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FMFAC: Operations of U.S. Marine
Force, Vietnam

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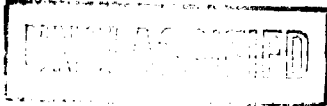
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May 66

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OPERATIONS OF U. S. MARINE FORCES

VIETNAM

MAY 1966



FLEET MARINE FORCE, PACIFIC

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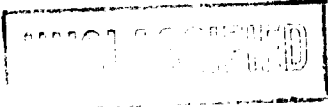
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This is a summary of activities of US Marine forces in Vietnam for the month of May 1966. Its purpose is to update similar reports covering periods from March 1965 through April 1966.

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SUMMARY

The political unrest, which had died down by the end of April, broke out anew in mid-May. It had a substantial impact on Marine logistic and civic action programs. Nevertheless, there were continued evidences of progress visible at month's end.

Offensive military programs continued at the increased tempo which had been set in April. As before, the priority of III MAF effort was directed at separating the local guerrilla force from the people. During the 13,201 small unit, counter guerrilla operations, Marines found and made contact with the enemy on 1,074 occasions - a record high, and killed 509 VC - another record, by far.

Meanwhile, there were 13 large unit operations, designed to engage the VC Main Force, to expand Marine influence beyond the III MAF tactical areas, and to continue consolidation of the I Corps littoral. The thirteen Marine operations in May reached into all five provinces of I Corps and covered some 150 linear miles - from 10 miles south of the DMZ to 20 miles south of Chu Lai, in northern Quang Ngai province. These opened up new areas of the countryside - an essential first step in the pacification of the interstices between the Marine areas. By neutralizing or driving out large enemy forces, these larger operations prepared the way for the daily small unit actions which are required to grind down the guerrilla force and improve the lot of the people.

Despite the suspension of almost all GVN assistance during the latter half of the month, the pacification program moved forward, chiefly because of the momentum generated by III MAF in prior months and, even

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more, because of the determination of the people in the areas under pacification. Probably the most striking development was the insistence on the part of many villages to continue with projects previously started, despite the GVN political turmoil. By the end of the month, for example, 34 villages had completed or partially completed their village census. In February, when our intensive census effort began, only 12 villages had done anything in this area. Similarly, by the end of May, GVN intelligence nets were active in 46 villages, compared with 25 in February, and 36 villages were working on defense plans, versus 23, three months ago. In the same short period, village public information programs increased from 6 to 32 and local governments from 33 to 42. These and other indicators of the steady, albeit slow, progress being achieved are exhibited graphically in the pacification section of this report (page 18).

Logistic support remained adequate throughout the month, although the civil disturbances delayed construction projects, hampered vehicle movements in the Danang and Phu Bai areas, and severely restricted cargo handling operations in the port of Danang. The average daily cargo discharge rate decreased some 1,200 M/T, to 3,675 and, by the end of the month, there was a cargo backlog of 56,930 M/T at Danang. By comparison, at the end of April the backlog was 14,388 M/T and at the end of March 23,785 M/T. Nevertheless, essential services and support continued, without interruption, even at the height of the unrest, and there was no reason to conclude that the cargo backlog would not quickly be liquidated when the political situation permitted optimum use of Danang facilities.

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COUNTERGUERRILLA OPERATIONS

May was a rewarding month for Marines engaged in the task of separating the local guerrilla from the people. Despite the political agitation which caused a number of company size units to be committed to reinforcement of Danang Air Base security, and others to be alerted for riot control operations and the evacuation of US civilians, III MAF was able to maintain the record rate of activity set in April - almost 430 small unit patrols, ambushes, and company searches each day, for a monthly total of 13,201 offensive counter guerrilla operations.

But more important, the record number of contacts produced by this saturation level activity - 1,074 - resulted in more guerrillas killed than in any month heretofore - 509 vs the previous high of 183, set in April. At the same time, 48 Viet Cong were captured - almost double the previous single month record of 27. These were decisive casualties for the enemy, because his losses were hard-core local products, familiar with the area in which they had been operating and possessing a blood relationship with the populace.

Three particularly effective counter guerrilla engagements are worthy of being detailed. In each, the Viet Cong were engaged by a Marine patrol of inferior size only to find themselves outnumbered when Marine reinforcements were moved quickly to the scene.

The first of these occurred on 12 May when a squad patrol in the southern tip of the Danang area encountered an enemy force which was prepared, by virtue of its

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greater size, to stand and fight. An air observer immediately called in artillery fire on the VC, blocking their escape. Within minutes, the Marine patrol was reinforced by its parent company which had moved overland, and by a second company and a platoon from a third company which landed by helicopter. Throughout the engagement which followed air and artillery support was intense and effective, inflicting a substantial number of casualties and fixing the enemy in position, enabling the ground units to surround and destroy him. Total casualties: 175 VC killed - 120 of them by air strikes or artillery fire. Fifteen Marines were killed and 12 wounded.

Two days later, on 14 May, a platoon patrol crossing an open field just south of Danang made contact with a considerably larger force. Pinned down, the patrol called for reinforcements; two platoons quickly arrived on the scene, one by helicopter and the other overland. The Marines assaulted the well-entrenched VC forces, causing them to flee to a second line of prepared trenches and bunkers. Again the Marines attacked and again the VC fled. In this brief action, 37 VC were killed, 19 of them in the open during a final escape attempt. Marines lost 5 KIA and 13 WIA.

On 21 May, another Marine squad patrol south of Danang struck an aggressive VC force. The patrol was reinforced immediately with its parent company, which arrived both overland and by helicopter. As the Marine strength grew, the VC attempted to escape but were blocked by artillery fire and a second helicopter-borne company, which was diverted quickly from another operation and positioned to seal off the VC escape route. Fifty-three VC were confirmed as killed in this one encounter.

Apart from the record number of enemy casualties, there was continuing evidence that this constant, month-in,

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month-out Marine activity in the countryside, underscored by successes such as those described above, was gradually winning the confidence and support of the populace. During May, more villagers volunteered helpful information to Marines about the Viet Cong than ever before. In June 1965, in the early stages of III MAF operations, there was only one reported instance of a Vietnamese volunteering information of assistance. By December 1965, the number had climbed to 32. In May, there were 41 cases. In addition to telling about guerrilla activities, villagers frequently have saved Marines from death or injury by pointing out the location of VC-planted mines and booby traps. The following are examples of information provided during May.

--At Chu Lai, villagers warned a squad patrol approaching a barricade across Highway 1 that it was booby trapped. The Marines blew up the barricade and found, in the rubble, remnants of booby trapped grenades.

--South of Danang, 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 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. Two armed VC inside the caves were killed and one was wounded and captured, along with seven weapons and a quantity of clothing and ammunition.

During the month III MAF completed its 18th

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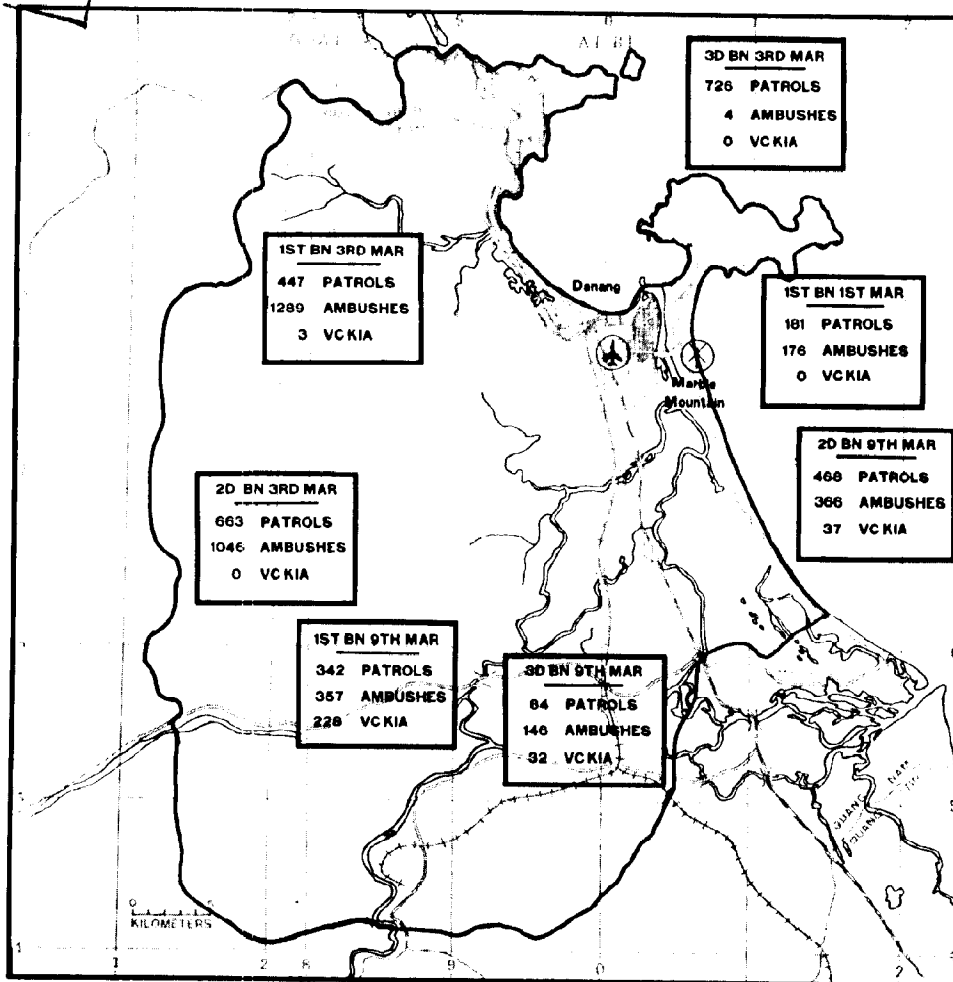
County Fair Operation. This novel idea, conceived by the Marines in January '66 and initiated in February (see April report) continued to prove effective in weeding out guerrillas, although the frequency of these operations was hampered by the involvement of Vietnamese units in the political crisis. In the six County Fairs conducted during May, 10 VC were killed and another 17 captured, along with 7 weapons and small quantities of mines and grenades found.

A summary of overall counter guerrilla activity by the infantry battalions of III MAF is shown on the three pages that follow. Battalions are shown in the tactical area in which they were located on 31 May.

