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# OPERATIONS OF U. S. MARINE FORCES

## VIETNAM

### OCTOBER 1968

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This is a summary of activities of US Marine Corps forces in Vietnam for the month of October 1968. Its purpose is to update similar historical reports covering the period from March 1965 through September 1968.

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CONTENTS

<del>SUMMARY</del>	<del>3</del>
LARGE UNIT OPERATIONS . . . . .	6
SMALL UNIT COUNTERGUERRILLA OPERATIONS . . .	23
REVOLUTIONARY DEVELOPMENT AND PACIFICA- TION. . . . .	33
BASE DEFENSE . . . . .	47
AIR OPERATIONS . . . . .	49
LOGISTICS . . . . .	59
<del>CONCLUSIONS</del>	<del>69</del>
STATISTICAL HIGHLIGHTS . . . . .	70

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SUMMARY

III MAF's mobile striking power--with 20 large unit operations during October--focused on the enemy's lines of communication and known and suspected base areas in all five provinces of I CTZ. Opportunities for decisive combat remained uncommon, however, as the enemy gravitated toward his secure areas at an accelerated pace, forced there by the combination of year-long punishment from Free World forces and the seasonal arrival of bad weather. On only two occasions did he risk exposure of a substantial troop concentration, and in both instances, he was soundly defeated by complementing III MAF and ARVN operations. The first occurred during early October, when a Marine and ARVN counterattack fragmented a major enemy attempt to reduce the Special Forces camp at Thuong Duc, and the latter in the eastern DMZ, where III MAF and ARVN units combined to kill 410 NVA in a three-day battle northeast of Con Thien during 23-25 October.

Monsoon flooding along the coastal lowlands forced guerrillas to surface, and consequently diminished their activity; it also hampered III MAF small unit operations. Despite the restrictions affecting the antagonists, accounting for a 10% decrease from III MAF September activity, Marine and US Army units deployed 14,333 patrols, ambushes, and sweep operations to maintain heavy pressure on local enemy forces; 285 enemy were killed, 118 captured, and 42 weapons seized in the 702 contacts established. In addition, Marine deep reconnaissance patrols scored 389 kills as they monitored and attacked enemy units trafficking between mountainous base areas and the coastal plains.

During October, Kit Carson Scouts tallied 182 enemy killed or apprehended, 229 mines or explosive devices discovered, and 164 caves, tunnels, and caches located. Employing knowledge gained as guerrillas, the Scouts provided III MAF units with a distinct advantage during the 2,182 patrols they accompanied.

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Revolutionary Development took impressive strides during October, with a record 617 infrastructure kills, bringing to 3,155 the number of infrastructure personalities eliminated by RD thus far during 1968. Phoenix-Phung Hoang activities in Thua Thien province alone ferreted out 249 VC infrastructure members and assisted 227 of the total 347 I CTZ ralliers who returned to GVN control.

Pre-Tet pacification levels were regained for the first time in October, with an end-month record of 839,579 Vietnamese civilians residing in 93 secure villages in I CTZ. And two additional villages, south along Route 1 from Quang Tri City, were added to the III MAF pacification program. Marine and Popular Force soldiers, prosecuting the Combined Action Program, accounted for 253 enemy killed or taken prisoner, and captured 70 weapons during the month, bringing the 1968 enemy losses to this program to nearly 2,500 personnel and 650 weapons.

Enemy rocketeers were noticeably inactive, most likely due to restrictions imposed by the monsoon and III MAF saturation patrolling; they failed to launch a single October rocket attack against the Danang vital area.

Cantonment construction resumed its normal pace in October, following September's Typhoon Bess setback, as Dong Ha recorded 100% base construction completion and the Camp Evans, Hue/Phu Bai, and Quang Tri projects neared completion at end-month.

The highest cargo tonnages ever recorded flowed through I CTZ ports during the month, with an increase of 18,776 M/T over the record May 1968 incoming cargo total and almost 1,000 tons over the previous backload high of 269,578, also a May 1968 feat.

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Despite the poor weather prevailing throughout I CTZ, Marine aviators flew 6,862 fixed wing sorties during the month, 5,349 of which were in support of Free World and ARVN forces operating in South Vietnam, and 1,513 against selected enemy redoubts in North Vietnam and Laos. Pilots of the 1st Marine Aircraft Wing and Special Landing Forces Alfa and Bravo transported a record number of passengers (121,296) and cargo (12,586 tons) while amassing 61,259 helicopter sorties.

Effective deployment of ARVN combat units in the field, often over extensive periods of time, has gradually intensified friendly striking power in I CTZ. ARVN commanders have become increasingly aware of tactical situations, and following the crucial test of their mettle imposed during the Tet offensive, have proven their ability to take to the field and consistently extract impressive victories from a formidable opponent.

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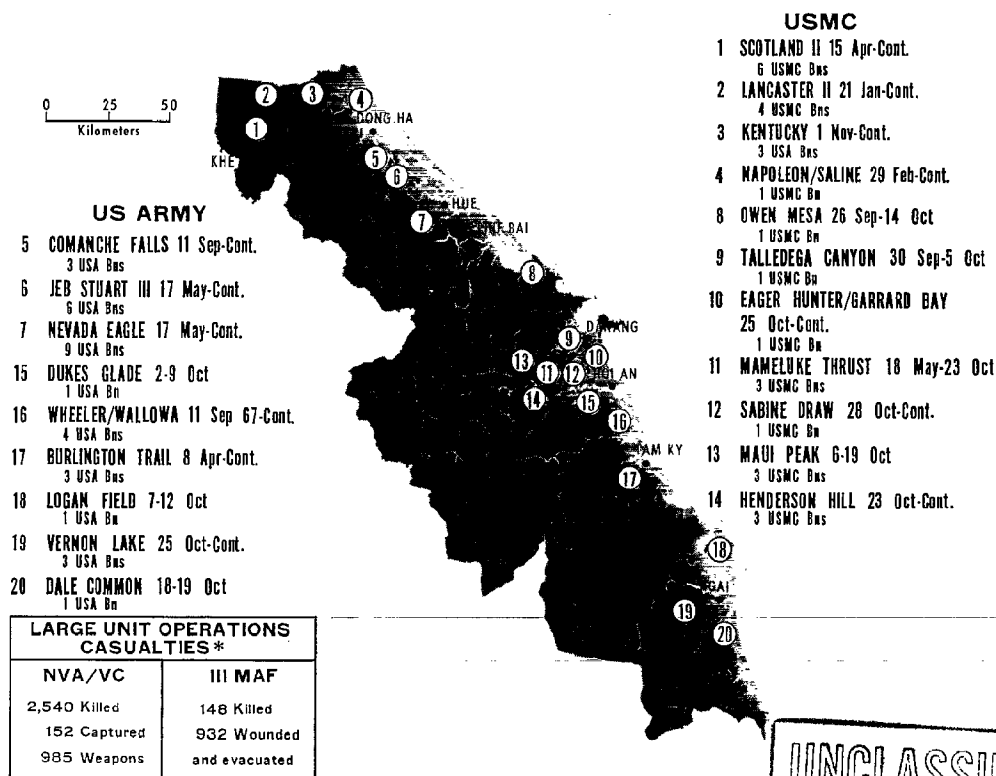
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LARGE UNIT OPERATIONS

Light, irregular contact characterized the III MAF and Seventh Fleet Special Landing Force operations - 20 in all - during October. A factor contributing to the limited action was the monsoonal weather, as heavy rains imposed restrictions on maneuverability and visibility in the middle two weeks of the month; however, the enemy's forced retrogression toward more secure areas remains the major cause for the protracted low level of combat obtaining in I CTZ. Despite enemy attempts at general disengagement, the mobile striking power of III MAF large unit operations accounted for 2,540 NVA/VC killed and 152 captured - a depletion equivalent of more than an enemy regiment.

The locations of October large unit operations are shown below.

**III MAF AND SLF OPERATIONS - OCTOBER 1968**

\*Includes 1,069 enemy killed and 140 enemy and 603 weapons captured by US Army operations.  
US Army casualties: 73 killed and 428 wounded and evacuated.

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Operations in Central I CTZ

Eight of the 20 US large unit operations in progress during October were executed in Quang Nam, where III MAF concentrated a strong effort to seek out and destroy elements of the 13 main and local force VC and regular NVA battalions known to operate in the central province of I CTZ. These actions were distinguished by a singular lack of major unit battles, due, in part, to periods of heavy rain and flooding, but more significantly to the enemy's refusal of serious combat. Subjected, since the first of the year, to a constant interlacing of his assembly areas and lines of communication by III MAF, ARVN, and ROKMC operations, the enemy has been forced largely to withdraw to more secure positions. Only in the An Hoa and Thuong Duc areas southwest of Danang was there continued enemy activity. There, two Marine operations (MAUI PEAK executed in support of Thuong Duc, and MAMELUKE THRUST in the An Hoa basin) successfully countered enemy units contesting the region.

-Operation MAUI PEAK

The action at Thuong Duc began during late September, when the enemy moved elements of at least two NVA regiments (21st and 31st) into positions ringing the Special Forces camp there. Deployed thusly, he initiated a concentrated effort to reduce this friendly installation during the latter part of the month, employing a series of ground attacks supported by continuous mortar, RPG rocket, and heavy machine gun fire.

The enemy's designs on the Special Forces camp at Thuong Duc are not difficult to comprehend. Situated athwart a major communications axis leading from A Shau Valley into central Quang Nam, thence to the II CTZ central highlands, the outpost has been a source of irritation to the enemy since 1966. Successful elimination of the Thuong Duc garrison would facilitate overland movement of troops and supplies and,

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equally important, would provide the enemy a much needed victory upon which to close a heretofore undistinguished summer campaign. As an additional bonus, the relative isolation of the difficult terrain-surrounded outpost, coupled with the advent of the northeast monsoon, offered the enemy some hope of achieving a quick success and a subsequent, unscathed withdrawal to his safe areas before friendly combat power could be marshaled in counterattack.

However, characteristic of his past large-scale offensive maneuvers, the enemy again underestimated the swiftness with which US supporting arms firepower could be brought to bear against his troop concentrations. Radio beacon-guided Marine A-6A's, flying in close support of the camp defenders, were instrumental in halting NVA main thrusts against the garrison on 28 and 29 September. Thereafter, through mid-October, two beacon-equipped forward air controller (FAC) teams remained at Thuong Duc, thus maintaining an all-weather air attack capability, concurrent with artillery fires, against targets of opportunity.

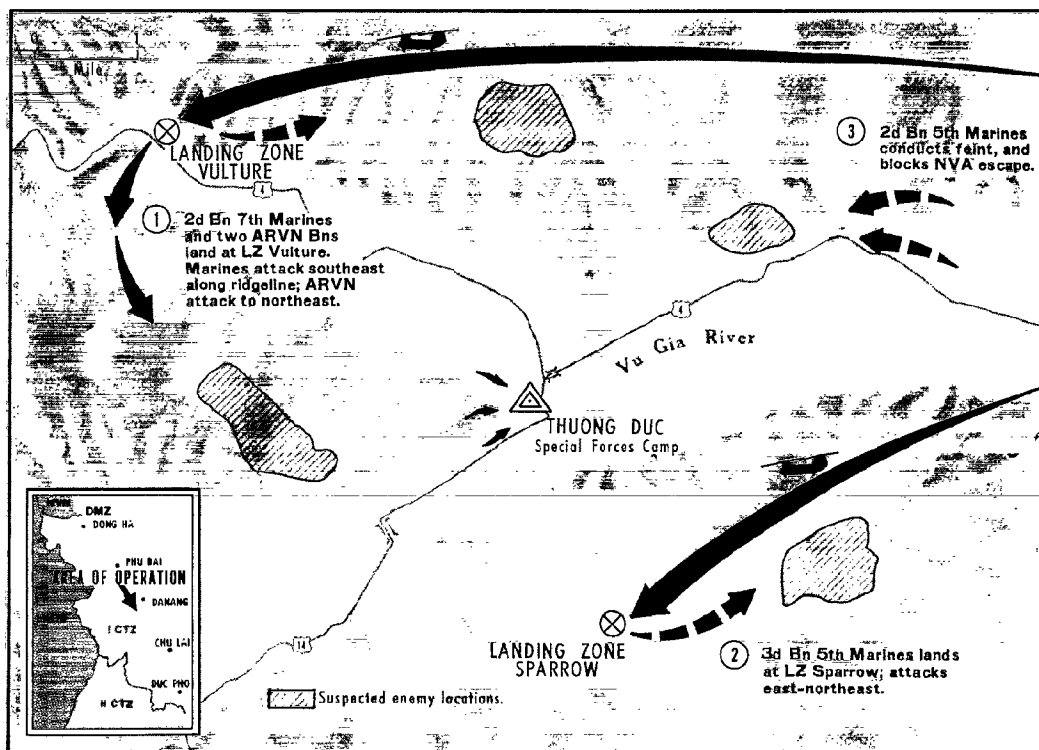
When, despite heavy losses to friendly firepower during the last three days of September, the enemy persisted in harassing Thuong Duc with mortar and probing ground attacks, III MAF launched a regimental, heliborne/ground assault to eliminate enemy pressure on the outpost. Initiated on 6 October, the 7th Marine Regiment-controlled Operation MAUI PEAK involved heliborne landings of 2d Battalion, 7th Marines three miles northwest of Thuong Duc, and 3d Battalion, 5th Marines three miles southeast of the camp, while 2d Battalion, 5th Marines executed a feint along the Vu Gia river valley and blocked enemy avenues of escape to the east. Following 2d Battalion, 7th Marines into the northwest landing zone, code-named Vulture, were two battalions of the 51st ARVN Regiment, conducting Operation HUNG QUANG 1-74, companion to MAUI PEAK. In reserve, to exploit sizable contacts developed by the coordinated III MAF/ARVN effort, were 1st Battalion, 1st Marines and two battalions of ARVN Rangers.

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The planned deployment and scheme of maneuver of friendly forces in Operation MAUI PEAK/HUNG QUANG 1-74 looked like this:

### PLAN OF ATTACK, OPERATION MAUI PEAK: 6 OCTOBER 1968



The troop insertions into Landing Zone Vulture were unopposed, as 2d Battalion, 7th Marines landed first and seized the high ground to the south for a southeastward attack along the ridgeline paralleling the valley floor. Following in trace, the ARVN landed, then commenced a search in a northeasterly direction against enemy believed occupying positions northwest of the encampment. Southeast of Thuong Duc, however, the scheduled helilift of 3d Battalion, 5th Marines into Landing Zone Sparrow was subjected to intense anti-aircraft fire, whereupon the battalion was diverted to an

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alternate zone three miles to the east. From there, following an extensive supporting arms preparation which included B-52 strikes, the battalion mounted an overland attack to the west, aimed at destruction of NVA forces in the vicinity of Landing Zone Sparrow.

From the outset, the helicopter-landed III MAF units made only minimal contact. Rapidly advancing to seize pre-planned objectives, the Marine battalions then fanned out in a series of wide-ranging company combat patrols seeking to engage major enemy units. These efforts proved largely unrewarding, as the enemy clearly was indisposed to stand and fight.

Conversely, to the east, 2d Battalion, 5th Marines developed enemy resistance in a system of fortified positions spanning a 180 degree arc three to four miles east of the Special Forces camp. Obviously deployed as a deterrent to overland relief of Thuong Duc, the enemy was well supplied with mortars and short-range rockets.

First contact took place at 1330 on the 6th, when a Company G combat patrol encountered an NVA platoon occupying a low hill just north of the Vu Gia river. The ensuing skirmish cost the enemy nine killed and three weapons captured, as the patrol seized the hill and continued the attack to the west. Nine more NVA were killed and four weapons abandoned during a pre-dawn attack against Company G positions the next morning. Marine casualties in the two contacts totaled seven killed and 15 wounded and evacuated.

As the battalion pressed the attack to the west on 7 October, Company A (attached to 2d Battalion for the operation), advancing during mid-afternoon to seize Hill 163, located two miles east of Thuong Duc, met strong opposition in the form of mortar-supported NVA dug in on the hill. Consolidating in a covered position along a stream 300 meters short of the hill, the Marines requested air support to destroy the enemy emplacements. Following in the wake of six fixed

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wing attack sorties, Company A took the hill unopposed late that afternoon, finding 45 dead NVA near the crest. There were no Marine casualties.

At 1655 on 8 October, the lead element of Company E, patrolling less than a mile southeast of Hill 163, engaged a well-armed NVA unit to its direct front. Countering mortar and automatic weapon fire with artillery and air attacks, Company E quickly gained fire superiority, and deployed a tank-accompanied rifle platoon to flank the enemy position from the south. Successfully executed, the tank-infantry attack overran the enemy at dark, killing 37 NVA. Friendly casualties were one killed and eight wounded seriously enough to require evacuation.

The final significant clash between Marines and NVA units during MAUI PEAK began at 0400 on 12 October, two miles east of Thuong Duc. There, two NVA companies, preceded by over fifty 82mm mortar rounds, attempted a penetration of positions manned by Company E. The assault failed, as Company E, coordinating closely the supporting fires of artillery and air with organic weapons, repulsed the attack, putting the enemy to flight before first light. The search of the battle area disclosed 46 NVA dead and ten weapons abandoned. One NVA soldier was also captured by the friendly unit, which sustained eight killed and 20 wounded and evacuated in the brief, but intense firefight.

The principal ARVN contact also occurred on 12 October, when at 1150, elements of 1st Battalion, 51st Regiment achieved solid contact with a large NVA unit two miles north of the Special Forces camp. Within the hour, the 2d Battalion, attacking along the right (south) flank, was also heavily engaged with the same enemy force, by then estimated to be an NVA regiment. Despite the limitations imposed on maneuver by the difficult terrain and a heavy rain, the ARVN maintained contact for 11 hours, the enemy finally withdrawing under the cover of darkness. Twenty-nine NVA were killed and one prisoner and 11 weapons captured by the ARVN on the

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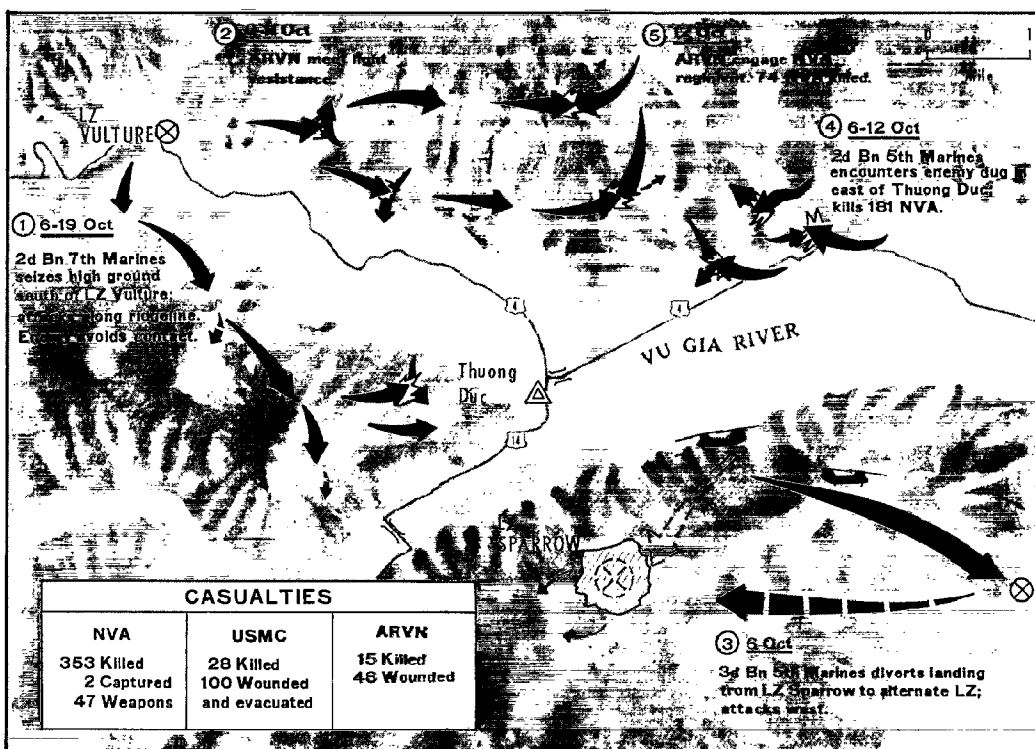
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12th; friendly losses were 11 killed and 29 wounded and evacuated. An additional 45 NVA dead, killed by friendly air and artillery supporting the preceding day's battle, were found by the ARVN on the 13th.

Although the operation continued until 19 October, our forces generated no significant contact after the 12th. The steady monsoon rains, prevalent throughout the campaign, increased in intensity, thereby considerably restricting both maneuverability and visibility. During the course of the operation, however, the enemy sustained a substantial defeat in his quest to take Thuong Duc -- 353 NVA soldiers killed from 6-19 October -- thus extending his pattern of complete failure to gain a military victory against Free World forces.

The map below describes the major actions in the vicinity of Thuong Duc.

### OPERATION MAUI PEAK/HUNG QUANG 1-74: 6-19 OCTOBER 1968



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In retrospect, a large measure of the credit for the successful defense and relief of the Special Forces outpost can be attributed to Marine air. Following the strong contribution made by the A-6A in stopping the enemy attacks on the camp proper from 28-30 September, Marine A-4 and F-4 pilots flew 147 sorties, delivering nearly 250 tons of bombs in close support of ground maneuver units in Operation MAUI PEAK. More than 60 NVA were killed by this latter close air support; many others were undoubtedly killed by bomb drops on troop formations and defensive positions, but not counted due to the dense vegetation and rugged terrain.

-Operation MAMELUKE THRUST/HENDERSON HILL

The 5th Marines, supported by the 1st Reconnaissance Battalion, continued to put a high price on stubborn enemy efforts to transit the An Hoa basin during October. The enemy's perseverance in attempting to effect passage through this area, regardless of manpower cost, reflects the high value he has placed on the region, both as an infiltration corridor and as a supply route. With a large segment of his combat units forced, by combination of wide-ranging friendly operations and monsoon weather, to seek refuge in mountainous base areas, the basin has accrued increased importance as a path over which much-needed foodstuffs must be transported.

