



Flares and smoke mark sites of combat in Saigon during the 1968 Tet attacks.

Tet and the Aftermath ... 1968

"The year ahead is destined to be one of great challenge and opportunity."

*New Year's Day Message
Lieutenant General Bruce Palmer
January 1, 1968*

A DOZEN names: Paris . . . Saigon . . . Hanoi . . . Tet . . . the Demilitarized Zone . . . Khe Sanh . . . the New Jersey . . . Hue . . . Abrams . . . these and many more studded the world's headlines during 1968.

And the names of thousands of Americans were printed in newspaper pages, etched on tombstones, whispered in lonely, tearfilled nights.

Seldom has a statement about the future been more prophetic than the one made on that New

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Rockets like the captured one fired back at the Viet Cong (right) slammed into Saigon during Tet and again in May (center). Identification was checked on all persons traveling (bottom left), and sampans—often used by VC—were carefully observed (bottom right).



Photo by Major Charles B. Moore



THE 1968 TET OFFENSIVE



During Tet 4th Infantry Division soldiers clear Kontum.
Photo by Spec. 4 James Doyle



Alone in her VC destroyed home in Song Be. Chopper lands atop U.S. Embassy in Saigon.



Year's by the deputy commander of the U.S. Army, Vietnam.

This was, without question, the most eventful year completed during America's agonizing war in Southeast Asia. It saw the most savage series of attacks, the most brutal fighting and a strong glimmer of hope for an honorable end.

The most violent part of the war year was the Communists' winter-spring offensive. It began even before 1968 did, with a 36-hour New Year's truce that was violated by the Reds 177 times—"the bloodiest holiday truce of the Vietnam War," the papers called it, 30 days and several thousand deaths before Tet.

The bombers flew north to begin the fourth year of raids above the Demilitarized Zone on Tuesday, Jan. 3. There were dogfights and Air Force Phantom pilots bagged two MIG 17s that day.

There were rumors that Ho Chi Minh was seriously ill, but it didn't make much difference to Americal Division troopers—they beat off attacks by elements of two NVA regiments on Jan. 3 and began a massive sweep of their southern I Corps area of operation. About 200 Reds were killed that first day, and by the time the fighting was over, more than a week later, Skytroopers of the 1st Cavalry Division's 3rd Brigade had joined in to help kill more than a thousand North Vietnamese.

As January neared its end it began to look like an offensive was coming near the DMZ, where a string of artillery, rocket and ground attacks were unleashed on Allied posts all along the buffer zone. Khe Sanh and neighboring Lang Vei were hit—hard—for the first time on Jan. 21, beginning a three-month drama that would focus the eyes of the world on a small Marine garrison in the rolling, rusty-red hills of the Lao border country.

The U.S. command rushed 3,000 1st Cavalry Division troops as reinforcements into northern I Corps, and infantrymen from the 101st Airborne Division soon followed. A total of 10,000 Marine and Army troops were poured, in less than a week, into areas near the DMZ to guard against an expected "major offensive" there.

American intelligence reports indicated that a fresh North Vietnamese division had been infiltrated into I Corps, to make a total of between 40 and 50 thousand NVA soldiers—three full divisions—poised for a general attack.

On Saturday, Jan. 27, the Communists began their "unilateral seven-day truce" during the Tet holiday season in South Vietnam, which the North Vietnamese completely ignored in the northern part of the Republic. The carnage there went on. On Wednesday, Jan. 31, the Allies began their 36-hour version of the Tet truce. It lasted 15½ hours, until 9:30 Thursday morning when rockets began

MPs hustle a Viet Cong detainee apprehended near the American Embassy during Tet to a detention point. Corporal George Moyer (left) and Spec. 4 James M. Singer were among MPs rushed to the Embassy to assist guards in repelling an assault on the compound.

Photo by Spec. 5 Donald A. Hirst



slamming into Da Nang Air Base. Wild street fighting broke out in the peaceful seaside resort of Nha Trang and Communist sappers breached the security of the U.S. Embassy grounds in Saigon.

One senior American officer said of the northern provinces: "It is something I would label an invasion. It is no longer just an infiltration."

In Saigon, on Jan. 31, the government was distributing "Tet tote bags," little gift packets of soap and other hard-to get necessities. In each was a printed horoscope that predicted the new year, beginning that day, would be "favorable to the government but unfavorable to its enemies."

"VC Hit Saigon," screamed the headlines on Thursday, Feb. 1.

Street fighting raged in all eight major cities and at least 30 towns and provincial capitals. That first day, the U.S. command acknowledged full-scale attacks on Kontum, Ban Me Thuot, Nha Trang, Hoi An, Tuy Hoa, Qui Nhon and Pleiku, and, of course, in the capital itself.

But many towns, such as My Tho and Can Tho in the Mekong Delta, were ripped with battles that at first went unreported in Saigon because of the confusion.

There was more fighting in Quang Tri, Dalat and Bien Hoa. The North Vietnamese virtually occupied Hue—they assassinated more than 1,000 civilians in that city alone. They held half of Kontum. Terrorist slaughter was reported everywhere—foreign missionaries were slain, and anyone who worked for the Americans was murdered or tortured.

The Reds had lists of names marked for assassination in nearly every city. Those who waited too long, or who had no place to hide, were killed without compunction—men, women and children—by the "liberators."

General William C. Westmoreland, U.S. commander in Vietnam, stated the attacks were "a diversionary effort to draw attention from the northern part of the country."

Communist snipers were operating within 200 yards of his Tan Son Nhut headquarters. The Philippine Embassy residence had been destroyed by terrorists, the ambassador and his wife barely escaping death or capture. Tanks ringed the Saigon home of U.S. Ambassador Ellsworth Bunker.

Five thousand Reds had died in savage, confused fighting in the first of the Tet Offensive—that name was already burning itself into front pages and TV screens around the world. More than 650 enemy deaths occurred in Saigon alone.

By Feb. 9, 920 U.S. soldiers had died in the Tet fighting; 4,561 were wounded. Newsmen were reporting that "countless civilians perished in the fighting"—the final count was almost 20,000 killed or wounded.

Dive bombers and rocket helicopters were raining destruction on Red troops entrenched in the

suburbs of South Vietnam's capital, the city that the world had considered "secure" until the morning of Feb. 1.

That's how it began. It went on, in Saigon, until mid-February, when fighting still flickered in the suburbs of Cholon and around the Phu Tho race track.

Who won the battles of the Tet Offensive? It's a hard question to answer. Certainly, the Communists were deprived of every major goal, with the possible exception of publicity.

It was by no stretch of the imagination a military win—27,706 Reds died in the Tet fighting. For this, the Communist high command had not one single prize to show.

It was not a psychological victory. In no clearly defined instance did any of the civilians in the areas of fighting join or support the Reds—unless at the point of a gun.

On the other hand, no one will deny that South Vietnam's city populace suffered terribly. There are scars of destruction that will last a long time—and scars of the mind that will last longer. As Dean Rusk said, "This is a time of trial for the South Vietnamese and their Allies. It may well be the climactic period of the struggle in Southeast Asia."

As the cleanup began in mid-February, a drama was unfolding in Hue. Some 4,000 Reds had died there in the first three weeks of February, but an estimated 500 North Vietnamese had holed up in the old imperial Citadel, from which Vietnam's ancient emperors ruled. They decided to die there, and the Allies had no choice but to oblige them. A Communist flag had been raised on Jan. 31, and it fluttered for nearly a month over the Citadel as U.S. Marines pushed grueling street fighting back toward the center, step by step. On Feb. 24, a company of South Vietnamese soldiers charged the last hold-out—and the flag came down. The enemy soldiers were at last dead, but Hue lay in ruins.

There was one bright spot in the gloomy month of February—Hanoi, as a "goodwill gesture," released three captured U.S. pilots on Feb. 16.

Friday, March 1, saw 4,000 paratroopers of the 82nd Airborne Division arriving in Vietnam, part of the 10,500 men that Washington had decided to rush to the Republic as reinforcements, acting on Westmoreland's request.

The first day of March also saw Clark Clifford sworn in as the new Secretary of Defense.

By the first week of the month, there were so many Army troops in the Marine bailiwick of the northern provinces that Westmoreland sent Army Lieutenant General William B. Rosson to assume a new command in I Corps, which was to serve as "a tactical echelon between General Cushman (Marine Lieutenant General Robert E. Cushman, senior I Corps commander) and the commanders of the U.S. Army and Marine divisions in the

northern area." It was called at first Provisional Corps, Vietnam, but is now XXIV Corps.

In mid-March, Operation Quyet Thang (Resolved to Win) was kicked off around Saigon. More than 50,000 Allied troops—including the 1st, 9th and 25th Infantry Divisions, the 11th Armored Cavalry Regiment and elements of the 7th and 25th ARVN Infantry Divisions, an airborne task force and the 5th Ranger Group plus National Police forces—swept and re-swept the provinces around the capital, searching for Communist troops and arms caches. Before it ended on April 9, 2,658 Reds had been killed.

On Thursday, March 21, the U.S. command announced it was kicking off five more general operations across South Vietnam "to regain the initiative." Ten thousand U.S. troops were committed, and 799 Communist soldiers were reported killed in the early fighting.