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COUNTERGUERRILLA ACTIVITY WITHIN THE DANANG TACTICAL AREA

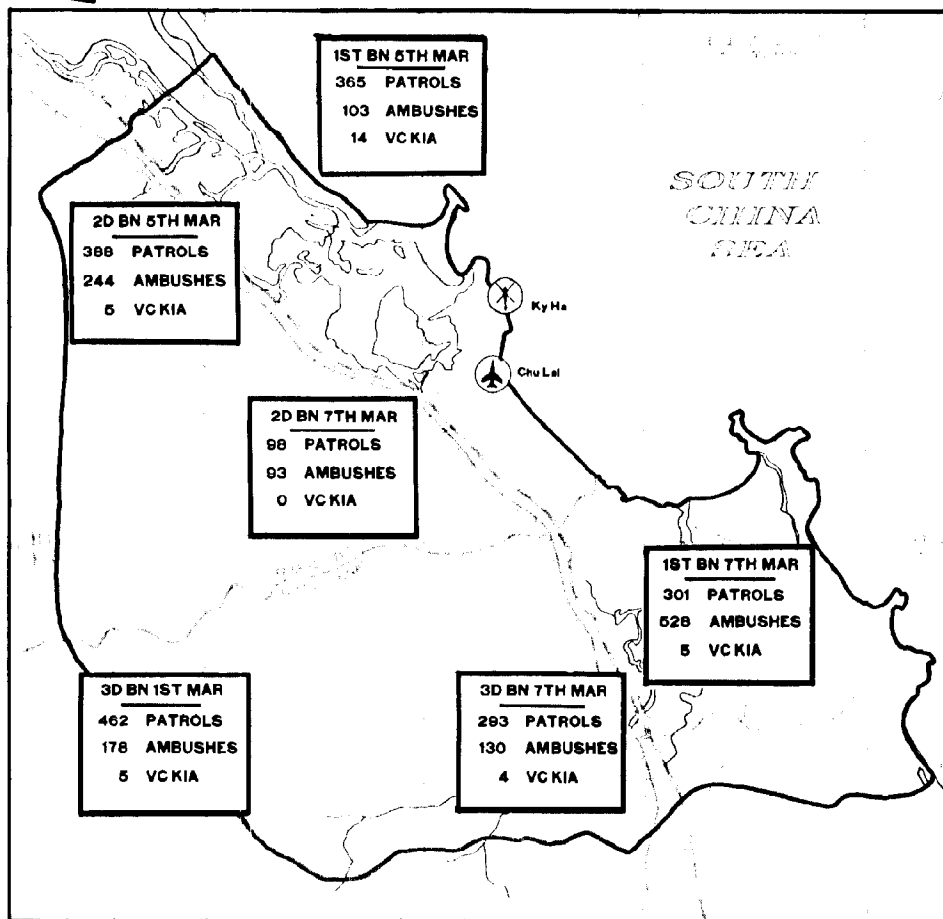


The seven infantry battalions at Danang conducted an average of 103 patrols and 122 ambushes each day during May. As has been the case in previous months, the majority of enemy contacts, 120 out of 132, were reported in the southern area.

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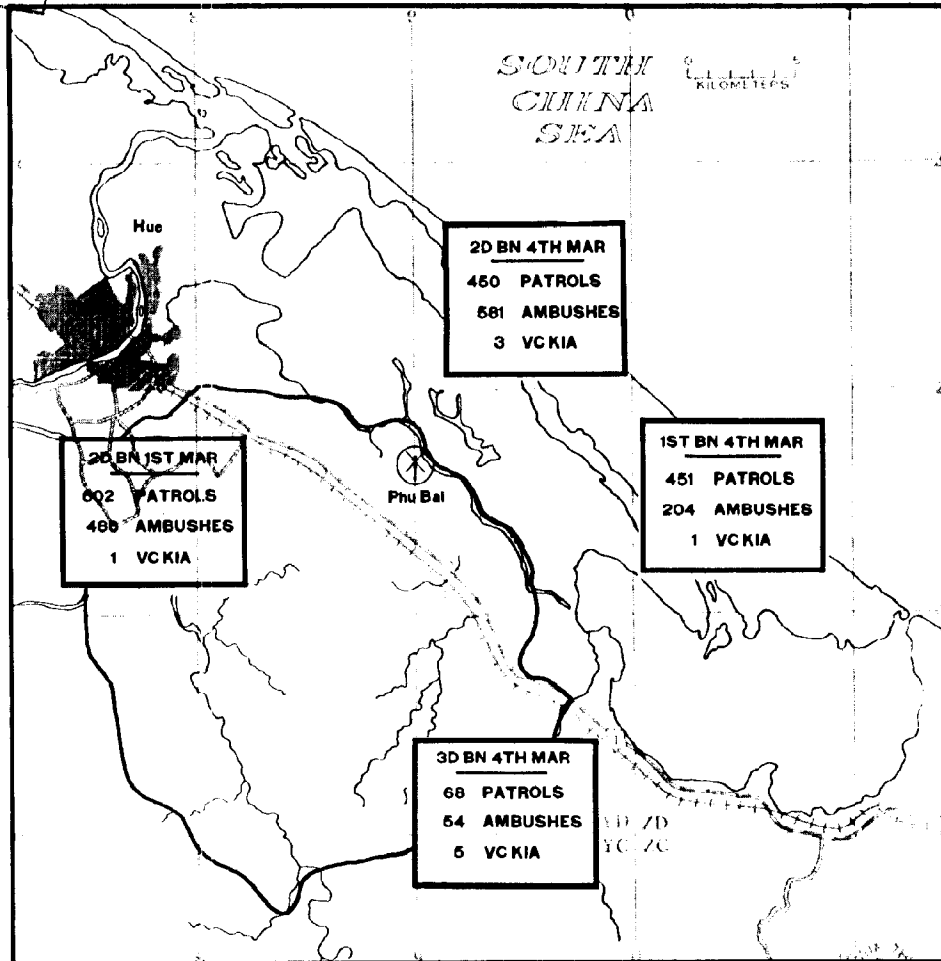
COUNTERGUERRILLA ACTIVITY WITHIN THE CHU LAI TACTICAL AREA



The 1st Battalion, 5th Marines, which arrived at Chu Lai on 7 May following two months as the Special Landing Force, raised to six the number of battalions in the Chu Lai area. These six battalions conducted a daily average of 62 patrols and 41 ambushes during April. In contrast to previous months, enemy contacts were almost equally divided between the southeast and northwest portions of the tactical area.

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COUNTERGUERRILLA ACTIVITY WITHIN THE PHU BAI TACTICAL AREA



At Phu Bai, the four infantry battalions conducted an average of 42 patrols and 30 ambushes each day during May. As in previous months, the light enemy contacts were equally spaced throughout the tactical area.

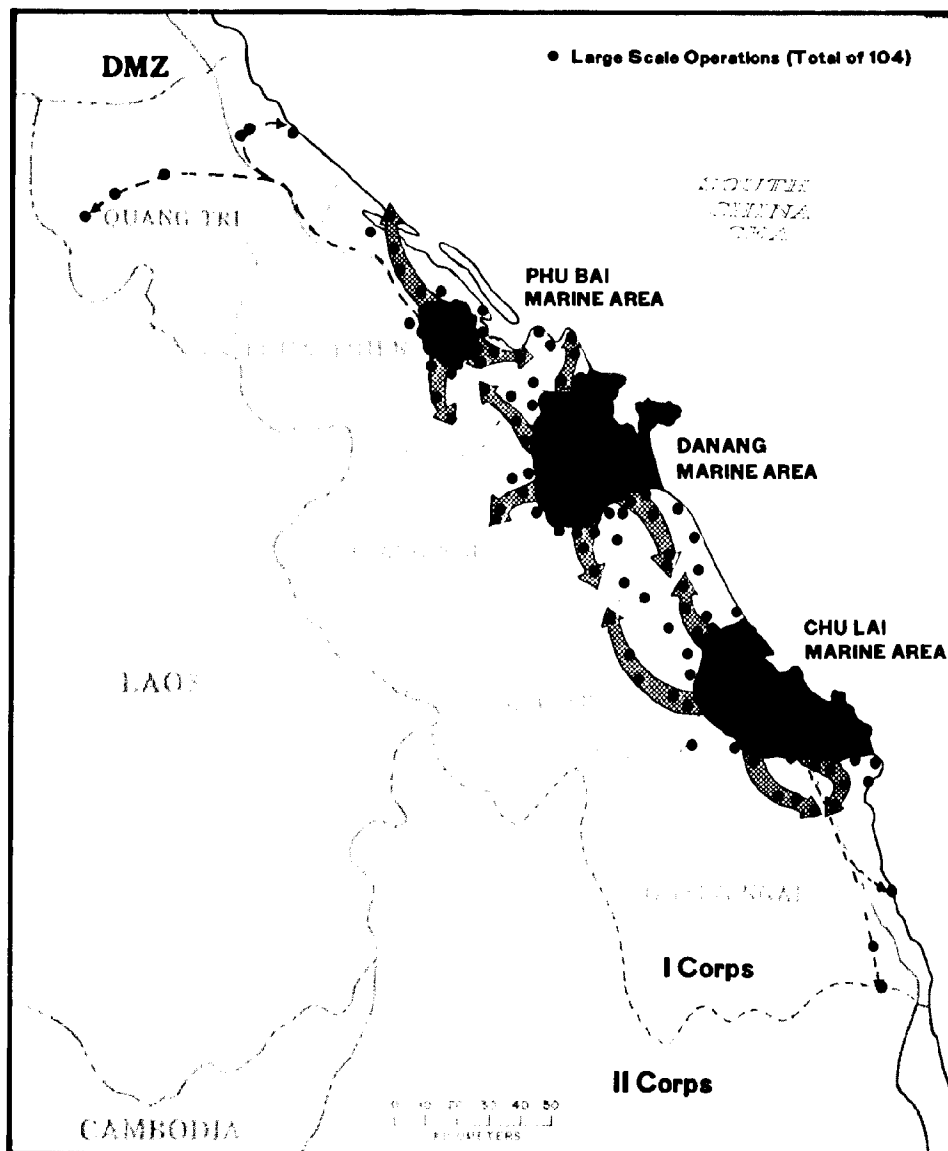
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LARGE UNIT OPERATIONS

Since their initial build-up in RVN began in March 1965, Marines have conducted 104 operations of battalion size or larger, softening up areas for subsequent pacification by destroying or neutralizing enemy regular units.

