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*South Pacific: Operations of U.S. Marine
forces, Vietnam*

Apr 70

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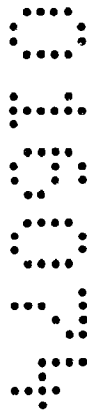
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This is a summary of activities of US Marine Corps forces in Vietnam for the month of April 1970. Its purpose is to update similar historical reports covering the period from March 1965 through March 1970.

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SUMMARY

By and large, there was little change in the tempo of III MAF combat operations during April over that of the previous month. While the enemy increased attacks-by-fire and ground assaults slightly during the first and last weeks, he remained unwilling to challenge Marine forces in Quang Nam to any large-scale fighting and continued to pursue tactics of mining and booby-trapping, population intimidation, harassing attacks, and those incident to foraging for food and other supplies.

Although enemy tactics presented little opportunity for major engagement, small unit operations by 1st Division and Combined Action Force units, with extensive support from 1st Wing helicopter and fixed wing squadrons, accounted for 672 NVA/VC killed, 58 prisoners taken, and 284 weapons captured. As continually has been the case, artillery support was a major contributor to enemy losses. Employment of the Integrated Observation Device and a variety of other target acquisition equipment, refinement of standard procedures as required to meet varying situations, and use of fire support bases - a concept which extends artillery coverage of the battlefield to distant areas - have served to improve considerably support provided by artillery to destroy the enemy.

Despite the early and late April increases, enemy activity had little detrimental effect on the progress of pacification. A modest improvement over the previous month was brought about in the number of individuals considered secure, leaving less than two percent of the population in Quang Nam under complete VC control. Pacification progress has been partially attributable to the impact of training given to Popular and Regional Force platoons by Marines through CAP and CUPP operations. The latter, in addition to training territorial forces, provided security for an increased number of Vietnamese, now almost 23,000.

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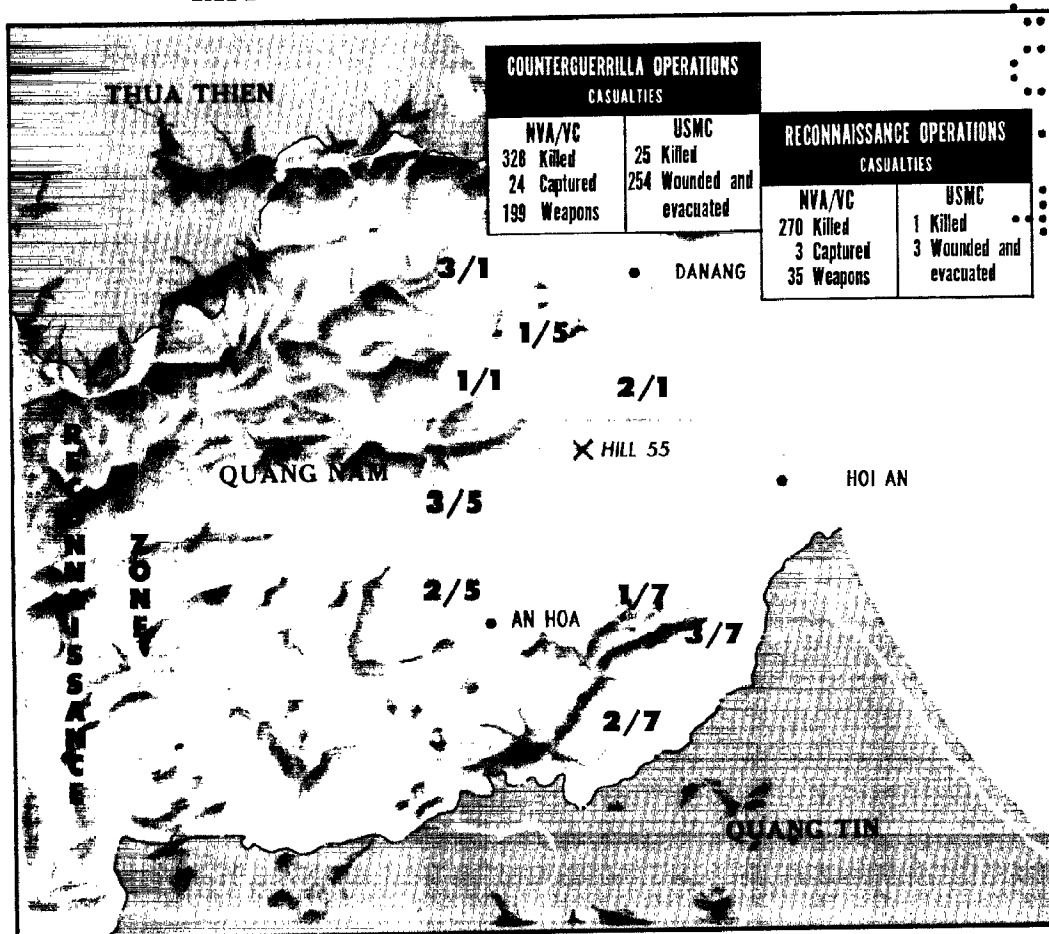
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COMBAT OPERATIONS

III MAF registered surges of action during early and late April, with a relatively low level of activity prevailing the remainder of the month. Counterguerrilla and reconnaissance operations accounted for 625 NVA/VC killed or captured and 234 weapons seized. Artillery fire, improved through an expanded network of observation systems and refined procedures to support reconnaissance operations, has heightened III MAF control of the battlefield, contributing steadily to the attrition of enemy manpower.

The map below locates the Marine battalions at end-month and displays the results of April operations.

MARINE OPERATIONS: APRIL 1970



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UNCLASSIFIEDArtillery Operations

The unique combination of conditions found in Vietnam - severe terrain, tropical weather, a lack of extensive road networks, islands of enemy interspersed among the citizenry, and an enemy which operates with stealth in small groups, generally at the time and place of his choice - presented a challenge to the artilleryman. Two requirements necessary to assure effectiveness of artillery fire support in the Vietnam environment are an observation system to acquire targets and an ability to deliver shells with precise, first-volley accuracy. Implied in the latter is the capacity to place a large enough volume of fire on the target, with minimal adjustment, to destroy or neutralize the enemy. The need for improved observation systems has increased, as friendly combat and pacification operations have diminished enemy presence close by populated areas, thus shifting artillery target emphasis to lines of communication (LOC) leading to lowland areas.

Positioning artillery units to provide diverse, far-reaching coverage was accomplished by employing fire support bases (FSB), the construction and occupation of which are described in the Logistics chapter. Use of FSBs diminished the capability to mass a large volume of shorter-range direct support artillery fire; however, preparing FSBs within mutually supporting range of each other, carefully locating longer-range medium and heavy artillery to cover the entire III MAF area, and the fact that the enemy very rarely presents a large target mitigated the massing limitation.

The III MAF area of operations currently is vested with the reinforced assets (some 115 artillery pieces) of the 11th Marines, which provides supporting fires for the 1st Marine Division, reconnaissance operations, and combined action units,

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in addition to firing supplementary missions for adjacent US Army, ROKMC, and RVNAF units. The Regiment has occupied 65 FSBs and combat bases in support of III MAF operations and, in the past seven months, has expended more than one million rounds of ammunition (105mm, 107mm, 155mm, 8-inch, and 175mm).

Coupled with this broad coverage, III MAF has achieved an improved capability to observe the battlefield and, therefore, to destroy the enemy in close, as well as at a distance. Supplementing artillery forward observer teams, the traditional eyes of artillery, are permanent observation posts (OP) on commanding terrain and in towers at fortified positions; countermortar radars; acoustic sound ranging devices; Seismographic Intrusion Devices and other sensors; Night Observation Devices; Starlight Telescopes; and Integrated Observation Devices (IOD).

The IOD, consisting of high-power binoculars integrated with a Night Observation Device and a laser range finder (accurate to a range of 18 miles), was first employed by the 11th Marines on 19 October 1969. As the potential of the device was already known through earlier use by Marines in Quang Tri province, the artillerymen implemented a program which included training teams to operate the equipment and the selection and development of primary and alternate OPs from which the devices could be judiciously shifted to observe constantly areas registering the most enemy activity.

The OPs and artillery firing positions were located by surveyors to determine their exact map locations and elevations. In addition, scrap trucks were painted white, helilifted into various target areas, and likewise located by survey. Registering artillery on these highly visible, accurately located points has provided precise data needed to deliver accurate fire throughout the target area. That, in connection with target information provided by the IOD, has given the forward observer greater ability to bring first-volley hits on the enemy.

