachers salaries for future courses which they would teach.

As a result of the coordinated efforts which had been established at the Port of Da Nang, and with the completion of the military port facilities, the council passed a motion which dropped the Port Coordinating Committee from its organizational structure. In its place, Brigadier General Robert G. Owens, Jr., Chief of Staff, III MAF, recommended to the council that the functions of the Road Committee be expanded and its title changed to the Transportation Committee. The committee

* Other membership changes that had taken place on the I Corps JCC were: Lieutenant Colonel O'Leary assumed the duties as recorder of the council from Lieutenant Colonel D. L. Evans on 28 February, and Brigadier General Robert G. Owens, Jr., assumed the duties as Chief of Staff, III MAF, from Brigadier General Hugh M. Elwood, and became a regular member of the council.

would have cognizance over land and sea transportation and future port developments within the ICTZ. The committee would ensure that all transportation aspects continued to be coordinated and would fill any void created by dropping the Port Coordinating Committee. The recommendation was taken under advisement and a study was to be made of its feasibility.

In order to deal more effectively with the refugee problem in I Corps and provide assistance to the GVN in solving the problem, the I Corps JCC formed a Refugee Committee, which became a functioning part of its organizational structure. The membership for the Refugee Committee was drawn from the GVN, III MAF, and OCO, and the committee was requested to make weekly reports to the council regarding its activities. By the end of the month, the standing committees of the council had reported on their areas of activity. These reports indicated an overall upward trend in the pacification progress. At the problem areas that did exist, immediate action was being directed at developing solutions. With the arrival of May, the I Corps JCC and its committees were continuing to search for ways that would assist in lightening the load of the Vietnamese people and provide avenues for the development of a viable and responsible GVN. (31)

The psychological operations which were conducted by III MAF during April in support of the pacification objectives were largely responsible for the continued defection of Vietnamese from the ranks of the VC. The 73 ralliers who defected from the VC in I Corps during the month continued to report that their decision to defect was greatly influenced by the leaflets or loudspeaker appeals which described the advantages of the Chieu Hoi program. Many of the propaganda leaflets which described the Chieu Hoi program and reached the VC were distributed by III MAF units which were carrying out daily patrols, and by MEDCAP and DENCAP teams who were performing services within the villages and hamlets. Psychological Operations Exploitation Teams (POET) and Armed Propaganda Teams, which were receiving their guidance and assistance from the U. S. Army 244th PsyOps Company, were able to turn enemy-initiated incidents into positive propaganda in support of the GVN. Although there had been only seven COUNTY FAIRs conducted over the past two months, three in March and four in April, the psychological support for those operations had been highly successful. Another area where PsyOps had been skillfully employed was the Kit Carson Scout program. The program during April continued to move forward with much success, and, by the end of the month, 32 scouts were actively working with Marine units in the field and an additional 31 scouts were undergoing training. Since the inception of the program, the scouts had led over 1,000 patrols and had identified over 100 Viet Cong through facial recognition procedures. In order to increase the Scout program, all ralliers coming into the Chieu Hoi program were thoroughly screened to determine their suitability for the important task. (32)

By the end of April, it was apparent that all of III MAF's civil affairs efforts had made an important contribution to the success of the elections which were held in I Corps. During the voting period, approximately 80 percent of the eligible voters had participated in the elections and III MAF was continuing its efforts to assure at least a similar turnout of voters during the elections which were due to be held during May and June. As the month closed, III MAF received an important document on the refugee situation in I Corps which had been prepared by the Displaced Persons Team of the 29th Civil Affairs Company. This document covered the past history of the refugee problem in I Corps and pointed to the magnitude of the problem which existed at the time the document was prepared. The following is a portion of the document which was received by III MAF in April 1967:

These refugees were civilians who by reasons of real or imagined danger had left their homes to seek safety elsewhere within their own country. The current I Corps refugee problem began in the fall of 1964 when heavy rains and floods drove thousands of the rural people to "safe-havens" near the coast and larger districts. As the combat situation and operations increased in tempo, more and more people used this opportunity to escape from VC taxation, domination, terrorism and harassing activities. The security afforded these people near U. S. military and ARVN camps prompted others, who had heard of their situation, to flow into these same areas. Temporary shelters were built for many, but others were required to seek refuge with friends, relatives, and in abandoned buildings in the area. As of this writing, refugees continued to move out of VC territory into areas secured by the military forces. The estimated number of arrivals each month based on a nine month sampling is 10,000. These people, even though considered a liability by the misinformed, are a true asset to the government of Vietnam. They have "voted with their feet" to accept a more democratic way of life. They have deprived the VC of taxation, laborers, supplies, and food commodities. And finally, the refugees, by being placed in a position to observe for themselves a better way of life, act as the best anti-VC propaganda that we can provide. Today, the total of refugees in the ICTZ is 327,298. However, the refugee figure is extremely fluid. These people tend to move from one area to another, since they are unable to return to their ancestral territories. They continue steadfast in their hopes for this return and even after twenty years of upheaval can visualize a time when they may return again to pursue a peaceful existence. One of our primary goals is to continue to provide a better existence to these "unfortunates of war" than was available to them under the VC.(33)

Providing for the "unfortunates of war" in I Corps, had been one of the major objectives of III MAF since the inception of its civil affairs activity in March 1965. This objective, from March 1965 through April 1967, had faced many trials and challenges and although there had been setbacks, the endeavor had never halted. Thus, with faith in its cause and a determination to provide for an increasingly better life for the people of South Vietnam, the III Marine Amphibious Force continued to push forward its civil affairs efforts.

APPENDIX A

Interviews

The following is an alphabetical listing of those personally interviewed concerning Civil Affairs Activity in I Corps, South Vietnam from April 1966 to April 1967:

Brown, Calvin D., Staff Sergeant, USMC, 2 July 1968, Washington, D. C.
Burgess, Roger E., USAID, 23 July 1968, Washington, D. C.
Evans, D. L., Jr., Lieutenant Colonel, USMC, 2 July 1968, Washington, D. C.
Gordon, Mark, USAID, 25 July 1968, Washington, D. C.
McGonigal, Richard A., Lieutenant Commander, USN, Chaplain, 1 August 1968, Washington, D. C.
Mattingly, Robert E., Captain., USMC, 22 July 1968, Washington, D. C.
Nickerson, Herman Jr., Lieutenant General, USMC, 2 August 1968, Washington, D. C.
Platt, Jonas M., Major General, USMC, 24 September 1968, Washington, D. C.
Robertshaw, Louis B., Major General, USMC, 31 July 1968, Washington, D. C.
Walt, Lewis W., Lieutenant General, 6 August 1968, Washington, D. C.
Weschler, Thomas, Rear Admiral, USN, 5 August 1968, Washington, D. C.
Young, Earl, USAID, 23 July 1968, Washington, D. C.

APPENDIX B

Abbreviations

ARVN - Army of the Republic of Vietnam
BLT - Battalion Landing Team
CA - Civil Affairs or Civic Action
CAC - Combined Action Company
CAO - Civil Affairs Officers
CAP - Combined Action Platoon
CARE - Cooperation for American Relief Everywhere
CGC - Census Grievance Committee
COMUSMACV - Commander United States Military Assistance Command Vietnam
DRV - Democratic Republic of Vietnam (North Vietnam)
FEBA - Forward Edge of the Battle Area
GVN - Government of South Vietnam
HANDCLASP - The U. S. Navy People-to-People relief effort since 1962--in June 1965 it became a joint effort between the U. S. Navy and the U. S. Marine Corps in South Vietnam.
ICTZ - I Corps Tactical Zone
JAC - Joint Action Company
JCC - Joint Coordinating Council (functioned in I Corps only)
JUSPAO - Joint U. S. Public Affairs Office
MEB - Marine Expeditionary Brigade
MEDCAP - Medical Civic Action Program or Medical Civic Action Patrols
MAF - Marine Amphibious Force
MORD - Ministry of Revolutionary Development

NSA - Naval Support Activity
NVA - North Vietnamese Army
OCO - Office of Civil Operations
PAT - Political Action Teams
PF - Popular Forces (South Vietnam)
PsyOps - Psychological Operations
PsyWar - Psychological Warfare
RC - Rural Construction
RD - Revolutionary Development
RF - Regional Forces (South Vietnam)
RVN - Republic of Vietnam (South Vietnam)
TAOR - Tactical Area of Responsibility
USAID - United States Agency for International Development
(also AID)
USIA - United States Information Agency
USIS - United States Information Service
USMACV - United States Military Assistance Command, Vietnam
USOM - United States Operations Mission
VC - Viet Cong or Vietnamese Communist
VCS - Vietnamese Communist Suspect or Viet Cong Suspect

APPENDIX C

A Selected Bibliography on Indo-China/Vietnam

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