OPERATIONS OF BATTALION SIZE OR LARGER
(Total of 104)



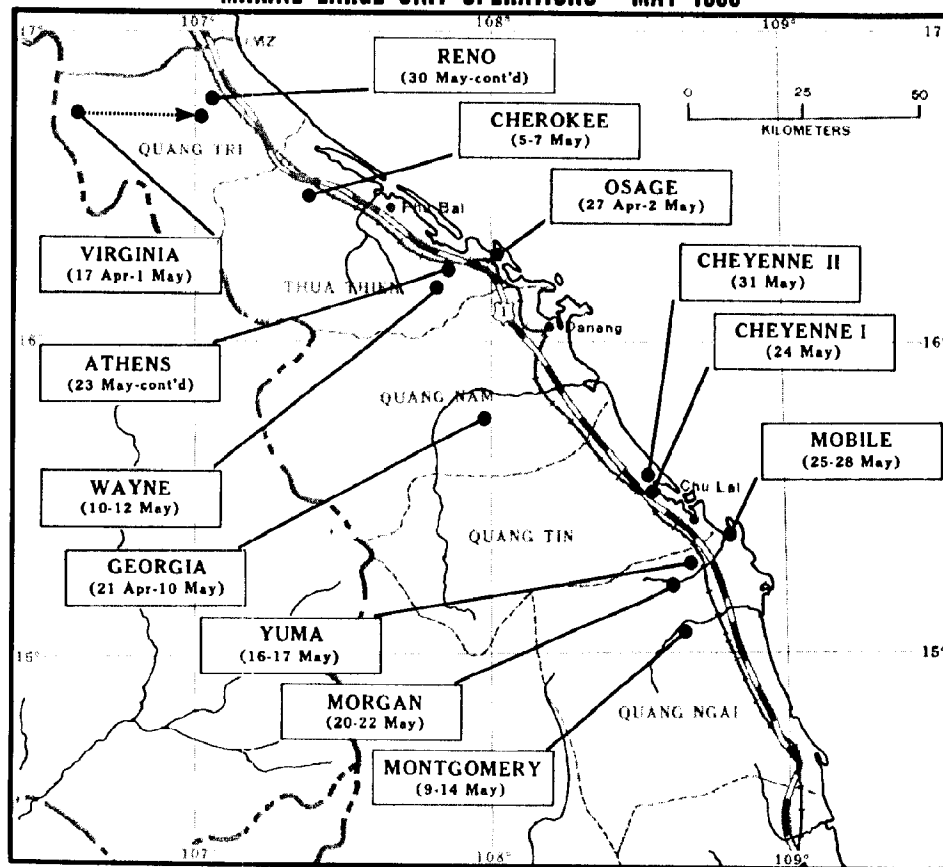
As can be seen on this map, Marine large unit offensives radiating from the three bases have gradually increased the

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saturation of the densely populated coastal areas lying between them. In addition they have penetrated inland from the rich littoral into the piedmont and the mountain base areas of the VC.

In May, large unit operations exhibited some reluctance on the part of the enemy to risk engagement of their Main Forces. Not that the opportunity for them to do so was lacking - Marines took part in 13 operations of battalion size or larger. As in April, these offensives were spread over the length of I Corps, from Dong Ha, 9 miles below the DMZ, to the river valleys of Quang Ngai province 150 miles to the south.

MARINE LARGE UNIT OPERATIONS - MAY 1966



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Of these, perhaps the most frustrating was Operation Virginia where two weeks of aggressive effort in an area where large VC units had been reported resulted in only minor contact.

There are several possible explanations of the unwillingness of the enemy's Main Force units to engage Marines during the period. The political unrest or preparation for large scale offensive action are two. Losses may be a third. In the past months enemy regular units in the I Corps have been seriously damaged by combat and disease. Since the first of the year, 2,541 regular VC or NVA troops, the equivalent of 5 complete battalions, have been killed during large unit operations. Many of the replacements must come from the north in what is a relatively slow process. Troops, when they arrive, are not immediately ready to fight. After completing the journey into I Corps, which takes about 30 days, enemy units usually require about one month additional training and recuperation before they are ready for combat.

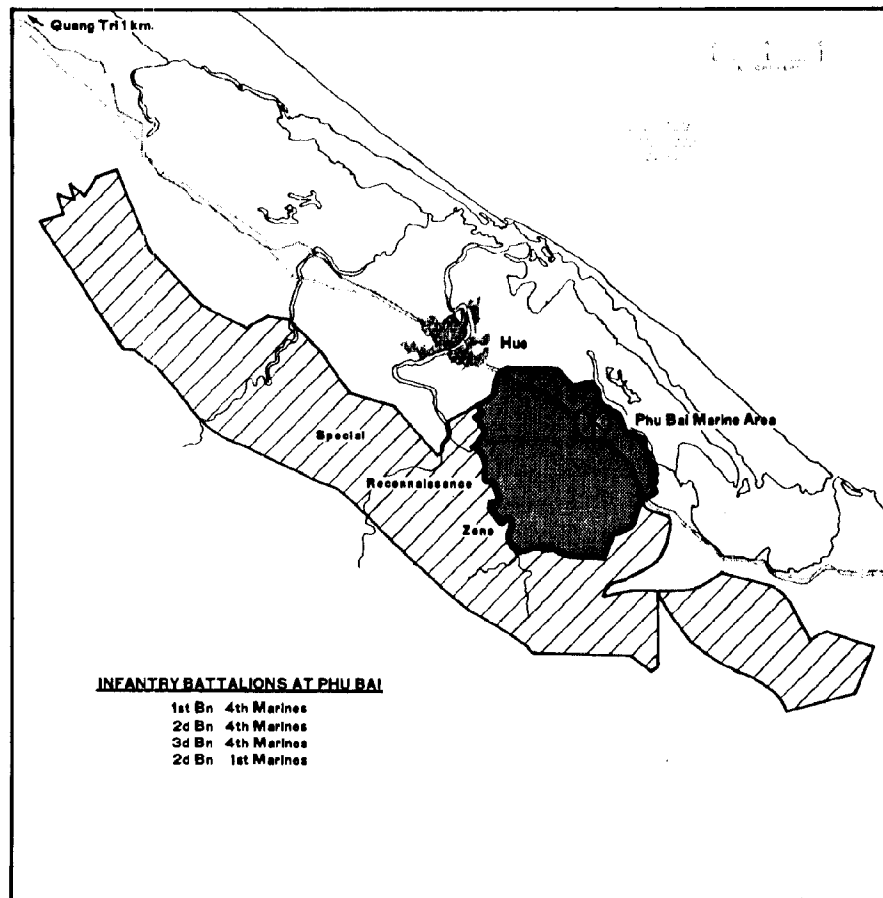
Malaria also takes a toll of these forces. Generally, newly infiltrated units arrive with 25 percent or more of their personnel stricken by this disease. In sum, recovery from losses which combat and sickness have dealt to VC/NVA forces takes time, and it is this lull which may have been visible in May.

As the consolidation of Marine areas has advanced, III MAF has progressively turned its attention to the traditional VC strongholds, areas under communist influence since the 1950's. In May, 10 of the 13 large scale Marine operations were in these areas which lie at either extremity of the I Corps Tactical Zone. In the north, Marine operations (Virginia and Reno) ranged the breadth of Quang Tri, all the way from the Laotian border to the coast, seeking contact with rumored large enemy units.

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Thua Thien province, south of Quang Tri was the target for four large unit operations in May. In order to keep this northern area more effectively under surveillance, III MAF has established a special reconnaissance zone around Hue and Phu Bai, extending some 30 miles north into Quang Tri, 19 miles west and about 15 miles south of the airfield.

PHU BAI SPECIAL RECONNAISSANCE ZONE



At the southern end of I Corps, Quang Ngai province contains the Do Xa Secret Base where the headquarters of

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Military Region 5, VC control organ for the northern third of RVN, is often located. This province has been a particularly lucrative target area for Marines during the past 5 months. Beginning with Operation Double Eagle I in January and continuing through Operation Mobile in May, Marines have struck wherever large enemy forces could be located or whenever there was a reasonable chance they might be encountered. 1,469 VC or NVA troops have been killed in this province alone since the first of the year.

While enemy casualties are a visible product of Marine large unit operations, another benefit of perhaps greater importance was evident during May in Operation Georgia in the extreme south portion of the Danang tactical area. There, in the village of An Hoa, an impressive Vietnamese industrialization project (power, coal mining, machine shops, fertilizer) has flourished under the protection afforded by Georgia and some 20 other battalion size operations which preceded it.

A Vietnamese project begun in the late 1950's to improve the economy of the area, this ambitious program was about to be abandoned in early 1965 because of VC activity. As Marine influence steadily spread southward, first through large unit operations of increasing frequency and later (April 1966) by daily small unit patrols and ambushes, the people of An Hoa evidenced a revived determination to continue. Today, the expanded tactical area of Danang reaches An Hoa, and a Marine battalion is close by. The benefits which have come to the people there are striking - they are well-dressed, and the area is spotless. There are language classes, using the most modern teaching aids; illiterates are being schooled; and teen-agers are attending classes in vocational subjects such as welding and electricity. All of this activity is

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self-help; the only request of the populace is that Marines free them from the Viet Cong.

Except for two days at the beginning of the month, the Marine Special Landing Force of the Seventh Fleet was not committed in Vietnam during May. On 2 May BLT 1/5 terminated Operation Osage which had begun on 27 April, north of Danang (see page 13). Only light contact was experienced throughout the operation. On 7 May BLT 1/5 was relieved by BLT 3/5, which remained in alert status aboard shipping of the Amphibious Ready Group for the balance of the month.

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CIVIC ACTION AND PACIFICATION

During May the political violence and civil disorders in the cities of Hue and Danang subjected the pacification program to an acid test. The fact that pacification progress was slowed but not stopped was an encouraging testimonial to the determination of the Vietnamese population to continue their struggle toward a peaceful and secure environment. And it underscored the validity of a balanced military program which places some of its attention directly on the people and the countryside.

During the past year, over half a million of these people have been given medical treatment by III MAF. Almost 5,000 who were critically ill have been evacuated by Marines to hospitals where they could be treated properly, many for the first time in their lives. 375,000 have been fed; 167,000 pounds of clothing have been distributed; 22,000 students have been supported; and \$26,660 has been given in voluntary cash donations by Marines to help Vietnamese who have been handicapped or deprived by war.

The civic action program continued its momentum in May. Some 5800 Vietnamese - many of them refugees with an opportunity to learn a skill for the first time - attended vocational training classes taught by Marines. During the month over 5100 children were given school supplies, 70,000 persons were provided with medical treatment, and 124,000 were fed. Seven village wells, 11 schools, 5 dispensaries and 3 bridges were built in joint Marine/Vietnamese civilian projects. Remaining under construction are showers, culverts, windmills, and additional schools. In all, 205,000 Vietnamese received assistance from Marines during May.

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Civic action projects continued to be an essential part of County Fair operations. While County Fair is basically related to population control measures and to military search operations to ferret out guerrillas (see page 8), one of its objectives is to demonstrate that the GVN is interested in the welfare of the people and will expend considerable effort to assist them. Medical treatment and the feeding of villagers during the operation accomplishes this and serves to minimize the resentment and ill-feeling which could be generated by the inconvenience of village search, census, etc. Over 500 villagers were administered medical treatment during the six County Fairs conducted by III MAF in May, and some 800 persons were fed.

May also gave evidence of progress in the Ngu Hanh Son National Priority Pacification Area ten miles south of Danang Air Base. During the political crisis, troops of the Rural Construction Cadre assigned to the area remained on duty in their villages and continued to function. At the same time, villagers were insistent on continuing with those self-help projects for which construction materials were on hand. Signs of closer cooperation between GVN officials, Rural Construction Cadre and villagers were noted, particularly with the continuing arrival of government-promised materials and other evidences of assistance - such as the assignment of four newly-trained 59 man Reconstruction Cadre Groups to the area.