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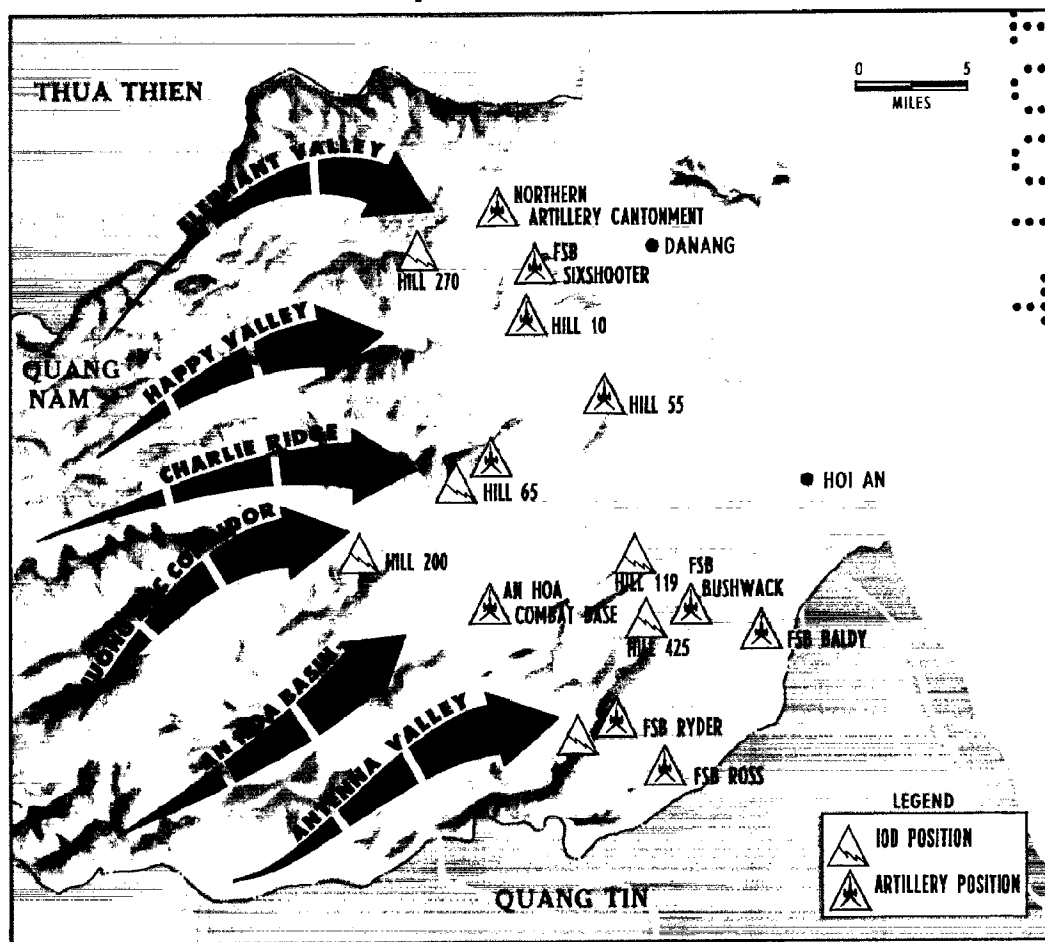
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The 11th Marines employs six IOD teams in Quang Nam; to date, artillery missions against IOD-detected targets have claimed in excess of 2,000 NVA and VC killed. This constitutes a sharp rise in 1st Marine Division kills attributed to artillery fire -- from 26 percent prior to inception of the IOD system to 53 percent since 19 October 1969.

The map below locates the six primary IOD observation posts and shows the dispersion of the main artillery firing positions, all located to interdict the enemy's principal avenues of approach to the Quang Nam lowlands and to support counter guerrilla operations.

III MAF IOD/ARTILLERY LOCATIONS



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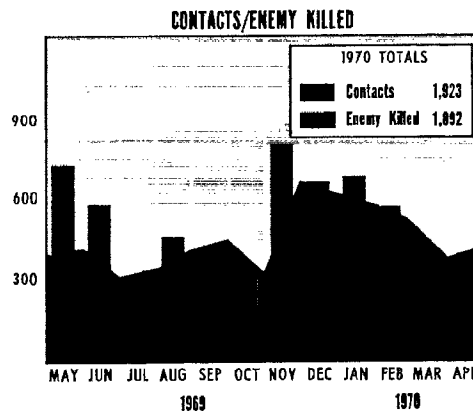
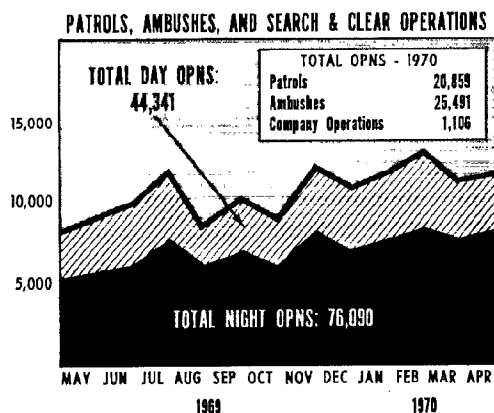
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Counter guerrilla Operations

Within the coastal plain of Quang Nam, Marine small units continued their assault against enemy incursions during April. With local support from his guerrilla infrastructure dissolving under pressure of the GVN pacification program, the enemy launched a series of limited rocket and mortar attacks against cities and key installations, primarily during early and late April. In concert with these indirect-fire attacks, he intensified efforts to stage food and materiel and to infiltrate NVA and VC Main Force elements closer to population centers, as part of revitalizing his campaign to discredit the RVNAF and disrupt pacification.

In April, III MAF deployed over 11,500 patrols, ambushes, and company-size operations in Quang Nam -- a maze of resistance which continued to splinter enemy elements entering the lowland battleground, thereby thwarting serious threat to province security.

The following graphs compare counter guerrilla operations during April with monthly totals since May 1969.

MARINE SMALL UNIT OPERATIONS: MAY 1969 - APRIL 1970

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-Patrols

During April, 3,310 day and 1,256 night Marine combat patrols, varying in size from fire team to platoon, met little concentrated enemy resistance; however, their presence denied the enemy free movement, widening further the cleavage between hungry enemy forces in mountainous base camps and their VC supporters in the lowlands.

At 1610 on 4 April, a Company H, 5th Marines platoon patrol, reconnoitering the north bank of the Thu Bon two miles northeast of Liberty Bridge, received small arms fire from an enemy squad concealed in the ruins of an abandoned village. The Marines laid down a heavy volume of fire, while one squad enveloped and assaulted the position, resulting in six VC killed, two others captured, and 18 civilians detained for interrogation by GVN officials. Two rifles, one crew served weapon, a small quantity of munitions, and a radio headset also were seized by the patrol, which sustained no casualties.

Another patrol action was registered on the 5th, when a Company G, 7th Marines squad came upon an NVA forward observer team playing cards in a cave, three miles northwest of FSB Ross. The spontaneous firefight yielded five enemy killed, four weapons, a compass, binoculars, and assorted military equipment and documents; no friendly casualties were sustained in the brief skirmish.

-Ambushes

With the greatest amount of enemy movement recorded during darkness, the ambush has proven a most successful tactic in countering infiltration and subduing NVA/VC transportation units assigned food-gathering chores; nearly 6,800 ambushes, predominately squad-size, were conducted by Marines. The following examples typify their success in denying the enemy use of his LOCs during the hours of darkness.

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-Selecting a site bordering Nui Loc Son basin three miles southwest of FSB Baldy, a Company M, 7th Marines ambush detected an NVA foraging party moving toward the lowlands at dusk on the 22d. The enemy, taken under fire, retreated toward the hills and left behind five dead, two weapons, and some documents. Two Marines were wounded during the action.

-On the night of 24 April, an element of Company C, 7th Marines laid an ambush position overlooking a well-used trail network traversing rice flats three miles northwest of FSB Baldy. At 2000, seven enemy entered the killing zone, triggering the ambush. During the clash, two of the intruders escaped; however, five NVA were killed and their weapons and a surgical kit seized. Friendly casualties were three wounded, one seriously enough to require evacuation.

