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OPERATIONS OF U. S. MARINE FORCES

VIETNAM

SEPTEMBER 1969

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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 September 1969. Its purpose is to update similar historical reports covering the period from March 1965 through August 1969.

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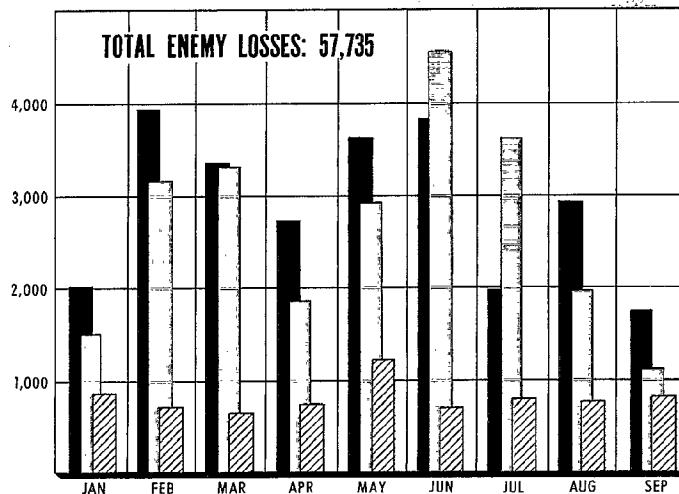
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~~SECRET~~**UNCLASSIFIED****SUMMARY**

Combat operations in I CTZ during September were marked by a protracted absence of meaningful contact between major units. The 15 battalion-size or larger operations executed by III MAF and SLF units generated little in the way of sustained action, the heaviest fighting being triggered by a sapper attack against a Marine company near the Rockpile; the small unit patrols, ambushes, and company-size actions comprising the counterguerrilla campaign seldom encountered enemy formations larger than platoon-size. And, except for a 13 September battle against two NVA companies in northern Quang Ngai province, combined action units likewise were not faced with large-scale opposition. Clearly unwilling, at this time, to commit major units to combat, the enemy has placed an increased reliance on sporadic shellings, sapper attacks, and other forms of harassment.

The low level of action developed during the month was reflected in the results of III MAF and SLF offensive operations, which accounted for 1,731 enemy killed -- the smallest monthly total of the year. Similarly, the 1,134 NVA/VC killed by ARVN and other Free World forces in I CTZ was also the lowest number recorded during 1969. Portrayed below is a recapitulation of the enemy's troop losses in I CTZ, by month, since 1 January.


**ENEMY LOSSES IN I CTZ:
JANUARY-SEPTEMBER 1969**

- ██████████** Enemy killed by III MAF, SLF
26,290
- ██████████** Enemy killed by ARVN,
ROKMC, USSF
24,168
- ██████████** Total enemy captured
or defected
7,277

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Despite the continuing high level of propaganda, terrorism, and sabotage aimed at village and hamlet echelons, the advance of pacification progress showed no sign of faltering during September. That portion of the I CTZ population considered secure rose another percentage point to 89.3 percent by end-month, promoting strong optimism for October attainment of the 90% goal established by the 1969 GVN Pacification and Development Plan. Prospects for reaching another of the plan's goals - that of receiving 3,600 Hoi Chanh by end-October - also were enhanced when the number of enemy defections topped 500 for the third month in 1969, leaving I CTZ but 246 ralliers short of the objective at end-September.

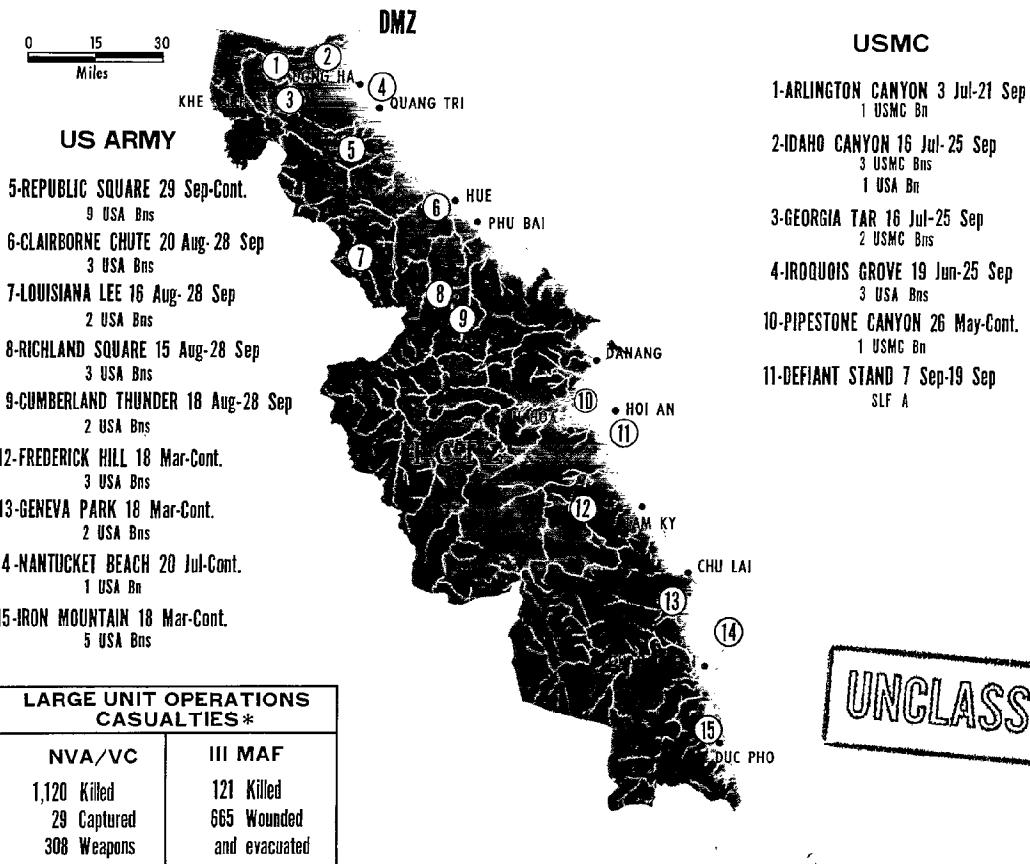
Announced during early September, the III MAF portion of the second US troop redeployment from RVN involves the movement of the remainder of the 3d Marine Division, along with an appropriate slice of air assets. Scheduled for completion by 30 November, the deployment will position the division headquarters and the 4th Marines on Okinawa, the 3d Marines at Camp Pendleton, California, and the aviation units at Okinawa or Japan bases.

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~~SECRET~~~~UNCLASSIFIED~~**LARGE UNIT OPERATIONS**

During September, the principal action took place in central I CTZ, where Special Landing Force Alfa conducted a combined amphibious operation with a ROK Marine regimental landing team against an enemy concentration on Barrier Island, accounting for nearly 300 Viet Cong killed. Fighting in northern I CTZ was marked by the repelling of a series of predawn NVA attacks against a 3d Marines company position northwest of the Rockpile on the 17th. Elsewhere in I CTZ, encounters with major NVA and VC units were infrequent, continuing evidence that the enemy's long-developed pattern of costly failure has forced him to alter his tactics in a concerted effort to conserve his combat strength.

Nevertheless, III MAF and SLF large unit operations maintained constant pursuit of the enemy, resulting in 1,120 NVA and VC killed during the month. The locations and results of these operations are depicted below.

III MAF AND SLF OPERATIONS: SEPTEMBER 1969

* Includes 884 enemy killed and 17 enemy and 274 weapons captured by US Army units.
US Army casualties: 78 killed and 422 wounded and evacuated.

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~~SECRET~~~~UNCLASSIFIED~~Operation DEFIANT STAND

September saw US Marines and ROK Marines (ROKMC) join forces in a combat amphibious assault for the first time in the war. Operation DEFIANT STAND - a two-phased assault employing a hammer-and-anvil tactic launched from the sea - was targeted against NVA and VC forces on Barrier Island, 20 miles south of Danang. This was the third Special Landing Force (SLF) operation to be conducted in the past four months on this coastal 15-mile wedge of land, traditionally an enemy staging area and logistics base which also dominates the river commerce of Quang Nam province. The two previous operations netted some 180 NVA and VC killed and eradicated much of the local Viet Cong infrastructure (VCI); however, since July, the enemy had been reinfiltrating the island complex, again creating a threat to the Quang Nam/Quang Tin coastal area.

The Phase I scheme of maneuver was predicated on establishing an "L"-shaped block to isolate the northern-end of the island, with Battalion Landing Team 1st Battalion, 26th Marines (BLT 1/26) forming the east/west leg and a ROKMC battalion the other. Phase II forces then were to be employed as an attack unit within the cordoned area to search out and destroy the entrapped enemy.

Phase I of the operation commenced on 7 September, with BLT 1/26 assaulting into a two and one-half mile central section of Barrier Island. In spite of rain and an accompanying heavy cloud cover, Companies C and D, aboard HMM-265 helicopters, were inserted into Landing Zones (LZ's) Quail and Eagle, respectively, while the remainder of the BLT executed a surface assault across Green Beach. Concurrently, strikes by A-4's of the 1st Marine Aircraft Wing and naval gunfire from USS TAUSSIG (DD-746) supported the maneuver, while aerial loud-speaker broadcasts were beamed at inhabited sections,

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urging civilians to displace southward to designated safe areas. First Marine Division units to the west and northwest of the island, elements of the 2d ROKMC Brigade to the north, and US Army Americal Division units to the south and southwest, all conducting local operations, provided a deep screen against infiltration/exfiltration, with US Navy and Coast Guard and Vietnamese Navy patrol craft providing the screen close-in to the amphibious objective area along the rivers and coast. The initial assault met little opposition and the Marines proceeded northward, invoking but scattered firefights with small bands of enemy. By the 12th, the BLT had established a series of blocking positions across the north-central portion of the island, isolating the northern section - the ROKMC objective area.

After landing BLT 1/26, troop and cargo ships from Amphibious Ready Group Alfa had moved farther up the I CTZ coast and, on the 9th, embarked the Korean units (2d and 5th Battalions, 2d ROKMC Brigade) for Phase II. During the period 9-11 September, shipboard familiarization and amphibious assault refresher training were completed, culminating with a rehearsal landing on the 11th.

The 1,100-man ROK Marine contingent landed via SLF helicopters and amphibious assault craft on the northern tip of Barrier Island early on the 12th, initiating Phase II of DEFIANT STAND. The actual landing was unopposed; however, as the ROK Marines attacked south toward the blocking wedges, increased resistance was encountered from varied-size enemy elements trapped within the constricting cordon. With the enemy's escape routes choked off by the Phase I maneuver, the ROK Marines executed a deliberate search of the many caves and tunnels honeycombing the area, accounting for most of the DEFIANT STAND action. Upon closure of the two Marine forces six days later, yet another enemy ploy to reconstitute a support base close-by the rice producing lowlands had been thwarted.

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Operation IDAHO CANYON

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Northern I CTZ action was concentrated along the mountainous fringe of the central DMZ above the Rockpile. The heaviest fighting took place in the IDAHO CANYON region, where Company L, 3d Marines bore the brunt of a sustained enemy predawn attack on the 17th.

On the morning of 13 September, Company L had departed Elliot combat base, one mile south of the Rockpile, commencing a company-size combat patrol into the high ground to the northwest. At 1900 that evening, as the patrol was moving to establish a night bivouac, a scout dog detected an enemy ambush, four miles northwest of the Rockpile and just three miles south of the DMZ. The company deployed on either side of the trail and initiated contact with the hidden enemy force. Employing supporting mortars, artillery fire, and air strikes, the Marines soon silenced the hostile fire and forced the enemy to break contact.

Alerted to reentry of enemy forces in the area, Companies K, L, and M, 3d Marines maneuvered under the cover of supporting arms fire during the following three days, combing the terrain adjacent to the 13 September contact. Despite aerial observer sightings of enemy soldiers, there was no major confrontation.

At 1840 on the 16th, following three days of light contact, Company L established night positions two and a half miles northwest of the Rockpile. All platoons were tied-in along the perimeter, which afforded good fields of fire, although the ground rose sharply to the north and northeast of the position. Listening posts (LP's) and ambushes were deployed along likely avenues of approach. At 0050 on the 17th, a squad-size probe from the north and east was repulsed and, ten minutes later, one of the LP's reported enemy between it and the company position;

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the security elements then were drawn back into the perimeter. An hour later, the enemy attacked from the east under the cover of mortars and an unusually large number of RPG's fired from the high ground. This attack also was repulsed, but almost immediately was followed by more intense attacks from the north and south. Advancing under a shower of mortars and RPG's, the enemy knocked out two friendly positions and achieved a local penetration, despite heavy close-in defensive fires by artillery and mortars. The attack was repelled quickly, however, and the enemy within the perimeter were killed during fierce hand-to-hand combat. Thereafter, light probes and mortar fire harassed the Marine position until daylight.

Throughout the predawn action, NVA were observed carrying off their dead and wounded; however, 23 NVA dead and 14 weapons were left at the battle site, and Company L found 18 additional dead abandoned some distance away. Friendly casualties included 16 killed and 23 wounded and evacuated, with most of the casualties sustained in the sector where the penetration occurred.

At 0810, Company I, 4th Marines (the 3d Marine Division reserve) was helilifted from Vandegrift combat base, landing unopposed in LZ Cardinal, two miles northwest of Company L's position, and began an immediate sweep to the southeast. Simultaneously, Companies K and M, 3d Marines advanced to the west and south, respectively, from their previous night's positions, each about two miles from the attack area, while one platoon of Company H, 3d Marines was helilifted into Company L's position to assist in a thorough, systematic sweep of the immediate contact area. The tactical situation remained stable until about 1330 when, about a mile northwest of the Company L position, Company I engaged an undetermined size enemy force in a sharp but brief skirmish, resulting in seven NVA killed. No further contact was gained; the enemy force was presumed to have escaped north into the DMZ.