Direct and specific results of Marine/GVN civic action and military efforts are not easy to measure in precise terms, but some of the more important aspects of pacification progress can be scored. One example is the completion of the village census in 19 villages by the end of May and the partial completion of a census in another 13 villages. This compares with the February status of 5 villages com-

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pleted and only 7 partially complete. Taking of a census is a vital step in overall pacification. It permits the populace to be identified and initial steps taken to remove the Viet Cong infrastructure. But perhaps more important, at end-May 14 more villages had a village organization and the requisite local security to complete the task, and an additional 13 villages were secure enough to make progress in their census.

Also by the end of May, nineteen villages had completed self-defense plans for the hamlets of their village, 14 more than had reached this point in February. Eight villages had completed recruitment and training of their local defense force by end-May, compared to none in February. An additional 31 villages had made some progress in this essential area despite varied demands on available manpower. Progress in these and other indicators is displayed on the next three pages, followed by map portrayals of the total progress in each tactical area.

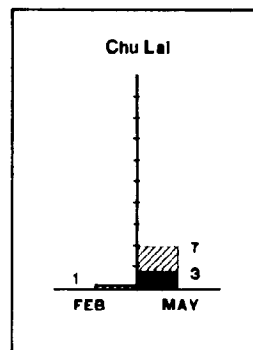
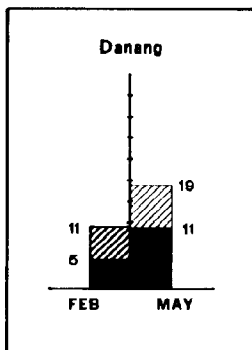
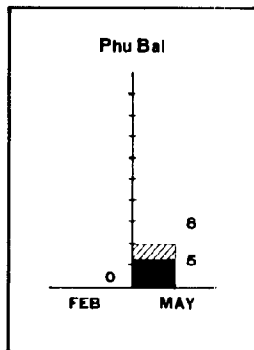
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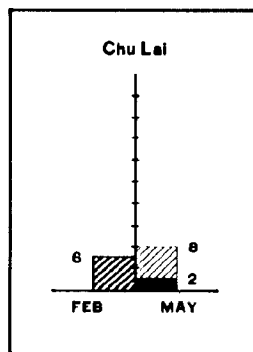
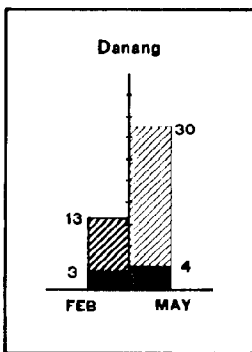
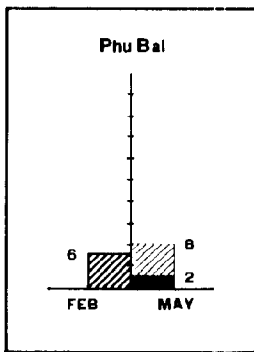
FEBRUARY-MAY PACIFICATION PROGRESS IN MARINE TACTICAL AREAS



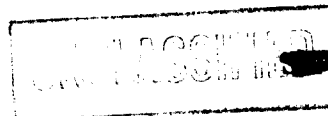
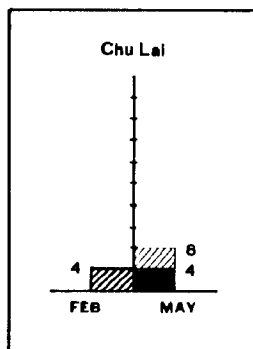
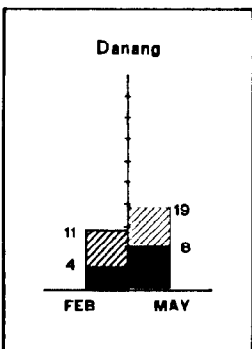
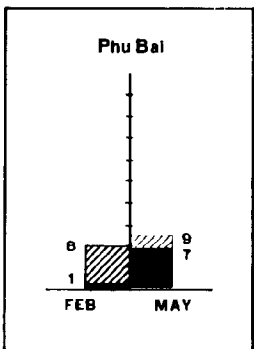
VILLAGE CENSUS



VILLAGE GVN INTELLIGENCE NET ESTABLISHED

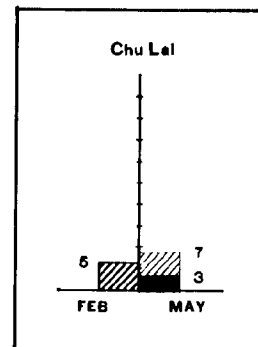
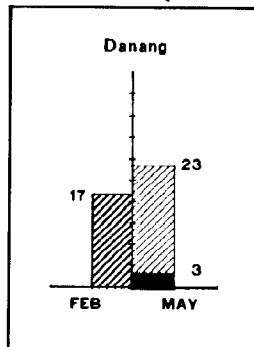
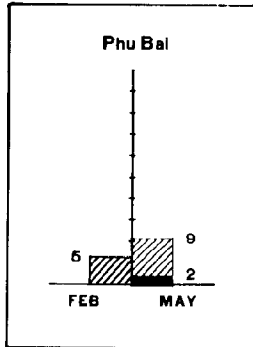


VILLAGE DEFENSE PLANS

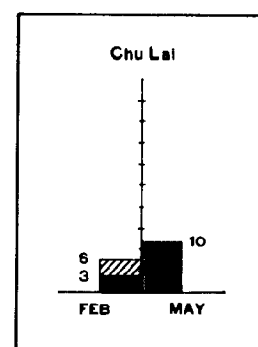
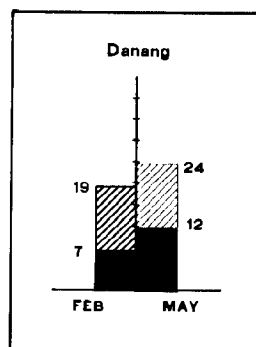
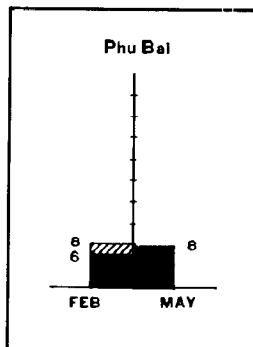


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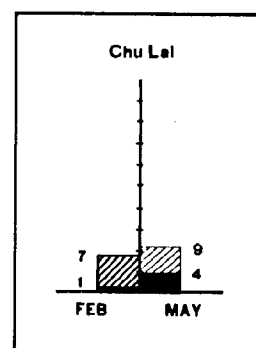
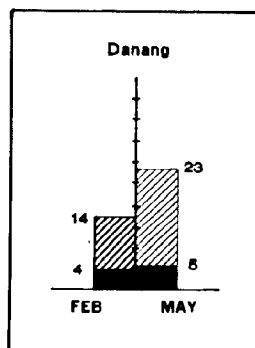
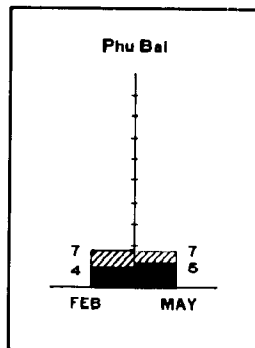
VILLAGE LOCAL DEFENSE FORCE TRAINED AND IN PLACE



VILLAGE CHIEFS AND COUNCILS FUNCTIONING



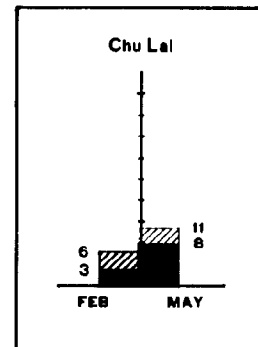
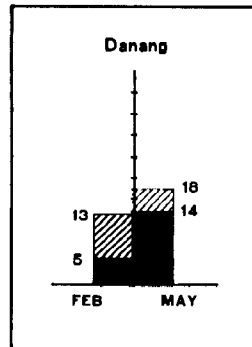
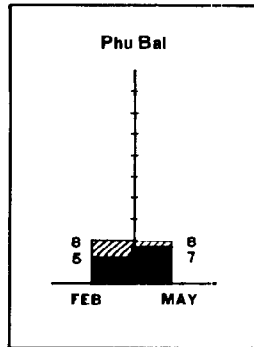
VILLAGE DEFENSIVE COMMUNICATION NETS ESTABLISHED



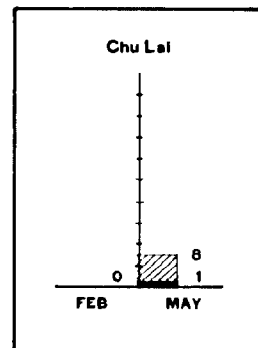
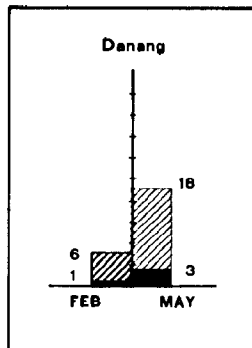
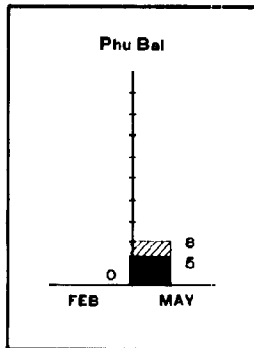
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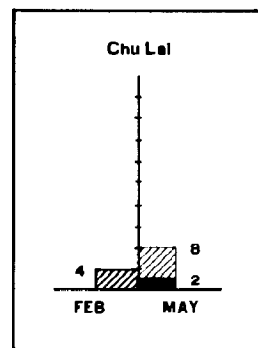
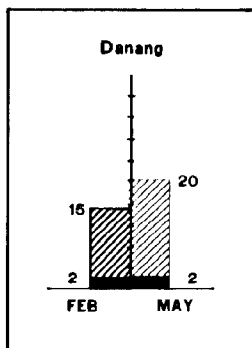
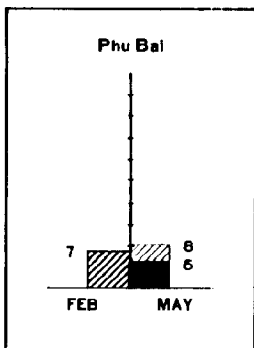
VILLAGE CHIEFS LIVING IN VILLAGES