Relying primarily on night movement to forestall detection by roving enemy units, III MAF combat patrols ranged the area between Go Noi Island and the Thuong Duc corridor, severely curtailing enemy traffic. Helicopter-inserted reconnaissance teams also made a substantial contribution to the III MAF effort, controlling air strikes and preplanned artillery missions against numerous sightings of NVA and VC troop movement. Illustrative of the effective employment of STING RAY-type reconnaissance patrols in support of large unit operations were the actions of two such teams from 1045 on 22 October through 0930 on the 23d. Observing a number

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of company-size enemy targets moving in a northeasterly direction between the Thu Bon and Vu Gia rivers (the most extensive enemy activity detected during October), the teams employed immediate supporting arms fire to account for more than 200 NVA/VC killed. (The action of one of these teams is described in detail in the Small Unit Counterguerrilla chapter of this edition.)

Operation MAMELUKE THRUST ended on 23 October, being supplanted by Operation HENDERSON HILL. The success of MAMELUKE THRUST is best exemplified by its results -- during the five-month period beginning on 18 May, 2,728 enemy were killed, 47 captured, and 462 weapons seized.

#### Operations in the DMZ Area

III MAF operations along the DMZ were marked by mobility, as 3d Marine Division ground and heliborne maneuver units, accompanied by their supporting arms, probed the length and breadth of northern Quang Tri, seeking to engage an enemy exhibiting definite signs of combat paralysis. Clearly, the unremitting subjection of his exposed formations to powerful air/ground assaults by friendly forces has taken a heavy toll of his combat and support strength. Consistently outmaneuvered and outgunned, the enemy, by and large, has repaired to sanctuary in nearby North Vietnam and Laos to regroup and refurbish.

#### -Operations KENTUCKY and NAPOLEON/SALINE

The one major engagement fought by III MAF forces in northern Quang Tri province occurred as the result of a coordinated armored attack into the DMZ by US Army elements from the KENTUCKY area, Marines from Operation NAPOLEON/SALINE, and a 2d ARVN Regiment task force from Dong Ha. Triggered by intelligence reports of a sizable enemy force south of the Ben Hai river between Gio Linh and

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Con Thien, the 23-25 October action was similar to the one executed during late September, but caused the enemy considerably more damage.

At 0800 on 23 October, the ARVN, accompanied by two platoons of Marine tanks, crossed the line of departure and proceeded into the DMZ. By 1130, the Marines and ARVN were in heavy contact with an enemy unit of undetermined size two miles northeast of Gio Linh. With artillery and attack aircraft reinforcing the friendly tank fire, the combined assault killed 112 NVA, 63 of which were credited to the tank crewmen of Company A, 1st Tank Battalion. ARVN losses in the day's action were five killed and 28 wounded; US casualties were three wounded and evacuated.

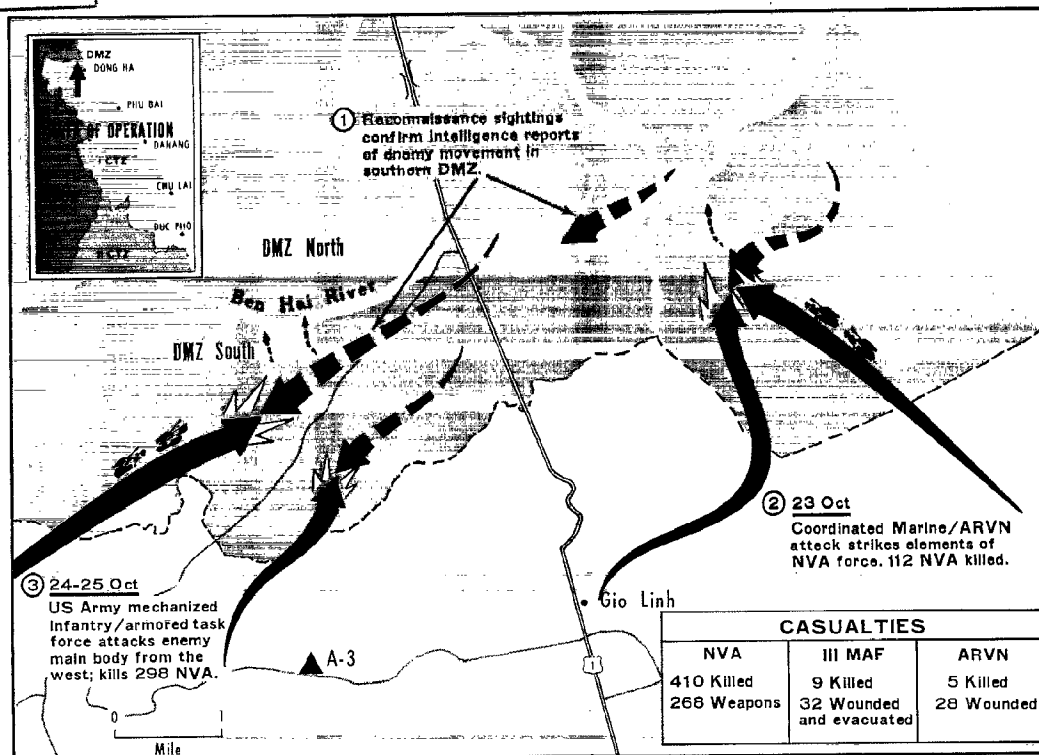
Attacking eastward in the DMZ toward the site of the Marine and ARVN action, US Army forces were in close contact with the enemy main body by 0800 on 24 October. With fire superiority provided by naval guns, fixed wing aircraft, and artillery, the mechanized infantry and armored units of the 1st Brigade, 5th Mechanized Infantry pressed the advantage through the 25th, killing 298 NVA and seizing 268 weapons. Attesting to the speed of advance by the US soldiers was the overrunning of an active mortar position by elements of Company B, 61st Infantry two miles north of A-3 on the 25th. Captured on the position were three complete mortars, one 82 and two 60mm. US losses during the 24-25 October DMZ action were nine killed and 29 wounded and requiring evacuation.

The III MAF and ARVN DMZ attack is portrayed on the following page.

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## ARMORED ATTACK INTO DMZ: 23-25 OCTOBER 1968

-Operation LANCASTER

Combat in the west-central DMZ was light throughout the month, limited to scattered small unit clashes with evading NVA units. The 320th NVA Division, punished severely during September, offered no evidence which would forecast an early return of its major elements to action in I CTZ.

The bulk of the limited contact generated in the LANCASTER area occurred in the 2d Battalion, 26th Marines sector. Exploring an enemy-constructed road extending from the south bank of the Ben Hai to a point on the southern trace of the DMZ six miles north of

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the Rockpile, the battalion generated several engagements with squad and platoon-size NVA units from 4 to 11 October. Of particular interest, it was during this period USS NEW JERSEY fired her first mission in support of ground troops. On 4 October, elements of the 2d Battalion requested naval gunfire support to clear a bunkered enemy unit employing mortar and automatic weapon fire against the friendly advance. Firing from 23 miles distant, the battlewagon responded with twenty-eight 16-inch rounds, destroying two bunkers, damaging two others, and cutting the road in two places. There were no enemy kills credited to the naval gunfire mission, however, as the bunkers were collapsed, effectively burying any occupying NVA.

Four days later, on the 8th, Company H engaged an estimated enemy platoon, well-armed and firmly entrenched in positions nine miles north of the Rockpile. The ensuing air and artillery-supported Marine assault through the fortified position claimed 28 NVA and 11 weapons, at a cost of two killed and 31 wounded and evacuated.

Although enemy contact was not plentiful, the 6 and 11 October discoveries of cached 152mm artillery rounds near the road were significant. The first cache, uncovered near the Ben Hai river bank, was composed of seven bunkers and two gun pits, and yielded 200 rounds of ammunition, while the latter, located 700 meters to the southeast, contained 40 rounds. The discovery of NVA artillery ammunition within the DMZ gives rise to speculation concerning enemy plans to employ heavy artillery from positions south of the Ben Hai. To date, no artillery weapons larger than 75mm have been captured in the DMZ area.

-Operation SCOTLAND

Highlighting October operations on the western DMZ

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flank was a series of heliborne maneuvers executed by the 4th and 9th Marines into the far reaches of western and southern Quang Tri. Contact was almost negligible (as was evidence of recent NVA activity) during the course of these operations, consequently the highly mobile attacking elements were able to cover a wide expanse of terrain.

Illustrating the concept of mobile operations in the DMZ area were the 4th Marines actions to the west and north of Khe Sanh from 4-31 October. After establishing Fire Support Base (FSB) Nanking one mile west of the old Khe Sanh combat base on 4 October, all three battalions of the 4th Marines landed by helicopter to the west and southwest, commencing a coordinated attack to the east. On 6 October, two battalions of the 2d ARVN Regiment joined the action on Hill 881 South and began a series of combat sweeps to the north and southwest.

Following four days of virtually unopposed maneuver, the 4th Marines dispatched its 1st and 2d Battalions in an overland attack toward the Da Krong Valley ten miles to the east, then prepared to move north of the Khe Sanh plateau with the remaining Marine and ARVN battalions. Attacking northwest from FSB Gurkha (activated on 12 October four miles northwest of FSB Nanking), the combined forces again encountered no serious opposition, and the ARVN returned to Dong Ha on the 19th; 3d Battalion, 4th Marines remained in the area for detailed search operations. Four days later, on the 23d, 2d Battalion rejoined the regiment, establishing a new fire support base (Alpine) 11 miles northwest of Khe Sanh. Through end-month, the battalions continued the advance to the northwest, executing a series of combat sweeps to Lang Ho, located 12 miles northwest of Khe Sanh.

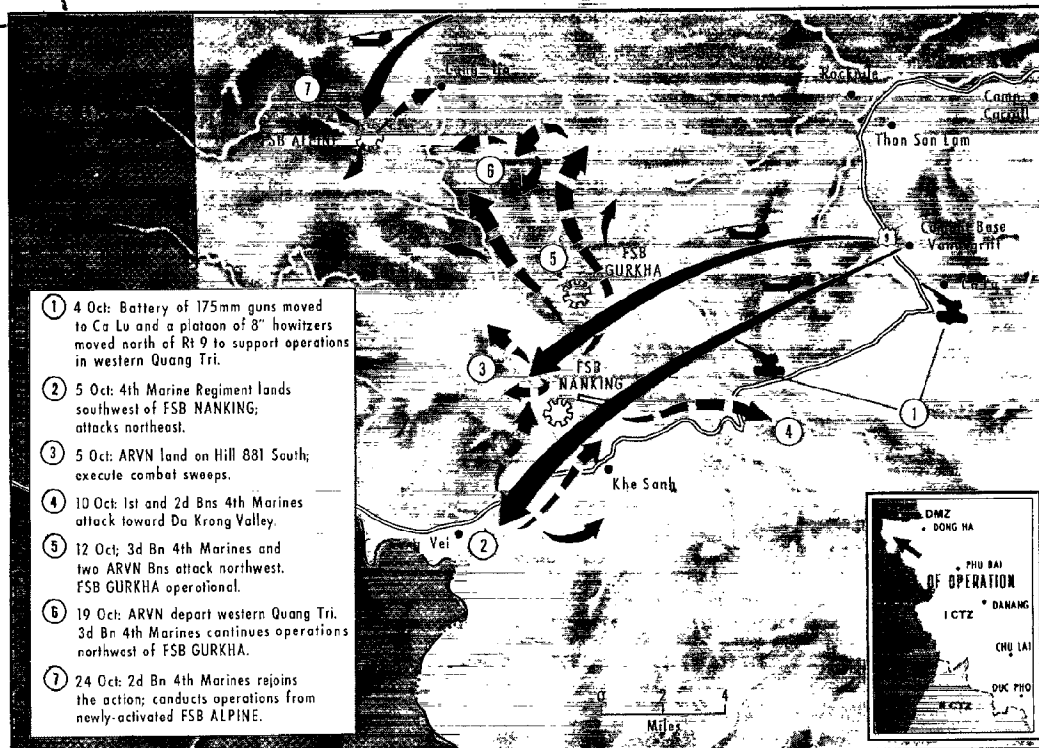
The following map illustrates the scope of the 4th Marines maneuver in western Quang Tri province during October.

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## 4TH MARINES OPERATIONS IN WESTERN QUANG TRI: 4 - 31 OCTOBER 1968



A similar offensive conducted by the 9th Marines in the mountainous terrain south of Khe Sanh also encountered only token resistance, further illuminating the enemy's diminished combat power in the DMZ region. Major elements of the 88th and 102d NVA Regiments, badly mauled by III MAF forces earlier this year, and not yet sufficiently restored to combat effectiveness, are apparently remaining in Laos. Likewise defeated, the 304th Division has failed to muster an appearance in I CTZ since June.

#### 1st Cavalry Division (Airmobile)

In consonance with intelligence assessments of an increased enemy threat in the III CTZ area, COMUSMACV directed the deployment of the 1st Cavalry Division (Airmobile) from I CTZ to III CTZ.

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On 28 October, the 3d Brigade, along with its combat support elements, was the first tactical unit to depart, with the remaining increments scheduled to complete displacement by 12 November; the entire movement involves both 7th Air Force transport aircraft and Navy amphibious shipping. Concurrently, the 3d Marine Division and the 101st Airborne Division (Airmobile) have expanded their areas of operation to the south and north, respectively, thereby filling the void created by the cavalry's departure.

Joining III MAF in I CTZ during January 1968 (just prior to the critical Tet offensive), the 1st Cavalry Division subsequently participated successfully in the Operation JEB STUART series in southern Quang Tri and northern Thua Thien; Operation PEGASUS at Khe Sanh; Operation CONCORDIA SQUARE north of Dong Ha; Operation DELAWARE VALLEY in A Shau; and Operation COMANCHE FALLS in enemy Base Area 101. The actions of the 1st Cavalry were a cardinal factor in thwarting the enemy's calculated plan for investment of northern I CTZ.

#### ARVN Operations

Evolution of the ARVN as a competent, dependable fighting force showed steady, if unspectacular, progress from 1965 through 1967. Conducting large scale operations in coordination with III MAF units, Vietnamese commanders gained an increased awareness of tactical considerations such as small unit leadership, effective coordination and control of supporting arms fire, aggressive maneuver, and terrain appreciation. Timely battlefield application of these principles and techniques proves the ARVN unit more than a match for its NVA and main force Viet Cong counterpart.

The crucial test for the ARVN, however, took place in early 1968 during the Tet offensive - and the Vietnamese armed forces were equal to the challenge. Far from folding

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in the face of the all-out offensive (as hoped for by the enemy high command), ARVN units, initially at reduced strength due to normal Tet holiday leaves, by and large returned to their posts and fought bravely and well. This was evidenced by their resolute defenses at Quang Ngai City, Tam Ky, and Danang; their rapid ejection of NVA forces from Quang Tri City; and their month-long house-by-house battle, along with US Marines, to retake the city of Hue. Thereafter, there has been little cause for criticism of ARVN combat efforts in I CTZ.

Implementing the emergence of the ARVN as a capable force-at-arms have been factors such as improved training at the NCO and junior officer level, increased firepower provided by the introduction of new weaponry (M-16 rifle, M-79 grenade launcher), employment of the helicopter as an assault vehicle, and the tactical and technical advice readily available in the form of US advisors. However, a large measure of the improvement must be attributed to the expanded development of confidence and professionalism among the ARVN themselves as, imbued with offensive spirit, they have ranged farther afield and remained away from base camps longer during 1968 than at any other time since the US entry into the war. During the past year, Vietnamese units have fought sustained actions in the DMZ; at Khe Sanh; in A Shau Valley; in Base Areas 101 and 114; and in the rugged mountainous regions of Quang Nam, Quang Tin, and Quang Ngai; as well as performing their normal combat and RD security missions in the populous coastal lowlands.

Operations of the 2d Regiment, 1st ARVN Division thus far in 1968 reflect an effective gauge of RVNAF progress in I CTZ. Fighting almost continuous action with regular NVA units abutting the DMZ, the regiment has killed 5,583 enemy, more than twice the number (2,675) killed there by ARVN in all of 1967. Throughout I CTZ, Vietnamese forces have accounted for 26,625 enemy killed or captured in 1968, a more than substantial increase over the 14,342 enemy losses credited to ARVN in 1967.

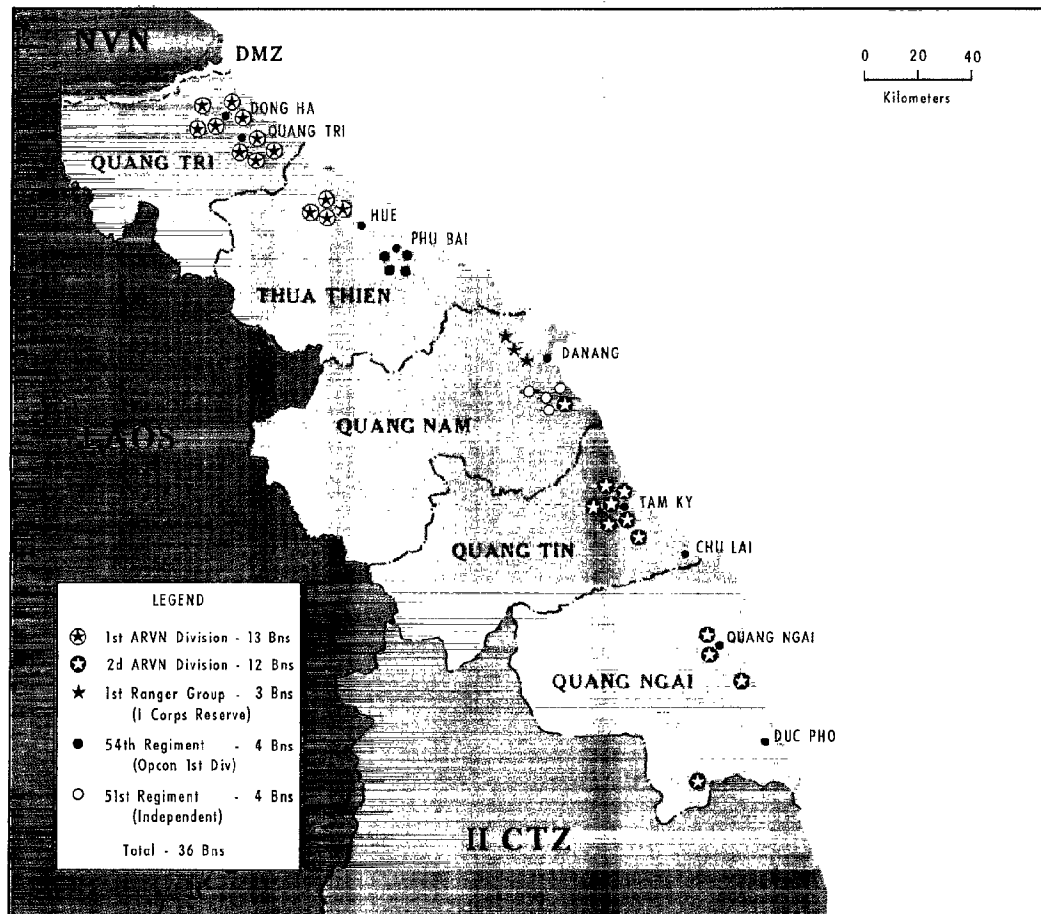
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The following map shows locations of ARVN infantry battalions in I CTZ at end-October.

# LOCATIONS OF ARVN INFANTRY BATTALIONS IN I CTZ



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SMALL UNIT COUNTERGUERRILLA OPERATIONS

During October, heavier than normal monsoon rains and concomitant lowland flooding denied the guerrilla enemy many underground and waterway associated havens and canalized him to a diminished selection of trail networks. Facing both a rain-washed countryside and an increasing vulnerability to III MAF saturation patrolling in the coastal sections of central and southern I CTZ, the enemy lessened his activity, as evidenced by the reduction in small unit contacts - 702 in October as compared to the monthly average of 901 since July.

Movement restrictions accruing from the seasonal downpour also diminished the activity of coastal-positioned counter guerrilla forces. Inundation of low lying areas reduced some small unit patrol requirements as the enemy was forced to higher terrain; however, maneuver of planned patrols and ambushes was inhibited as the flood waters rose along avenues of approach and generated treacherous water obstacles along normally fordable stream networks.

Nevertheless, the III MAF counter guerrilla campaign placed 14,333 small unit operations - 8,931 patrols, 5,296 ambushes, and 106 company-size operations - across the traditional guerrilla battlegrounds, assessing upon a reluctant and withdrawn enemy 285 soldiers killed, another 118 captured, and the loss of 42 weapons.

By the following graphs, counter guerrilla efforts during October are compared with activities since March 1968.