-Company Search and Clear Operations

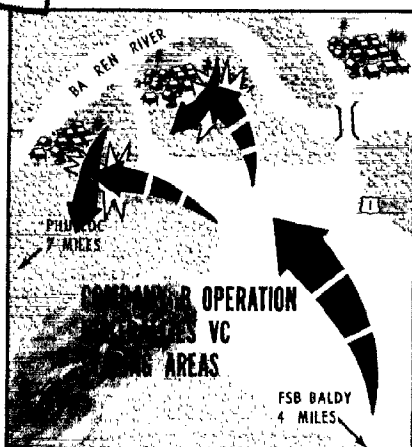
During April, 213 company-size search and clear operations (the majority employed by the 7th Marines) were executed in support of the counter-guerrilla campaign. Normally deployed to neutralize known enemy strong points or to search out major NVA/VC formations, this tactic continued to extract a high price from the enemy. One such operation, conducted by Company B, 7th Marines during 10-14 April, was typical of this maneuver.

With the mission to purge the eastern extremity of Phu Loc Valley of enemy soldiers, VC sympathizers, and cached food and materiel, the Marines searched inhabited villages along the southern bank of the Ba Ren River, four miles northwest of FSB Baldy. In one village, nearly two tons of rice were uncached, along with a supply of penicillin and streptomycin. Nearby, two 15-foot boats at the river's edge obscured the entrance to a tunnel complex, which contained seven rifles, one 60mm mortar,

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a short-wave radio, and a quantity of mixed ordnance, medical supplies, and military documents. Altogether, Company B accounted for 13 VC killed and one captured in scattered clashes; 39 VC suspects/sympathizers detained for interrogation and classification; 20 rifles, two crew served weapons, and a moderate amount of munitions and foodstuffs seized; and, most important,

a VC rest station and staging site neutralized.

Reconnaissance Activity

III MAF reconnaissance units continued to monitor routes of communication linking mountainous enemy base areas with the populous lowlands surrounding Danang. Long-range patrols extend observation of the battlefield into areas the enemy considers safe from friendly attack and provide target data for supporting arms interdiction. First Force Reconnaissance Company conducted 104 deep-surveillance patrols during April, while 1st Reconnaissance Battalion elements provided a mid-range screen, tallying over 1,100 patrols. Enemy units, attacked by reconnaissance-directed supporting arms fire and occasionally engaged with small arms fire, lost at least 270 NVA and VC killed, three NVA taken prisoner, and 35 weapons seized.

Reconnaissance actions, employing aerial firepower as the predominant supporting arm, are described in the Air Operations chapter of this edition. The following narratives are descriptive of meeting engagements which measured the tactical ability of these small patrols.

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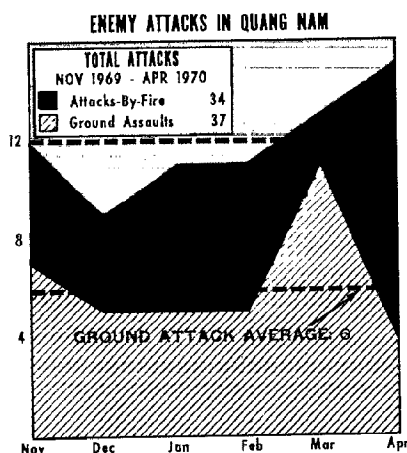
Eleventh Marines artillery, relied upon heavily by reconnaissance patrols, provides rapid supporting fires through a three-part program: first, the use of a "special recon fire zone" for each patrol; second, dedicating a battery or platoon to each patrol; and third, providing an artillery liaison officer to the reconnaissance unit to assist fire planning and coordination. Thus, each reconnaissance team patrols within a precleared fire zone (a no-fire zone for all other agencies) and places calls for fire directly to a dedicated firing unit, which can respond immediately.

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Enemy Activity

Enemy-initiated activity in Quang Nam during April remained essentially at the low level recorded the previous month. Ground action, primarily the work of local force and guerrilla units, consisted of scattered mortar attacks, as well as a few ambushes and light harassment-by-fire. The early and latter parts of the month were marked by a moderate increase in activity, as the enemy conducted several attacks-by-fire against friendly tactical units and installations. Elements of the 577th NVA Rocket Artillery Battalion intermittently launched a number of 122mm and 140mm rockets at An Hoa and selected targets in the Danang area, while other units sup-



plemented the action by carrying out terrorist, mining, and propaganda missions. During the period of increased shellings at end-month, the enemy, for the first time in several months, exercised a chemical capability, delivering a number of tear gas mortar rounds on FSB Ross and the Thuong Duc refugee center. In all, the enemy attack effort during the month totaled 11 attacks-by-fire (20 rounds or more) and four ground assaults.

Acts of terrorism continue as the enemy's principal means of inducing local support; pacification success in Quang Nam has forced the insurgents to place greater reliance on fear tactics to prevent further disintegration of their support structure. The most significant terrorist incident

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occurred during the early hours on the 30th, when an undetermined size enemy force entered a village one mile northeast of Dai Loc district headquarters, burned six homes, and kidnapped 50 civilians.

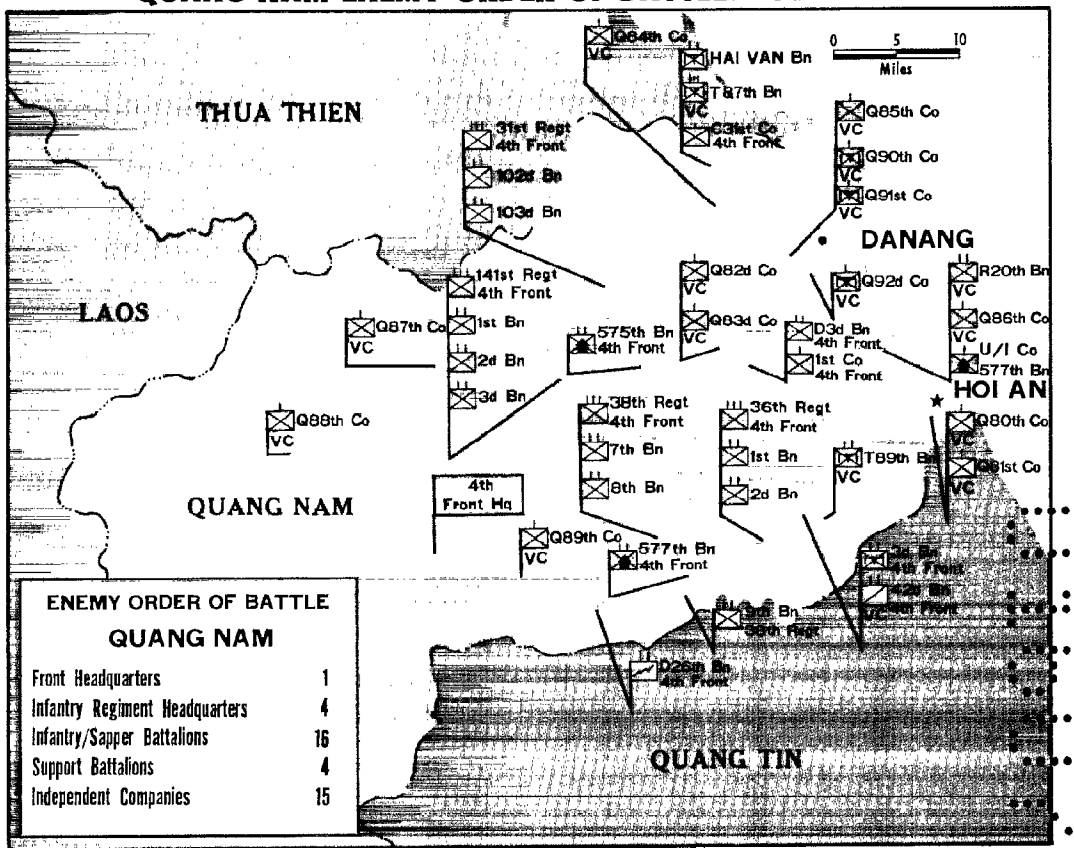
A recently captured VC prisoner stated that the late-March and April surges were preparatory stages of an attempt to rekindle the Spring campaign, dampened earlier by friendly offensive maneuver and a general lack of provisions. Another prisoner verified an increase in enemy reconnaissance activity prior to each period of accelerated action; he stated most missions were conducted at night during phases of little moonlight, with the teams advancing as close as possible to the objective (during daylight, targets were studied at 300-400 meters). Analysis has shown a substantial percentage of enemy attacks take place during the last quarter moon - that phase of the lunar cycle when it is dark until approximately one hour after midnight. This provides opportunity to move to the target during early evening hours and yet have some light available for the attack, normally timed for the early morning hours. Thus, most enemy reconnaissance efforts to scout a route to a target are conducted during a similar period of low illumination, sometimes a month in advance of an intended attack.