VILLAGE PSYCHOLOGICAL AND PUBLIC INFORMATION PROGRAM ESTABLISHED



NECESSARY VILLAGE MARKETS ESTABLISHED

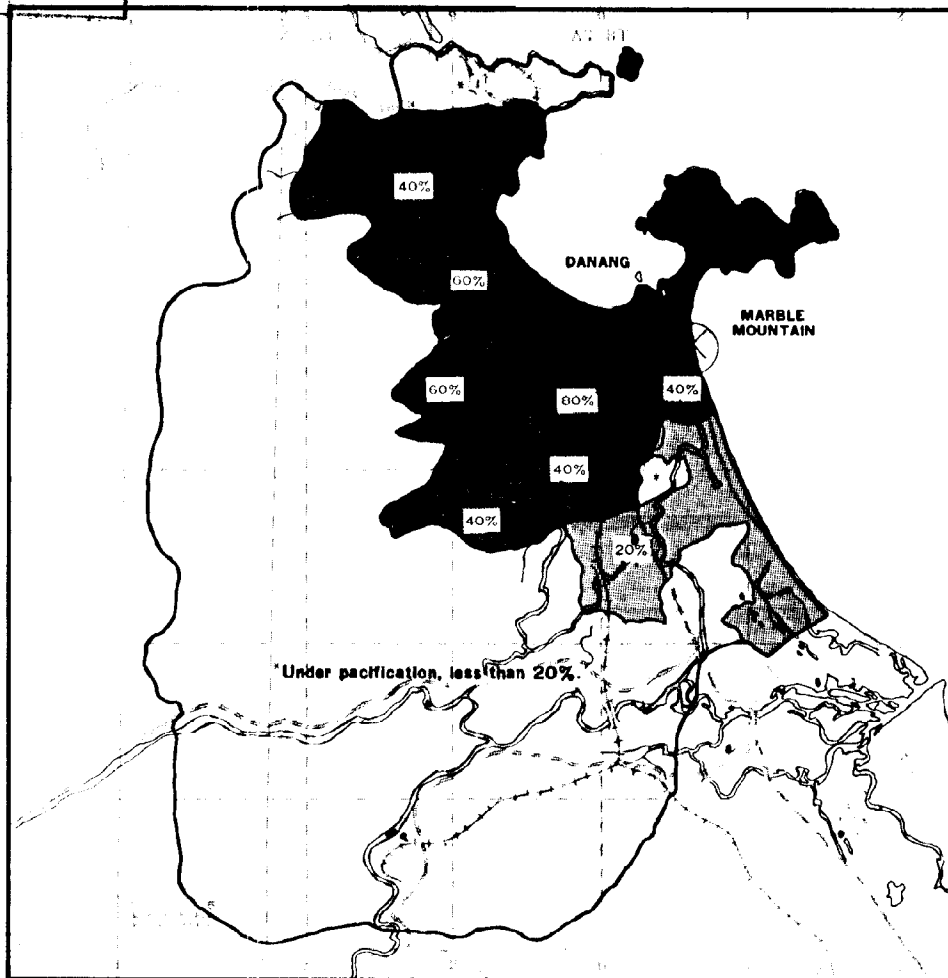


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PACIFICATION STATUS-DANANG TACTICAL AREA



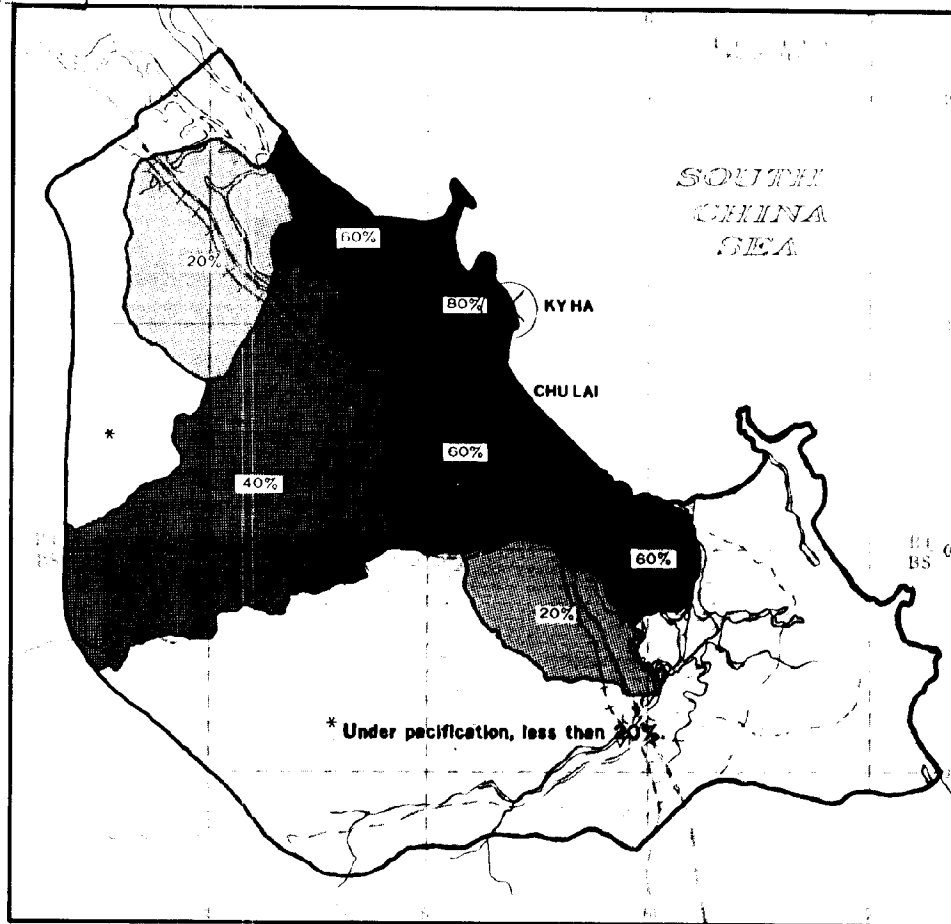
PERCENT PACIFIED	SQUARE MILES			CIVILIAN POPULATION			VILLAGES		
	FEB	MAY	CHANGE FEB-MAY	FEB	MAY	CHANGE FEB-MAY	FEB	MAY	CHANGE FEB-MAY
0	457	515	+58	94,491	116,723	+21,232	53	57	+4
20%	57	9	-48	36,258	11,417	-20,841	9	2	-7
40%	18	52	+44	16,100	38,460	+22,360	4	9	+5
60%	26	26	—	19,036	26,640	+7,640	5	7	+2
80%	31	54	+33	175,000	269,120	+114,120	1	7	+6
100%	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Total	569	676		340,885	482,360		72	82	

* Under pacification, less than 20%.

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PACIFICATION STATUS-CHU LAI TACTICAL AREA



PERCENT PACIFIED	SQUARE MILES			CIVILIAN POPULATION			VILLAGES		
	FEB	MAY	CHANGE FEB-MAY	FEB	MAY	CHANGE FEB-MAY	FEB	MAY	CHANGE FEB-MAY
*	244	264	+20	91,145	106,378	+15,233	21	30	+9
20%	30	24	-6	21,624	8,036	-35,588	5	2	-3
40%	—	31	+31	—	22,198	+22,198	—	4	+4
60%	—	24	+24	—	17,159	+17,159	—	3	+3
80%	—	4	+4	—	4,191	+4,191	—	1	+1
100%	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Total	274	347		112,769	157,962		26	40	

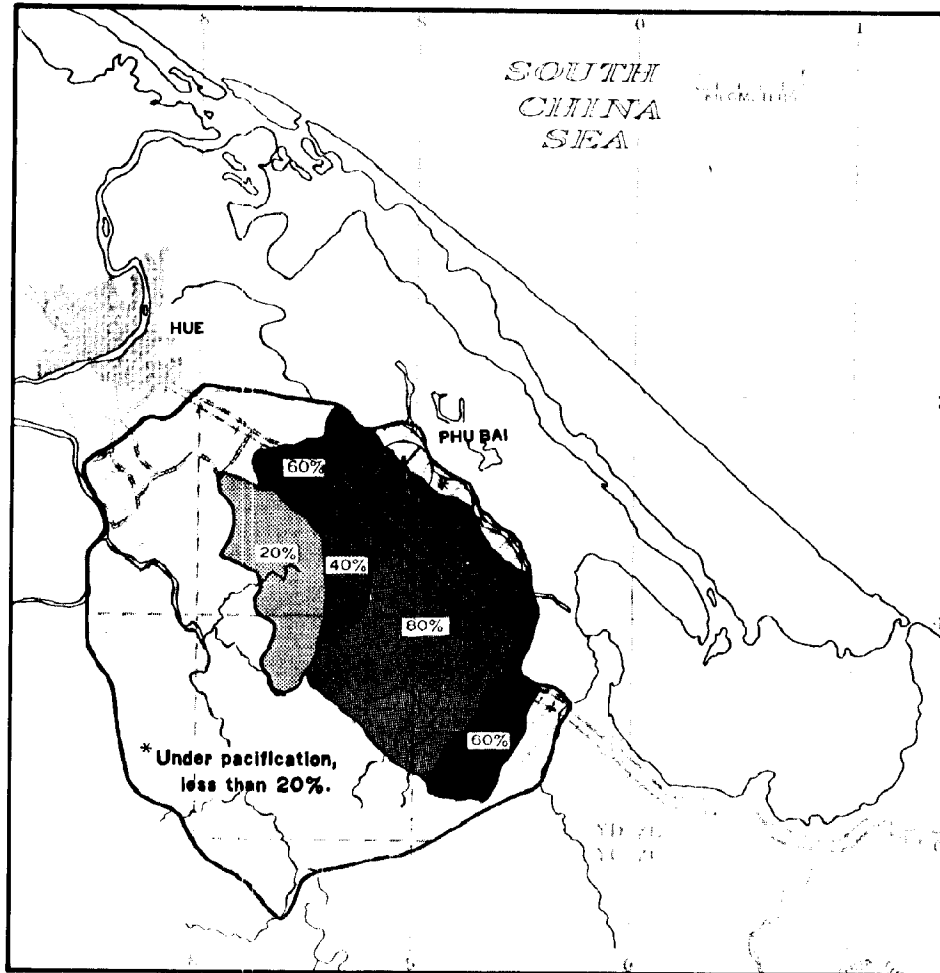
* Under pacification, less than 20%.

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PACIFICATION STATUS-PHU BAI TACTICAL AREA



PERCENT PACIFIED	SQUARE MILES			CIVILIAN POPULATION			VILLAGES		
	FEB	MAY	CHANGE FEB-MAY	FEB	MAY	CHANGE FEB-MAY	FEB	MAY	CHANGE FEB-MAY
* 0%	22	88	+66	17,750	13,408	-4,342	4	13	+9
20%	25	10	-15	11,852	1,878	-9,974	2	1	-1
40%	—	8	+8	—	5,296	+5,296	—	1	+1
60%	38	10	-28	23,486	7,245	-16,241	5	2	-3
80%	—	48	+48	—	26,542	+26,542	—	5	+5
100%	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Total	85	182		53,076	54,187		11	22	

* Under pacification, less than 20%.

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BASE DEFENSE

In a sudden move on 15 May, Premier Ky sent four battalions of loyal troops into Danang for the announced purpose of preventing opposition forces from taking over the city. Events which followed threatened the security of Marine installations in the area and affected, to a considerable degree, Marine operations for the remainder of the month.

The two Vietnamese Marine battalions and two ARVN airborne battalions sent into Danang by Premier Ky on the 15th encountered no opposition of consequence. Almost immediately, however, some ARVN units in I Corps announced their opposition to Premier Ky and began moving towards Danang. CG, III MAF, in light of these developments, quickly bolstered the defenses of the air base at Danang with two infantry companies from Phu Bai and alerted three other companies for riot control operations or the evacuation of U. S. civilians.

