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*3/1/77*

*FMF-Pac: Operations of U.S. Marine  
forces, Vietnam  
and 1968 Anniversary*

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OPERATIONS OF U. S. MARINE FORCES  
VIETNAM

DECEMBER 1968  
AND  
1968 SUMMARY

C-8



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FLEET MARINE FORCE, PACIFIC

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This is a summary of activities of US Marine Corps forces in Vietnam for the month of December 1968, as well as a review of those activities for the whole of 1968. Its purpose is to update similar historical reports covering the period from March 1965 through November 1968.

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SUMMARY

1968 emerged as a year of omnidirectional development -- a period of powerful, progressive action which marked the reduction of the enemy's combat strength to the extent he is clearly reluctant to risk exposure of his major formations to further destruction; the measured progress of the ARVN in becoming a professional fighting force; and the generation of new and viable growth in the pacification campaign, a program now embracing measurable momentum in its acceptance by the Vietnamese populace. Friendly combat operations repulsed the enemy's all-out effort on I CTZ battlefields, taking a toll of enemy combatant strength equivalent to ten divisions (more than 100,000 NVA/VC were killed, captured, or defected in I CTZ), and forcing his withdrawal from the area of decision by end-year. The RVNAF, its very structure severely challenged by the enemy's abrupt show of force during early 1968, responded in all five provinces with an assertive performance, thus gaining recognition as a capable, combat-proven force-at-arms. And the Vietnamese government, likewise faced with its most serious test, reacted to the enemy offensive with strength, solidifying the GVN position among the people by moving with timely energy to restore order, repair enemy-caused damage, and renew the advance of pacification and revolutionary development.

The III MAF mobile offensive campaign imposed grave damage on the enemy in I CTZ during 1968, as large unit combat operations accounted for nearly 48,000 NVA/VC killed, more than 2,100 taken prisoner, and almost 19,000 weapons captured. Action early in the year was centered in northern I CTZ, where III MAF counteraction ruined an enemy drive to invest the two northern provinces. Violent, sustained combat took place along the DMZ flanks, with III MAF combined arms counterattacks repulsing strong NVA thrusts against Khe Sanh and Dong Ha, and at Hue, where Marines and Vietnamese troops joined to expel a determined enemy force from the city.

The early-May detection of a major enemy buildup south of Danang signaled a shift of the major combat arena from north-

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ern to central I CTZ. By mid-Summer, however, our forces, ranging over a wide area to the south and west of Danang, effectively had spoiled enemy plans for large-scale offensive action. The latter part of 1968 saw the enemy, by and large, pull back his major units to relatively secure areas, unwilling, and to a large extent unable, to risk further destruction at the hands of III MAF maneuver and firepower.

An unremitting counter guerrilla campaign dealt yet other serious blows to the enemy in the coastal regions of central and southern I CTZ. Already thwarted by a ring of wide-ranging major unit operations, the enemy further lost ground during the year to an obstructive buffer of small unit maneuver protecting pacification efforts and military vital areas by denying him close-in terrain and restricting the availability of his war-required resources. Severe damage was dealt the already diluted guerrilla and local force units, as more than 208,000 patrols, ambushes, and company-size sweep operations, successfully detecting enemy assemblies and infrastructure activities, removed over 8,100 enemy from service during the year.

ARVN units continued throughout 1968 to demonstrate a marked improvement in aggressive application of combat skills. Severely tested by the enemy's all-out Tet offensive, the ARVN met the challenge with distinction, fighting as well-disciplined units to help repulse the enemy's widespread and well-coordinated attack effort. Following their successful combat performance during Tet, the ARVN retained their aggressive posture, accounting for 26,688 enemy killed in 1968 -- more than double the 12,483 NVA/VC credited to ARVN 1967 operations. Having displayed the ability to match enemy combat power, the ARVN have assumed an increased responsibility in both the prosecution of the war and furtherance of GVN influence throughout I CTZ.

Abetted by the comprehensive screen of combat operations, pacification progress in I CTZ reflected an increasingly potent GVN-initiated and III MAF-supported program for development of a viable society. Fearful of further erosion of his popular base, the enemy launched his 1968 Tet offensive, confident

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it would topple the GVN. However, this offensive accrued but further dividends to his long-standing pattern of failure. Reacting in timely fashion to take full advantage of the III MAF/ARVN counteroffensive, the GVN engineered a meaningful civil recovery program to lay the framework for a highly successful 1968 pacification effort. The 1 November commencement of the Accelerated Pacification Campaign climaxed this year of substantive advance, as by end-year, the campaign was well on the road to satisfactory conclusion -- 1968 results included a record 3,118 Hoi Chanh, more than 4,000 Viet Cong infrastructure cadre neutralized, 69% of the I CTZ population considered secure, and nearly a quarter-million civilians organized in the People's Self-Defense Organization.

Thus, with support of Revolutionary Development and Pacification at its core, the III MAF program of counter guerrilla and large unit operations, together with its flexible and responsive logistic and air efforts, expanded in ever-widening circles throughout I CTZ, achieving substantial progress toward the objectives of defeating the VC/NVA forces and assisting the GVN to extend control throughout I CTZ.



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GOALS-And Progress Toward Achieving Them-

Consistent with the established US objectives throughout South Vietnam, III MAF military activities in I CTZ during 1968 were focused principally on the extension of GVN control in I CTZ and the defeat of NVA/VC forces.

Certain goals were formulated as vehicles for measuring progress toward achievement of these objectives; those relating primarily to extending GVN control in I CTZ are discussed in the Revolutionary Development and Pacification chapter of this summary. Three III MAF goals devoted to destruction of the NVA/VC are addressed in this chapter as:

-To render ineffective all enemy main and local force units.

-To inflict losses on enemy forces at a rate greater than the enemy can replace.

-To neutralize enemy base areas.

Goal One-

The first COMUSMACV/III MAF defined goal, the rendering ineffective all enemy main and local force units, is one extremely difficult to gauge accurately, particularly in the case of regular NVA units. The North Vietnamese forces derive virtually all reinforcement and logistic support from homeland sources; therefore, meaningful information concerning their combat effectiveness is not always readily available in the degree required to render precise assessment. A major factor bearing on the problem of both the accomplishment of the assigned goal and the measurement of progress achieved thereto is the enemy's well-demonstrated residual capacity to reinforce expeditiously his NVA

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formations. Drawing on fresh, already-trained troops from his divisions stationed in North Vietnam, and using those divisions' cadre to ready replacement units, the enemy repeatedly has remanned his front line NVA elements in short order. Further inhibiting Free World efforts to reduce the enemy to non-effective status during 1968 was the massive influx of NVA combat units into I CTZ; at end-year, there were 68 NVA infantry battalions deployed in the I CTZ/DMZ area, as compared to 42 battalions so located in December 1967.

However, certain hard indices of progress are clearly evident. The loss of over 100,000 troops (killed, captured, or defected) and 33,425 weapons, along with thousands of tons of ammunition, supplies, and equipment, to Free World forces in I CTZ during 1968 has levied grave damage against enemy combat strength -- in the northern two provinces, his major units have been forced to repair to North Vietnam and Laos; in southern I CTZ, regular NVA and main force Viet Cong units, while remaining nearby, have exhibited a marked reluctance for combat, keeping instead to hinterland secure areas. In addition, instances reflecting a deterioration in quality of both the individual enemy soldier and his unit have become commonplace. Interrogation of prisoners has revealed many to be under-trained and extremely young, while enemy units engaged in combat have been increasingly guilty of such unsoldierly conduct as abandonment of dead and weapons on the battlefield. This latter factor is amply reflected in the results of 1968 DMZ area operations. During 1968, our forces accounted for 15,016 enemy killed and 5,175 weapons seized along the DMZ, for an average of one weapon per 2.9 NVA killed, compared to a not nearly so favorable 1967 ratio of 1:6.1 (6,884 NVA killed, 1,129 weapons seized).

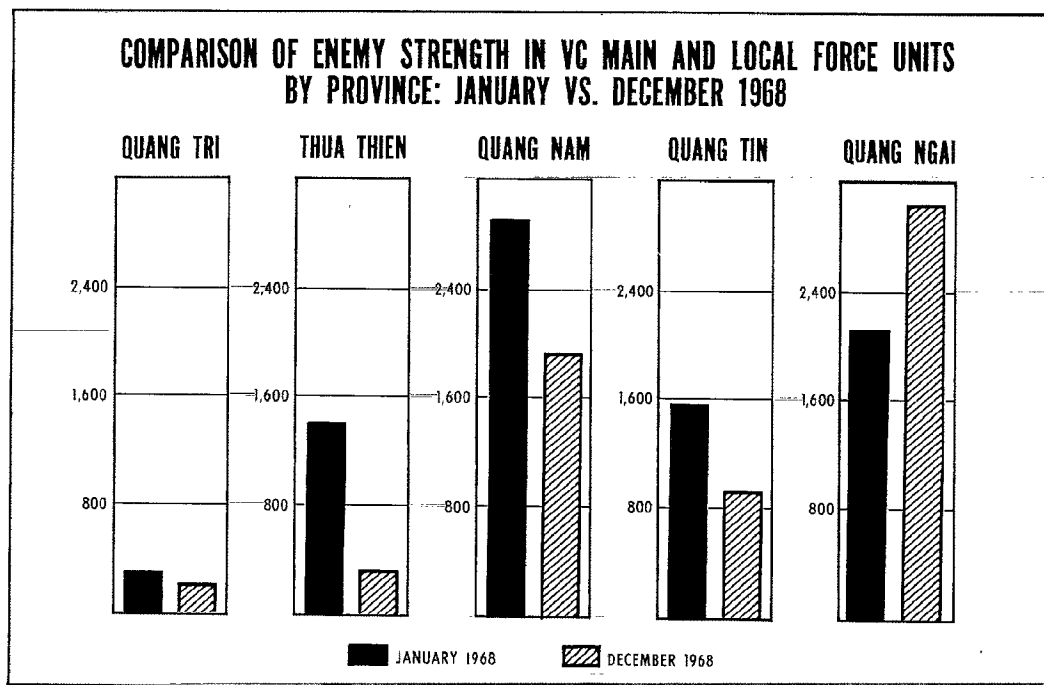
In the case of Viet Cong main and local force (MF and LF) units, an assessment of battle damage can be more readily determined. These elements, largely local in origin and deployment, can be more easily tracked, owing to long

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accumulation of intelligence concerning their habits, configuration, and the identification of personalities within individual units. One measure of progress achieved toward attrition of Viet Cong combat effectiveness is found in the year-end reduced strength of confirmed VC MF and LF units. The December 1968 estimated VC strength in these units was 6,485, a 22% decrease from the 8,355 recorded in January. Enemy units particularly hard hit were Quang Nam's R-20th and V25th (LF) Battalions (down to 195 and 200 personnel from January 1968 strengths of 490 and 420, respectively), Quang Nam/Quang Tin's 1st VC (MF) Regiment (reduced from 1,285 troops to 520), and Thua Thien's 804, 804B, and 800th (all MF) Battalions (deleted by COMUSMACV from the order of battle as non-effective, being replaced by three NVA battalions). Only in Quang Ngai province did the enemy show a gain in strength (from 2,125 to 3,025), and this increase was due to the shift of the 2d VC (MF) Regiment (1,290 troops) into Quang Ngai from II CTZ rather than failure of Free World forces to maintain constant pressure against the enemy.

The graph below compares the December 1968 estimated enemy strength in VC MF and LF units, by province, with that recorded in January.



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Nevertheless, the above statistics cannot be construed as all-conclusive. Since the enemy traditionally has drawn replacements for his battle-depleted Viet Cong MF and LF formations from the guerrilla ranks, he will continue to enjoy a strong recruit base so long as his guerrilla structure remains sound. However, constant erosion of the guerrilla infrastructure, the combined product of main and local force recruitment and the attrition caused by the relentless III MAF counterguerrilla campaign, has forced the enemy to infuse this depleted force with NVA, the undesirable effects of which are described in the counterguerrilla chapter of this summary.

In sum, the magnitude of the attrition of enemy personnel and material by III MAF, ARVN, and ROKMC operations in I CTZ during 1968, while not quantifiable in exact terms of reduced combat effectiveness, did force the enemy to pull back to more secure regions, a posture he has retained, for the most part, since late Summer. Therefore, III MAF during 1968 moved a major stride toward accomplishing the goal of ultimate destruction of the enemy's combat effectiveness.

#### Goal Two-

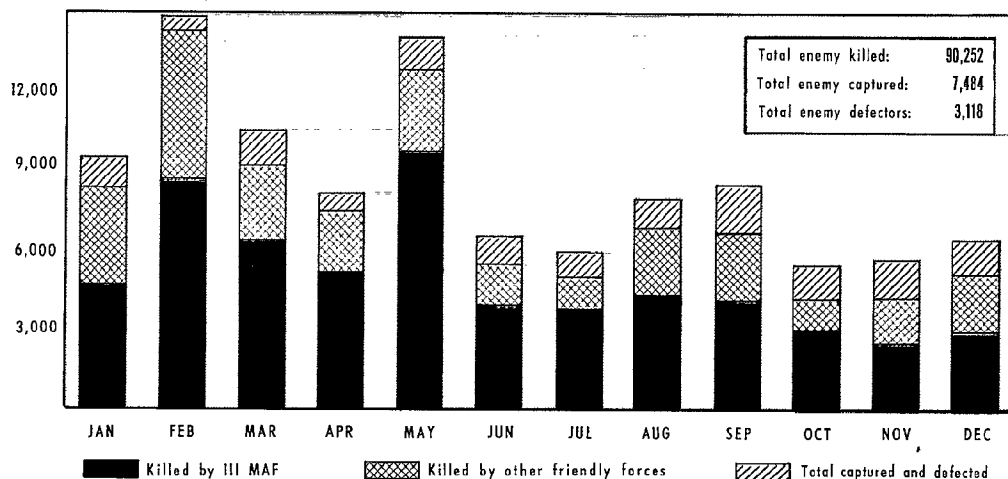
In furtherance of the cited 1968 goal of inflicting losses on enemy forces at a rate greater than the enemy can replace, III MAF and SLF operations in I CTZ resulted in 59,432 enemy killed and 2,805 taken prisoner. Additionally, Vietnamese forces, Republic of Korea Marines, and US Special Forces in I CTZ accounted for another 30,820 killed and 4,679 captured. There also were 3,118 enemy who rallied to the GVN during the year. In sum, confirmed enemy losses in I CTZ for 1968 -- killed, captured, or defected -- were 100,854.

The graph on the following page displays confirmed enemy losses in I CTZ during the year.

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## ENEMY TROOP LOSSES IN I CTZ - 1968



CINCPAC and COMUSMACV have concluded 35% of the confirmed enemy killed is a reasonable estimate of enemy troops who either die of wounds after battle or become permanently disabled. When this 35% factor is applied to the confirmed NVA/VC killed, enemy losses in I CTZ then total 132,442 -- 90,252 killed, 31,588 disabled or dead as a result of wounds, 7,484 captured, and 3,118 rallied to the GVN.

An explicit assessment of III MAF's progress toward achievement of this second goal, however, can be rendered only by a comparison of losses inflicted upon Viet Cong and NVA ranks and the enemy's ability to infiltrate and recruit replacement personnel. According to CINCPAC estimates for 1968, approximately 82,000 North Vietnamese were infiltrated as replacements for units in the DMZ area and Military Region (MR) Tri-Thien-Hue (the two northern provinces of I CTZ) and another 50,000 infiltrated to units in Military Region V (the three southern provinces of I CTZ and the three northern provinces of II CTZ). Assuming 70% (35,000) of the MR V infiltrators were absorbed by units in Quang Nam, Quang Tin, and Quang Ngai provinces, total infiltration to I CTZ was an estimated 117,000. In addition, an estimated 12,500 personnel were recruited during the year

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by the enemy in I CTZ. Thus, the second goal established by III MAF was attained, as the total enemy accretions in I CTZ for 1968 were approximately 129,500 -- some 3,000 less than his losses.

Goal Three-

The third 1968 goal assigned III MAF, as derived from CINCPAC and COMUSMACV directives, was the neutralization of eight enemy base areas within I CTZ. Base areas employed by the enemy in I CTZ are not sharply defined; rather, they are geographic regions in which the enemy is known to have facilities for the training and logistic support of his regular and guerrilla forces. Since these base areas cover hundreds of square miles of hinterland and piedmont, connected by thousands of miles of narrow road and waterways, absolute neutralization of the whole of these base areas is neither probable nor necessary. It is the destruction and dislocation of the enemy's combat and logistic power within the base areas, and the eventual degradation of his combat capabilities, to which CINCPAC refers when defining neutralization as a condition when the areas are "no longer able to be used for their intended purpose."

During 1968, III MAF conducted 21 operations in the enemy's base areas. These operations resulted in 21,958 enemy killed, 1,437 captured, and 11,086 weapons seized, and the neutralization of two base areas: Base Area 100 in Quang Tin province and Base Area 116 in Quang Nam.

The enemy established in 1968 one new base area which met the criteria established by CINCPAC and COMUSMACV. Designated Base Area 112, it is located in the mountainous region of Quang Nam province southwest of An Hoa. On 7 December, III MAF launched Operation TAYLOR COMMON, a multi-regiment attack involving both ground and heliborne maneuver, against this newly defined enemy base area. Coordinated with Operation LE LOI, a 1st ARVN Ranger Group action, and FAYETTE CANYON, an Americal Division operation blocking on the south,

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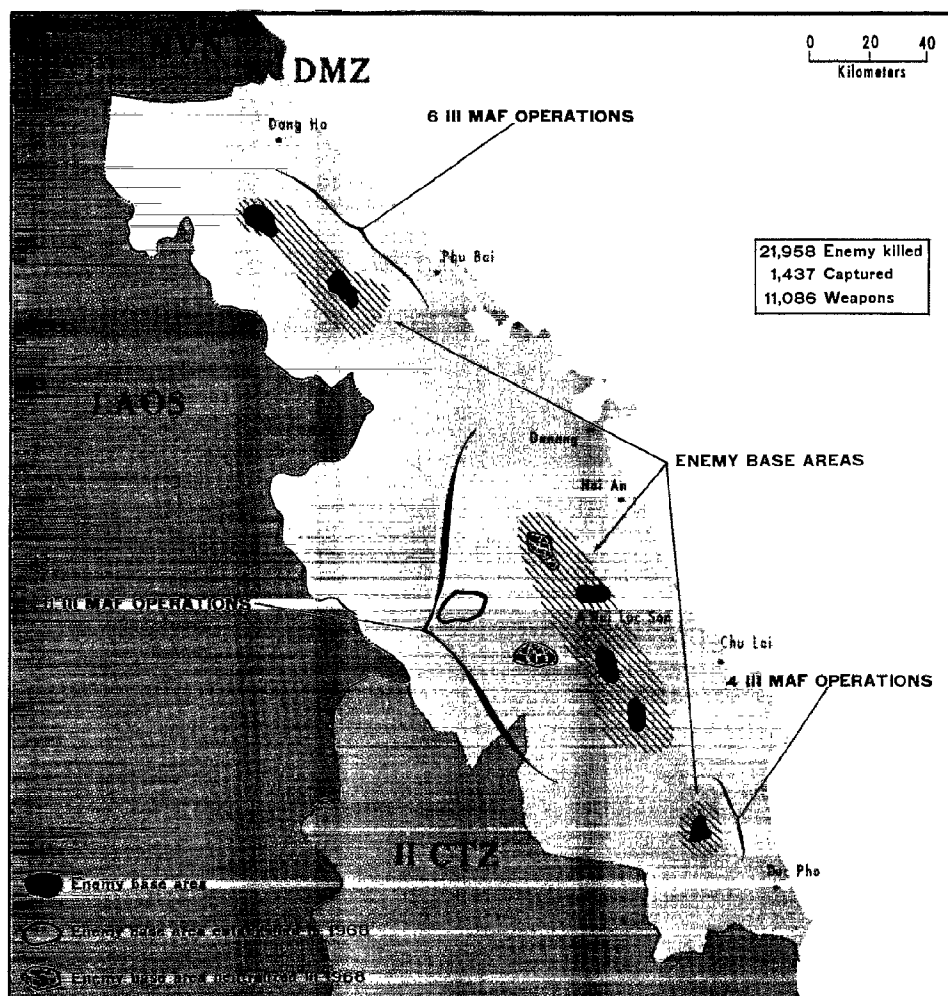
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TAYLOR COMMON continued into 1969 as a concerted campaign to destroy enemy forces, fortifications, and logistic apparatus in the objective area. Through end-December, contact developed by III MAF units was characterized as light to moderate; however, substantial enemy arms and supply stocks had been seized and subsequently destroyed.

The map below portrays the status of enemy base areas, and the III MAF operations conducted therein, during 1968.

### III MAF BASE AREA NEUTRALIZATION OPERATIONS: 1968



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In addition to the operations portrayed, Free World forces executed another 56 operations on the immediate periphery of I CTZ enemy base areas in 1968; these operations accounted for over 26,000 more enemy killed or captured and over 12,000 weapons seized.

Thus, Free World forces, in executing 77 battalion or larger size operations within, or proximate to, enemy base regions, accounted for nearly 50,000 enemy killed or captured, and seized more than 23,000 weapons. On this basis, coupled with the comprehensive maneuver and reconnaissance effort continuously interlacing the enemy's remaining base areas, III MAF made substantial progress toward achieving its goal during 1968.

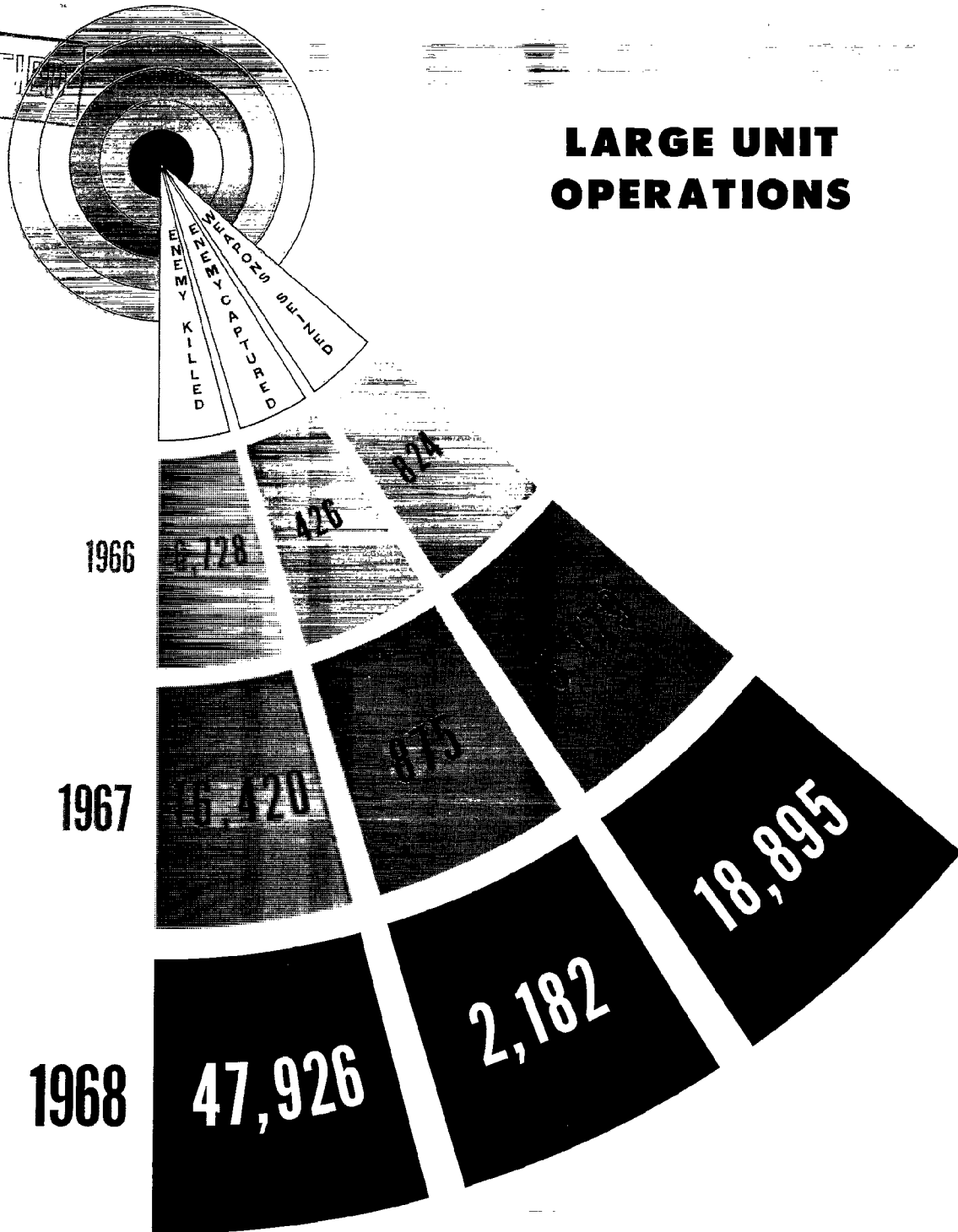
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# LARGE UNIT OPERATIONS



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LARGE UNIT OPERATIONS

Large unit operations during 1968 were marked first by a period of violent, sustained combat enveloping virtually the first five months of the year, with III MAF countering successfully the largest enemy offensive of the war, then by one of diminishing major unit actions, as the enemy, beset by prohibitive losses, became increasingly reluctant to risk his forces to further destruction. Advancing a concept of rapid mobility - of both maneuver units and firepower support - III MAF and Special Landing Force large unit operations resulted in 47,926 NVA/VC killed, 2,182 captured, and 18,895 weapons seized -- thus considerably surpassing the totals credited to large unit operations executed in 1965, 1966, and 1967, combined (24,420 enemy killed, 1,444 captured, and 4,246 weapons).

The enemy's early 1968 all-out offensive was launched during the Vietnamese Tet, or lunar new year, holiday celebration. Taking advantage of both a traditionally festive and unwarlike season, and the US preoccupation with the impending battle at Khe Sanh, he aimed a well-coordinated series of major attacks at friendly military installations, lines of communication, and principal Vietnamese cities and administrative centers, opting for a spectacular victory through the principles of surprise and mass.

The enemy bid ended in costly failure, as III MAF and ARVN forces contained his initial thrusts, then counterattacked to rout his formations with extremely heavy losses. Reinforced during this period of heavy fighting by two US Army divisions and Marine Regimental Landing Team-27, III MAF exploited the accrued combat flexibility with a strong pursuit of the enemy, penetrating and establishing a presence in areas he once claimed as secure. Particularly impressive during this period of heavy fighting in I CTZ were the ARVN, who, standing firm in the face of the enemy attack effort, demonstrated conclusively their emergence as a competent fighting force.

Subsequent enemy attempts at mounting serious offensive action were largely ineffective. His ambitiously planned

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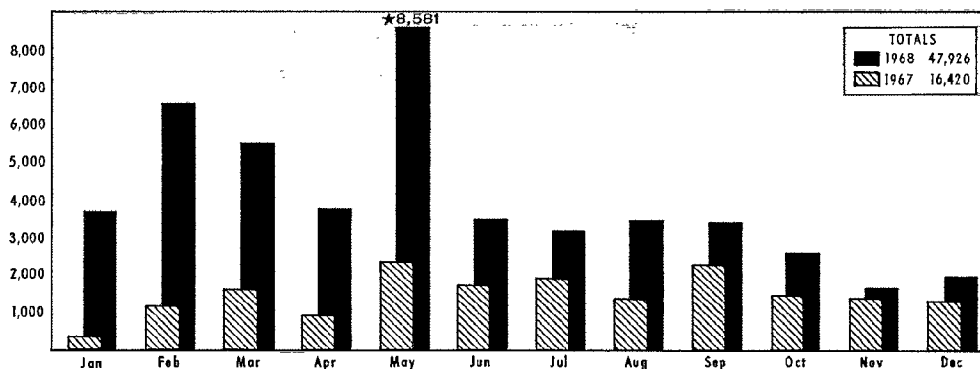
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but feebly executed second and third offensives (in May and August, respectively) were of decidedly reduced velocity, characteristic of an opponent who has spent the better part of his veteran troop strength. Often, captured NVA soldiers were extremely young and poorly trained. In addition, enemy units defeated in the field became increasingly prone to abandon their dead, weapons, and supplies, hard evidence of a growing lack of battlefield discipline. By early Autumn, the enemy was clearly withdrawing the bulk of his forces to more secure areas to escape friendly operations continually interlacing his base and assembly areas and his lines of communication.

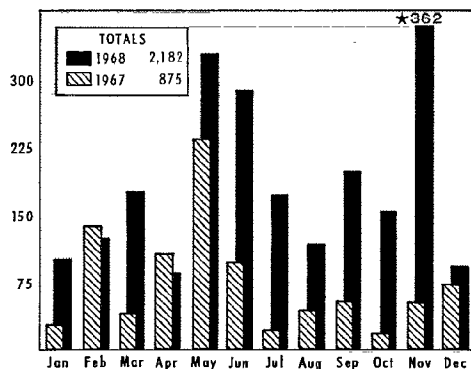
The graphs below, illustrating enemy losses to III MAF and SLF operations, portray the thrust of the action during 1968, along with a comparison of similar statistics for 1967.

### ENEMY LOSSES TO III MAF & SLF LARGE UNIT OPERATIONS: 1967 & 1968

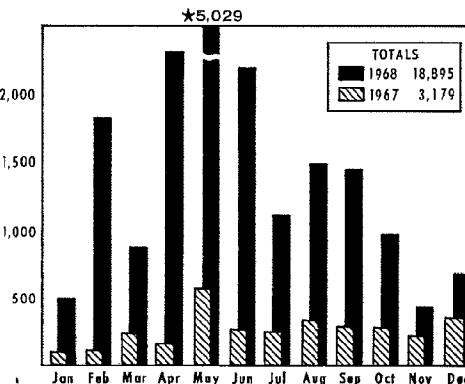
#### ENEMY KILLED



#### ENEMY CAPTURED



#### WEAPONS CAPTURED



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Major combat action during early 1968 was centered on, but not limited to, long-term operations in northern I CTZ. Along the DMZ, Operations SCOTLAND (Khe Sanh), NAPOLEON/SALINE (Dong Ha and Cua Viet), KENTUCKY, and LANCASTER thwarted enemy intentions to effect a take-over in Quang Tri, while Operations HUE CITY, CARENTAN II, JEB STUART, NEVADA EAGLE, and HOUSTON blocked a similar threat to Thua Thien. In the southern three provinces, a saturation of smaller operations, shorter in duration, maintained constant pressure against an enemy not yet disposed to engage in other than intermittent, but occasionally intense, forays against Free World forces.

In late Spring and early Summer, the focus of combat action shifted south to center in Quang Nam. Despite a massive influx of NVA units, trailed from North Vietnam and Laos border areas, the enemy was never able to gain the initiative. Operations such as ALLEN BROOK, MAMELUKE THRUST, MAUI PEAK, HENDERSON HILL, and MEADE RIVER, in coordination with complementing ARVN large unit actions, and a comprehensive ground and aerial reconnaissance campaign, denied him adequate opportunity to get set for a single successful attack. Immediately to the south, in Quang Tin province, III MAF Americal Division Operations WHEELER/WALLOWA, BURLINGTON TRAIL, and POCAHONTAS FOREST kept the 2d NVA Division contained, inflicting heavy losses against its three regiments.

December III MAF and SLF large unit operations numbered 13, resulting in 1,854 enemy killed and 93 enemy and 788 weapons captured. The action remained primarily centered in Quang Nam province. There, Operation MEADE RIVER, a classic example of a deliberately executed cordon and search, was successfully brought to a close. Mounted in support of the Accelerated Pacification Campaign, MEADE RIVER and its ARVN counter-

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part accounted for over 1,200 enemy killed or captured; 72 prisoners were identified as Viet Cong infrastructure. In western Quang Nam, Operation TAYLOR COMMON, a multi-regiment assault into newly defined enemy Base Area 112 to destroy the primary source of troop and supply infiltration through the An Hoa basin, enjoyed steady progress. Except for a mid-December series of battles fought by ARVN Rangers against a sizable NVA force attempting to exfiltrate the target area (the 1st ARVN Ranger Group conducted Operation LE LOI in conjunction with TAYLOR COMMON), significant contact was not common; however, the Marines' neutralization of numerous enemy harboring sites had, by end-month, unearthed substantial hoards of arms and supplies and accounted for 357 enemy killed or captured.

All told, there were 79 US large unit operations in I CTZ during 1968; their locations are displayed on the following page.