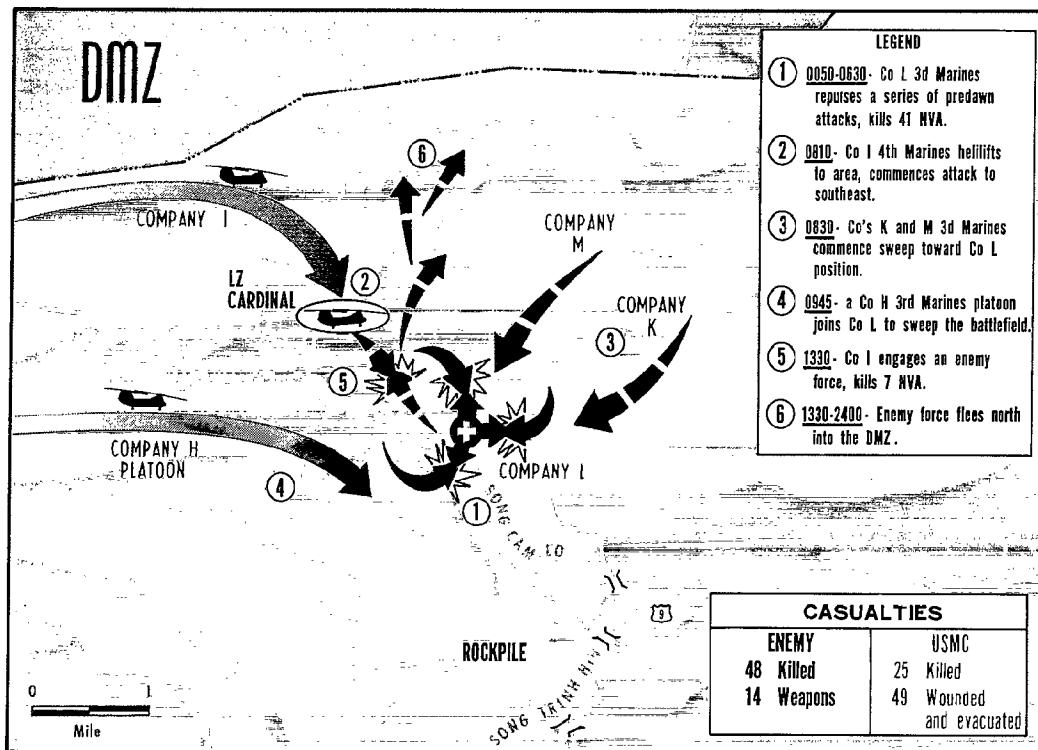
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The map below illustrates the 17 September IDAHO CANYON action.

ACTION NEAR THE ROCKPILE: 17 SEPTEMBER 1969



In response to the September-announced Phase II troop redeployment, 3d Marine Regiment units stood down from combat operations on the 21st, with the 4th Marines assuming responsibility for the IDAHO CANYON operating area. The operation terminated on the 25th, the results indicative of periods of hard fighting along the central DMZ since mid-July -- 565 NVA killed, five others taken prisoner, and 203 weapons seized.

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A 40,500-man US troop redeployment (code name KEY-STONE CARDINAL) was announced on 16 September, the Marine portion to include the remainder of the 3d Marine Division and supporting elements of the 1st Marine Aircraft Wing, a total of 18,483 troops. Consequently, the 3d Marine Regiment stood down from combat operations on the 21st and prepared for an early-October departure for CONUS. The division headquarters, the 4th Marines, and the 1st Wing units are scheduled for a phased movement to Okinawa and Japan, to be completed by 30 November.

To cover the void created by the departure of the Marines from northern I CTZ, the 1st ARVN Division and 1st Brigade, 5th Infantry Division (Mechanized) are expanding their operations west to the vicinity of Camp Carroll. In addition, elements of the 101st Airborne Division will take up further slack along Quang Tri's western frontier in early October.

ARVN Operations

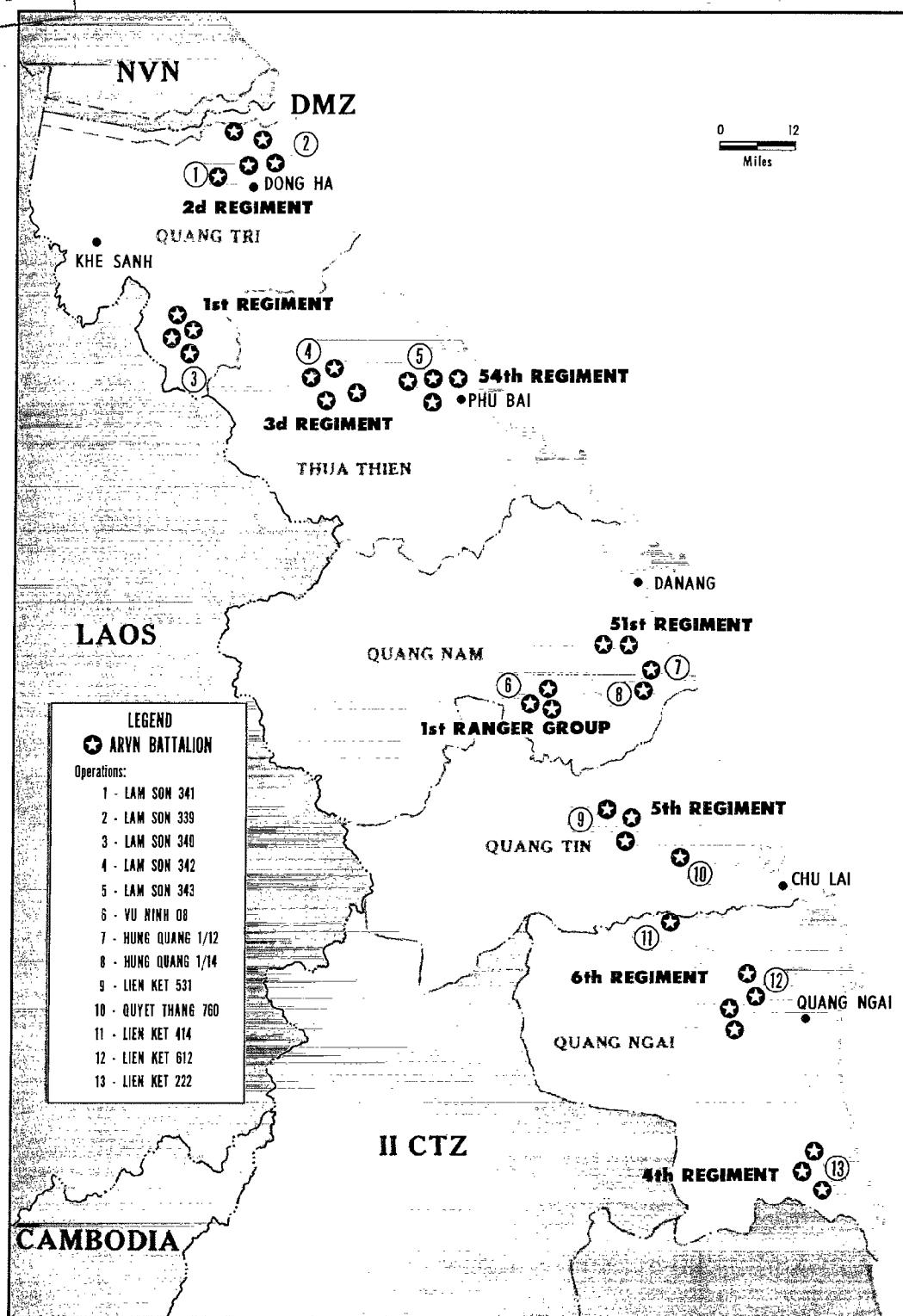
An essential consideration influencing the decision to deploy US troops from I CTZ has been the steady growth of the ARVN as a capable force-at-arms. While the RVNAF as yet are not sufficiently advanced in logistics or supporting firepower means to assume the burden of waging independent, sustained warfare against NVA regulars and insurgent Viet Cong forces concurrently, the extended period of success on the battlefield, coupled with the receipt of modern weapons and increased emphasis on thorough combat training, has revitalized ARVN confidence in its ability to accept a larger share of the responsibility. With the necessary logistic and firepower support at hand, the Vietnamese soldier is capable of more than merely holding his own in combat.

An example of ARVN fighting skill is contained in the results of 19 battalion-size or larger operations executed by units of the 1st and 2d ARVN Divisions, the 51st Regiment, and the 1st Ranger Group during September -- 459 enemy killed, 85 more taken prisoner, and 221 weapons captured. The map on the following page portrays the locations of ARVN large unit operations and battalions in I CTZ at end-September.

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ARVN LOCATIONS AND OPERATIONS: SEPTEMBER 1969



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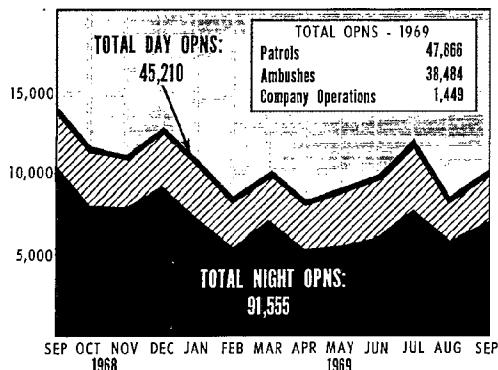
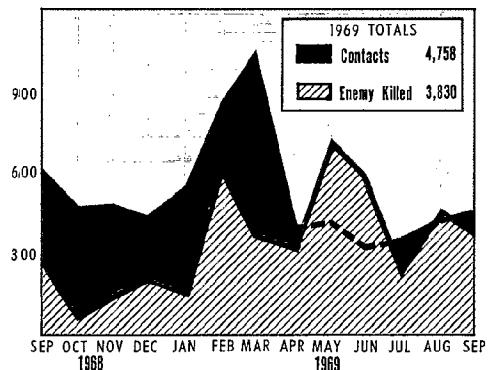
~~SECRET~~**UNCLASSIFIED****SMALL UNIT COUNTERGUERRILLA OPERATIONS**

Encompassing virtually the entire populated region of Quang Nam province, the Marine counter-guerrilla pursuit during September included 4,251 small unit patrols, 5,605 ambushes, and 249 company-size search and clear operations. As a consequence of the mid-August deployment of the 7th Marines to the Que Son area, the range of the 1st Marine Division sphere of small unit activity had been expanded to cover the region extending southward from the Hai Van pass to the Quang Nam/Quang Tin border, excluding only that terrain occupied by Operation PIPESTONE CANYON and by the ROK Marine operating area. Aimed at elimination of Viet Cong infrastructure, as well as against guerrilla and other combatant units, the counterguerrilla effort remained concentrated near the population centers and along the lines of communication leading thereto, thus assisting the Vietnamese to stabilize and sustain a routine, peaceful life at the hamlet and village level.

Combat action generated by this scheme of maneuver was intermittent throughout the province, with most of the month's 451 contacts spread among the 1st, 5th, and 7th Marines areas; the fourth Quang Nam area regiment, the 26th, encountered little activity north and west of Danang. The results of these engagements, primarily brief clashes at close range or employment of artillery/mortar missions against small, unsuspecting bands of enemy troops, were 368 NVA/VC killed and 74 individual and ten crew-served (includes a 75mm recoilless rifle) weapons captured. And, the majority of the contacts again were fought with small units, as the enemy, directing his interest toward foraging for rice to restock depleted larders, showed little inclination to expose a large formation.

The graphs on the following page compare September's Marine small unit counterguerrilla operations and results with those of the preceding 12 months.

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~~SECRET~~~~UNCLASSIFIED~~**MARINE SMALL UNIT OPERATIONS: SEPTEMBER 1968-SEPTEMBER 1969****PATROLS, AMBUSHES, AND SEARCH & CLEAR OPERATIONS****CONTACTS/ENEMY KILLED**Enemy Activity

Attacks against friendly installations or field tactical dispositions in I CTZ gained in frequency for the second consecutive month, with 33 mortar or rocket shellings (20 rounds or more) and 28 ground probes reported by Free World units during September. Limited, by and large, to stand off attacks-by-fire or probes incorporating sapper tactics, however, this surge in enemy-initiated action fell short of classification as a major escalation, as the total effort was but slightly over the 1969 monthly average of 57 attacks. Quang Nam and Quang Ngai provinces recorded the brunt of the hostile energies, reporting a combined total of 40 incursions.

In Quang Nam, where ten ground probes and 13 shellings were registered, the major actions took place during the early morning hours of 6 September. Beginning shortly after midnight, the enemy launched a series of rocket and mortar attacks against a wide range of targets throughout the greater Danang area. Accompanied, in isolated instances, by low-strength ground probes, the enemy's expenditure of ordnance included some 42 rockets of mixed caliber, 154 rounds of 82mm mortar, and 105 rounds of 60mm mortar, the

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majority of which was widely scattered in and around the various military installations ringing the city. With the exception of considerable blast damage to buildings in the III MAF compound and major destruction in the nearby Naval Supply Activity covered storage area (both instances the result of secondary explosions caused by impact of a 122mm rocket in an ARVN ammunition dump), and the three Marines killed and 76 wounded by a 100-round mortar barrage in the 3d MP Battalion area, the overall effect was minor. Total personnel casualties were four US, three ARVN, and 41 civilians killed and 105 US, nine ARVN, and 41 civilians wounded seriously enough to be evacuated.

Results of III MAF counterfire against suspected enemy attack positions were largely unknown; however, elements of Company H, 2d Battalion, 1st Marines uncovered evidence of at least one scheduled fire mission being aborted. At about 0810, the patrolling Marines discovered six 122mm rockets, on launchers and prepared for firing, less than four miles southeast of the Danang airstrip.

Enemy attacks in Quang Ngai province primarily involved mortar shellings, along with occasional sharp ground attacks, delivered against population centers. The major enemy-initiated action, a disastrous attempt to overrun a combined action unit and a nearby refugee hamlet 13 miles northeast of Quang Ngai City, is described in the Pacification and Revolutionary Development chapter of this edition.

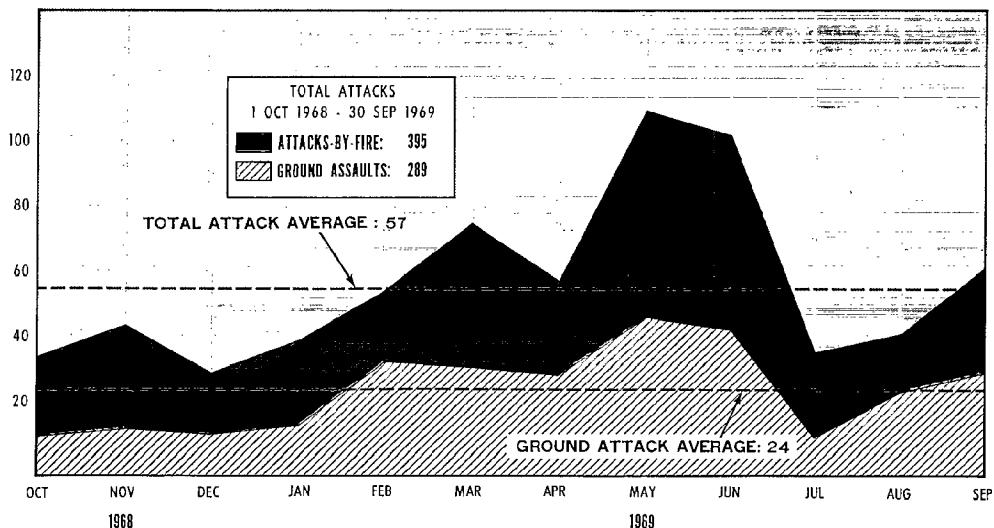
In sum, the bulk of the VC/NVA-initiated activity during September, a combination of actions designed more for harassment than for gaining military advantage, underscores further the enemy's increased reliance on guerrilla tactics to accomplish his ends. Consistently foiled, both on the battlefield and among the populace, he has adopted an attitude embodying attempts to erode Free World strength and influence through local hit-and-run forays.