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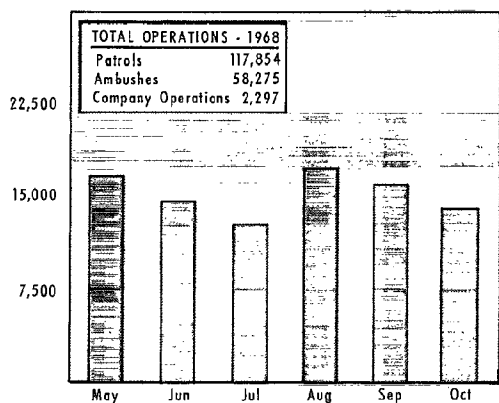
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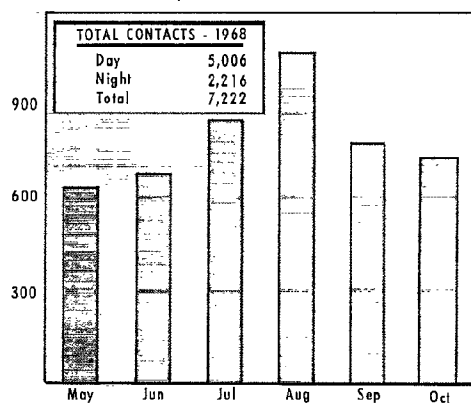
# **ACTION BY COUNTERGUERRILLA UNITS IN I CTZ 1 MAY - 31 OCT 1968**

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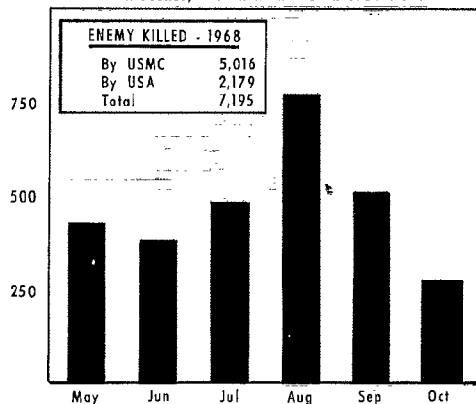
**SMALL UNIT PATROLS, AMBUSHES,  
& SEARCH AND CLEAR OPERATIONS**



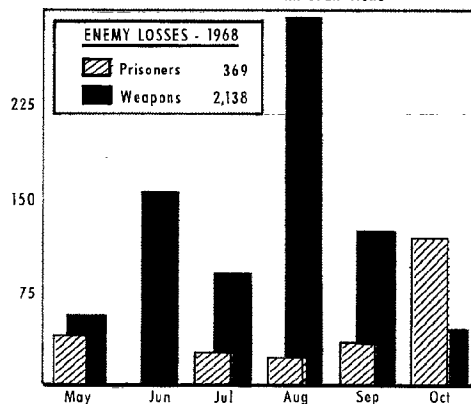
**CONTACTS BY SMALL UNIT PATROLS,  
AMBUSHES, & SEARCH AND CLEAR OPERATIONS**



**ENEMY KILLED BY SMALL UNIT PATROLS,  
AMBUSHES, & SEARCH AND CLEAR OPERATIONS**



**WEAPONS AND PRISONERS CAPTURED  
BY SMALL UNIT PATROLS, AMBUSHES,  
& SEARCH AND CLEAR OPERATIONS**



## Enemy Activities

Maintaining the comparatively slow pace which commenced in June, the enemy in I CTZ initiated a total of 11 ground attacks and 25 attacks-by-fire during the month. Salient features of his activity were an unsuccessful ground thrust southwest of Danang and a continuation of indirect fire harassment from the DMZ.

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Quang Nam province was the focal point for almost half the month's overt hostile activity, as NVA and VC elements launched nine ground assaults and eight attacks-by-fire against central I CTZ targets. Related in the previous chapter, the Thuong Duc Special Forces camp, 23 miles southwest of Danang, received the only sustained threat, as elements of the 21st and 31st NVA Regiments used seven ground attacks and two ordnance missions in their abortive two-week attempt to invest the outpost.

Other central I CTZ activity followed the mission guidance contained in a VC operations order captured by the 1st Marine Division on 31 October. Detailing October and November tasks for the Duy Xuyen District Unit, which operates along the Dai Loc-Hoi An corridor, the unit commander called for intensified attacks on lines of communication and GVN centers to support a "violence policy" set by NVN military directives.

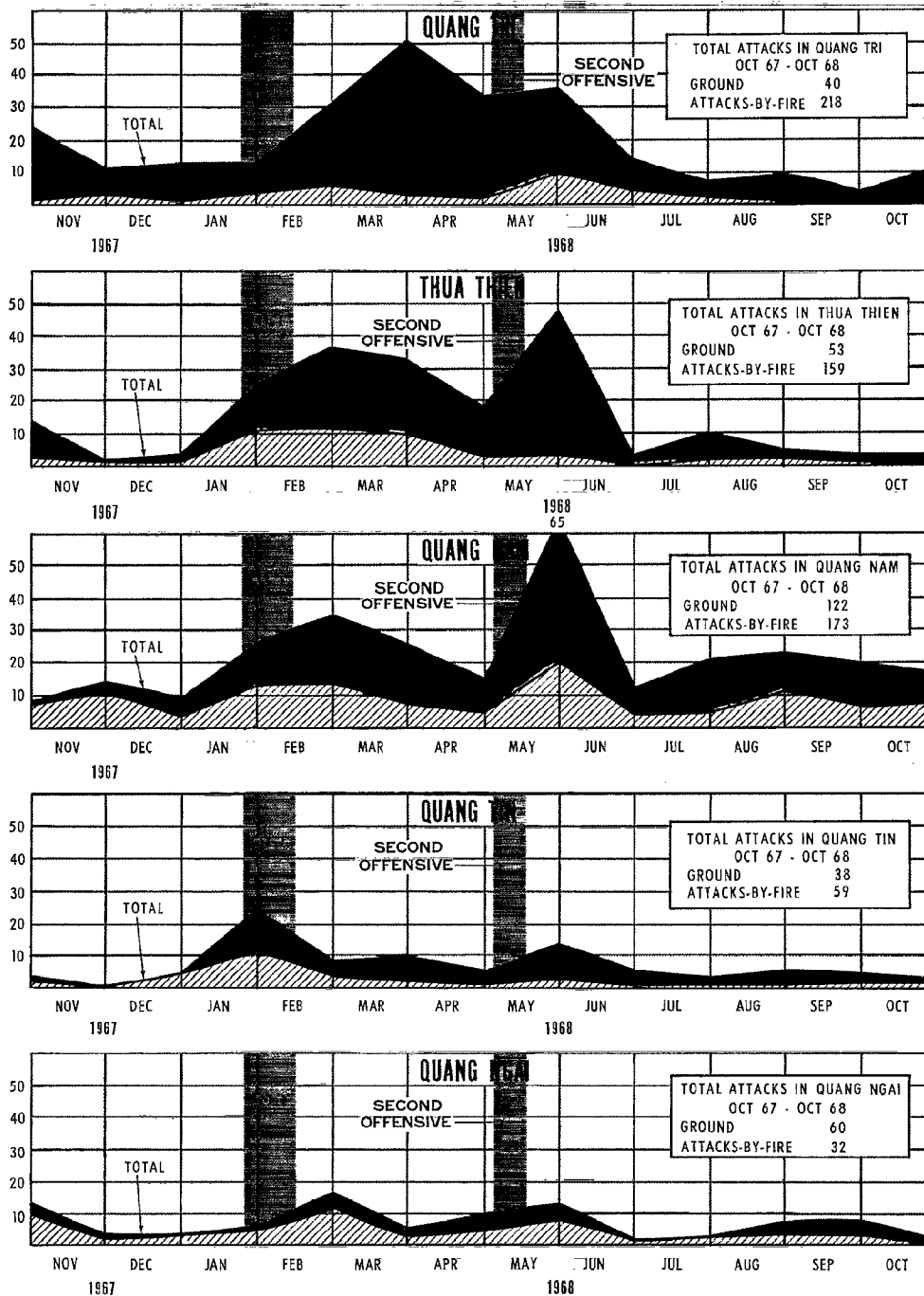
Furthering his recent tendency of limited ground activity in northern I CTZ, the enemy in October failed to initiate a ground attack in either Quang Tri or Thua Thien province. However, harassment of III MAF and ARVN positions in northern I CTZ by 15 rocket, artillery, and mortar attacks served to emphasize the combat potential yet available north of the Ben Hai river.

Monthly totals for enemy attacks in I CTZ, and in each of the five provinces, since November 1967, appear in the following graphs.

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## ENEMY ATTACKS IN I CTZ PROVINCES: NOVEMBER 1967 - OCTOBER 1968



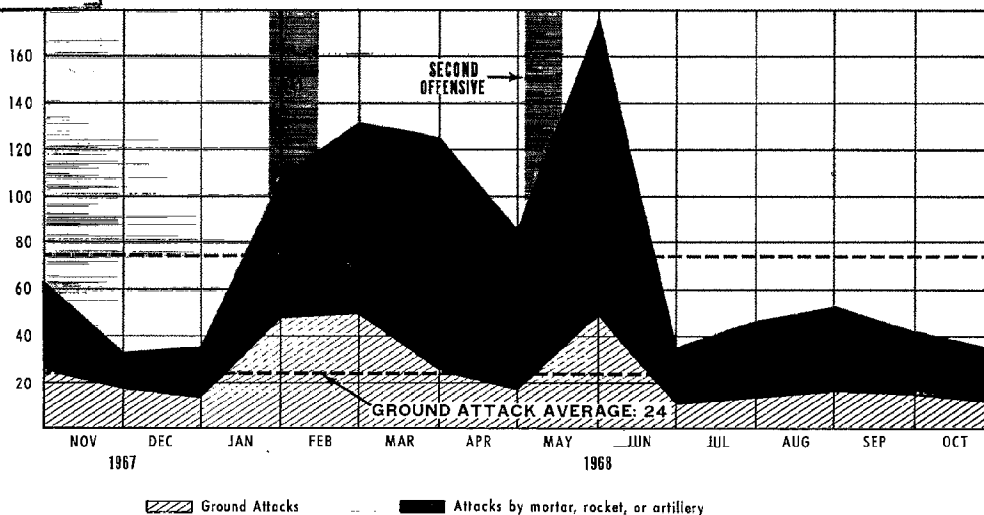
ATTACKS BY MORTAR,  
ROCKET, OR ARTILLERY

GROUND ATTACKS

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## ENEMY ATTACKS IN I CTZ: NOVEMBER 1967 - OCTOBER 1968

Danang Area Operations

During the month, eight Marine battalions directed operations against guerrilla organizations dispersed in the populous rice-growing complexes surrounding Danang. Tasked to interdict enemy resupply traffic and to reduce further the guerrilla and local force strength in the coastal lowland, the 11,553 ambushes and patrols deployed near Danang accounted for 70 enemy killed and 12 guerrillas and 40 weapons captured.

October's actions evolved from 466 contacts, extending the trend of decreasing hostile activity in the Danang-Hoi An-Dai Loc triangle. The ratio of contacts to activities, steadily declining since July (1:15), dropped to 1:25 during October. With control of the night increasingly in Marine hands--7,893 night ambushes and patrols in October--the enemy was forced to look to the daylight hours if he was to move at all. And this attempt proved futile as the maze of daylight surveillance operations tallied 331 contacts, a gain of 5% in the rate of day engagements over monthly averages for the previous quarter.

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-Security Operations

Marine units working the immediate approaches to Danang maintained a tightly-woven mesh of security patrols and ambushes in October, effectively discouraging enemy rocket and ground assaults against the area's vital military installations and revolutionary development projects. Reflecting the intensity of activity committed to these assignments, 2d Battalion, 1st Marines initiated 1,282 small unit operations in the area south of Marble Mountain. This offensive, incorporating over 60 combat maneuvers by each of the battalion's 36 rifle squads, resulted in 73 contacts which claimed 32 enemy killed, another three captured, and ten weapons seized.

The majority of the month's actions involved small guerrilla elements deployed for limited harassment and fleet-withdrawal behind an insidious array of mines and booby traps, and normally resulted in shortlived firefights. And often, conclusive evidence of the harm inflicted on the elusive guerrilla was lacking. However, occasional enemy units, seeking encroachments near Danang, faced immediate accounting. On 23 October, Company H, 1st Marines observed enemy movement near a bunker complex on the periphery of Cau Ha (2) hamlet, seven miles southeast of Danang. As the company maneuvered for the attack, fixed wing air strikes and artillery fire razed the fortifications. Assault forces, securing the position after a two-hour fight, counted 13 NVA dead and three enemy weapons.

-Interdiction

Enemy traffic violating the lowland perimeter south and west of Danang was disrupted again in October as Marine units consistently obstructed forays along trails emanating from hostile base areas. Difficulties encountered by transiting elements were exemplified on 4 October as an NVA unit attempted to depart the An Hoa basin.

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Sweeping the north side of the Vu Gia river, 18 miles southwest of Danang, Company E, 5th Marines detected the North Vietnamese approaching along the opposite bank. Although unable to close immediately on the target, the unit halted the enemy with organic weapons fire, as fixed wing air strikes and mortar missions targeted available avenues of egress. Following a search of the site, which revealed 19 NVA dead, the company continued its assigned mission--detaching a fire team to monitor the area. Shortly before dusk, as anticipated, a group of the enemy survivors made their move for safety. Assisted by an armed helicopter, the four-man post killed another 13 NVA.

#### -Reconnaissance Activities

Again in October, the 1st Reconnaissance Battalion extracted a heavy toll from NVA and VC units as 104 patrols, committed to independent STING RAY missions, and in support of large unit operations, maintained surveillance of base area trail networks vital to hostile logistical and operational traffic. Although monsoon weather occasionally shrouded their high-ground observation posts, the reconnaissance teams directed 117 artillery and 44 tactical air support missions against enemy troop sightings, killing a total of 389 NVA and VC while the Marines sustained no fatalities during the month.

More than half the enemy losses from reconnaissance operations were scored as a 21-man Marine patrol (code-name WAGE EARNER) detected an NVA battalion-size unit depart its sheltered retreat and set course to the northeast. Inserted atop Hill 200, 19 miles southwest of Danang, to check traffic along the Vu Gia river valley and in the western reaches of the An Hoa basin, the team had experienced eight days of inactivity before a company-size NVA formation was sighted on the afternoon of the 22d. Artillery fire, adjusted by WAGE EARNER, splintered the unit, killing over 50 of the 130 enemy soldiers. Then, at dawn on the 23d, the Marines observed the battalion's main body tracing the identical route employed by the previously decimated point element.

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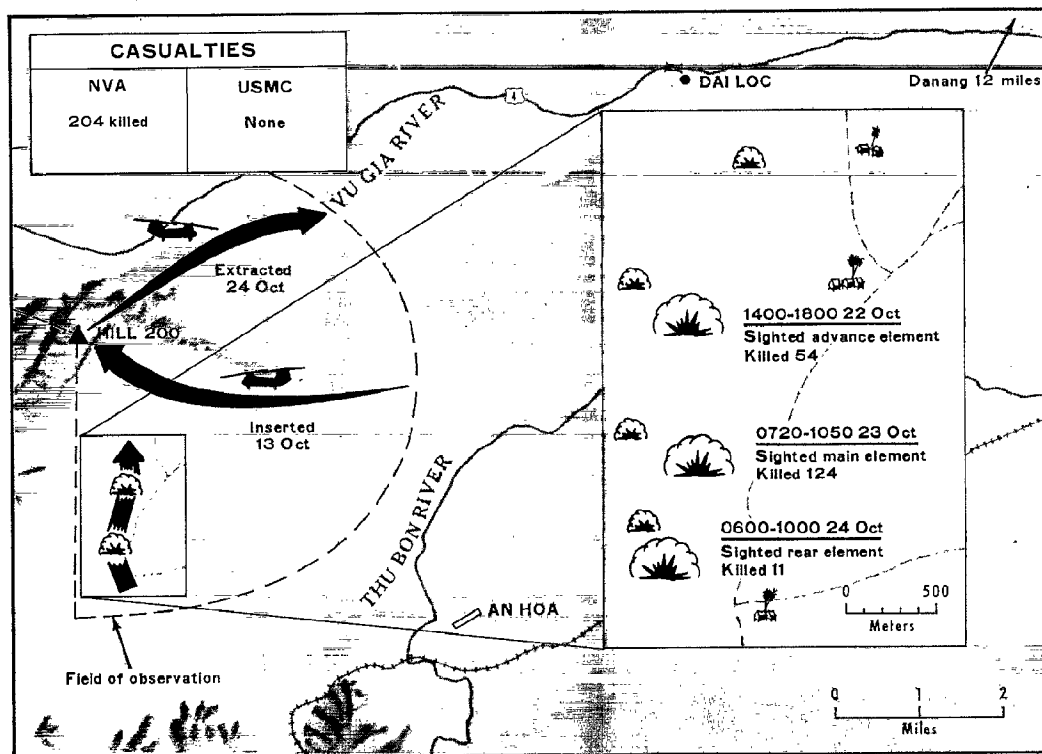
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WAGE EARNER-directed fixed wing air and artillery strikes cost the enemy another 124 troops before noon. And, suggesting a lack of effective command control, the battalion's rear element entered the same target area at mid-morning on the 24th, only to sustain further losses from supporting arms, with WAGE EARNER again calling the fire. In addition to the 204 enemy killed by the 15 air strikes and 12 artillery missions placed on these targets and other minor sightings, immeasurable damage to the unit's combat efficiency resulted from the concurrent loss of its 122mm rockets, 82mm mortars, .50 caliber machine guns, and 12.7mm anti-aircraft guns.

WAGE EARNER's actions against the large sightings of 22, 23, and 24 October, and other enemy traffic, are shown on the following graph.

#### ACTION BY RECONNAISSANCE TEAM WAGE EARNER: 13-24 OCTOBER 1968



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Kit Carson Scouts

The Kit Carson Scout (KCS) program experienced a 20% expansion during October as 81 newly trained Scouts were assigned to the five III MAF divisions and the 1st Combined Action Group, at Chu Lai. Numbering 470 at end-month, the Scouts again exhibited their value while accompanying 2,182 combat activities. A measure of KCS effectiveness was reflected in enemy losses attributed to Scouts - 35 enemy killed and 147 guerrilla suspects apprehended. More significant, however, Scout-accompanied small unit operations enjoyed a marked benefit as the Scouts detected 229 hidden surprise firing devices, thereby preventing numerous friendly casualties.

With the detailed knowledge of enemy habits and practices accrued during their service as Viet Cong, the KCS identified 68 cave and tunnel locations and discovered 96 caches and 166 weapons during the month. In addition to this informal field guidance, the former guerrillas conducted 820 VC tactics classes for III MAF units. And, the local population learned of VC-dominated life through 76 psyops broadcasts conducted by the Scouts.

The growth and accomplishments of the III MAF-initiated Kit Carson Scout program during October is compared by the following charts, with monthly totals since May 1968.

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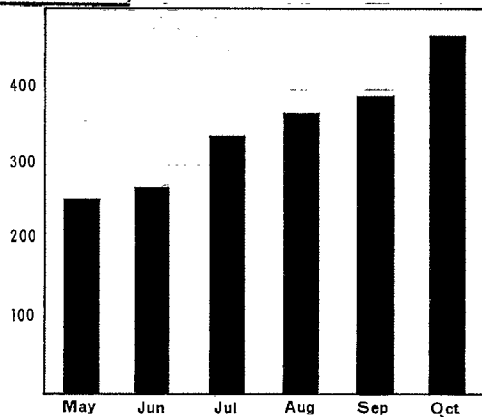
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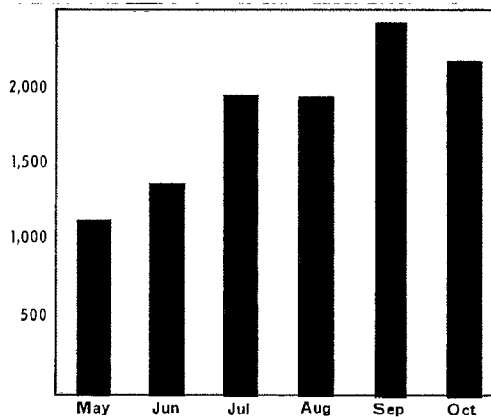
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# KIT CARSON SCOUT PROGRAM: MAY - OCT 68

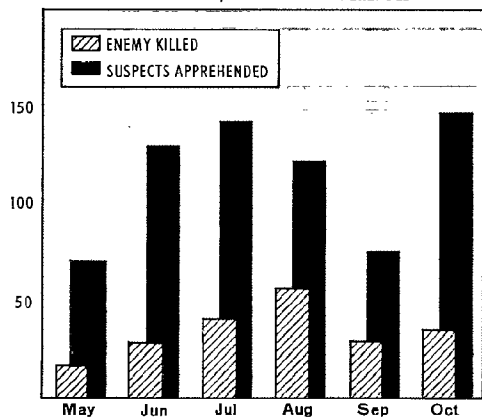
KIT CARSON STRENGTH



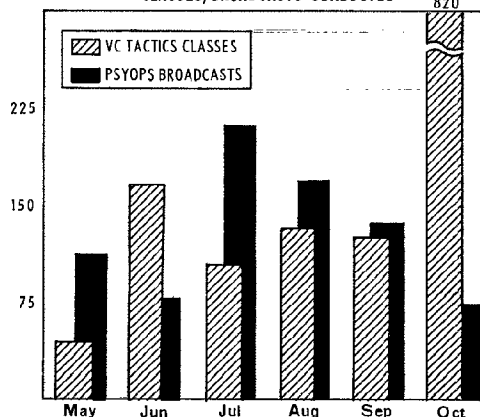
NUMBER OF PATROLS ACCOMPANIED



ENEMY KILLED/SUSPECTS APPREHENDED



CLASSES/BROADCASTS CONDUCTED



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REVOLUTIONARY DEVELOPMENT AND PACIFICATION

The inclusion of two pacified villages in northern I CTZ brought the secure population in III MAF pacification areas to a record 839,579 - 14,000 more than the previous high in December 1967.

Despite the reduced level of enemy activity, and the operational restrictions of attendant monsoonal weather, combined action units during October again were successful in their counter guerrilla campaign. Conducting 2,851 daylight patrols and 5,166 night patrols and ambushes, the combined Marine and Popular Force units killed 143 and captured 110 enemy soldiers, while seizing 70 weapons.

The Chieu Hoi returnee rate also maintained a high level, as 347 enemy personnel defected in I CTZ, 65% of them in Thua Thien province. And, the Phoenix-Phung Hoang campaign, capitalizing on the momentum gained in August and September, eliminated over 600 Viet Cong infrastructure cadre during the month.