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The Tet Offensive

Timing his action to coincide with the Tet holiday, the enemy, in late January, launched an all-out offensive to seize a position of strength in I CTZ. Directing his assaults against the cities, the airfields, and the lines of communication, he based his hope for achieving success on four factors: (1) tactical surprise gained from initiating major offensive thrusts during a traditionally festive and peaceful holiday season; (2) the absence on holiday leaves of a large segment of the ARVN (further believing the bulk of the absent military would desert rather than return to face large-scale combat action); (3) diversion of III MAF combat assets by the coordinated, widespread series of attacks throughout the five provinces; and (4) support of the Vietnamese population.

The massive enemy offensive, albeit well-coordinated and, in several instances, skillfully engineered, culminated in total failure, achieving only a measure of surprise -- and the sacrifice of some 30,000 soldiers. Having earlier rejected, as tactically unsound, US participation in a Tet stand-down in I CTZ, III MAF, in coordination with ARVN and ROK Marine forces, mounted immediate counteraction, decisively defeating the enemy in a series of major battles throughout the coastal region of I CTZ. Highlights of the fighting at Hue, Danang, Quang Tri City, and other principal I CTZ population centers are described below and on the pages following.

-The Battle for Hue

The most intense, sustained fighting of the Tet offensive took place in the old imperial city of Hue. Here, the enemy, cleverly masking the infiltration of troops and arms into the city by amalgamating his formations with the traditionally heavy holiday traffic, was able to gain total surprise, and, correspondingly, his strongest position of the campaign. Completing his movement of troops under a pre-dawn shower of rocket and mortar fire, by first light on 31 January, the enemy enjoyed virtual control of the entire city. Only after nearly a month of fierce combat in the city - an environment

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totally foreign to the heretofore rice paddy and mountain piedmont setting of the war - were the Marines and Vietnamese armed forces able to destroy the last enemy resistance, restoring Hue to GVN control.

A number of factors other than the size and disposition of the occupying enemy forces also complicated the battle for Hue. Among these was the bad weather obtaining throughout most of the action, a condition seriously hampering the use of air, both as a tactical supporting arm and as a medium of logistic support. Not a small consideration influencing the employment of all friendly supporting arms also, was the desire to minimize injury to the civilian population, and damage to edifices of historic, cultural, and religious significance within the city. As a result, the use of other than direct fire supporting weapons was strictly controlled throughout the action.

Nevertheless, the III MAF and ARVN action to retake Hue was highly successful. In consequence with an initial assessment of the situation, LtGen LAM (CG, I Corps) moved to expel the enemy with ARVN assets, committing elements of his 1st Division, and requesting airborne reserves from Saigon. However, when the magnitude of the enemy opposition became apparent (subsequent prisoner interrogation confirmed elements of at least 11 enemy battalions participating in the battle), he requested III MAF assistance to retake that portion of the city south of the Hue (Perfume) river, deploying ARVN forces within the Citadel on the north. III MAF responded immediately; two companies of Marines already had been sent to Hue on the 31st to ensure the security of the MACV compound, and additional companies arrived from Phu Bai on the 1st and 2d of February.

The Marine action to seize south Hue was a surgical-

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ly precise assault by fire and maneuver. Beginning on 1 February, and attacking block-by-block and house-to-house, the Marines systematically rolled back the numerically superior enemy, silencing the last organized resistance on the 9th. Using loudspeaker broadcasts to guide civilians, and employing recoilless rifles, rocket launchers, mortars, and tanks and Ontos as the primary supporting arms, the assault forces accomplished their mission with a minimum of harm to non-combatants and to the city; more than 1,000 enemy were killed.

With the southern sector of the city purged of serious enemy opposition, Marines joined ARVN and Vietnamese Marine forces in the drive to clear the remainder of Hue. Also advancing against heavy resistance through 12 February, the RVNAF had fought well, compressing the VC and NVA forces into the southern quadrant of the Citadel. After an additional two weeks of close, violent combat, the combined US/Vietnamese attack reclaimed the city of Hue, with the Marines seizing the southeast wall on the 24th, and the ARVN wresting control of the Imperial Palace from the enemy on the 25th. Concurrently, US Army units concluded their attack from the west, effectively severing enemy supply lanes and escape routes.

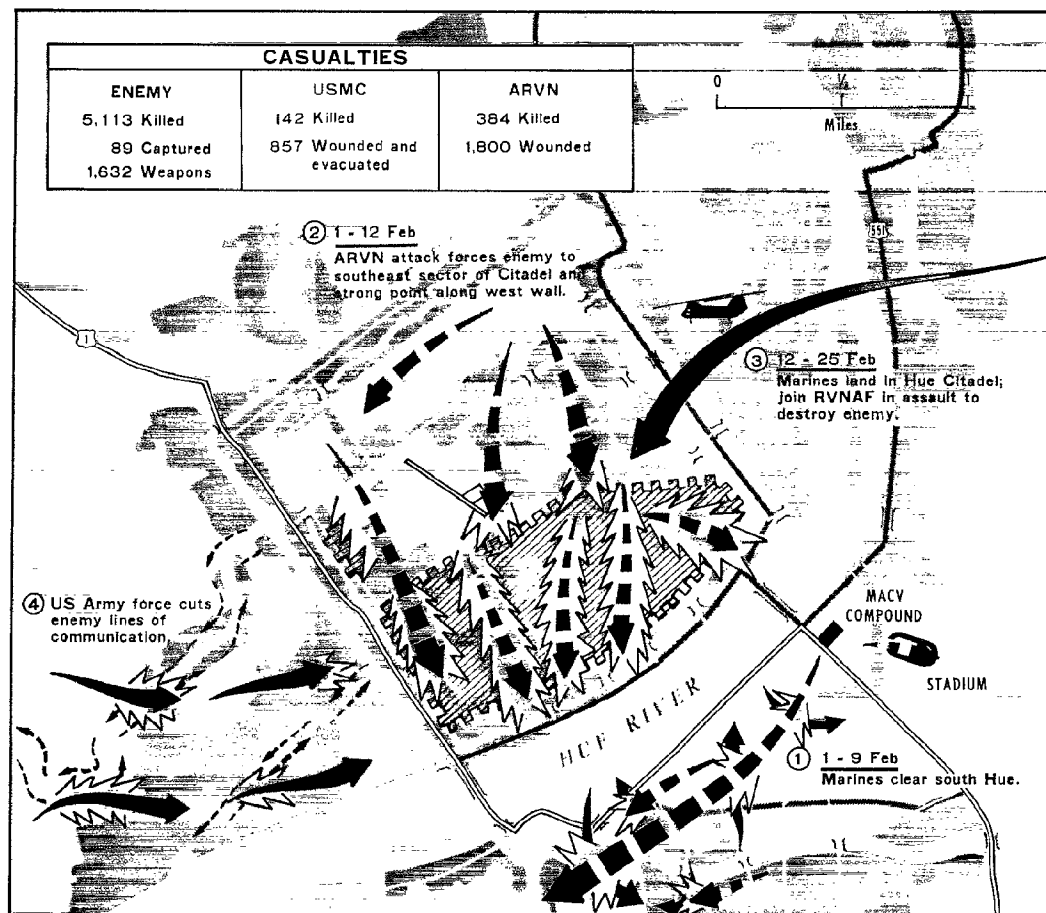
The battle of Hue is portrayed on the following page.

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## THE BATTLE FOR HUE: 1-25 FEBRUARY 1968

-The Action at Danang

Second only to the battle of Hue in intensity was the action at Danang. Taking place between 30 January and 9 February, largely in the area south of the city, the resultant engagements proved extremely costly to the enemy -- he lost over 1,400 troops, and once again was denied a meaningful penetration of the Marine-held Danang area.

The enemy preparation for attacking Danang was a well-coordinated effort involving the massing of combat units into attack positions near the city. On 30 January, having surrepti-

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tiously assembled a sizable assault force within striking distance, he triggered his plan into action with early-morning rocket and mortar attacks against US and ARVN installations and a ground attack against the I ARVN Corps headquarters.

The enemy attack effort, however, gained only surprise, as the token ARVN force at the headquarters (the remainder were on holiday leave), in conjunction with a Combined Action Platoon, repulsed the attack, whereupon ARVN and Marine military policemen and ARVN Rangers, alerted to the threat of impending attack, moved into action, capturing 256 prisoners and detaining over 1,500 suspects in the immediate vicinity. During the ten-day period following, the enemy suffered an overwhelming defeat at the hands of aggressive III MAF and ARVN ground maneuver units and their application of supporting arms firepower. The enemy's initial thrust repelled and a large portion of his vanguard either killed or captured, he was obliged to commit his main forces piecemeal, with predictable results. Friendly ground units intercepted his attack columns well short of Danang and destroyed them in place.

#### -Tet Attacks Against Province Capitals

Enemy attacks against the provincial capitals of Quang Tri, Quang Nam, Quang Tin, and Quang Ngai were, except for a somewhat doubtful margin of propaganda benefit accrued, similarly non-productive. At Quang Tri City, elements of the 1st ARVN Division repulsed a two-battalion NVA thrust from the northeast on 31 January. Ejecting the enemy from the city by noon, the ARVN pursued the fleeing remnants, accounting for 468 killed and 232 weapons seized. At Tam Ky (Quang Tin) and Quang Ngai City, ARVN and US Army elements likewise blunted large-scale, mortar-supported ground attacks, inflicting heavy casualties against NVA regulars and Viet Cong main and local forces.

Only at Hoi An (Quang Nam) did the enemy gain a foothold, and he paid heavily for his temporary position advantage. ROK Marines, newly deployed to the Hoi An area from Quang

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Ngai province, counterattacked to retake the province capital, limiting the enemy's stay to less than 24 hours. The Korean contribution to the Free World defeat of the enemy Tet offensive included nearly 600 NVA/VC killed.

#### The Tet Offensive in Retrospect

His exaggerated claims of an overall substantial victory during the 1968 Tet offensive notwithstanding, the enemy sustained a costly - and serious - defeat. He was able to achieve a considerable measure of surprise (as evidenced at Hue and Danang), and he did cause major disruptions to overland lines of communication, as well as widespread destruction and temporary chaos in certain populated areas. However, at end-February, with the termination of the battle for Hue eliminating his last hold-out, he had gained no victories, occupied no new terrain, nor strengthened appreciably his standing with the civilian populace, and had wasted the equivalent of three divisions in the process.

Perhaps more significantly, however, he committed a serious blunder in underestimating the will of both the civilian populace and the Vietnamese armed forces. The people, rather than joining in popular support of the insurgent uprising, elected to remain loyal to their government, in many instances rallying to provide active support. And the ARVN, far from deserting in the face of the all-out offensive, as the enemy had long predicted, by and large returned to their posts to fight as well-disciplined units. In all likelihood, the enemy, in launching his Tet campaign, unwittingly triggered the ARVN elevation to stature. These two factors united to promote a strong optimism for the future conduct of the Vietnam war.

#### Operations in the DMZ Area

The major, sustained action in northern I CTZ during 1968 took place along the DMZ. There, from January through September, III MAF large unit operations administered a series of sharp defeats to elements of five regular NVA divi-

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sions, accounting for 15,016 enemy killed, 350 captured, and 5,175 weapons seized -- in each category more than doubling the results of III MAF 1967 DMZ operations (6,884 enemy killed and 78 enemy and 1,129 weapons captured). In addition, the 1st ARVN Division's 2d Regiment proved to be a formidable ally, accounting for more than 5,500 enemy killed in combat along the DMZ.

During 1968, the enemy substantially altered the pattern of attack he had exhibited in the DMZ area from mid-1966 through 1967. Instead of committing major NVA formations to periodic month-long trans-DMZ invasions, and retracting them for like periods of refurbishing following inevitable defeat by III MAF maneuver and firepower, the enemy attempted in 1968 to sustain indefinitely a large combatant force south of the Ben Hai river. By making use of his short, relatively secure lines of communication through North Vietnam and Laos, the enemy aspired to mass sufficient strength to initiate investment of northern I CTZ. In aiming at a spectacular victory, preferably one involving the flanking of the Marine combat outpost line, the enemy reasoned he could compromise the US position in northern Quang Tri, forcing friendly units to fall back to positions south of Route 9.

The enemy was unsuccessful. Despite an all-out attempt to maintain his formations combat effective by pouring replacement units and supply stocks across the Ben Hai at an unprecedented rate, by early Summer it was abundantly clear he had overestimated his strength and severely taxed his residual capability to reinforce. There followed a period of general withdrawal of NVA units to sanctuary in North Vietnam and Laos, a forced retrogression which, by end-year, had resulted in almost total absence of major enemy units in northern Quang Tri.

#### -Operations in the Khe Sanh Region

Paramount among major unit actions near the DMZ in early 1968 was the battle for Khe Sanh, where from Janu-

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ary through March, III MAF met and defeated the largest enemy thrust of the war. Employing the full spectrum of US combined arms firepower in support of resolute ground maneuver, our forces administered grave damage to major elements of two NVA divisions -- punishment of sufficient magnitude to force their ultimate withdrawal from I CTZ combat.

Desperate for a signal victory over the Marines deployed along the northern border of South Vietnam, the enemy moved a strong force against the Khe Sanh combat base, the western anchor of the combat outpost line. An overwhelming assault against the outpost appeared to the enemy to offer the fundamental ingredients for success, as the situation at Khe Sanh invited a parallel with that at Dien Bien Phu, the scene of his 1954 victory over the French. Relatively isolated and surrounded by rugged terrain, the garrison was further plagued by seasonally poor weather, a factor expected to negate III MAF's capability for timely and effective air support, and by the interdiction of Route 9 (due to bad weather as much as to enemy action), rendering overland reinforcement or supply, at best, unlikely. Finally, the nearby Laotian border provided him quick access to sanctuary from friendly counterattack.

Thus confident of success, by mid-January, the enemy had moved major elements of the 325C and 304th NVA Divisions into positions ringing the combat base, and began the employment of a wide array of artillery, rockets, and mortars against the base and its high-ground outposts. Then, utilizing periods of reduced visibility, as well as the attacks-by-fire, to mask his efforts, he attempted to close for his final assault by way of a series of trenchlines, dug to within hand grenade range of the garrison perimeter.

III MAF halted the enemy drive well short of its intended objective, controlling massive supporting arms attacks in support of the four Marine and one ARVN Ranger battalions holding the combat base. Despite the poor weather prevailing throughout most of the campaign, Marine, Navy, and Air

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Force pilots delivered 103,500 tons of bombs against the NVA offensive, while III MAF artillery batteries fired nearly 103,000 rounds on known and suspected targets; these efforts united to inflict severe troop and supply losses on the enemy, thus denying him the opportunity to marshal more than a fraction of his force for a coordinated attack at any one time. Consequently, significant ground combat was limited to three battalion-size engagements in late January and early February, and several minor clashes around the combat base perimeter. When, during the last week of March, the Marines began driving the remaining enemy from his trenches near the base perimeter, it was evident the NVA organization for combat had been rendered largely non-effective.

Operation PEGASUS, a combined Army, Marine, and ARVN offensive launched to complete the destruction of enemy forces in western Quang Tri, confirmed the magnitude of the NVA defeat at Khe Sanh. From end-March through mid-April, friendly forces encountered only sporadic contact and discovered large quantities of abandoned weapons, ammunition, and supplies, clear evidence of a disorderly withdrawal from combat.

Subsequent Marine operations in western Quang Tri emphasized mobility. Following a highly successful June attack deep into the hills south of Khe Sanh, a helicopterborne assault which splintered the 88th and 102d Regiments, 308th NVA Division, III MAF deactivated the Khe Sanh combat base on 5 July, its purpose as a deterrent to enemy infiltration successfully served. Throughout the remaining months of 1968, Marines ranged the length and breadth of western Quang Tri, employing heliborne infantry and mobile fire support bases to keep the enemy constantly off stride, thus effectively preventing his assembly of forces sufficient to renew the offensive.

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-The Action near Dong Ha

On the eastern flank of the DMZ, the action centered in the Cua Viet/Dong Ha region. During late January, Seventh Fleet Special Landing Force Bravo (SLF B) was landed in northern Quang Tri to halt a marked increase in enemy attempts to interdict the flow of vital logistic traffic on the Cua Viet river between Dong Ha and the coast. In the ensuing three months, the battalion landing teams (BLT's) of both SLF's were alternately deployed there, effectively countering the enemy threat to river traffic. Periodically developing contact with enemy units of up to battalion-size, the Marines effectively curtailed enemy encroachment along the Cua Viet.

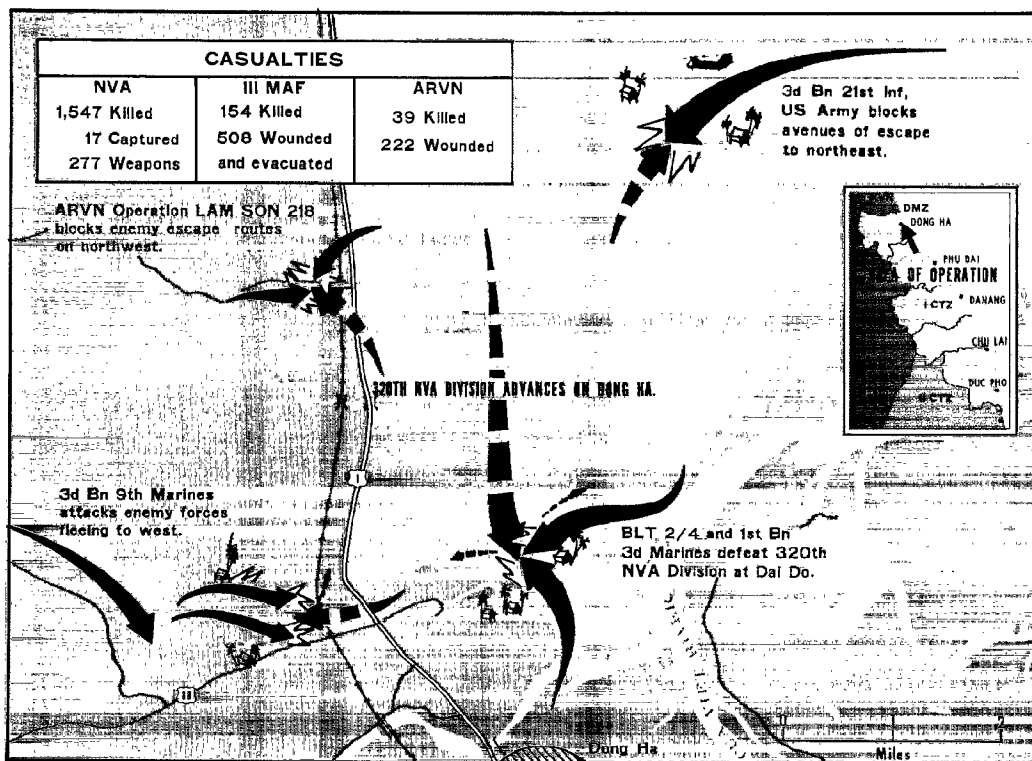
In late April, the enemy shifted his pattern of attack in the DMZ coastal region, launching his 320th NVA Division in a bold attack against Dong Ha. There followed one of the major set piece battles of the war, with the enemy suffering a costly defeat at the hands of a powerful combined arms counterattack. Involving three Marine, one US Army, and three ARVN battalions, and supported by air, artillery, and naval gunfire, the battle claimed over 1,500 NVA regulars during 30 April-5 May. The heaviest fighting took place one and one-half miles northeast of Dong Ha at Dai Do hamlet, where, from 30 April through 3 May, a battalion of Marines halted the enemy's main thrust, accounting for nearly 600 NVA killed in the action.

The 30 April-5 May battle at Dong Ha is illustrated on the following page.

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## THE BATTLE FOR DONG HA: 30 APRIL - 5 MAY 1968



Obviously pressing for a victory in the DMZ, the enemy rapidly reconstituted the 320th NVA Division, returning it to action north of Dong Ha in late May. He was no more successful than in his earlier venture. Marine and ARVN units successfully contained this second, division-size NVA incursion, forcing the enemy to withdraw north of the Ben Hai; during 25-31 May, his losses were 920 NVA killed and 55 captured. Interrogation of the prisoners revealed many to be in a poor state of training and further disclosed instances of mass infusions of battalion-size reinforcements - both factors indicating a serious derogation of the enemy's formerly exhibited resiliency.

Throughout the remainder of 1968, combat in the eastern DMZ area was characterized by a diminution of large-scale engagements. Highlighting the action in September and October were two coordinated III MAF/ARVN armored attacks against en-

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emy concentrations within the DMZ -- each achieving substantial results against enemy units unprepared for the velocity of the mobile assault.

#### -Operations in the Central DMZ Region

Although the principal battles took place on the DMZ flanks, 3d Marine Division elements operating in the Con Thien/Camp Carroll area generated brief periods of intense combat. The December 1967 establishment of Strongpoint A-3, midway between Con Thien and Gio Linh, constituted yet another hazard to enemy infiltration efforts; consequently, his forays south of the Ben Hai river were subjected to increased exposure. Tank-accompanied infantry, maneuvering under a canopy of air, artillery, and naval gunfire support, rendered the enemy's position in the central DMZ area largely untenable by mid-Summer.

The last major action to occur in the central DMZ region took place during September in the area northwest of the Rockpile. Perceiving the assembly and staging of the 320th NVA Division south of the Ben Hai, III MAF preempted the impending attack by mounting a multi-regiment counteroffensive into the rugged, canopied hill country between Mutter's Ridge (three miles northwest of the Rockpile) and the river. Caught off-guard in the midst of his preparations by the Marine assault, the enemy withdrew to safety in North Vietnam, abandoning hundreds of tons of weapons, ammunition, supplies, and equipment, as well as an extensive network of carefully fortified positions, in his haste to escape destruction.

#### Operations in Southern Quang Tri and Northern Thua Thien

The impending major confrontation along the DMZ demonstrated conclusively the enemy's intention to focus on I CTZ as the war's chief battle ground; consequently, III MAF combat assets were strengthened by the addition of two US Army divisions, the 1st Cavalry (Airmobile) and the 101st Airborne, arriving in I CTZ in January and February, respectively. Joining at a critical time, the two divisions were deployed to

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the vital area between Quang Tri City and Hue, thereby providing considerable combat power in an area previously occupied by two III MAF battalions.

The 18-battalion army force proved a valuable reinforcement, both during and subsequent to the Tet campaign. Ranging throughout the coastal region and the enemy base areas in southern Quang Tri and northern Thua Thien provinces, the two divisions successfully blocked enemy avenues of approach to Hue and Quang Tri City, and secured overland and water lines of communication, an offensive which claimed a high toll of enemy troops, weapons, ammunition, and supplies. Operating in close harmony with ARVN elements, the cavalry and airborne units severely encroached upon the enemy's use of two major base areas, 114 (southwest of Hue) and 101 (southwest of Quang Tri City), ultimately causing him to seek harboring sites farther removed from the coastal plain.

A highlight of the army deployment to northern I CTZ was Operation DELAWARE VALLEY, a month-long campaign into A Shau, a long-used enemy infiltration and staging area. While 101st Airborne and ARVN elements attacked southwest along Route 547, two brigades of the 1st Cavalry assaulted into selected landing zones in A Shau Valley and began a detailed search for enemy forces. Although little significant contact was generated, material results were abundant. Enemy losses to DELAWARE VALLEY included numerous weapons and supply caches, yielding, among the tons of supplies and equipment captured, some 2,500 weapons and 60 trucks.

However, looking beyond the impressive enemy losses credited to both Airborne and Cavalry division offensive operations, perhaps the most salient benefit of this timely reinforcement of III MAF was added combat flexibility. With a force of five US divisions arrayed against the enemy threat in I CTZ, III MAF enjoyed an increased capacity to reinforce units in contact, exploit engagements in progress, or attack lucrative targets -- all without serious degradation of on-going operations in any other region.

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Operations in the Danang Area

A precursor of the general shifting of the action from northern to central I CTZ accompanied the ill-fated enemy second (May) offensive. The accretion of enemy forces in Quang Nam province and the attendant increased pressure against Danang came as no great surprise to III MAF -- a considerable measure of the enemy's hope for survival in I CTZ is dependent upon his ability to acquire a power position in and around Danang. His efforts to gain a victory at Danang disclosed a pattern of total failure - despite a concerted campaign of rocket and mortar attacks, sabotage and terrorism, and ground thrusts, since the US entry into the war, he had succeeded only in causing minor disruptions in the daily routine in and near the city. Thus, the enemy's image among the populace and his ability to maintain troop morale were deteriorating at an alarming pace.

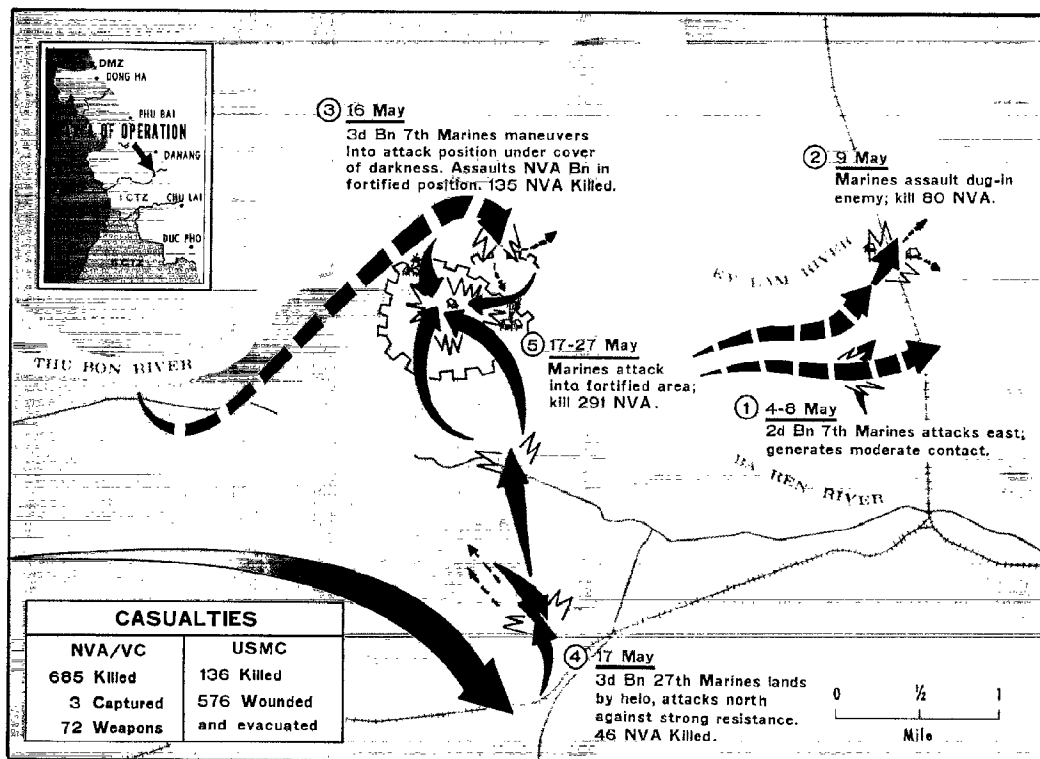
In late April and early May, III MAF detected a substantial enemy buildup in its supply and troop assembly stage in the Go Noi Island region south of Danang. In conjunction with a widespread series of coordinated, diversionary attacks - both by fire and overground - the enemy intended marshaling a major thrust at Danang from his long-used Go Noi Island staging complex. ALLEN BROOK, a 7th Marines operation launched by III MAF on 4 May, spoiled the impending enemy attack, fracturing the offensive before it could be set in motion. Our forces, maneuvering by covered night march and by helicopter, trapped elements of two NVA regiments (36th and 38th) newly infiltrated from North Vietnam and, for the time being, destroyed both as effective fighting forces. By end-May, Operation ALLEN BROOK had accounted for nearly 700 NVA killed, with infantry forces remaining in the area to provide security for extensive engineer operations aimed at denying the enemy future use of Go Noi Island as a secure base.

The map on the following page describes the maneuver action of Operation ALLEN BROOK during May.

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## OPERATION ALLEN BROOK: 4 - 31 MAY 1968



Operation MAMELUKE THRUST, also initiated in May, was a multi-regiment offensive campaign to forestall the growing enemy threat to Danang from the west and southwest. The most intense action took place in the An Hoa basin, where a saturation of patrols, ambushes, and coordinated company-size search and clear operations put a high price on enemy attempts to use the area as an avenue of approach to Danang. Operating from hilltop-vantage points on the periphery of the basin, Marine reconnaissance teams interdicted observed enemy movement with air strikes and pre-planned artillery attacks, also with telling effect.

Although the results obtained were not so dramatic as those gained through combat around An Hoa, that portion of Operation MAMELUKE THRUST encompassing the Charlie Ridge/Happy Valley region lying to the west of Danang seriously degraded the enemy capability to launch effective rocket, mortar, and ground

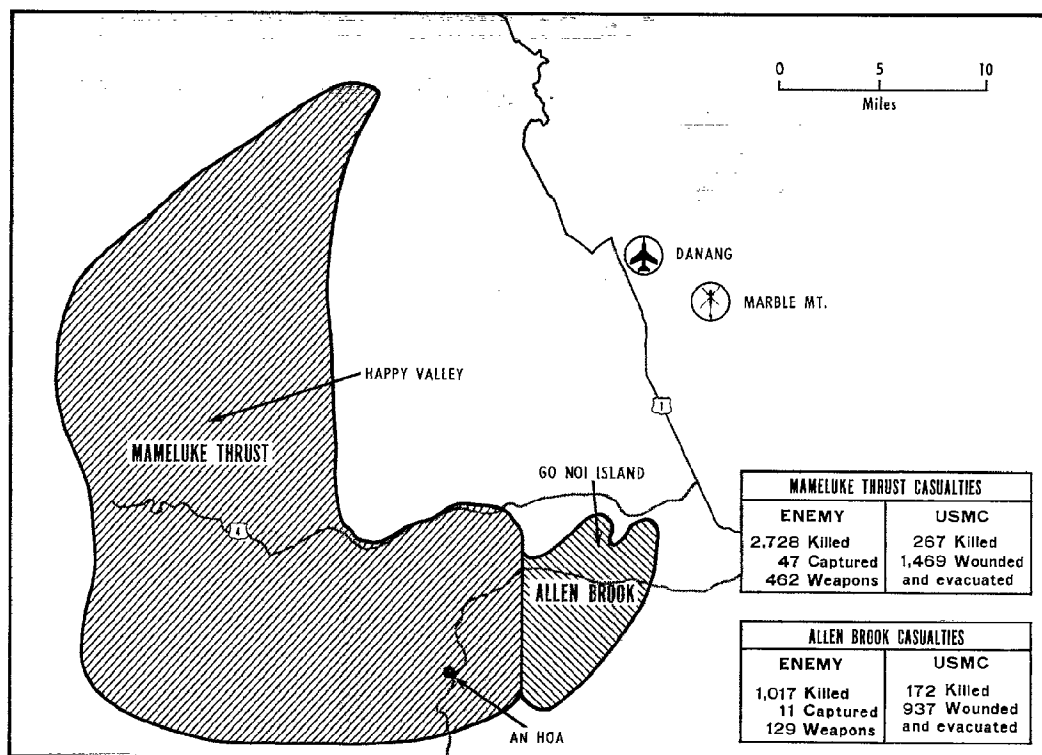
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attacks from that direction. Utilizing demolitions and chain saws to carve suitable artillery fire support bases from the triple-canopied jungle terrain, mobile III MAF units ranged through the area in search of enemy harboring sites. Contact for the most part was characterized by brief skirmishes with small enemy units deployed to protect base camps and supply caches. Attacking Marines destroyed the enemy fortifications and supplies, and captured a sizable quantity of enemy rockets and rocket launchers, forcing the enemy to seek safe areas farther into the hinterlands.

Operations ALLEN BROOK and MAMELUKE THRUST continued through late August and October, respectively, arresting considerably the enemy's capacity to mount serious offensive overtures toward Danang. The areas of operation and the final results of the two operations are shown below.

### OPERATIONS ALLEN BROOK & MAMELUKE THRUST



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The enemy's third 1968 incursion against Danang afforded him no more success than the attempts preceding. Ill-timed and understrength, his attack was blunted at the southern outskirts of the city by coordinated III MAF and ARVN action, and his subsequent, disorderly withdrawal was disassembled by Marine and ARVN Ranger maneuver battalions. Further compounding his defeat was the capture of tons of food, ammunition, supplies, and explosives, all assiduously staged to support his assault.

At end-year, a positive enemy threat remained in the Danang area, with some 19 NVA and VC infantry battalions deployed in Quang Nam province. However, with the Accelerated Pacification Campaign, supported directly by selected III MAF operations, gaining momentum in the elimination of Viet Cong infrastructure, the enemy is faced with a steadily deteriorating support base in the populated, coastal lowlands. And badly damaged by III MAF superior firepower and mobility throughout the year, the enemy has become increasingly wary of exposing major troop formations to combat.