Danang and Hue both were quiet on the 16th, except for an occasional Buddhist sound truck moving through the streets of Danang urging the people to "resist the invaders" and to close places of business as a token of opposition to the government. Shops, however, remained open and activity was normal.

During the following three days, Danang generally was calm, in the absence of an uprising of popular support for the anti-government (Struggle Forces) movement. Scattered rifle fire was heard in parts of the city and there were confrontations by opposing forces. One was of particular note. On the morning of the 17th, anti-government ARVN forces moved into positions on the east side of the main Danang River Bridge, while a

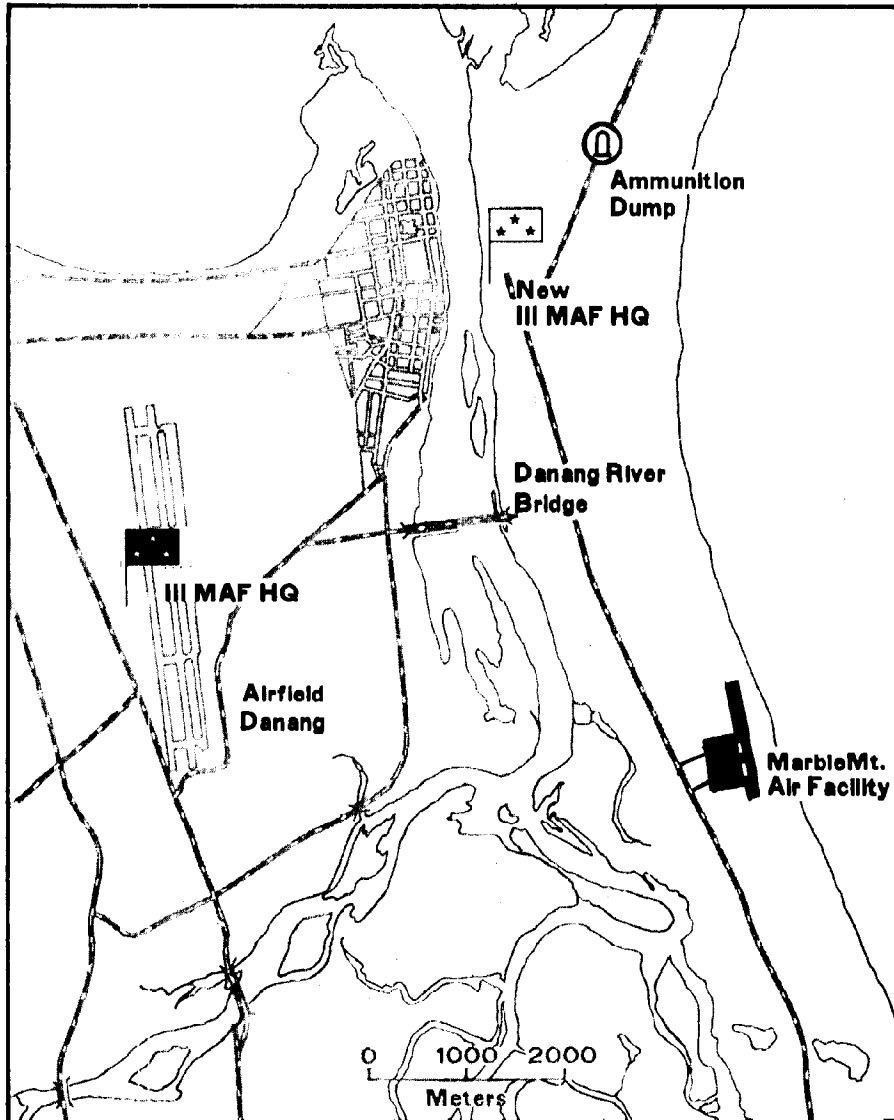
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company of pro-Ky Vietnamese Marines occupied the west side of the bridge. Later the same day, the Vietnamese Marines moved across the bridge to the east side and set up a position within 400 meters of the ARVN.

DANANG CITY AREA



To avoid bloodshed, CG, III MAF prevailed upon General Cao (the new CG of I Corps) to withdraw his

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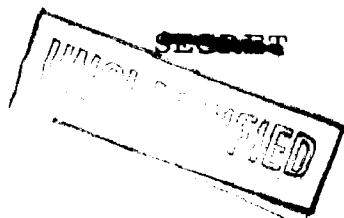
Marines to the west side of the river. That evening, the ARVN unit established road blocks, refused to permit traffic to cross the bridge, and placed demolitions on it. The following morning CG, III MAF requested the ARVN to remove the demolitions and move away from the bridge. When they refused, a reinforced squad of U. S. Marines, backed by a platoon at the ready, moved into the ARVN positions. A momentary confrontation followed, but then the ARVN moved away. At the same time, the Vietnamese Marine unit on the west side also was asked to withdraw and leave the security of the bridge in the hands of III MAF. Shortly thereafter, the Vietnamese Marines pulled back and a company of U. S. Marines moved in, took complete control of the bridge and its approaches, and removed the demolitions.

Repeatedly during this period, CG, III MAF cautioned government forces against attacks on the pagodas and calmed the fears of Hue leaders that Danang had been turned into a bloodbath.

By the 21st, the opposition movement in Danang had begun to crumble. On the morning of the 21st, VNAF aircraft fired into the new III MAF facility east of Danang, apparently by accident, but received in return a warning from CG, III MAF that US planes would shoot down any aircraft firing on US bases. U. S. Marine aircraft were sent up to reinforce this warning, and there were no other incidents of this nature. The same morning, mortar rounds landed near the new MAF headquarters and on the main air base at Danang. These were apparently fired by Struggle Forces and, as a result, some 50 aircraft at Danang were flown to other fields to permit wider dispersal of remaining planes.

Also on the 21st, CG, III MAF learned of a government plan to attack rebels holding an ARVN ammunition

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depot (6000 tons) in East Danang. He pointed out to the commander of the government forces that such an attack would only aggravate an already tense situation and persuaded him that, to avoid bloodshed, the matter should be resolved by negotiation with the rebels. Government forces quickly recommended that U. S. Marine control of the dump would settle the problem, but the rebels would not yield and threatened to blow up the dump. After two days of discussions, the rebels finally agreed that U. S. Marines should take over responsibility for security of the depot, and on 23 May a reinforced Marine company moved into the area, and the crisis there was over.

By the end of 23 May, the last of the organized opposition in Danang had capitulated and the city soon returned to normal.

Hue, however, was a different matter, with student groups and Buddhists becoming more and more vocal and demonstrating more and more against the United States, ostensibly because of its support for Ky. Beginning on 26 May, the anti-American demonstrations in Hue reached a climax with the sacking of the USIS Library, the subsequent evacuation of U. S. civilians from Hue on 27 May, and the burning on 31 May of the U. S. Consulate.

By the end of the month, the immediate threat to the security of Marine installations had been removed, but the troubled situation in the city of Hue foretold new problems, both for the Ky government and for III MAF.

During May, Danang was the only base directly threatened by events of the political crisis. Chu Lai and Phu Bai were virtually unaffected. Base defense measures there continued to consist of a balanced use of close-in and far-reaching patrols, numerous day and



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Protected by III MAF's defenses at Danang, Chu Lai and Phu Bai were approximately 600 aircraft, 65% of them from the 1st Marine Aircraft Wing. The balance contained 100 US Air Force, 34 US Army, 4 US Navy, and 49 VNAF aircraft.

Hue Phu Bai
 1 Marine Helo Sqn (19 UH-34)
 1 USA Avn Co (23 O-1, 1 U-B)

Danang

Marble Mountain
 4 Marine Helo Sdns (26 UH-34, 47 CH-46)
 1 Marine Obs Sqn (22 UH-1)
 1 Marine Acft Maint Sqn (6 CH-37, 7 CH-34, 6 CH-46, 1 C-117)

Ky Ha
 3 Marine Helo Sdns (74 UH-34)
 1 Marine Obs Sqn (16 UH-1)
 1 Marine Acft Maint Sqn (5 UH-34, 1 C-117)

Chu Lai
 4 Marine Atk Sdns (88 A-4)
 1 Marine Acft Maint Sqn (1 C-117)

USMC
 2 Marine Ftr/Atk Sdns (31 F-4)
 1 Marine All-Weather Ftr Sqn (17 F-8)
 1 Marine Photo/ECM Sqn (8 RF-8, 9 EF-10B)
 1 Marine Acft Maint Sqn (2 C-117, 1 UC-45)

USN
 Misc (1 F-4, 1 A-3, 1 A-1, 1 EC-121)

USAF
 1 Tact Air Supt Sqn (16 O-1)
 3 Det Air Rescue Sdns (5 UH-16, 4 HH-43)
 1 Tact Ftr Sqn (36 F-4)
 1 Troop Carrier Sqn (4 C-130)
 1 Det Tact Bomber Sqn (20 B-57)
 2 Air Control Sdns (12 C-123, 3 AC-47)

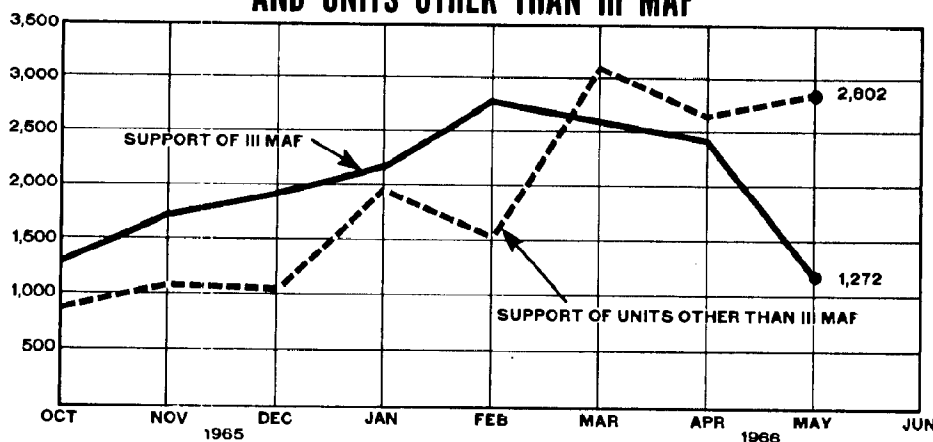
USA
 2 Pitts Avn Co (10 UH-1)

VNAF
 1 Liaison Sqn (18 O-1, 8 UH-17)
 1 Ftr Sqn (23 A-1)

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In May, the number of Marine fixed wing sorties decreased slightly from the April total: 4,074 in May vs 5,107 in April. Caused partly by bad weather over Laos and North Vietnam (1250 sorties in May vs 1,400 in April), the decrease was most evident in the reduced number of sorties flown in support of III MAF - some 1,000 less than during the previous month, primarily because of lack of suitable targets (see page 12, "Large Unit Operations"). On the other hand, approximately 1,550 sorties were flown in support of ARVN forces, compared with 1,400 in April.