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The graph below provides a comparison of enemy attacks in September with those since October 1968.

ENEMY ATTACKS IN I CTZ: OCTOBER 1968 - SEPTEMBER 1969



Small Unit Actions

Consistent with the established pattern of the ongoing counterguerrilla campaign, the preponderance of contact immediately south and southwest of Danang was generated along or near waterway lines of communication and, with the exception of the enemy's 6 September attack effort, was relegated primarily to areas beyond rocket range of Danang. Thus, the majority of the action remained concentrated near Hill 55 in the 1st Marines sector, where 107 enemy were killed, and in the Arizona area, where the 5th Marines killed another 111. Farther south, 7th Marines patrols and ambushes in the Que Son Valley accounted for 131 NVA/VC killed, curtailing considerably the enemy's designs on the rice harvest in that region.

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Highlighting September small unit accomplishments were two instances occurring in the 1st Marines area, wherein exploitation of information provided by Vietnamese civilians proved highly profitable. This type of local participation, becoming more commonplace in heretofore enemy-infested regions, is hard evidence that the impact of repeated Viet Cong failure has not been lost on the Vietnamese citizenry.

The first incident took place on 9 September, the result of a Vietnamese male reporting suspicious activity and a possible arms cache to Company I, a little over a mile southeast of Hill 55. A reinforced squad of Marines accompanied the informer to the site and commenced a search of the area during midafternoon. Shortly thereafter, one of the probing fire teams triggered a firefight with an unknown size enemy unit. The ensuing action accounted for 14 enemy killed and one weapon seized, while friendly casualties were three wounded seriously enough to warrant medical evacuation. Although no cache was uncovered, the fortifications occupied by the enemy were destroyed.

Eleven days later, on the 20th, a Vietnamese civilian approached a Company E squad near Phong Ho, 10 miles south of Danang, and offered to lead the patrol to a rocket cache. Moving a short distance to the target area, the squad soon turned up four 122mm rockets, buried under about a foot of soil. Reporting the find to higher headquarters, the patrol was joined by platoons from Companies E and H; the final results of the search included another twenty-four 122mm rockets and seven 82mm mortar rounds.

Reconnaissance Operations

Uninterrupted surveillance of trail networks and known and suspected harbor or assembly sites to ensure early detection of enemy-staged major uprisings remained the focus of III MAF reconnaissance

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missions during September. Concentrated in hinterland or border regions, a comprehensive screen of reconnaissance teams (usually helicopter-inserted) occupied or patrolled from vantage points selected to provide maximum fields of observation, maintaining constant alert for signals of increased enemy movement or other preparation for stepping-up the war effort. While little evidence of a nature to suggest resurgence of large-scale combat has been gathered during the past several months, there has been no corresponding diminution in the scale of this monitoring of enemy activity -- the outer layer of security so-created being an integral part of the antiguerrilla and pacification action contained within.

Of particular significance in the III MAF reconnaissance scheme is the effort expended in the central and extreme northern sectors of I CTZ, the areas of surveillance for the 1st and 3d Marine Divisions, respectively. With Quang Nam province being the population center of the zone and Quang Tri offering the enemy his shortest lines of communication into RVN, the continuance of an effective early-warning system is of paramount importance. Results secured by these wide-ranging teams, while not always individually spectacular, have included the discovery and subsequent destruction of enemy caches, fortifications, and other facilities (particularly within the southern half of the DMZ), along with the detection of enemy troop traffic, ranging in size from squad to multibattalion formations. In addition, by virtue of being manned by Marines well-versed in the employment of supporting arms, these reconnaissance teams possess, and often execute, a considerable offensive capability. During September, Marine reconnaissance teams, employing artillery fire or air strikes against enemy troop formations, accounted for at least 131 NVA/VC killed.

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The graph below illustrates the results, in terms of enemy killed, of Marine reconnaissance actions thus far in 1969.

RESULTS OF RECONNAISSANCE ACTIONS: 1969



In southern I CTZ, the principal reconnaissance-initiated action took place during late evening on 2 September, when a team situated on high ground overlooking the An Hoa basin engaged three westbound enemy bands with artillery fire, killing 30 VC in less than an hour. The first sighting, consisting of 20 enemy travelling a trail three miles northwest of An Hoa, was attacked at 1830, resulting in five VC dead; almost simultaneously, another 20 VC were spotted about a quarter-mile to the southeast, with the artillery fire claiming five more. At 1900, the team spotted still more enemy soldiers, approximately 75, attempting to maneuver through virtually the same impact area as traversed by the leading two elements. Supporting arms fire scattered the VC unit, killing 20.

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To the north, the month's major reconnaissance clash was a sharp skirmish occurring five miles northwest of Ca Lu on the 15th. At 1830, the friendly patrol encountered ten NVA on a ridgeline about six miles east of the old Khe Sanh combat base. Employing immediate action to gain fire superiority, the Marines eliminated the enemy force, then continued the mission.

Kit Carson Scout (KCS) Program

Expansion of the Kit Carson Scout program continued, with 549 KCS assigned to III MAF units in I CTZ at-end September - 37 more than in August. Accompanying patrols and conducting classes, the KCS are able to impart to US troops a wealth of information concerning enemy habits and techniques, knowledge acquired by the Scouts while serving in VC and NVA units.

Although there are some weaknesses inherent in the program - notably personnel deficiencies involving poorly motivated Scouts, or, in extreme instances, the possibility of enemy infiltration of KCS - the results obtained therefrom have been uniformly good. The undesirables are soon weeded out, leaving a nucleus of enthusiastic, professional Scouts, capable of performances similar to that of 1st Brigade, 5th Infantry Division (Mechanized) Scout, Le Van KHANG, along the DMZ on 24 September. Accompanying a Company C, 1st Battalion, 11th Infantry patrol, KHANG detected three enemy soldiers hiding in a hole partially obscured by heavy brush. Entering the hole by himself, the Scout captured the three NVA, along with an RPG launcher, an AK-47 rifle, and 14 grenades.

Operational results attributable to the Kit Carson Scouts during September were a direct reflection of the protracted absence of sustained heavy fighting in the war. For example, while the 217 KCS assigned to Marine units were active participants during September (accompanying over 1,400

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patrols and conducting 98 classes), the 13 enemy killed and eight weapons seized by the Scouts were below the 1969 monthly averages of 18 and 17, respectively. Nevertheless, the dividends engendered by the KCS establishment, readily measurable in terms of enhancing III MAF efforts to detect and forestall enemy tactics and techniques, have proven the program worthy of retention and further expansion.

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REVOLUTIONARY DEVELOPMENT AND PACIFICATION

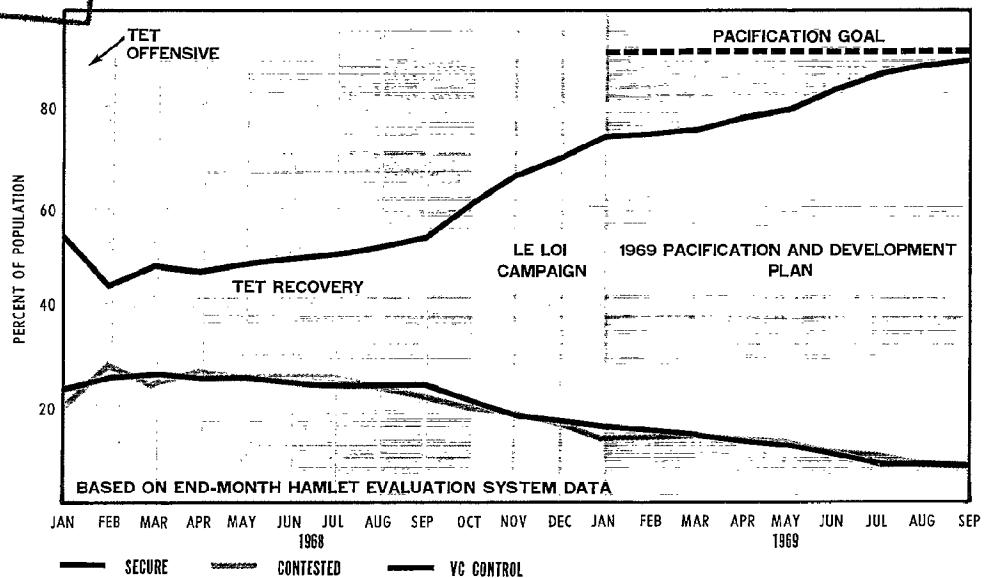
Continuing Free World promotion of the 1969 GVN Pacification and Development Plan raised the level of security and governmental development in I CTZ during September. Constant pressure exerted through combat and psychological operations against the enemy both in pacification priority areas and the hinterlands curbed his efforts to build an influential status among the people and allowed the advances enjoyed thus far by the 1969 plan to take deep root. By end-month, security had been extended to almost 90 percent of I CTZ's population - furthering the primary consideration for the establishment of stable economic, governmental, and reconstruction systems. Similar progress was achieved by the III MAF Combined Action Program, ARVN maneuver in support of pacification, and governmental programs aimed at spreading revolutionary development throughout I CTZ.

Pacification

Progress obtained through the 1969 GVN Pacification and Development Plan toward achieving security for the 2.9 million inhabitants of I CTZ showed a modest advance during September, as that portion of the population considered secure increased by 53,300 personnel or one percentage point. At end-September, 89.3 percent of the populace was considered secure; thus, during the one month remaining before termination of the 1969 plan, the mantle of security need be extended to but 20,400 additional people to achieve the plan's 90 percent goal. Pacification progress was exhibited also in the corresponding decreases in the number of persons living in contested villages and hamlets or under Viet Cong control - 17,300 and 12,300 people, respectively.

The September security advance, the lowest in any month since the enemy's abortive Tet offensive this past February, reflects increased difficulty inherent in the extension of security into hinterland communities, further removed from GVN influence in pacification priority areas; however, the outlook of reaching the 90 percent secure level in I CTZ by end-October remains excellent. The following graph portrays advancement made during various GVN pacification programs promoting secure living conditions in I CTZ since January 1968.

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~~SECRET~~**UNCLASSIFIED****POPULATION SECURITY IN I CTZ: JAN 1968 - SEP 1969**

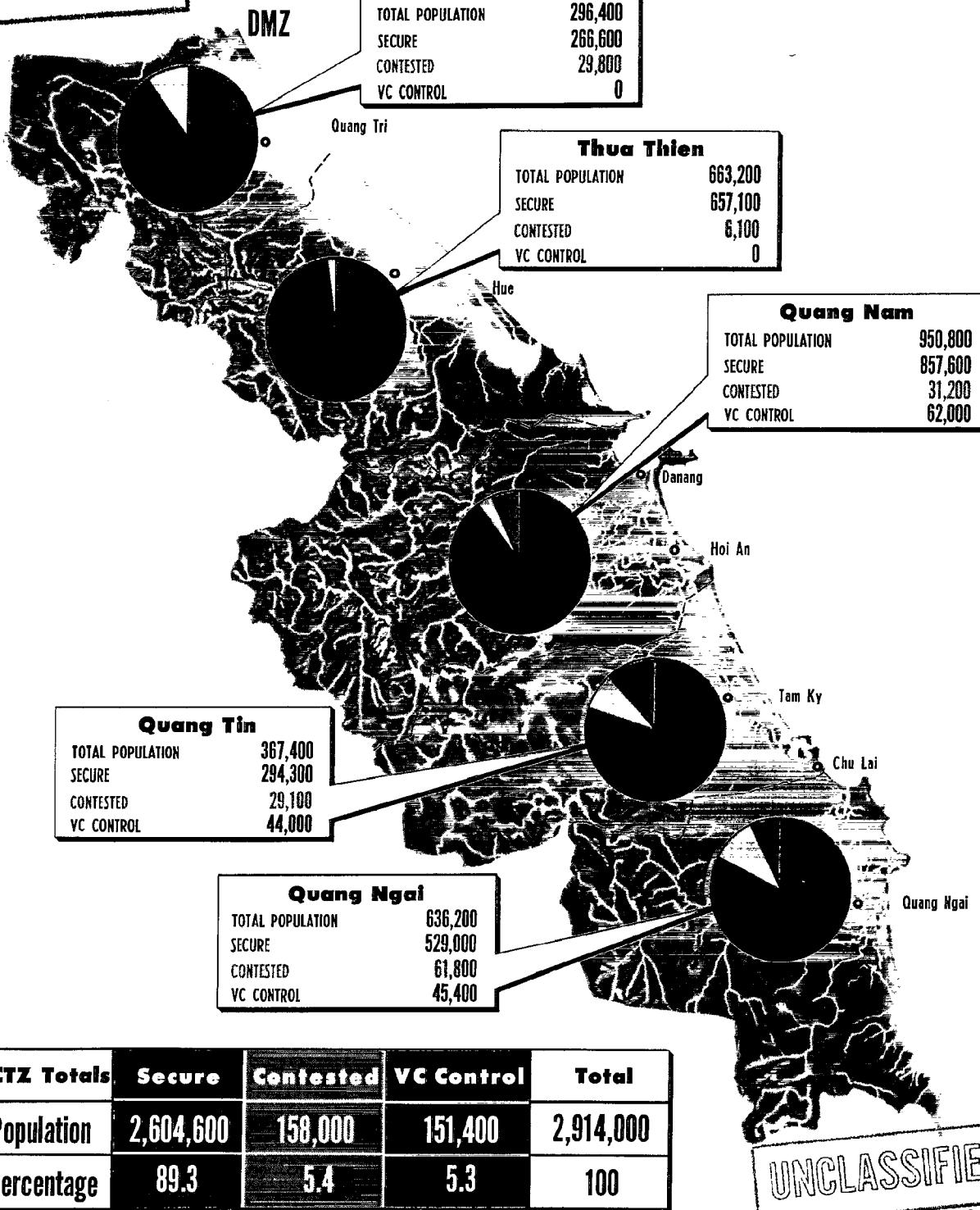
Although I CTZ's secure population is nearing the 90 percent level, each of the five provinces reflects a varying degree of pacification. The security leader, Thua Thien, which contains the city of Hue, possesses a secure status of 99.1 percent, with the remainder of its population in contested status. Likewise, Quang Tri has assimilated its total population under government sovereignty (secure or contested); less than 30,000 of its 269,400 citizens remain in the contested category. The three southernmost provinces, averaging only about 67 percent secure at the onset of the 1969 GVN Pacification and Development Plan, have shown dramatic improvement, despite experiencing the brunt of the enemy's 1969 offensive action. Highlighted by the four percent increase in Quang Tin - the highest in I CTZ - each registered progress during September, with the overall average of the three provinces reaching 85 percent.