#### Special Landing Force Operations

The Seventh Fleet Special Landing Forces (SLF) executed 13 amphibious operations during 1968, a total substantially smaller than the 25 conducted in 1967. The dynamic situation existing in northern I CTZ during early 1968 required deployment of both SLF Alfa and Bravo in the DMZ area during January; both remained there under operational control of III MAF until Summer. Highlighting the actions of the SLF's during this extended period ashore was the participation of their two Marine BLT's in Operations KENTUCKY, LANCASTER, and NAPOLEON/SALINE. For example, Operation NAPOLEON/SALINE, initially launched as an amphibious assault to clear the Cua Viet area, accounted for nearly 3,500 NVA/VC killed in 1968, of which the majority were credited to SLF elements.

With the diminishing of overall enemy combat capability in I CTZ, both SLF's were back-loaded aboard amphib-

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ious shipping, thereby providing a mobile striking force of proven strength for quick employment against located enemy targets. The value of this unique amphibious capability as an instrument of the Accelerated Pacification Campaign was amply demonstrated during November and December. Employed either as an integral element of a force established ashore, such as in Operation MEADE RIVER south of Danang, or as a separate tactical entity, as in DARING ENDEAVOR and VALLANT HUNT, both south of Hoi An, the SLF has proven singularly adept at establishing a rapid, undetected cordon of a target area. Illustrating the success of such operations, VALLANT HUNT in December accounted for the elimination of 43 hard-core VCI. More are planned.

#### ROK Marine Operations

The 2d Brigade, Republic of Korea Marine Corps has been a member of the Free World combat team in I CTZ since August 1966. First employed in northern Quang Ngai province, the ROK Marines completed movement to the Hoi An region in January 1968. Deployed in unfamiliar and mine-inundant terrain, the Koreans nevertheless performed with distinction during Tet, reacting aggressively to eject the enemy from Hoi An and such lesser administrative centers as Duy Xuyen. Throughout 1968, the Korean Marines were a valuable asset in south-coastal Quang Nam province, demonstrating a particular talent for adroit conception and execution of the night ambush. ROK Marine large unit operations, a series code-named VICTORY DRAGON, accounted for 2,504 enemy killed during the year.

#### Large Unit Summary

In sum, the III MAF large unit campaign, closely integrated with counter guerrilla and revolutionary development activities, caused the enemy a decisive defeat in 1968. In a test of strength, our forces met his challenge, ultimately forcing the retrogression of his major forces to hinterland safe areas, in many cases to North Vietnam or Laos. Only

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in Quang Nam and Quang Ngai does an immediate enemy threat prevail, but, despite the presence in the two provinces of significant enemy strength, a sudden shift in his offensive pattern appears, at this time, unlikely.

However, the enemy's undeniable residual capacity to recoup expeditiously his losses, coupled with his oft-demonstrated willingness to sacrifice entire regiments in seeking even a temporary advantage, makes him a still formidable opponent. And, the certain knowledge he is losing the war - both on the battlefield and among the people - engenders an unstable situation. Nevertheless, III MAF, in strong offensive posture at end-1968, and enjoying close harmony with the now combat-proven ARVN, will put an even higher price on enemy attempts to contest progress in I CTZ.

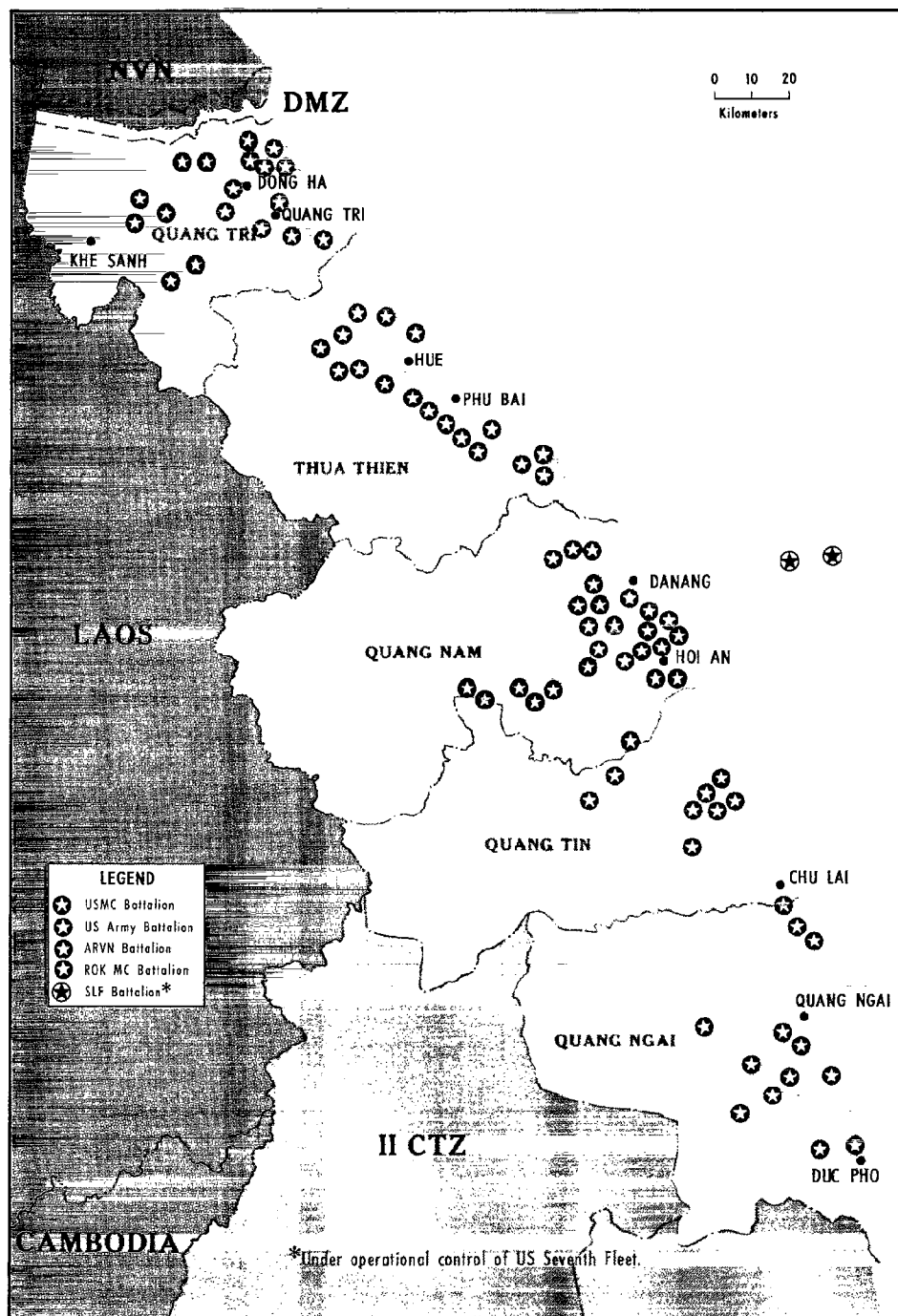
The following map portrays the locations of III MAF, ARVN, and ROKMC infantry battalions in I CTZ at end-year (includes one US Army armored cavalry battalion in eastern Quang Tri).

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FREE WORLD INFANTRY BATTALION LOCATIONS: DEC 1968

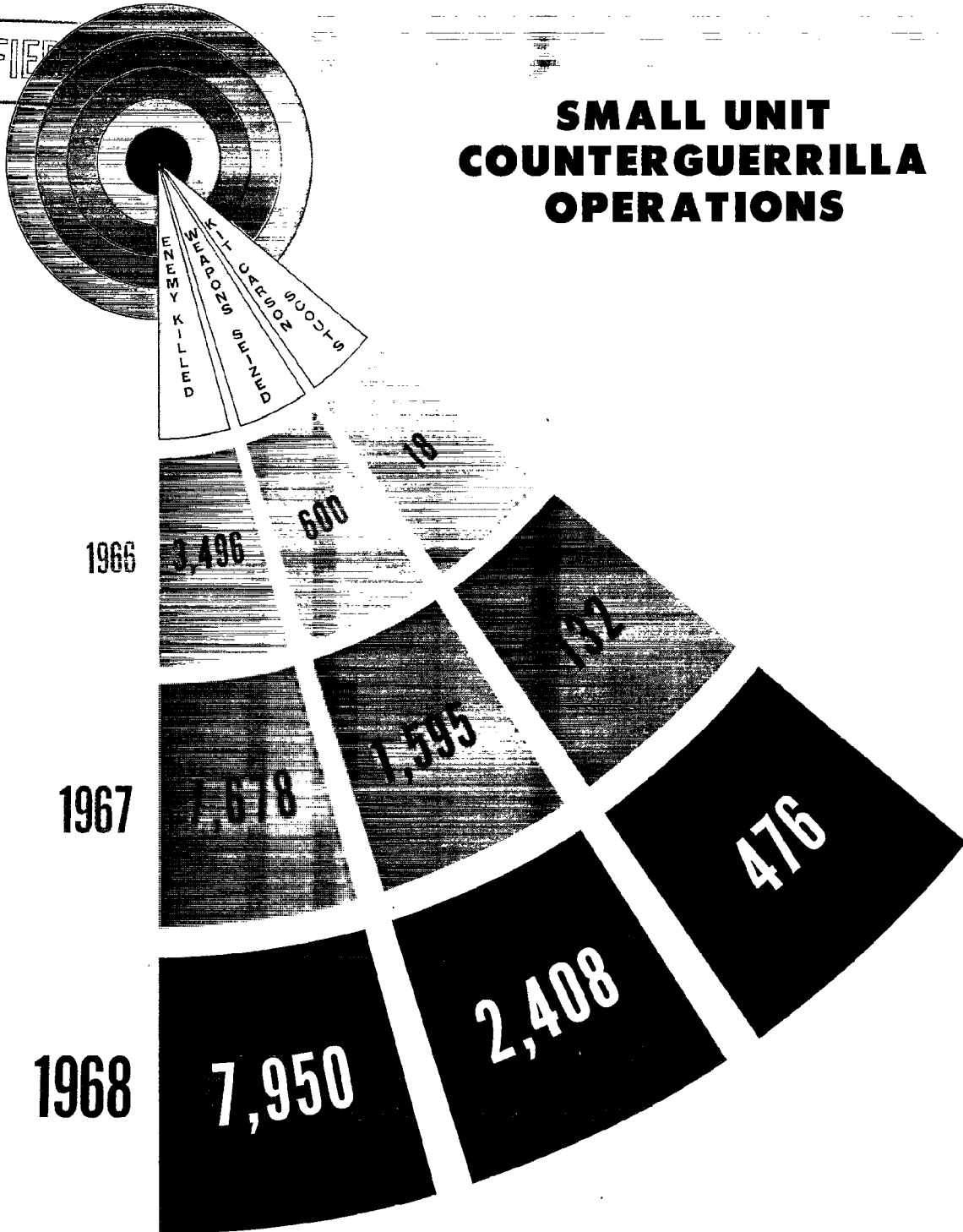


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# **SMALL UNIT COUNTERGUERRILLA OPERATIONS**



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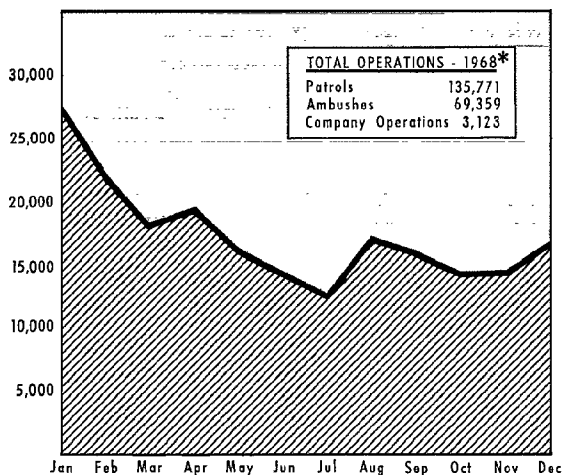
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SMALL UNIT COUNTERGUERRILLA OPERATIONS

Forming a closely integrated net across the coastal region of central and southern I CTZ, the III MAF counter guerrilla campaign in December deployed 16,600 patrols, ambushes, and company-size sweep operations to maintain pressure against enemy combat units focusing on potential lowland targets and against infrastructure cadre promoting the enemy cause among the populace. The salient result of this activity - prevention of a reported December offensive - provided continuing security for pacification projects and military vital areas. Complementing efforts of large unit maneuver farther afield, patrol and ambush saturation of the plains effected 1,098 combat engagements, costing disrupted enemy traffic 938 NVA and VC killed and another 47 captured.

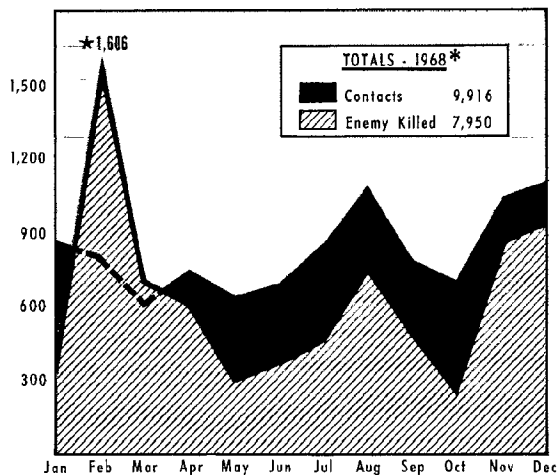
The following graphs relate small unit activity during December to monthly totals for the remainder of 1968.

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



\*Totals adjusted to reflect up-dated data.

**CONTACTS/ENEMY KILLED  
BY SMALL UNIT OPERATIONS**



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Applying an erosional pressure developed during almost four years of operations, the III MAF counter guerrilla campaign in 1968 inflicted substantial and irreparable damage to the local enemy structure. By killing or capturing over 8,100 enemy during the year (a total equal to 44% of the year-end guerrilla strength in the three southern I CTZ provinces), small unit actions placed a serious hurt on the enemy's combat capability. More lasting, however, was the burden imposed on the total guerrilla mission. While combat losses increased, the Viet Cong recruit potential was engulfed by the expanding, and increasingly effective, wave of GVN influence, requiring induction of additional NVA into guerrilla units (VC units averaged an estimated 65-70% NVA members at end-year) and progressive upgrading of irregular and local soldiers to larger enemy units. This dilution resulted in a force composition lacking the cohesion and motivation necessary for traditional insurgency.

Increases in the effectiveness of the counter guerrilla campaign were noted in 1968 as III MAF units benefited by earlier operational experience in the coastal region of I CTZ. Reflecting higher returns from patrol and ambush combat actions, the ratio of enemy personnel losses to III MAF small unit operations rose from 1:51 in 1967 to 1:26 in 1968. Much of this increase accrued from success attained by III MAF night operations. Of the 208,278 small unit operations fielded in 1968, 69% (144,735) were conducted at night; and contacts generated by nocturnal maneuver doubled during the year -- 1,008 engagements registered at end-June, compared to 2,254 during the latter half of the year.

#### Enemy Activity

Enemy-initiated attacks in I CTZ during December dropped to the lowest monthly level registered since November 1966, as NVA and VC forces launched but 11 ground assaults and 17 attacks-by-fire. Reflecting the enemy's attempt

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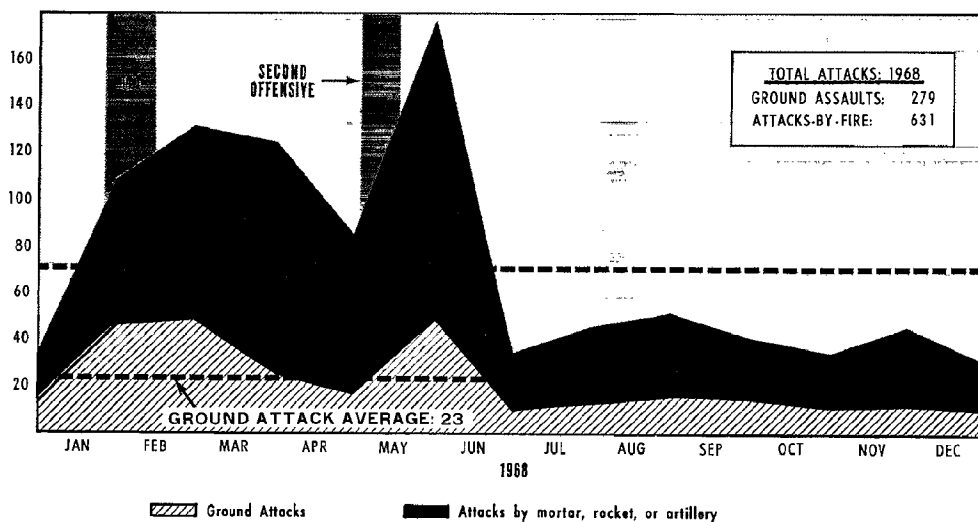
to maintain a footing for future thrusts in the Danang area, the heaviest concentration of effort - seven ground and six rocket or mortar attacks - was directed at Quang Nam targets.

While major enemy effort in the two northern provinces was restricted to six indirect fire attacks, reminders of rapidly employable combat force were mirrored in DMZ activity (141 incidents or sightings of enemy activity during December), and intelligence reports suggesting 1969 Tet attacks against major northern I CTZ installations.

Despite a continuing enemy buildup in Quang Ngai province, action remained restrained. Two ground attacks and two attacks-by-fire targeted ARVN and GVN installations, while local Vietnamese shared the effects of three incidents of terrorism and one of sabotage.

Monthly totals for enemy-initiated attacks in I CTZ during 1968 are compared by the following graphic.

### ENEMY ATTACKS IN I CTZ: 1968



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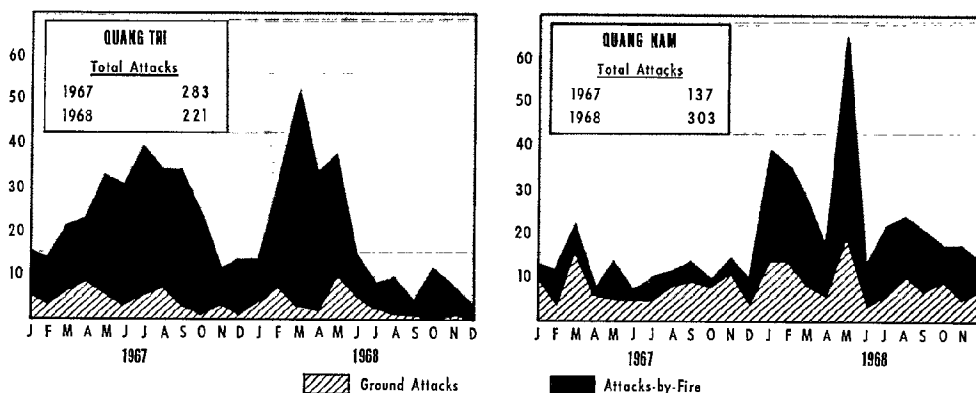
-Shift of Enemy Threat

His attempt to invest Quang Tri province shattered by defeat at Khe Sanh and Dong Ha in early 1968, the enemy, re-vising his strategy for victory in I CTZ, focused attention on the greater Danang area. Priority tasks for the resultant Summer troop influx involved destruction of the viable III MAF/ ARVN battle force and disruption of the increasingly effective GVN pacification program. More distant plans included the population and resources concentrated in the broad lowland region.

Consummation of the mission failed, however, as early-Summer spoiling attacks by the 1st Marine Division commenced to splinter the strongest NVA/VC formation yet concentrated in Quang Nam province. At end-year, persistent Marine and ARVN pursuit had engaged the enemy along the Dai Loc corridor, across the An Hoa basin, and deep in Base Area 112, disrupting his plans for a major advance on Danang.

The change in enemy strategy is graphically portrayed by comparisons of enemy-initiated attacks in Quang Tri and Quang Nam provinces since January 1967.

### COMPARISON OF ENEMY ATTACKS IN QUANG TRI AND QUANG NAM PROVINCES JAN 67 - DEC 68



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-Rocket Attacks

As practiced during the past six months, the enemy again launched his rocket attacks under the added security of moonless nights accompanying the new moon phase. The first attack came shortly before midnight on the 17th, as seven 122mm rockets impacted uneventfully at widely scattered points in the Danang vital area. On the 21st, a total of ten 140mm rockets were aimed at the Chu Lai Air Base during an 11-hour period. Material damage was light, but one rocket impacted directly on a personnel bunker, leaving seven dead and three seriously wounded. The heaviest, but also dispersed, attack of the month occurred at Danang on the 23d when 16 rockets hit areas ranging from Marine Air Control Group-18, near the air field, to the 1st Marine Division headquarters area, three miles to the southwest. Military losses were one killed and 13 wounded. Vietnamese civilians sustained the brunt of the attack -- four rocket rounds impacted in a village near the air base, killing 12 and wounding 19.

Modifications in enemy rocket tactics were noted during the year, as NVA rocketeers, attempting to escape rapid and accurate III MAF countermeasures, staged less-intensive attacks from hastily prepared positions. In 1967, rocket attacks averaged 27 rounds, while 1968 figures (1,300 rounds received) show 13 rockets per attack, a 48% reduction. Effects of rushed firing procedures and inadequately prepared launch sites were evident, as wide dispersions in rocket impacts resulted in partial target coverage and, often, limited damage.

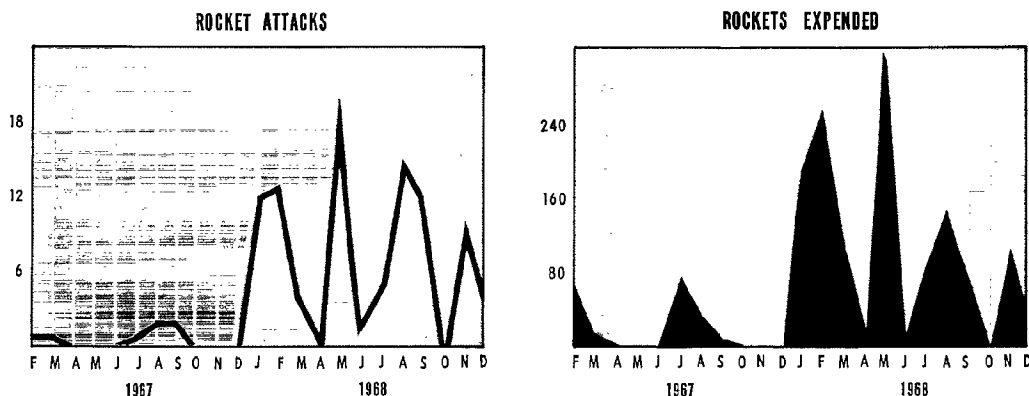
The graph on the following page depicts the number of attacks and rockets launched against major I CTZ bases since February 1967.

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# ENEMY ROCKET ATTACKS AGAINST MAJOR I CTZ BASES FEB 1967 - DEC 1968



## Small Unit Activity in the Danang Area

Security measures for Danang and outlying GVN and military installations were intensified during December, as enemy documents and prisoners described I CTZ's largest city as the focal point for the Winter-Spring offensive. Supplementing the disruption caused by Operations MEADE RIVER and TAYLOR COMMON, the interdiction efforts of over 12,768 small unit patrols, ambushes, and company-size sweep operations, saturating the Danang-Hoi An-Dai Loc triangle, precluded any serious enemy threat.

While MEADE RIVER enveloped and eliminated the major lowland violation, Marine small unit activities in December, pursuing an aggressive campaign against local enemy traffic and occasional remnants fleeing the MEADE RIVER cordon, established 427 combat engagements which took a total of 228 enemy out of action. On the morning of the 30th, an ambush deployed from Company C, 5th Marines, two miles northeast of An Hoa, displayed the spirited nature of the month's campaign. Shortly after midnight, the squad observed 20 enemy in a nearby treeline, but moving on a tangent to the trap. Placing artillery fire on the target, the Marines maneuvered to a more suitable intercept position and relaid

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the ambush. Minutes later, claymore mines were triggered on the enemy column, killing eight guerrillas.

Again in December, ground activity by combat support, infantry, and reconnaissance units, together with a coordinated supporting arms interdiction program, produced in-depth security against ground or indirect fire attacks. While reconnaissance sightings disrupted a major portion of enemy movement from base areas toward Danang, prevention of rocket or mortar attacks by remaining elements fell primarily to the relentless efforts of small unit operations. For example, 3d Battalion, 7th Marines, covering the security sector from the mouth of Happy Valley (terminus of an important enemy supply route from A Shau Valley and Laos) to the southwest corner of the Danang complex, conducted 5,935 patrols and ambushes in December, directly affecting the hostile rocket threat. On the 13th, a Company K, 7th Marines ambush, positioned nine miles southwest of Danang, surprised an enemy rocket unit, killing five Viet Cong and capturing seven 140mm rockets. Within three miles of this site, other 3d Battalion, 7th Marines' units recovered six additional rockets later in the month.

During December, the counter guerrilla campaign continued, as in the past three years, to provide assistance for Danang area pacification projects. In close coordination with ARVN RD support units, Marine patrols maintained an exterior insulation for Vietnamese units tasked with close-in security of the critical pacification areas. Combined operations experience also paid dividends in the Accelerated Pacification Campaign. Using proven techniques developed earlier in III MAF-originated County Fair operations and subsequently expanded in pacification support operations, Marine and ARVN units required only a specific scheme of maneuver to ensure successful execution of the special pacification effort.

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Reconnaissance Activities

Along the periphery of the lowland plain south and west of Danang, the 1st Reconnaissance Battalion maintained a surveillance screen to detect and disrupt enemy movement from adjacent mountain base areas. Deployed independently as STING RAYS, or assigned in support of large unit operations, 36 reconnaissance patrols in December continued vital intelligence collection tasks, while disrupting enemy traffic with supporting arms strikes. Persisting in attempts to traverse the well-covered routes, NVA and VC units sustained 230 losses in December, as the teams effectively controlled 100 artillery missions and 12 air strikes against the enemy formations.

Results of intelligence collection efforts by reconnaissance patrols were highlighted in December as Operation TAYLOR COMMON commenced to the southwest of Danang. Reports by the covert patrols had delineated heavily traveled trail networks in the western reaches of the An Hoa basin and had pinpointed enemy traffic exiting Base Area 112, southwest of the basin. Further importance was given the continuity of transiting formations, despite the heavy losses imposed by reconnaissance-directed supporting arms fire. Based on these reports and other intelligence products, TAYLOR COMMON, by end-month, had swept the basin trails of hostile traffic and penetrated Base Area 112, reportedly occupied by elements of the 21st and 141st NVA Regiments, accounting for 350 enemy killed, seven captured, and 157 weapons seized.

Assisted by a reorganization which provided one additional company, the 1st Reconnaissance Battalion continued to increase its tempo of operations again in 1968, deploying 1,738 patrols. In addition to intensifying the intelligence collection effort, a III MAF/ARVN goal for 1968, these operations were credited with 3,838 NVA and VC killed. Marine losses, 59 during the year, were sustained during frequent close-in contacts; still, a record high casualty ratio was established -- for each Marine loss, the enemy sustained 65 soldiers killed.

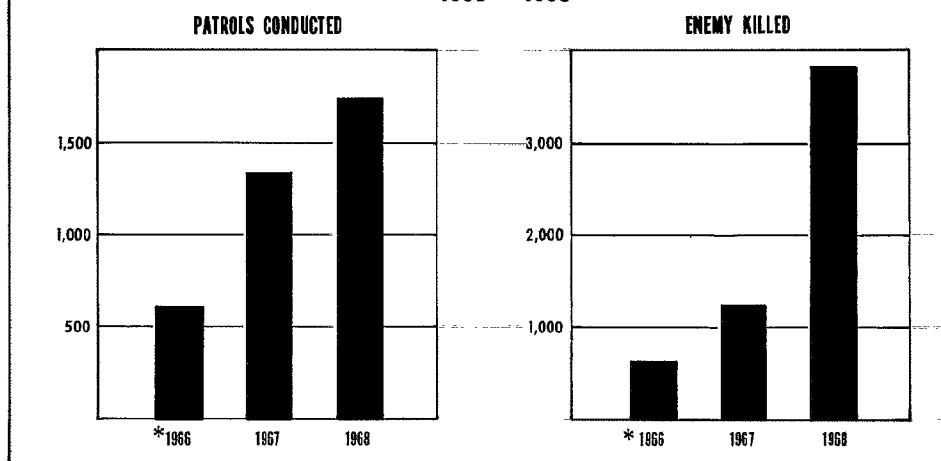
A comparison of the 1968 reconnaissance effort with previous annual totals is provided on the following page.

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### MARINE RECONNAISSANCE BATTALION OPERATIONS IN SOUTHERN I CTZ 1966 - 1968



\*Results from May 1966

#### Kit Carson Scout Program

At end-year, 476 former Viet Cong soldiers were being employed in combat operations by the four III MAF divisions and the four combined action groups. Recruited and trained under the III MAF-initiated Kit Carson Scout (KCS) program, Chieu Hoi returnees in December accompanied 2,202 patrols, providing assistance based on detailed knowledge of VC tactics and routines. Credits to the Scouts included 51 enemy killed, 30 guerrillas and suspects apprehended, and four returnees. Additionally, the KCS pointed out 174 explosive devices and 97 caches, tunnels, and caves.

Success of Scout-accompanied patrols, and the daring, tenacious nature exhibited by Kit Carson Scouts, was highlighted in December by incidents involving Ding Van MINH, who is assigned to 1st Battalion, 26th Marines. On the evening of 5 December, MINH, accompanying a Company D patrol, recommended an ambush site to the patrol leader after observing signs of recent enemy movement. Later, as an NVA column approached the squad, MINH fired the initiating claymore mine, killing five NVA only feet from his position. Although wounded

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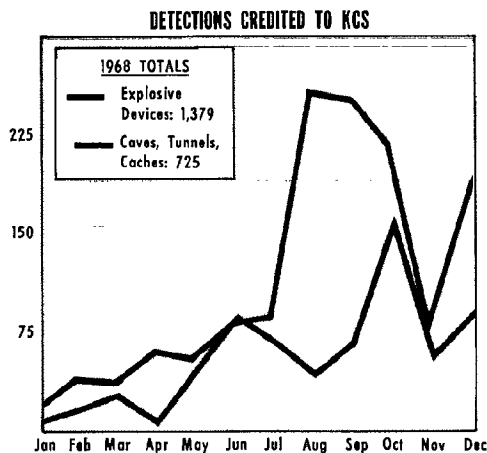
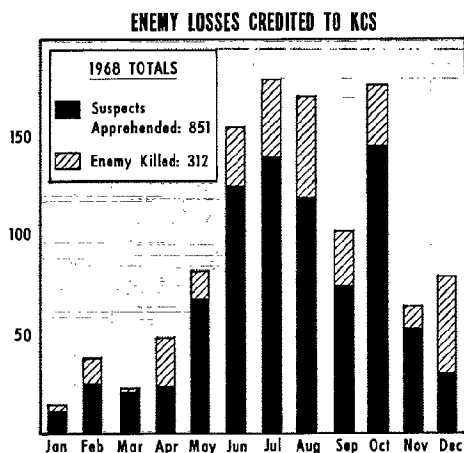
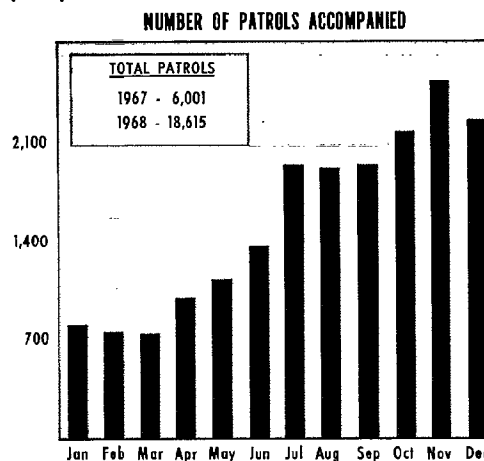
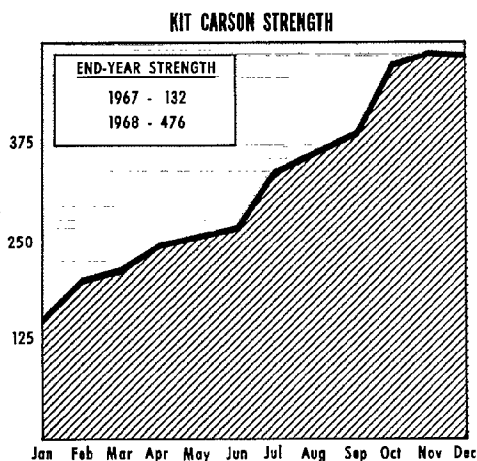
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as he exposed himself to enemy fire, he threw grenades into the remaining enemy and, on one occasion, returned an enemy-thrown grenade. MINH again demonstrated his resourcefulness against the enemy late in December; kidnapped by eight armed guerrillas on the 15th, he escaped and returned to his unit on 28 December.