FIXED WING COMBAT SORTIES IN SUPPORT OF III MAF AND UNITS OTHER THAN III MAF



While conducting these sorties, Marines lost 11 strike aircraft to enemy ground fire - 9 in RVN and 2 in Laos. Effective search and rescue operations resulted in recovery of 12 of the 14 pilots and crew members who had been shot down.

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On 15 May at the air base at Chu Lai another first was established with the launching of A-4 and F-4 combat loaded aircraft from the newly installed CEI MOD 3 field catapult. This catapult, which permits takeoffs from runways as short as 2,000 feet, is one of the components used in the SATS - "Short Airfield for Tactical Support", a concept developed by the Marines following World War II for use in underdeveloped countries where jet-capable airfields are limited. As stated in the April report, operations at Chu Lai have continued to validate the short airfield concept. During one year of continuous operation under climatic conditions which have varied from extreme heat and dust to torrential rains, the system and its components - mobile arresting gear, interlocking aluminum matting runway, portable control tower, and complete communication, radar and fueling systems - has proved effective and durable, requiring very little maintenance. In this first year of operation, aircraft population rose from the single flight of A-4's which landed on 1 June 1965 - only 25 days after construction began - to four attack squadrons of some 90 aircraft.

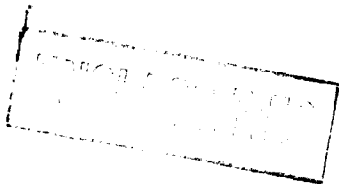
In May, 36,790 helicopter sorties were flown. This is about 6% under the record set in April, but is still considerably above any previous month. Some 4800 of these sorties were flown in support of ARVN forces while another 211 were rescue sorties to pick up downed pilots in RVN, Laos and NVN. During the month Marine helicopters lifted 54,467 passengers and evacuated 1898 wounded personnel. Only one helicopter was lost to enemy ground fire during May, but another 88 were hit.

The number of helicopter sorties and passengers

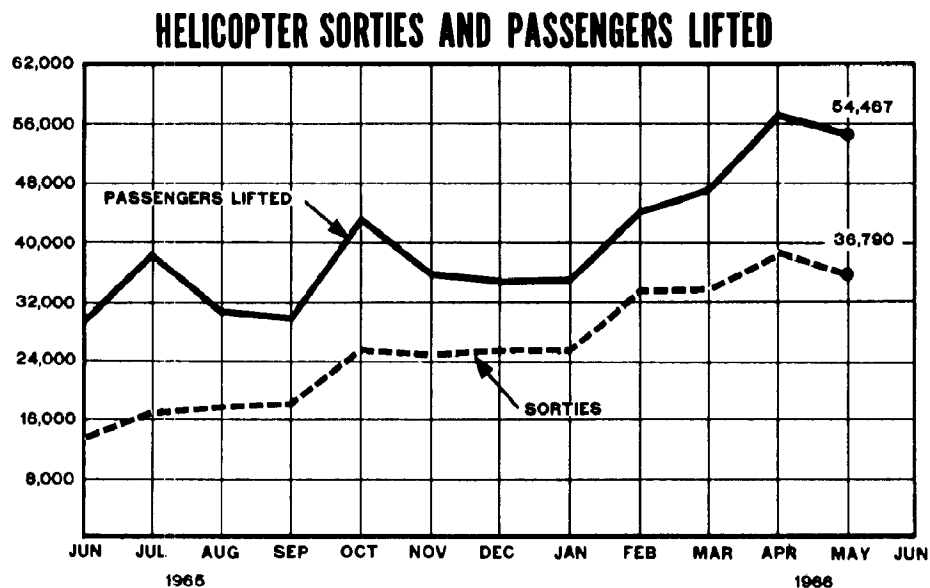
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lifted by the 1st Marine Aircraft Wing since May of 1965 is shown below.



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LOGISTICS

Political and civil disturbances during the period diminished logistic activity in the III MAF area. However, the lessons learned during the similar disturbances in April were helpful in providing uninterrupted support for III MAF during periods of unrest in May and essential services were carried out without serious interruption. Some progress was also realized in the construction of operational, logistic, and other support installations.

Supply: The general status of supply remained adequate during the period. Support of operations was satisfactory and stock levels, to insure continued support under probable future conditions, continued to grow. Use of special supply techniques, such as CRITIPAC, RED BALL and parcel post shipments, continued to provide those items of supply required on a priority basis.

Class I -- Resupply movements coupled with the limited amount of local cold storage spaces resulted in some disruption during the civil disturbance in the supply of "A" rations (fresh provisions) to unit messes; however, adequate stocks of other rations were available. During the period, additional refrigerated storage space was placed in operation at the Naval Support Activity and Force Logistic Command; continued progress on completion of planned cold storage facilities will insure a more adequate and continuous supply of "A" rations.

Class II -- A program was initiated to review all outstanding obligations at the various echelons of the supply system for possible cancellation or expedited supply action. This program consists initially of a review of items having large numbers of obligations in the two Force Logistic Support Groups in RVN, and a comparison of the obligations

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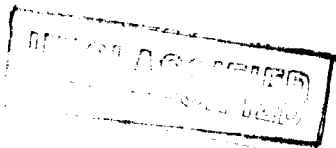
held by each FLSG against the assets of the other. This obligation-to-asset comparison has already resulted in the release of 7,611 obligations at the FLSG's. Items obligated at 3d Force Service Regiment and at the Marine Corps Supply Center, Barstow, California are also being reviewed and verified to expedite supply action. Also, all items which have a large number of obligations at each supply echelon are being systematically examined and traced through the supply system to insure timely delivery to the user. This is a comprehensive program which will be repeated periodically and will result in a purification of the supply channels and the maximum utilization of supply assets.

Class III and IIIA -- The effect of the civil disturbances on supply actions was most noticeable in the supply and delivery of petroleum products. The closing of the commercial terminals and the stoppage of commercial deliveries to Phu Bai placed increased reliance on the military systems. These systems were equal to the task. Multiple products were discharged through the ship-to-shore line and transferred by overland line direct to military storage at Danang. A floating ship-to-shore line, with expeditionary storage facilities ashore, continued to be used near the mouth of the Hue River to provide bulk POL supplies to the Phu Bai area. All stock levels remained adequate during the period, and transfers of products were made to the Air Force in the Danang area to supplement their stocks during the periods that commercial deliveries were disrupted.

Class IV -- Supply of these items remained adequate. Stocks of field fortification materials are now being maintained by the FLSG's and issues to supported units are made as required.

Class V and VA -- Ground ammunition stocks were maintained at 45 days of supply. The stockage of low drag bombs

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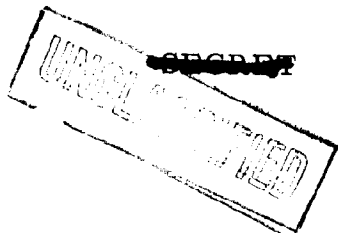


was somewhat improved by the receipt of 7,062 MK81 and 7,400 MK82 bombs on the SS Hope Victory during May. Assets of these preferred items of air-to-ground ordnance continue to remain critical; however, required air support is carried out by the discriminate use of all ordnance, including the less desirable high drag bombs.

Maintenance: Maintenance of ground equipment in III MAF was characterized by additional shifts to 4th echelon maintenance in-country as facilities and equipment became available. Also, the first ten trucks to be rebuilt at depot level were evacuated to the Public Works Center, Yokosuka, Japan, arriving there on 16 May. Further, during May, 2 1/2 ton trucks were evacuated from RVN to the 3d FSR for rebuild and a total of 52 LVT-P5's have now been lifted by retrograde surface shipment from RVN, to be returned to Marine Corps Supply Centers, Barstow and Albany for rebuild. All of these measures are designed to make maximum use of available maintenance assets and programs, and to ensure the retention in RVN of the best possible equipment.

On 22 May HMM-265 with 24 CH-46A helicopters arrived at Marble Mountain Air Facility. This increased the First Marine Aircraft Wing assets of the turbine powered CH-46A to 48 aircraft. These helicopters have greatly enhanced the operations of the III MAF; however, the sand and dirt encountered in the operating environment in RVN have continued to plague maintenance personnel and reduce the availability of aircraft. The sand erodes the engine compressor and main rotor blades, clogs fuel systems, and causes excessive wear of engine bearing mounts. A contractor-developed filter on the air intake of the CH-46A aircraft has been tested in RVN, and aircraft engines so equipped have shown negligible engine sand erosion after 260 landings in a sand environment. Procurement of similar filters for all WestPac



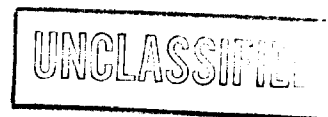


CH-46A aircraft has been requested.

Port Facilities: Although the LST/LCU unload facility by the Danang River Bridge is considered to be only slightly over 50 percent completed, service at this facility was inaugurated on 20 May. This initial use was necessitated by the civil disturbances in Danang and the need to avoid unloading cargo at the commercial or Museum areas. Although the lighterage had minor difficulties making the facility due to grounding, vastly improved efficiency of the unloading operation at the facility was realized. Progress continued on the installation of the deep water piers at Observation Point. Dredging on this project is now 50 percent complete with 55 percent of the back fill completed. It is still estimated that the first Delong pier may be available for use as early as July.

Engineer Operations : Although significant construction progress was realized, the civil unrest, and the accompanying loss of the local labor force, curtailed projects in the Danang and Phu Bai areas. Chu Lai was not affected by the disturbances and progress was made on all projects in that area. Primary emphasis of the organic engineer capacity was placed on maintenance and upkeep of camps and roads within the camp areas. Marine Corps engineers were also assigned to assist the contractor in soil cement stabilization of the Danang Air Base parallel runway. Assignment of Marine Corps forces to this high priority task was necessary due to the absence for several days of the local labor force.

As an aftermath of the political unrest it was learned that due to their participation in "Struggle Force" activities, a large number of heavy equipment operators in ARVN engineer units assigned to the Danang garrison will be transferred. This will seriously affect the engineer capabilities of ARVN units in ICTZ until new personnel are assigned and trained.



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Movement and Resupply: During the month a total of 3051 personnel were introduced into RVN from 9 amphibious ships.

Cargo operations in I Corps Tactical Zone were again hampered by civil unrest during May. During the month the average daily cargo discharge rate at Danang was 3675 M/T, and 113,910 M/T were unloaded during the period. This compares to a daily average of 4855 M/T during April, and an April total unload of 145,659 M/T. At Chu Lai 34,273 M/T were unloaded during May, with a daily average discharge rate of 1106 M/T.

On 30 April there were 6 ships in port at Danang. During May, 25 ships arrived and 20 ships completed unloading and departed; 11 were in port 31 May with 56,930 M/T of cargo backlogged, almost 10,000 M/T higher than the previous record backlog in December 1965. The backlog on 30 April was 14,388 M/T, and the average daily backlog for May was 21,152 M/T.

The Military Airlift Command cargo channel between Kadena, Okinawa and Danang was utilized to move 392 S/T of high priority cargo. The 315th Air Division and organic Marine aircraft moved an additional 1122 S/T, for a total of 1773 S/T of airlifted cargo from areas outside Vietnam to Danang, Chu Lai and Phu Bai.