The map on the following page presents the end-September pacification status in I CTZ, by province.

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PACIFICATION STATUS - I CTZ

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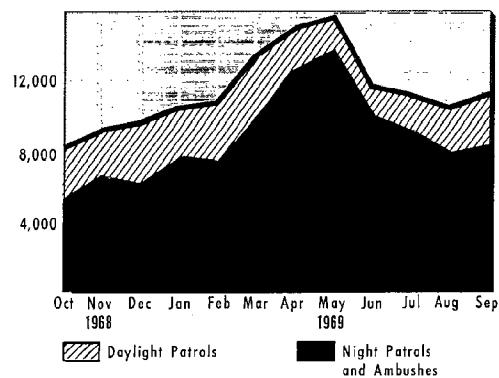
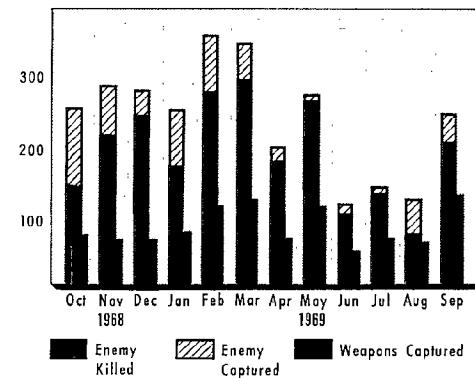
Note: Based on end- September 1969 Hamlet Evaluation System data.

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~~SECRET~~**UNCLASSIFIED**Combined Action Program

The III MAF Combined Action Program, working to further its primary mission of improving the effectiveness of the Popular Forces within pacification priority areas of I CTZ, concentrated its September offensive actions to prevent enemy attacks against population centers and to deny his attempts at procuring rice and other foodstuffs during the harvest preceding the monsoon season. To accomplish these objectives, Combined Action Platoons (CAP's) conducted 3,321 daylight patrols and 8,077 night combat operations. Although combat activity within the pacification areas continued at a low level during the month, the Combined Action Program was able to achieve significant results not only in attrition of enemy maneuver forces through combat engagements - 205 NVA and Viet Cong killed and 39 taken prisoner - but also in depletion of enemy local forces and Viet Cong infrastructure (VCI) - 95 suspected Viet Cong troops or cadre captured. This latter accomplishment is singularly noteworthy -- if left unchecked, the VCI can undermine the success already gained in the 1969 GVN Pacification and Development Plan.

The following graphs portray combined action operations and results for the period October 1968 through September 1969.

COMBINED ACTION PROGRAM OPERATIONS**OPERATIONS CONDUCTED****ENEMY LOSSES****UNCLASSIFIED**

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The Combined Action Program underwent no significant change within its organization during September, having reached its currently authorized strength of 114 platoons the preceding month. The scheduled redeployment of remaining 3d Marine Division forces from northern I CTZ, however, posed a coordination requirement for the 4th Combined Action Group (CAG), which is dependent upon the division for fire support, reinforcement, and resupply. In a planned transfer of responsibility, XXIV Corps will assume combat and service support of Marine CAP's continuing operations within Quang Tri province.

The program has continued to emphasize mobile operations vice stationary platoons; currently, only seven static CAP positions remain in place. The mobile posture of the CAP's allows Marines and Popular Force soldiers to operate freely throughout their areas of responsibility, thereby increasing security and military civic action for the Vietnamese civilian. Additionally, this concept reduces the threat of concentrated enemy attack against a platoon's position.

Although each of the CAG's experienced a degree of enemy resistance, 1st CAG, headquartered at Chu Lai and operating within the populated coastal plains of Quang Tin and Quang Ngai provinces, encountered the stiffest opposition.

-Shortly before dawn on the 13th, CAP 1-3-9, located in An Phong village 14 miles northwest of Quang Ngai, was attacked by two companies of North Vietnamese soldiers. In a concerted attempt to overrun the CAP position, the NVA employed intense short-range rocket and mortar fire to force entrance to the village. The CAP, supported by artillery and air strikes, contained the enemy's thrust and, reinforced by a Regional Force company; elements of 1st and 2d Battalions, 6th ARVN Regiment; and 1st Battalion, 52d US Infantry, counterattacked at first light, forcing his retirement from An Phong and flight to the west. The combined allied force pursued and maintained con-

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fact with the NVA until late that afternoon. The aborted enemy attack against the CAP position culminated with 116 NVA killed and 70 weapons captured. Free World losses were one Marine, one US Navy corpsman, and eight PF soldiers killed and one Marine wounded and evacuated.

-Three days later in Quang Tin province, a CAP 1-1-3 night ambush engaged the lead element of a Viet Cong company moving toward Tam Ky, three miles to the southeast. A brief firefight erupted and, as fixed wing aircraft arrived overhead, the VC fled to the southwest. A sweep of the contact site revealed four enemy dead, while one Popular Force soldier was killed and another wounded in the action.

-Conducting a joint harvest security operation with Regional Force Companies 199 and 380 four miles northeast of Quang Ngai on the 25th, CAP's 1-4-5 and 1-4-6 accounted for 14 Viet Cong killed and prevented disruption of the harvest. CAP 1-4-6, upon receiving small arms and mortar fire from about 15 enemy, directed an artillery mission against the site, then swept through the position, killing two VC and apprehending five others. Meanwhile, CAP 1-4-5 conducted air strikes against a small enemy force harassing the harvesters with sniper fire. Air-delivered ordnance killed nine Viet Cong and caused 16 secondary explosions and fires. Alert CAP members then spotted three additional enemy fleeing the air strikes and killed each with small arms fire. The day's harvest was completed with no friendly or civilian casualties.

ARVN Support of Pacification

ARVN forces, pursuing the mission of military support for GVN pacification and development programs assumed in January 1967, conducted 19 major operations in and around I CTZ's pacification priority areas during September. The low level of combat activity prevalent throughout I CTZ is reflected in the results achieved by these operations - 459 enemy killed, 85 taken prisoner, and 221 weapons captured. Additionally, 33 Chieu Hoi returnees were received by ARVN troops during the month.

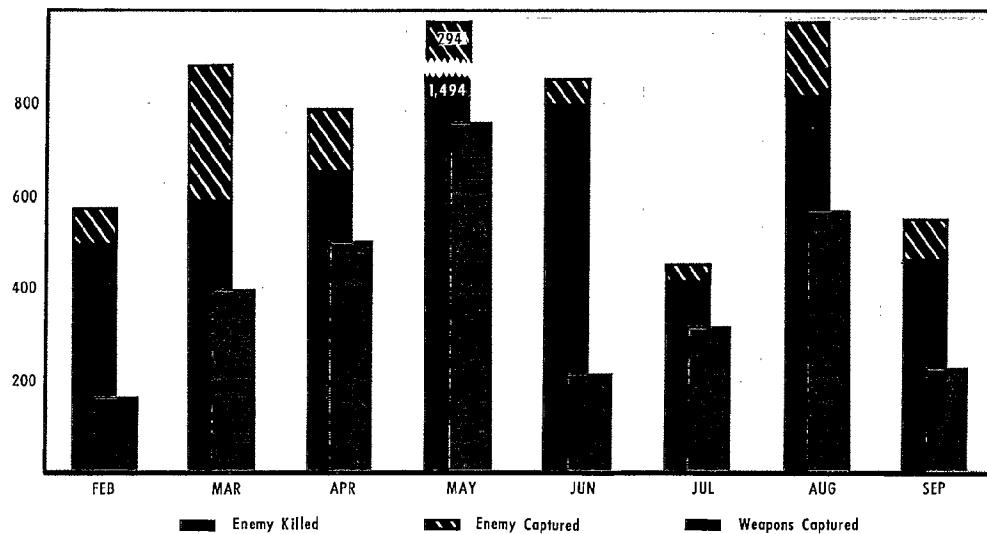
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The presence of ARVN battalions in pacification priority areas serves a two-fold purpose - the creation of a strong ARVN image, as well as the reduction of enemy manpower and logistics, the former of which will increase in importance as US troop redeployment continues in I CTZ. ARVN maneuver in the area surrounding these population centers has been instrumental in preventing hostile attempts to disrupt the progress made by the 1969 GVN Pacification and Development Plan toward restoring normalcy to the local community. ARVN forces recently have assumed a wider responsibility for combat operations throughout I CTZ and, therefore, constantly are in the view of their civilian countrymen. These Vietnamese units, having benefitted through their association with III MAF units, thus serve to bulwark the confidence of the non-military, now more and more dependent on the ARVN for protection.

Since the inception of the 1969 GVN Pacification and Development Plan, ARVN forces have participated in an average of 16 operations monthly in the pacification priority areas of I CTZ, the results of which are shown in the following graph.

ENEMY LOSSES TO ARVN PACIFICATION SUPPORT OPERATIONS
FEB - SEP 1969

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REF ID: A65125
UNCLASSIFIEDChieu Hoi Returnees

Enemy defections to Free World forces in I CTZ during September topped the 500 mark for the third time in 1969. The 517 enemy soldiers and Viet Cong infrastructure cadre received - only 50 short of the all-time monthly high - raises the 1969 Pacification and Development Plan total to 3,354 ralliers, leaving a deficit of only 246, with one month remaining to reach the program's goal of 3,600. Since the pacification plan commenced on 1 February, no month has yielded less than 262 Hoi Chanh, thus prospects remain excellent for fulfillment of the goal.

Highlighting the continued excellent results of the Chieu Hoi program during September were the following two incidents.

-On the 25th, a Hoi Chanh named QUYEN rallied to Thang Binh district headquarters in Quang Tin province. The 27-year old QUYEN, later identified as the commanding officer of the C-9 Local Force VC Company, gave as his reason for rallying disenchantment with Communist leadership, which continually failed to fulfill promises of support. To demonstrate his good faith, QUYEN disarmed 26 mines and surprise-firing devices planted by guerrillas in the coastal flats north of Tam Ky and, during the next five days, persuaded 23 members of his company to rally at Thang Binh. QUYEN and ten of his better men, reequipped and rearmed by the GVN, presently are fighting against the remaining Viet Cong within their home district.

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-In a III MAF survey of 251 Hoi Chanh, 84 percent stated that food and medical supplies were inadequate, while 65 percent complained weapons and ammunition were insufficient in their former units - continued evidence that enemy forces far removed from northern supply points are experiencing difficulty in obtaining provisions for sustained combat.

Rice Harvest and Denial

The fall rice harvest season arrived in I CTZ during September -- accompanied by increased NVA and Viet Cong efforts to procure foodstuffs so desperately needed to sustain their forces for combat operations, particularly in the tactical zone's three southernmost provinces. Similarly, GVN and III MAF countered with a combination of military and psychological measures to prevent the harvest from falling into enemy hands.

At end-month, practically 50 percent of the rice crop within I CTZ had been harvested. Increased patrol activity within the rice-bearing coastal plains and harvest security operations by Free World forces have made enemy attempts at rice collection and harvest disruption increasingly difficult. Also, the GVN has expanded a central storage concept for the denial operation, through which farmers store, in government-controlled repositories, all rice in excess of their family's needs for one week, minimizing enemy pilferage.

The effectiveness of the denial operation has gained a measure of credence from statements by large numbers of Hoi Chanh and prisoners that food supplies within their units are inadequate and combat operations have been curtailed so that rice collection details can forage for foodstuffs.

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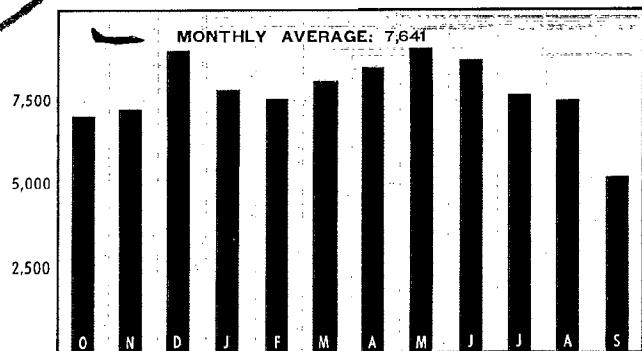
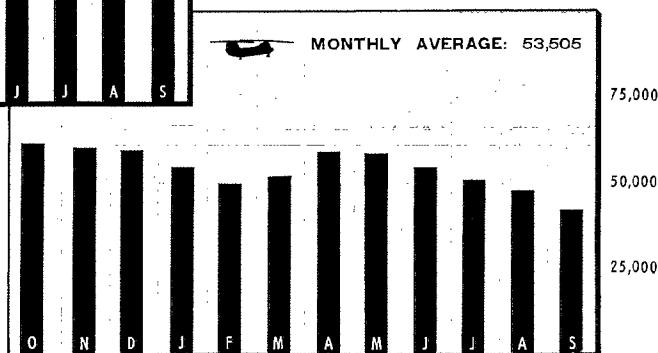
~~SECRET~~**UNCLASSIFIED****AIR OPERATIONS**

Marine aircraft squadrons compiled over 5,000 fixed wing and 40,000 helicopter sorties during the month to support Free World combat operations in I CTZ and the out-of-country air interdiction and reconnaissance programs. Reflecting the re-deployment of certain III MAF units, the September air effort (45,552 sorties) was 15 percent below the August total of 53,607 flights.

Maintaining responsive coverage for in-country operations, Marine aircrues conducted 4,017 fixed wing sorties, accounting for 2,868 attack missions (which delivered over 6,000 tons of ordnance) and 1,149 combat support flights. Vertical lift requirements, answered by 40,455 helicopter sorties, resulted in 72,558 troops and passengers and 7,630 tons of cargo transported. Recurring tasks to assist out-of-country reconnaissance, electronic warfare, interdiction, and combat air patrol operations required an additional 1,080 sorties.

In the graph on the following page, the fixed wing and helicopter sortie totals for September are compared with monthly figures since October 1968.