Growth of the Kit Carson Scout program and accomplishments credited to Scouts during 1968 are portrayed in the following graphs.

### KIT CARSON SCOUT (KCS) PROGRAM: 1968

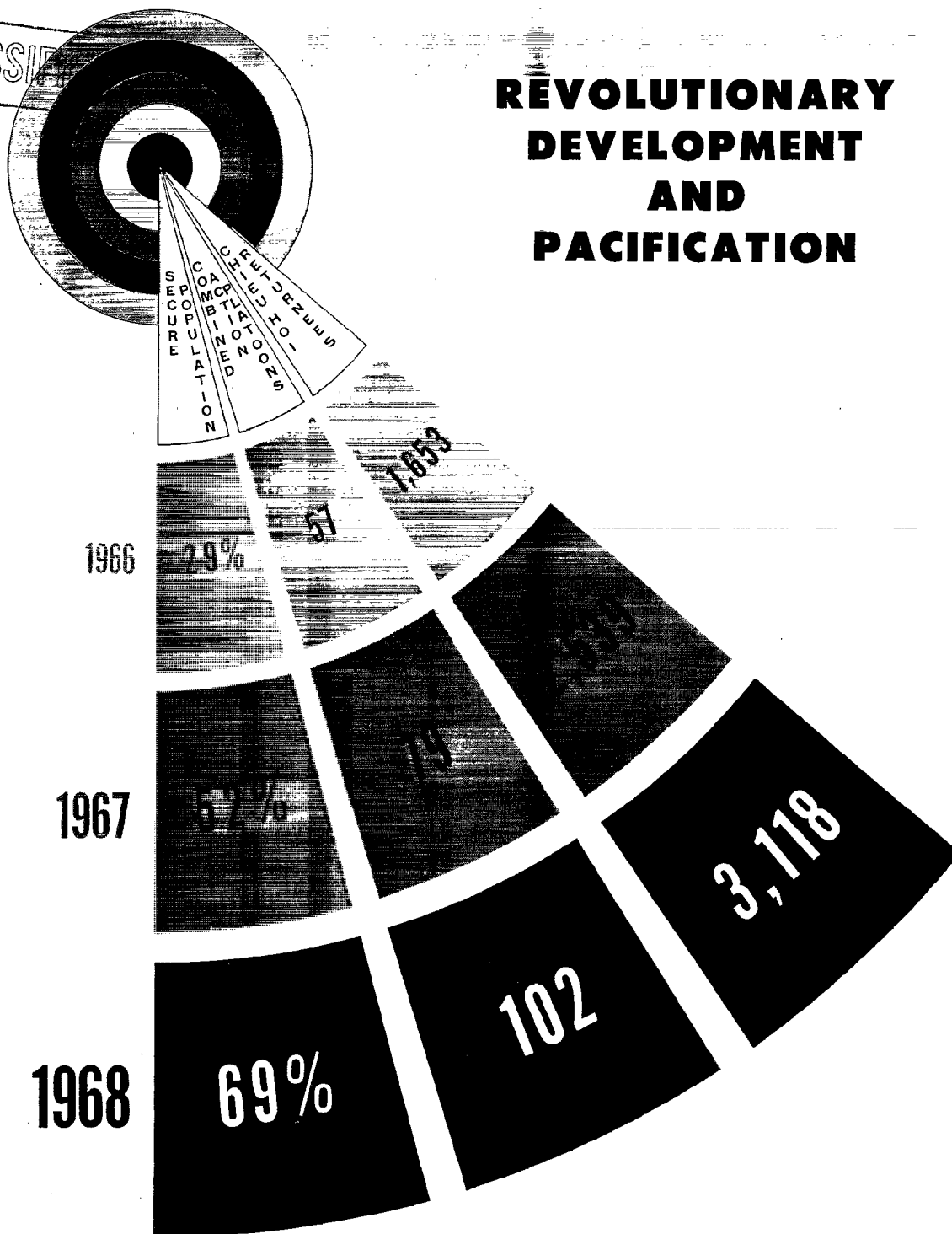


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# REVOLUTIONARY DEVELOPMENT AND PACIFICATION



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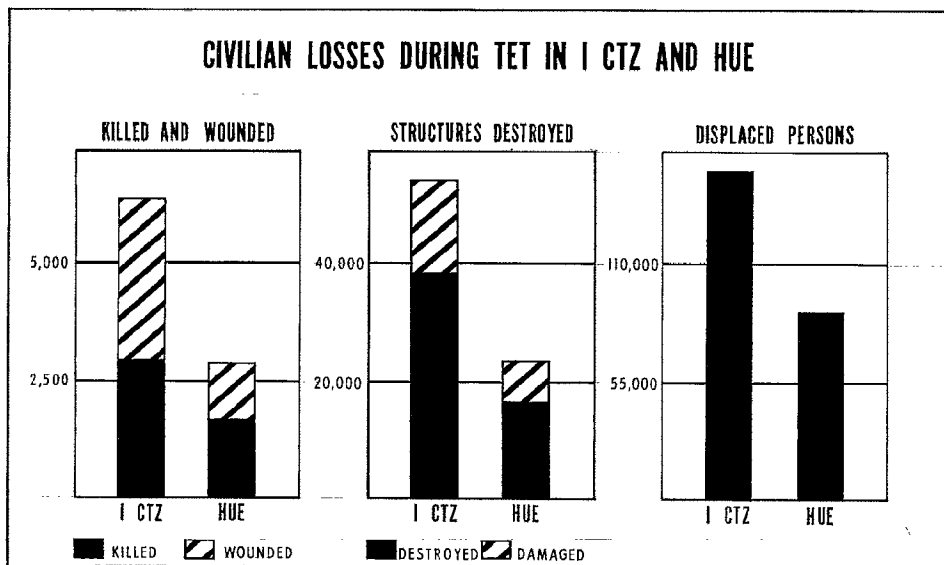
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REVOLUTIONARY DEVELOPMENT AND PACIFICATION

As 1968 began, the pacification program in I CTZ had attained substantial results, with more than 50% of the region's 3.1 million civilians living in secure hamlets. The government, effectively implementing its revolutionary development campaign, was advancing the erosion of the enemy's oft-claimed popular support, and the enemy reacted violently, launching his massive Tet offensive of late January and early February.

This offensive, contrived to generate dramatic popular uprisings and disrupt the political, economic, and military functions of the GVN, was, in the main, unsuccessful. The US and GVN claims of progress in their pacification efforts were vindicated, however, as the Vietnamese citizenry rallied, not around the National Liberation Front, but behind their duly-elected government. Death and destruction among the civilian population, particularly in Hue, were the only tangible products the enemy achieved, with more than 6,400 civilians killed or wounded, over 54,000 structures destroyed or damaged, and some 155,000 Vietnamese rendered temporarily homeless, as presented in the graphs below.



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Executing his offensive during Tet, the enemy gained the element of surprise, as Vietnamese government and military forces were understrength as a result of personnel on leave for the celebration of the traditionally peaceful lunar new year holiday. After the initial shock, however, GVN machinery gradually began to regenerate power, and organization of a comprehensive recovery program during the first week in February signaled the start of a coordinated GVN/US effort to provide timely and protracted relief to the civilian population. Between its inception in February and its mid-October termination, this program, entitled Operation RECOVERY, spent in excess of \$500,000, in reestablishing normalcy to the lives of victimized civilians in I CTZ. Examples of other assistance provided were:

- resettlement of more than 152,000 (98%) of the offensive's temporary refugees;
- provision of more than 131,000 bags of cement and over 276,000 sheets of roofing tin for the reconstruction of homes;
- supplying nearly 50,000 tons of rice and grain to supplement the diet of families displaced by the battles;
- inoculation of some 500,000 civilians against contagious diseases.

The enemy, defeated militarily by rapidly reacting III MAF and ARVN units and thwarted psychologically by timely assistance provided civilians through the GVN, recoiled from the Tet offensive with his long-sought major victory yet unwon. Twice again during the year, however, the enemy attempted to launch widespread offensives, but each time -- in May and in August -- his effort ended in abortive disaster. On 1 November, with recovery complete and the enemy surges blunted, the GVN initiated a special pacification effort.

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Accelerated Pacification (LE LOI) Campaign

The Accelerated Pacification (LE LOI) Campaign is a GVN organized, US supported offensive scheduled to restore, by 31 January 1969, pre-Tet security levels to those hamlets yet afflicted from the enemy's three 1968 offensive attempts and to lend added momentum to the 1968 Revolutionary Development Program. During the LE LOI Campaign, high priority is being attached to attaining the best possible GVN security posture prior to the advent of Tet in February 1969. And, as an added benefit, the program is providing initial momentum for the 1969 GVN Pacification and Reconstruction Plan.

By 1 December, the LE LOI Campaign was implemented fully in I CTZ, and subsequent results obtained toward achievement of the six campaign objectives have reflected substantial progress.

-Military Operations

The first objective, the conduct of operations to drive enemy formations from populated areas or destroy them in place, has met its most spectacular success thus far in the 1st Marine Division's Operation MEADE RIVER. Conducted by up to seven battalions over a 20-day period in the enemy infested rice paddies south of Danang, MEADE RIVER terminated on 9 December with over 1,200 enemy personnel either killed or captured by Marine and ARVN battalions. Equally important, however, was the capture of 72 Viet Cong infrastructure -- a significant blow to the enemy's organization in Quang Nam province.

US Seventh Fleet Special Landing Force (SLF) operations also have been conducted in support of the LE LOI Campaign. For example, Operation VALIANT HUNT, executed between 15 December and 5 January by Battalion

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Landing Team 2/26, was aimed at fracturing the enemy's power base in the coastal area 24 miles southeast of Danang. VALIANT HUNT, closely coordinating Special Landing Force maneuver with civil operations by government agencies, proved to be one of the most successful operations of its size conducted against the Viet Cong infrastructure (VCI). Over 3,400 Vietnamese living in the objective area were screened and classified during the operation, resulting in 43 VCI, 36 Viet Cong soldiers, and six enemy suspects apprehended; other results included 35 VC killed.

Three other LE LOI-associated operations employing SLF, III MAF, and ARVN units and GVN civil assets were conducted during November and December, raising the toll extracted from the enemy by such operations to 2,252 killed or captured.

-Hamlet Security

The second objective, to bring security to 140 I CTZ hamlets, has been approached vigorously; and in response to President THIEU's direction, additional hamlets have been targeted for improvement. By 17 December, special teams, comprised of revolutionary development cadre and Regional and Popular Force units, had launched the program in 168 I CTZ hamlets, populated by nearly 192,000 Vietnamese. As displayed on the graph on the following page, a secure status had been achieved for 116 (69%) of these hamlets by end-December, two-thirds of the way through the three-month LE LOI Campaign.

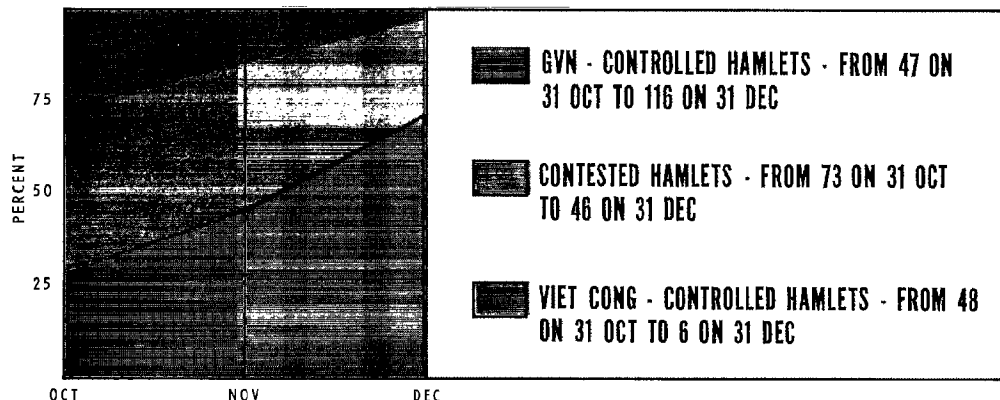
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## LE LOI CAMPAIGN PROGRESS - ICTZ

-Anti-Viet Cong Infrastructure Campaign

The third objective, the intensification of Phoenix-Phung Hoang anti-Viet Cong infrastructure operations, also has attained spectacular results. During November, a record 770 enemy cadre were neutralized, bringing the year-ly total to 3,701 VCI neutralized in I CTZ. And Thua Thien province, with 962 infrastructure members eliminated in the first 11 months of 1968, led all 44 provinces in RVN. Preliminary reports indicate December results again will reflect the added emphasis given the anti-VCI campaign at the Vietnamese national level and bring to over 4,000 the number of cadre eliminated in I CTZ during the year, well on the way to reaching the III MAF/I ARVN Corps goal of neutralizing the VCI in all pacification priority areas.

-Chieu Hoi Returnees

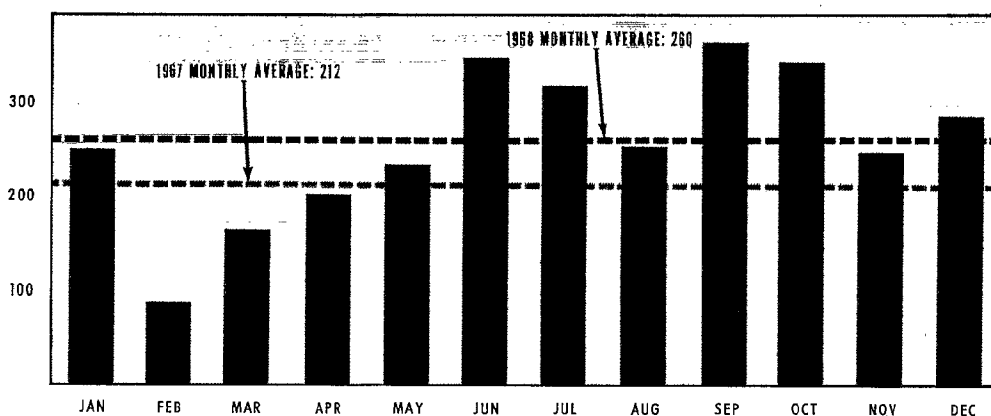
The fourth objective, the expansion of the Chieu Hoi program, has been underway all year in I CTZ. During the first ten months of 1968, 2,583 former enemy rallied to the GVN (as compared to 2,539 in 1967). Since initiation of the LE LOI Campaign on 1 November, an additional 535

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have taken advantage of the program, bringing to 3,118 the number of ralliers during 1968. This represents an increase of 23% over the 1967 total, clearly satisfying another III MAF and I ARVN Corps 1968 goal, that of increasing the Chieu Hoi returnee rate. The following graph displays the Chieu Hoi returnee rate in I CTZ for 1968, with a comparison between the 1967 and 1968 monthly averages.

I CTZ CHIEU HOI RETURNEES - 1968



Other important products of the Chieu Hoi program are retrieval of enemy weapons and defections to the GVN by NVA soldiers. During 1968, 723 weapons were surrendered by returnees in I CTZ, an average of about one weapon for every four ralliers. And, 119 NVA soldiers defected to the GVN in 1968, more than five times the 22 NVA defections recorded during 1967.

The graphs on the following page portray the monthly rates of NVA defections and weapons retrieved in I CTZ for 1968.

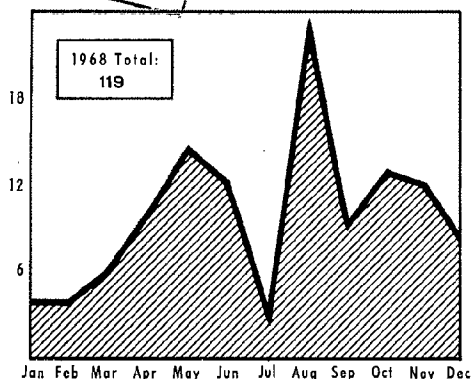
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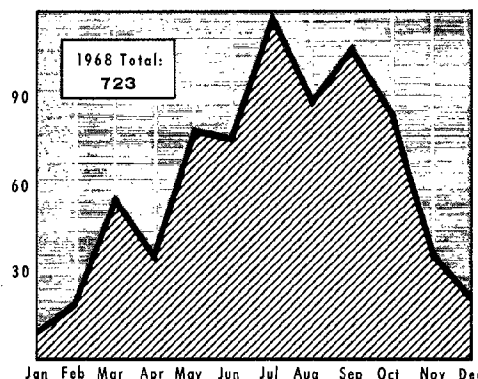
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NVA DEFECTIONS



WEAPONS SURRENDERED BY ALL HOI CHANH



As shown by the previous graph, the number of weapons recovered through the Chieu Hoi program has decreased sharply over the past two months. Interrogation of returnees reveals two reasons for this: (1) Viet Cong cadre do not trust recruits with less than six months service, so they do not allow them to retain their weapons; (2) VC cadre collect all weapons when friendly operations are expected, giving the appearance all the men in the area are merely farmers.

#### -People's Self-Defense Organization

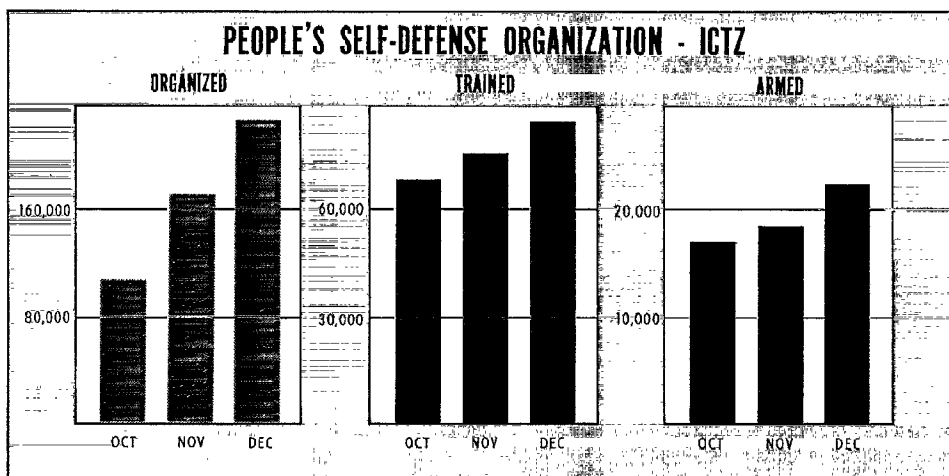
The fifth objective, the nationwide extension of the People's Self-Defense Organization to one million participants, with 20% armed, initially experienced limited progress. But, as a result of President THIEU's personal interest in the organizing, training, and arming of civilian defense units, the program is gathering momentum. The concept of civilian defense forces materialized into several programs -- Revolutionary Development People's Groups, Combat Youth, locally organized militia -- as early as 1966, but priority interest was not afforded the program until Tet 1968. During

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1968, the various programs were merged under national leadership into the People's Self-Defense Organization, which then began to grow. In I CTZ, the program has expanded from an end-October roll of 105,946 participants (16% of whom were armed) to an end-December total of 225,162 (ten percent of whom were under arms). The graph below portrays the dramatic growth the People's Self-Defense Organization has experienced in I CTZ since the initiation of the LE LOI Campaign.



#### -Psychological Operations

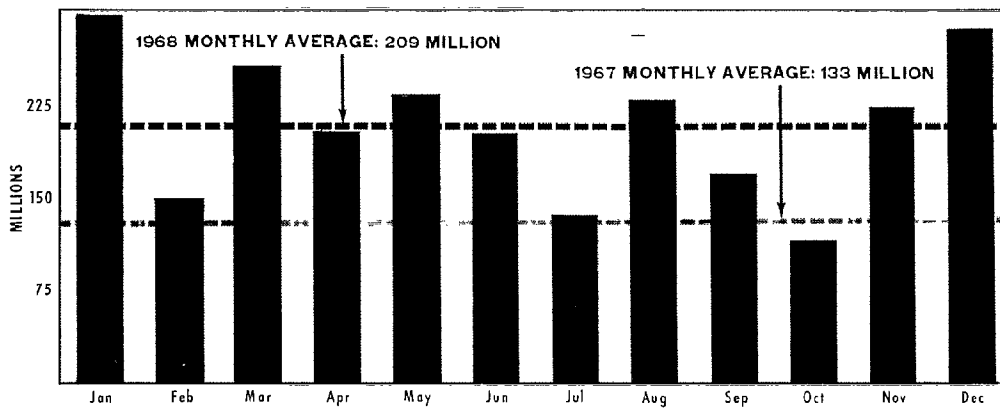
The sixth objective, the increase in psychological operations both against the enemy and for the furtherance of GVN influence, has registered noteworthy accomplishments, as the combined III MAF and GVN psyops effort during the LE LOI Campaign months of November and December reflected an increase of 51% over that of the first ten months of 1968. In December alone, a record 3,069 aerial and ground broadcasts were conducted, a record 725 visual productions were presented, and a near-record 285 million leaflets were distributed throughout I CTZ. These results brought the 1968 yearly totals to 21,051 broadcasts, 6,422 visual presentations, and 2.5 billion leaflets. The following graphs present the 1968 psyops effort, comparing the 1968 and 1967 monthly averages.

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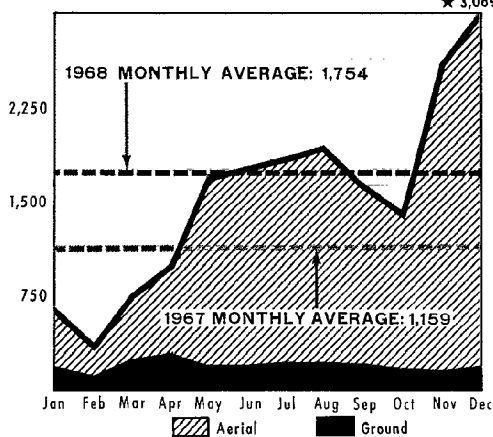
## PSYCHOLOGICAL OPERATIONS IN I CTZ - 1968

LEAFLETS DISTRIBUTED

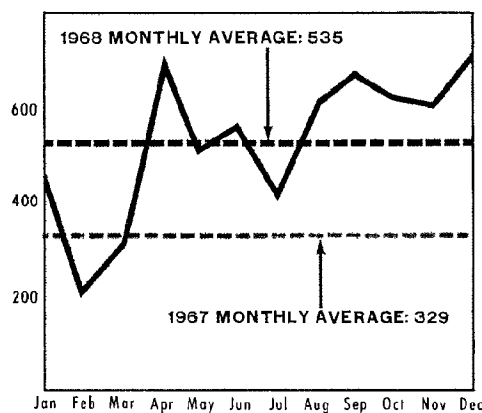


BROADCASTS CONDUCTED

★ 3,069



VISUAL PRESENTATIONS



One psychological operations program which produced significant results in 1968 was the rewards program. The program appeals to Vietnamese patriotism and offers remuneration as encouragement for civilians to provide intelligence to friendly forces. In 1967, 1,083 civilians responded to the appeals; the III MAF/I ARVN Corps goal for 1968, to triple this response, was surpassed, as 8,828 Vietnamese (eight times as many as the previous year) took advantage of the opportunity to report enemy movements

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and plans, to identify Viet Cong infrastructure cadre, or to turn in munitions and equipment.

Another goal established by III MAF/I ARVN Corps for 1968 was to improve the exploitation of prisoners and Hoi Chanh. The most lucrative means of employing these former enemy has been to exploit their information for use in psychological operations. Information concerning the enemy's lack of food and medicine, his continued heavy losses, and his soldiers' poor health has proven particularly effective in depressing the enemy's morale and for inducing defections. Most of this is accomplished through the printing and distribution of leaflets, but Hoi Chanh (with prisoners and detainees to some degree) are used extensively to record taped messages, write letters to former comrades, and make appeals over mass communications media. The response elicited from the enemy has been encouraging, as some 80% of an interviewed cross-section of returnees in I CTZ had been influenced to rally as a result of these psychological appeals.

#### -Summary

The Accelerated Pacification Campaign has met success primarily as a result of the impetus provided from the national level and the enthusiasm generated among provincial agencies. President THIEU, in a speech to a group of his province chiefs, praised them for their efforts but hastened to add more would be asked. Indicating the accelerated campaign is perhaps but a pilot program, the president added: "At the end of the campaign do not be surprised if we ask you to try for even more. We expect you to go the first mile, and then go the second mile. We expect you to try and try again."

#### Revolutionary Development

The 1968 GVN Revolutionary Development (RD) Program has been extended to 31 January 1969, to coincide with

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the termination of the LE LOI Campaign. It is anticipated the RD program will be concluded satisfactorily by that time, with development in all 287 selected hamlets completed. As of end-December, 1968 (69%) of these hamlets had been developed, and RD teams were operating in the other 89. The 287 hamlets targeted by the 1968 plan represent an increase of 40% over the 203 hamlets in 1967, thus satisfying yet another goal established for the year.

The program's expansion in 1968 was enabled by a substantial increase in the number of RD teams available. At the first of the year, a goal of 169 active teams was established for I CTZ; this objective was accomplished by September, and at end-December, 178 teams were developing hamlets within the tactical zone.

#### ARVN Support for Revolutionary Development

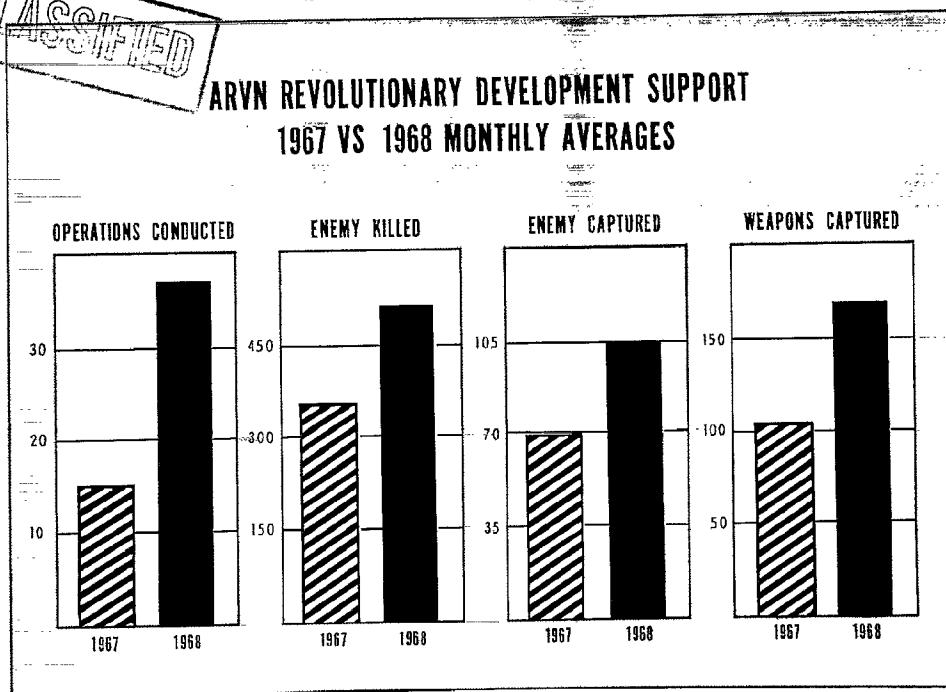
Responsibility for military support of the GVN revolutionary development effort was assigned the ARVN in January 1967. During the ensuing two years, the commitment of I Corps battalions grew from an initial 12 to as many as 17 during 1968, in accordance with an established III MAF/I ARVN Corps objective. This increase in RD support battalions was reflected in corresponding increases in operations conducted and results achieved. In 1967, ARVN battalions conducted 175 RD support operations, accounting for 4,170 enemy killed, 829 prisoners, and 1,218 weapons captured; in 1968, ARVN involvement in support of RD amounted to 444 operations, which resulted in 6,096 enemy killed, 1,260 captured, and 2,014 weapons seized.

The graph on the following page, displaying the 1967 and 1968 monthly averages of ARVN RD support operations and results in I CTZ, illustrates ARVN progress in responding to the commitment.

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Although not specifically in support of the Accelerated Pacification Campaign, ARVN operations in support of RD have enhanced the security of LE LOI hamlets. One such operation was conducted during December by the 1st ARVN Ranger Group in the basin area between Dai Loc and An Hoa. By end-month, the Rangers, coordinating closely with 1st Marine Division Operation TAYLOR COMMON to the west and southwest, had accounted for 537 enemy killed, 32 captured, and 114 weapons seized. The operation also afforded RD and LE LOI teams added peripheral security for the development of targeted hamlets in the vital Danang-Hoi An-Dai Loc triangle.

In sum, ARVN RD support battalions conducted 36 operations in December, which resulted in 652 enemy killed, 68 prisoners taken, and 176 weapons captured. The graphs on the following page display the 1968 RD support operations and results, by month, in I CTZ.

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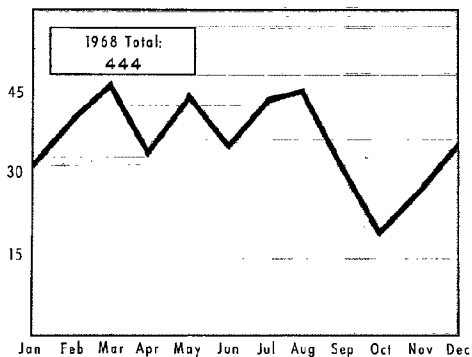
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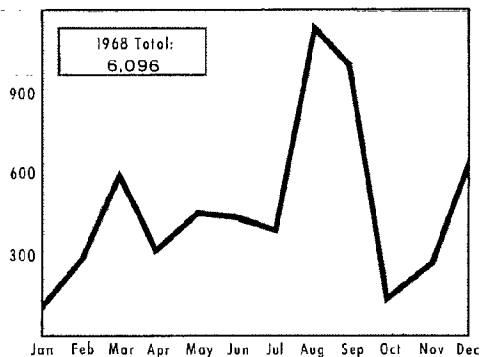
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# ACHIEVEMENTS OF ARVN UNITS IN SUPPORT OF REVOLUTIONARY DEVELOPMENT

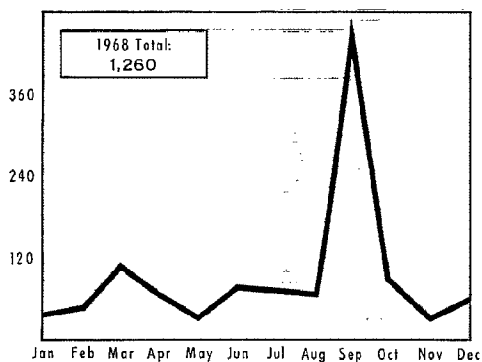
OPERATIONS CONDUCTED



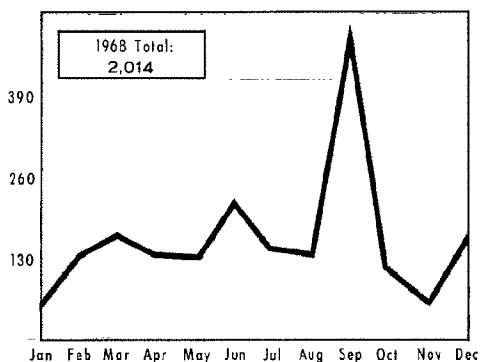
ENEMY KILLED



ENEMY CAPTURED



WEAPONS CAPTURED



## Combined Action Program

The Combined Action Program, a Marine-initiated program for upgrading the tactical proficiency of Vietnamese territorial forces, has expanded consistently since the first platoon was organized in Phu Bai during the Summer of 1965. By 1 January 1968, there were 79 combined action platoons (CAP's) in I CTZ, and through the year, 23 more were activated. In April, the program developed mobile

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training teams (MTT's), which have provided two weeks of basic combat instruction to more than 70 I Corps Popular Force platoons. Also activated in 1968 were the 4th Combined Action Group (CAG) headquarters, responsible for the coordination of combined action units in the Quang Tri-Dong Ha-Cam Lo area, and five company headquarters (one in 2d CAG, three in 3d CAG, and one in 4th CAG).

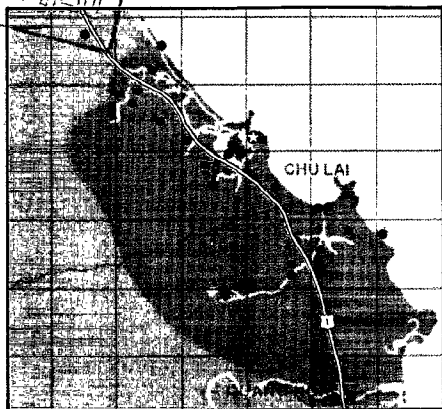
The growth of the Combined Action Program during 1968 and the program's end-December disposition are shown by the map on the following page.