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STATISTICAL HIGHLIGHTS1. PHU BAIMAJOR CHANGES IN III MAF UNITS

<u>Unit</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Change</u>	<u>From/To</u>	<u>Remarks</u>
2ndBn, 4thMar	30May	Arrive	Danang	Opn Reno
1stBn, 1stMar	30May	Depart	Danang	
HMM-161	31May	Arrive	Danang	Relieves HMM-163 in June

CHANGES TO TACTICAL AREA

None

ENEMY ORDER OF BATTLE

<u>Confirmed</u>	<u>May</u>	<u>Apr</u>	<u>Probable</u>	<u>May</u>	<u>Apr</u>
<u>Within 25 miles</u>			<u>Within 25 miles</u>		
Regt Hq	1	0	Regt Hq	0	0
Battalions	7	4	Battalions	0	0
Companies	2	2	Companies	2	2
Total Strength	3,795	1,795	Total Strength	150	150
<u>Within 25 to 50 miles</u>			<u>Within 25 to 50 miles</u>		
Sub Region Hq	1	1	Regt Hq	0	0
Regt Hq	1	2	Battalions	5	5
Battalions	5	8	Companies	3	3
Companies	8	8			
Total Strength	3,755	5,405	Total Strength	2,345	2,345

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<u>Grand Total to</u>		<u>Grand Total to</u>	
<u>50 miles</u>	7,550 7,200	<u>50 miles</u>	2,495 2,495

A comparison of the April 1966 and the May 1966 confirmed enemy order of battle shows an increase of 350 enemy personnel within 50 miles of the Phu Bai airfield. The increase was caused by the re-evaluation of strength figures for the 806th VC and 808th NVA Battalions and normal order of battle adjustments.

2. DANANG

MAJOR CHANGES IN III MAF UNITS

<u>Unit</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Change</u>	<u>From/To</u>	<u>Remarks</u>
3rdBn, 1stMar	22May	Arrive	Chu Lai	During political crisis
HMM-265	22May	Arrive	Cherry Point	Rotation with HMM-261
HMM-263	24May	Arrive	Futema	Rotation with HMM-361
HMM-361	25May	Depart	Futema	Rotation with HMM-263
2ndBn, 4thMar	30May	Depart	Phu Bai	Opn Reno
1stBn, 1stMar	30May	Arrive	Phu Bai	Opcon 9thMar
1stMPBn	31May	Arrive	CONUS	-
HMM-261	31May	Depart	CONUS	Rotation with HMM-265
HMM-161	31May	Depart	Phu Bai	June rotation w/HMM-163

CHANGES TO TACTICAL AREA

None

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ENEMY ORDER OF BATTLE

<u>Confirmed</u>	<u>May</u>	<u>Apr</u>	<u>Probable</u>	<u>May</u>	<u>Apr</u>
<u>Within 25 miles</u>			<u>Within 25 miles</u>		
Regt Hq	0	0	Regt Hq	0	0
Battalions	4	4	Battalions	3	3
Companies	5	5	Companies	2	2
Total Strength	2,590	2,590	Total Strength	1,425	1,425
<u>Within 25 to 50 miles</u>			<u>Within 25 to 50 miles</u>		
Regt Hq	1	1	Regt Hq	0	0
Battalions	3	4	Battalions	2	3
Companies	10	10	Companies	2	2
Total Strength	2,905	3,165	Total Strength	1,050	1,350
<u>Grand Total to 50 miles</u>	5,495	5,755	<u>Grand Total to 50 miles</u>	2,475	2,775

A comparison of the April 1966 and the May 1966 confirmed enemy order of battle shows a reduction of 260 confirmed enemy personnel within a 50 mile radius of the Danang airfield. This decrease is due to the southern movement of the 80th VC Battalion into north central Quang Ngai province and normal order of battle adjustments.

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3. CHU LAIMAJOR CHANGES IN III MAF UNITS

<u>Unit</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Change</u>	<u>From/To</u>	<u>Remarks</u>
VMA-214	1May	Arrive	Iwakuni	Rotation w/VMA-224
VMA-224	2May	Depart	Iwakuni	Rotation w/VMA-214
BLT 1/5	7May	Arrive	SLF	BLT 3/5 new SLF
3rdBn, 1stMar	22May	Depart	Danang	During political crisis
RLT-5	26May	Arrive	Okinawa	-

CHANGES TO TACTICAL AREA

None

ENEMY ORDER OF BATTLE

<u>Confirmed</u>	<u>May</u>	<u>Apr</u>	<u>Probable</u>	<u>May</u>	<u>Apr</u>
<u>Within 25 miles</u>			<u>Within 25 miles</u>		
MR-V Hq	1	1	Regt Hq	300	0
Division Hq	1	1	Battalions	1	2
Regt Hq	2	2	Companies	0	0
Battalions	9	8			
Companies	11	11			
Total Strength	7,000	6,500	Total Strength	300	600

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Within 25 to 50
miles

Regt Hq	0	0
Battalions	4	5
Companies	10	10
Total Strength	3,060	3,150

Within 25 to 50
miles

Regt Hq	0	0
Battalions	4	4
Companies	0	0
Total Strength	1,700	1,700

Grand Total to
50 miles 10,060 10,010

Grand Total to
50 miles 2,000 2,000

A comparison of the April 1966 and the May 1966 confirmed enemy order of battle indicates an increase of 50 enemy personnel within a fifty mile radius of the Chu Lai airfield. The slight increase was caused by the confirmation of the RQ-23d 120mm Mortar Battalion, 620th NVA Division and normal order of battle adjustments.

4. VIET CONG LOSSES FOR MAY 1966As of 31 MayTotal to Date

658	KIA	6,141
95	VC (Captured)	859
579	VC (Suspects)	6,349
11	WIA	465
116	Weapons	1,131

5. CIVIC ACTION STATISTICSAprilMayTotal as of 31 May 66

62,482	70,050	Persons Given	
		Medical Treatment	538,592
25	42	Persons Given	
		Medical Training	321

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42	46	Construction Projects	455
50,793	56,851	Pounds of Food Distributed	360,788
8,235	5,984	Pounds of Soap Distributed	86,268
2,921	5,930	Pounds of Clothing Dis-	
		tributed	167,033
162	176	Critically Ill Civilians	
		Evacuated	4,808
57	46	English Language Classes	
		In Progress	411
\$1,713	\$1,934	Cash Donations	\$26,661
156,813	124,269	Persons Fed	374,364
3,510	5,165	Students Supported	22,034

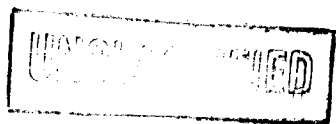
6. III MAF OFFENSIVE OPERATIONS

<u>April</u>	<u>May</u>		<u>Total as of 31 May</u>
7,183	6,986	Patrols	46,073
5,653	6,088	Ambushes	30,523
451	630	Sniper Posts	2,090
4	7	Regimental or Larger Opns	28
10	5	Battalion Opns	76
202	127	Company Opns	891
5,107	4,074	Offensive Air Sorties	39,482
39,441	36,790	Helo Sorties	310,694

7. III MAF STRENGTH - ON 31 MAY

Danang	26,030
Chu Lai	20,259
Hue Phu Bai	8,019
Total	54,308

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~~SECRET~~8. LOGISTICS

a. Supply Levels at End of Period:

DANANG CHU LAI PHU BAI

Class I (1000 of
rations/
days of
supply)

MCI (Rations)	846/31	572/25	242/31
B Rations	496/18	765/34	164/21
A Rations	27/1	173/8	11/1

Class III & IIIA (BULK):
(1000 gals/days of supply)

JP-4	*70/4	483/5	20/2
AVGAS	113/6	207/16	5/1
MOGAS	88/6	188/9	8/3
DIESEL	175/13	203/6	3/1

* Includes only the JP-4 stored by FLSG at Danang;
does not include NAVSUPPACT, Danang storage or
deliveries from NAVSUPPACT direct to operating
squadrons.



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Class V and VA:

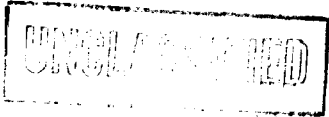
Ground Ammo (days of supply)	45	45	45
250 lb bombs (number of bombs)	1355	4711	-
500 lb bombs (number of bombs)	1526	1973	-
Launcher w/19 2.75 in. rockets	14	32	-
Launcher w/4 5 in. rockets	727	443	-

b. Resupply Status:

(1) Surface Shipping Status (Danang)

Cargo unloaded (May)	113,910 M/T
Average daily discharge rate	3,675 M/T
Ships in port 30 April	6
Ships arriving during May	25
Ships unloaded during May	20
Ships in port 31 May	11
Cargo backlog 30 April	14,388 M/T
Cargo backlog 31 May	56,930 M/T

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Average cargo backlog (May) 21,152 M/T

(2) Air Shipping Status

Cargo lifted into RVN (May) 1,773 S/T

Cargo awaiting lift on Okinawa 414 S/T
as of 1 June

c. RED BALL Summary (May):

Items at beginning of period - 439

Items added - 840

Items removed - 244

Items remaining at end of period - 1035

d. Maintenance (May):

Items evacuated from RVN - 218

Items repaired at 3rd FSR - 533

Items returned to CONUS - 104
from 3rdFSR

Items disposed of on Okinawa- 508

e. Construction Projects:

Roads rehabilitated or constructed - Maintenance and improvement to existing roads

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Bridges constructed	- Maintenance and repairs only.
Wells drilled	- 9 completed, 6 in progress.
Covered storage, NSA	- 288,000 sq.ft. completed, 96,000 under construction. 384,000 sq.ft. programmed for NSA.
III MAF covered storage (includes maintenance facilities)	- 56,000 completed; 116,000 sq.ft. under construction.
Ammo storage	- ASP #1 - 8% complete due to change in plans and increased scope of construction to be accomplished. ASP #2 - 87% complete.
POL storage tanks 10,000 BBL	- 3 completed and 2 under construction at Danang; 3 completed at Chu Lai, and 2 under construction at Marble Mt Air Facility.
400 bed hospital	- 84% complete.
Danang water supply distribution system	- 81% complete.

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CONCLUSIONS

The guerrilla enemy in the Marine areas is suffering serious hurt. He still is formidable because he continues to have access to food and supplies.

The Main Force enemy in the I Corps is not now suffering greatly, because he has refused battle, avoided the aggressive moves of III MAF into his inland areas, and has kept clear of the populated areas.

The effects of the political unrest, while tempered by lessons learned during the similar disturbances in April, are and continue to be substantial, in the areas of civic action and logistics. The situation in the city of Hue is serious and forebodes new problems for Marine forces at Phu Bai.

The steadfast attitude of the people in areas undergoing pacification, evidenced both by the increased assistance provided to Marines and a determination to help improve their own lot, gives basis for optimism that III MAF's battle to win the people is proceeding satisfactorily.

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