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~~SECRET~~~~UNCLASSIFIED~~**MARINE AIR OPERATIONS: OCTOBER 1968 - SEPTEMBER 1969****FIXED WING SORTIES**In-Country Operations-Tempo of Operations

In support of III MAF and other Free World units in I CTZ, the 1st Marine Aircraft Wing conducted 44,472 fixed wing and helicopter sorties during September, providing a broad spectrum of aerial missions for uninterrupted prosecution of combat operations. Although less intense than the 1969 monthly average to date (59,031 sorties), this campaign was commensurate with combat activity experienced in the five northern provinces of RVN -- a reflection of continuing enemy hesitance to engage in meaningful combat.

While 1st Wing commitments generally continued as a function of ground action generated, operational planning was affected simultaneously by other factors also. A major contributor to the lower September sortie totals was

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the reduction of aerial support requirements created by the July and August redeployment of the 9th Marine Regiment from northern I CTZ. Not only were the attack and helicopter assault sorties associated with wide-ranging operations of three infantry battalions correspondingly reduced, but so also were the combat support (reconnaissance, resupply, medical evacuation, command and control, and administrative) missions necessary to maintain a regiment and its supporting units in the mountainous hinterland of Quang Tri. Exampling this reduction in requests, fixed wing and helicopter sorties in support of 3d Marine Division large unit operations during September totaled 524 and 8,062, respectively, as compared to 1969 monthly averages of 715 and 14,098.

-Fixed Wing Operations

Marine aircrues supported in-country operations with 4,017 fixed wing sorties during the month, 2,868 of which were attack sorties, while the remainder performed a variety of combat support tasks. The attack effort - applied to 14 III MAF large unit operations, the counterguerrilla campaign, and the interdiction of enemy trail and staging networks - required the delivery of 5,982 tons of high explosives, 6,605 air-to-ground rockets, and 1,976 napalm bombs. The following narratives are representative of attack missions conducted against the scattered enemy resistance found during the month.

-On 3 September, two F-4B's from MAG-13 were assigned to support US Army and Regional Force elements in contact 20 miles south-southeast of Quang Ngai City. Subsequent ordnance runs reduced an enemy fortified position, killing its five occupants.

-Attacking an enemy position 30 miles southwest of Quang Tri City on the 12th, two MAG-12 A-6A aircrues were credited with destroying six bunkers and creating six secondary explosions and fires.

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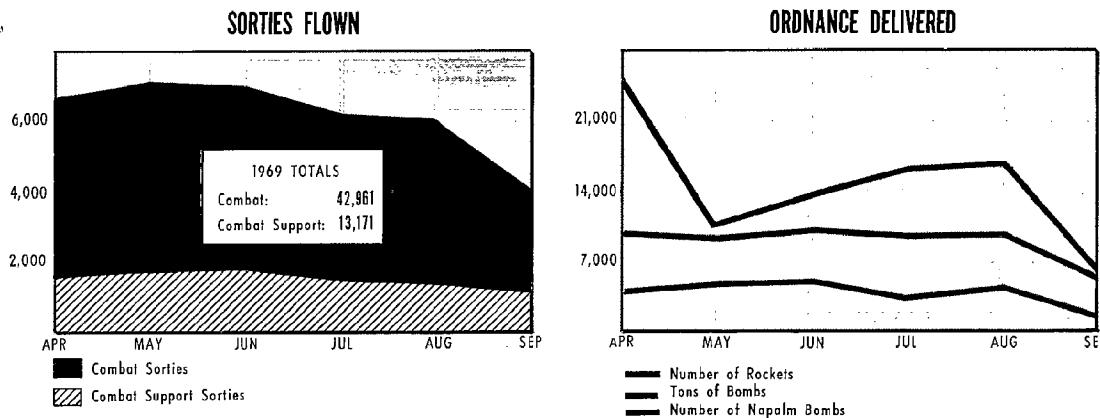
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-During a joint mission conducted on the 25th, two F-4's from MAG-13 and two US Air Force F-4's, supporting CAP 1-4-5 six miles northeast of Quang Ngai City, struck enemy positions, killing nine Viet Cong and causing sixteen secondary explosions and fires.

Of the 1,149 combat support flights, OV-10A aircraft accomplished 778, to provide ground units airborne reconnaissance and supporting arms control assistance. Aircrues from Marine Composite Reconnaissance Squadron (VMCJ)-1 added 253 sorties, as they conducted 161 photographic and 92 electronic warfare missions.

The graphs below compare September in-country fixed wing operations with monthly totals since April.

IN-COUNTRY FIXED WING SUPPORT BY MARINE AIRCRAFT: APR-SEP 1969



-Helicopter Operations

Although the pace of combat activity in I CTZ again slackened, helilift requirements remained considerable as III MAF units pressed the search for insular VC and NVA formations. In all, 1st Marine Aircraft Wing and Special Landing Force helicopter squadrons conducted 40,455 sorties during the month to maintain the requisite vertical lift capability for mobile combat maneuver and for accom-

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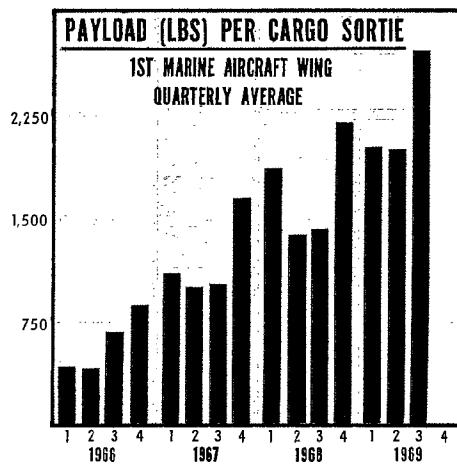
plishment of other support tasks. In addition to lifting 68,330 troops and 7,457 tons of cargo, 1st Wing helicopters flew over 3,000 command and control, 2,000 medical evacuation, and 7,000 armed helicopter sorties. SLF Alfa's HMM-265 conducted 2,029 sorties during amphibious Operation DEFIANT STAND, lifting 4,228 US and ROK Marines and 173 tons of supplies.

The September lift totals, which provided the highest payload to cargo sortie ratio yet achieved by 1st Wing helicopters, represent further gains in efficient transport service - a factor becoming increasingly important as helicopter assets are reduced by redeployments and as the forthcoming monsoon encompasses the I CTZ region. A capability to resupply committed combat elements with heavier payloads and, correspondingly, fewer sorties serves two purposes. Ground elements, unencumbered by lengthy resupply schedules, are provided more freedom of maneuver and, as a corollary, present a less vulnerable target for enemy-initiated action. For helicopter squadrons, accomplishment of an assigned task in fewer round trips allows more economical use of time and aircraft and reduces exposure to enemy fire.

As an example of the 1st Wing lift capacity advancements, during the 2d quarter of 1966 (with

UH-34's as the major carrier), 31,274 sorties were required to lift 6,858 tons of cargo - an average of 440 pounds per lift. The ratio of payload to cargo lift sorties improved steadily during 1967 and 1968 with the advent of CH-46 and CH-53 helicopters as prime cargo transporters. Further improvement, witnessed during 1969 as introduction of CH-46D models provided a substantial increase over the lift capacity of the original CH-46's,

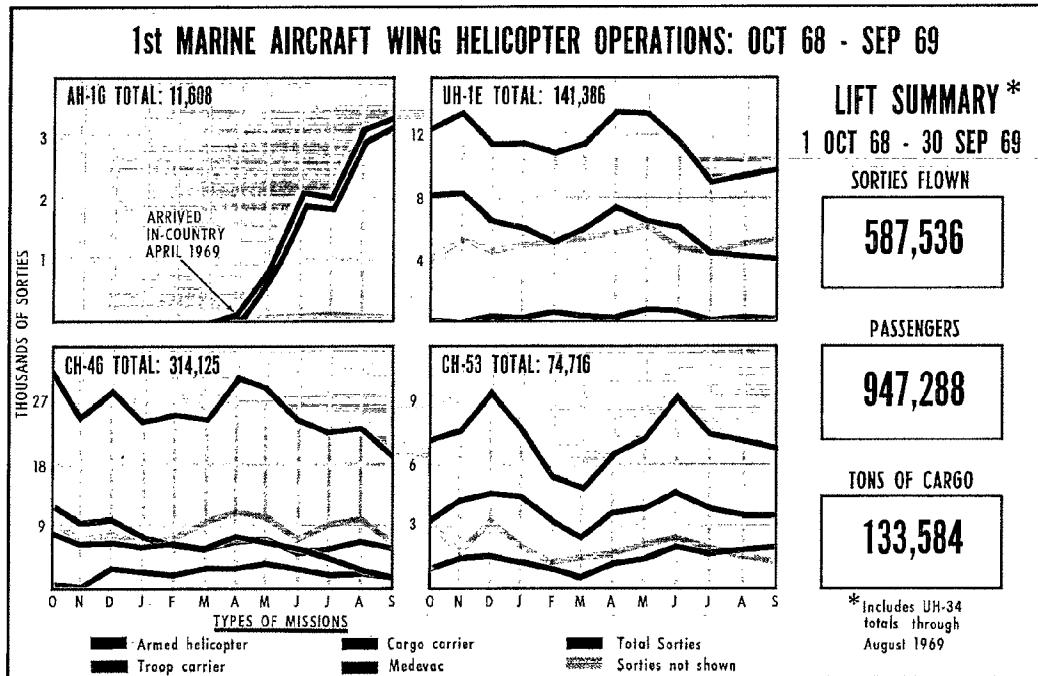
peaked during September as an average of 2,660 pounds of supplies per cargo lift sortie was recorded.

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The following graph portrays, by aircraft type, helicopter operations for the past year.



Out-of-Country Operations

During the month, VMCJ-1 aircrues flew 181 sorties north of the DMZ to conduct electronic warfare (EW) and photographic missions. Utilizing a variety of electronic monitoring and jamming techniques while orbiting offshore, EA-6A and EF-10B pilots flew 137 missions against radar-controlled surface-to-air missile (SAM) and antiaircraft artillery (AAA) sites posing a threat to Free World air operations. The principal EW effort was focused in countermeasure to hostile weapons systems just north of the DMZ, which are range-capable of attacking US and RVN aircraft operating over northern Quang Tri province; thirty-three EW sorties offered assistance to manned and drone

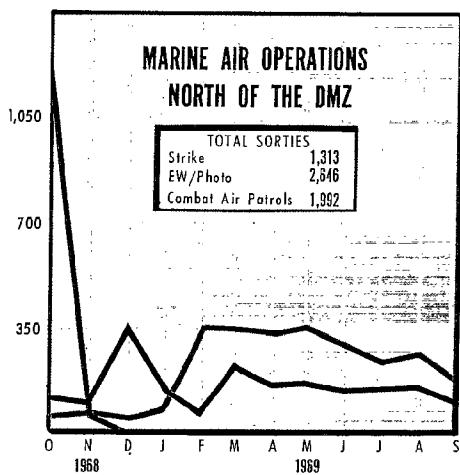
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reconnaissance aircraft flying in the vicinity of the Vinh and Hanoi/Haiphong complexes. The RF-4B

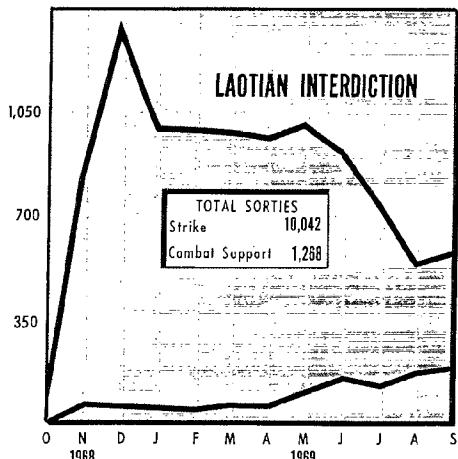
aircraft of VMCJ-1 flew 44 sorties over North Vietnam to satisfy photographic missions tasked to the 1st Marine Aircraft Wing.



provides US ships and aircraft in the Gulf of Tonkin 24-hour-a-day protection from the North Vietnamese air threat.

Marine fixed wing aircraft flew 788 sorties over southern Laos during September to assist in the around-the-clock interdiction of enemy logistics complexes and connecting road and trail networks. Daylight missions were flown primarily by A-4 and F-4 aircraft, which accounted for 298 sorties, while the A-6A's of Marine Aircraft Groups-11 and 12 concentrated

on nocturnal disruption of enemy attempts to remain and restock his units. Flying 289 sorties, 85 percent of which were under the cover of darkness, A-6A crews identified and attacked more than 300 enemy targets through the use of moving target indicator and target acquisition radar systems. Providing support for the interdiction campaign, 1st Wing TA-4F air-

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craft were utilized for 154 visual reconnaissance flights and 47 tactical air control (airborne) missions.

Aircraft Movements

-Rotation of F-4 Aircraft

An exchange of F-4 squadrons between the 1st Wing and the 9th Marine Amphibious Brigade was completed during early September, resulting in all WestPac-deployed F-4B aircraft models being stationed in-country, while the two F-4J squadrons now are assigned to MAG-15 at Marine Corps Air Station, Iwakuni. Moving from Japan to Chu Lai, VMFA-122 joined MAG-13 on the 5th for combat operations, enabling VMFA-232 to transplace to Japan. Collocation of the F-4J's, equipped with more effective radar systems, provides a more flexible and comprehensive air defense contingency capability in the northeast Asia region. Further, consolidation of F-4's by model type conserves limited ground support assets available and simplifies maintenance and logistics procedures.

-Trans-Pacific Deployment KEY QUOIT

An additional seven new-production A-6A aircraft were delivered to the 1st Marine Aircraft Wing during September, as trans-Pac KEY QUOIT VI terminated at Danang on the 27th. Flight-ferried from Naval Air Station, Whidbey Island, Washington, this echelon brought to 21 the number of new A-6A's delivered by the KEY QUOIT series of flights; previous KEY QUOIT trans-Pac's also have delivered six new EA-6A's.

Two east-bound flights during the month, KEY QUOIT V and VII, returned a total of nine A-6A and three EA-6A planes to CONUS for progressive aircraft rework.

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~~SECRET~~**UNCLASSIFIED**Aircraft Losses

Although combat activity was at a low level in September, enemy-initiated action against Free World air operations remained common - a total of 253 hostile firing incidents were reported by US and RVN aircrues in I CTZ. Marine losses to this effort and out-of-country resistance included three fixed wing aircraft (two A-6A's and an F-4B) and one AH-1G helicopter. Additionally, one UH-1E received battle damage from enemy ground fire.