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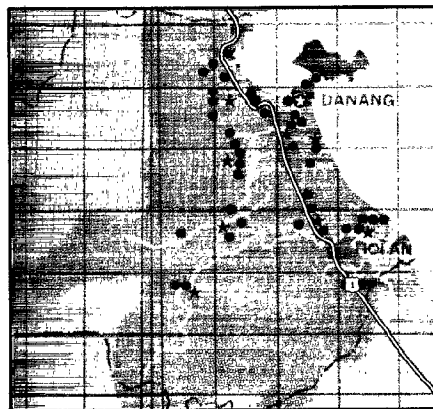
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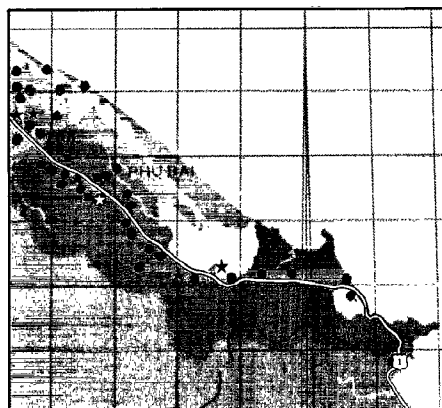
## COMBINED ACTION PROGRAM EXPANSION - 1968



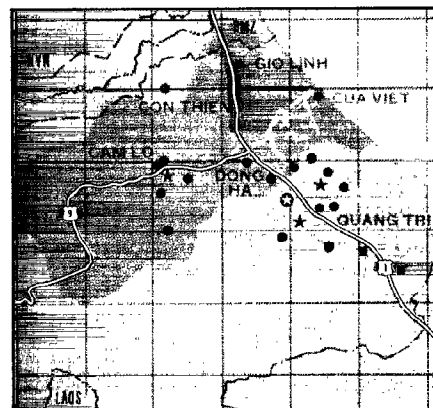
1ST CAG		
UNITS	1967	1968
GROUP HQ	1	1
COMPANY HQ	3	3
PLATOONS	15	21
MOBILE TRAINING TEAMS	-	2
STRENGTHS		
USMC	213	364
USN	19	34
RVN	334	644



2D CAG		
UNITS	1967	1968
GROUP HQ	1	1
COMPANY HQ	7	8
PLATOONS	40	39
MOBILE TRAINING TEAM	-	1
STRENGTHS		
USMC	633	571
USN	42	41
RVN	1,070	1,043



3D CAG		
UNITS	1967	1968
GROUP HQ	1	1
COMPANY HQ	2	5
PLATOONS	15	31
MOBILE TRAINING TEAMS	-	2
STRENGTHS		
USMC	296	546
USN	18	28
RVN	378	809



4TH CAG		
UNITS	1967	1968
GROUP HQ	-	1
COMPANY HQ	2*	3
PLATOONS	9*	12
MOBILE TRAINING TEAMS	-	2
STRENGTHS		
USMC	123	282
USN	9	19
RVN	229	540

\* Includes three CAP's and one Co Hq deactivated at Khe Sanh.

## LEGEND AND RECAPITULATION

STATUS AS OF 31 DECEMBER 1967		ACTIVATED DURING 1968		STATUS AS OF 31 DECEMBER 1968	
GROUP HQ	3	GROUP HQ	1	GROUP HQ	4
COMPANY HQ	14	COMPANY HQ	** 6	COMPANY HQ	19
PLATOONS	79	PLATOONS	** 28	PLATOONS	102
MOBILE TRAINING TEAMS	-	MOBILE TRAINING TEAMS	7	MOBILE TRAINING TEAMS	7
STRENGTHS		STRENGTHS		STRENGTHS	
USMC	1,265	USMC	498	USMC	1,763
USN	88	USN	34	USN	122
RVN	2,011	RVN	1,025	RVN	3,036

\*\* Five CAP's (two in 2d CAG; three in 4th CAG) and one Company Hq were deactivated during 1968.

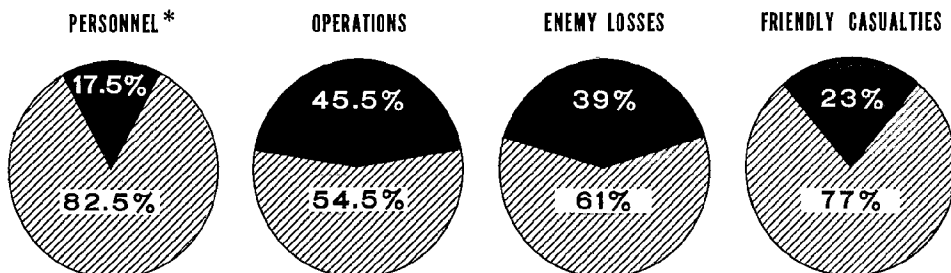
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During its three and one-half years, the Combined Action Program not only has expanded physically, but has evolved a workable solution for the problem of an undeveloped territorial security force. Everyday association with Marines has enhanced greatly the ability and confidence of Popular Force soldiers participating in the program. This is most apparent when comparing the combat records of those PF operating independently and those under CAP cognizance. As an example, the following graphs depict the higher level of success attained by PF in combined action outfits during the six-month period, April through September 1968.

### COMPARISON OF I CORPS POPULAR FORCES APRIL - SEPTEMBER 1968



\*Includes USMC/USN in CAP'S

● I Corps PF operating in CAP'S    ◐ I Corps PF operating independently

One of the most important operational benefits derived from the program has been the CAP's ability to collect intelligence from the populace. This has evolved over the past three and one-half years as a result of CAP's demonstrating to the local citizenry they are worthy of support. Following are recent examples of the many incidents where local intelligence has initiated CAP operations.

-At 1800 on 15 November, an MTT 1-1 patrol, operating out of Tam Ky, was informed by a group of Vietnamese of an enemy rally point, four miles southwest of the

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provincial capital. The patrol proceeded to the reported area, directing artillery in front of its advance. A sweep of the objective netted five Viet Cong prisoners.

-During the morning of 17 December, CAP 2-5-4, acting on intelligence from local civilians, engaged five Viet Cong five miles south-southwest of Danang, killing one enemy, capturing two, and seizing one weapon.

-Also in December, villagers on two occasions led CAP's to enemy weapons caches. On the 5th, CAP 2-3-3 was directed to a store of fifty-eight 2.75-inch rockets, 11 miles south of Danang; and on the 13th, villagers guided CAP 2-1-3 to two 122mm rockets, five miles southwest of Danang Air Base.

The ability of combined action units to develop local intelligence resources greatly endangers enemy units in CAP operating areas. As a result, the enemy, over the past two years, has directed a disproportionate number of attacks against combined action units -- about 17% of his effort in 1967 and over 20% in 1968. This is particularly significant, considering but two percent of the friendly forces in I CTZ are involved in combined action units. However, CAP's consistently have thwarted this enemy attempt to discredit them in combat, as evidenced by the following actions which took place in December.

-Shortly before midnight on the 19th, enemy movement was detected outside the wire of the MTT 1-1 compound, two miles southwest of Tam Ky. The Marines and Popular Force soldiers preempted the attack by directing small arms fire against the target area, and artillery was called to interdict the enemy's withdrawal. A sweep of the area found three Viet Cong killed, one AK-47 rifle, two B-40 antitank rocket launchers with four rounds, three satchel charges, four antipersonnel mines, and a ladder. There were no friendly casualties.

-At dawn on the 22d, CAP 2-1-1, six miles west-southwest of Danang, was attacked by a large Viet Cong force, employing machine guns and B-40's and supported by mortars. Fixed wing and armed helicopter strikes supported the CAP, and CAP 2-1-6 reinforced the action from their position roughly

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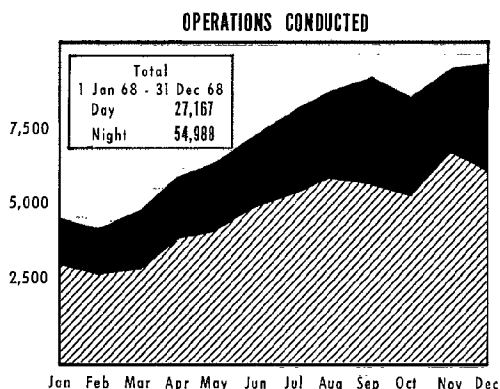
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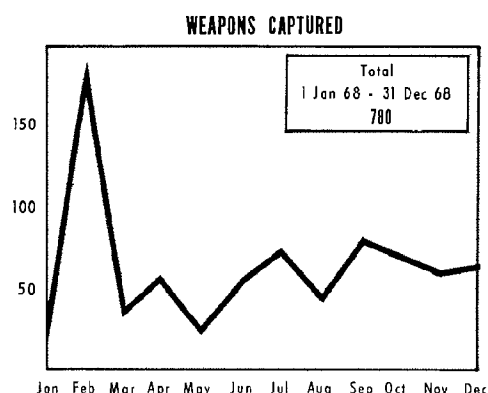
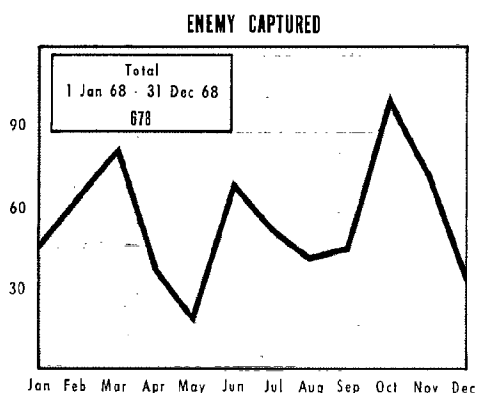
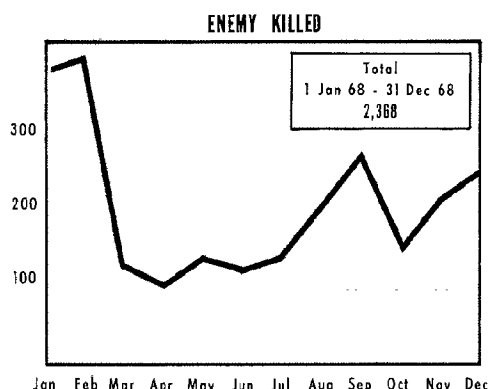
three miles to the north. By dusk, the last remnants of the VC force were routed, but not before the enemy lost 24 dead and five weapons. Friendly casualties for the engagement were one Marine and eight PF wounded.

During December, combined action units conducted a record 9,206 counter guerrilla operations, 66% of which were night patrols and ambushes. These operations resulted in 245 enemy killed, 34 captured, and 64 weapons seized. Combined action unit operations and results for 1968 are displayed in the graphs below.

## COMBINED ACTION UNIT ACTIVITY



■ Daylight patrols    ▨ Night patrols and ambushes



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Pacification

As of 31 December, approximately 847,000 civilians were residing in the 93 secure villages within III MAF pacification areas, representing more than 69% of the 1.4 million Vietnamese in the five regions. However, there are some 3.1 million civilians living in I CTZ, or more than twice the population of the designated III MAF areas, and all these people are affected by the pacification program in I CTZ.

In February 1966, with 46,735 Marines in I CTZ, III MAF implemented the Pacification Evaluation System to measure the Marine impact on pacification. Later, in December, the Department of Defense, in conjunction with the US Mission Council, Vietnam, developed a similar system (the Hamlet Evaluation System) to measure pacification progress throughout the entire Republic of Vietnam.

Both systems have been employed in I CTZ and have proven to be not only compatible but complementary. The country-wide Hamlet Evaluation System (HES) estimates progress on the basis of observation by US advisors at the district level, whereas the III MAF system relies exclusively on its military structure for information, and thus is self-limited to those areas more or less permanently occupied by III MAF tactical units. In view of the tenuity of pacification in those regions not enjoying the cloak of security provided by III MAF forces, this publication in the past has based its reports on the III MAF Pacification Evaluation System.

The complexion of the war has changed, however, as the enemy's strength has been augmented by major NVA formations, and III MAF's strength has been bolstered to more than 139,000 US Marines and soldiers as of December 1968. With this substantially larger force, III MAF by end-1968 had extended its influence to include all I CTZ. And the ARVN, demonstrating marked improvement in the execution of both offensive and RD support operations, were seeking an ever-

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increasing role in the war. Thus, beginning with the January 1969 edition, this report will incorporate HES as the data base for measuring pacification progress in I CTZ, as it allows a comprehensive view of both III MAF and ARVN influence on the development of security throughout the five provinces.

According to HES ratings, the secure population in I CTZ increased during 1968 from approximately half to over two-thirds, as displayed on the following graph. Thus, the III MAF/I ARVN Corps 1968 goal of increasing the percentage of the population considered secure was accomplished.

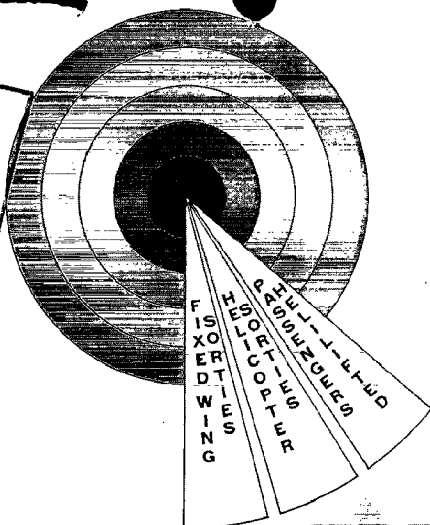
PACIFICATION PROGRESS IN I CTZ - 1968		
	1 JANUARY	31 DECEMBER
SECURE POPULATION	52%	69%
CONTESTED POPULATION	29%	16%
VC CONTROLLED POPULATION	19%	15%

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# AIR OPERATIONS

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AIR OPERATIONS

Paralleling the accelerated pace of ground combat activity, Marine fixed wing and helicopter air support reached record levels during 1968. Pilots of the 1st Marine Aircraft Wing flew 8,788 fixed wing sorties in December, bringing to 92,385 the total number of in and out-of-country fixed wing flights tallied during the year - a 16% increase over the 79,532 flown in 1967. Helicopter pilots of the wing and the two Special Landing Forces realized an even greater increase, flying 670,995 sorties in 1968 (59,838 in December) - 31% more than the 510,595 flown in 1967.

Fixed Wing Operations-In-Country Operations

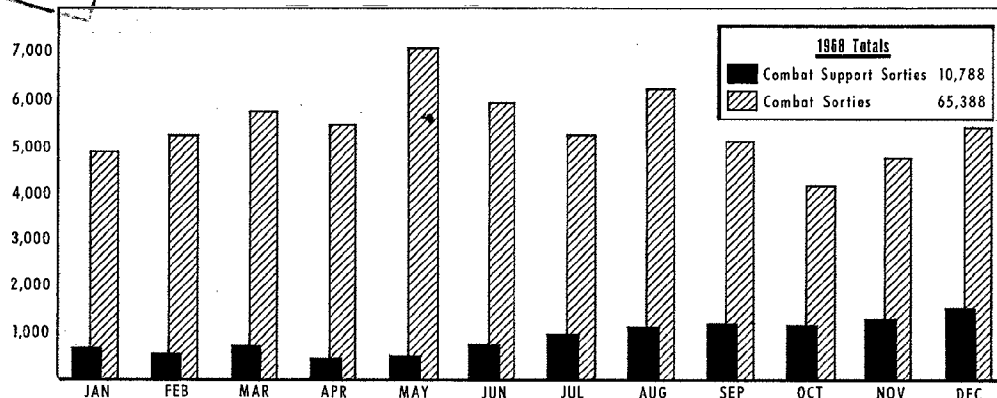
Of the 8,788 fixed wing tactical sorties flown in December (second only to the 8,929 logged in August), 6,953 were flown in support of III MAF, ARVN, and ROK forces actively engaged in ground operations within the confines of I CTZ. These in-country sorties included 5,434 combat flights (close and direct air support and interdiction) and 1,519 combat support missions (reconnaissance, electronic countermeasure (ECM), electronic intelligence (ELINT), photographic, and tactical air coordinator (airborne)). During the year, 76,176 fixed wing sorties were flown in-country -- 65,388 classified as combat and 10,788 as combat support.

The graph on the following page depicts the in-country combat and combat support sorties flown, by month, since January 1968.

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## IN-COUNTRY FIXED WING SUPPORT BY MARINE AIRCRAFT: JAN-DEC 1968



Though results of the combat support effort (providing the ground commander a portion of the required reconnaissance coverage of the battlefield) are relatively intangible, battle damage assessments normally afford a good indication of the effectiveness of the combat missions flown. For example, in December, Marine pilots delivered 8,761 tons of bombs, 3,097 napalm canisters, and 12,063 rockets against enemy targets, accounting for 181 enemy killed, more than 1,000 structures and 700 bunkers destroyed, 176 secondary explosions, and 168 secondary fires.

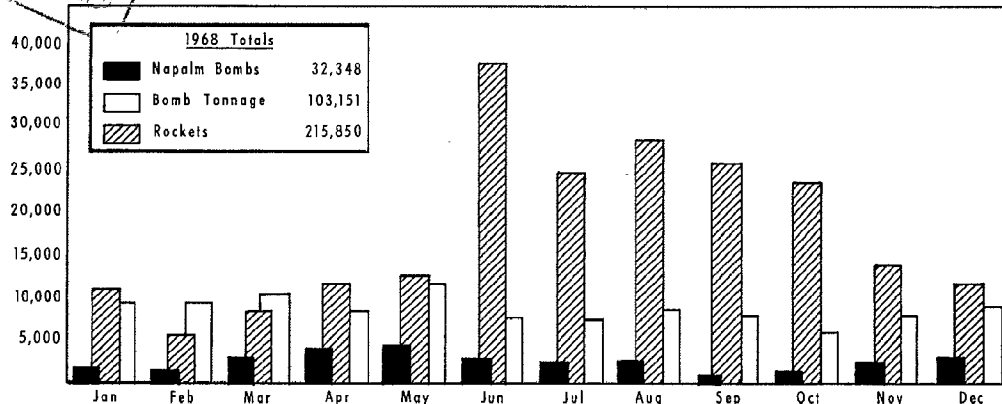
The enemy's propensity for avoiding major confrontation with friendly forces and a shift in emphasis of the ground and air effort to smaller and more widely-dispersed targets in southern I CTZ (relative to those attacked in the DMZ area) during the second half of the year are reflected in the corresponding decline in ordnance expended and enemy killed by Marine aircraft, noted on the graphs on the following page.

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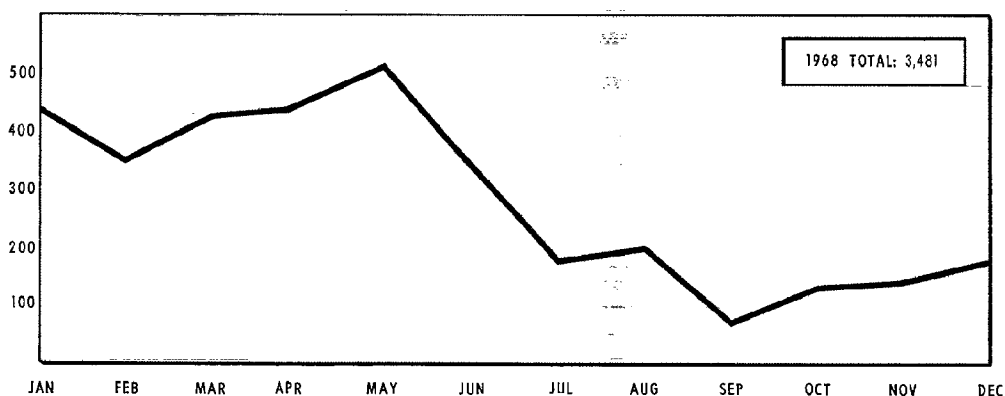
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# ORDNANCE DELIVERED BY MARINE AIRCRAFT IN ICTZ: JAN - DEC 1968



## ENEMY ATTRITION IN ICTZ BY MARINE AIR: JAN - DEC 1968



In December, 2,999 (55%) of the in-country combat flights were flown in support of 13 large unit operations conducted by III MAF and the SLF's and one by the 2d ROK Marine Brigade. The remaining 2,435 (45%) were flown in support of small unit operations or in the Danang Rocket Belt, A Shau Valley, or against Route 547 between A Shau and Hue.

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Typifying the missions flown daily by Marine pilots in support of tactically engaged ground units were the following:

--On the morning of 9 December, a tactical air coordinator (airborne) observed a large enemy force well dug-in along the La Tho river eight miles south of Danang. Within minutes, four A-4E's of Marine Attack Squadron-211 attacked the enemy position. Expendng thirty-two 250-pound bombs and eight napalm canisters, the pilots accounted for 70 enemy killed.

--On the 11th, just prior to noon, two A-4E's of Marine Attack Squadron-311 delivered sixteen 250-pound bombs and four napalm canisters in direct support of units in Operation TAYLOR COMMON. This air attack against an unknown size enemy force located eight miles northwest of An Hoa resulted in 15 enemy killed. Shortly thereafter, and one mile southeast of this action, two other A-4E's dropped three tons of ordnance in close support of 2d Battalion, 7th Marines, this time accounting for 12 enemy killed.

-Out-of-Country Operations

During 1968, out-of-country combat and combat support missions flown by fixed wing pilots of the 1st Marine Aircraft Wing ranged from a low of 941 in May to a high of 2,148 in July, totaling 16,209 for the year. The December total of 1,835 was notably higher than the year's monthly average - 1,351.

Of the 16,209 sorties flown throughout North Vietnam and in the southern panhandle of Laos, 14,676 were classified as combat flights, while 1,533 were catalogued as combat support sorties. December combat and combat support figures were 1,763 and 72, respectively.

The halting of bombing north of the 19th parallel on 1 April 1968, and the complete cessation of strike missions

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against North Vietnam on 1 November 1968, had little effect on the number of sorties flown out-of-country. It should be noted, however, that the 1 November restriction on air operations over North Vietnam did lead to a significant increase in the number of sorties directed against enemy targets in southern Laos.

Illustrating the effects of these strike sorties against enemy sanctuaries in Laos were the results of missions flown on 14, 20, and 27 December. At 1230 on the 14th, two F-4B's of Marine Fighter/Attack Squadron-323 flew a direct air support mission against an NVA force located approximately 125 miles west-southwest of Danang. Expending twenty 500-pound bombs, the pilots accounted for 32 enemy soldiers killed. Six days later, and ten miles farther west, four A-4E's of Marine Attack Squadron-311 delivered twenty-four 500-pound bombs on positions occupied by an estimated NVA company. The tactical air coordinator (airborne) quoted a damage assessment of 30 enemy killed. Finally, at 1750 on the 27th, three A-4E's of Marine Attack Squadron-223 dropped four tons of bombs on an enemy redoubt some 110 miles southwest of Danang. Fifteen NVA were killed by this strike.

Out-of-country combat support sorties were flown almost exclusively by pilots of Marine Composite Reconnaissance Squadron-1 (VMCJ-1). Of the 1,533 sorties flown during the year, 1,497 were ECM, ELINT, or photo reconnaissance provided by VMCJ-1's EA-6A, EF-10B, and RF-4B aircraft.

The primary mission of VMCJ-1 is electronic warfare (EW) -- denying the use of, or rendering ineffective, the enemy's radar systems. Airborne EW is divided into passive and active operations, passive being concerned with the gathering of electronic intelligence, while active jamming operations directly support friendly aircraft during the conduct of their mission.

Marine EW support aircraft are the EA-6A and EF-

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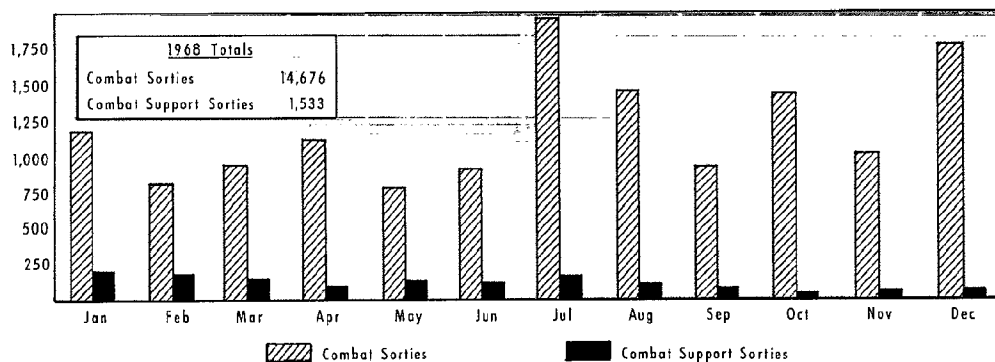
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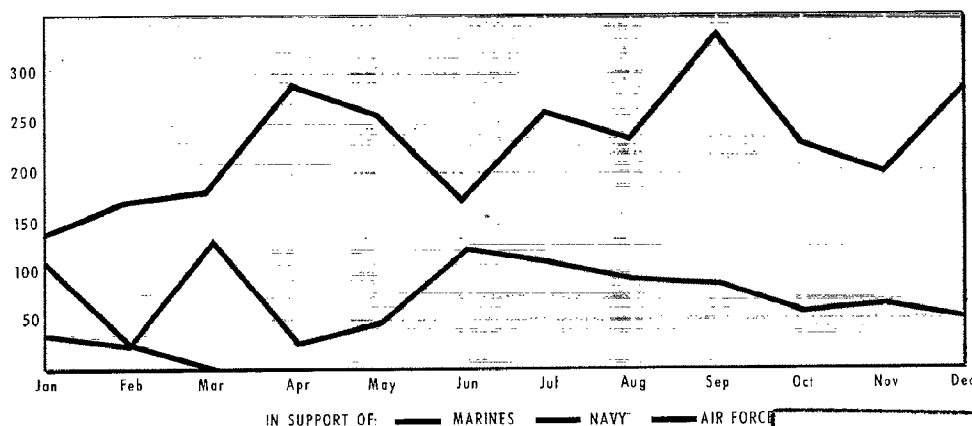
10B. The EA-6A is replacing the older EF-10B, scheduled to be phased out of southeast Asia during 1969. Both aircraft were employed extensively during the year in support of Marine, Navy, and Air Force aircraft conducting missions deep into North Vietnam (and, on occasion, into Laos) and in support of Marine aircraft operating in and north of the DMZ.

The following graphs portray the number of combat and combat support sorties flown out-of-country and the number of Marine EW support sorties flown in and out-of-country during the past 12 months.

### OUT-OF-COUNTRY FIXED WING SORTIES FLOWN BY MARINE AIRCRAFT JAN - DEC 1968



### EW SUPPORT SORTIES PROVIDED BY MARINE AIRCRAFT: JAN - DEC 1968



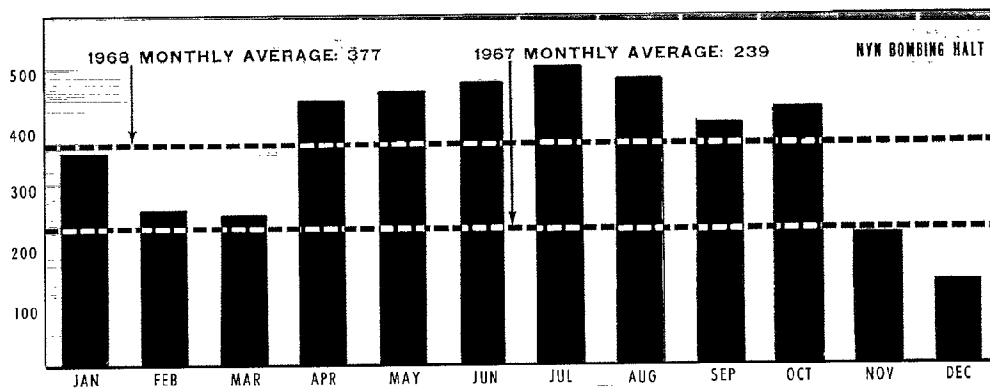
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During the year, the A-6A, with its unique capability of delivering ordnance at night or during instrument conditions through the utilization of its all-weather target acquisition radar and moving target indicator systems, flew 4,526 sorties in North Vietnam and Laos. (As the rules of engagement precluded ordnance drops against Laotian targets unless under positive control, these systems were employed only in North Vietnam.) A-6A sorties over Laos totaled 508 -- 369 were flown in November and December.

The following graph depicts the A-6A out-of-country attack sorties flown since January 1968.

**MONTHLY MARINE A-6A SORTIES FLOWN OUT-OF-COUNTRY  
JANUARY - DECEMBER 1968**



#### Marine F-8 Aircraft Completes Combat Tour

On 10 May, Marine utilization of the F-8 Crusader in South Vietnam ended with the deployment of Marine All-Weather Fighter Squadron-235 from Danang to Iwakuni, Japan. Three Crusader squadrons (VMF(AW)-312, 232, and 235), employed in support of US operations in South Vietnam, North Vietnam, and Laos, amassed a total of 20,955 sorties following their initial introduction in-country in December 1965. VMF(AW)-235, the last of the three squadrons to serve, was replaced by Marine Fighter/Attack Squadron-

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542 with 18 F-4B Phantoms.

OV-10A Aircraft

On 6 July, the first detachment of OV-10A aircraft (six planes) arrived at Marble Mountain Air Facility. Primarily employed for reconnaissance missions, the OV-10A also is utilized for tactical air coordinator (airborne) flights, helicopter escort missions, photo reconnaissance missions, and naval gunfire and artillery spotter flights. Since 6 July, two other detachments have joined the 1st Marine Aircraft Wing, the last arriving in Danang on 29 October. At end-year, 26 aircraft were assigned to two Marine observation squadrons (VMO-2 and 6) based in I CTZ. Flying an average daily sortie rate of 1.37, these versatile aircraft recorded 3,003 sorties in their first six months of combat.

The Single Manager Control of Tactical Air Resources in South Vietnam

As recounted in previous editions of this report, 1968 brought a radical disruption to III MAF's organization for combat, as COMUSMACV, on 10 March, assigned III MAF fixed wing strike and reconnaissance aircraft and associated air control assets to the mission direction of the CG, 7th Air Force, citing as his reasons therefor the increasing deployment of Army forces into I CTZ, the then-impending major battle in I CTZ, and the need to achieve a more flexible capability for possible shifts of air effort. This program of Air Force control, entitled the single manager system, was unable to commence functioning until 22 March and was not a viable system until 1 April. Meanwhile, however, the then-current III MAF system, following February's record shattering month of Tet-associated combat activity (8,610 enemy killed by III MAF alone), continued during the last three weeks of March to demonstrate its proven efficacy throughout I CTZ, particularly in controlling Air Force, Navy, and Marine aircraft in close support of ground maneuver units concluding

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successfully the battle of Khe Sanh -- an action involving the largest enemy force concentration of the war. As the single manager system then began to attain an operational capability in I CTZ, the III MAF air control element at Khe Sanh continued to support a major part of Operation PEGASUS, in which the 26th Marines attacked from the Khe Sanh combat base, joining the 1st Cavalry Division (Airmobile) and the 1st Marine Regiment in an assault to drive the enemy from western Quang Tri.

As the III MAF air control system, which through three years of Vietnam combat had been coordinated with, and integrated into, the 7th Air Force system, then in effect became a part of the Army-Air Force joint air/ground operations system (forming the single manager system), a fundamental difference in air control philosophy became evident: the single manager system was primarily a producer oriented effort, while the III MAF system was consumer oriented. This consumer orientation was central to the proven combat success of the III MAF system and underlay its complete responsiveness to the desires of the supported ground commander. Although the single manager procedure of air controllers diverting scheduled air support without approval of the ground chain of authority certainly was foreign to the Marine concept of directing air support, the difference in air control philosophy principally affected the preplanned air request procedures. The III MAF system for preplanned requests was keyed to the ground commander's schedule for planning his daily operations, and the ground commander thus transmitted his requirements for preplanned air support as late as the evening preceding his operation. Under single management, he now was required to submit his request for preplanned air support two days in advance, often before a ground operation was planned or even contemplated. While this single management procedure provided for convenient and orderly scheduling of aircraft, it was at the expense of responsiveness to the ground commander's tactical requirements.

By end-April, the derogation in responsiveness had

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become a matter of alarm to the CG, III MAF who, from the outset, had opposed strongly the imposition of the new air control procedures, knowing that the loss of control of his organic fixed wing aviation would degrade seriously his combat effectiveness; he was convinced too that the stated performance goals of single management were inherent in the pre-single manager arrangement, and the change therefore was unnecessary. With his initial analysis confirmed by the demonstrated weakness of single management and the resultant diminution in tactical air support to Marine ground commanders, the CG, III MAF requested that his fixed wing aviation assets be restored to his operational control.