Minor changes were effected to the enemy order-of-battle listing for Quang Nam during April. The 3d Battalion, 36th NVA Regiment was disbanded; a company of the 577th Rocket Artillery Battalion was confirmed between Danang and Hoi An; and the 90th NVA Regiment was determined to be an alias for the 38th Regiment. The map below locates those enemy units in either confirmed or probable status in the province at end-month.

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QUANG NAM ENEMY ORDER OF BATTLE: APRIL 1970



★ Province capital

TROOPS IN CONFIRMED COMBAT UNITS		ADMINISTRATIVE UNIT PERSONNEL	GUERRILLAS	TROOPS IN PROBABLE AND POSSIBLE UNITS
NVA	VC			
5,000	2,450	350	5,000	600

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UNCLASSIFIED**REVOLUTIONARY DEVELOPMENT AND PACIFICATION**

Close coordination among Marines and RVNAF to combat anti-pacification activities has created an atmosphere conducive to improvement of security and political/socioeconomic conditions within Quang Nam province. By 1 April, 88.1 percent of the population were residing in secure hamlets, protected by constantly improving RVNAF efforts, while Marines of the Combined Action Force and Combined Unit Pacification Program, through training and active battlefield interaction, expanded the transition of local security responsibility from US to RVNAF.

Pacification

End-March Hamlet Evaluation System 70 (HES 70) data reflected an improvement of overall pacification in Quang Nam province, in spite of increased enemy attacks against population centers and other related pacification targets. With the exception of Thuong Duc, each of the province's nine districts and the Danang municipality were rated secure; Thuong Duc, with over 50 percent of its population not residing in established hamlets, remained unrated, as sufficient data was not available for realistic assessment. Of the province's some 972,000 inhabitants, 88.1 percent (an increase of 2.2 percent) were considered secure, while 6.5 resided in contested areas and 1.4 lived under direct enemy influence.

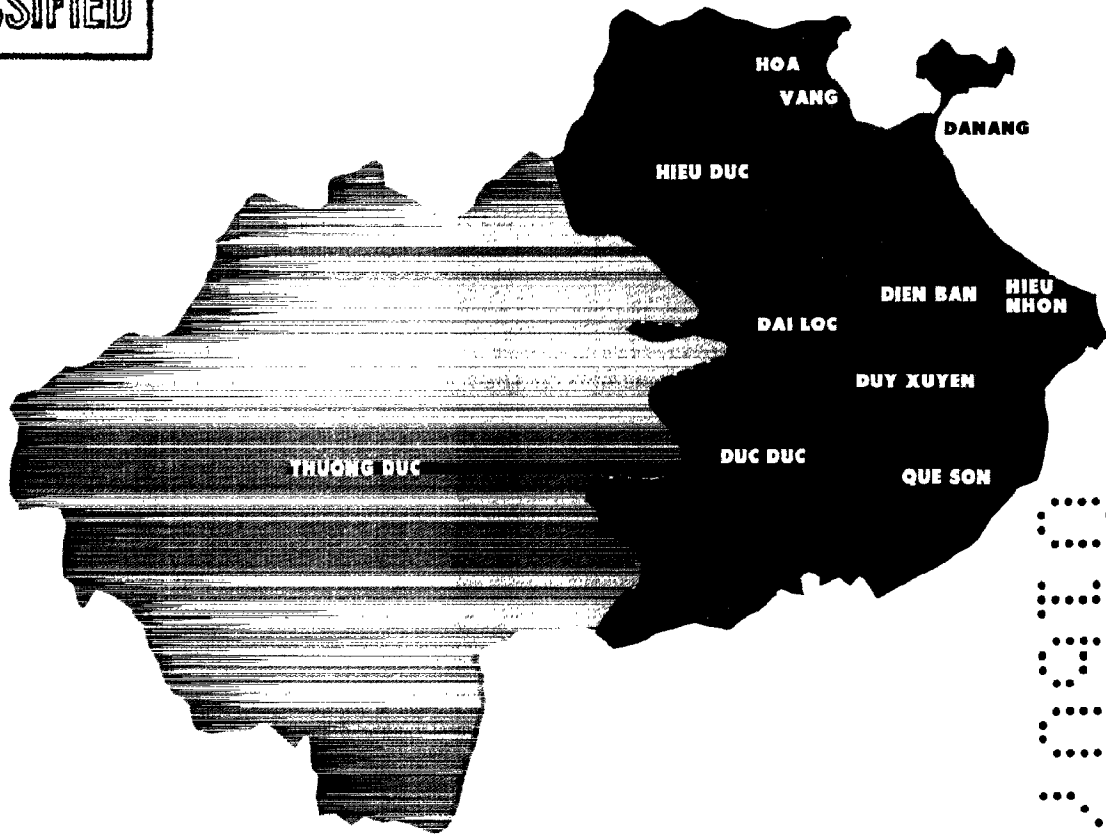
Although each of the eight districts graded attained an A, B, or C rating, VC domination over 13,156 individuals continues through resident guerrilla forces and infrastructure. As HES 70 does not offer an absolute measurement of pacification but provides comparative indicators to the security and political/socioeconomic conditions of a location, this population, seldom politically homogeneous in any locale, is not necessarily averse to legal governmental control, but does not as yet enjoy freedom from VC influence.

The end-March, pacification status for Quang Nam districts is reflected on the following page.

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QUANG NAM PACIFICATION STATUS

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POPULATION STATISTICS

DISTRICT	SECURE	CONTESTED	VC-CONTROL	NOT RATED	TOTAL
DANANG	382,515	0	0	0	382,515
HOA VANG	173,286	3,784	0	0	177,070
HIEU DUC	14,979	0	0	4,250	19,229
DIEN BAN	46,107	16,298	989	0	63,394
DAI LOC	43,694	2,462	0	0	46,156
THUONG DUC	13,640	0	0	28,500	42,140
DUC DUC	32,292	5,508	0	0	37,800
QUE SON	33,376	12,576	12,167	0	58,119
DUY XUYEN	35,268	10,730	0	0	45,998
HIEU NHON	81,913	11,989	0	6,000	99,902
QUANG NAM PROVINCE	857,070	63,347	13,156	38,750	972,323
PERCENTAGE	88.1%	6.5%	1.4%	4.0%	100%

BASED ON END-MARCH HES 70 DATA.

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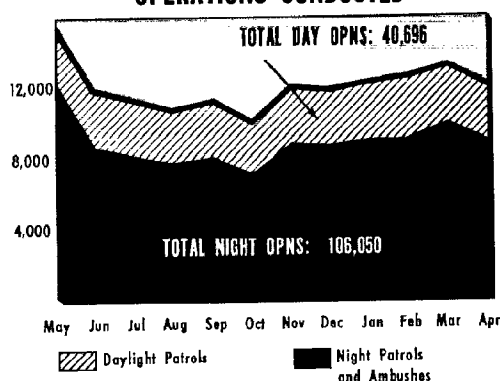
Combined Action Force

Continuing to provide mobile security for the inhabitants of selected I CTZ hamlets and villages, maneuver elements of the Combined Action Force (CAF) conducted 12,193 combat operations during April. Of these, the 114 Combined Action Platoons (CAP) executed more than 70 percent (3,371 patrols and 5,452 ambushes) during the hours of darkness to limit enemy attempts at clandestine movement into population centers to disrupt pacification. Both day and night activities encountered only intermittent enemy movement; 74 NVA and VC were killed, 31 others taken prisoner, and 50 individual or crew served weapons captured by CAP Marines and Popular Force soldiers during the month.

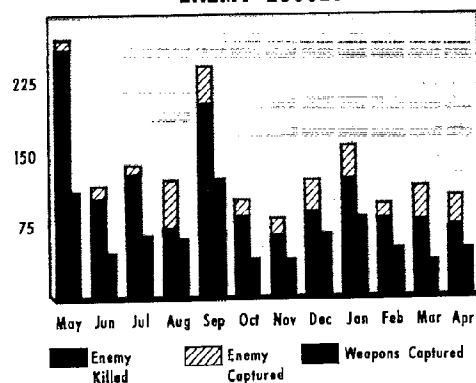
The following graphs compare CAF combat operations and results achieved in April with those of the preceding eleven months.