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The second US troop redeployment from RVN, code named KEYSTONE CARDINAL, commenced for III MAF Marines on 28 September, with a 28-man advance party from VMA(AW)-533 departing Chu Lai for Iwakuni, Japan via KC-130 aircraft. Planning for this movement began during the execution phase of KEYSTONE EAGLE and encompassed logistic and embarkation planning in addition to operational considerations. As approved, KEYSTONE CARDINAL calls for the redeployment of Regimental Landing Team 3d Marines (RLT-3) to CONUS by 30 October and the remainder of the 3d Marine Division and selected 1st Marine Aircraft Wing elements to Okinawa and Japan by 30 November. The magnitude of the Marine portion of KEYSTONE CARDINAL is clearly revealed by the lift requirements.

	Personnel	Vehicles (sqft)	Cargo (cuft)
To CONUS	7,511	90,229	797,600
To Okinawa/Japan	<u>9,545</u>	<u>363,850</u>	<u>2,861,400</u>
Total	*17,056	454,079	3,659,000

At end-September, Embarkation Unit-1 (RLT-3) was making ready to board amphibious assault ships of the US Seventh Fleet and Military Airlift Command aircraft for the movement to CONUS. In addition, the remainder of the division was making preparations to move from its hinterland operating areas to coastal ports of embarkation for redeployment.

*In addition to the 17,056 CONUS or Okinawa/Japan-bound personnel scheduled for air or surface embarkation, the total Marine redeployment of 18,483 includes some 1,500 who are departing the combat zone on early rotation or for other administrative reasons.

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Embarkation and Transportation

Use of opportune stowage aboard scheduled amphibious shipping continued to decrease the requirement for contracted MSTS space for movement of surface cargo to and from I CTZ. The resultant saving realized by utilization of this expedient mode totaled nearly one-half million dollars during the 1st quarter of FY-70, as more than 400 items of equipment and 563 measurement tons (M/T) of cargo transited the Pacific in available US Navy vessels vice MSTS.

During September, 8,685 M/T of cargo were retrograded from I CTZ. While this total is somewhat below the 1969 monthly average (13,115 M/T), that portion moved by air (367 S/T) established a 1969 record, substantially surpassing the monthly average of 260 S/T.

Intra-I CTZ Cargo Movement

Continuous improvement of intra-I CTZ transportation systems has facilitated greatly the effective management of III MAF logistic assets. A reflection of this progress is the increased ability to shift resources expeditiously to areas of high consumption, thus decreasing the need for large stockpiles at forward bases.

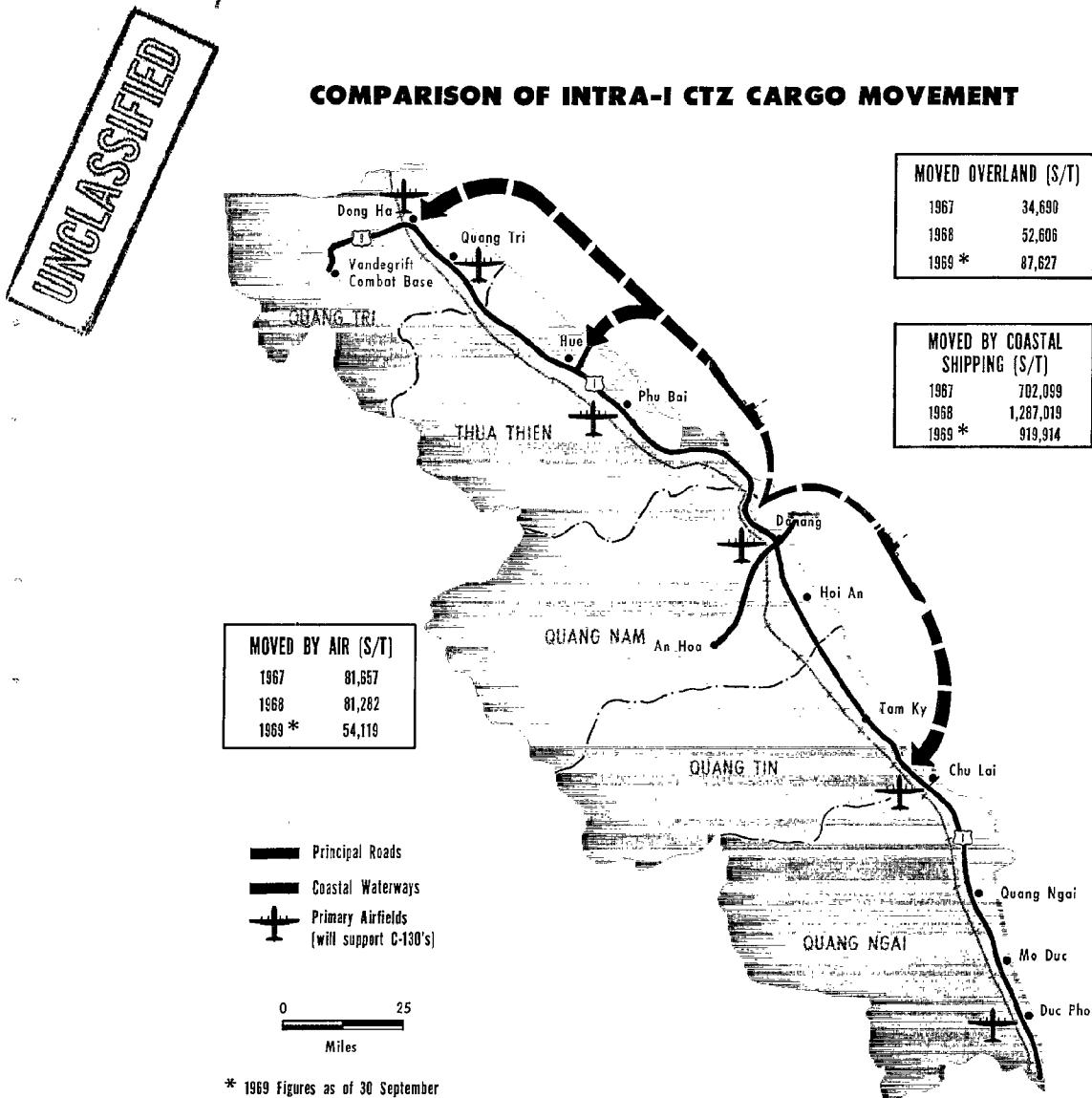
III MAF cargo is moved by land, sea, and air, with each means complementing the other. The map on the following page portrays the flow of intra-I CTZ cargo, while the accompanying charts illustrate both the amplitude of the task and the trend toward increased use of the more conventional and less expensive water and overland modes of transportation.

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COMPARISON OF INTRA-I CTZ CARGO MOVEMENT

Motor Transport Operations

During the month, 189 Rough Rider convoys were conducted in I CTZ by III MAF, transporting 8,585 S/T of cargo - some 12 percent less than the

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1969 monthly average of 9,849 S/T. The tonnage delivered by these convoys, averaging ten vehicles per unit, will decrease still further over the next two months, as two (the 3d and 9th) of the five in-country Marine motor transport battalions are redeployed to CONUS and Okinawa. Results of these commitments and other September operations of the five battalions and the Truck Company, FLC are illustrated below.

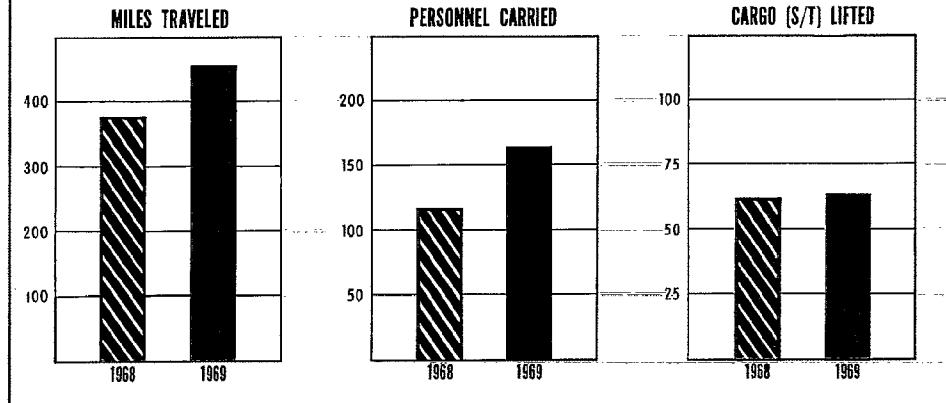
MARINE MOTOR TRANSPORT OPERATIONS: SEPTEMBER 1969

Unit	Mileage	Personnel Transported	Tonnage
1st MT Bn	65,035	43,685	5,566
3d MT Bn	16,341	18,674	2,239
7th MT Bn	110,796	1,437	27,195
9th MT Bn	74,716	40,900	9,214
11th MT Bn	119,247	26,120	15,458
Trk Co, FLC	89,766	53,166	20,808
TOTAL	475,901	183,982	80,480

As a result of road restoration and upgrading projects, Marine motor transport units, thus far in 1969, have been able to improve on the high level of operations recorded during 1968. This level of activity likewise will decrease as a result of the scheduled 35 percent reduction of in-country motor transport assets, coupled with the deletion of support requirements for an entire division. During the first nine months of 1969, the monthly average vehicular movement of III MAF cargo and personnel along I CTZ roads showed an increase over that of 1968, as depicted in the graph on the following page.

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1968 VS 1969 MONTHLY AVERAGES (THOUSANDS)**Monsoon Preparations

As a direct consequence of experience acquired and lessons learned during four previous monsoon seasons, the 1969-70 special requirements were limited to six supply items (compared with a range of 26 to 31 items in the past two years). Those items deleted from the previous monsoon special requirements list now can be obtained through normal supply channels. The following is a list of the 1969-70 special requirements.

<u>ITEM</u>	<u>QUANTITY</u>
Lightweight Rainsuit	95,000
Plastic Sheeting (yards)	171,000
Sleeping Shirt	110,000
Waterproof Pistol Cover	29,000
Fighting-hole Cover	28,000
Rainsuit Repair Kit	674

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With the exception of fighting-hole covers and rainsuits, all special requirements were CONUS-procured. The fighting-hole covers were purchased locally by the 3d Force Service Regiment (FSR) on Okinawa, as were a portion of the rainsuits (43,000), with the remainder coming from assets either collected during the 1968-69 III MAF recovery program or not issued the previous season. By end-September, all special requirements not already on hand at FLC were in transit from 3d FSR.

Amphibian Tractor Fire Suppression

To increase safe operation of the Marine amphibian tractor (LVT), Force Logistic Command has established procedures to modify the fire extinguishing apparatus of the 40-ton tracked vehicle. In continuous use in I CTZ since the Marines landed at Danang in March 1965, the LVT has proven invaluable in moving troops and supplies in the inundated areas of the I CTZ lowlands, in addition to supporting the amphibious assaults of the two Seventh Fleet SLF's.

However, the gasoline-powered tractor has been prone to violent combustion when its fuel tanks are ruptured by land mines or shell fire. To improve upon the hand-activated fire extinguishing device previously used to spread carbon dioxide inside the vehicle, FLC established, during July and August, an assembly line to modify all in-country LVT's.

The new, more effective, fire suppression system can be activated manually by the crew or automatically by a system of grids screening the 12 fuel tanks in the hull of the tractor. This system will activate if the ambient temperature exceeds 212 degrees Fahrenheit, extinguishing undetected fires. Although this modification requires 105 man-hours per vehicle, FLC completed 26 during September, bringing the total modified to 69. All in-country LVT's are scheduled to have the improved fire suppression kit by 1 November.


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Avaition Logistics

During the first week of September, tropical storm DORIS temporarily disrupted operations of Quang Tri-based helicopter squadrons, its accompanying high winds causing various degrees of damage to 36 aircraft. The preponderance of the harm inflicted involved rotor blades - one broken, 25 twisted, and 202 more suspected to be overstressed; other damage included minor fuselage damage to two helicopters, a crushed nose compartment on another, and apparent damage to two vertical shafts.

There was no degradation in operational aircraft availability as the damaged and overstressed blades were replaced immediately with on-hand assets. The 202 blades thought to be overstressed were evacuated to COMFAIRWESTPAC facilities at Atsugi, Japan for testing and possible return to the supply system.

In preparation for the redeployment of Marines from northern I CTZ, the 1st Wing has begun a phased reduction in logistic support capability in that area. The fuel storage capacity at Quang Tri was lowered from 90,000 gallons to 40,000 for JP-4 and from 20,000 to 10,000 for AVGAS. The capacity at Vandegrift combat base also was reduced, with JP-4 now at 20,000 gallons vice 50,000 and all AVGAS facilities closed down.

-PAR/BDR

The chart on the following page reflects the number of aircraft, by type, assigned to the 1st Marine Aircraft Wing in RVN as of 30 September. Those aircraft undergoing periodic aircraft rework (PAR) and battle damage repair (BDR) are also included.