Rejecting the III MAF petition, COMUSMACV responded to single management's failure with a modified arrangement which divided preplanned sortie allocations into two groups: 70% of the sorties would be allocated on a weekly schedule, while the remainder would be allocated on a daily basis. The weekly schedule was intended to provide each ground commander with sorties that he could use in any manner he considered would support his tactical plans most effectively, and the daily schedule would provide additional sorties with which to respond to the ever-changing ground combat situation. This modified arrangement was an improvement over the initial single management procedures. The weekly schedule, while not providing the responsiveness of III MAF's pre-single manager system, nevertheless provided all ground commanders a guarantee of air support and a degree of control over that support previously not existent in the single manager system.

Despite this initial modification and other III MAF-inspired improvements to the Army-Air Force joint air/ground operations system procedures of single management, and notwithstanding that, within its limitations, its performance had improved measurably, single management continued to be a producer oriented effort and, for Marine purposes, remained less effective than the system it replaced. Year-end statistics revealed the quantifiable effects of this

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unwieldy system on Marine operations in I CTZ. To the Marine ground commander, air support always has been but another in his arsenal of organic weapons. Prior to single management, he routinely preplanned his supporting air to complement his ground maneuver for the ensuing day, and during three years of combat operations, 88% of the air support received by Marine ground commanders in SVN was so planned. In the months following the imposition of single management, this preplanned air support declined to only 40% of the total sorties received by Marine ground commanders, and in December, it diminished further to less than 30%. On the other hand, the decline in preplanned sorties actually flown by III MAF fixed wing aircraft (from 90% of the total to 58%), while drastic, was not as marked as the decline in preplanned support provided to Marine ground forces. This apparent dichotomy was a product of the significant increase in Marine air diverted to support other than Marine ground units, which doubled from a previous average of 20% to a single manager average of 40%, and in November and December, to over 50%. To offset the nonresponsiveness of single management preplanned air support, III MAF relied heavily on immediate air support and extra, or add-on, sorties. Immediate air support, which previously had averaged ten percent of the air support effort, increased to a 1968 average of 25%. At the same time, III MAF found it necessary to resort to the extra or add-on sorties (17% of the total air support sorties) to compensate for the incompatibility between the weekly scheduling and the ground commander's tactical requirements.

As these indices of inefficiency accumulated during successive system evaluations, the CG, III MAF continued to recommend a procedural modification which would restore pre-single management air support responsiveness to forces in I CTZ and attain more effective utilization of air in I CTZ without in any way depriving COMUSMACV of control of the total air effort. In substance, the CG, III MAF proposed that, following COMUSMACV's weekly allocation of air effort, Marine air, less that allocated by MACV for employment outside of I CTZ, would be scheduled on a daily basis by III MAF

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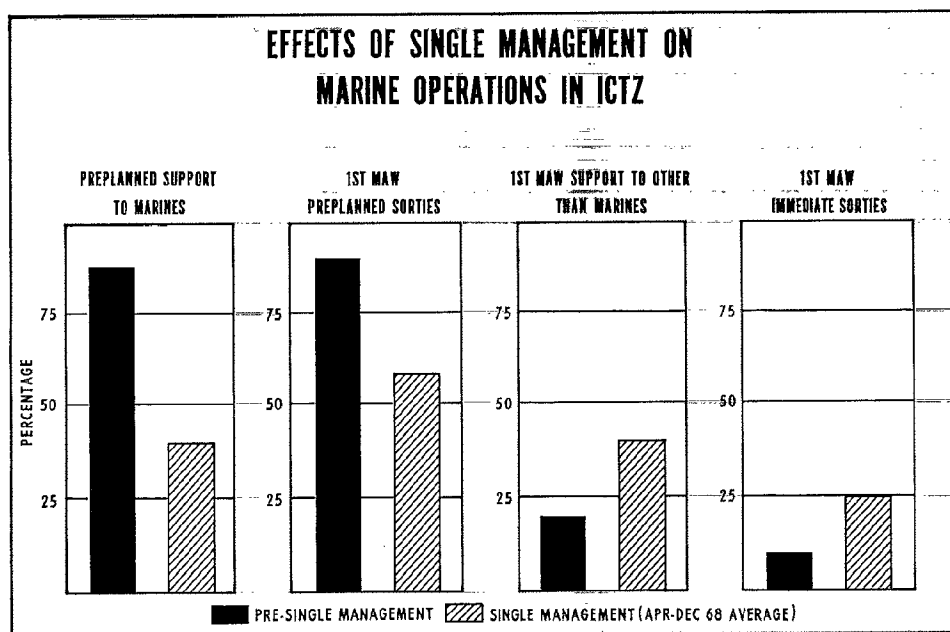
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to support all III MAF forces. The III MAF daily schedule would be published concurrently with the Air Force daily schedule thereby keeping Saigon apprised, on a timely basis, of the air plan in I CTZ. No other changes in single management procedures were envisioned. With the diminishing combat intensity and the reduction in Army forces in I CTZ at year's end, Marines in I CTZ were hopeful for an opportunity to demonstrate this procedural modification.

The following graph portrays the effect of single management on Marine operations in I CTZ.



### Helicopter Operations

Responding to the increased helicopter commitments generated by the intensified tempo of friendly ground operations in I CTZ, pilots of the 1st Marine Aircraft Wing and

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Special Landing Forces (SLF's) Alfa and Bravo flew 670,995 sorties in 1968, helilifting 1,027,556 passengers and 115,716 tons of cargo. Of these totals, SLF pilots flew 12% (71,477) of the sorties and transported 14% (128,822) of the passengers and six percent (6,751 tons) of the cargo. (In December, wing and SLF pilots flew 59,838 sorties, lifting 113,499 passengers and 13,835 tons of cargo.)

End-1968 helicopter statistics reflect a significant increase over those of 1967.

	<u>1967</u>	<u>1968</u>
Sorties	510,595	670,995 (*31%)
Passengers	622,535	1,027,556 (*39%)
Cargo (Tons)	70,950	115,716 (*39%)

\*Percent increase

Throughout the year, approximately half the helicopter missions flown were for combat and logistical re-supply of troops and cargo to friendly units conducting operations against NVA and VC forces in I CTZ. Other tactical sorties flown included casualty (medical) evacuation, reconnaissance, command and control, sea/air rescue, escort, tactical air coordinator (airborne), and tactical aircraft recovery missions.

More than 67,000 combatant and non-combatant evacuees were lifted from field areas to more secure positions (villages, secure outposts, field hospitals, hospital ships) during the course of the year. One of these casualty evacuation missions, flown on 23 July by a crew from Marine Medium Helicopter Squadron-165, demonstrated the versatility of the CH-46 aircraft. Just after noon on that date, the aircraft and four crewmen in question evacuated five wounded Marines and an attendant corpsman to a hospital ship anchored

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northeast of Danang. Enroute to the ship, the pilot was forced to secure one of his engines because of a fire. Unable to remain airborne, the pilot landed in the water and subsequently water-taxed the plane three miles to the shoreline. No injuries were associated with this waterborne maneuver. On reaching shore, the five medical evacuees were quickly retransported to the hospital ship.

The CH-53, utilizing its heavy lift capability, flew the majority of the tactical aircraft recovery missions logged during the year. Able to lift a payload in excess of 9,000 pounds, the aircraft recovered 167 helicopters and a small fixed wing aircraft (65 UH-34's, 60 CH-46's, 42 UH-1E's, and one O-1C) which otherwise may have been lost, realizing an approximate replacement savings of \$123,657,000. It is also worthy of note that the Army's CH-54 helicopter recovered 41 additional CH-46's (including the aircraft previously referred to in the water-taxi incident) for an estimated savings of \$65,600,000.

In December, 3,180 sorties, or 5.3% of those flown by 1st Marine Aircraft Wing helicopter pilots, were in support of other than Marine forces. Again, the great majority of these flights were in support of ROK Marine units (2,599), with the remainder supporting US Special Forces (522) and ARVN (59). Throughout the year, 43,138 sorties were provided to other than Marines - 34,094 to ROKMC, 3,840 for ARVN, 3,508 for USSF, 1,666 to US Army, and 30 in support of the 7th Air Force.

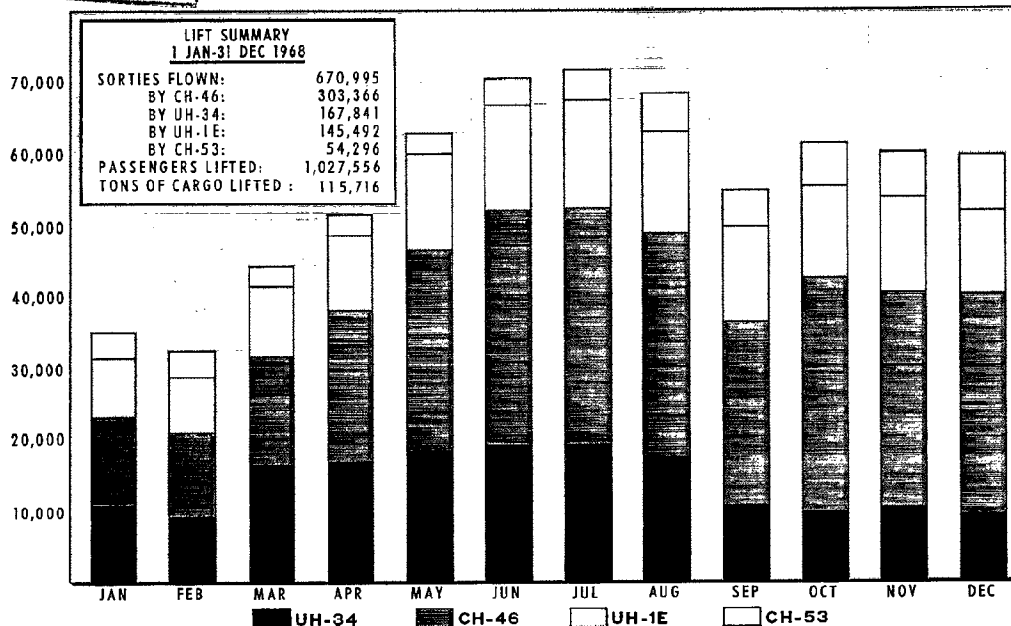
The graph on the following page portrays the total support provided by Marine helicopters during the past 12 months.

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## MARINE HELICOPTER SORTIES: JAN-DEC 1968

Crew, Passenger, and Aircraft Losses

In December, four aircraft (three fixed wing and one helicopter) were lost to direct enemy action, claiming the lives of two crewmembers. Four other crewmembers were classified as missing.

On 2 December, an O-1G, flying a reconnaissance mission, crashed and burned as a result of enemy small arms fire some 19 miles south of Dong Ha. Both of the plane's occupants were killed. The following day, an OV-10A, previously reported missing, was found in dense jungle ten miles west of Danang. The status of the two crewmembers is unknown. On the 9th, a CH-46, previously downed by enemy fire 12 miles south of Ca Lu, was, due to its inaccessibility and enemy activity in the area, destroyed by friendly fixed wing aircraft. The crew was recovered. And finally, on 20 December, an F-4B failed to return from a mission in Laos. Crewmember and aircraft status is unknown.

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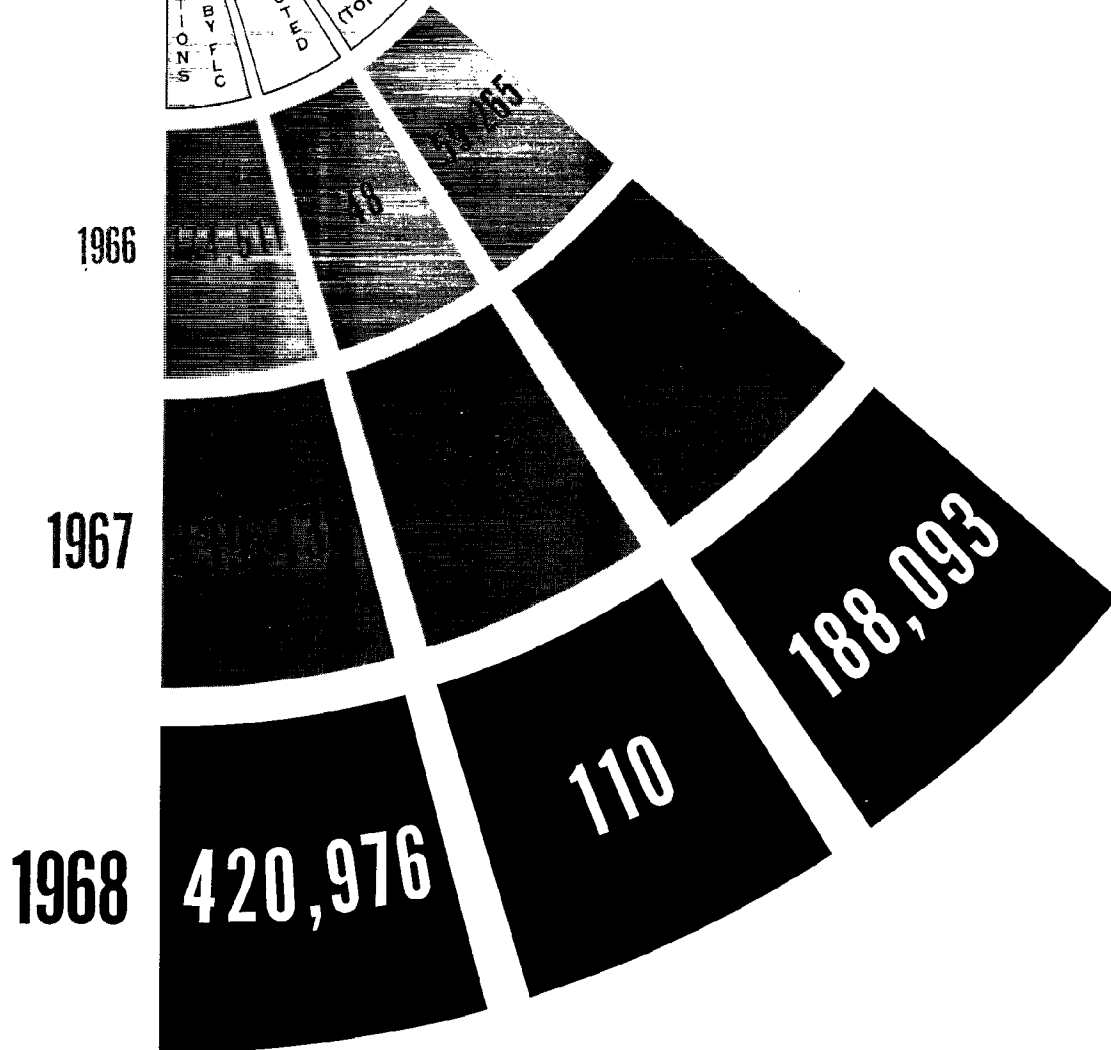
In all, the loss of 60 fixed wing aircraft and 82 helicopters was attributed to direct enemy action during the year. Included in these totals are 23 F-4's, 16 A-4's, six A-6's, three F-8's, three TA-4's, three OV-10's, two RF-4's, two EF-10's, one O-1, one KC-130F, 41 CH-46's, 20 UH-1E's, 17 UH-34's, and four CH-53's. These incidents cost the lives of 102 crewmembers and 83 passengers. Twenty-seven personnel were listed as missing.

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REGULATED BY FLC  
BARRIERS  
AVOIDANCE  
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LOGISTICS

III MAF's logistic organization was tested vigorously early in the year by the enemy's Tet offensive, with the challenge of simultaneously providing support for normal operations, restoring lines of communication degraded by the enemy offensive, providing support for the isolated Khe Sanh combat base, and supporting the rapid buildup of US forces in northern I CTZ.

The offensive struck hard at the roads and waterways of I CTZ. Traffic on primary land lines was restricted by severed roads, blown culverts, and damaged or destroyed bridges, and waterborne traffic on the principal northern waterways, the Cua Viet and the Perfume (Hue) rivers, was curtailed by attacks against transiting craft. Repair of the roads and bridges progressed at a rapid pace, soon reaching a pre-Tet level of trafficability, although emergency resupply by air was required for a time. And, through the resolute efforts of the US Navy, the movement of supplies continued on the Cua Viet and Perfume rivers to Dong Ha and Hue.

Despite periodic attacks against resupply routes and logistic facilities during the remainder of the year, and problems imposed by inhospitable terrain and weather, the III MAF logistic organization met the challenges, and was able to provide uninterrupted logistic support. On occasion, stock levels dipped due to unusual requirements levied on the system by intense combat activity, but these were replenished quickly. Throughout the year, III MAF personnel remained well-fed, well-clothed, and well-supplied with the necessary implements of war.

Changes in the logistic organization and shifts in the location of facilities to support the tactical situation have established flexibility as the hallmark of III MAF logistic support. Initiation of Operation TAYLOR COMMON, a multi-regiment penetration of Base Area 112, 30 miles southwest of Danang in December continued this characteristic, open-

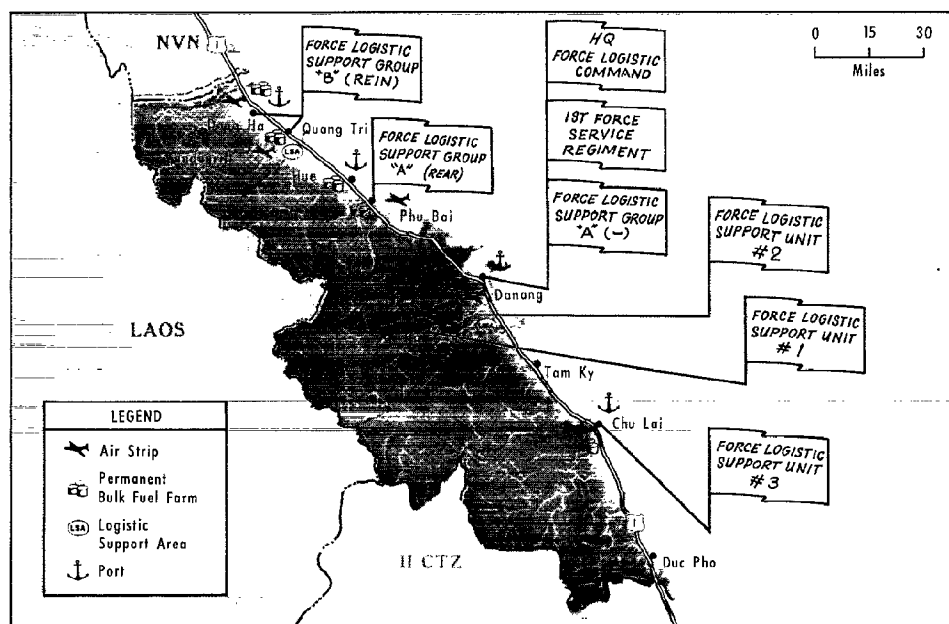
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ing Force Logistic Support Unit-1 at An Hoa as the primary Logistic Support Area (LSA) for the operation and Force Logistic Support Unit-2 at Hill 55 as the alternate. A highlight in the construction of the An Hoa installation was the upgrading of the airfield to an all-weather capability. In accomplishing this, a 350-man Seabee force rematted the 72 by 3,500 foot runway, the two taxiways, and the 46,000 square foot parking apron in five days.

The end of 1968 found III MAF logistic activities with a proven capability to adjust to realities imposed by weather and enemy activity. This flexibility, ensuring responsive and effective logistic support to the combat forces, encourages an optimistic appraisal for the coming year. The Marine logistical complex in I CTZ at year's end is portrayed on the following map.

### III MAF LOGISTICS FACILITIES - END 1968



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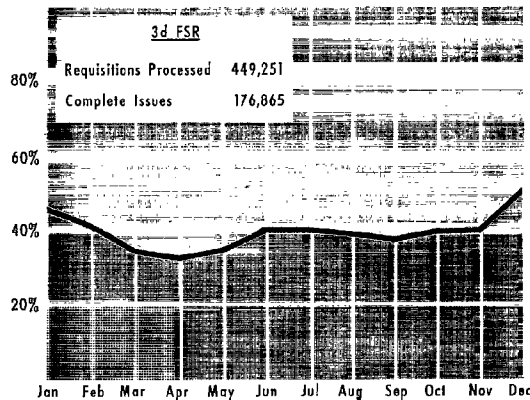
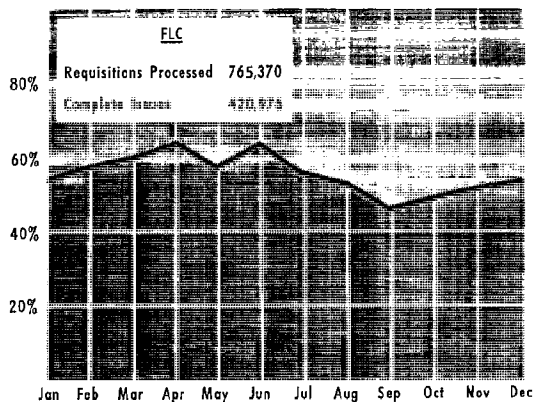
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Supply

Class I (Rations)- There were no significant problems involved in maintaining the desired stock posture in this class of supply. Increasing quantities of refrigerated rations were provided during the year.

Class II (General Supply)- The class II supply situation was adequate to satisfy all operational requirements. For the year, 3d Force Service Regiment (3dFSR), Okinawa processed 449,251 requisitions with 176,865 fills. Force Logistic Command processed 765,370 requisitions with 420,975 fills. The monthly fill rate attained by FLC and 3dFSR during 1968 is portrayed on the graphs below.

## REQUISITION FILL RATE - 1968



Class III (Petroleum) - Petroleum delivery operations were simplified with completion of several pipelines in northern I CTZ. Lines were installed at Tan My, Hue, Phu Bai, Quang Tri, and Dong Ha, thereby eliminating overland delivery and associated multiple handling.

Class IV (Special Items) - Adequate supplies were maintained during the year to support all III MAF operations.

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Class V (Ground Ammunition) - Stock levels of ground munitions were maintained essentially at the 45-day ammunition level authorized for the Force Logistic Command during 1968. These levels were adequate to support all III MAF operations.

Class V (A) (Aviation Ammunition) - Monthly Class V (A) issues increased sharply with the Tet offensive, reached a new high of 18,584 tons in June, and then declined to 12,700 tons in November with the diminution of overt enemy activity in I CTZ. Issues in 1968 were 188,093 tons, an increase of 40,680 tons over the 1967 total.

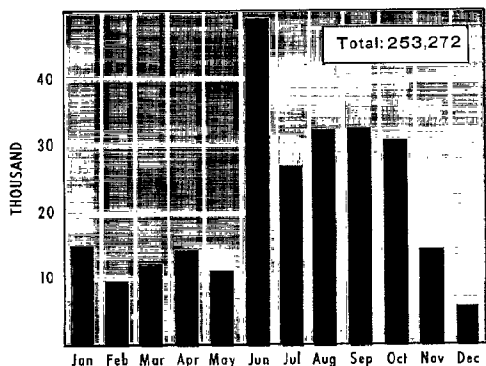
The chart on the following page depicts Force Logistic Command's monthly issue of selected aviation munitions to units of the 1st Marine Aircraft Wing.

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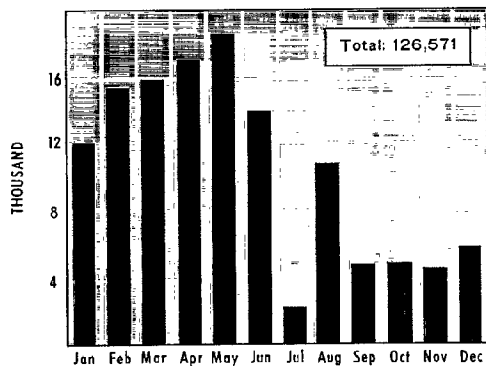
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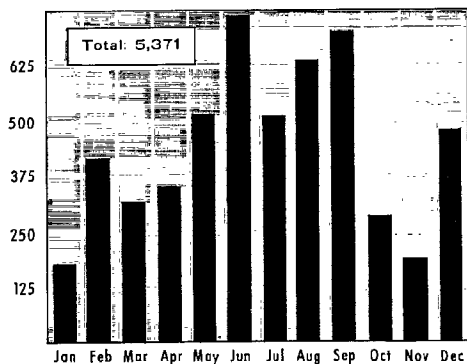
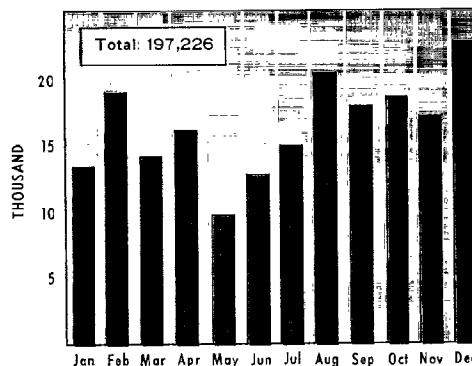
## FLC ISSUE OF SELECTED TYPES OF AVIATION ORDNANCE - 1968

2.75" Rocket (U)<sup>(1)</sup>

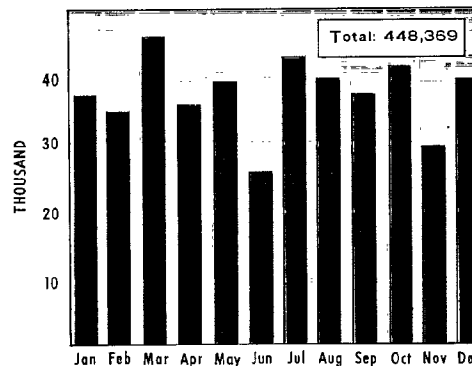
MK-81 (250-pound) Bomb



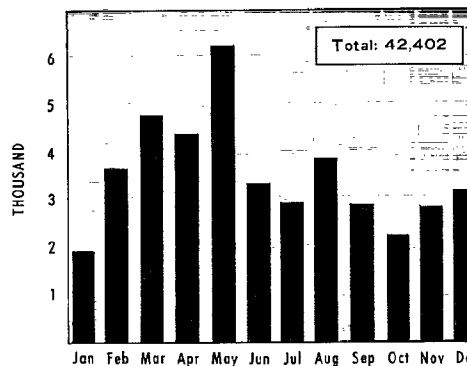
Cluster Bomb Unit (CBU-24)

2.75" Rocket (S)<sup>(2)</sup>

MK-82 (500-pound) Bomb



MK-77 (500-pound) Napalm Bomb



(1) 2.75" Rocket Unscarfed: Fired from fixed wing aircraft.

(2) 2.75" Rocket Scarfed: Fired from helicopters. "Scarfed" pertains to those characteristics of the rocket fins which give the projectile a more stable trajectory.

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Ordnance

Highlighting operations in the ordnance field in 1968 was the introduction of improved controlled fragmentation conventional munitions (COFRAM), a 155mm howitzer replacement model, the Walleye missile system, and the Rockeye antitank bomb.

-COFRAM

Improved controlled fragmentation munitions were introduced into Vietnam during January 1968. Upon receipt of authorization for their use, Prepositioned War Reserve Stocks of COFRAM munitions were airlifted to RVN from Okinawa and CONUS, establishing an initial 30-day ammunition stock level at the Force Logistic Command. Additional munitions were provided by surface shipments, and a 60-day stock level at Force Logistic Command was established by 1 March. The munitions were initially employed in support of operations in the Khe Sanh area, and have proven highly effective against soft targets such as personnel in the open. Total expenditures of COFRAM during 1968 were as follows:

Grenade, Hand, M33	48,438
Grenade, 40mm, M386/M397	63,319
Cartridge, 105mm, M444 Series	23,317
Projectile, 155mm, M449 Series	11,262
Projectile, Eight-inch, M404	1,674
Cluster Bomb Unit-1	102

-155MM Howitzer M109

During early 1968, it became evident that by end-year all M109 155mm howitzers used by Marines in Vietnam would

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require replacement, due to extensive use. On 1 June, the Commandant of the Marine Corps established a program to replace the model in Vietnam with an improved version. Initial shipment of 20 weapons arrived in Vietnam during November and early December, and replacement of all M109's in the 12th Marines was completed during December. The remaining 26 artillery pieces required to complete the exchange within III MAF were shipped from CONUS during December and are scheduled to arrive at Danang by 20 January 1969. It is planned that preliminary servicing and issue of these 26 howitzers will be completed by mid-February 1969.

-Walleye Missile System

Walleye, a 1,125-pound, video-guided, free-fall missile, was made available to the 1st Marine Aircraft Wing (1stMAW) during 1968 for Vietnam operations. The missiles were positioned in-country in August and an intensive training program was established for the maintenance and employment of the weapon; however, they have yet to be employed against the enemy.

-Rockeye II

Rockeye II, consisting of a 491-pound, air-dropped container filled with 274 antitank bomblets, was introduced into 1stMAW during September, complementing the inventory of antipersonnel/antitank bomblet dispensers. Limited quantities of Rockeye II were expended during November and December against selected material targets.

-M16 Rifle

As a result of cartridge extraction problems experienced with the M16A1 rifle during 1967, a program to replace the original barrel/sight assembly with a chromed chamber assembly was initiated at the Force Logistic Command. These assemblies with chromed chambers began arriving at the Force Logistic Command during January, and a rework assembly

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line was in full operation by February. The retrofit and replacement of M16A1 rifles was completed for the 1st and 3d Marine Divisions and attached units during September, and issue of chrome-chambered weapons to Headquarters, III MAF, the 1st Marine Aircraft Wing, and the Force Logistic Command commenced during October. In November, all unchromed weapons of the 2d Brigade, Republic of Korea Marine Corps were replaced with chrome-chambered models. As of 31 December, the Force Logistic Command was in the process of completing the conversion of the final 9,100 rifles required for the remaining units of III MAF and for a back-up stock at FLC. Upon completion of this final block, a total of 61,169 M16A1's will have been retrofitted by the Force Logistic Command -- a major accomplishment.

#### Communication/Electronics

The introduction of new equipment and the expansion of existing facilities improved the communication/electronics posture in I CTZ during 1968.

An increased communication capability between major commands of III MAF was accomplished by installation of dial telephone systems at Headquarters, III MAF, Force Logistic Command, and the 1st and 3d Divisions, linking these commands through direct distance dialing, and by receipt of the AN/TRC-97E radio (possessing a 24-channel capability), supplementing the 12-channel capability of the AN/TRC-97.

Message handling capabilities of the III MAF major communication centers were improved through expansion of the automatic digital communication facilities at III MAF, Force Logistic Command, and 1st Marine Aircraft Wing, and by receipt of additional items of fixed-plant teletype equipment.

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Movement of Personnel and Supplies

As the year began, extreme pressure was placed on transportation and embarkation operations in I CTZ. The enemy line of communication interdiction campaign of January and February placed a heavy burden on in-country air assets for the movement of personnel and essential supplies. Air-lift was the only link between Khe Sanh and its external sources of supply. Marine and Air Force fixed wing aircraft flew 1,127 sorties, delivering 12,437 tons of supplies to the Khe Sanh combat base, primarily by air delivery systems. When Route 1 from Hue to Phu Bai was blocked by enemy interdiction in February, helicopters transported emergency supplies from Tan My to Phu Bai, thus sustaining combat operations. Waterborne convoys on the Cua Viet and Perfume rivers required constant escort by minesweepers and river patrol boats; armed helicopters often flew air cover.

By early March, III MAF units had curtailed the major enemy threat, and engineer efforts had restored integrity of the land lines of communication. During the rest of the year, enemy attempts at disrupting movement of personnel and supplies were desultory.

-Cargo Operations

For the year, III MAF received 489,429 measurement tons (M/T) of surface delivered cargo from CONUS and intra-WestPac, practically the same as the 489,965 M/T received by surface during 1967. However, an increase over the 1967 total was registered in the amount of retrograde cargo surface shipped from III MAF, as 148,768 M/T were shipped in 1968 compared with the 1967 total of 121,058 M/T. Monthly amounts of cargo shipped to and from III MAF by surface are shown on the following page.