Combined Action Program

At end-October, the Combined Action Program, with a strength of 1,767 Marines, 127 US Navy corpsmen, and 3,155 Popular Force soldiers, included four group headquarters, 18 company headquarters, 98 platoons, and eight Mobile Training Teams (MTT's). This status represents the activation of two CAP's (3-3-4, eight miles northeast of Hue, and 4-2-5, two miles southeast of Quang Tri City) and the inclusion of an additional 502 PF soldiers in the training program.

Combined Action Company 4-3 (with four platoons), totaling 51 Marines, four US Navy corpsmen, and 326 PF's, also became operational during the first week in October.

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Situated two miles north of Quang Tri City in Trieu Phong district, the company assists in providing security for the nearly 28,500 civilians living in Trieu Long, Trieu Hoa, Trieu Thanh, and Trieu Hai villages, and offers a defensive screen on the northeast quadrant of the provincial capital. Within a week following activation, the company began hurting local enemy units, as its 3d platoon (CAP 4-3-3), at 1430 on the 11th, killed one guerrilla and uncovered a cache containing eight individual weapons, four miles northeast of Quang Tri. At 1000 on the 23d, a CAP 4-3-4 patrol located and captured four Viet Cong attempting to hide in a tunnel complex three miles east of Quang Tri.

Elsewhere in I CTZ, combined action units continued their arduous counter guerrilla campaign, registering noteworthy results, several of which are exemplified below.

-At 2120 on the 5th, CAP 3-2-7 employed automatic rifles, M-79's, and claymores in ambushing an enemy squad nine miles south-southeast of Phu Bai. One NVA body was left by the fleeing enemy, as were 18 15-pound satchel charges and three rifles. Just after daybreak the following morning, an NVA corpsman who had been caught in the ambush rallied to CAP 3-2-6 and revealed six VC had been killed and four wounded during the previous night's action.

-Shortly after noon on 10 October, while on combat patrol three miles northwest of Tam Ky, CAP 1-1-4 surprised a large enemy force moving from the southeast against Thach An (1) hamlet. Deploying undetected into positions offering unrestricted fields of frontal and flanking fire, the Marines and PF's attacked with organic weapons, simultaneously directing preplanned artillery concentrations against enemy rear guard elements and logical avenues of escape. Caught in a crossfire, the enemy withdrew, leaving 18 dead on the field. Friendly casualties for the engagement were one Marine and two PF soldiers wounded.

-Prior to dawn on the 28th, four miles north-northeast of Tam Ky, a CAP 1-1-7 ambush observed and killed four

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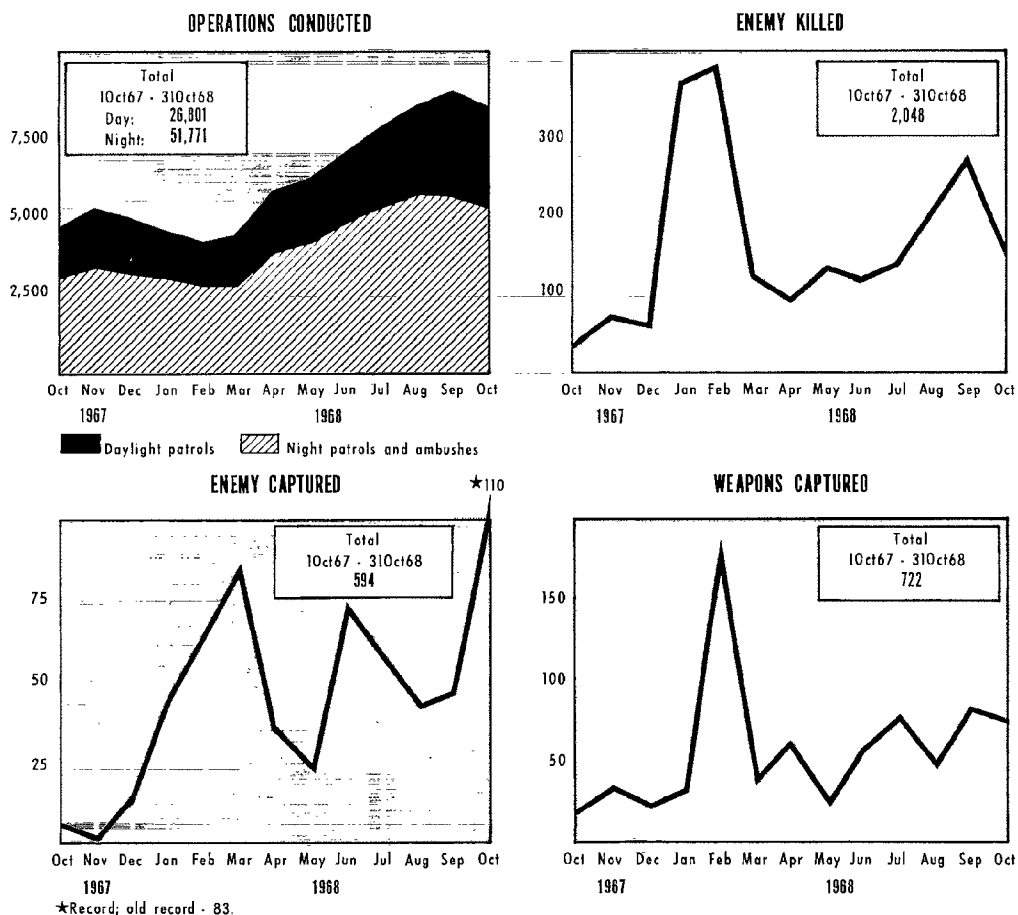
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Viet Cong. While subsequently sweeping the killing zone, the CAP element came under small arms fire. Reacting rapidly, the Marines and PF's, supported by artillery, returned fire and counterattacked a 20-man enemy force, killing ten VC, capturing five, and seizing six weapons. One PF was killed, and six PF's and one Marine were wounded during the firefight.

Throughout the month, combined action units conducted 8,017 small unit operations, 64% of which were at night. The October operations and results, along with those since October 1967, are portrayed in the following graphs.

## COMBINED ACTION UNIT ACTIVITY



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Of the 98 CAP's in being, 34 were operating independent of a stationary compound at end-month. Maneuvering from position to position within their operating areas, the platoons deny fixed targets to enemy sapper and mortar teams. Additionally, the increased mobility inherent in this concept results in more rapid responses to enemy initiated incidents. It is anticipated that, by the end of the year, some 75% of the CAP's will be operating in this manner.

#### Anti-Viet Cong Infrastructure Campaign

The Phoenix-Phung Hoang program, which as of 30 September had eliminated 2,538 I CTZ Viet Cong infrastructure (VCI) cadre in 1968, again was effective in October. The campaign, designed to identify and eradicate the VCI - the major threat to long-term freedom and security for the Vietnamese - deleted a record 617 known infrastructure personalities from cadre rolls during the month.

Highlighting the October effort were operations in Thua Thien, where, in exploitation of August and September successes, combined GVN and III MAF units accelerated their drive, particularly in the coastal districts of Phu Vang and Vinh Loc. By end-month, protracted operations in the two areas had netted 250 enemy killed, 185 VCI captured, 347 other enemy taken prisoner, and 98 Chieu Hoi returnees.

Augmenting the Thua Thien Phoenix-Phung Hoang campaign was ARVN Operation LAM SON 245. Conducted by the 54th ARVN Regiment, the operation, over a two-month period, resulted in 324 enemy killed, 287 taken prisoner, and 343 weapons captured. This combination of Phoenix-Phung Hoang and ARVN revolutionary development operations typifies the effective coordination inherent in the GVN/III MAF effort to rid I CTZ of VCI.

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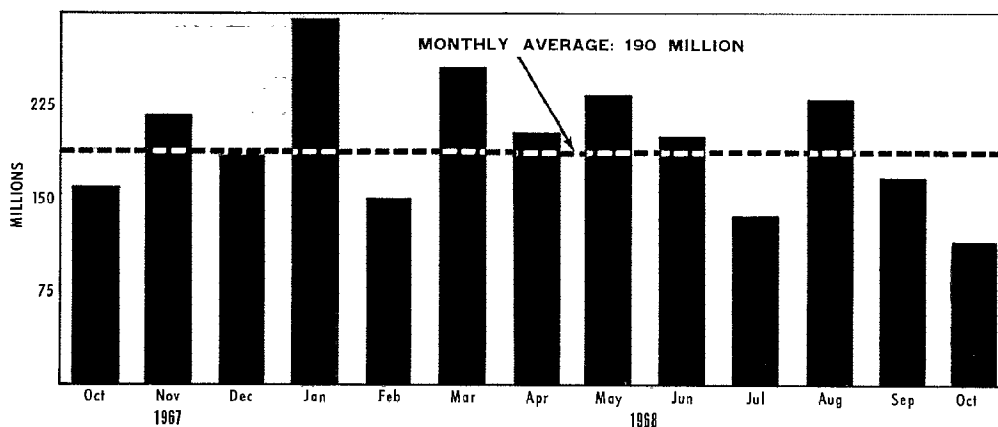
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## Psychological Operations

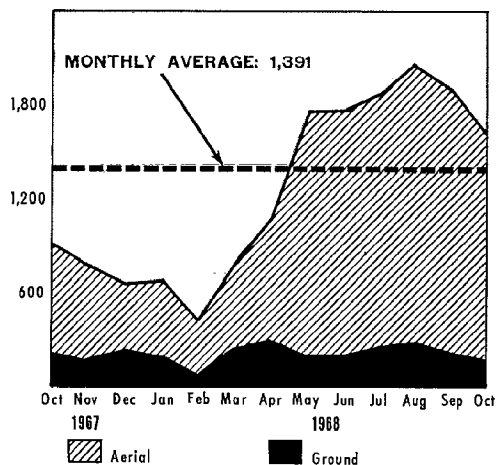
Again in October, as in September, monsoon rains adversely affected the aerial dissemination of leaflets in I CTZ, as but 115.5 million leaflets were distributed. However, other areas of the combined III MAF/GVN psychological operations campaign continued at a relatively high level, with 1,590 broadcasts and 642 visual presentations conducted. The following graphs depict the I CTZ psyops effort over the past 13 months.

### PSYCHOLOGICAL OPERATIONS - I CTZ

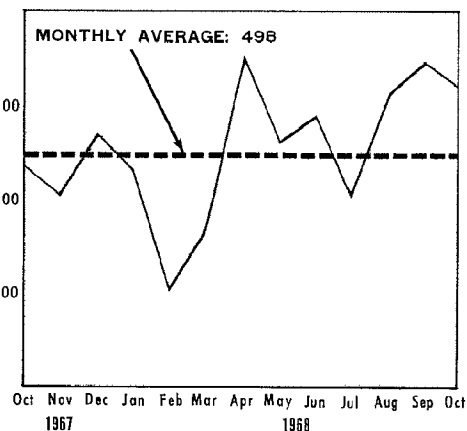
LEAFLETS DISTRIBUTED



BROADCASTS CONDUCTED



VISUAL PRESENTATIONS



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One of the primary areas of psychological operations interest is the rewards program. Designed, through patriotism and reward, to induce I CTZ civilians to report enemy movements and plans, to identify infrastructure personalities, and to turn in munitions and equipment, the program has developed into a highly successful weapon. Since May, civilians have taken advantage of the opportunity afforded by the program to provide intelligence items to friendly forces in I CTZ on 6,140 occasions, nearly six times as many as the 1,082 instances recorded in all of 1967.

#### Chieu Hoi Returnees

I CTZ enemy personnel continued to defect at a high level, as 347 former enemy rallied to the GVN during the month. These returnees brought the 1968 total to 2,583 - 44 more than the 2,539 defections recorded all last year.

In consonance with the trend since March, the largest proportion (227) of the returnees rallied in Thua Thien, where the combined Phoenix-Phung Hoang campaign has pressured severely the Viet Cong infrastructure along the coastal plain. During the past eight months, 1,161 (52%) of the I CTZ ralliers have been in Thua Thien.

Returnees also continued to surrender weapons at a high rate, with 84 (approximately one per four returnees) turned in during October. The monthly total brings the number of weapons in 1968 to 662, or enough to arm nearly two Viet Cong battalions.

Following are two one-year I CTZ graphs: one displaying the Chieu Hoi rate; the other presenting the level of weapon retrieval.

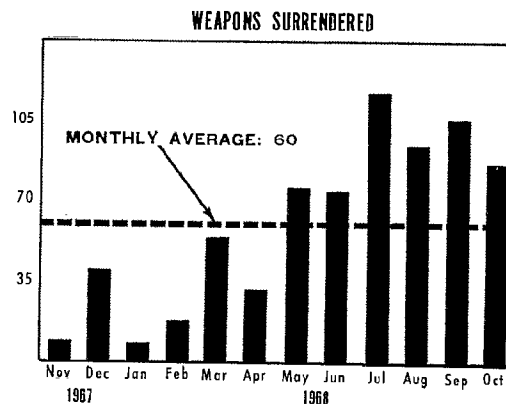
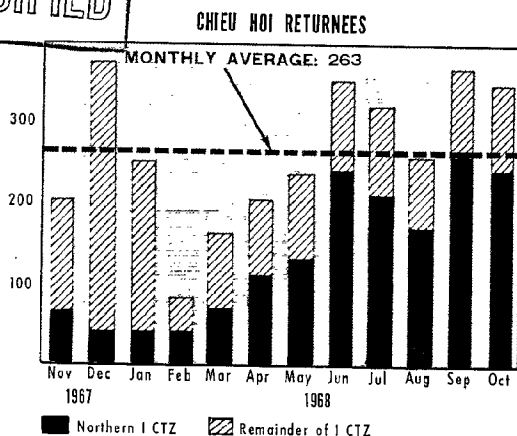
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## CHIEU HOI RETURNEES - I CTZ



As often has been the case, enemy defectors during the month provided III MAF and the GVN with significant intelligence. A group of ralliers in Phu Vang district, Thua Thien province provided information leading to the discovery of a cache containing one 60mm mortar, one machine gun, one rifle, several carbines, and the personnel roster of the C-117 Local Force Viet Cong Company. And, a defector in Quang Tin province led Americal Division units to a cache of 200 pounds of TNT, scheduled for use against Route 1 bridges.

### Pacification

On 31 October, a record 839,579 Vietnamese civilians were living in the security of the 93 villages which had gained a rating of 60% or higher on the III MAF pacification evaluation scale. Having decreased to approximately 742,000 as of 31 March (after the Tet offensive), the secure population of I CTZ, with a resurgence of the III MAF pacification effort, increased by 97,407 during the last seven months. And representing an increase of some 14,000 over the end-1967 secure population census (the previous record), the October status marks the first time the pre-Tet pacification posture has been either attained or surpassed.

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Two populated villages in northern I CTZ, Hai Tai and Hai Thuong (fringing the southern section of Quang Tri City), were added to the III MAF pacification system. The inclusion of these villages brings an additional 16,092 secure civilians into the III MAF system.

In the remainder of the tactical zone, the pacification status remained relatively stable. However, the 1 November initiation of a coordinated III MAF and GVN special pacification campaign portends a continued effort to bring greater security to the people of I CTZ.

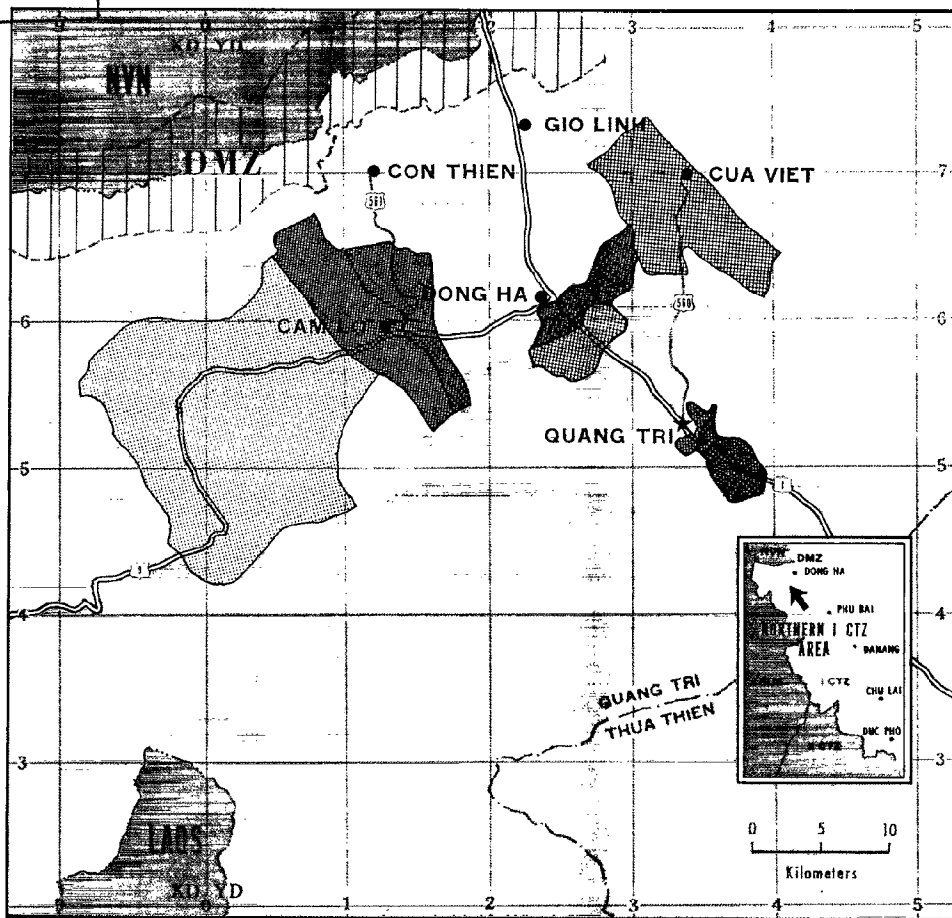
The five maps which follow depict the status of III MAF pacification areas at end-month.

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## PACIFICATION STATUS - NORTHERN I CTZ



★ Province capital

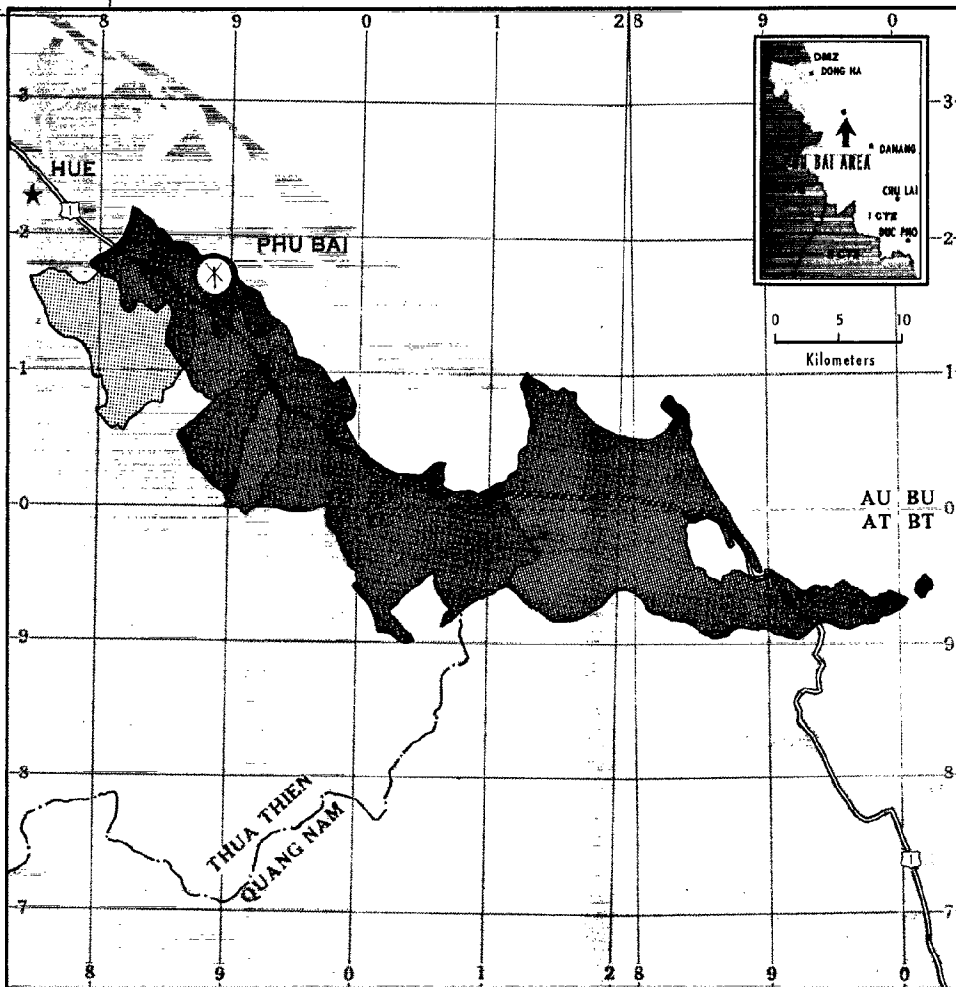
PERCENT PACIFIED	SQUARE MILES			CIVILIAN POPULATION			VILLAGES		
	OCT 67	APR 68	OCT 68	OCT 67	APR 68	OCT 68	OCT 67	APR 68	OCT 68
Under 20%	47	144	95	2,643	24,179	2,643	2	15	8
20%	—	45	38	—	9,741	3,741	—	3	2
40%	61	18	29	21,256	7,645	17,230	5	2	4
60%	63	34	29	21,892	15,032	20,292	6	4	4
80%	37	34	29	13,615	24,708	32,404	3	2	3
100%	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
TOTAL	208	275	220	59,606	81,305	76,310	16	26	21

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# PACIFICATION STATUS - PHU BAI AREA