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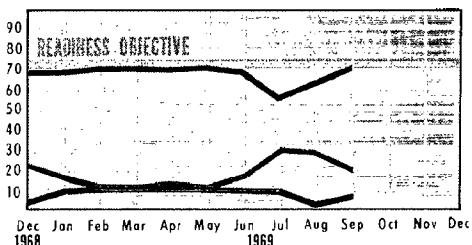
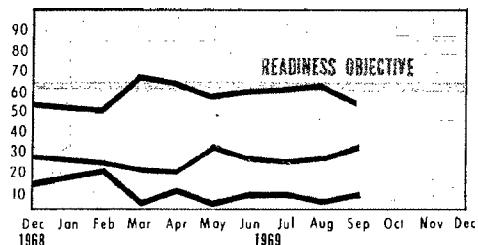
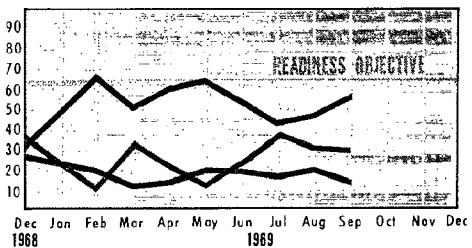
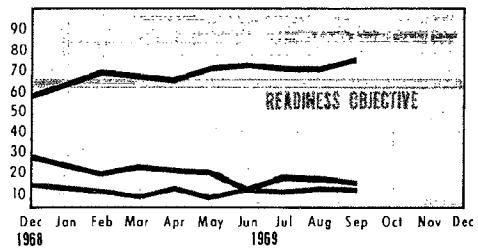
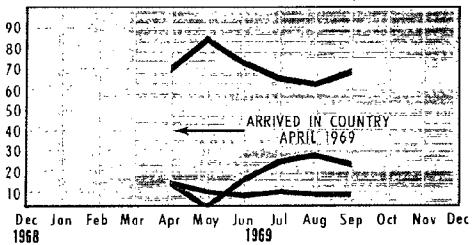
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UNCLASSIFIED**STATUS OF III MAF MARINE AIRCRAFT: SEPTEMBER 1969**

Aircraft Model	Total Assigned	PAR	BDR	Other	Total In-Country
A-4	69	9	3	6	51
TA-4	11	2	—	1	8
A-6	36	7	1	1	21
EA-6	8	—	—	1	7
F-4	74	16	3	1	54
RF-4	10	1	—	1	8
EF-10	6	—	—	—	6
C-1	3	—	—	—	3
C-117	6	—	—	—	6
US-2	3	—	—	—	3
O-1	9	—	—	—	9
OV-10	37	—	—	—	37
AH-1	17	—	1	—	16
UH-1	69	6	2	—	61
UH-34	9	8	—	—	1
CH-46	133	22	7	—	104
CH-53	64	11	—	—	53
TOTAL	564	82	17	17	448

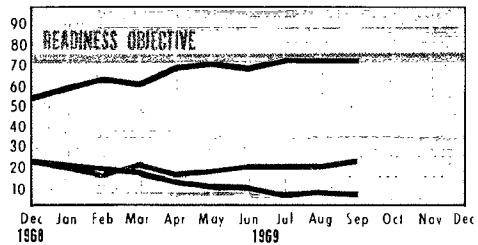
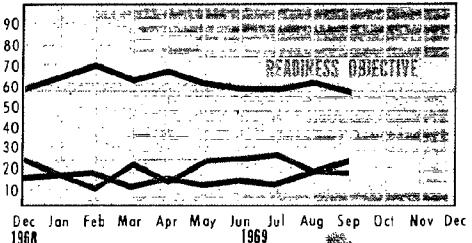
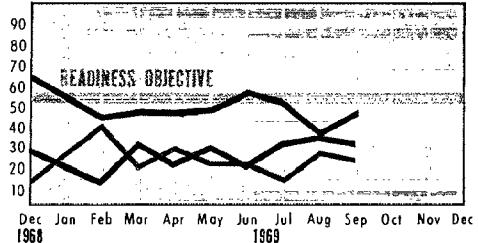
-NORS/NORM/OR

The operational readiness status of wing aircraft remained essentially at August levels, except for an anticipated rise in available CH-53's and a slight shortfall in the ready rate of F-4 assets. The F-4 decline was due, in the main, to engine changes in seven aircraft and unscheduled maintenance to nine others. The NORS/NORM and OR (not operationally ready due to supply/maintenance and operationally ready) data for selected in-country Marine aircraft are displayed on the next page.

UNCLASSIFIED

~~SECRET~~**UNCLASSIFIED****NORS/NORM RATES - III MAF MARINE AIRCRAFT****A-4 (ATTACK)****F-4 (FIGHTER-ATTACK)****A-6A (ATTACK)****OV-10A (RECONNAISSANCE)****AH-1G (HELO) ***

* Readiness Objective not established.

UH-1E (HELO)**CH-46 (HELO)****CH-53 (HELO)**

NORS — NORM — READY —

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CONCLUSIONS

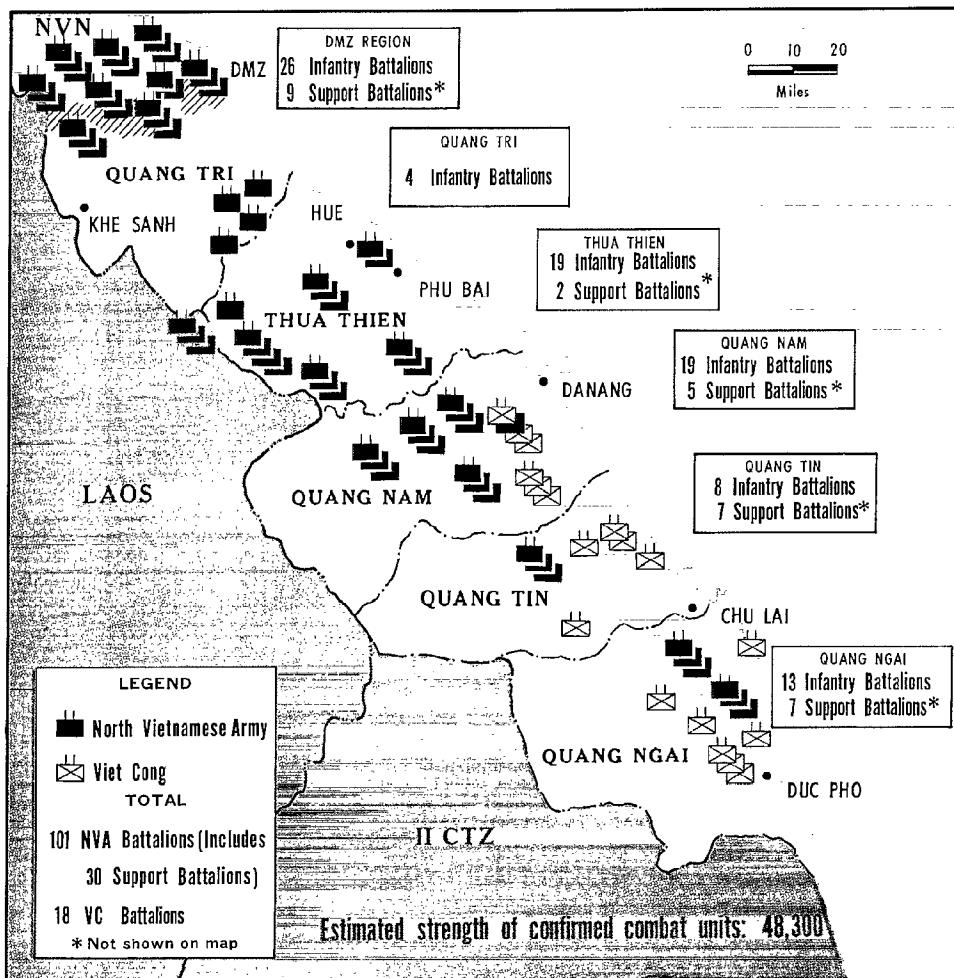
Assiduously plying economy-of-force tactics, the enemy is attempting to erode Free World strength through a continuation of ground assaults by small, sapper-trained units and stand off attacks-by-fire, coupled with acceleration of his population intimidation campaign. His lack of success is reflected amply by the progress achieved through the III MAF-supported 1969 GVN Pacification and Development Plan.

Despite the ongoing redeployment of the 3d Marine Division, the balance of combat power in northern I CTZ remains with III MAF and the ARVN.

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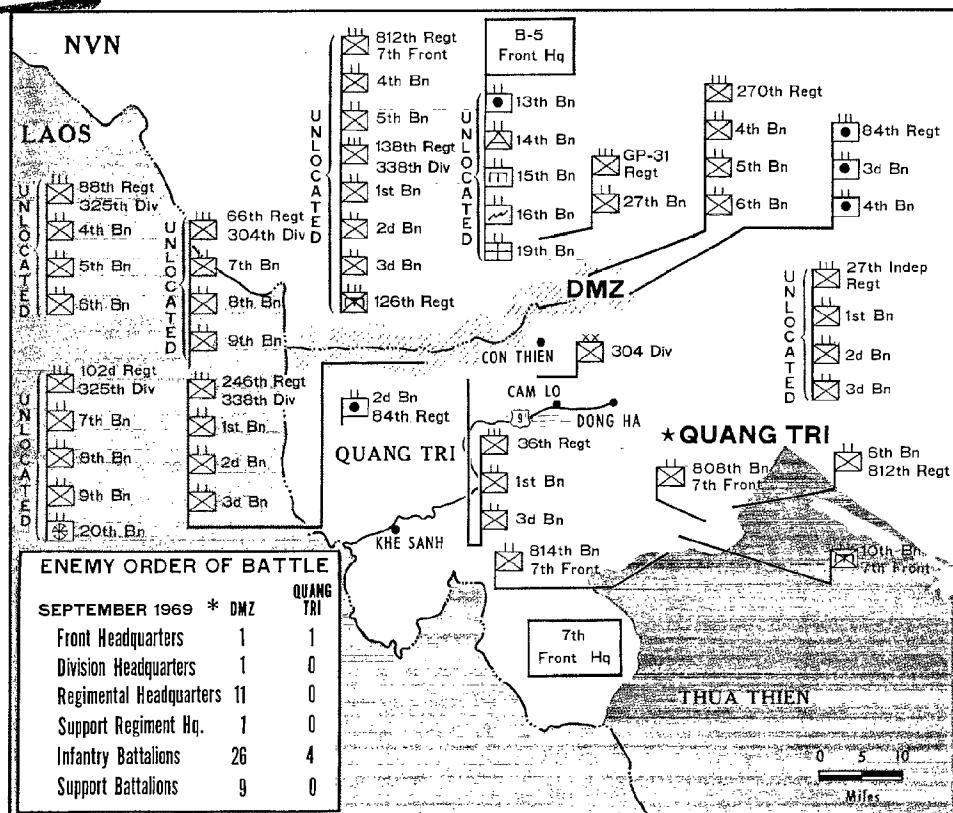
~~SECRET~~**UNCLASSIFIED****STATISTICAL HIGHLIGHTS****1. Enemy Order of Battle**

At end-September, enemy strength in I CTZ was an estimated 83,000 troops, a total which included 48,300 soldiers in confirmed combat units (42,200 NVA and 6,100 VC), 2,200 administrative personnel, 12,600 guerrillas, and 19,900 soldiers in units carried in probable or possible status in order-of-battle listings. The map below portrays the general locations of enemy battalions in I CTZ, while the four following provide, by province, more detailed information.

ENEMY BATTALIONS IN I CTZ AND DMZ AREA: SEPTEMBER 1969**UNCLASSIFIED**~~SECRET~~

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DMZ/QUANG TRI PROVINCE



★ Province capital

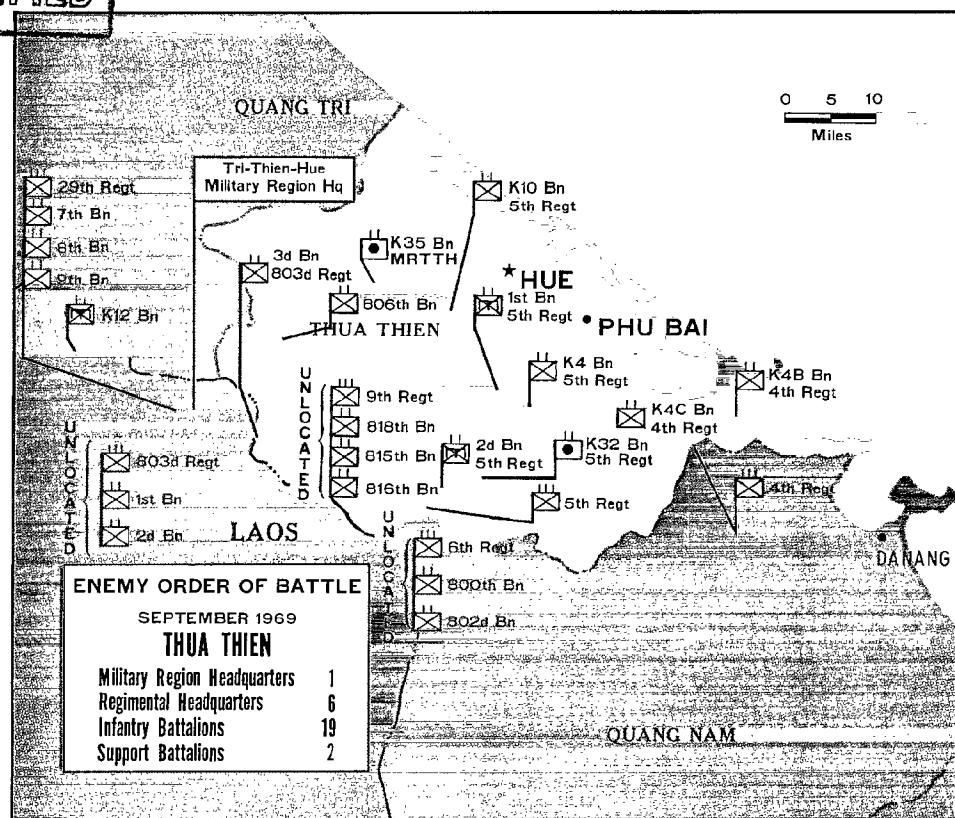
ESTIMATED ENEMY STRENGTH

TROOPS IN CONFIRMED COMBAT UNITS		ADMINISTRATIVE UNIT PERSONNEL	GUERRILLAS	TROOPS IN PROBABLE AND POSSIBLE UNITS
NVA	VC			
20,500	150	400	1,200	17,300

* 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.