COMBINED ACTION ACTIVITIES: MAY 1969-APRIL 1970

OPERATIONS CONDUCTED



ENEMY LOSSES



As during the past several months, the 1st Combined Action Group (CAG), which operates in Quang Tin and Quang Ngai provinces, experienced the

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preponderance of enemy resistance during April. Of particular note was the combat activity of Combined Action Company (CACO) 1-4, which killed 27 NVA/VC, captured nine others, and received 54 Hoi Chanh. Headquartered approximately one mile north of Quang Ngai City, CACO 1-4 controls the operations of six CAPs in the coastal flats northeast of the city.

Illustrative of CAP mobility and inherent capacity to coordinate the wide range of available supporting arms fire was an action occurring on 5 April. Responding to a request for assistance from a nearby non-CAP Popular Force platoon, CAP 1-4-4 dispatched a reaction force at 0210 to join an engagement near Dong Xuan (2) hamlet, nine miles northeast of Quang Ngai City. Supported by the firepower of armed helicopters and an artillery battery, the CAP element forced the enemy unit to flee, leaving three dead and two weapons on the battlefield; the CAP sustained no casualties.

Another supporting arms engagement was initiated at dusk on 9 April, when a CAP 1-4-6 observation post opened fire at long range with machine guns and directed an artillery mission on an estimated 45 VC. The enemy, on foot and in boats along the Kinh Giang River six miles northeast of Quang Ngai City, lost 12 troops before he could disperse.

Benefits accruing from the Chieu Hoi program were made evident on 28 April, when a Hoi Chanh led a CAP 1-4-3 patrol to five bunkers in a treeline 12 miles southeast of Binh Son. Following a search of the complex, which yielded one M-1 carbine, the Marines and PF soldiers destroyed the bunkers. Maneuvering to another fortified position 100 meters to the east, the patrol killed three VC and captured a Thompson submachine gun and 100 rounds of ammunition; the Hoi Chanh was wounded in the fighting. While hospitalized in Quang Ngai City, the Hoi Chanh, who also had pointed out three buried M-16 antipersonnel mines, received a Voluntary Information Program payment for his contribution to the patrol.

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In addition to the combat missions assigned a CAP, the Marine element is responsible for training its PF contingent. When government authority is well established in the locality and the PF soldiers attain the desired state of proficiency, a process normally requiring one year, the Marines are relocated to another contested area, where they join a local PF platoon to repeat the training process. Since the Combined Action Program began in 1965, over 95 PF platoons have been trained by CAPs and 114 are now undergoing training. Further, 810 hamlets, encompassing in excess of 425,000 Vietnamese civilians, have been or are now provided security by CAPs. In no case has a CAP-protected hamlet reverted to VC control after relocation of the Marine element.

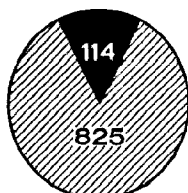
A comparison of the combat effectiveness of CAP and non-CAP PF platoons makes the advantage of Marine training readily apparent. During the first quarter of 1970, there were 825 independent PF platoons and 114 CAP PF platoons deployed in I CTZ. While the CAP PF strength is but 12 percent of the total, these platoons have achieved 29 percent of the enemy killed and 40 percent of the weapons captured during this same period.

The following graphs compare the combat records of CAP and non-CAP PF platoons.

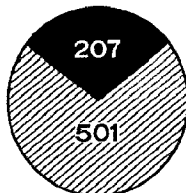
COMPARISON OF CAP AND NON-CAP PF ACHIEVEMENTS IN I CTZ

JANUARY - MARCH 1970

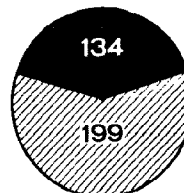
NUMBER OF PLATOONS



ENEMY KILLED



WEAPONS CAPTURED



● PF OPERATING IN CAPS

▨ PF OPERATING INDEPENDENTLY

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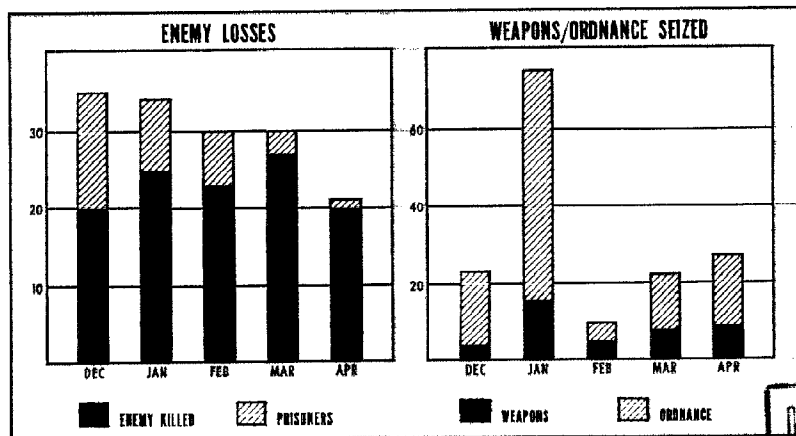
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Combined Unit Pacification Program (CUPP)

Company I, 1st Marines assumed responsibility for the CUPP locations formerly held by Company K, 26th Marines in northern Quang Nam province during April, concentrating its efforts in the two most heavily populated hamlets of the four originally assigned. Company M, 1st Marines also shifted three of its CUPP squads to new hamlets affording security for a greater number of civilians, while the 5th Marines continued operations in three unchanged locations. Thus, at end-April, 1st Marine Division units had 22 CUPP squads deployed in hamlets populated by nearly 23,000 civilians.

Similar to CAF units, CUPP squads not only provide security through combat operations but also are charged with the training of territorial forces located in their target hamlets. During April, 16 PF and seven RF platoons, along with 530 armed members of local Peoples' Self Defense Forces, gained tactical skills through association with Marine CUPP squads.

Combat activity generated by CUPP operations was characterized by meeting engagements with small enemy units throughout April, resulting in 20 NVA/VC killed, one taken prisoner, and nine weapons captured. The following graphs portray combat results achieved by CUPP units since their original deployment in late 1969.

MARINE CUPP RESULTS: DEC 1969 - APR 1970

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ARVN Pacification Support Operations

During April, the 51st ARVN Regiment and the 1st Armored Brigade conducted five large unit operations in Quang Nam province in direct support of the GVN pacification campaign. Forming a screen behind which close-in operations by Popular and Regional Force units, Peoples' Self Defense Forces, and the National Police structure can prosper, this effort accounted for 249 enemy killed, 67 others captured, and 81 weapons seized.

Operation DUONG SON 3/70, controlled by the 1st Armored Brigade since 11 February in the rice-rich lowlands six miles south of Hoi An, remained the focal point of ARVN pacification operations in the province. The 37th and 39th Ranger Battalions and 3d Troop, 17th Armored Cavalry Assault Squadron repeatedly encountered small pockets of enemy resistance during the month, killing 159 NVA or VC, taking 65 prisoners, and capturing 50 weapons.

The 51st ARVN Regiment, providing security for the central lowlands of the province, continued its series of HUNG QUANG operations to inhibit enemy activity in the heavily populated area south of Da-nang. Four such operations were conducted or were continuing at end-month, the most significant being 1/31, centered seven miles east of Dai Loc. The 1st, 2d, and 4th Battalions of the 51st, joined by elements of the Korean Marine Corps' 2d Brigade, killed 53 enemy during Operation HUNG QUANG 1/31. Highlighting the action was a 2d Battalion attack against an unknown size enemy force on the 4th six miles east of Dai Loc; the ARVN killed 12 enemy and captured three weapons, with no friendly casualties reported.