On Friday, March 22, President Johnson announced in Washington that General Westmoreland would be promoted to Army Chief of Staff. Replacing General Westmoreland as commander of U.S. Forces in Vietnam would be General Creighton W. Abrams, then deputy commander. General Palmer would become the new Army Vice Chief of Staff, with Lieutenant General Frank T. Mildren replacing him as deputy commander of U.S. Army, Vietnam.

On the last day of March, the President made his famous "I won't run" speech and cut back the bombing in the north to below the 19th Parallel, marking America's broadest appeal to Hanoi for peace.

On Monday, April Fool's Day, Operation Pegasus/Lam Son, a massive aerial-assault, began the several days of sweeping near Laos that would lift the siege of beleaguered Khe Sanh Marine camp—where up to 1,300 Red shells had been falling every day, but the promised tidal-wave ground assault that would relive Dien Bien Phu never came.

On the same day, President Nguyen Van Thieu told his nation that general mobilization, which would place more than 200,000 additional South Vietnamese under arms by the end of the year, was coming.

Operation Quyet Thang had been so successful that another mass Allied sweep, Operation Toan Thang (Complete Victory) was launched on April 8. Fifty thousand soldiers began a drive through 11 provinces around Saigon, with the same objective that the earlier operation had, but on a scale twice as large.

It was not as spectacular in results, but the Allies were to learn in the coming May Offensive how well both sweeps had done their jobs.

The Air Force and the Navy were doing their work, too. On Friday, April 19, the highest number of missions over North Vietnam for the year

were logged—160. And on the Tuesday before than, B52 Stratoforts, South Vietnam's "man-made thunder," socked over a million pounds of explosives into the A Shau Valley in a single day, softening that area for Operation Delaware, a sweep by 1st Cavalry and 101st Airborne Division troops in which the major Communist stronghold and supply route was shattered.

On Friday, May 3, there was an announcement the world had been waiting for—the United States and Hanoi agreed to begin preliminary peace discussions in Paris.

The war was not, though, by any stretch of the imagination, ending in May—that was the month of the second Communist city offensive. The fighting was bitter, but the Red effort was a faint echo of the Tet campaign.

It began the night of May 4, with the near-simultaneous shelling of 119 cities, towns and villages in the Republic. There were ground attacks in Saigon and Bu Dop, three miles from Cambodia. The Bu Dop attackers were driven off in hours. It took longer in Saigon.

There was wild, confused street fighting in the western and southern suburbs of the city. The first secretary of the West German Embassy was assassinated. Brigadier General Nguyen Ngoc Loan, chief of the National Police, was wounded badly in a leg leading a charge against a machine gun position near the big Newport Bridge, in Gia Dinh. Two hundred VC were killed in the first day of the fighting.

But no U.S. installations in Saigon were even attacked this time, and there was absence of the wide-spread terrorism and sniping that had marked the Tet fighting. On Monday, May 6, the Reds were turned back when they tried to break into Tan Son Nhut Air Base from the western perimeter—but the South Vietnamese commander of the base was killed by a Red rocket.

By the end of the week, the resistance had been localized into pockets in the western and southern suburbs, but they still had to be rooted out. This meant treacherous house-to-house fighting and more heavy damage to Saigon's badly needed housing areas. By Sunday, May 12, it was over—the last pocket of Reds surrendered, en masse. Enemy losses had reached a total of 2,982 killed. They had never entered the heart of the city itself. An intended 26 to 30 battalions had never gotten close enough to take part in the second assault on Saigon—the two big sweeps had cut them off or wiped them out.

The next day, May 13, the Paris peace talks began.

Fighting trailed off at this time. Although there were minor skirmishes in the Saigon suburban areas until mid-summer, there were no more "Tet Offensives." But on Ho Chi Minh's birthday, May 19, 20 big 122mm rockets slammed into downtown

Saigon, killing 11 and wounding 51. It marked the start of a scatter-shot terror campaign of rocketings against Saigon and other cities that killed only innocent civilians and lasted till the fall.

The shellings did more to turn the population against the VC than to terrorize them into the Communist line. There were 12 straight days of rocketings in the worst period, in June. More than 100 civilians were killed and 400 wounded during those dozen days alone. Massive, close-in Allied sweeps turned up scores of Red rockets and put a stop to most of the shellings.

The last half of the year saw a switch in combat accent away from the cities and back into the countryside. The war tended to decentralize, although there was no lack of "significant" contacts, and the fury of the fighting was not for a moment abated by the on-going peace talks.

While 1968 brought the hardest fighting of the war to South Vietnam, it also brought a sweet, delicate breath of peace—and America took the first step away from escalation. President Johnson, after months of bitter wrangling with Hanoi's representatives in Paris, told the world he was ordering a total halt to the bombing of North Vietnam on the first of November, five months after he initially limited the bombing.

The great carriers in the Tonkin Gulf headed southward in silence.

In late summer, fall and winter, the other big news stories were:

—Defense Secretary Clark Clifford arrived for a four-day "complete review" of the war on July 14, promising South Vietnamese forces new equipment, including M16s.

—Three more U.S. pilot-captives were released by Hanoi on Aug. 3. They went home, saying they were "well-treated" while in prison.

—The 4,500-man 27th Marine Regiment was withdrawn from Vietnam and sent back to the U.S. on Sept. 10. It had arrived during Tet as "temporary reinforcements."

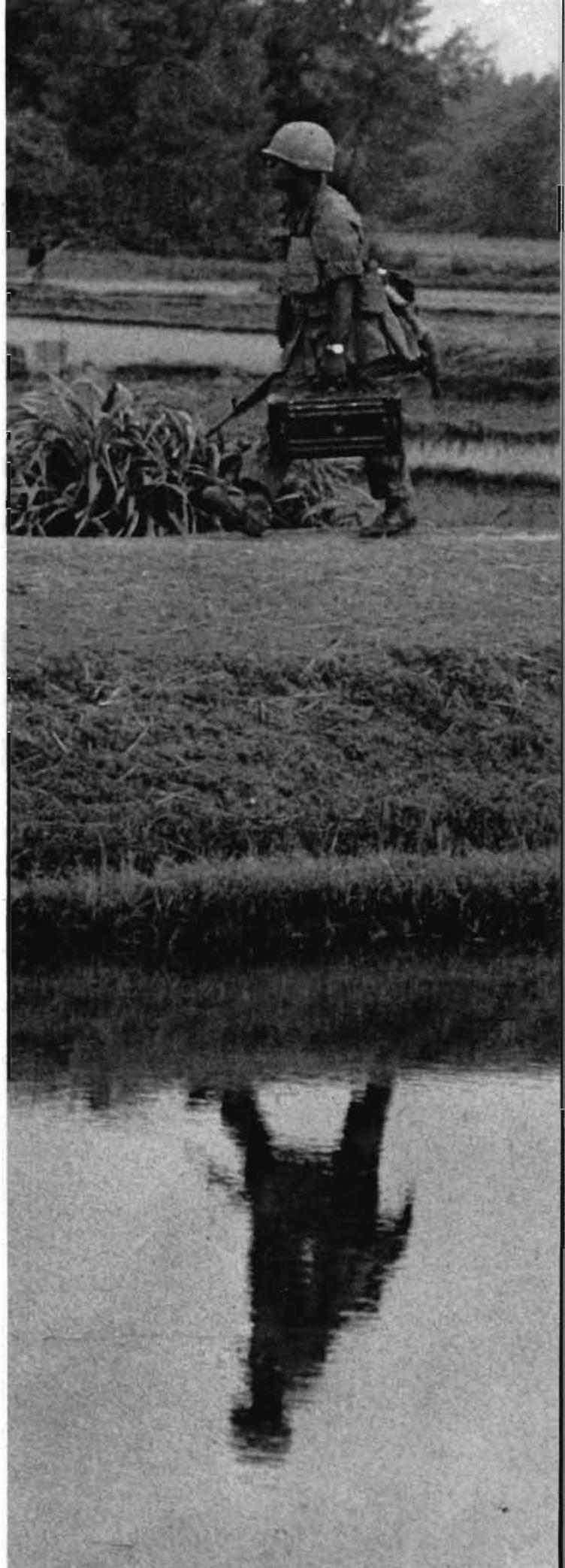
—Major General Keith L. Ware, commander of the U.S. 1st Infantry Division, was killed near the Cambodian border Sept. 13, when his helicopter was shot down by enemy fire.

—Brigadier General Frederick E. Davison, commanding the 199th Light Infantry Brigade, became the third Negro in U.S. history to win general's stars, given him on Sept. 13.

—The 56,000-ton battleship New Jersey, first dreadnaught to fire in combat since Korea, returned to war, off the coast of Vietnam, Sept. 30.

—General Duong Van (Big) Minh, leader of the coup that overthrew the Diem regime in 1963, returned from exile in Thailand at President Thieu's invitation, Oct. 5.

His reflection cast on the water, a combat-ready soldier walks along a dike between two rice paddies.



The New Look

...1969

THE thunder of rockets and mortars shattered the final hours of a Communist ceasefire period toward the end of February, marking the first broad enemy offensive of 1969. As the year moved into summer, the low level of ground action indicated that the enemy was changing his tactics. The Communist capability for large scale attacks had been whittled away by constant pressure from U.S., Republic of Vietnam and other Free World armed forces. Apparently the enemy would now have to depend on small unit, sapper-type attacks, with occasional high points, to cause any significant damage.