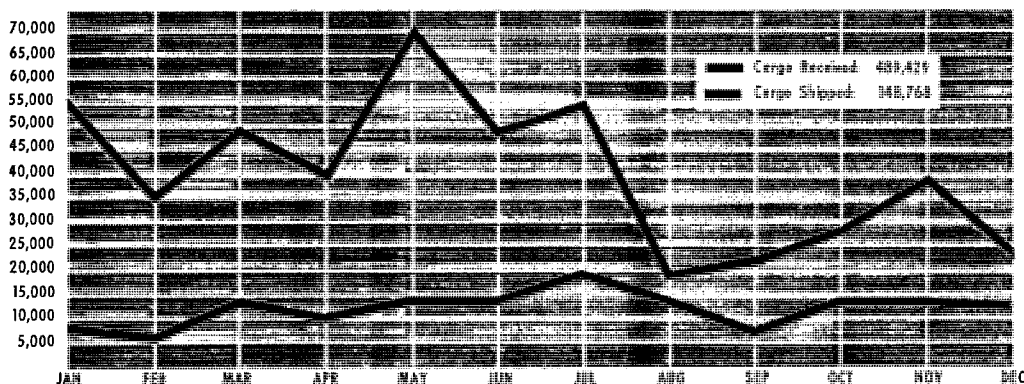
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### SURFACE CARGO MOVEMENT PERFORMANCE: 1968 (MEASUREMENT TONS)



#### -Port Facilities

Improvement of port facilities during the early months of 1968 paid dividends during the remainder of the year, with cargo handling records repeatedly broken. Although these operations are primarily the responsibility of the Naval Support Activity, Danang, III MAF units were the ultimate recipients of the vast majority of the material. Highlights of 1968 port operations and development were:

- construction of additional LCU ramps at Dong Ha, increasing the daily throughput capacity from 1,000 to 1,800 short tons (S/T);

- development of the Tan My/Hue complex, raising the throughput capability from 1,100 S/T to 2,700 S/T daily;

- establishment of a logistics-over-the-shore (LOTS) site at Wunder Beach, eight and one-half miles east of Quang Tri City, to supplement the northern ports, adding a daily capability of 750 S/T to the I CTZ total from March until October, when the site was closed.

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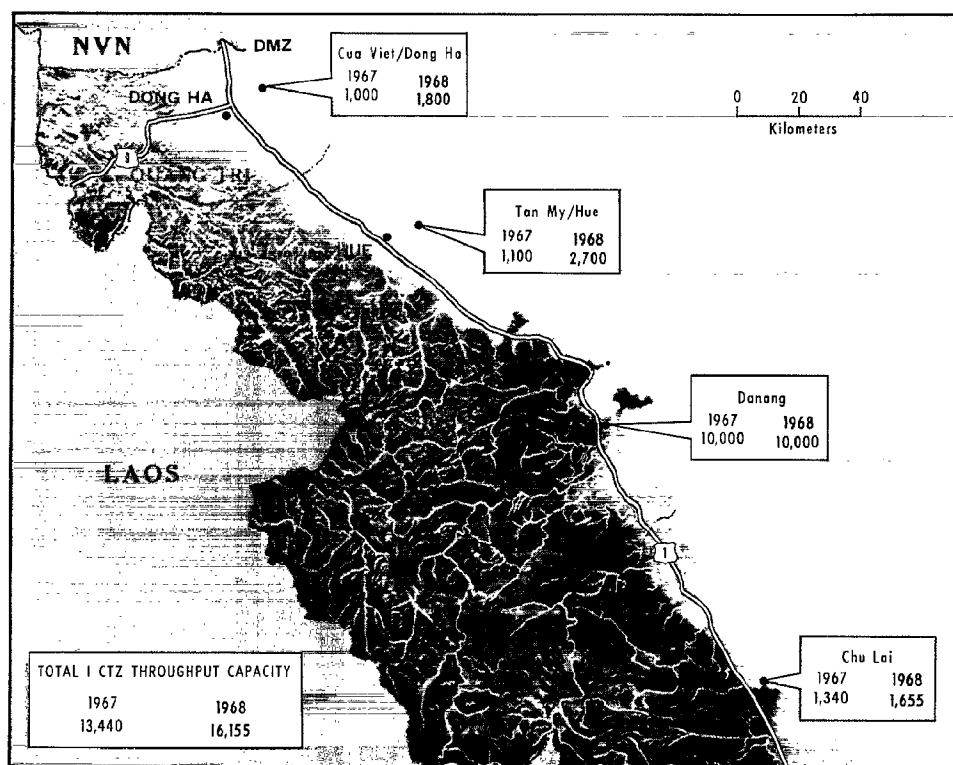
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The map below depicts the I CTZ ports and throughput capability on 31 December 1968.

### I CTZ DAILY PORT THROUGHPUT CAPACITY (S/T): END - 1968



### Maintenance

During 1968, the maintenance effort of Force Logistic Command and 3d Force Service Regiment, as reflected in the completion of Tactical Equipment Repair Orders (TERO), increased 24% over the previous year. A total of 134,942 TERO's were initiated in 1967, of which 132,222 were completed, while during this year, 164,027 TERO's were initiated and 164,881 were completed. A synopsis of the monthly input and completion of TERO's at FLC and 3dFSR is given in the graph on the following page.

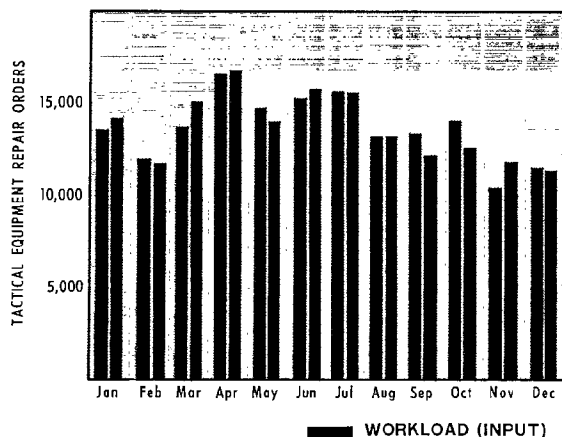
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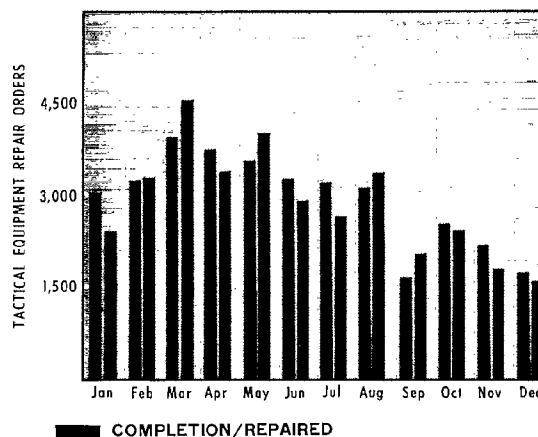
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PLC WORKLOAD VS COMPLETION: 1968



3D FSR WORKLOAD VS COMPLETION: 1968



### -Rebuild Program

After maintaining an excellent rate of production during the first six months of 1968, the program for repair/rebuild of major items of equipment by military maintenance facilities or civilian contractors on Okinawa or Japan experienced a reduction in output during the remainder of the year. From January through June, a total of 452 items of equipment were rebuilt, a 36% increase over the previous six month period. The production rate of the PU-239, a 20KW, 60-cycle generator, was particularly noteworthy, with the rebuild period being reduced from 102 to 67 days. During July, the program departed from procedures established during the previous years by changing to a fiscal year program vice the earlier quarterly forecast method. The anticipated benefits resulting from more consistent input and an earlier projection of repair parts requirements were not fully realized by the end of the year. The induction quota of 520 pieces of equipment set for the last half of 1968 was only 76% accomplished. However, the December induction quantity was 177 items, a 209% improvement over the average for the previous five months, and the forecast for output during the first six months of 1969 anticipates achievement of projected levels.

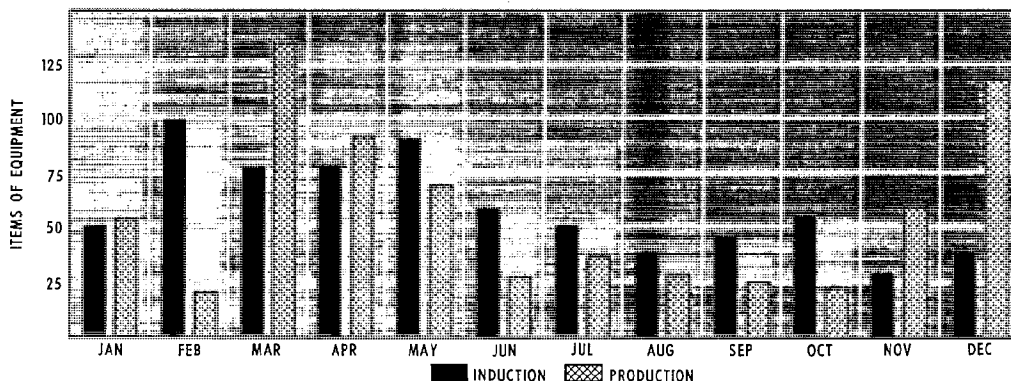
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The chart below provides a comparison of the induction of equipment for rebuild versus the number of items repaired.

### REBUILD PROGRAM INDUCTION/PRODUCTION: 1968



### -Deadlined Equipment

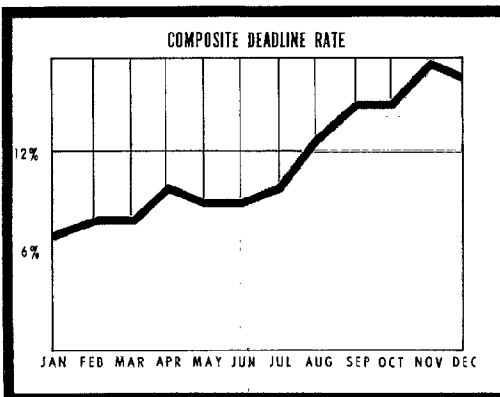
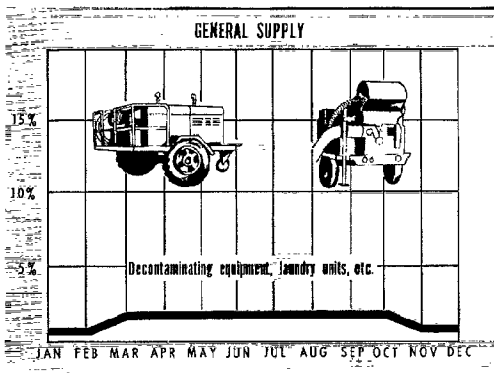
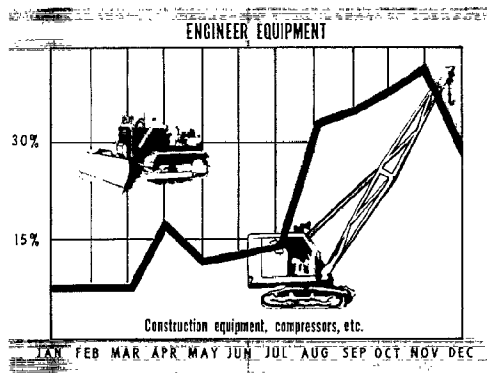
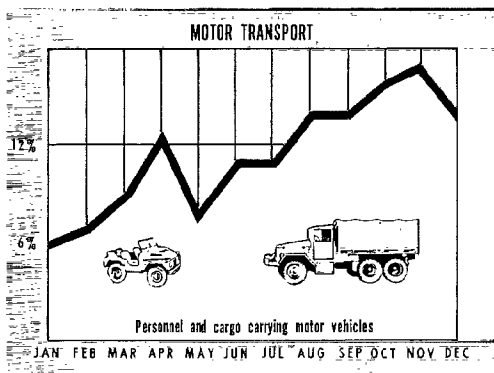
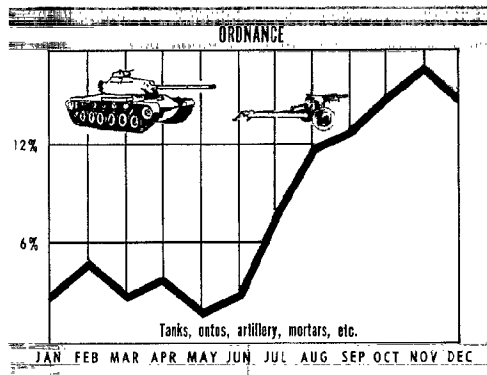
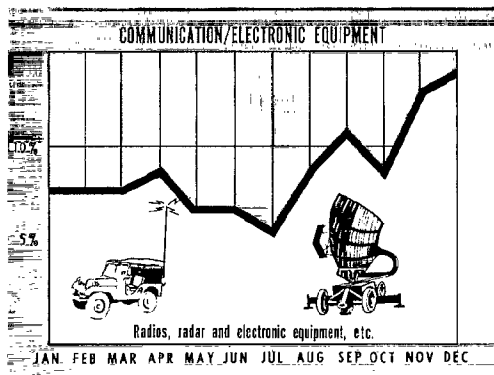
A comparison of the rates of deadlined combat essential equipment during 1968 with previous years was complicated by a change in the method of calculation. Between January and July, equipment deadlined in excess of 15 days served as the basis for computation of the rates. Deadline percentages for subsequent months were based on equipment deadlined in excess of 24 hours. While the deadline rates portrayed graphically on the following page appear to have increased considerably, the number of items deadlined remained essentially at the same level as end-1967.

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# MATERIEL DEADLINE: 1968

## COMBAT ESSENTIAL EQUIPMENT



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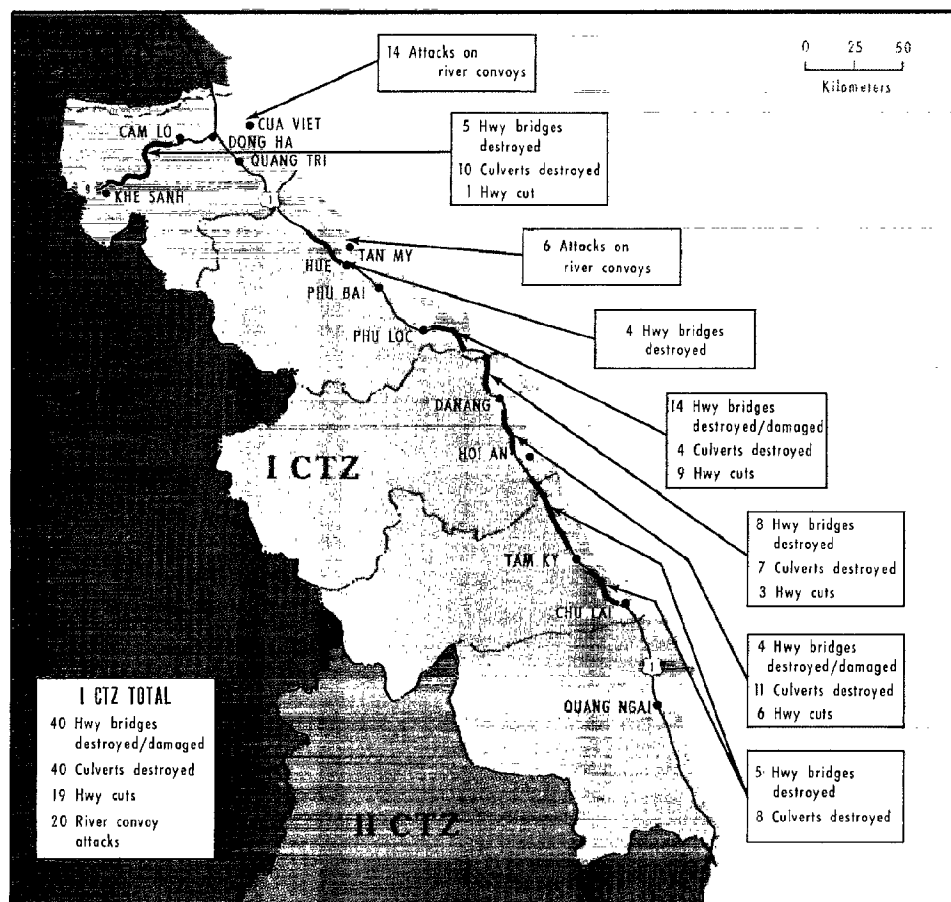
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Engineer Operations

Engineer activity during 1968 was influenced early in the year by the enemy's Tet offensive. Major interdiction of lines of communication (LOC) left Routes 1 and 9 largely impassable. Twenty-five bridges and 11 culverts were rendered temporarily impassable on Route 1 between Danang and Hue; from Cam Lo to Khe Sanh, Route 9 was interdicted in 16 places by the enemy. Traffic in southern I CTZ was also affected, as Route 1 was severed 34 times between Danang and Chu Lai. The map below depicts the extent of the enemy's LOC interdiction efforts during the Tet offensive.

### INTERDICTION OF I CTZ LINES OF COMMUNICATION 1 JANUARY - 9 FEBRUARY 1968



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Repairs to the lines of communication were effected by efforts of all engineer units supporting III MAF; by 2 March, Route 1 was open from Danang to Dong Ha.

The opening of the road to Khe Sanh was the next major engineer project. The 42-mile road, from its eastern terminus at Dong Ha to Khe Sanh in the west, had 49 bridges, 27 of which were along one 15-mile stretch east of Khe Sanh. Initiated on 30 March, the herculean task of placing Route 9 in a trafficable status was accomplished in 12 days, and required construction of ten bridges and major repairs to three others.

In consonance with III MAF's mobile offensive campaign, a mid-year engineer effort was directed toward closing the Khe Sanh combat base. The dismantling and razing of the base encompassed removal and recovery of all taxiway matting and usable fortification and building materials. Two-hundred sixty-four squad-size or larger bunkers and 577 weapon bunkers were dismantled, and 16,420 feet of concertina wire were destroyed and buried. The remaining rubble was dusted with CS powder (a non-lethal chemical agent), burned, and then covered with dirt. Sand bags were slit, emptied, and burned. Following departure of the last truck-load of equipment, six tactical bridges were removed along Route 9.

A major program for upgrading troop living areas in northern I CTZ was started by US Navy Seabees in late Summer. Involved in the project was the construction of over 5,000 cantonment structures at Dong Ha, Quang Tri, Camp Evans, and Hue/Phu Bai. In September, Typhoon Bess, accompanied by 60-knot winds and up to 20 inches of rain in 24 hours in some areas, temporarily disrupted construction, requiring 7,450 man-days of rework to restore projects to the pre-storm status. Despite the set back, the project was essentially complete by 31 October.

#### Status of Lines of Communication

One of the goals assigned ARVN and III MAF for 1968

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was to provide greater military and civilian use, both day and night, of lines of communication (LOC) by opening and securing an increased number of rail and road LOC's.

-Danang-Hue Railroad

To attain the goal of increased rail traffic, COMUSMACV, in May, assigned CG, III MAF, in coordination with CG, I Corps and the Vietnamese National Railroad System, the mission of restoring the railroad from Danang to Hue; the task was scheduled to commence when security forces were available for protection of the construction crews. The combined project was initiated on 15 July by Vietnamese and US sources, with the Vietnamese Railroad Service assigned responsibility for overall restoration, and US Navy Seabees providing construction crews for repair of four long-span bridges damaged by enemy action.

Restoration progressed satisfactorily, with 56 of the 64 miles of track rehabilitated at end-year. Also, work on the Truoi river bridge, seven and one-half miles south of Phu Bai, was completed, and repairs were nearing completion on the other three bridges west of Lang Co, four miles northwest of the Hai Van pass. However, the enemy reacted violently to efforts to reopen the railway, destroying 100 yards of track on 6 December. Repairs were made quickly, and while the goal of increasing the use of rail LOC's was not accomplished during 1968, a target date of 1 February 1969 has been established for opening the Danang-Hue segment of the railway.

-Roads

A comparison of the 1967 and 1968 year-end status of the security of the roads, as reflected in the following maps, reveals the improvement made during 1968.

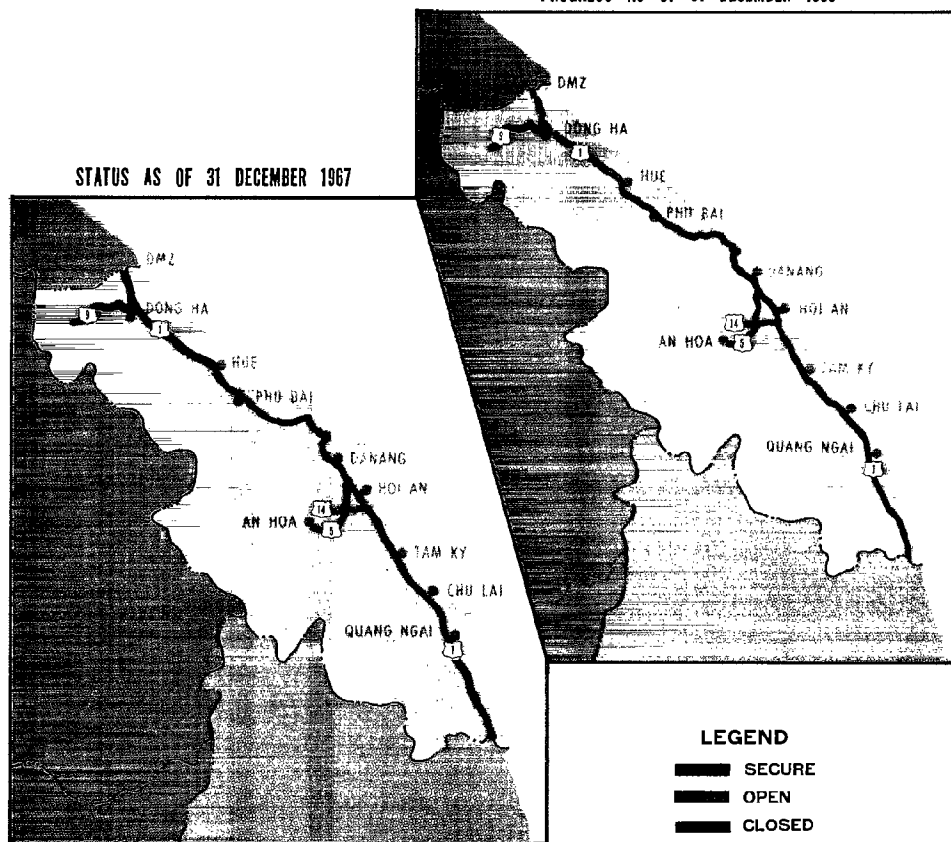
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ROAD STATUS: END - 1967/1968

PROGRESS AS OF 31 DECEMBER 1968



Directives published by COMUSMACV classify roads as follows:

- "Secure": Controlled by RVN/US/FWMAF during daylight hours with minimum security measures required. Isolated incidents may occur.

- "Open": Used by RVN/US/FWMAF employing thorough security measures. Frequent incidents may occur.

- "Closed": Closed either by VC/NVA military control of the area or by extensive physical interdiction. Requires major operations or engineering efforts to open.

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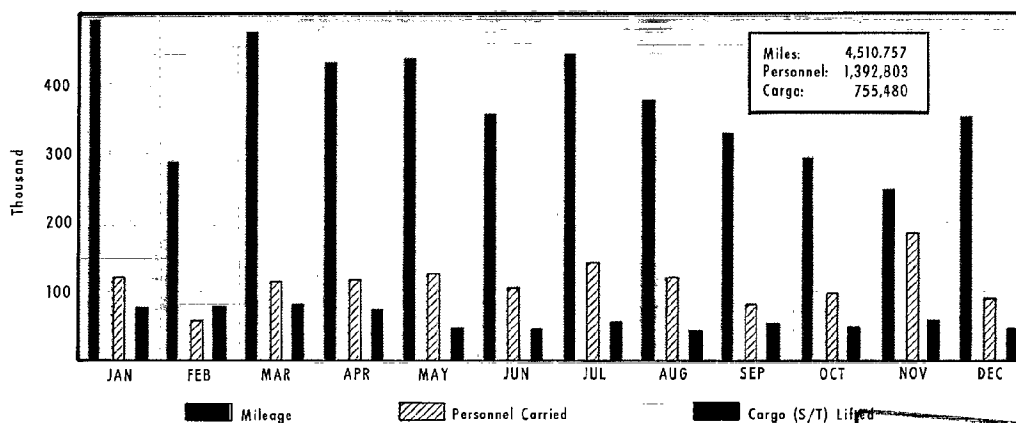
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The most dramatic progress in increasing security of land LOC's was accomplished along Route 1, the 242-mile north-south artery of I CTZ. With the exception of a two-mile segment closed immediately south of the DMZ, and 53 miles from north of Dong Ha to Hue assigned an open classification, Route 1 was considered secure throughout I CTZ at end-1968. This compares with the 121 miles secure and 121 miles open on 31 December 1967, thus indicating substantial progress in attaining the III MAF/I ARVN Corps LOC improvement goal.

### Motor Transport Operations

The operational tempo in RVN in 1968 necessitated the continuing use of large numbers of motor transport equipment for long-haul tactical convoys and the accommodation of house-keeping chores. Providing the bulk of general transportation support for Marine units were the five motor transport battalions operating within I CTZ. Two battalions, the 1st and 11th, supported the 1st Marine Division, and two battalions, the 3d and 9th, supported the 3d Marine Division. The remaining battalion, the 7th, supported the Force Logistic Command. The graph below reflects the operations of the in-country Marine motor transport battalions during 1968.

### OPERATIONS OF MARINE MOTOR TRANSPORT BATTALIONS - 1968



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In keeping with plans to completely modernize the Marine Corps tactical vehicle inventory in WestPac, new equipment and replacement vehicles arrived in-country during 1968. Notable among these replacements were the multi-fuel family of 2 1/2 and 5-ton tactical vehicles and the new M151 1/4-ton jeep. Another new item of equipment, the 10-ton truck tractor, was received by III MAF units during the year. This tractor replaces certain 5-ton tractors and will tow the 25-ton trailer. During the year, a total of sixty-five 10-ton tractors arrived in RVN. The following chart gives a comparison of the vehicle replacement program at the end of 1967 and end-1968.

### III MAF MARINE VEHICLE REPLACEMENT STATUS END 1967/1968

VEHICLE TYPE	NUMBER REQUESTED	AWAITING SHIPMENT AT USMC INSTALLATIONS	AT COMUS PORTS OF EMBARKATION OR ENROUTE	ARRIVED RVN
Truck, 1/2 Ton M274A2 (Mechanical Mule)	656/656			656/656
Truck, 1/4 Ton M151A1 (Replaces Mighty Mite & M38 Jeep)	1,442/2,102	894/0	156/0	0/2,102
Truck, 2 1/2 Ton, 6X6 Multifuel M35A2C	748/1,049	4/0	29/0	661/1,047
Truck, Tanker, 2 1/2 Ton, 6X6 Multifuel M49A2C	75/114		29/0	30/83
Truck, Tanker, Water, 2 1/2 Ton, Multifuel M50A2	24/27		10/0	0/22
Truck, Shop Van, 2 1/2 Ton, 6X6 Multifuel M109A3	63/63		25/0	15/63
Truck, Dump, 5 Ton, Multifuel M51A2	237/323	42/0		141/323
Truck, Tractor, 5 Ton, Multifuel M52A2	202/216			108/216
Truck, 5 Ton, 6X6 Multifuel M54A2C	635/675	11/0		171/675
Truck, Wrecker, 5 Ton, Multifuel M543A2	86/88	14/0		49/81
Truck, Telephone Maint, 2 1/2 Ton, V-17	8/8	2/0		0/7
Truck, Earthbore, 2 1/2 Ton, V-18	9/9	1/1		0/1

End - 1967

End - 1968

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Aviation Logistics

Major programs in effect during 1968 for improvement of aviation logistics were:

-Project Sigma, involving the installation of a new fuselage tail section, a modified transmission mounting, an improved armored seat retention provision, and a cruise-guide indicating system in the CH-46 helicopter (these modifications provide for added structural strength, and give the pilot a means of monitoring the structural loads imposed on the airframe, reducing the likelihood of overstress; due to the magnitude of the program, all changes are being incorporated as the CH-46's undergo Progressive Aircraft Rework (PAR) and/or Battle Damage Repair (BDR) at industrial maintenance sites);

-SHOEHORN, the installation of defensive electronic countermeasure equipment in A-4, TA-4, A-6, F-4, and RF-4 aircraft of the 1st Marine Aircraft Wing (as of 31 December, 213 aircraft in the wing's inventory had Shoenhorn equipment installed);

-Installation of improved ejection seats, with the capability of ejection and successful recovery from a plane with zero air speed and zero altitude (at year's end, ten A-4's and 30 F-4's had received the new seats).

A measure of the operational readiness of aircraft on hand is expressed in the NORS/NORM rates. NORS, "Not Operationally Ready due to Supply", and NORM, "Not Operationally Ready due to Maintenance", reflect aircraft not available for operations. All other aircraft are ready to perform missions assigned. The NORS/NORM rates for the past 18 months, for selected aircraft of the 1st Marine Aircraft Wing, are shown in the graphs on the following page.

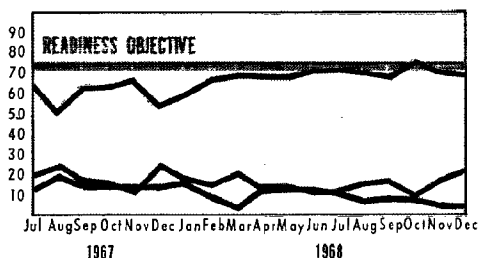
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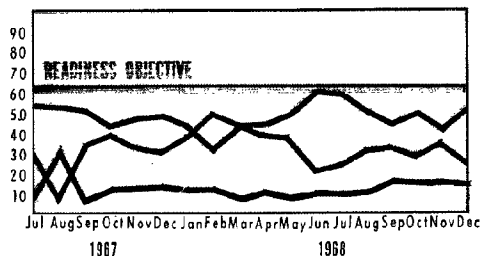
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# NORS/NORM RATES - III MAF MARINE AIRCRAFT

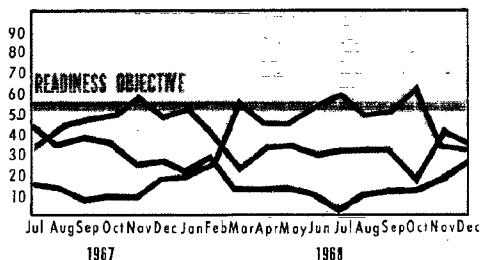
K-4 (ATTACK)



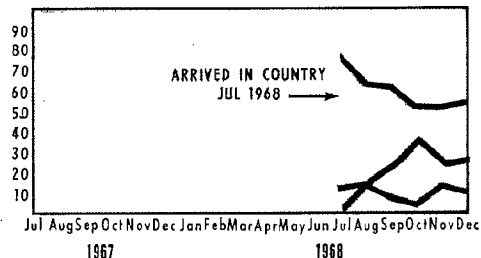
F-4 (FIGHTER-ATTACK)



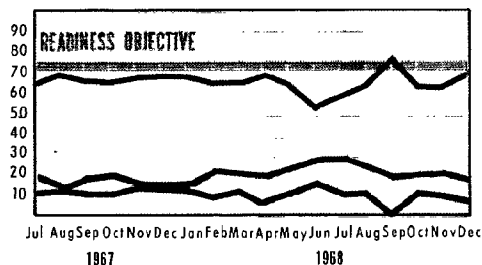
A-6A (ATTACK)



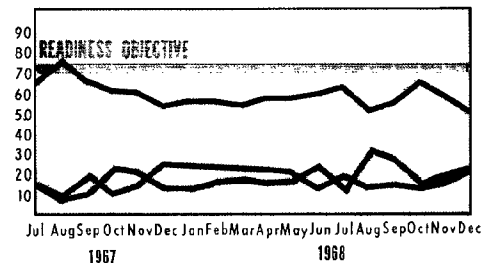
OY-10A (RECONNAISSANCE) \*



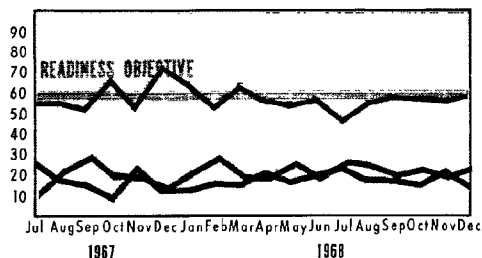
UH-34 (HELO)



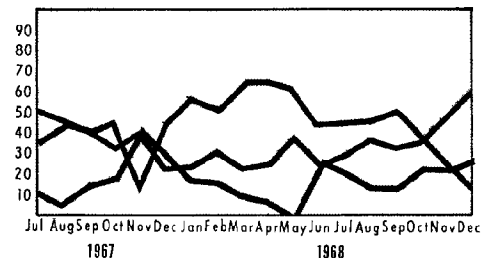
UH-1E (HELO)



CH-46 (HELO)



CH-53 (HELO) \*



\* Readiness Objective not established

— NORS — NORM — READY

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CONCLUSIONS

-While the enemy retains a dual capability to initiate acts of harassing nature on a continuing basis and to gather sufficient strength for periodic major incursions, III MAF combat power will impose a prohibitive cost on enemy attempts to mount large-scale offensive action.

-Pacification, benefiting from impetus at the Vietnamese national level, from the success of the Accelerated Pacification Campaign, and from an ever-increasing security posture, has momentum sufficient to project GVN influence throughout all I CTZ.