Territorial Forces

Providing security in the immediate vicinity of population centers in Quang Nam are the Regional and Popular Forces (RF and PF), the Peoples' Self

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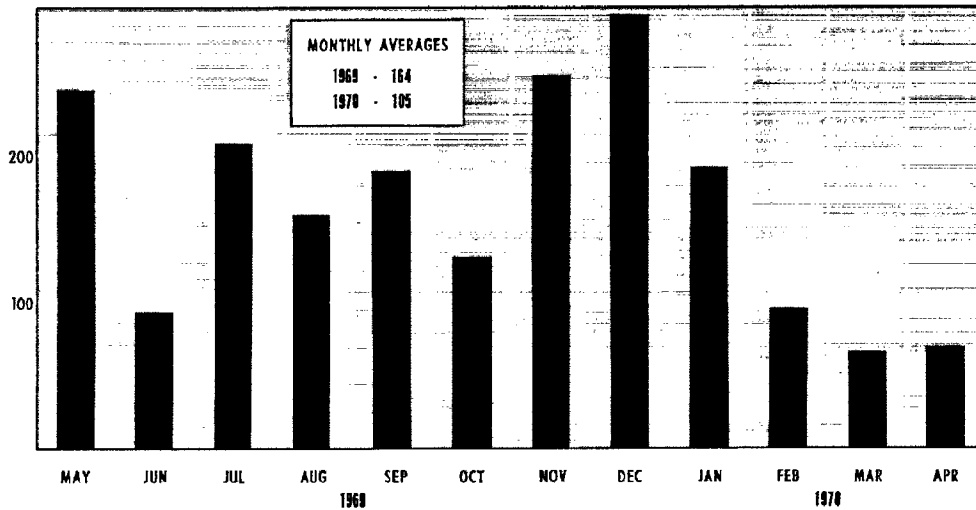
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Defense Force (PSDF), and the National Police structure. Generally recruited from the area in which they are to serve, these territorial forces have rapport with the people, are familiar with the terrain and enemy operating procedure, and possess the ingredients for high motivation, inherent in individuals tasked with defense of their own home. As of 1 April, there were 60 RF companies and 199 PF platoons deployed throughout the province. The PSDF numbered over 73,000 organized (both combat and combat support), more than half of whom have been trained. Combat PSDF who have received both training and weapons totaled 14,147. The effectiveness of the nearly 4,500 National Police and National Police Field Force is being improved through the infusion of ARVN soldiers into their ranks. Thus, the Vietnamese are becoming increasingly responsible for the continuing defense of their villages and hamlets, security along lines of communication, and law enforcement - all vital to the advance of rural development.

Chieu Hoi Returnees

Response to the GVN Chieu Hoi campaign increased slightly in Quang Nam province during April, as Free World forces in the province received 69 Hoi Chanh (29 VC, one NVA, and 39 non-military supporters). Thus far, 1970 has yielded an average of 105 defections monthly, a sharp decline from the 1969 monthly average of 164. The extensive insertion of NVA in local and main force VC units and increased supervision of low echelons, restricting opportunities to defect, have been among the chief reasons cited for the diminished results of the Chieu Hoi campaign.

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QUANG NAM CHIEU HOI RESULTS: MAY 69 - APRIL 70

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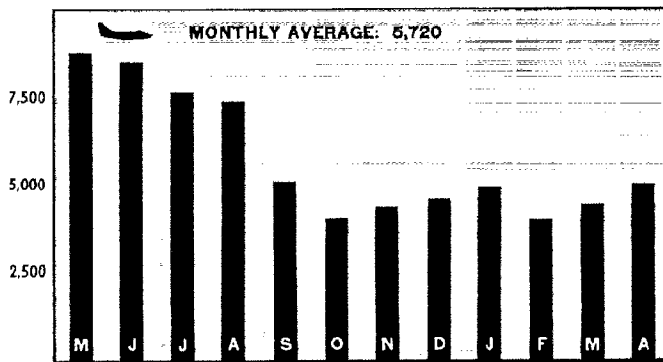
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AIR OPERATIONS

Marine air operations increased in April to the highest level since September 1969, attributable partially to the end of the yearly northeast monsoon and ensuing good flying conditions. The 1st Marine Aircraft Wing effort totaled 36,576 fixed wing and helicopter sorties, which fulfilled both in and out-of-country air requirements. Marine aircrews flew over 3,200 attack missions against targets located in RVN and along the Laotian Ho Chi Minh Trail with its assorted staging areas and truck parks, with the remaining fixed wing program (1,755 sorties) dedicated to combat support tasks over I CTZ, Laos, and the North Vietnam/Gulf of Tonkin region. Again, the bulk of the month's total sorties was flown by the helicopter squadrons, with more than 31,500 sorties in support of I CTZ Free World forces.

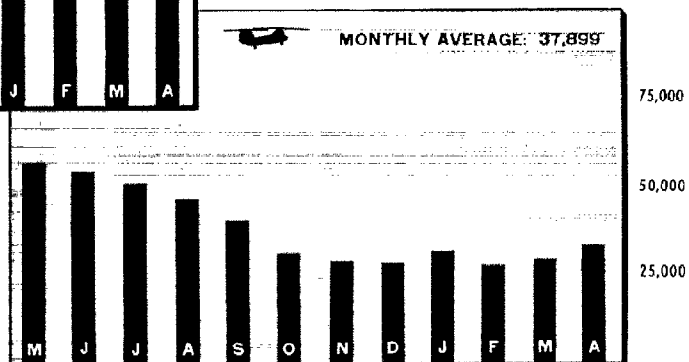
The following graphs compare April fixed wing and helicopter operations with monthly totals since May 1969:

MARINE AIR OPERATIONS: MAY 1969 - APRIL 1970



FIXED WING SORTIES

HELICOPTER SORTIES



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In Country Fixed Wing Operations

Combat activity remained low during April; however, the flexible support available through fixed wing firepower provided ready response to fleeting targets of opportunity acquired by various surveillance systems, as well as close air support for all I CTZ forces. Additionally, the 1st Wing provided several tactical air strikes in the Dak Seang area of II Corps Tactical Zone. All told, F-4B, A-4E, and A-6A squadrons provided 2,920 close, direct, and interdiction support missions to the Free World campaign. The 6,632 tons of bombs, 2,110 cans of napalm, and 4,660 rockets delivered during these tasks destroyed more than 500 enemy bunkers and ignited over 380 secondary fires and explosions.

While opportunity to employ aerial firepower against major enemy formations remained infrequent, III MAF continued to reap excellent success from air attacks against reconnaissance-detected, hinterland targets. The following narratives illustrate the results of three such coordinated air/ground actions.

-At 1822 on the 2d, reconnaissance team COFFEE TIME observed 30 enemy, 11 miles southwest of An Hoa. The team contacted an OV-10A aerial observer, who directed fixed wing air against the target; 13 enemy were reported killed.

-Reconnaissance team MISTY CLOUD spotted 12 NVA near a bunker complex at 1543 on the 5th, in the hills 15 miles west of An Hoa. An aerial observer was alerted and on-call fixed wing aircraft killed five enemy, destroyed one bunker, and caused four secondary explosions.

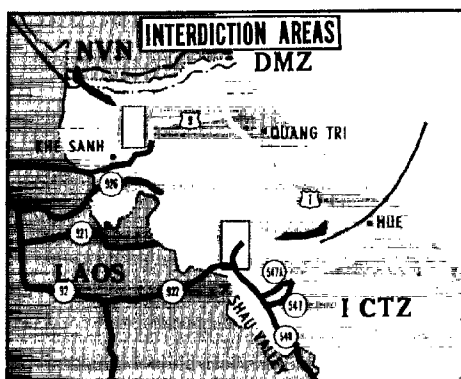
-During midmorning on the 22d, reconnaissance team ELK SKIN was engaged by a large enemy force 19 miles northwest of An Hoa. In the ensuing firefight, the team called upon artillery fire as well as close air support in killing 21 VC/NVA.

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Continuing to interdict hinterland transportation networks and logistic base areas, 1st Wing aircraft amassed 902 sorties. One of the primary areas targeted during April was located 23 miles west-southwest of Hue, in the northwestern end of A Shau Valley, long a favorite infiltration route for NVA troops and supplies destined for I CTZ. The following narratives evidence the cost of pushing supplies through A Shau.



-On 1 April, two A-4Es and two F-4Bs struck an enemy bunker position dug in the eastern mountain slopes of A Shau Valley, razing 21 bunkers and igniting eight secondary fires and eight secondary explosions.

-A strike on the 5th by 12 F-4Bs from Marine Air Group (MAG)-13 destroyed eight bunkers, touched off 13 secondary explosions, and caused five fires among logistic stores.

-In the same region on the 17th, two A-6As were joined by two Air Force F-4s in destroying two 12.7mm antiaircraft weapons; three secondary explosions and three fires consumed stores at the site.

Another significant flight occurred on the 14th only 30 miles northwest of the A Shau Valley targets; two F-4Bs from MAG-13 were diverted from a Quang Tri Air Support Radar Team calibration mission to a target three miles southwest of the Rockpile. The Phantoms dropped their ordnance under the control of an aerial observer, who subsequently counted 31 enemy bodies in the impact area.