The new year got off on a hopeful note with the release of three American soldiers captured during 1968 by Viet Cong (VC) and the escape the day before of Special Forces Major James Rowe, a VC captive since 1963. The peace talks were continuing in Paris and Richard M. Nixon was being inaugurated as President of the United States.

Many thought that the new president would bring a rapid end to the war. President Nguyen Van Thieu made a comprehensive proposal for peace in which he said all factions, including the Communists, would participate. His only stipulation was that all parties abide by the outcome. President Nixon lauded the proposal and said that the enemy could gain nothing by waiting. Still the Communists made no move for a settlement of the war. While he waited, the enemy suffered heavy losses, including men, food supplies and weapons.

Through mid-August 1969, Allied forces accounted for 109,948 enemy dead, uncovered caches of rice amounting to 3,326 tons and captured 47,338 individual and crew-served weapons. The Chieu Hoi Program was more effective than ever. Thirty-thousand, four-hundred, thirty-nine enemy soldiers had rallied to the Republic of Vietnam by Aug. 31.

Meanwhile, the Hamlet Evaluation System revealed that a record 86.5 per cent of the Republic of Vietnam was now pacified. President Thieu's popularity was growing and his armed forces were becoming stronger. So much stronger, that in June, Presidents Nixon and Thieu issued a joint communique which called for the redeployment and replacement by Republic of Vietnam forces of 25,000 American troops. President Nixon hinted that more American troops might be replaced in the fall. The Army of the Republic of Vietnam (ARVN) was taking over more and more of the load.

This was Vietnam 1969—the new look.

During the February offensive, more than 100 cities and military facilities in the Republic of Vietnam came under Communist attack, but American and Vietnam forces quickly repelled and routed the attackers, inflicting heavy enemy casualties.

One major attack was mounted against Long Binh Post, where elements of the 11th Armored Cavalry Regiment, the 720th Military Police Battalion, the 199th Light Infantry Brigade and post personnel killed 132 enemy soldiers. Attacks on 25th Infantry Division camps and fire support bases resulted in 309 enemy dead, while Americal Division soldiers killed 160 in one day's fighting.

The Americal Division engaged the enemy in a number of sharp but successful battles. Operation Fayette Canyon, begun Dec. 15, approximately 25 miles northwest of Tam Ky, resulted in 327 enemy deaths against only two U.S. fatalities by mid-February. In Operation Hardin Falls, which began on Dec. 2, the mid-February figures showed 78 enemy dead and 17 suspects detained contrasting to only one U.S. soldier killed.

On Jan. 13, Americal elements, ARVN troops and U.S. Marines joined forces for Operation Russell Beach. The operation ended Feb. 10, with a cordon on the Batangan Peninsula resulting in 158 enemy killed. Operation Vernon Lake II begun Nov. 2 west-southwest of Quang Ngai City, had resulted in 455 enemy killed and 181 suspects detained as compared with 23 U.S. soldiers killed.

The 101st Airborne Division (Airmobile) and the

ARVN soldiers rush into battle in the Mekong Delta area of operations that was formerly the responsibility of the U.S. 9th Infantry Division (bottom). Infantrymen from the 101st Airborne Division charge up Dong Ap Bia mountain in the A Shau Valley. The mountain was captured after 10 days of heavy fighting (below).



ARVN 1st Infantry Division continued Operation Nevada Eagle from late 1968 until the end of February. The operation resulted in more than 3,000 enemy killed.

Striking hard and often, Skytroopers of the 1st Cavalry Division (Airmobile) made their II Corps area of operations a hot-spot for Charlie during the early part of 1969. The infantrymen scored impressive kill totals, capped by one of the largest munitions cache discoveries in the war. During the third week of January, division elements discovered a 30-ton cache in a bunker complex 14 miles southwest of Katum.

After robbing the enemy of his munitions, the Skytroopers turned around and took his food from him—in huge quantities. In early February, a sweep by other elements of the division 12 miles northeast of Tay Ninh resulted in the discovery of 50.7 tons of rice one day and another 18.5 tons the following day. By the third day, the division's combined rice haul exceeded 100 tons. Soldiers of the 25th Infantry Division saw heavy fighting during late 1968 and early 1969. Just three days before Christmas, 103 NVA regulars were killed when they tried to overrun a patrol base about nine miles south of Tay Ninh City. During the third week in January, the Tropic Lighting soldiers plowed through a long-time enemy stronghold nine miles northeast of Go Dau Ha killing 54 enemy soldiers in two days.

Defying Allied warnings that continued attacks could only end in defeat, Communist gunners stepped up the shelling of cities and military bases with rocket and mortar fire as their spring offensive got underway. The attacks continued through March, April and May. Enemy losses soared as U.S. and ARVN soldiers successfully defended military bases and positions while continuing to receive a minimum of casualties.

Toward the middle of April, rocket and mortar attacks began to taper off, but several sharp ground clashes flared in scattered areas of the Republic.

In late April, an estimated two battalions of NVA and VC troops attacked a fire patrol base occupied by an element of the 25th Infantry Division 20 kilometers south of Tay Ninh City. 25th Infantry Division troops manning the base were backed by artillery, air strikes and helicopter gunships, and at least 120 of the enemy were killed.

Operation Massachusetts Striker, a 69-day push into the A Shau Valley, ended in early May after 101st Division soldiers accounted for 176 enemy killed and an impressive amount of Communist supplies and munitions captured. The final tally for the operation

showed 859 individual and 34 crew-served weapons captured along with more than 136,000 rounds of small arms ammunition and more than 2,000 crew-served weapons rounds. Thirteen vehicles, 11,000 pounds of grain and hundreds of pounds of other supplies and equipment were discovered during the operation.

But not all was quiet as summer began. May 6 marked the beginning of what was to be a 56-day period of heavy enemy activity around a Civilian Irregular Defense Group (CIDG) camp at Ben Het, eight miles west of Dak To in the Central Highlands. During the period, Communist troops fired about 6,000 rounds of artillery, mortar and recoilless rifle shells into the base. At the start of the period, 12 U.S. Special Forces advisors, U.S. artillerymen and hundreds of Republic of Vietnam infantrymen and CIDG forces occupied the camp. American B52 Stratofortresses pounded the area around Ben Het. On July 1, Republic of Vietnam troops moved through dense jungle and to Ben Het without meeting opposition from the enemy. Communist activity around the base had subsided, and, for the first time since May 6, a 24-hour period passed without a round hitting the base.

When the period ended, the Communists had lost 1,630 men killed and had virtually nothing to show for it. Casualties among U.S., Republic of Vietnam and CIDG forces were termed light.

Late in May, 101st Division soldiers and ARVN infantrymen captured and occupied a 4,000-foot-high North Vietnamese mountaintop fortress along the rugged Laotian frontier. The action was the 10-day-long heavy fighting for Dong Ap Bia mountain. The Allied force, which included more than 1,000 troopers from the 101st and 400 ARVN infantrymen, stormed the mountain from four sides. The seizure of the mountaintop came after 10 previous assaults had failed to move the North Vietnamese, who fired rocket-propelled grenades and machine guns from bunkers built to withstand heavy bomb strikes. U.S. military spokesmen claimed more than 500 North Vietnamese troops had been killed in the battle for Dong Ap Bia mountain which overlooks the A Shau Valley, a major Communist supply depot and staging area for attacks in the northernmost I Corps Tactical Zone.

Monsoon rains didn't seem to cut down on enemy activity in the Mekong Delta. During the week of May 26, Old Reliables of the 9th Infantry Division experienced heavy contact in their area of operations. Several sharp ground clashes in Long An Province resulted in 537 enemy killed.

It was little more than a week later that Presidents Nixon and Thieu met at Midway Island and announced the 25,000 troop redeployment. President Nixon promised that further announcements would be made when the time was right for additional replacement of American troops with Republic of Vietnam soldiers. A task force lead by Admiral John S. McCain Jr., commander-in-chief, Pacific, recommended that 16,000 Old Reliable troops from the 9th Division and the Marine's 3rd Division be redeployed first.

The recommendation was adopted and plans were formulated to move part of the 9th Division to Hawaii and send others to the U.S. mainland for deactivation, leaving only the 3rd Brigade of the 9th in Vietnam. The plans were later changed and all the troops redeployed from the 9th were returned to the states and deactivated or reassigned. The 3rd Brigade remained at its base camp at Tan An in the Mekong Delta. Dong Tam, the division base camp, was turned over to the ARVN 7th Infantry Division formerly based at My Tho.

One month after Presidents Nixon and Thieu made their joint communique, the 3rd Battalion, 60th Infantry, 9th Infantry Division left Tan Son Nhut Air Base for Ft. Lewis, Wash. The unit received the warm thanks of the Vietnamese people at the parting

ceremony. President Thieu and Vice-President Nguyen Cao Ky attended the ceremony.

As President Nixon had promised, the initial contingent was leaving a month to the day from the announcement at Midway Island. Also as promised, all of the 25,000 troops were gone from Vietnam by the end of August.