★ Province capital

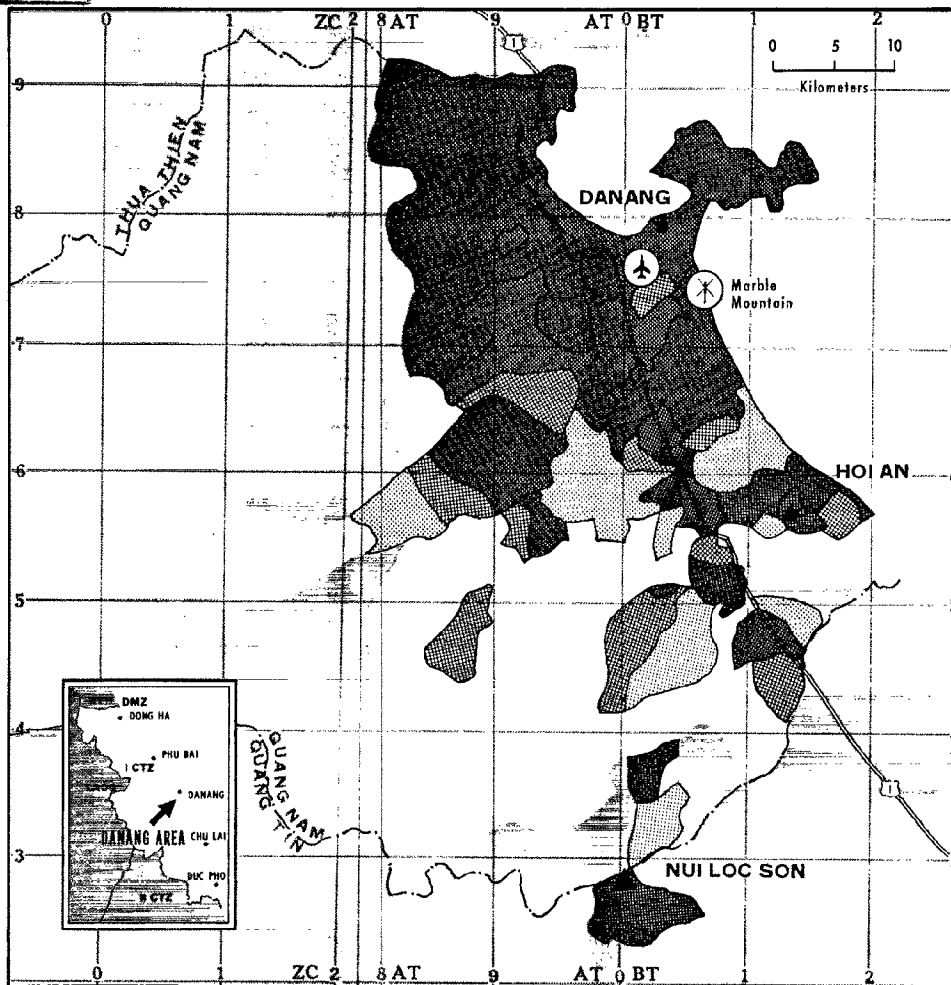
PERCENT PACIFIED	SQUARE MILES			CIVILIAN POPULATION			VILLAGES		
	OCT 67	APR 68	OCT 68	OCT 67	APR 68	OCT 68	OCT 67	APR 68	OCT 68
Under 20%	35	35	—	11,199	11,199	—	11	11	—
20%	17	17	17	2,879	2,879	2,879	1	1	1
40%	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
60%	33	71	96	24,255	39,675	52,320	3	6	7
80%	77	39	136	33,703	17,954	38,219	7	4	7
100%	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
TOTAL	162	162	249	72,036	71,707	93,418	22	22	15

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## PACIFICATION STATUS - DANANG AREA



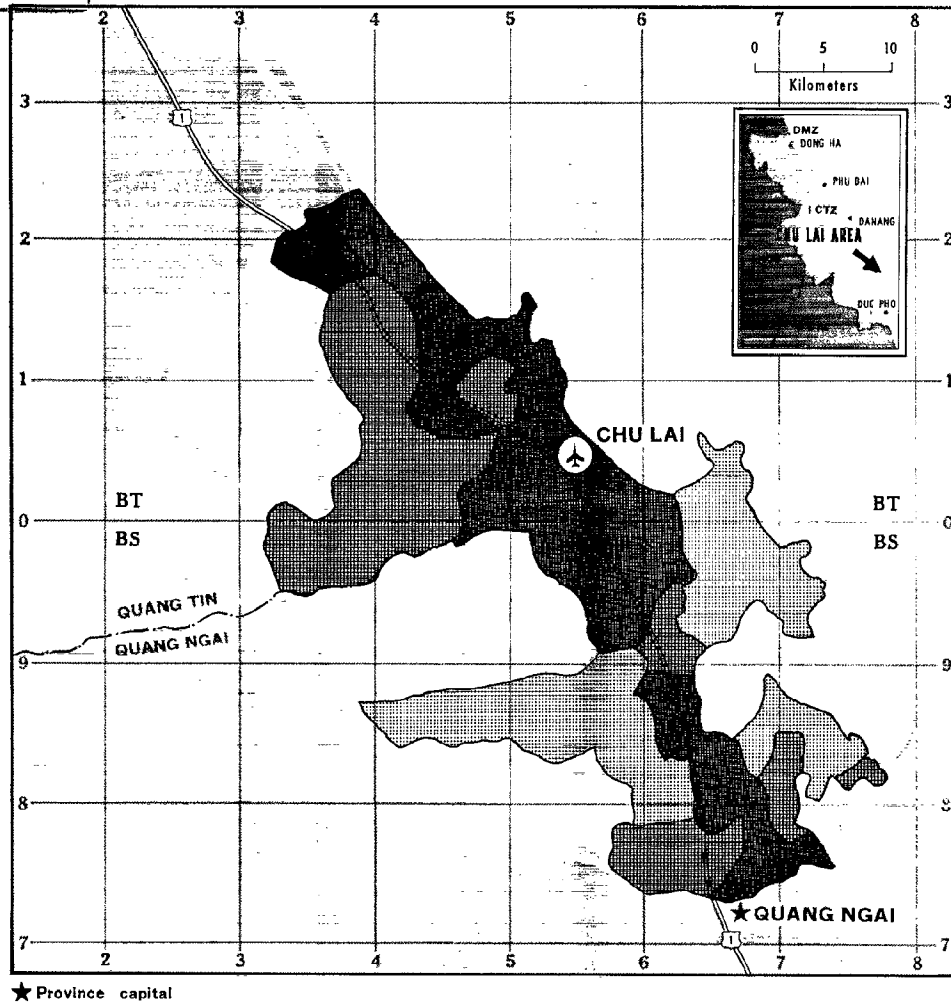
★ Province capital

PERCENT PACIFIED	SQUARE MILES			CIVILIAN POPULATION			VILLAGES		
	OCT 67	APR 68	OCT 68	OCT 67	APR 68	OCT 68	OCT 67	APR 68	OCT 68
Under 20%	645	664	235	193,826	204,680	166,159	44	45	34
20%	93	73	26	67,252	70,634	54,584	15	15	11
40%	73	58	57	54,634	48,987	45,068	13	11	11
60%	76	105	178	73,790	109,524	141,852	14	20	28
80%	161	148	103	422,690	391,920	392,288	26	21	18
100%	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
TOTAL	1,048	1,048	599	812,192	825,745	799,951	112	112	102

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## PACIFICATION STATUS - CHU LAI AREA



PERCENT PACIFIED	SQUARE MILES			CIVILIAN POPULATION			VILLAGES		
	OCT 67	APR 68	OCT 68	OCT 67	APR 68	OCT 68	OCT 67	APR 68	OCT 68
Under 20%	212	248	257	81,011	87,386	76,784	21	23	21
20%	37	55	94	23,704	39,226	49,518	5	6	10
40%	103	133	104	65,851	74,441	57,927	9	11	9
60%	57	100	101	51,567	74,312	82,722	11	15	16
80%	124	12	9	57,291	11,056	6,178	11	2	1
100%	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
TOTAL	533	548	565	279,424	286,423	273,129	57	57	57

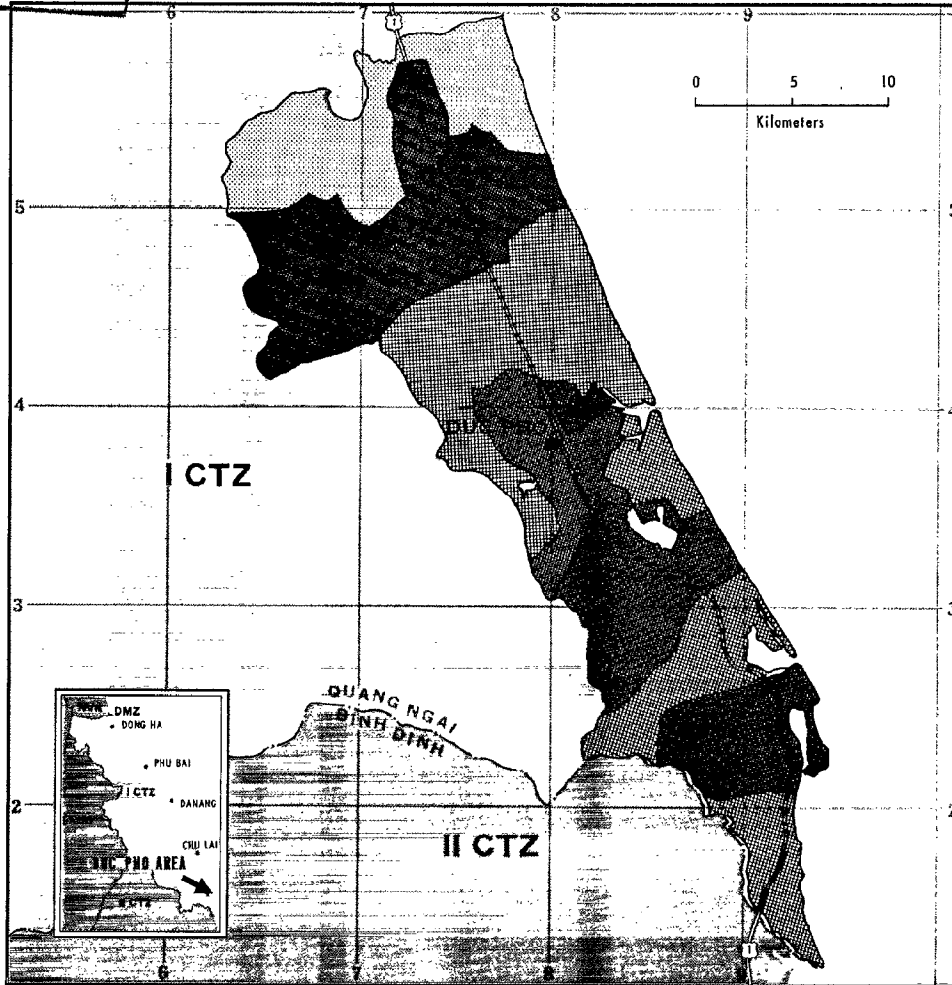
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# PACIFICATION STATUS - DUC PHO AREA



PERCENT PACIFIED	SQUARE MILES			CIVILIAN POPULATION			VILLAGES		
	OCT 67	APR 68	OCT 68	OCT 67	APR 68	OCT 68	OCT 67	APR 68	OCT 68
Under 20%	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
20%	36	23	31	34,619	28,810	15,835	6	4	4
40%	84	45	63	67,642	29,246	57,377	7	6	9
60%	32	77	77	36,455	40,404	54,697	4	6	6
80%	10	17	17	17,704	16,183	18,607	2	3	3
100%	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
TOTAL	162	162	188	156,420	114,643	146,516	19	19	22

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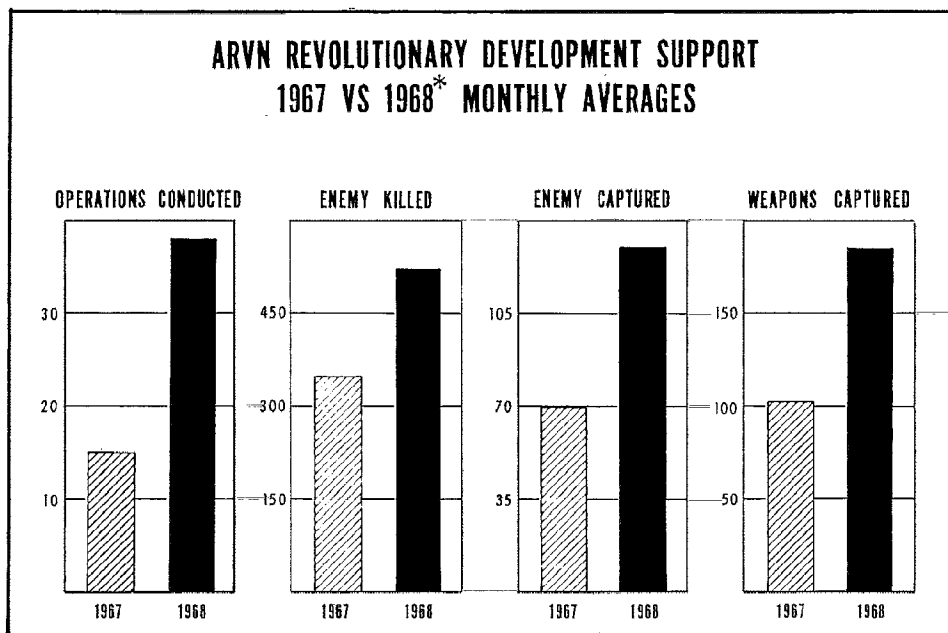
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ARVN Support for Revolutionary Development

Since January 1967, ARVN forces have been committed to the direct support of the revolutionary development campaign. During the first month of commitment, I Corps battalions conducted eight operations, accounting for 63 enemy killed, 14 captured, and 51 weapons seized. The program expanded throughout 1967, and by end-year, the ARVN had conducted 175 operations, resulting in 4,170 enemy killed, 829 prisoners, and 1,218 weapons captured. In 1968, ARVN involvement in RD has continued to grow, and the results already have surpassed the 1967 effort. Thus far this year, 380 operations have been conducted, with I Corps battalions killing 5,153 enemy, capturing another 1,186, and seizing 1,838 weapons.

The following graphs, displaying the 1967 and 1968 monthly averages of ARVN RD support operations and their results, demonstrate the progress the ARVN has made in the past 22 months in denying the enemy access to RD priority areas in I CTZ.



\*January through October.

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BASE DEFENSE

Impeded by heavier than usual monsoon rains, and the continued saturation patrolling by III MAF counter-guerilla forces, enemy efforts against the major bases in October were limited to sporadic artillery attacks against Dong Ha and Cua Viet by DMZ and North Vietnam-based artillery units.

In the Danang area, a total of 38.7 inches of rainfall was recorded, more than 15 inches above the norm. The resultant flooding experienced in the Danang lowlands restricted the enemy's mobility and inundated many of the possible rocket launching areas. Although no rocket attacks were initiated against major bases in I CTZ during October, enemy rocket units attempted, on at least three occasions, to move 122mm rockets into firing positions in the Danang area.

-The first incident occurred four kilometers northwest of An Hoa, on the 22d, when a Marine reconnaissance team sighted a 79-man enemy unit moving an undetermined number of 122mm rockets toward Danang. Artillery was directed on the enemy force, resulting in five secondary explosions and 22 enemy killed.

-The following morning another large enemy force was observed attempting to move rockets through the same area. A close air support mission was conducted, killing 67 enemy and scattering the remainder.

-Also on the 23d, Headquarters and Service Company, 1st Battalion, 7th Marines uncovered eight 122mm rockets, still in their shipping crates, cached six miles southwest of the Danang airbase.

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Concurrently, the DMZ area was affected by the monsoon rains, with a total of 26.51 inches of rain falling at Dong Ha. Although the extent to which the monsoon affected enemy artillery firing and resupply capabilities is uncertain, there was no enemy artillery fire received in the DMZ area from 4 to 22 October. However, during the last ten days of the month, North Vietnamese artillery units initiated three attacks against the combat bases at Dong Ha and Cua Viet, the two most significant of which are described below.

-At 1510 on 22 October, an enemy 130mm artillery unit mounted a 30-round attack against Dong Ha village and adjacent combat base. Casualties from this attack were substantial; six US, two ARVN, and four civilians killed, and 13 US, six ARVN, and seven civilians wounded. In addition, 21 buildings, two tanks, and two artillery pieces received light damage. Marine fighter/attack aircraft quickly located, and silenced, the enemy's firing position, 14 miles northwest of Dong Ha, on the northern boundary of the DMZ, with one 130mm gun destroyed.

-On the 30th, in an attack that lasted for almost two hours, a total of 40 rounds of 130mm artillery fell on Dong Ha, resulting in three Marines killed, and eight Marines, one Seabee, and two US and one Vietnamese soldier wounded. Material damage was relatively light, although the enemy did manage to score two hits in the Grade III (unserviceable) ammunition storage area, destroying approximately 300 tons of ammunition awaiting disposal.

October was the first month since December 1967 the enemy failed to launch a single rocket attack against the sprawling Danang complex, most likely due to the rain-induced restrictions imposed on his movement of troops and ordnance, by the flooding of his possible launch sites, and the 24-hour surveillance of the area by alert Marine patrols. Despite retardation by the monsoon rains and continued saturation patrolling by III MAF, the enemy retains the capability of launching limited rocket attacks against any III MAF installation.

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AIR OPERATIONS

During October, fixed wing pilots of the 1st Marine Aircraft Wing flew 6,862 sorties in support of Free World and ARVN forces in South Vietnam, and against targets in North Vietnam and Laos. Helicopter pilots of the wing and the two Special Landing Forces of the US Seventh Fleet logged 61,259 sorties, helilifting 121,596 passengers and 12,586 tons of cargo.

Effect of Weather on Air Operations

The generally deteriorating weather prevailing throughout I CTZ (attendant to the annual northeast monsoon) accounted for a comparative decrease in the Marine fixed wing air effort during the month. There were 1,728 sorties cancelled because of inclement base or target weather, 318 more than the previous high of 1,410 cancelled in November 1966. Of the 1,728 sorties cancelled, 1,184 had been scheduled against in-country targets, while 544 were to have been directed against targets in North Vietnam or Laos.

The period of the northeast monsoon, normally from October to March, brings to the majority of Southeast Asia a cold, dry wind which has travelled down from Siberia and across China. The northeast winds which strike the coastal lowlands of the two Vietnams have an opportunity, however, of crossing a few hundred miles of the warm and humid South China Sea. By the time the wind reaches the coastline, it is no longer dry but is instead saturated with moisture. That area extending from Vinh (in North Vietnam) southward to Cap Padaran (near Cam Ranh Bay in the southern portion of II CTZ) thus receives the greatest

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portion of its rainfall during this period. A sampling of the annual rainfall shows Vinh with 72 inches, Hue with 127 inches, Danang with 85 inches, Quang Ngai with 89 inches, Nha Trang with 56 inches, and Cap Padaran with 29 inches. In each case, the months of September, October, and November produce the greatest amounts of rain.

Associated with the northeast monsoon is a phenomenon known as "crachin", a situation wherein the ceiling and visibility is drastically and quickly reduced by fog and drizzle. Crachin may last for as long as five days but will not normally occur prior to October or after April.

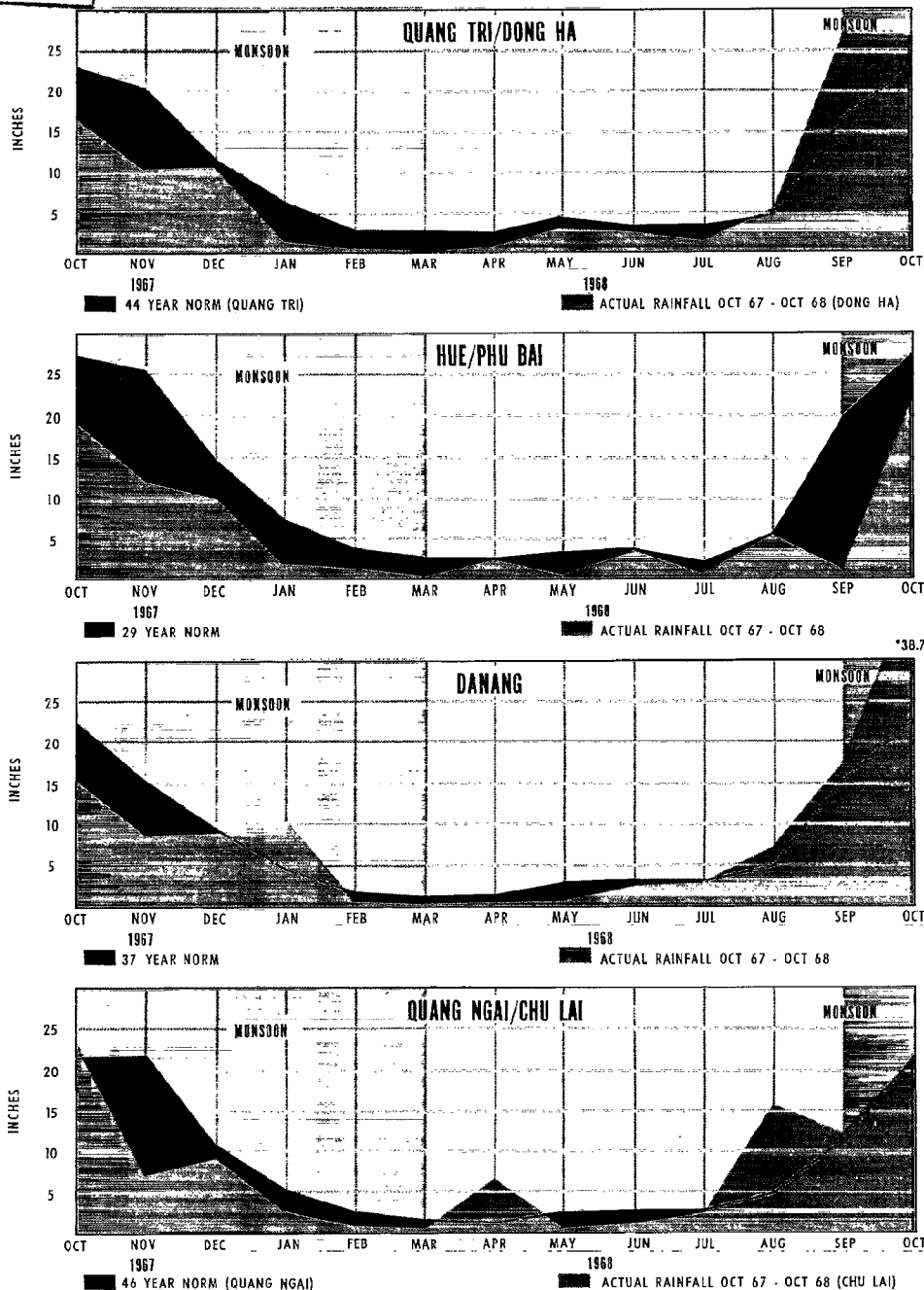
The graphs on the following page depict normal monthly rainfall (in inches) at selected locations in I CTZ, as related to actual rainfall accruing over the past 13 months at the same stations.