Combat support flights during the month totaled 763 sorties. Of this number, 75 percent (568 flights) were provided by OV-10A aircrews of Marine

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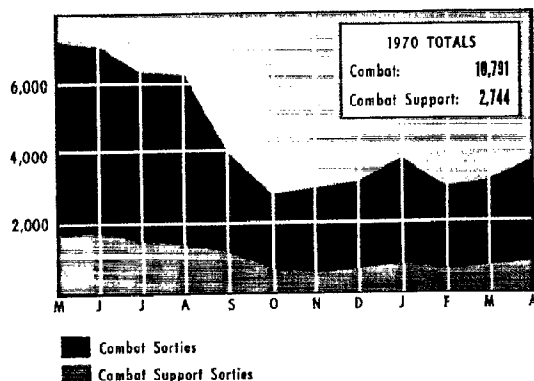
Observation Squadron-2, performing visual reconnaissance, forward air control (airborne), photography, and artillery spotting services.

As a direct result of the 21 April loss of an OV-10A (downed by 37mm AA fire) on a visual reconnaissance (VR) mission in western Quang Nam province, the TA-4F, for the first time, flew a significant number of monthly in-country VR missions (97). After the search and rescue force for the OV-10A crew encountered an intense volume of mixed AA and small arms fire (which downed three additional Free World aircraft and ultimately required over 142 sorties to suppress), 1st Wing ordered utilization of the faster TA-4F for future VR missions in the hostile environs of the western border regions. Heretofore, the aircraft had been employed primarily in an out-of-country role.

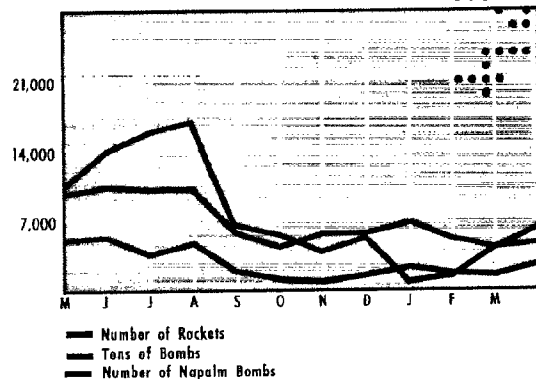
The graphs below reflect in-country fixed wing operations and ordnance expenditures for the past year.

IN-COUNTRY FIXED WING SUPPORT BY MARINE AIRCRAFT MAY 69 - APRIL 70

SORTIES FLOWN



ORDNANCE DELIVERED



Helicopter Operations

Marine helicopter squadrons flew 31,581 sorties to satisfy the vertical lift requirements for III MAF and other I CTZ units, with the extraneous commitment of Marine helicopters to ROK Marine, RVNAF, and US Army forces

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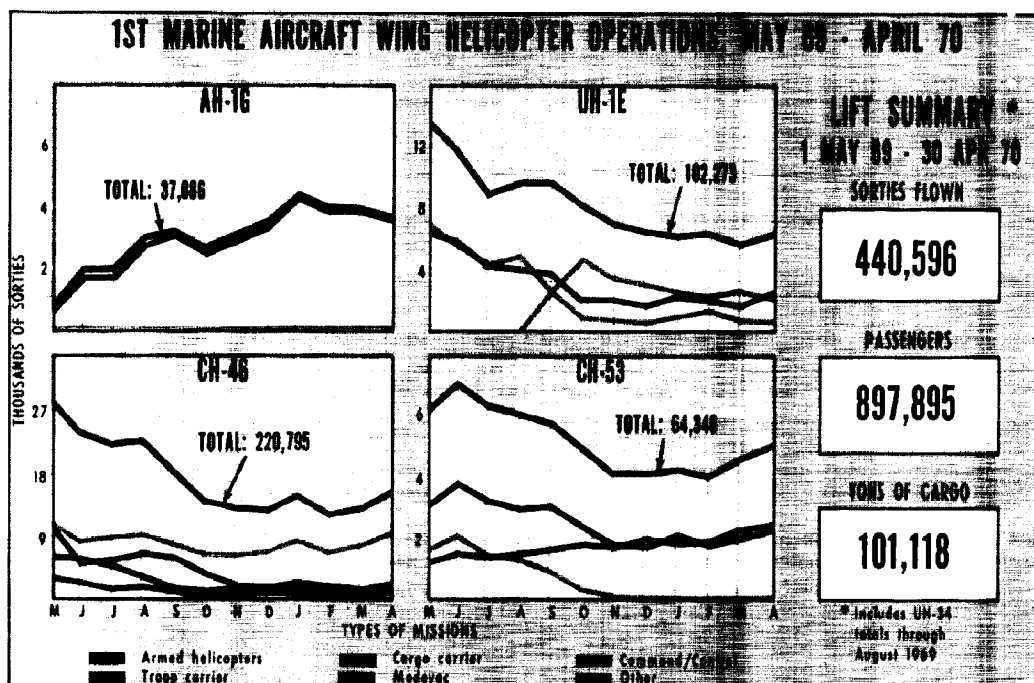
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accounting for eight percent of the total effort. Although no major heliborne assaults were executed, logistic resupply, troop movement, and command and control flights resulted in over 74,000 passengers and 5,300 tons of cargo lifted.

Continuing its workhorse capability to perform the wide range of helicopter missions occasioned by a fluid tactical situation, the versatile CH-46D amassed 4,479 combat assault and logistic lifts, along with 4,802 sorties for medical evacuation, reconnaissance, command and control, and search and rescue. However, capitalizing on an inherent heavy lift advantage, the 20 CH-53Ds of HMH-463 carried 55 percent of the total passengers and lifted 85 percent of the total cargo for the month. A large measure of the 6,520 armed helicopter missions by AH-1G and UH-1E aircraft ensured the successful completion of troop and cargo lifts.

The following graphs show the performance, by mission, of 1st Wing helicopters during the past 12 months.



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Continuing to mold the various Marine Air Group-16 helicopters into a viable package to adapt to any situation, the 1st Wing makes a vital contribution to the success of III MAF Pacifier operations. Typical of the vertical mobility and firepower available was the support provided elements of Company D, 5th Marines during operations two and one-half miles southeast of Liberty Bridge on the 8th. Late in the afternoon, two platoons had been inserted into an area of reported enemy presence but had made no contact. However, when the assault helicopters were returning to pick up the remaining platoon, the Helicopter Coordinator (Airborne) (HC(A)) spotted six enemy trying to cross a river and directed an accompanying armed helicopter against them, killing three. Two platoons (one from the original landing zone) were helilifted into the area and attacked southward, killing another VC with small arms fire. The HC(A) then spotted a second group of enemy fleeing southeast. AH-1Gs took them under fire, killing two, while the continuing platoon sweep counted two more.

Out-of-Country Operations

Fixed wing aircrews of Marine Air Groups-11 and 13 reinforced the out-of-country interdiction, air defense, and reconnaissance campaign with 730 sorties during the month. This total included 320 strike and armed reconnaissance missions over Laos, complemented by 202 combat support flights, counting armed escort, visual reconnaissance, photography, tactical air controller (airborne), and electronic warfare tasks. The remaining 208 sorties were NVN associated missions.

The all-weather A-6A (MAG-11) conducted 200 night flights over the Steel Tiger area of Laos during the month. Utilizing the aircraft's moving target indicator, A-6A crews located and struck 93 trucks; in addition, 390 stationary targets were hit.

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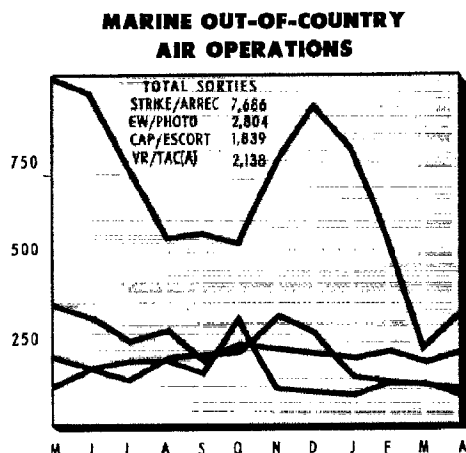
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In a role as intelligence collector/strike coordinator for the Laotian interdiction campaign in Steel Tiger south, TA-4Fs of Headquarters and Maintenance Squadron (H&MS)-11 logged 110 visual reconnaissance and tactical air controller (airborne) missions.