During this time, the enemy was avoiding contact in order to resupply. U.S. installations were hit with fewer rocket and mortar attacks. There were very few ground actions or any consequence reported and almost no enemy unit attacks on U.S. bases.

As the low level of ground action continued into late July, President Nixon embarked on a world-wide tour which included countries of Southeast Asia. On July 30, the President made a surprise visit to the Republic of Vietnam. While on the Thailand leg of his journey, the President took a day off to visit with troops in Vietnam. He traveled to Saigon for meetings with President Thieu. During mid-afternoon, President Nixon made a quick flight to Di An to talk with members of the 2nd Brigade of the 1st Infantry Division. The President received a warm welcome from the troops and spent approximately an hour talking individually with the men.

Hopes again rose as both U.S. and Republic of

Paratroopers of the 3rd Brigade, 82nd Airborne Division load Communist 122mm mortar rocket launchers captured in a sweep 12 miles west of Saigon.



Republic of Vietnam President Nguyen Van Thieu and Vice President Nguyen Cao Ky are escorted to the reviewing stand by General Creighton W. Abrams and U.S. Ambassador Ellsworth Bunker during departure ceremonies for the 3rd Battalion, 60th Infantry, 9th Infantry Division at Tan Son Nhut Air Base (bottom). President Richard M. Nixon talks with Major General Orwin C. Talbot and two members of the 2nd Brigade, 1st Infantry Division at Di An (below).



Vietnam officials continued their efforts to get the Communists to come to terms.

As the summer wore into August, the lull came to an abrupt halt with massive Communist ground attacks on forward elements of the 11th Armored Cavalry Regiment, the 3rd Brigade of the 1st Cavalry Division (Airmobile) and several ARVN and CIDG units in the Quan Loi-Loc Ninh area near the Cambodian border. On Aug. 12, heavy fighting in and around Quan Loi, Loc Ninh and An Loc resulted in 452 Communists killed. Eighty-three were killed the next day, and on the 14th of August, as the fighting moved away from the cities, 74 Communists died. As Allied units swept the area on the 16th and 17th, they killed 43 more enemy soldiers.

In mid-August major clashes broke out in the Americal Division's area of operations. During the five-day period from Aug. 17 through Aug. 21, elements of the division engaged enemy forces in two major battles and other scattered actions around Fire Support Base West, 18 miles west of Tam Ky. The actions resulted in 325 enemy soldiers killed.

With these new developments in the ground fighting, President Nixon, who was spending a month at the summer White House in San Clemente, Calif., at the time, disclosed he was postponing—possibly for several weeks—a decision on more American troop redeployments. Acknowledging that he had promised an announcement in August, the President said he wanted to reassess the attacks as well as Communist infiltration and power.

With this decision by President Nixon, the world waited to see whether the Communists would make any efforts toward peace.



Major Unit Locations



Looking Toward Peace

THE summer months of 1969 served to heighten speculation that a major change in the war might be at hand. Three things in particular lent credence to the speculation: (1) the redeployment of 25,000 troops from the Republic of Vietnam, (2) Republic of Vietnam President Nguyen Van Thieu's proposal for free elections with Communist participation, and (3) a lull in ground fighting that hopefully would open the way for the redeployment of additional U.S. soldiers.

The Paris peace talks continued, but fell into something of a pattern with peace proposals by President Richard Nixon and Republic of Vietnam President Thieu being scoffed at by representatives of North Vietnam and the National Liberation Front (NLF).

U.S. and Vietnamese efforts to bring the war to some satisfactory conclusion continued in the face of what some called a stalemate in Paris.

On June 8, Presidents Nixon and Thieu ended a one-day summit meeting on Midway Island with a joint communique pledging the redeployment of 25,000 troops by the end of August. The two chiefs-of-state also promised to push harder toward peace at the Paris negotiations. In issuing his part of the communique, President Nixon said, "During the month of August and at regular intervals thereafter we shall review the situation, having in mind the three criteria which I have previously mentioned with regard to troop replacement. First, the progress in the training and equipping of the South Vietnamese forces. Second, progress in the Paris peace talks. Third, the level of enemy activity. I will announce plans for further replacements as decisions are made."

The President also promised that "no action will be taken which threatens the safety of our troops and the

troops of our Allies. And second, no action will be taken which endangers the attainment of our objective, the right of self-determination for the people of South Vietnam."

The decision to replace American troops with Republic of Vietnam forces was reached after an exhaustive study of the situation in the south and with the concurrence of General Creighton W. Abrams, commander of U.S. forces in Vietnam. Military and governmental officials from both the U.S. and the Republic of Vietnam agreed that the Vietnamese forces had reached a level of training that would allow them to take a more active part in the fight and allow for the gradual replacement of U.S. ground forces.

As the lull in ground action in the Republic continued, President Thieu proposed internationally supervised elections with Communist participation to end the fighting. The only condition the President placed on the NLF was that they "renounce violence and pledge themselves to accept the results of the elections." He also promised the government of the Republic of Vietnam would "abide by the results of the election, whatever these results may be."

Following President Thieu's announcement, President Nixon praised the new peace proposal, saying it "should open the way at last for a rapid settlement" of the Vietnam war.

"If the other side genuinely wants peace, it now has a comprehensive set of offers which permit a fair and reasonable settlement," he said. "If it approaches us in this spirit, it will find us reasonable. Hanoi has nothing to gain by waiting."

But Hanoi waited. Communist negotiators from Hanoi and the NLF called the Thieu proposal "a scheme of the United States to strengthen and maintain in power the puppet administration and compel

the South Vietnam people to give up its glorious fight for national salvation and accept a U.S. neocolonialist regime. Loyal to the supreme interests of the nation and the country, the delegation of the PRG . . . categorically exposes and rejects the so-called 'free election solution' as an act of treachery of the United States and the Saigon administration."

No great change occurred in the military situation in the South during the month of July and into August. The lull in the ground fighting continued. In late summer, military observers began saying that Communist forces might have given up the idea of large-scale attacks and would begin, in some parts of the Republic, concentrating on hit-and-run sapper-type attacks. The observers pointed to the halt in operations by the NVA and VC units and to the statements of captured VC who said that many units were sending up to half their troops into Cambodia for guerrilla warfare training.

Almost as if to underline this speculation, Communist guerrillas made a sapper attack on a U.S.

Army convalescent hospital at Cam Ranh Bay which resulted in two American deaths and numerous injuries. On Aug. 8, the following day, a terrorist bombing at an American-run language school in Saigon left 12 dead.

Speculation began about this time that another major troop redeployment was imminent. The time was arriving for President Nixon's promised decision on a further reduction in U.S. forces. Reports from Washington were estimating 50,000 in late August and another 50,000 in October. President Nixon and General Earle G. Wheeler, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, had reportedly agreed that a 50,000-man redeployment was possible.

The reports went further, saying that if the President could reduce the strength by 100,000 by the end of the year, then, added to the 25,000 already redeployed, he would be able to beat the time-table suggested by former Defense Secretary Clark M. Clifford—a goal that President Nixon was admittedly interested in beating.

With C141s waiting, the color guard of the 3rd Battalion, 60th Infantry, 9th Infantry Division parade for the last time in Vietnam. The unit was the first of 25,000 troops redeployed in late summer.



Pacification=Nation Building

A family slipped out of a Viet Cong controlled village and joined a resettlement community a few miles away, but a world away from the Communist tyranny they had known for so long.

Ralliers traveled many miles to a government outpost carrying their North Vietnamese political cadre tied on a pole. Each received a small plot of land and help in building a new life.

A new miles away, a farmer worked his field using age-old outmoded methods to eke out a living for himself and his family. Now, thanks to better equipment and more modern methods he is able to reap a larger and more frequent harvest and provide

a higher standard of living than his family had ever known.

These are but a few of the many individuals who have profited from the Republic of Vietnam's pacification program—a program designed to give every citizen the opportunity to live free of fear.

At this time, at least 40 nations have responded to the needs of the Republic of Vietnam with equipment and advisors. Most of this non-military assistance falls into one of five categories: (1) medical aid, (2) educational and vocational aid, (3) technical assistance program, (4) agricultural aid programs and (5) resettlement programs.

A Vietnam Railway System train speeds over tracks between Nha Trang and Ninh Hoa. Locomotive, U.S. provided, is preceded by flat cars to take brunt of possible mine explosion.



The shortage of trained medical personnel has been a serious problem in the Republic of Vietnam. Currently, 13 Free World governmental and private organizations are helping meet this need.

To bring medicine to remote areas of Vietnam, medical teams from New Zealand, Korea, the United Kingdom, the Philippines, Australia, the Republic of China, Germany, Japan, Spain and the United States are stationed throughout the Republic. Here are a few examples:

* A Spanish medical team is now operating in a provincial hospital and in Go Cong.

* A Korean mobile medical unit works in the coastal city of Vung Tau.

* New Zealand has a surgical team at Qui Nhon.

* Philippine teams have operated in several provinces, including Tay Ninh Province.

* Quang Ngai clinic and Quang Ngai hospital both have Canadian doctors and Cuban refugee doctors on their staffs.

* The Republic of China has sent a medical team to work at the Phan Thiet hospital.

* The United States has medical teams serving in many of the provinces of Vietnam.

* Over 150 private physicians from the United States, on leave from their practices, have volunteered and served in Vietnam under a program sponsored by the American Medical Association.