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# RAINFALL (IN INCHES) AT SELECTED I CTZ LOCATIONS



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Fixed Wing Operations-In-Country Operations

Marine pilots flew 5,349 sorties during October in support of III MAF, ARVN, and ROK Marines operating within I CTZ. Of this number, 4,186 were classified as combat flights and 1,163 were combat support sorties. The total in-country fixed wing effort was 928 sorties less than the 6,277 combat and combat support flights flown in September, with the decrease attributed to the inclement base and target weather prevailing during the month.

The month's confirmed battle damage assessment in I CTZ, credited to Marine pilots, was more than 130 enemy soldiers killed and 662 structures, 1,003 bunkers, ten bridges, 22 weapons positions, and nine boats destroyed. Further, the 137 secondary explosions and 108 secondary fires reported attest to the damage caused to enemy ammunition and POL caches. Aerial ordnance expended by fixed wing pilots amounted to 6,412 tons of bombs, 24,132 rockets, and 1,866 napalm bombs.

--Close Air Support

Although weather did hamper air operations somewhat, the continual close air support provided to tactically engaged ground units maintained its high rate of effectiveness, as exemplified in the following actions.

-At 1400 on 3 October, Company L, 5th Marines, patrolling the area five miles north-northeast of An Hoa, engaged an enemy force of undetermined size with organic small arms and automatic weapons fire. The battle, supported by artillery fire and tactical air strikes, resulted in five NVA killed and two weapons captured. The enemy withdrawal was subsequently detected by a Marine aerial observer who directed additional air attacks against the fleeing enemy, accounting for eight more NVA killed and a secondary explosion.

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-On the afternoon of the 7th, elements of 2d Battalion, 5th Marines, engaged in Operation MAUI PEAK, were sweeping in the area three and one-half miles east-northeast of Thuong Duc Special Forces camp, when they received small arms, RPG rocket, and 60mm mortar fire from an estimated enemy platoon. The ensuing request for air support was answered by F-4's of Marine Fighter/Attack Squadrons-334 and 542. The pilots, flying six close air support sorties, delivered over 11 tons of ordnance on the enemy force, accounting for 45 NVA killed. (MAUI PEAK, a 13-day, multi-battalion, search and clear operation in the Thuong Duc region, terminated on the 19th, with enemy forces having suffered 202 killed by Marines. Sixty-three of these were credited to Marine close air support missions.)

-On 26 October, two A-4E's of Marine Attack Squadron-311, flying in close support of 5th Marines elements in Operation HENDERSON HILL, delivered sixteen 250-pound bombs against 15 enemy reported in a bunker complex 13 miles southwest of Danang. A search of the destroyed position by attacking ground units yielded 14 enemy killed by the air strike.

-At 1035 on 27 October, four F-4B's of Marine Fighter/Attack Squadron-323 flew a close air support mission for III MAF units in Operation KENTUCKY. Attacking with seventeen 250-pound bombs, six napalm canisters, and 750 rounds of 20mm cannon fire, the Marine pilots struck an enemy troop concentration in the DMZ, four and one-half miles northeast of Con Thien, killing 24 NVA and causing one secondary explosion.

The following graphs portray the in-country sorties flown, and ordnance delivered, by Marine pilots during the past six months.

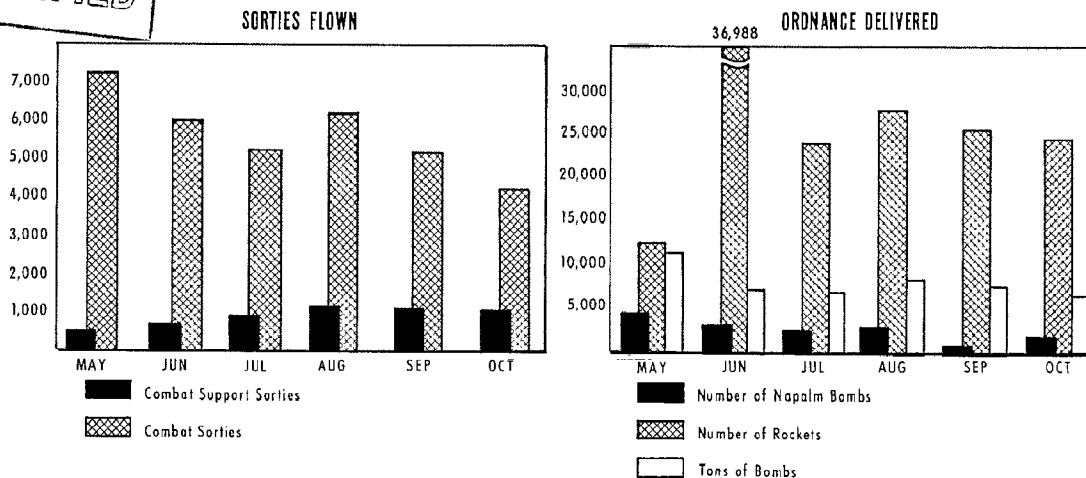
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## IN-COUNTRY FIXED WING SUPPORT BY MARINE AIRCRAFT: MAY - OCT 68

-Out-of-Country Operations

Marine pilots recorded a total of 1,513 sorties out of I CTZ during October - 1,379 combat and 61 combat support flights in Route Package I of North Vietnam, and 73 strike sorties in Laos. All of the combat support flights were electronic countermeasure missions flown by EA-6A pilots of Marine Composite Reconnaissance Squadron-1. The 1,379 combat sorties were flown by the F-4 (422), A-4 (482), TA-4F (36), and A-6A (439; 66% of the total monthly A-6A effort of 666 sorties).

The A-6A, flying armed reconnaissance and strike missions in the north on all but two nights during the month, unleashed 1,600 tons of ordnance against 990 targets - 564 of which were moving - acquired through utilization of the aircraft's moving target indicator system and all-weather acquisition radar.

The graph on the following page depicts the monthly A-6A out-of-country effort since November 1967.

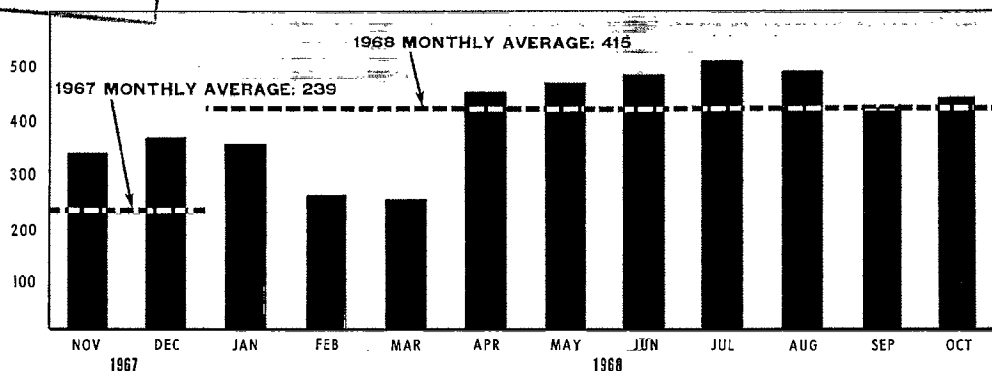
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MONTHLY MARINE A-6A SORTIES FLOWN OUT-OF-COUNTRY  
NOVEMBER 67 - OCTOBER 68

Typical of the out-of-country strike support provided were the sorties flown by two A-4E's of Marine Attack Squadron-223 on 27 October. At 1825 on that date, twelve 500-pound bombs were delivered against an NVA artillery position in North Vietnam, three miles north of the Ben Hai river. The resultant damage assessment was the destruction of one artillery piece (which previously had been firing on friendly emplacements south of the DMZ), the ammunition on position, and 40 meters of trench line.

Enemy regression to his base areas and sanctums in Laos, plus his increased reliance on the superior trafficability of the Laotian LOC's (relative to those in North Vietnam) during the month, led to the greatest number of strike sorties in the Laotian panhandle in the past four months. The 73 sorties flown during October against targets in Laos were a significant increase over the 13 flown in that area in September.

#### Helicopter Operations

During the month, helicopter pilots of the 1st Marine Aircraft Wing and Special Landing Forces Alfa and Bravo flew

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61,259 sorties in support of Marine, Army, US Special Forces, ARVN, and ROKMC forces operating in I CTZ. Although the total sortie effort was 11% higher than the 55,078 monthly average for 1968, point-to-point resupply missions and the insertion and extraction of reconnaissance units were still hampered by the poor weather persisting during the month. The bad weather notwithstanding, the helilifting of 121,596 passengers and 12,586 tons of cargo established an all-time monthly high in each category. Of the totals presented, the SLF pilots flew 6,427 sorties and lifted 9,935 passengers and 162 tons of cargo.

The bulk of the helicopter effort was in the combat and logistical transporting of troops and supplies (nearly 50% of the total sorties flown). Other missions flown included command and control flights, sea/air rescue missions, casualty evacuation sorties, reconnaissance flights, tactical air coordinator (airborne) flights, and tactical air recovery missions.

Helicopter activity in the northwestern portion of I CTZ accounted for more than 20% of the total sorties flown during the month. Mobile search operations in the SCOTLAND II area by Marine and ARVN battalions were supported by 12,995 helicopter sorties. In excess of 31,550 troops and 4,350 tons of supplies were helilifted to these units in the field west and north of the former Khe Sanh combat base. (See the Large Unit Operations chapter for a detailed description of ground action in this area.)

Pilots of the 1st Marine Aircraft Wing flew 3,418 sorties (6.2% of their monthly effort) in support of US Army, US Special Forces, ROK Marines, and ARVN. The ROKMC received the large majority of this support - 3,066 sorties.

The graph on the following page portrays the Marine helicopter effort over the past 12 months.

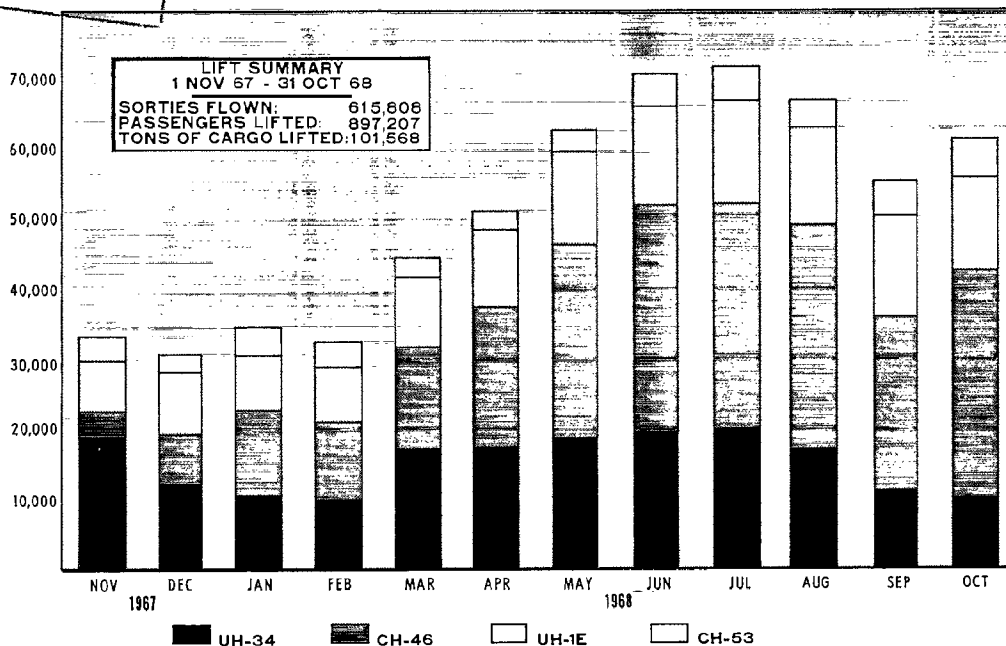
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## MARINE HELICOPTER SORTIES: NOV 67 - OCT 68

Operation MAMELUKE THRUST

On 23 October, the 1st Marine Division terminated Operation MAMELUKE THRUST. The operation was initiated on 18 May 1968, in order to search out and destroy enemy personnel operating in the southwest portion of Quang Nam province. The area of operations was distinguished by flat, open terrain in the An Hoa region, and double and triple-canopied jungle to the west and northwest and, as is frequently the case in these operations, the distance and terrain factors favored movement of troops and supplies by helicopter. Further, units operating in the jungle region northwest of the Vu Gia river and Route 14 found that the support provided by fixed wing aircraft, delivering bombs with a near vertical trajectory, was often more effective than an artillery projectile in penetrating the dense, overhead canopy.

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Statistically, Marine fixed wing pilots tallied 2,077 sorties, dropping 3,543 tons of ordnance. They were credited with killing more than 100 enemy soldiers. Helicopter pilots flew 23,082 sorties, lifting 44,476 troops and 3,962 tons of cargo.

#### Crew, Passenger, and Aircraft Losses

In October, four crew members were killed and two were listed as missing, as five fixed wing aircraft and two helicopters were lost to enemy fire.

Of the five fixed wing aircraft lost (two TA-4F's, one F-4B, one RF-4B, and one OV-10A), four were caused by enemy small arms or antiaircraft fire. Two crew members were killed when their F-4B crashed during a close air support mission 16 miles west-southwest of Danang. The two OV-10A crewmen were also killed subsequent to receiving enemy ground fire while marking a target 11 miles south of Danang. One TA-4F received ground fire while spotting for a USS NEW JERSEY naval gunfire mission. The crew ejected over water, east of the DMZ, and was recovered. The RF-4B crewmen ejected 15 miles east-northeast of Dong Ha when enemy ground fire caused the failure of the aircraft's flight controls. The crew was recovered. The fifth, the other TA-4F, failed to return from a tactical/air coordinator (airborne) flight; the crew members are listed as missing.

Two helicopters were also lost during the month; a UH-34, five miles south-southeast of An Hoa, and a CH-46, ten miles west-southwest of Danang. All crew members and passengers were recovered uninjured and returned to their units.

Three fixed wing aircraft and five helicopters received substantial or minor damage from enemy fire while in flight.

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LOGISTICS

Heavy monsoon rains were the dominating factor affecting logistic operations within I CTZ during the month of October. On the 14th and 15th, the northeast monsoon deposited almost 12 inches of rain in the Dong Ha area and ten inches at Danang. Subsequently, on the 16th and 17th, the Danang area was deluged with over 15 inches of rain, while six inches fell at Chu Lai. Floods resulting from the four-day downpour put a vise-like clamp on vehicular traffic throughout most of the five northern provinces of South Vietnam. Thua Thien and Quang Tri provinces were particularly hard hit, with Route 1 flooded north and south of Camp Evans, and between Quang Tri City and Dong Ha. The Quang Tri City bridge, a vital link on Route 1, was undermined by the surging waters of the Thach Han river, and Route 9 was closed west of Dong Ha due to the weakened condition of the Khe Gio bridge, two and one-half miles east of the Rockpile. Farther south, the Tan My causeway, five miles northeast of Hue, was under water and impassable. However, in spite of these monsoon-imposed restrictions, logistic support for III MAF operations remained adequate.

Motor Transport

The debilitating effect of the monsoon on motor transport operations was reflected in the 295,674 miles recorded in October by the five in-country Marine motor transport battalions, a reduction of over 100,000 miles from the January-September 1968 monthly average of 401,194 miles. Corresponding drops were registered both in personnel transported (102,256 versus the average of

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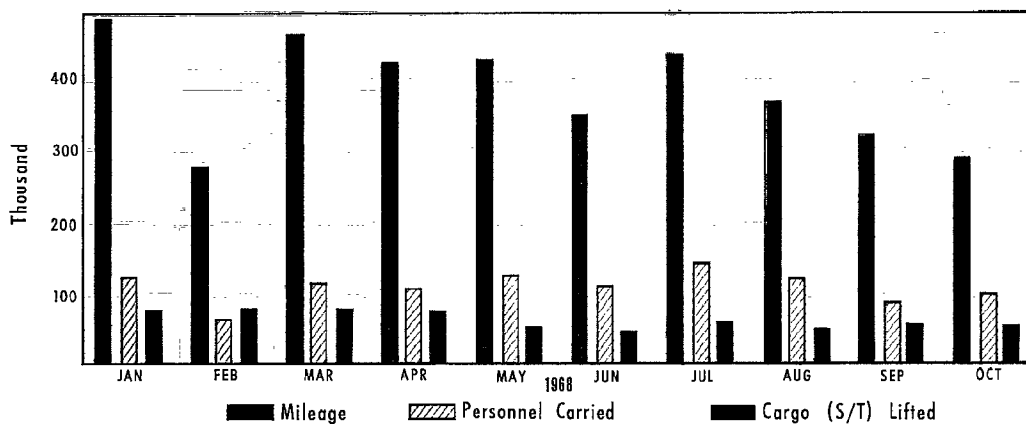
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111,253) and in cargo hauled (51,930 tons compared with 65,745). Individual battalion operations were:

UNIT	MILEAGE	PERSONNEL TRANSPORTED	TOTAL TONNAGE
1stMTBn	51,665	26,116	2,536
3dMTBn	54,087	30,089	2,530
7thMTBn	99,329	8,928	28,301
9thMTBn	36,179	18,690	14,283
11thMTBn	<u>54,414</u>	<u>18,433</u>	<u>4,280</u>
TOTALS	295,674	102,256	51,930

A summarization of the Marine motor transport operations for 1968 is shown in the following graph.

### OPERATIONS OF MARINE MOTOR TRANSPORT BATTALIONS JAN - OCT 68



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Engineer Operations-Northern I CTZ Cantonment

The monsoon did not appreciably deter progress on the northern I CTZ combat base construction program. The majority of construction material had been positioned previously, and with US Navy Seabees providing almost all the engineer effort, rapid advances toward completion of the project were made during October. At Dong Ha, the program was 100% completed, and at end-month it was 85% completed at Quang Tri, with work at Camp Evans and Hue/Phu Bai 99% and 96% complete, respectively. The 31 October status of that portion of the program under construction primarily for Marines was:

<u>LOCATION</u>	<u>PROJECT</u>	<u>PERCENT OF COMPLETION</u>	<u>BENEFICIAL OCCUPANCY DATE</u>
Dong Ha	30 Heads	100	1 Oct
	9 Showers	100	31 Oct
	193 Southeast Asia Huts	100	31 Oct
	1 Laundry	100	22 Oct
Vandegrift Combat Base	5 Messhalls	80	10 Nov
Quang Tri	114 Tent Frames	100	1 Oct
	17 Bunkers	94	10 Nov
	142 Heads	91	10 Nov
	55 Showers	78	15 Nov
	1,501 Southeast Asia Huts	87	15 Nov
	36 Messhalls	78	15 Nov

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-Strong Point/Obstacle Subsystem

On 22 October, COMUSMACV directed cessation, pending further guidance, of all construction and planning effort on the DMZ buffer zone in northern I CTZ. During October, 30,844 man-days were employed in staffing, construction, and security for the project; 1,646 equipment-hours were expended at an operating cost of \$37,448. The cumulative expenditures since the start of the project in April 1967 were:

Equipment Operating Costs	\$1,146,230
Equipment Losses	\$1,491,847
Equipment-Hours	159,630
Man-Days	1,556,752

Total casualties sustained by construction and project security personnel were 266 killed and 779 wounded (eight deaths and 41 injuries by non-battle causes).

The status of bunker construction at the strong points and base areas, as of 22 October, is shown on the map on the following page.

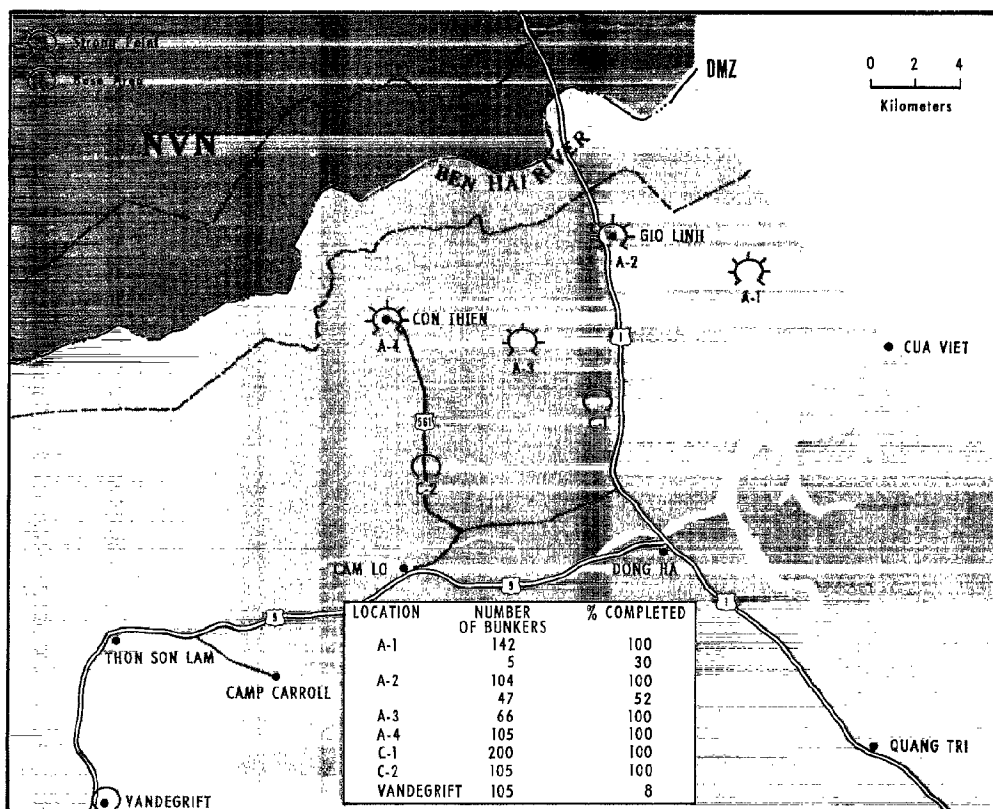
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# STRONG POINT/BASE AREA BUNKER CONSTRUCTION STATUS 22 OCTOBER 1968



## -Danang Barrier

Work on the Danang Barrier (previously discussed in the July 1968 edition of this series) consisted of installation of 1,000 meters of wire during the second week of October. The sensor detecting system, comprised of seismic, acoustic, and electronic sensing devices to detect infiltration attempts, is now 12% completed. There was no progress on construction of the barrier during the last half of the month due to the flood conditions.