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~~SECRET~~**UNCLASSIFIED****THUA THIEN PROVINCE**

★ Province capital

ESTIMATED ENEMY STRENGTH

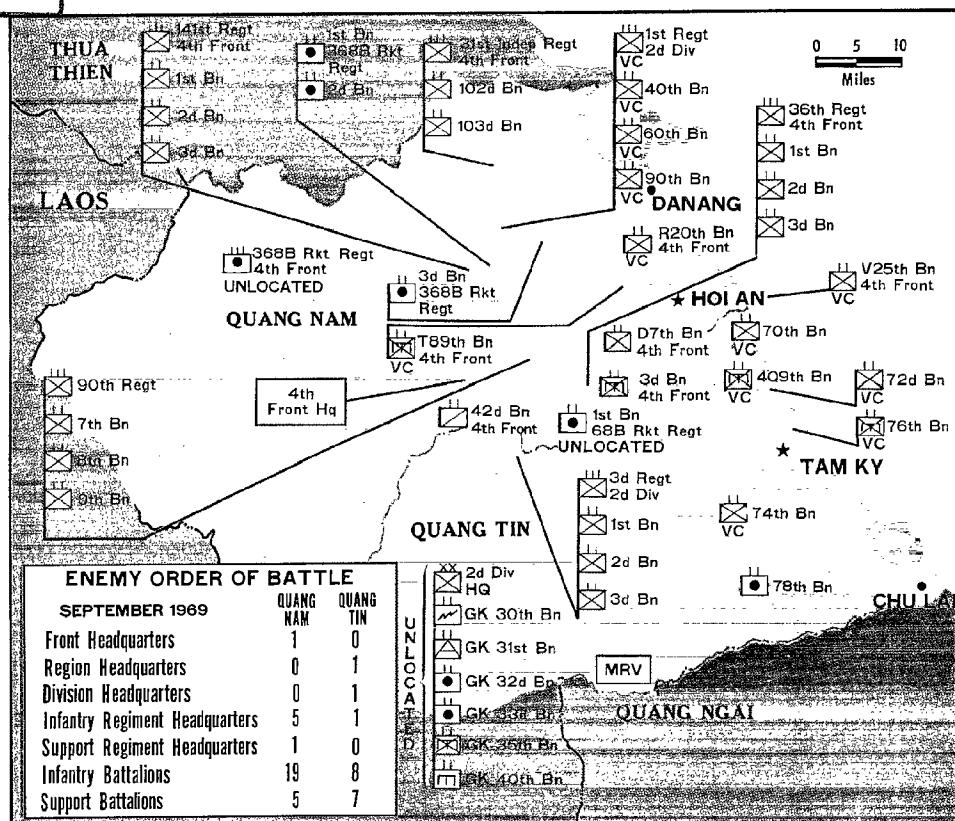
TROOPS IN CONFIRMED COMBAT UNITS		ADMINISTRATIVE UNIT PERSONNEL	GUERRILLAS	TROOPS IN PROBABLE AND POSSIBLE UNITS
NVA	VC			
10,000	300	900	1,300	1,600

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QUANG NAM/QUANG TIN PROVINCES



★ Province capital

ESTIMATED ENEMY STRENGTH

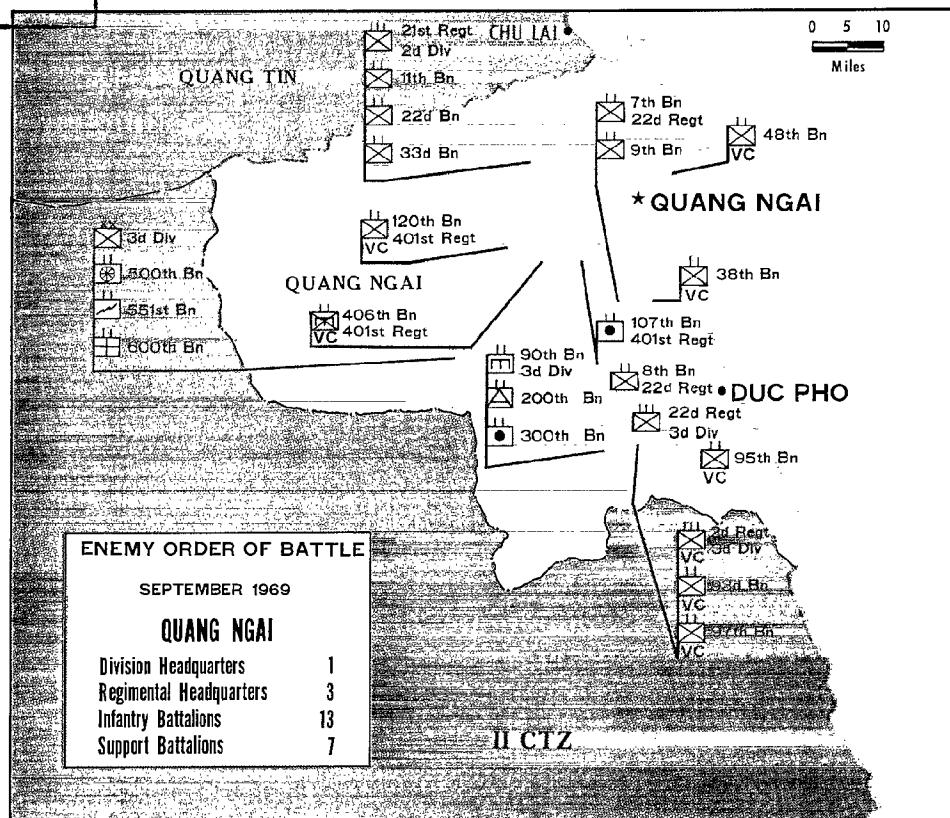
TROOPS IN CONFIRMED COMBAT UNITS		ADMINISTRATIVE UNIT PERSONNEL	GUERRILLAS	TROOPS IN PROBABLE AND POSSIBLE UNITS
NVA	VC			
7,600	3,200	1,000	7,300	1,600

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QUANG NGAI PROVINCE



★ Province capital

ESTIMATED ENEMY STRENGTH

TROOPS IN CONFIRMED COMBAT UNITS		ADMINISTRATIVE UNIT	GUERRILLAS	TROOPS IN PROBABLE AND POSSIBLE UNITS
NVA	VC	PERSONNEL		
4,100	2,400	NONE	3,100	1,100

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2. ENEMY LOSSES IN I CTZ

	<u>Killed</u>	<u>Captured</u>	<u>Weapons</u>
<u>Enemy losses to III MAF/SLF</u>			
Marines	882	50	258
Monthly III MAF/SLF			
Total	1,731	67	529
1969 III MAF/SLF			
Total	27,123	781	11,156
<u>Enemy losses to other forces</u>			
ROKMC	12	0	12
RVNAF	1,054	206	682
Special Forces/CIDG	68	6	33
Monthly Total	1,134	212	727
I CTZ Monthly Total	2,865	279	1,256
1969 Total	50,389	4,312	30,098

3. MARINE/SLF OFFENSIVE OPERATIONS

<u>USMC</u>	<u>CAP</u>		<u>Cumulative</u>
			<u>1969 Total</u>
4,251	5,455	Patrols	114,796
5,605	5,943	Ambushes	87,357
249		Company operations	1,449
358		Sniper posts	4,114
4		Battalion operations	14*
1		Regimental or larger	21*
		operations	
5,097		Fixed wing sorties	68,899
40,455		Helicopter sorties	460,590

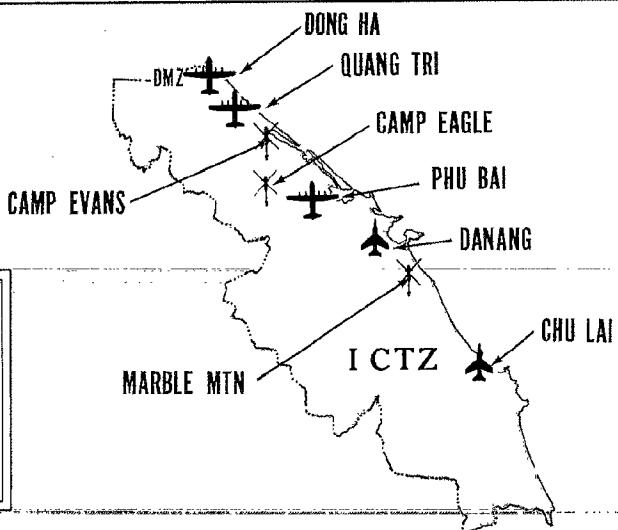
*Since monthly figures include operations continued from previous months, they are not used to compute cumulative totals.

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4. US AIRCRAFT BASED AT MAJOR I CTZ AIRFIELDS: SEPTEMBER 1969

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USMC AIRCRAFT	USN AIRCRAFT	USA AIRCRAFT (CONT)
QUANG TRI 1 HELO SQDN (22 CH-46) 1 OBS SQDN (9 O-1, 18 OV-10, 11 UH-1)	DANANG 1 HVY PHOTO SQDN (2 RA-3B) 1 DET FLT AIR RECON SQDN (3EA-3B, 2 EC-121M)	CAMP EAGLE 1 ABN DIV ASSETS: 1 AVN GP (64 UH-1, 11 AH-1, 11 OH-6, 2 U-6) 1 MED BN (12 UH-1) 1 TRANS BN (3 UH-1, 1 OH-6) 1 CAV SQDN (28 UH-1, 27 AH-1, 25 OH-6) DIV ARTY (10 UH-1, 31 AH-1, 15 OH-6) MISC (15 UH-1, 21 OH-6)
PHU BAI 4 HELO SQDNS (35 CH-53, 26 UH-1, 22 CH-46) 1 ACFT MAINT SQDN (1 C-117, 1 CH-46, 1 UH-34)		MARBLE MTN HQ AVN BDE (2 UH-1, 3 U-6, 1 U-21) 2 AVN COS (28 UH-1, 18 OV-1) 1 COURIER PLT (3 U-1)
DANANG 1 FTR/ATK SQDN (15 F-4) 2 ALL-WEATHER ATK SQDNs (20 A-6A) 1 PHOTO/ECM SQDN (9 RF-4B, 8 EA-6A, 6 EF-10B) 2 ACFT MAINT SQDNs (4 C-117, 9 TA-4F, 3 C-1, 3 US-2)	TOTAL USN A/C PRESENT 8	DANANG 1 TAC AIR SPT SQDN (70 O-2, 36 OV-10) 3 TAC FTR SQDNs (51 F-4) 2 DETS AIR RES/RCVY SQDNs (3 HH-43, 13 HH-3) 1 DET FTR/INTERCEPT SQDN (6 F-102)
MARBLE MTN 4 HELO SQDNS (44 CH-46, 18 CH-53, 26 UH-1) 1 OBS SQDN (17 AH-1, 19 OV-10) 1 ACFT MAINT SQDN (22 CH-46)	USAF AIRCRAFT FIXED WING - 163 HELICOPTER - 16	FIXED WING - 163 HELICOPTER - 16
CHU LAI 3 FTR/ATK SQDNs (43 F-4) 3 ATK SQDNs (60 A-4) 1 ALL-WEATHER ATK SQDN (9 A-6A) 2 ACFT MAINT SQDNs (1 C-117)	TOTAL USAF A/C PRESENT - 173	CHU LAI 1 INFANTRY DIV ASSETS: 2 AVN BNS (32 CH-47, 115 UH-1, 6 AH-1, 10 OH-6, 2 U-6) 2 CAV SQDNs (15 UH-1, 18 AH-1, 15 OH-6) DIV ARTY (8 OH-6, 1 U-6) MISC (12 OH-6, 2 U-1) 1 RECON CO (21 O-1, 1 U-6)
FIXED WING - 254 HELICOPTER - 228	USA AIRCRAFT DONG HA TAC ARTY SPT (4 UH-1, 4 OH-6) CAMP EVANS 1 AVN BN (55 UH-1, 8 AH-1, 2 OH-6)	FIXED WING - 124 HELICOPTER - 687
TOTAL USMC A/C PRESENT - 482	PHU BAI 3 AVN COS (10 UH-1, 4 OH-6, 32 O-1, 20 OV-1, 2 U-6, 2 U-21) ABN DIV SPT (45 CH-47, 2 OH-6, 7 CH-54)	TOTAL USA A/C PRESENT - 811

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1969 Total

126,646	Persons given medical treatment	1,080,799
3,795	Persons given dental treatment	30,779
541	Persons given medical or dental training	4,947
68,657	Pounds of food distributed	960,279
4,003	Pounds of soap distributed	70,335
2,791	Pounds of clothing distributed	53,468
870	Critically ill civilians evacuated	8,193
725	English language classes conducted	7,260
\$6,920	Cash donations	\$69,422
23,113	Persons fed	373,128
3,887	Students supported	39,871
348	Construction projects	2,263

6. III MAF/SLF STRENGTH

	USMC		USN		USA	
	Off	Enl	Off	Enl	Off	Enl
DMZ area	503	8,997	65	378	293	3,888
Quang Tri	505	5,845	63	424	391	5,797
Phu Bai	260	2,202	3	55	2,771	22,297
Danang	2,978	41,692	233	1,590	172	783
Chu Lai	480	5,051	14	107	1,710	18,221
Duc Pho	-	-	-	-	274	4,564
Afloat	157	1,993	9	81	-	-
Total	4,883	65,780	387	2,635	5,611	55,550

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~~SECRET~~~~UNCLASSIFIED~~ LOGISTICSa. SupplyClass I

(1000 rations/days of supply)

	Danang	Dong Ha and Quang Tri
MCI	479/10	1058/30
B rations	485/10	349/9
A rations	670/14	243/6

Class II

(supply requisitions)

	FLC	3d FSR
Processed	42,247	19,076
Fill rate	52%	33%

Class III and III(A) (bulk) (Marine Corps owned)

(1000 gallons/days of supply)

	JP-4	AVGAS	MOGAS	DIESEL
Vandegrift	10/8	-	-	-
Quang Tri	42/1	8/8	-	-
Phu Bai	94/3	37/9	-	-
Danang	-	-	81/8	89/8
An Hoa	70/25	5/500	-	-

Class V and V(A) - Adequate to support operational commitments.

b. Resupply Status to RVN(1) Surface Shipping Status 53,804 M/T

Received from CONUS (33,567 M/T)

Received from intra-WestPac (20,237 M/T)

(2) Air Shipping Status 857 S/T

Received from CONUS (472 S/T)

Received from intra-WestPac (385 S/T)

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~~SECRET~~~~UNCLASSIFIED~~ Resupply Status within RVN(1) Surface Shipping Status 90,340 S/T

Danang to Dong Ha/Cua Viet (21,149 S/T)
 Danang to Hue/Tan My (30,513 S/T)
 Danang to Chu Lai (38,678 S/T)

(2) Air Shipping Status (USMC and PACAF) 984 S/T

Danang to Dong Ha (170 S/T)
 Danang to Phu Bai (134 S/T)
 Danang to Chu Lai (126 S/T)
 Other intra-I CTZ APOE's (554 S/T)

d. Retrograde Cargo from RVN(1) Surface 8,318 M/T

MSTS conventional vessels (4,487 M/T)
 Roll On/Roll Off vessels (1,978 M/T)
 Fleet amphibious vessels (1,853 M/T)

(2) Air 367 S/T

USMC (46 S/T)
 MAC (132 S/T)
 PACAF (189 S/T)

e. Medical and Dental Services(1) Medical

Patients admitted to III MAF facilities	1,939
Battle injury (368)	
Non-battle injury (284)	
Disease (1,287)	
Evacuated out-of-country	650
Deaths in III MAF facilities	11
Returned to duty	891
Hospitalized as of 30 September	308

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~~SECRET~~~~UNCLASSIFIED~~(2) Dental

Total procedures	42,231
Operative, crown, and bridge	20,329
Prosthetics	364
Oral surgery	3,738
Preventive dentistry	7,455
Number of sittings	16,778

f. Construction Projects

<u>Roads</u>	- 114.5 miles were upgraded and maintained.
<u>Bridges</u>	- One Class 30 and one Class 60 bridge were constructed; one Class 30 and two Class 60 bridges were under construction; and four Class 60 bridges were repaired.
<u>Rafts</u>	- One Class 40/45 raft was in operation in the Danang area.

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