* The German hospital ship Helgoland docks at several ports along the coast to provide medical services as a floating hospital.

Medical teams could not operate were it not for the existence of adequate medical supplies. By 1967, more than \$10,000,000 in vital medical supplies has been donated by 10 different nations. A few examples:

* Canada provided 1/2 million doses of anti-polio vaccine for a massive immunization program being conducted by the Vietnamese Department of Public Health.

* In September 1966, three tons of medical supplies were donated jointly by the Brazilian government and 14 private organizations.

These are only a few of the varied and extensive types of medical assistance being given to the people of Vietnam by nations of the Free World. In a country engaged in war, good medical services for civilian and military populations are essential. Thanks to the Free World, Vietnam today is enjoying the highest standard of medical treatment in its history.

Key targets of Viet Cong assassins are the teachers of Vietnam. The enemy realizes that the destruction of the schools is necessary for the final subversion of society. To counter these atrocities, and to expand and improve the educational facilities of Vietnam, nations of the Free World have been giving various forms of educational aid to the Republic of Vietnam.

* More than 1,400,000 textbooks have been provided for all school grades.

* Free World professors are now lecturing in the Republic, many of them on leave from their universities.



A Vietnamese man helps build the superstructure of a new wing on an orphanage near Bien Hoa (top). A captain from PHILCAG—Philippine Civic Action Group—examines a refugee from Long My. PHILCAG is one of many Free World organizations active in the Republic of Vietnam.

* Thousands of scholarships have been made available to deserving Vietnamese students for the purpose of study abroad.

* Australia, New Zealand and Germany are providing technical training aids to Vietnam. Machines and equipment for two technical schools, one at Dalat and one at Gia Dinh, were given by Germany.

Free World educational aid is aimed in several directions. It seeks to give to Vietnamese people technical training in order that they might manage their own specialized industries. It seeks to give Vietnamese students the opportunity to study abroad. Above all, it tries to expand educational opportunities for as many young people as possible. As the military provides security in hitherto insecure areas, it will be possible for the students of Vietnam to pursue their education without fear of Viet Cong terrorism. Free World assistance will provide them with the tools and facilities for a better tomorrow.

There is no greater indication of the Free World's belief in the future of the Republic of Vietnam than in the long-range technical assistance project now being undertaken in the Republic.

* South of Da Nang lies the An Hoa/Nong Son industrial complex, where the Republic of Vietnam's only coal mine is being developed with the aid of French and German investments. Germany has provided machinery for the construction of chemical plants near this complex and has funded many millions of dollars in long-term capital investments. Such a project will not only create jobs for the people in the surrounding areas, but also stimulate many other sectors of the economy and provide benefits far above the initial investment.

* The United States has given 48 locomotives and 225 freight cars for the Vietnamese national railway, an important contribution in the effort to reestablish communications with all parts of the nation.

* Australia constructed a 55 kilowatt radio station at Ban Me Thuot. This station helps bring the government's message to remote areas of the Central Highlands.

* At Thu Duc, the United States has completed a water purification plant which now services the entire Saigon area. For the first time, the Saigon-Cholon area can enjoy the benefits of pure water.

With the improvements and maintenance of Vietnam's communications, it will be possible to keep the country united, and prevent the Viet Cong from isolating portions of the countryside.

Industry, communications, power—these are the fields in which Free World technical assistance is now being given. When the war is over, these projects will remain to help the Vietnamese people and economy.

Vietnam is one of the richest rice producing nations in all of Asia, and the development of agriculture is of prime concern. Many Free World nations are seeking to further the development of cooperatives to promote agricultural development.

Recently the "miracle rice" IR8 has been introduced into Vietnam. This strain of rice, developed by Free

World nations, produces a stronger, more nutritious rice in much greater quantities than other varieties grown in Vietnam. As the use of this rice spreads, Vietnam will be able to provide more food for her own people, and may well be able to export quantities to other Asian nations. This effort in particular has the possibility of helping not only the Vietnamese people, but it may also develop a stable base for the nation's economy.

* The Republic of China has had an agricultural mission in Vietnam since 1959. Working through the Ministry of Agriculture and local farmers, the mission has been seeking to promote better crop development in the Hue, Pha Rang, Dalat, Bien Hoa and Long Xuyen areas.

* Australia has provided valuable material including an experimental dairy farm, irrigation equipment, farm tools, livestock and poultry breeding equipment, a milk plant, rice silos and animal vaccine production equipment.

* Germany has provided \$4,000,000 in long-term investment for the importation of machine tools and fertilizers.

The largest contribution, in terms of money, has come from the United States, whose agricultural aid program by 1966 had totaled \$64,000,000.

Today, an estimated seven per cent of the Vietnamese population are refugees. The Republic of Vietnamese government has been providing for these unfortunate people, but the magnitude of the problem demands much more. Free World governments and agencies are attempting to fill this need.

* Germany has provided \$6,000,000 for the construction of refugee centers and a refugee village for 2,000 people.

* Australia has donated milk, blankets, roofing materials and earth moving equipment for refugee resettlement.

On a more personal level, the drive to aid the refugees of Vietnam was felt in the Japanese city of Niigata. Hearing of the plight of the refugees of Song Be in Phuoc Long Province, the citizens of Niigata banded together and sent 2 1/2 tons of blankets, clothing and home medicine kits. Soon after this generous donation was made, the mayor of Niigata came personally to Song Be, where he was greeted by the local population. It was fitting demonstration of Asian brotherhood and Free World solidarity in the face of Communist aggression.

Flags of eight nations fly alongside that of the Republic of Vietnam at the headquarters of the Free World Military Assistance Forces in Saigon. Each flag represents a nation which has sent military units to assist the Republic in its fight against aggression from the North.

In addition to the more than 500,000 American military personnel, Australia, New Zealand, the Philippines, Thailand, the Republic of Korea, Spain and the Republic of China have sent men to help win the war against Communist aggression. The number of Free World Forces in Vietnam amounts to more than 72,000.

Korea has the second largest non-Vietnamese fighting force in Vietnam, which includes the Capital (Tiger) Infantry Division located at Qui Nhon, the 9th (White Horse) Division located at Nha Trang and the 2nd Marine (Blue Dragon) Brigade. They are supported by the 100th Logistical Command, a construction support group, a Mobile Army Surgical Hospital and Naval and Air Force transport groups. More than 48,000 ROK troops are serving in Vietnam.

Thailand increased her force in Vietnam in 1968 by replacing the Queens Cobra Regiment with the Black Panther Division. The first increment of the division was deployed and operates in Bien Hoa Province with its headquarters located at Bear Cat.

The Australians, who were the first after the U.S. to come to the aid of the Vietnamese people, now have approximately 8,000 fighting men from all three services engaged in Vietnam. The Australian Navy has one guided missile destroyer on station with the U.S. Navy's 7th Fleet. Its Air Force maintains three squadrons in Vietnam. Australian infantry headquarters is located near Nui Dat.

A Special Air Service Troop from the 1st Ranger Squadron was added in mid-December to New Zealand's military assistance forces, which include two rifle companies, an artillery battery and a tri-service medical team. New Zealand has a total force of more than 500 men in Vietnam, which is 10 per cent of her total army.

The Republic of the Philippines is expected to continue its effort in the field with its 1,500-man civic action group. The individual civic action teams have completed 600,000 MEDCAPS and DENTCAPS. The teams are active in the Tay Ninh area. The Philippine group has been active since 1964. Nationalist China is providing a psychological operations (PSYOPS) group to act as advisors to various Vietnamese Armed Forces headquarters and schools. Almost all of the soldiers sent by China are field grade officers with a background in education.

It took the United States nearly 300 years to develop from a youthful frontier to the most powerful nation in the world. Vietnam, like many developing nations, is trying to modernize in much less time. The Republic of Vietnam is faced with the additional problem of trying to progress in the wake of constant war. She is fighting on two difficult fronts at the same time, but she is not alone in the fight.

The Republic of Vietnam, the United States and nations of the Free World are not waiting for the war to end in order to help the Vietnamese people. Free World nations are providing many types of assistance: military, medical, educational, agricultural, technical and economic. They are building a new nation.

All this has one common purpose: to enable the people of Vietnam to enjoy the fruits of freedom and prosperity.

Teaching youngsters in schools is typical of Army projects to aid pacification activities.





The Enemy We Face

“THEY came to my house and told my mother that I had been chosen to be one of them. They wanted me to be come a *chien si* (soldier). My mother pleaded that I was too young. The North Vietnamese soldier said, ‘He is old enough—the draft age is 15 to 40.’”

This is how 15-year-old Nguyen Van Qui became one of the enemy you faced. His story is typical. He was then taken to a training camp near Com Ninh, in the southern panhandle of North Vietnam. There, he and other recruits were given their khaki uniforms and taught to aim and fire a weapon. The complete training cycle for duty as a regular *chien si* in the North Vietnamese Army (NVA) lasted six days.

After his training, Qui and 1,200 others were sent on a four-week journey down the Ho Chi Minh Trail. They moved in small groups to escape B52 raids. About 700 of them were armed.

“Many died on the trail,” Qui recalled. “Some died of malaria and others died of not enough food. It was very hard. Everybody was sick, but they

kept pushing us.”