-The obvious maturation of the ARVN in 1968 as a combat-capable fighting force, while as yet not to stature sufficient to stem a major enemy incursion, engenders strong optimism.

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STATISTICAL HIGHLIGHTSDECEMBER AND 1968 SUMMARY1. ENEMY ORDER OF BATTLE

During 1968, the enemy was forced to place an increased reliance on North Vietnamese resources, both to reman the depleted ranks of his combat formations and to restore his logistical base. III MAF, ARVN, and ROK Marine forces through the year accounted for some 100,000 enemy killed, captured, or defected, 24% more than the 81,500 enemy losses recorded in I CTZ between 1965 and 1967. And, friendly operations captured or uncovered more than 33,400 weapons, more than three times the number captured in I CTZ during all 1967 -- exceeding a III MAF/I ARVN Corps goal to triple, in 1968, the number of weapons captured during 1967.

As the enemy's force structure altered, so did his tactics. In 1968, the enemy included urban areas as attack objectives (Tet), introduced tanks into his combat arsenal (Lang Vei), and increased the sophistication in the employment of his antiaircraft weaponry (Khe Sanh and A Shau Valley).

For the last four months of 1968, the enemy in northern I CTZ chose to regroup his major forces to North Vietnam and Laos. In central I CTZ, the enemy elected to build up his forces around Danang and has posed a threat to that city since mid-Summer. The enemy forces in the southern two provinces conducted a relatively limited scope of overt operations, concentrating instead on guerrilla tactics, augmented occasionally by large-scale efforts.

Despite his infusion of men and materiel from North Vietnam, his tactical innovations, and his redistribution of forces, the enemy ended the year as he began it -- seeking a signal victory.

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At end-year, the enemy strength in I CTZ, the DMZ area, and Laotian border areas was estimated at approximately 86,000, about the same as on 30 November. Included in the estimate were some 45,000 confirmed combat soldiers (38,500 NVA and 6,500 VC), nearly 2,000 confirmed administrative personnel, roughly 24,000 guerrillas, and about 15,000 troops in probable or possible units.

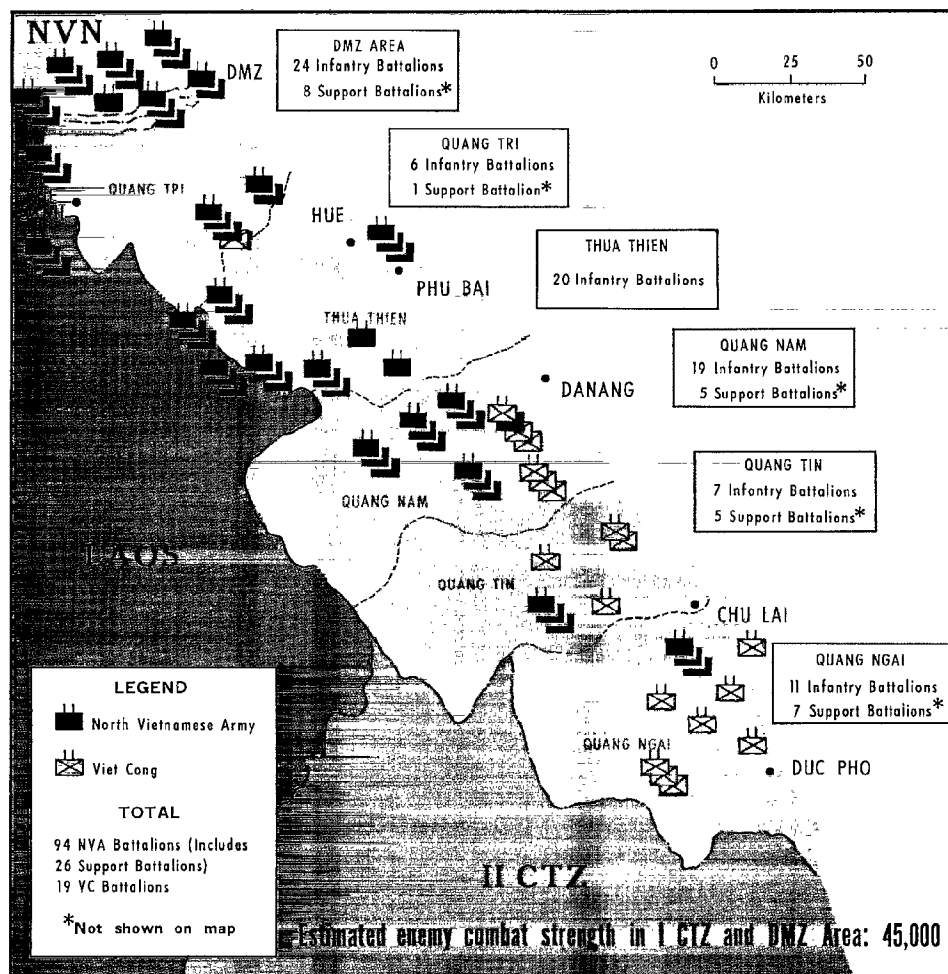
As the year began, there were 42 NVA and 19 VC infantry battalions confirmed in I CTZ and the DMZ area, augmented by 15 support battalions. Through the year, the enemy's confirmed combat units expanded to 87 infantry and 26 support battalions, with all 37 new battalions identified as NVA. The following maps, portraying the growth of the enemy commitment in the I CTZ/DMZ area, evidence the enemy's paramount interest in the five northern provinces of RVN.

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



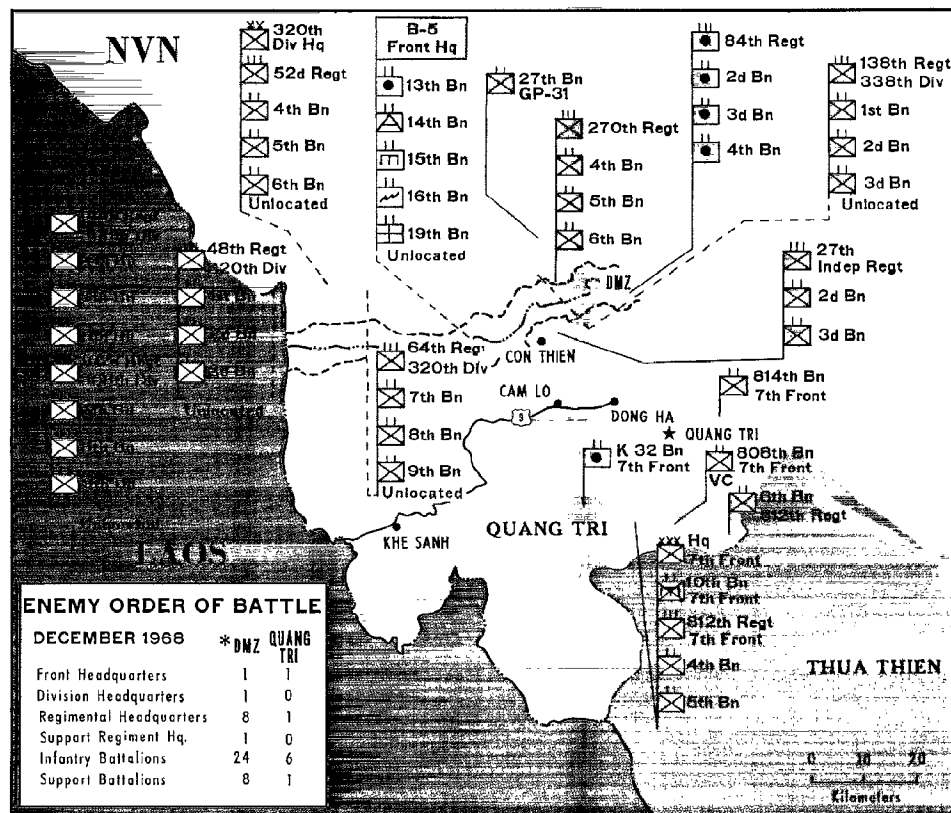
	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC
Front Headquarters	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	2	2	2	3	3
Military Region Headquarters	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	1	1	1	2	2
Division Headquarters	4	4	6	6	6	3	2	3	3	3	3	3
Regimental Headquarters	16	15	19	19	19	21	20	21	22	22	23	23
Support Regimental Headquarters	0	1	1	1	1	2	3	3	4	3	3	4
Group Headquarters	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0
Infantry Battalions	60	61	72	72	74	80	78	79	84	84	87	87
Support Battalions	15	15	16	16	16	19	21	16	26	26	26	26

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## ENEMY ORDER OF BATTLE DMZ/QUANG TRI PROVINCE



★ 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 B-5 Front headquarters, are considered DMZ AREA UNITS.

	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC
Front Headquarters	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	2	2	2	2	2
Division Headquarters	3	3	5	5	5	2	1	1	1	1	1	1
Regimental Headquarters	11	11	12	12	11	9	8	8	9	9	9	9
Support Regimental Headquarters	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	2	1	1	1
Infantry Battalions	33	32	34	34	36	29	29	28	30	30	30	30
Support Battalions	6	6	6	6	6	9	9	4	9	9	9	9

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0 10 20  
Kilometers

QUANG TRI

THUA THIEN

PHU BAI

QUANG NAM

XXX

Trk Thien-Hue  
Military Region Hq

\* HUE

803d Regt

1st Bn

2d Bn

3d Bn

Unlocated

9th Regt

815th Bn

816th Bn

818th Bn

Unlocated

6th Regt

600th Bn

902d Bn

800th Bn

Unlocated

K4B Bn  
4th Regt

K4 Bn  
5th Regt

K10 Bn  
5th Regt

1st Bn  
5th Regt

K4C Bn  
4th Regt

4th Regt

5th Regt

ENEMY ORDER OF BATTLE  
DECEMBER 1968

THUA THIEN

Military Region Headquarters 1

Regimental Headquarters 7

Infantry Battalions 20

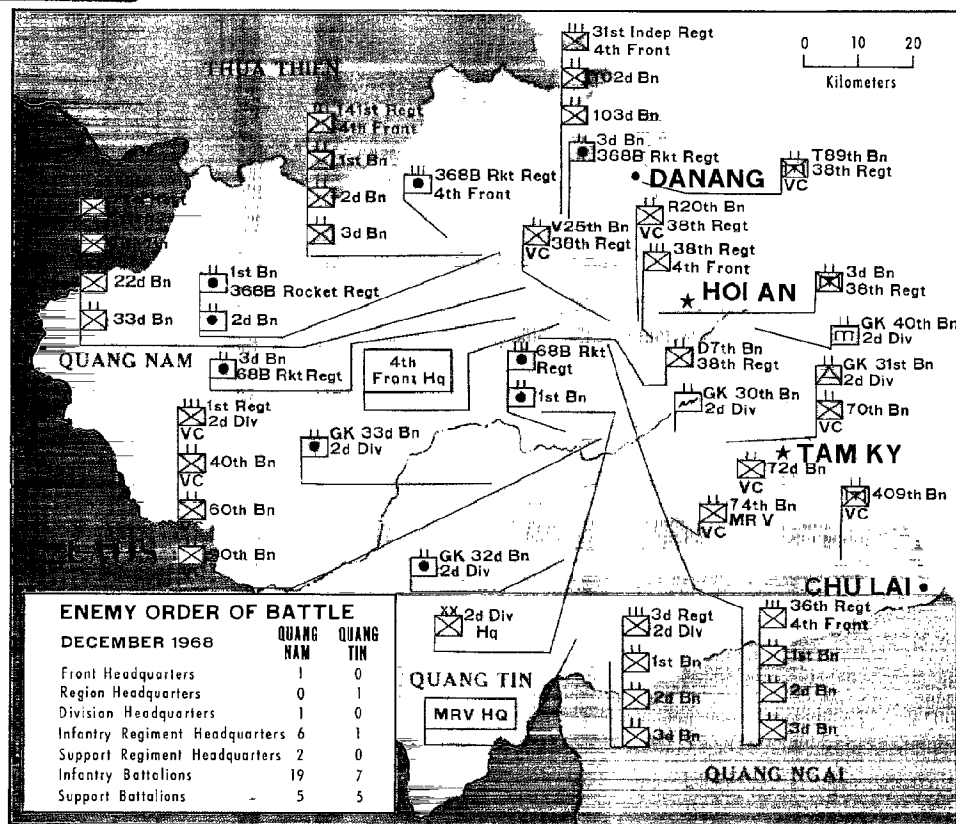
	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC
Military Region Headquarters	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Regimental Headquarters	1	1	3	3	4	5	6	6	7	7	7	7
Infantry Battalions	6	8	15	15	16	18	16	18	21	21	20	20
Support Battalions	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0

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## ENEMY ORDER OF BATTLE QUANG NAM/QUANG TIN PROVINCES



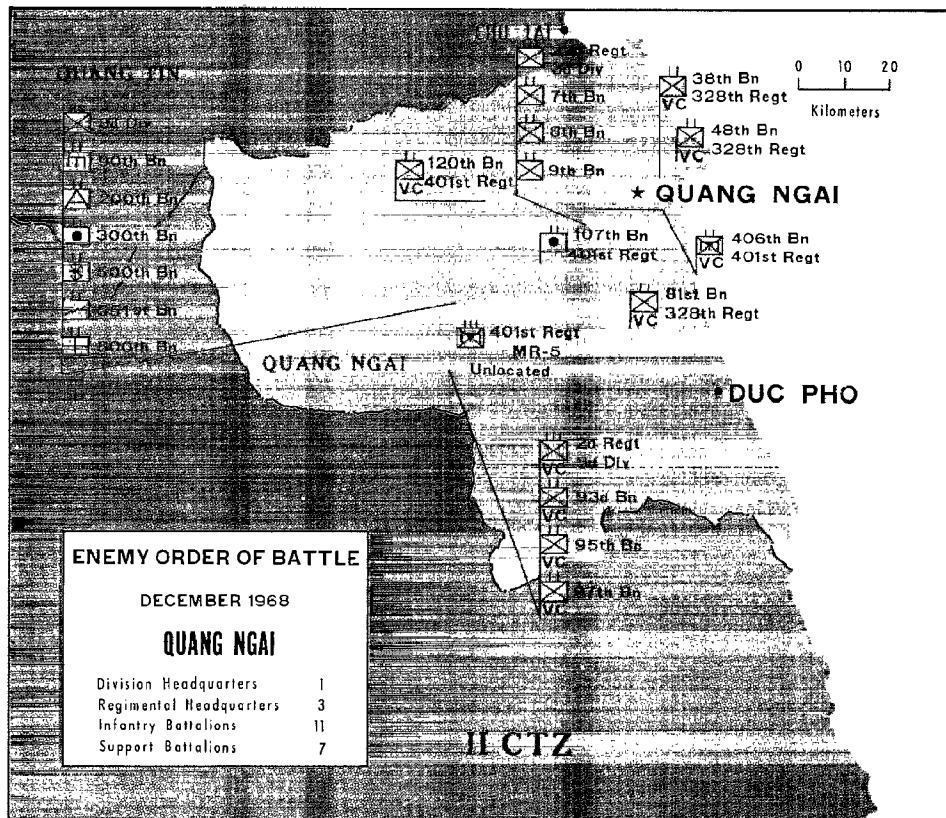
	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC
Front Headquarters	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
Military Region Headquarters	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	1
Division Headquarters	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Regimental Headquarters	4	3	4	4	4	6	6	6	6	6	7	7
Support Regimental Headquarters	0	1	1	1	1	1	2	2	2	2	2	2
Group Headquarters	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0
Infantry Battalions	16	16	18	18	17	22	22	22	22	22	26	26
Support Battalions	8	8	9	9	9	9	10	10	10	10	10	10

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## ENEMY ORDER OF BATTLE QUANG NGAI PROVINCE



	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC
Military Region Headquarters	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0
Division Headquarters	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	1	1
Regimental Headquarters	0	0	0	0	1	4	4	4	4	3	3	3
Infantry Battalions	5	5	5	5	5	11	11	11	11	11	11	11
Support Battalions	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	7	7	7	7

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**2. ENEMY LOSSES IN ICTZ****a. Enemy losses to Marines**

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	1968 Total
Killed	2,126	5,040	3,118	1,782	6,200	2,154	2,124	1,894	2,892	1,707	1,042	1,612	31,691
Captured	55	92	83	30	140	65	57	57	105	24	144	145	997
Weapons	324	1,399	448	267	1,613	726	606	508	965	431	234	581	8,102

**b. III MAF/SLF Total**

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	1968 Total
Killed	4,790	8,610	6,482	5,231	9,749	3,953	3,700	4,346	4,161	2,991	2,436	2,983	59,432
Captured	134	193	229	119	368	286	195	164	285	270	377	185	2,805
Weapons	647	2,280	1,877	2,415	5,119	2,406	1,206	1,840	1,643	1,034	592	892	21,951

**c. Enemy losses to ROKMC**

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	1968 Total
Killed	109	529	111	372	122	160	117	104	127	231	224	298	2,504
Captured	3	6	--	7	--	3	5	15	5	4	8	1	57
Weapons	16	82	19	38	16	36	32	26	54	73	85	128	605

**d. Enemy losses to RVNAF**

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	1968 Total
Killed	3,094	5,059	2,547	1,888	2,727	1,389	1,196	2,369	2,174	1,006	1,543	1,696	26,688
Captured	392	286	256	135	157	337	253	478	525	357	391	890	4,457
Weapons	1,257	1,454	706	667	1,058	766	625	969	944	549	739	647	10,381

**e. Enemy losses to Special Forces/CIDG**

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	1968 Total
Killed	414	146	63	88	222	61	37	135	271	52	49	90	1,628
Captured	33	12	38	10	7	1	21	7	7	7	6	16	165
Weapons	30	27	19	63	95	40	22	61	80	15	12	24	488

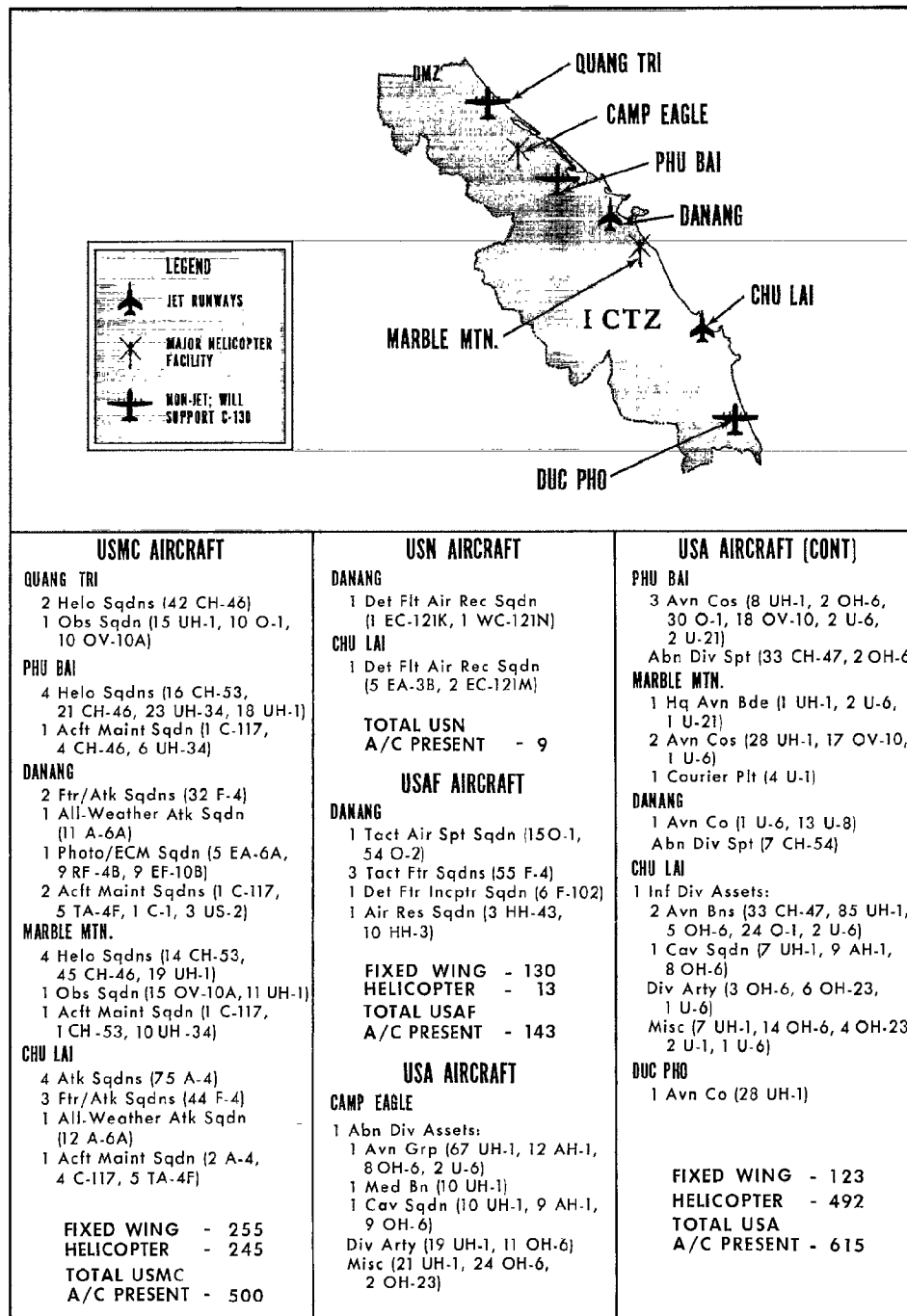
**f. Total enemy losses**

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	1968 Total
Killed	8,407	14,344	9,203	7,579	12,820	5,563	5,050	6,954	6,733	4,280	4,252	5,067	90,252
Captured	562	497	523	271	532	627	474	664	822	638	782	1,092	7,484
Weapons	1,950	3,843	2,621	3,183	6,288	3,248	1,885	2,896	2,721	1,671	1,428	1,691	33,425

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## 4. US AIRCRAFT BASED AT MAJOR I CTZ AIRFIELDS AT END - 1968



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## 5-III MAF MARINE CIVIC ACTION

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	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	1968 Total
Persons given medical treatment	87,442	49,411	58,709	81,776	97,111	102,097	137,671	127,521	82,787	124,128	133,038	152,226	1,233,917
Persons given dental treatment	4,157	2,111	4,094	3,194	4,337	4,657	5,691	3,603	1,424	1,925	1,486	2,642	39,321
Persons given medical or dental training	13	-	2	66	86	60	447	265	654	406	485	560	3,044
Pounds of food distributed	137,909	207,788	430,260	110,893	45,156	38,600	33,207	69,763	58,339	21,375	266,057	40,782	1,460,129
Pounds of soap distributed	7,328	4,990	6,463	2,370	4,852	10,760	13,555	8,840	6,939	10,181	6,946	8,443	91,667
Pounds of clothing distributed	9,379	2,005	4,163	7,864	8,354	13,484	14,254	6,692	4,966	7,681	2,965	17,408	99,215
Critically ill civilians evacuated	392	643	458	201	298	208	515	417	959	502	354	829	5,776
English language classes conducted	445	195	237	449	690	646	963	392	252	1,082	1,019	1,421	7,791
Cash donations	\$949	-	-	\$14,927	\$599	\$295	\$1,299	\$6,948	\$6,773	\$41,161	\$23,095	\$7,890	\$103,936
Persons fed	275,818	415,476	860,250	220,526	90,206	77,400	66,314	138,716	116,678	42,740	532,114	81,564	2,917,802
Students supported	738	180	966	1,124	402	600	26	3,075	2,807	2,230	1,062	5,551	18,761
Construction projects	56	53	83	73	74	82	185	92	93	104	94	115	1,104

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## 6. III MAF PERSONNEL STRENGTH

## a. Marine

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
DANANG Off Enl	2,378 30,634	2,371 32,021	2,383 31,331	2,358 31,390	2,359 32,360	2,408 33,208	2,400 33,361	2,537 33,730	2,879 40,516	2,875 41,618	2,920 42,182	2,971 43,853
CHU LAI Off Enl	491 5,202	472 5,213	495 5,396	486 5,947	467 5,930	444 5,962	512 5,745	528 5,568	548 5,442	519 5,235	481 5,196	459 5,030
PHU BAI Off Enl	622 7,700	937 12,926	1,025 14,806	828 14,395	809 14,614	678 10,963	659 10,318	676 10,935	304 4,298	438 5,945	370 3,275	298 2,732
QUANG TRI Off Enl	353 4,933	302 4,899	343 5,020	456 4,562	607 9,101	633 7,659	657 7,765	652 6,657	540 4,960	521 5,096	613 5,828	571 5,652
DMZ Area Off Enl	1,323 24,195	1,173 21,905	1,146 21,807	1,245 23,735	987 17,501	1,023 20,429	986 21,045	1,027 22,746	1,088 23,392	831 18,309	827 18,604	795 16,900
Total Off Enl	5,167 72,664	5,255 76,964	5,392 78,360	5,373 80,029	5,229 79,506	5,186 78,221	5,214 78,234	5,240 79,636	5,359 78,608	5,184 76,203	5,211 75,085	5,094 74,167

## b. U.S. Navy

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
DANANG Off Enl	209 1,218	214 1,197	204 1,208	196 1,172	170 997	166 1,057	151 945	160 1,037	225 1,573	243 1,858	255 1,838	264 1,827
CHU LAI Off Enl	46 211	32 205	32 199	34 196	23 119	23 112	20 112	22 118	22 132	21 112	21 104	21 101
PHU BAI Off Enl	95 599	132 867	134 1,001	112 866	146 1,075	141 898	138 856	78 967	11 119	12 138	10 72	63 133
QUANG TRI Off Enl	18 170	17 182	15 187	11 193	55 409	58 378	62 399	89 275	89 596	90 615	90 569	91 536
DMZ Area Off Enl	96 925	83 810	84 798	102 910	54 594	67 702	65 695	92 767	80 678	65 518	66 554	54 432
Total Off Enl	464 3,123	478 3,261	469 3,363	455 3,337	448 3,194	451 3,147	436 3,007	441 3,164	427 3,098	429 3,241	442 3,137	493 3,029

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## 6. III MAF PERSONNEL STRENGTH (continued)

## c. U.S. Army

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
DANANG Off Enl	171 819	151 773	286 2,133	238 2,040	261 2,082	227 1,844	213 1,772	227 1,933	272 2,012	264 1,933	284 1,896	245 1,924
CHU LAI Off Enl	1,279 14,406	1,368 14,943	1,451 15,865	1,126 12,482	1,113 12,757	1,086 12,838	1,274 15,998	1,307 16,483	1,579 16,187	1,540 18,434	1,602 18,026	1,886 18,658
PHU BAI Off Enl	503 3,827	206 1,975	1,435 14,651	1,491 15,836	1,675 17,509	1,643 18,057	1,728 18,061	1,859 18,849	1,849 19,197	1,973 19,136	1,918 19,260	2,040 20,413
DUC PHO Off Enl	538 6,816	492 6,064	283 3,754	386 4,899	362 4,884	321 4,930	315 4,823	343 4,711	341 4,755	293 4,505	223 4,317	241 4,237
QUANG TRI Off Enl	862 6,616	1,536 13,019	1,525 13,692	1,855 16,942	1,841 18,128	1,746 18,421	1,900 19,732	2,026 19,364	1,992 19,189	1,768 16,732	386 5,396	398 5,400
DMZ Area Off Enl	379 5,057	277 3,457	280 3,999	344 4,892	294 4,258	289 4,293	241 3,297	233 3,281	260 3,896	279 3,908	313 3,994	297 4,105
Total Off Enl	3,732 37,541	4,030 40,231	5,260 54,094	5,440 57,091	5,546 59,168	5,312 60,383	5,671 63,683	5,995 64,621	6,293 65,236	6,107 64,648	4,726 52,889	5,107 54,737

## d. Total III MAF Strength

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
III MAF Total Off Enl	9,363 113,328	9,763 120,456	11,121 135,817	11,268 140,457	11,223 141,868	10,949 141,751	11,321 144,924	11,676 147,421	12,079 146,942	11,809 144,092	10,379 131,111	10,694 131,933

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## a. Supply levels at end of month

CLASS I  
(1,000 of rations/days of supply)

## DANANG

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
MCI Rations	218/6	159/4	113/3	240/6	167/4	71/2	119/3	152/4	118/3	110/2	214/5	255/6
B Rations	365/9	202/4	102/3	39/1	218/5	227/6	151/4	229/6	79/2	182/4	198/5	198/5
A Rations	278/7	293/7	346/9	252/7	248/5	266/7	223/6	291/8	132/3	171/4	155/4	145/3

## CHU LAI

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
MCI Rations	45/5	45/5	40/5	Responsibility for Class I resupply assumed by Detachment, Naval Support Activity								
B Rations	45/5	45/5	40/5									
A Rations	113/14	126/16	0									

## PHU BAI

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
MCI Rations	481/16	390/11	709/15	686/22	656/24	578/18	1,007/32	905/32	679/26	Responsibility for Class I resupply assumed by US Army		
B Rations	329/11	130/4	98/2	274/6	262/10	390/12	539/17	484/17	352/13			
A Rations	300/11	2/1	16/1	297/10	443/16	197/6	173/6	176/6	127/5			

## DONG HA

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
MCI Rations	312/9	81/2	635/11	683/16	421/9	442/8	739/15	508/10	456/9	722/16	818/18	834/17
B Rations	138/4	196/4	30/1	538/12	409/9	450/3	518/11	577/15	477/11	307/7	762/23	799/17
A Rations	144/6	12/0	109/2	177/4	192/4	77/1	104/3	112/3	48/1	114/2	66/2	55/2

\* DONG HA and QUANG TRI

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Supply levels at end of month (continued)

CLASS III and III A (BULK)  
(1,000 gals/days of supply)

## DANANG

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
JP-4	8,765/17	5,387/10	7,120/4	3,297/8	97/2	Note 1						
AVGAS	709/12	1,532/23	839/18	1,053/28	Note 1							
MOGAS	1,338/41	964/28	1,223/33	672/20	84/5	91/5	109/5	82/6	81/10	82/9	75/7	72/10
DIESEL	1,689/30	2,560/45	74/11	636/7	73/5	72/6	61/3	90/5	95/6	23/1	75/4	69/4

## CHU LAI

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
JP-4	5,184/16	3,214/13	6,321/22	4,712/14	Note 1							
AVGAS	490/29	406/29	442/28	507/36	Note 1							
MOGAS	713/19	799/24	363/12	508/12	Note 1							
DIESEL	1,070/25	781/18	647/13	891/23	Note 1							

## PHU BAI

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
JP-4	45/2	110/5	91/4	249/12	90/4	80/4	54/2	103/5	84/4	—	98/5	96/5
AVGAS	41/8	0/0	66/8	62/9	37/6	34/5	40/5	24/3	18/3	—	31/10	45/15
MOGAS	93/5	19/1	17/1	69/6	93/7	79/6	71/6	90/7	107/9	101/8	Note 1	
DIESEL	46/2	46/3	44/2	124/7	114/5	103/4	161/6	155/7	123/4	131/7	Note 1	

## DONG HA

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
JP-4	58/2	33/1	203/4	105/2	13/1	7/1	13/4	25/6	8/4	13/4	44/6	40/7
AVGAS	28/5	4/1	20/5	16/1	25/7	9/2	17/4	7/3	11/5	12/12	30/30	32/23
MOGAS	25/2	17/0	75/4	84/3	Note 1							
DIESEL	35/2	20/1	94/4	77/2	Note 1							

\* DONG HA and QUANG TRI

NOTE 1: Responsibility for  
Class III assumed by Naval  
Support Activity

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## 7. III MAF LOGISTIC STATUS (continued)

## b. Red Ball Summary

	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC
Items at beginning of month	202	318	453	585	770	882	997	895	869	The Red Ball program for expeditious processing and shipment of emergency supply requisitions was incorporated into Marine Corps Automated Readiness Evaluation System (MARES) at the end of September		
Items added during month	203	192	279	381	327	270	292	224	73			
Items removed during month	87	57	147	196	215	155	394	250	69			
Items remaining at end of month	318	453	585	770	882	997	895	869	873			

## c. Maintenance

	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC
Items evacuated from RVN to 3d FSR	1,873	1,434	5,014	3,494	1,842	654	611	408	383	738	1,746	353
Items repaired at 3d FSR	4,446	2,330	3,231	7,927	5,724	4,894	5,326	453	489	146	153	236
Items returned to CONUS from 3d FSR or disposed of on Okinawa	1	40	23	17	167	69	150	127	4	3	1,421	168

## d. Construction in support of III MAF

	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC	TOTAL
Miles of road under construction	209	66	63	67	80	183	78	169	116	133	215	215	1,594
Bridges constructed	19	14	10	22	2	12	7	0	1	8	11	4	110
Bridges repaired	7	5	6	4	13	3	2	1	1	6	15	10	73

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