## Force Logistic Support Group Alfa Phase-out

The phase-out of Force Logistic Support Group Alfa (FLSG A) from Phu Bai, commencing in September, continued

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through October as the US Army assumed responsibility for operation of the ammunition supply point and the ration issue point. Elements of FLSG A were transferred to Dong Ha to reinforce FLSG B and to Danang to bolster logistic units there. A detachment of FLSG A remains at Phu Bai to provide general supply support for Marine elements remaining in that area.

#### Red Ball

After three years of providing Marine commanders in RVN a means of accelerated supply action on urgently needed combat essential items, the expeditious Red Ball system has been cancelled and replaced by an even more responsive computerized procedure under the recently implemented Marine Corps Automated Readiness Evaluation System (MARES). MARES enables Marine commanders to evaluate current and projected capabilities of Fleet Marine Forces to execute contingency and other plans, through the analysis of personnel, training, logistic, combat readiness, and combat status reports produced within the system. Upon termination of Red Ball there were 873 requisitions outstanding; these will continue expedited processing under Red Ball procedures until the requisitions are received by priority shipment. New critical requirements are now submitted from the field in accordance with the provisions of MARES. Benefits gained by the change are: (1) more rapid response through automated processing; (2) greater capability of alleviating shortages by management at the Headquarters, Marine Corps level, where redistribution can be effected from Marine Corps-wide assets; and (3) elimination of the duplication of effort created by multiple expediting systems operating at different management echelons.

#### Transportation and Embarkation

October was a record month for cargo tonnage moved through I CTZ ports. New highs for offload, backload, and throughput were established at Danang, Hue/Tan My, and

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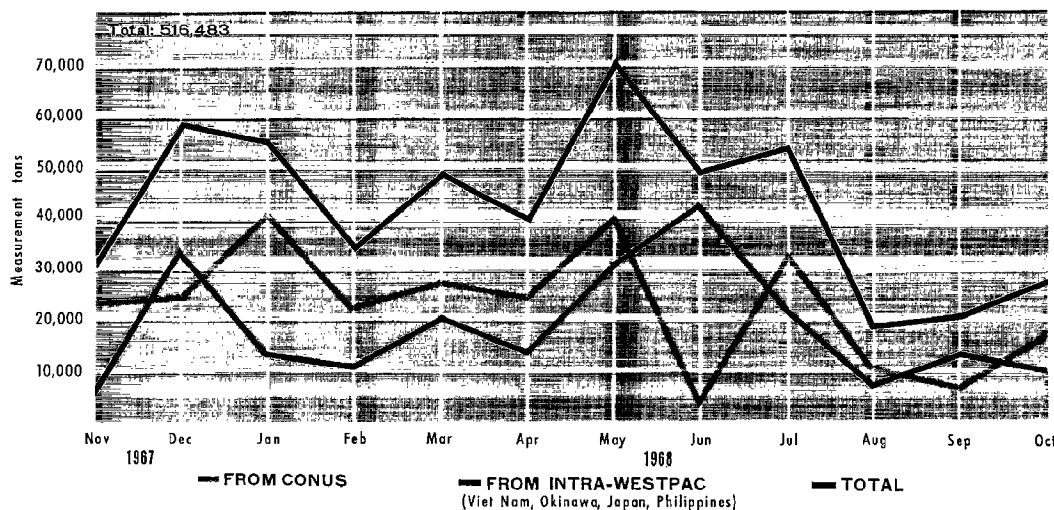
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Dong Ha/Cua Viet. I CTZ tonnage records set for the month of October included 575,590 M/T offloaded, compared to the old record of 556,814 M/T established in May 1968. Another new record was set when backload reached 269,578 M/T, surpassing the old record of 268,702 M/T, also established in May 1968.

III MAF, during October, received from CONUS and intra-WestPac units 28,328 M/T of cargo by surface and 1,289 S/T by air as compared to the 21,623 M/T and 916 S/T received by surface and air in September. Intra-I CTZ cargo shipments by III MAF during the month totaled 111,670 S/T by surface and 10,187 S/T by air.

Cargo movement performance for the past year is illustrated in the following graphs.

#### CARGO SURFACE LIFTED TO III MAF: NOV 67-OCT 68



#### Movement Status

On 23 October, USS HOLMES COUNTY (LST-836) and USS SNOHOMISH COUNTY (LST-1126) arrived at Danang

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with 44 M123 10-ton tractors and 16 M49 2 1/2-ton multifuel tankers for III MAF. This brought the total number of vehicles shipped to III MAF on amphibious ships during 1968 to 499.

A realignment of the air defense posture in Southeast Asia permitted the redeployment of the HAWK missile-equipped, 2d Light Antiaircraft Missile Battalion from Chu Lai to its home base at Marine Corps Base, Twentynine Palms, California. The movement commenced on 12 October with airlift of the main body, 18 personnel and 778 cubic feet of cargo, from Chu Lai to Okinawa. (Other members of the battalion, with time remaining on their tour in Viet Nam, were reassigned within III MAF.) On the 16th, the main body of the battalion arrived at MCAS, El Toro, California. The surface lift (four personnel, 247 vehicles, 66,471 cubic feet of cargo, and 81 HAWK missiles) departed Danang on 13 October aboard SS SEATRAN PUERTO RICO, with an estimated time of arrival at Long Beach, California on 5 November.

#### Aviation Logistics

Installation of the AN/APR-25 homing and radar warning equipment in the A-6A aircraft reached the final phase at Naval Air Station, Atsugi, Japan, with the induction of one A-6A and one EA-6A on 28 October, the last of the Marine A-6A's scheduled for WestPac modification. The AN/APR-25 system will inform pilots if they are being radar observed, and will provide them with the relative bearing to the hostile radar equipment. Based on this, the emission site may be attacked, or action may be taken to evade missiles or anti-aircraft fire controlled by the enemy radar. At month's-end 24 A-6A's and five EA-6A's have completed the installation program or were in the modification line.

The chart on the following page shows the number of aircraft undergoing Progressive Aircraft Rework (PAR) at aircraft plants in Japan, and Battle Damage Repair (BDR) at intermediate maintenance activities or repair facilities in Japan and the Philippines, as of 31 October.

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<u>ACFT</u>	<u>PAR</u>	<u>BATTLE DAMAGE REPAIR</u>
A-4	12	1
TA-4F	-	1
F-4	8	4
RF-4B	3	2
US-2	-	2
O-1	-	1
UH-1E	10	-
CH-46	23	1
CH-53	<u>6</u>	<u>3</u>
	62	15

NORS/NORM (not operationally ready due to supply, maintenance) data for selected Marine aircraft in III MAF are displayed on the following page.

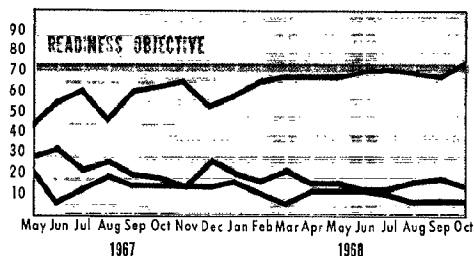
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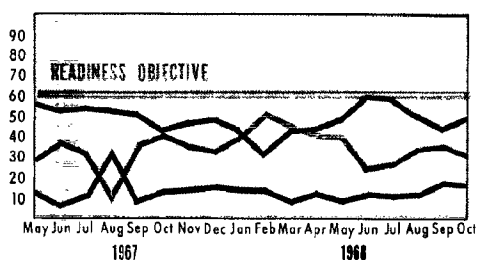
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# NORS/NORM RATES - III MAF MARINE AIRCRAFT

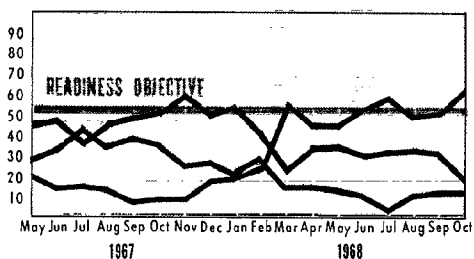
A-4 (ATTACK)



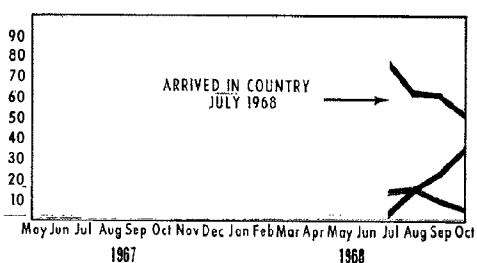
F-4 (FIGHTER-ATTACK)



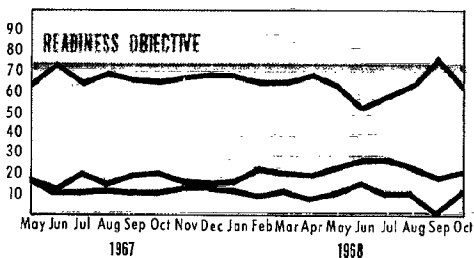
A-6A (ATTACK)



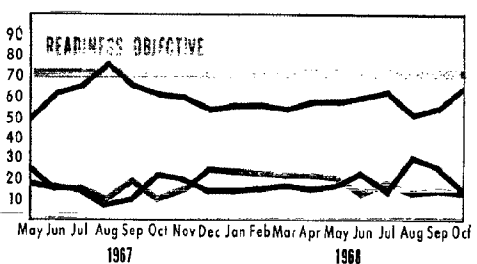
OV-10A (RECONNAISSANCE)\*



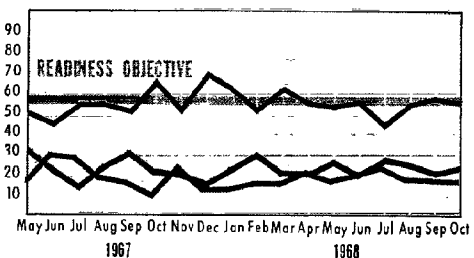
UH-34 (HELO)



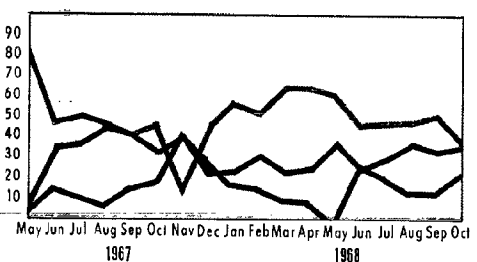
UH-1E (HELO)



CH-46 (HELO)



CH-53A (HELO)\*



\*Readiness Objective not established.

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CONCLUSIONS

-Withdrawal of the enemy, more by necessity than choice, to cross-border sanctuaries, nevertheless affords him an invaluable opportunity to refurbish his consistently outmaneuvered and battle-depleted combat units.

-Hampered both by heavier than normal monsoon rains and the ubiquitous, offensive mobility of III MAF forces, the enemy nonetheless retains the capability for harassing attacks against bases or outlying camps, or a major offensive with forces marshalling north of the DMZ.

-Phoenix-Phung Hoang, a country-wide program proven highly effective in ferreting out the VC infrastructure -- with over 240 kills in the coastal districts of Thua Thien province during October alone -- should constitute our strongest campaign for unfettering those Vietnamese civilians yet existing in fear of infrastructure terrorism or reprisal.

-ARVN, improving steadily, is shouldering an increasing share of combat in I CTZ, while, at the same time, continuing to bolster the revolutionary development program.

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STATISTICAL HIGHLIGHTS - OCTOBER 19681. ENEMY ORDER OF BATTLEa. DMZ/I CTZ Summary

During most of October, the enemy generally elected to avoid major contact with Marines and other forces in the DMZ/I CTZ region. The exception was in Quang Nam province, where elements of two NVA regiments maneuvered, albeit unsuccessfully, to isolate and reduce the US Special Forces garrison at Thuong Duc. Positioned 23 miles southwest of Danang in the western reaches of the An Hoa basin, Thuong Duc straddles the Route 614/548 infiltration corridor, impeding the influx of enemy soldiers and materiel from Laos.

Throughout I CTZ the enemy withdrew during the month toward his base areas in the hinterlands and the sanctuaries of North Vietnam and Laos, substantiating prisoner interrogations, agent reports, and aerial and ground reconnaissance evaluations. He reportedly will attempt, during this respite, to recover from his loss of over 89,000 combat troops thus far in 1968 and to reconstitute his war materials in preparation for renewed offensive operations.

At end-month, the strength of confirmed enemy combat units in I CTZ and the DMZ area was estimated at 40,055 North Vietnamese and 6,830 Viet Cong. This reflects a decrease, from 30 September, of 2,325, primarily as a result of casualties assessed against identified enemy units.

Augmenting the troops in these confirmed combat units are 1,970 personnel in confirmed administrative units, 23,870 guerrillas, and 18,385 enemy soldiers in unconfirmed, but probable or suspected, enemy units in the region. This brings the total enemy strength estimate for the DMZ area and I

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CTZ to 91,110, or nearly double the confirmed combat strength of 46,885.

-Enemy Lines of Communication

The enemy, in October, attempted to restore his routes into, and within, I CTZ following the ravages of Typhoon Bess and the subsequent heavy rains of the southwest/northeast monsoon transition. Late-October aerial photography revealed but a few landslides and washouts impeding enemy traffic. Despite this paucity of interference, enemy vehicular movement was reported in the main to be at low intensity.

The principal enemy road engineering effort during the month was repair of Route 1036 in Laos, just west of the DMZ, and the further construction of Route 548 in western Quang Nam province. This latter road is designed to provide a motorable artery linking marshaling areas and supply depots in A Shau Valley and Laos with the battleground of eastern Quang Nam.

The following map displays the general locations of the 84 enemy infantry battalions in the DMZ/I CTZ region, with the succeeding four maps presenting more specific information on confirmed enemy units in each province.

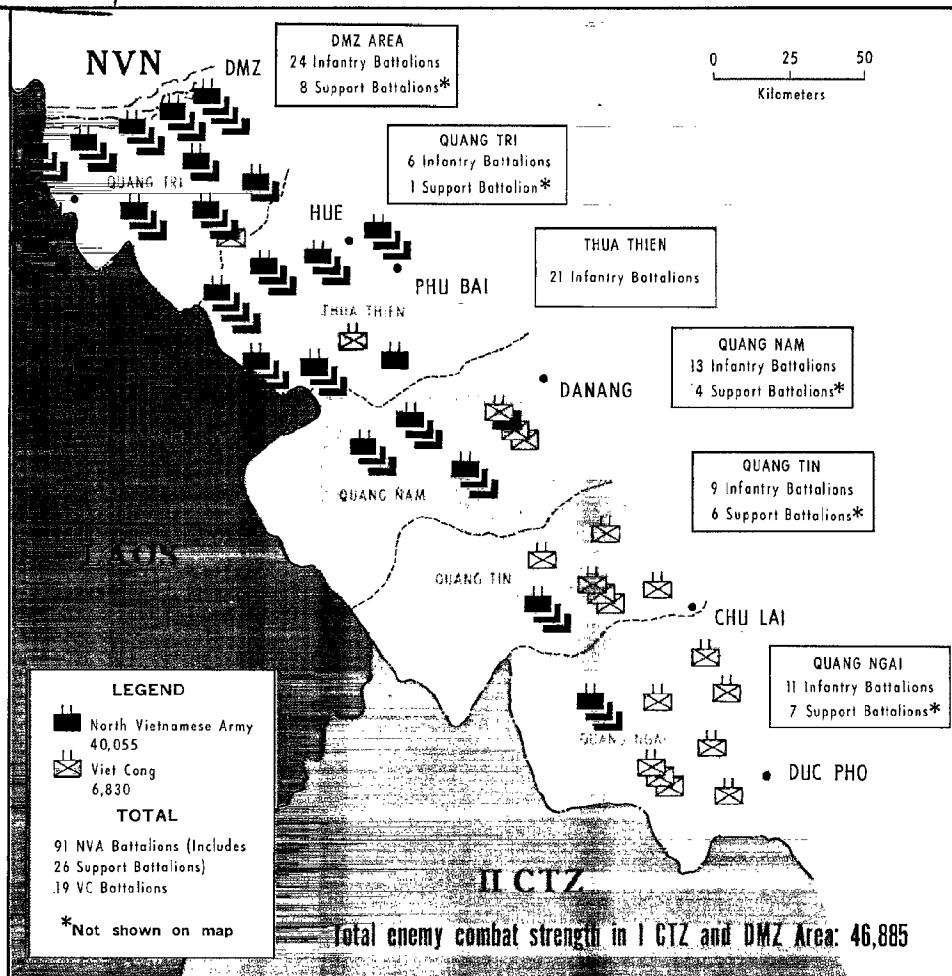
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# ENEMY BATTALIONS IN I CTZ/DMZ AREA - OCTOBER 1968



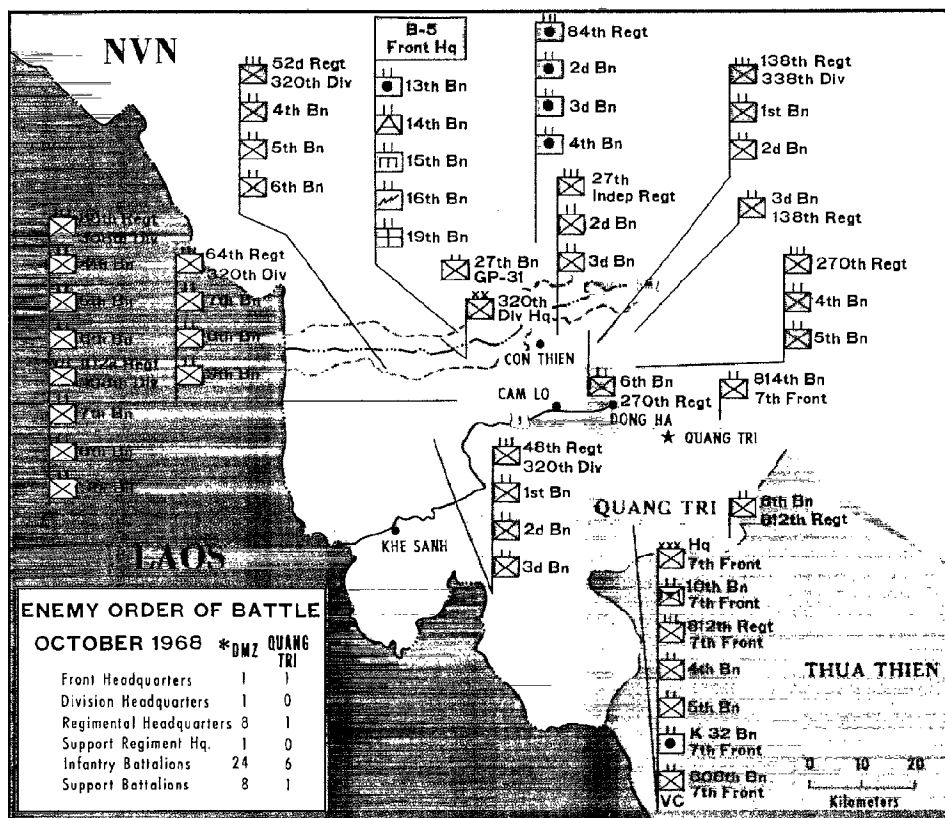
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b. DMZ/Quang Tri Province

At end-October, the confirmed enemy combat strength in the DMZ/Quang Tri province region was an estimated 17,285, a decrease of 940 from 30 September. This decrease reflects 240 replacement soldiers to counter the 1,180 combat losses suffered during the month. Principal contact with the enemy occurred at mid-month, when ARVN battalions engaged elements of the 138th NVA Regiment, and on the 24th, when US Army units contacted portions of the 138th and possibly forces from the 270th NVA Regiment.



★ Province capital

\* The DMZ area includes that portion of Quang Tri province which lies north of Route 9, the DMZ itself, and the Vinh Linh Special Zone in North Vietnam. NVA units operating in this vicinity, or under the control of the DMZ Front headquarters, are considered DMZ AREA UNITS.