The NVA now comprise perhaps over half of the total enemy forces in South Vietnam, with their percentage growing smaller as one travels toward the Mekong Delta. They depend upon infiltrated units for reinforcements and resupply, and few are paid anything more than a bag of salt for their efforts. Each units has a political officer who tries to maintain morale with a steady flow of North Vietnamese ideology.

Still they often pose a more formidable threat on the battlefield than do the Viet Cong, who fill the remaining ranks of the enemy. This elusive, so-called Liberation Army consists of two basic elements—the paramilitary and the full military.

The paramilitary Viet Cong is generally a local civilian who is a part-time soldier, whose military duties do not take him far from home. In addition, he is not highly indoctrinated politically. The Liberation Front calls this force the Guerrilla Popular Army (GPA).

At the hamlet level the GPA unit is either a cell,

a half-squad or squad—three, six or twelve men. The GPA unit at the village level, consisting of several hamlets, is the platoon, made up of three or four squads—36 to 48 men.

There are two basic classes of GPA members. The first is the Viet Cong in the village, frequently an older man, who is generally used as a village defender. He has little training and is armed with scanty or primitive weapons. The second is the Viet Cong combat soldier, who is younger and better trained and armed. He is frequently called upon to aid mobile columns or fill military units in the vicinity of his village or hamlet. The VC combat units also serve as manpower pools for the Viet Cong's full military units.

The full military element also is divided into two types—the Regional Forces and the Main Force. They are not organized or operated like an orthodox army. Their units are self-contained, not uniformed and rely primarily on guerrilla-type tactics. They depend on local populations for much of their logistical support.

The Regional Forces, also called Territorials, are units established by Front district committees, which provide their leadership and direct their activities. A Regional Force operates mostly in one area.

The elite units of the Viet Cong are the battalions of the Main Force. They have acquired the name of "Hard Hats" because of the metal or fiber-board helmets that distinguish them from the Regional Forces and paramilitary VC. These battalions are directed by the Front committees at the provincial level and range farther afield in their combat operations.

During the early days of the conflict, the Communists fought with older weapons used in previous wars by the French, Japanese and Americans. But today, largely as the result of aid from Red China and the Soviet Union, North Vietnamese Army troops and many main-force Viet Cong units are equipped with late model weapons comparable to those used by U.S. forces.

The most common of these are the SKS carbine, the Soviet AK47 assault rifle, or—more often—a Chinese copy of either. These weapons use identical 7.62mm rounds, similar to the round fired by the U.S. M14 rifle, but shorter. Both have a maximum effective range of 400 meters. The assault rifle most often captured is the Chicom (short for "Chinese Communist") Type 56, although soldiers in the field usually refer to it as the AK47, since it is a virtual copy of that weapon. It can be fired on automatic at a rate of 150 rounds a minute, or on semi-automatic.

The SKS carbine—or the Chicom 7.62 copy—is a semi-automatic weapon. It weighs nearly nine pounds when loaded with a 10-round magazine.

Until three years ago, the only machine guns available to the VC were obsolete French, Chinese and German models. Today, however, each NVA and Main Force VC battalion is allocated 36 light

machine guns, usually the 7.62mm Type 56 RPD or the older and heavier Type 58 RD46. Both can accurately fire 150 rounds a minute up to ranges of 800 meters. These automatic weapons were first supplied to the North Vietnamese in 1965.

A weapon which the enemy has been using with growing frequency, especially in stand-off attacks on U.S. and South Vietnamese military bases, is the mortar. Standard mortars in Charlie's arsenal are the 82mm—backbone of his high-angle fire support—and the 60mm, normally used in small-scale guerrilla actions.

Ready to fire, the 60mm mortar weighs 45 pounds and its 3.2-pound projectile travels up to 1,500 meters. The 82mm in firing position weighs 123 pounds and hurls a 6.72-pound projectile at targets up to 3,040 meters away.

The 82mm round was designed one millimeter larger than the U.S. 81mm round so the Communists can employ captured U.S. mortar rounds in their tubes.

During early 1968 a 120mm mortar, capable of hurling a 33.9-pound warhead 5,700 meters, was added to the Communist arsenal. With a total weight of 606 pounds, it is more difficult to transport and is not widely used.

The enemy also has stepped up his use of rockets within the past year. Charlie employs rockets in stand-off attacks of military installations and as general support artillery.

The simple but effective Soviet-made 122mm rocket launcher, first used in South Vietnam in May 1967, can hurl with area target accuracy a projectile weighing more than 100 pounds up to ranges of 11,000 meters.

The 140mm rocket, with a carrying weight of 88 pounds and a projectile weight of 70 pounds, has a range of 9,500 meters. This rocket was first employed in an attack on Da Nang in February 1968. Its use thus far has been largely restricted to the northern I Corps Tactical Zone, primarily because of logistical limitations.

The latest type of rocket introduced by the enemy is the Chinese-made 107mm, which weighs less than half as much as either of the others and has an estimated effective range of 9,000 meters.

In 1965 the enemy added to his grenade capability with the introduction of the Soviet-made RPG-2 anti-tank grenade launcher. Two years later the RPG-7 appeared.

The RPG-2 has a maximum effective range of 150 meters and can penetrate six to seven inches of armor. The RPG-7, with an improved sight, is effective up to 500 meters and can penetrate steel 12 to 14 inches thick.

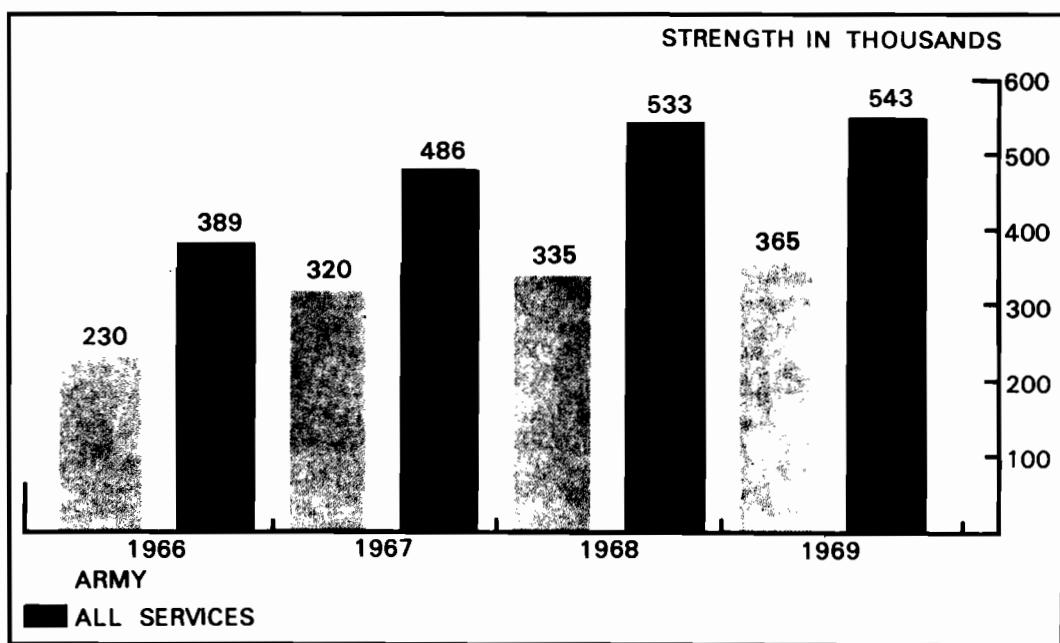
Probably the most striking recent addition to the enemy arsenal is the Soviet PT-76—an amphibious tank equipped with a 76mm gun capable of firing 25 rounds a minute at ranges up to 13,300 meters. Highly maneuverable with its hydro-jet propulsion system, it can cross waterways at six miles per hour and has a cruising range of 155 miles.

Statistics

ITEM	1967	1968	1969*
Enemy Killed	83,386	181,146	109,948
Hoi Chanhs	27,178	18,171	23,819
Vietnamese Abducted	5,357	7,776	5,110
Vietnarnese Civilians Killed	3,707	5,389	2,530*
ARVN Casualties			
Killed	12,716	17,486	9,658
Wounded	29,448	60,928	32,025
FWMF Casualties			
Killed	1,105	979	303*
Wounded	2,318	1,997	676*
U.S. Military Casualties			
Killed			
Army	6,514	9,333	4,814
U.S.	9,353	14,592	6,854
Wounded			
Army	33,556	59,838	32,756
U.S.	62,025	92,820	45,418

+ Totals through Aug. 9, 1969.

* Totals through April 1969 only.



Vietnamese Armed Forces



Vietnamese Rangers keep a sharp lookout.

One out of every nine citizens of the Republic of Vietnam has been trained to fight Communist aggression. Almost a million and a half Vietnamese are now in the uniformed services backed by nearly as many civilian home-defense soldiers. This is 11.7 per cent of the population.

The 1968 Mobilization Decree boosted the Republic of Vietnam's national, territorial and paramilitary forces to put six per cent of the country's total population into full-time military service. This does not include the Peoples Self-Defense Group which is composed of unpaid civilians trained to defend their homes and villages.

If the U.S. had a proportionate number of its population in uniform, the American Armed Forces would be increased from its present 3.4 million to 12 million.

More than 100,000 Republic of Vietnam Armed Forces (RVNAF) personnel have been killed fighting Viet Cong and North Vietnamese regulars since 1960. During the 15 months ending March 31, 1969, RVNAF lost more than twice as many men killed as did all the rest of the Allied forces from six Free World nations that total nearly 625,000 men. From January 1968 through March 1969, South Vietnamese troops lost 39,307 to the Allies' 19,433.

RVNAF forces in turn inflicted more than 100,000 casualties on the enemy during 1968, including 85,000 killed.

The Communist attacks during TET 1968 marked a turning point for the Republic's armed forces in terms of morale, manpower and equipment. The Viet Cong (VC) and North Vietnamese Army (NVA) hurled 84,000 troops, many of them their most combat-experienced, against the Republic of Vietnam forces and their Allies. Hanoi had assured its forces that RVNAF units would desert in masses to the Communist banner. However, not a single

unit went over to the enemy.

The enemy lost almost half his attacking force during the TET attacks: 20,300 to the RVNAF; 18,581 to the U.S. and other Free World Forces. Within two days, the VC/NVA forces were pushed out of most of the towns and cities.

Much of the RVNAF toll of the enemy, however, has not been the results of large operations but small actions. Many of these involved Regional and Popular Forces (RF/PF). Stationed in villages and hamlets or operating from small bases, RF/PF personnel comprise almost 50 per cent of RVNAF.

These Regional and Popular Forces consist of locally recruited personnel who serve in their home areas.

The RF/PF have greatly increased in efficiency since the issuance of M16s began. By the end of 1969, issuance to RF/PF is expected to be completed. All maneuver battalions of RVNAF have already been equipped with M16s and by year end, will also be equipped with M60 machine guns and M79 grenade launchers.

The Army of the Republic of Vietnam (ARVN) combat units increased their transportation capability by 50 per cent last year by replacing old vehicles with new models while communications were improved by newer, light-weight PRC25 radios.

Armored commands added more personnel carriers and other armored equipment. Over-all number of armored personnel carriers in RVNAF double during 1968 and the armored units continued to fulfill a number of missions throughout the Republic.

In addition to separate armored, infantry and artillery units, the ARVN consists of 10 numbered divisions and an airborne division. The average ARVN division has three to four thousand fewer men than a U.S. division. Although usually employed in offensive operations against VC and NVA main force units, ARVN units also provide security for

key areas and installations.

The destruction of enemy material and personnel has not been the ARVN's sole job over the years. The Republic's initial pacification work was done by members of the nation's young army and today many elements of the Armed Forces have pacification as their primary mission.

In addition to the Army divisions, the Republic of Vietnam has a 9,500-man Marine Division. Although primarily concerned with amphibious operations, the Marines often engage in joint operations with the Vietnamese Army and other Free World Forces.

Also supporting the ARVN is the Vietnamese Air Force (VNAF) which is playing an increasingly large role in the war. VNAF currently flies more than 20 per cent of all tactical air missions throughout the Republic.

Organized in 1966 with a total of 95 pilots and 32 planes, VNAF now has more than 350 aircraft.

The Vietnamese Navy (VNN) is also expanding and receiving new equipment with 64 U.S. Navy river gunboats acquired on June 25. This brought the total of craft turned over to VNN since June 1968 to 167.

All four of the major commands of the Vietnamese

Navy have, as one of their primary missions, the transportation and support of ground combat elements. The VNN also has a ground responsibility in the Rung Sat Zone, the swampy area between Saigon and the sea.

The Navy consists of the Fleet Command, the Coastal Forces, River Forces and the newly-formed River Assault and Interdiction Division (RAIDS).

The Army of the Republic of Vietnam, Vietnamese Navy, Vietnamese Air Force and Vietnamese Marines as well as the 3,500-women's Armed Forces Corps are headed by the RVNAF Joint General Staff (JGS). The JGS is located just outside Tan Son Nhut Air Base. In addition to the forces themselves, JGS is also responsible for the training of RVNAF personnel.

The Vietnamese Armed Forces school system includes the National Military Academy at Dalat; the Naval Academy at Nha Trang; the Air Force Training Center, also at Nha Trang; the Command and General Staff College at Dalat, the Reserve Officers School at Thu Duc, and a number of branch and trade schools.

Additionally, all divisions have their own training centers and there are also national training centers for basic and advanced training.



Vietnamese Air Force ground crewman signals pilot preparing to taxi to runway to join an air strike against enemy forces.

Photos by Spec. 4 Dennis Leoke

The Pleasant Moments

MUCH more so than his counterparts in any other war, the American soldier who served in Vietnam was the beneficiary of a myriad of programs designed to maintain his morale at a high level and improve his general welfare.

By far the most popular and important of these programs was the Rest and Recuperation (R & R) leave, which gave every soldier the opportunity to spend five full days in one of 10 exciting "fun capitals" of Asia and the Pacific.

The more than 20,000 servicemen who chose Australia will always remember with a smile the bikini-clad "birds" along Manly Beach. And the memory of the warmth with which the Aussies welcomed all "Yanks" will never fade.

In stately Bangkok, one was impressed by the pomp and grandeur of the ancient Court of Siam. And how about those delicate bargaining sessions with enchanting Thai salesgirls who had "a special deal" just for you?

The majority of the Hawaii-bound travelers were joined there by their wives. But a vacation reunion with loved ones was by no means the only attraction. Gleaming beaches and luau delicacies enhanced their Hawaiian stay.

Variety was the watchword for those who chose Hong Kong for R & R. The prices in the world's most famous bargain basement made gift-buying a delight. And the night life ranged from cozy cabarets to colossal stage productions.

Kuala Lumpur had a magnetic appeal all its own. The soaring spires of the National Mosque, and spectacular religious celebrations were sights not to be forgotten. At mealtime, budding gourmets received their introduction to savory Eastern cuisine, including Indian curries and juicy Malaysian "satay."

Manila was sheer joy for the shutterbugs. The harbor hydrofoil ride provided many opportunities for the camera enthusiast in search of the shot, while in the mountains, picturesque Baguio was captured on film for future reminiscing.

Exotic Penang was a tropical paradise. You could have spent your whole leave just basking in the sun on one of many beaches. But there were hills and temples, magnificent waterfalls and lush gardens to explore, too.

People-watchers spent many a pleasant hour at open-air cafes on Singapore's Bugis Street. When

they tired of the bustle of this melting pot of the Orient, the "must see" list suggested the Tiger Balm Gardens and the House of Jade.

Taipei's provincial hospitality demonstrated the ancient tradition of service and efficiency. Visitors were thoroughly satisfied, whether it was a pot of tea or a major purchase. Both shopping and sightseeing offered equal attraction, and whatever the day's choice, you came out a winner.

The fast-paced life in the world's largest city stands out in the minds of those who headed for Tokyo. The bright lights and multitude of shops of the Ginza were an irresistible attraction. Electronics dealers offered outstanding buys on cameras, radios, stereos and more. And in contrast, the cherry blossoms and ancient beauty of old Japan tempered the hectic pace.

Once again, there was plenty of first-rate entertainment for Americans in Vietnam. Working with the USO's Hollywood Overseas Committee and the Department of Defense, Special Services continued to bring top names in show business and sports throughout the country.

The perennial favorite, Bob Hope, made his fifth consecutive Christmas visit—his 18th consecutive overseas tour. Having, as he said, "some idea of what the troops wanted to see," Hope brought along 19 beautiful girls to brighten the Christmas season. Ann-Margret wowed them with her singing and dancing and other things. Two all-girl singing groups, Honey Ltd. and the Goldiggers, provided good medicine for sore eyes and ears. As a chaperon, Hope brought huge Rosey Grier, former New York Giant football star and now a rock 'n roll singer. In addition to his vocal performance, Rosey played straight man for Hope, while Dick Albers showed that physical fitness can be fun with his antics on the trampoline.

Other big hits were Ohio State football coach Woody Hayes and his films of the OSU-USC Rose Bowl game, and comedian Joey Bishop.

Of course, radio personality Johnny Grant visited Vietnam again, accompanied by several gorgeous young ladies. And there were many others who did their part to make a year in Vietnam go a little faster.

Also not to be forgotten were the military tours sponsored by Special Services. Outstanding military musicians from each Corps were selected to



give concerts throughout Vietnam. Since they were military men, these musicians could and did visit more remote locations than could other entertainers.

Many men were able to take advantage of the in-country R & R program, and spent three days on the beaches of Vung Tau, enjoying the sun, sand and surf in a picturesque setting.

For the men who wished to expand their educational horizons, Vietnam had plenty to offer. Servicemen could take courses for credit from the United States Armed Forces Institute, or resident credit from the University of Maryland. Those planning an Army career had the opportunity to take extension courses from several service schools.

Exchanges offered everything from razor blades and soap to radios, stereos and cameras. Most stores stocked snack items to offer a change from standard Army fare. A special program was launched to get radios, watches and cameras out to the smaller PXs to give the combat soldier an equal chance to purchase these luxury items.

The snack bars operated by the exchange system were a welcome addition. Situated at division and brigade basecamps, they were always popular with the men. The snack bars at the aerial ports always seemed to have a line of hungry customers in front of them.