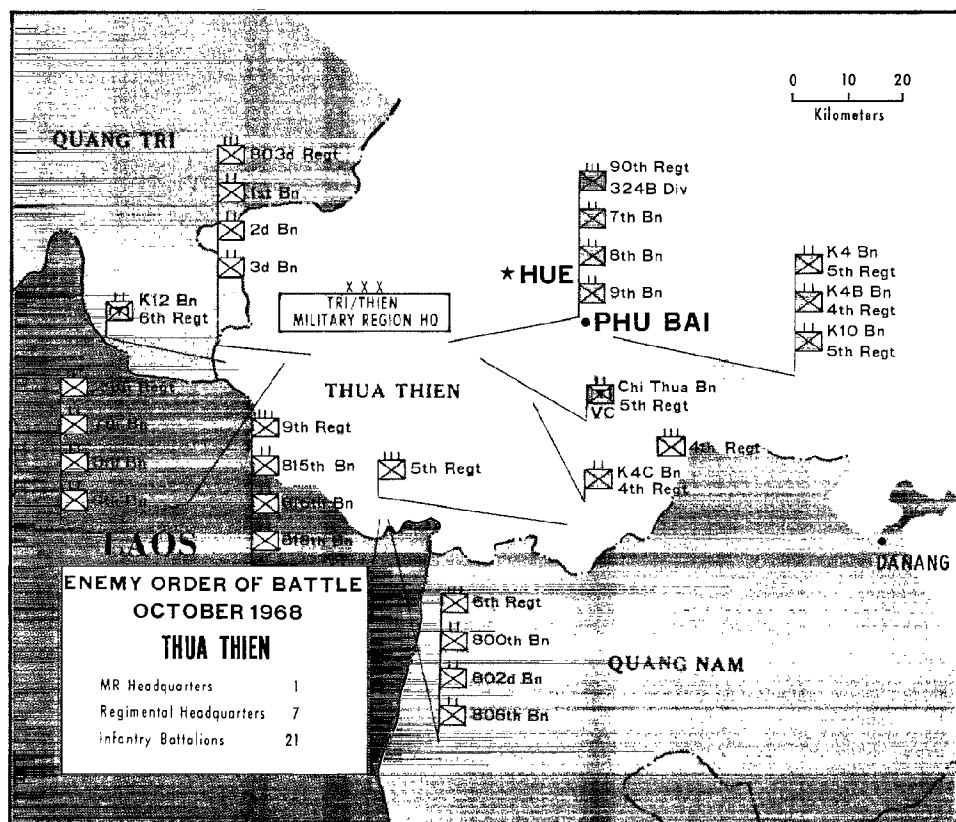
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c. Thua Thien Province

The confirmed enemy combat strength in Thua Thien province remained relatively stable during the month, decreasing by 90, to an estimated 10,425 men. This reduction resulted by offsetting a gain of 165 recruits and infiltrators with 255 casualties. Enemy initiated activity in the province focused primarily in the Phu Loc area, where it was characterized by harassing attacks-by-fire.



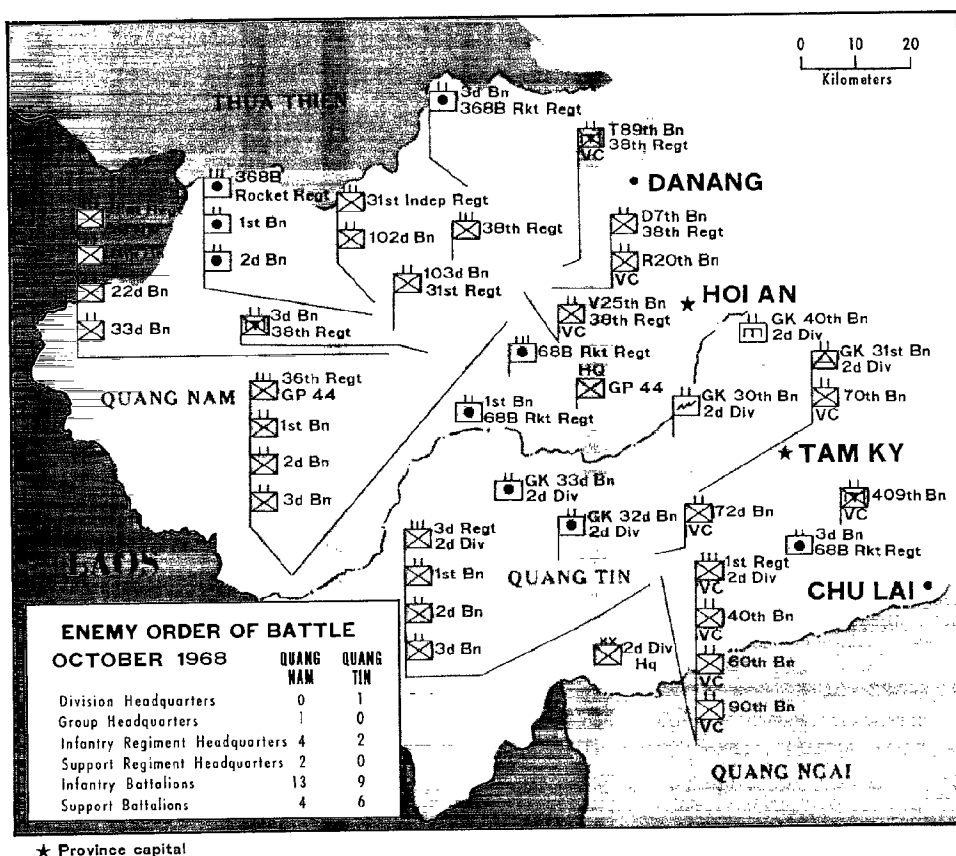
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d. Quang Nam/Quang Tin Provinces

Confirmed enemy combat strength in central I CTZ decreased by 945, to an estimated 11,350, on 31 October. This reflects combat losses of 1,465 and gains of 520 recruits and infiltrators. The Quang Nam arena of combat was the Thuong Duc area, where elements of the 21st and 31st NVA Regiments, supported by cannoneers from the 368B NVA Artillery (Rocket) Regiment, were engaged sporadically by Marine, Special Forces, and ARVN units. In Quang Tin, scattered enemy activity was directed primarily against Vietnamese territorial forces, revolutionary development hamlets, and combined action platoons.



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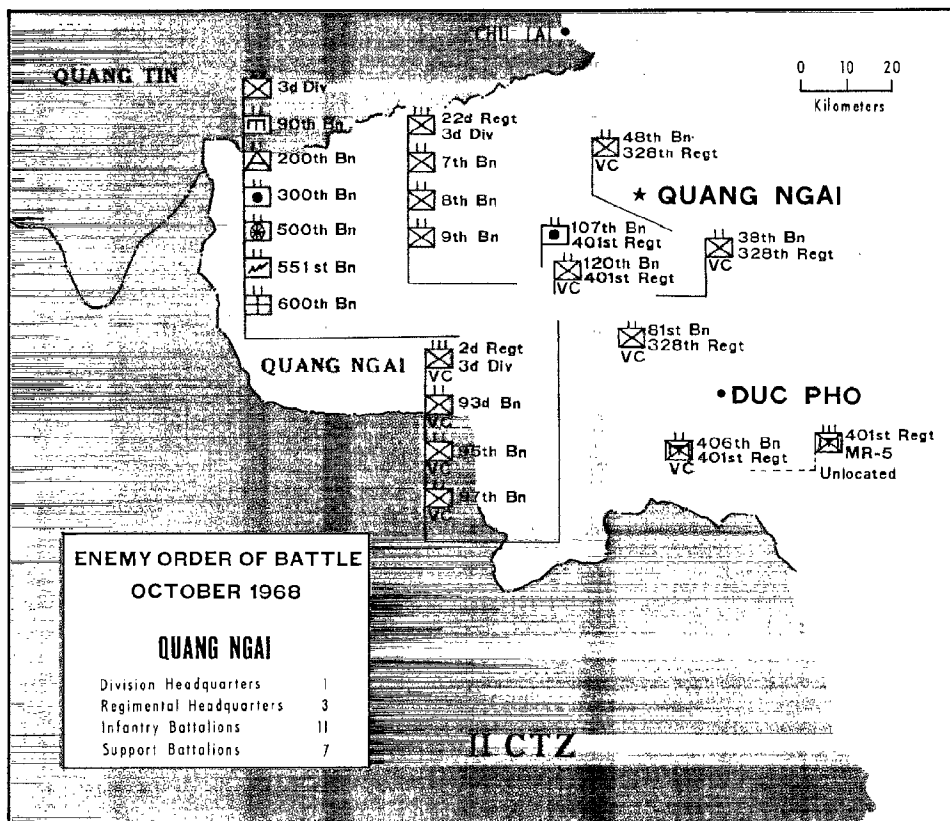
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e. Quang Ngai Province

On 31 October, the confirmed enemy combat strength in Quang Ngai province was an estimated 7,825, a 350-man decrease during the month. Affecting the decrease were the withdrawal of the 328th NVA Regimental headquarters and combat losses of 375, offset somewhat by the increase of 155 soldiers realized through infiltration and recruitment. Enemy activity in southern I CTZ consisted in the main of scattered harassing attacks-by-fire against GVN installations and densely populated urban areas.



★ Province capital

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2. ENEMY LOSSES IN I CTZ

	<u>Killed</u>	<u>Captured</u>	<u>Weapons</u>
<u>Enemy losses to III MAF/SLF</u>			
By Marines	1,707	24	431
Monthly III MAF/SLF	2,991	270	1,034
Total			
1968 III MAF/SLF	54,013	2,243	20,467
Total			

Enemy losses to other forces

By ROKMC	231	4	73
By RVNAF	1,006	357	549
By Special Forces/CIDG	52	7	15
Monthly Total	1,289	368	637
I CTZ Monthly Total	4,280	638	1,671
1968 Total	80,933	5,617	30,306

3. MARINE/SLF OFFENSIVE OPERATIONS

<u>October 1968</u>		<u>Cumulative 1968 Total</u>
7,849	Patrols	109,967
4,319	Ambushes	48,694
35	Company operations	929
584	Sniper posts	3,271
4	Battalion operations	21*
7	Regimental or	23*
	larger operations	
6,862	Combat/combat	76,377
	support sorties	
61,259	Helicopter sorties	549,776

\*Since monthly figures include operations continued from previous months, they are not used to compute cumulative totals.

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4. CHANGES IN MAJOR III MAF/SLF MARINE UNITS

<u>Unit</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>From/To</u>
HMM-363 (SLF Alfa)	1Oct	Phu Bai/LPH-5
HMM-265	5Oct	Marble Mtn/Phu Bai
HMM-165 (SLF Bravo)	5Oct	LPH-10/Marble Mtn
MATCU-65	10Oct	Quang Tri/Okinawa
2d LAAM Bn	12Oct	Chu Lai/CONUS
3d Bn, 26th Marines	15Oct	Phu Loc/Danang
5th 155mm Gun Btry	18Oct	Quang Tri/Camp Carroll
BLT 2/26 (SLF Alfa)	18Oct	Quang Tri/LPH-5
BLT 2/26 (SLF Alfa)	25Oct	LPH-5/Hoi An
HMM-363 (SLF Alfa)	27Oct	LPH-5/Phu Bai
HMM-165 (SLF Bravo)	30Oct	Marble Mtn/LPH-10

5. UNITS ASSIGNED TO THE SPECIAL LANDING FORCESSLF Alfa (TG 79.4)

Battalion Landing Team - 2/26  
Marine Medium Helicopter Squadron -363

SLF Bravo (TG 79.5)

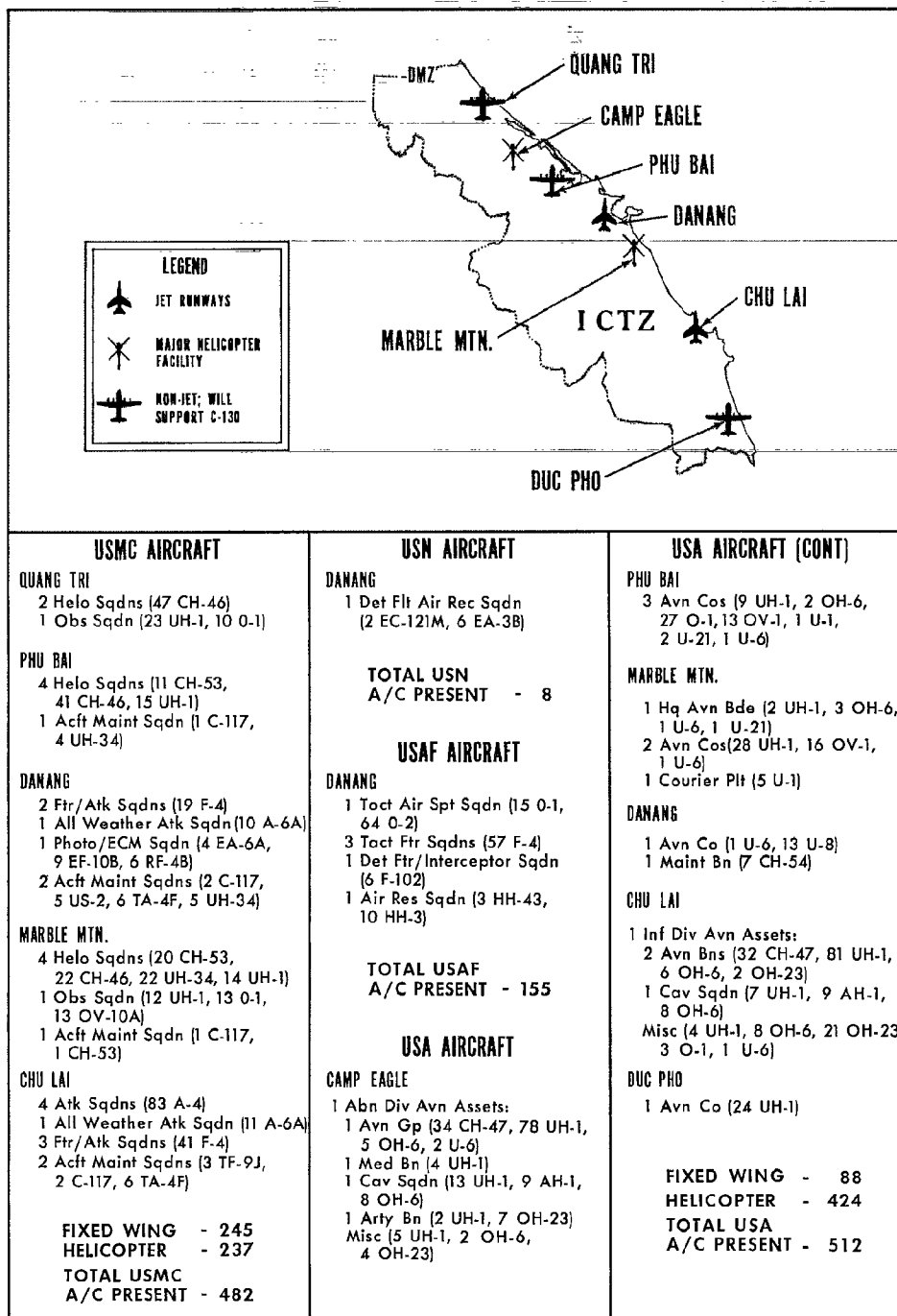
Battalion Landing Team - 2/7  
Marine Medium Helicopter Squadron - 165

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## 6. US AIRCRAFT BASED AT MAJOR I CTZ AIRFIELDS AS OF 31 OCT 1968



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7. MARINE CIVIC ACTION

<u>October 1968</u>		<u>Cumulative 1968 Total</u>
124,128	Persons given medical treatment	948,653
1,925	Persons given dental treatment	35,193
406	Persons given medical or dental training	1,999
21,375	Pounds of food distributed	1,153,290
10,181	Pounds of soap distributed	76,278
7,681	Pounds of clothing distributed	78,842
502	Critically ill civilians evacuated	4,593
1,082	English language classes conducted	5,351
\$41,161	Cash donations	\$72,951
42,740	Persons fed	2,304,394
2,230	Students supported	12,148
104	Construction projects	895

8. III MAF STRENGTH

	<u>USMC</u>		<u>USN</u>		<u>USA</u>	
	<u>Off</u>	<u>Enl</u>	<u>Off</u>	<u>Enl</u>	<u>Off</u>	<u>Enl</u>
Danang	2,875	41,618	243	1,858	264	1,933
Chu Lai	519	5,235	21	112	1,540	18,434
Duc Pho	-	-	-	-	283	4,505
Phu Bai	438	5,945	12	138	1,973	19,136
Quang Tri	521	5,096	90	615	1,768	16,732
DMZ Area	831	18,309	63	518	279	3,908
Totals	5,184	76,203	429	3,241	6,107	64,648

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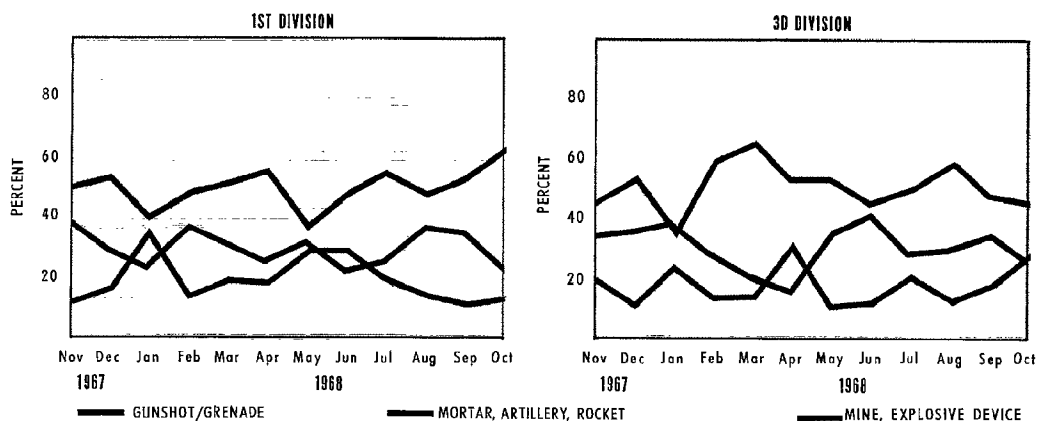
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## 9. MARINE CASUALTIES

During the past 12 months, 18,346 Marines from the 1st and 3d Divisions became combat casualties as a result of operations in I CTZ. A breakdown of these casualties by type of weaponry inflicting them shows 31.2% resulted from small arms fire or grenades, 35.4% from mines or other explosive devices, and the remaining 33.4% as a result of artillery, mortar, or rocket fire.

Of interest is a comparison between the two divisions by the types of casualties. The majority (51%) of the 3d Division casualties were caused by indirect fire weapons, with but 18.4% of the division's killed and wounded resulting from mines. In contrast to statistics from the 3d Division's DMZ area of operations, where the enemy frequently has been supported by NVA artillery emplaced in North Vietnam or Laos, casualties from the 1st Division, which fights primarily in the coastal plain of I CTZ, reflect a constant confrontation with the insidious mine warfare of the guerrilla. This difference in enemy tactics is the main reason for the reversal in the statistical pattern, with 49% of the 1st Division casualties sustained by mines, and 19.4% caused by rocket or mortar fire. The graphs below displaying Marine casualties by weapon, portray the different wars being fought by the two divisions.

### MARINE CASUALTIES BY WEAPON TYPE



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10. LOGISTICS

a. Supply levels at end of period

Class I

(1000 of rations/  
days of supply)

	<u>Danang</u>	<u>Dong Ha</u>
MCI rations	110/2	722/16
B rations	182/4	307/7
A rations	171/4	114/2

Class III and IIIA (Bulk) (Marine Corps Owned)

(1000 gals/days  
of supply)

	<u>Danang</u>	<u>Phu Bai</u>	<u>Dong Ha</u>
JP-4	-	-	13/4
AVGAS	-	-	12/12
MOGAS	82/9	101/8	-
DIESEL	23/1	131/7	-

Class V and VA    Danang    Chu Lai    Phu Bai    Dong Ha

Ground Ammunition (days of supply)	45	45	45	45
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Aviation Ordnance - Stocks maintained within CINCPAC allocations.

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b. Resupply Status

- (1)
- Surface Shipping Status (all I CTZ)
- 28,328 M/T

Received from CONUS (17,771 M/T)

Received from intra-WestPac (10,557 M/T)

- (2)
- Air Shipping Status
- 1,289 S/T

Received from CONUS (407 S/T)

Received from intra-WestPac (882 S/T)

c. Resupply Status Within RVN

- (1)
- Surface Shipping Status
- 111,670 S/T

Danang to Chu Lai (42,772 S/T)

Danang to Hue/Phu Bai (30,940 S/T)

Danang to Dong Ha/Cua Viet (37,958 S/T)

- (2)
- Fixed Wing Shipping Status (USMC and PACAF)
- 4,561 S/T

Danang to Chu Lai (274 S/T)

Danang to Phu Bai (159 S/T)

Danang to Dong Ha (1,385 S/T)

Other intra-I CTZ APOE's (2,743 S/T)

- (3)
- Helicopter Shipping Status (USMC)
- 5,626 S/T
- 
- CH-53

d. Cargo Shipped out of RVN

- (1)
- Surface
- 13,602 M/T

MSTS Conventional Vessels (12,761 M/T)

Roll On/Roll Off Vessels (841 M/T)

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(2) Air

404 S/T

USMC (318 S/T)

MAC (36 S/T)

PACAF (50 S/T)

e. Maintenance

Items evacuated from RVN to 3dFSR	738
Items repaired at 3dFSR	146
Items returned to CONUS from 3dFSR	3
or disposed of on Okinawa	

f. Construction Projects

Roads -133.1 miles were either under construction or being upgraded.

Bridges - Four Class 60 bridges were repaired and three Class 60 bridges were under construction.

Rafts and Ferries - Four rafts (one in the Chu Lai area, two in the Danang area, and one in Hue) were in operation.

g. Medical and Dental Services(1) Medical

Patients admitted to III MAF facilities	1,810
Battle injury (346)	
Non-battle injury (239)	
Disease (1,225)	
Evacuated out-of-country	392
Deaths in III MAF facilities	4
Returned to duty	732
Hospitalized as of 31 October	191

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(2) Dental

Total Procedures	51,761
Operative, Crown, and Bridge	23,550
Prosthetics	634
Oral Surgery	4,405
Preventive Dentistry	11,715
Number of Sitzings	18,712

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