The many EM, NCO and officers' clubs supplied a place to relax after a hard day. Many featured live entertainment in addition to snack items and cold beverages. Some of the larger clubs also operated concessions such as the always-popular massage parlor.

In make-shift theaters wherever a projector could be set up, movies were shown. The schedule of productions and the quality of the films varied greatly from week to week, but they were always enjoyed, although many a man cursed a little as the alert siren stopped the show right in the middle of "Dr. Zhivago," or "Madigan."

The chaplain is sometimes regarded as detached from the mainstream of military life, concerned more with the spiritual than the real. But the men who serve in the Chaplain Corps frequently do more than conduct Sunday services. Chaplains have two principal duties. The first is to provide religious services and the second is to counsel the men. Often they accompany combat soldiers on assaults to know what the men experience, check on morale and help the wounded.

From Valley Forge to Dak To, American soldiers have endured the hardships of a thousand battles. In Vietnam, however, unprecedented morale and welfare opportunities help make the burdens of war at least a little more bearable.



"Watch the hands," was the keyword for those on Rest and Recuperation in Hawaii. Regardless of where it was taken, R & R was welcomed (left). The chaplain provided guidance (bottom), and Bob Hope and girls—in this case the Goldiggers—provided entertainment (above).

The Medal of Honor



CPT Roger H. C. Donlon
5th Special Forces Group, 6 July 1964

SGT Larry S. Pierce
1st Bn, 503rd Inf, 173rd Abn Bde, 20 September 1965

PFC Milton L. Olive III
2nd Bn, 503 Inf, 173rd Abn Bde, 22 October 1965

1LT Charles Q. Williams
5th Special Forces Group, 9-10 June 1965

1LT Walter J. Marm, Jr.
1st Bn, 7th Cav, 1st Cav Div (AM), 14 November 1965

2LT Robert J. Hibbs
2nd Bn, 28th Inf, 1st Inf Div, 5 March 1966

SP5 Lawrence Joel
1st Bn, 503rd Inf, 173rd Abn Bde, 8 November 1965

SP4 Daniel Fernandez
1st Bn, 5th Inf, 25th Inf Div, 18 February 1966

SGT James W. Robinson, Jr.
2nd Bn, 16th Inf, 1st Inf Div, 11 April 1966

SSG Jimmy G. Stewart
2nd Bn, 1st Cav Div (AM), 18 May 1966

SGT David C. Dolby
1st Bn, 8th Cav, 1st Cav Div (AM), 21 May 1966

1LT James A. Gardner
1st Bn, 327th Inf, 101st Abn Div (AM), 7 February 1966

SSG Charles B. Morris
2nd Bn, 503rd Inf, 173rd Abn Bde, 29 June 1966

CPT Joseph X. Grant
1st Bn, 14th Inf, 15th Inf Div, 13 November 1966

“... for heroism above and beyond the call of duty.”

SGT Donald R. Long[†]

1st Sqdr, 4th Cav, 1st Inf Div, 30 June 1966

PFC Lewis Albanese[†]

5th Bn, 7th Cav, 1st Cav Div (AM), 1 December 1966

CPT Robert F. Foley

2nd Bn, 27th Inf, 25th Inf Div, 5 November 1966

SGT John F. Baker, Jr.

2nd Bn, 27th Inf, 25th Inf Div, 5 November 1966

SP5 Charles C. Hagemeister

1st Bn, 5th Cav, 1st Cav Div (AM), 20 March 1967

SP4 Donald W. Evans, Jr.[†]

2nd Bn, 12th Inf, 4th Inf Div, 27 January 1967

1LT George K. Sisler[†]

5th Special Forces Group, 7 February 1967

CPT Euripides Rubio, Jr.[†]

1st Bn, 28th Inf, 1st Inf Div, 8 November 1966

PFC Billy Lane Lauffer[†]

2nd Bn, 5th Cav, 1st Cav Div (AM), 21 September 1966

PFC Louis E. Willett[†]

1st Bn, 12th Inf, 4th Inf Div, 15 February 1967

SSG Delbert O. Jennings

1st Bn, 12th Cav, 1st Cav Div (AM), 27 December 1966

SGT Leonard B. Keller

3rd Bn, 60th Inf, 9th Inf Div, 2 May 1967

1ST David H. McNerney

1st Bn, 8th Inf, 4th Inf Div, 22 March 1967

SSG Kenneth E. Stumpf

1st Bn, 35th Inf, 25th Inf Div, 25 April 1967

SP4 Raymond R. Wright

3rd Bn, 35th Inf, 25th Inf Div, 2 May 1967

SSG Elmelindo R. Smith[†]

2nd Bn, 8th Inf, 4th Inf Div, 16 February 1967

PFC James H. Monroe[†]

1st Bn, 8th Cav, 1st Cav Div (AM), 16 November 1967

1SG Maximo Yabes[†]

4th Bn, 9th Inf, 25th Inf Div, 26 February 1967

Chaplain (CPT) Angelo J. Liteky

199th Inf Bde, 6 December 1967

SP5 Dwight H. Johnson

1st Bn, 69th Armor, 4th Inf Div, 15 January 1968

SGT Sammy L. Davis

2nd Bn, 4th Arty, 9th Inf Div, 18 November 1967

SP4 Gary Wetzel

173rd AHC, 1st Avn Bde, 8 January 1968

CPT James A. Taylor

1st Sqdr, 1st Cav, Americal Div, 9 November 1967

SGT Ted Belcher[†]

1st Bn, 14th Inf, 25th Inf Div, 19 November 1966

CPT Riley L. Pitts[†]

2nd Bn, 27th Inf, 25th Inf Div, 31 October 1967

PSG Matthew Leonard[†]

1st Bn, 16th Inf, 1st Inf Div, 28 February 1967

SSG Drew D. Dix

US Senior Advisor Group, IV Corps Military Assistance Comd, 1 February 1968

2LT Stephen E. Karopczyc[†]

2nd Bn, 35th Inf, 25th Inf Div, 12 March 1967

1LT Ruppert L. Sargent[†]

4th Bn, 9th Inf, 25th Inf Div, 15 March 1967

SFC Charles E. Hosking[†]

5th Special Forces Group, 21 March 1967

SP4 Don L. Michael[†]

4th Bn, 503rd Inf, 173rd Abn Bde, 8 April 1967

SP4 George A. Ingalls[†]

2nd Bn, 5th Cav, 1st Cav Div (AM), 16 April 1967

PFC Clarence E. Sasser

3rd Bn, 60th Inf, 9th Inf Div, 10 January 1968

CW2 Frederick E. Ferguson

227th Avn Bn, 1st Cav Div (AM), 31 January 1968

PFC Thomas J. Kinsman

3rd Bn, 60th Inf, 9th Inf Div, 16 February 1968

SSG Fred W. Zabitosky

5th Special Forces Group, 19 February 1968

SGT Joe R. Hooper

2nd Bn, 501st Inf, 101st Abn Div, 21 February 1968

SSG Frankie Z. Molnar[†]

1st Bn, 8th Inf, 4th Inf Div, 20 May 1967

PSG Bruce A. Grandstaff[†]

1st Bn, 8th Inf, 4th Inf Div, 18 May 1967

PFC Leslie A. Bellrichard[†]

1st Bn, 8th Inf, 4th Inf Div, 20 May 1967

([†] indicates posthumous award)



Distinguished Service Cross



Distinguished Service Medal



Silver Star



Legion of Merit



Distinguished Flying Cross



Soldiers Medal



Bronze Star Medal



Air Medal



Joint Services Commendation Medal



Army Commendation Medal



Purple Heart



Good Conduct Medal



National Defense Service Medal



Armed Forces Expeditionary Medal



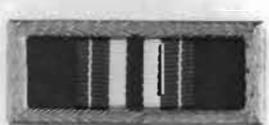
Vietnam Service Medal



Vietnam Campaign Medal (RVN Award)



Presidential Unit Citation



Valorous Unit Award



Meritorious Unit Citation

AWARDS GRANTED IN VIETNAM

These are shown in order of precedence, the order in which they should be worn. The unit citations are worn over the right pocket, all others over the left.



DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
HEADQUARTERS UNITED STATES ARMY VIETNAM
OFFICE OF THE DEPUTY COMMANDING GENERAL
APO SAN FRANCISCO 96375



Your tour in Vietnam is now behind you. It has been a year of hard fighting--certainly a period in which the American soldier has performed in the best traditions of the US Army. You may leave this land of Vietnam--the jungles, mountains, and coastal plains--with that inner satisfaction of knowing you have served the cause of free men everywhere. The Republic of Vietnam and, indeed, our own nation, are greatly in your debt for your efforts.

Now you are going home to rejoin your family and friends. They are proud of you and are anxiously awaiting your return. With you goes a world of knowledge and impressions based on the experiences you have had in Vietnam. Your friends, neighbors, and the people with whom you will work will look to you as an authority on what is happening in the Republic of Vietnam. This magazine, a history of this country and the year you spent here, may help you to tell your story.

You are commended for the fine job you have completed in Vietnam. Warmest wishes for success in your future endeavors.

Frank T. Mildren
FRANK T. MILDREN
Lieutenant General, US Army
Deputy Commanding General



U.S. AIR FORCE