Another Danang-based MAG-11 squadron, Marine Composite Reconnaissance Squadron (VMCJ)-1, continued vital support of out-of-country operations with 209 electronic warfare (EW) and photographic sorties. EA-6A aircraft flew 138 missions in the off-shore area adjacent to North Vietnam, fixing locations and jamming radars to minimize AAA and SAM threats to Free World aircraft. And, averaging 1.4 sorties per day for a total of 43 flights, RF-4B aircrews continued a constant level of operations in photographing intelligence areas of Laos; in addition, one mission was flown over NVN.



The versatile and heavily-armed F-4B model of the Phantom, flown by MAG-13 pilots, provided all but two of the remaining 211 sorties. These flights included 118 interdiction strikes in Laos, 48 barrier combat air patrols (BARCAP) in support of US Navy commitments over the Gulf of Tonkin, and 43 armed escorts to accompany selected EW, visual, and photo reconnaissance aircraft.

Aircraft Losses

Despite the low level of combat activity in Quang Nam and I CTZ, hostile reaction to 1st Wing aircraft remained high during April. A total of six

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aircraft (one F-4B, A-4E, OV-10A, and CH-46D and two UH-1Es) were destroyed as the result of direct enemy action. There were no out-of-country losses.

Distribution of Marine Aircraft

1st Wing aircraft locations and numbers remained stable during the month. The following chart delineates assignments at end-April.

MARINE AIRCRAFT BASED IN I CTZ: APRIL 1970

DANANG	CHU LAI	MARBLE MOUNTAIN (CON'T)
1ST WING	MAG-13	
H&MS-17	H&MS-13	HML-367
C-117D 3	C-117D 1	AH-1G 25
US-2A/B 3	VMA-311	HMM-161
	A-4E 26	CH-46D 28
MAG-11	VMFA-115	HMM-262
H&MS-11	F-4B 24	CH-46D 26
TA-4F 12	VMFA-122	HMM-263
VMCJ-1	F-4B 20	CH-46D 31
RF-4B 10	VMFA-314	HMM-364
EA-6A 11	F-4B 18	CH-46D 31
VMA(AW)-225	TOTAL 89	HMH-463
A-6A 13	MARBLE MOUNTAIN	CH-53D 20
VMA(AW)-242	MAG-16	TOTAL 209
A-6A 12	H&MS-16	
VMO-2	UH-1E 4	TOTAL USMC AIRCRAFT
OV-10A 18	CH-46D 5	FIXED WING 171
TOTAL 82	HML-167	HELICOPTER 209
	UH-1E 39	

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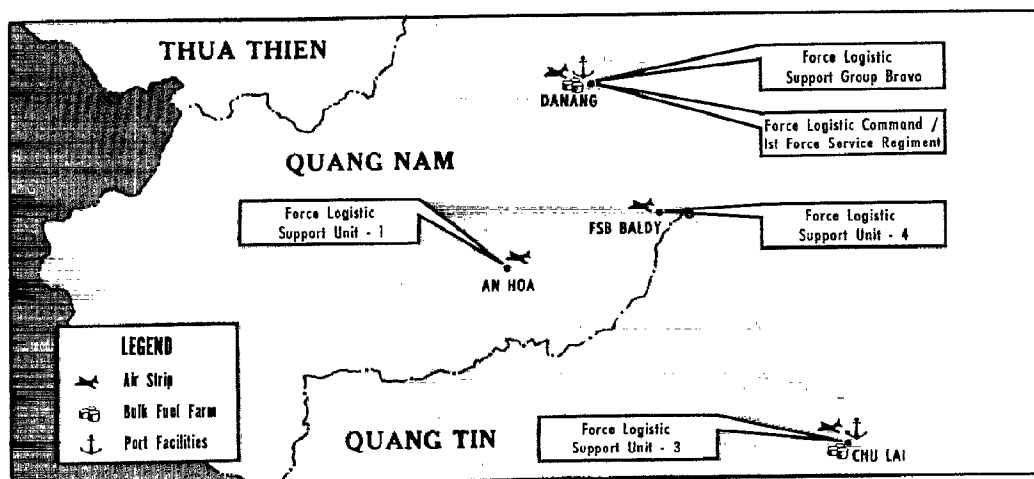
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LOGISTICS

With the arrival of USS DURHAM (LKA-114) at Long Beach, California on 7 April, the Marine surface movement of KEYSTONE BLUEJAY - carried entirely on fleet shipping - was completed. In addition to redeploying RLT-26 and associated aviation units, this move trimmed the III MAF logistic support organization by a motor transport battalion, major elements of a shore party battalion, a military police company, detachments from an engineer battalion and a hospital company, and a sizable detachment of Force Logistic Command - all dispatched to CONUS/other... WestPac stations. Despite these moves and attendant shifts of responsibility, along with major involvement in staging, marshalling, and embarking the redeploying forces (interspersed with short-notice surges of high activity to load retrograde cargo on opportune amphibious shipping); III MAF logisticians continued the orderly flow of supply, maintenance, medical, and transportation support to Marines in the field. Organizational realignments included attachment of the remaining shore party company to 9th Engineer Battalion and assignment of a Marine MP company and provisional land clearing company to the operational control of XXIV Corps. At the end of April, Force Logistic Command had constricted to 4,219 troops, down from 5,689 at the beginning of the year.

The major FLC subordinate installations are deployed as shown below.

III MAF LOGISTIC FACILITIES



NOTE: FLSU-2 WAS DISESTABLISHED DURING KEYSTONE BLUEJAY

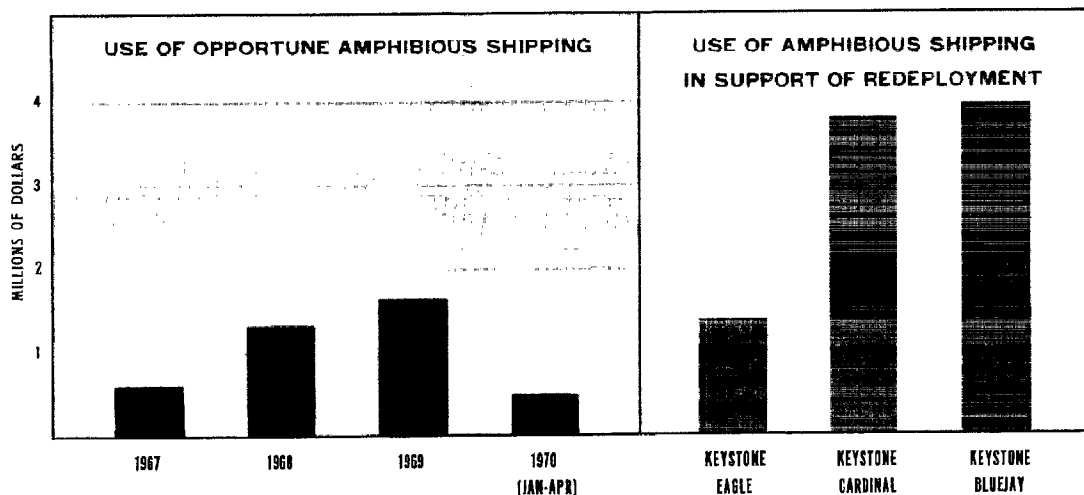
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Redeployment and Retrograde Cargo

The third Marine redeployment increment was influenced to a considerable degree by expectations of heightened enemy activity (which never materialized) during Tet and the continuing amphibious lift requirements for the Special Landing Forces (SLF) earmarked for other WestPac contingencies. Nonetheless, meticulous planning and close coordination by Navy and Marine amphibious staffs scheduled redeployment shipping to embark infantry, artillery, and tank units subsequent to Tet, without interrupting III MAF or SLF expeditionary readiness.

Concurrent with the continuing redeployment evolution was the incessant search for every square foot of amphibious shipping not filled by embarking units, followed by rapid application of available manpower and material handling equipment to move compatible retrograde cargo and vehicles - such as vehicles or equipment destined for out-of-country rebuild facilities - from outlying marshaling areas to the available spaces on board, without delaying sailing schedules. In this fashion, Marines squeezed some 94,000 square feet of retrograde vehicles and 486,000 cubic feet of cargo on opportune amphibious shipping; separate drayage would have required roughly the equivalent of three MSTs Victory ships. In all, the assets of one Amphibious Ready Group, augmented by four EastPac amphibious ships, were utilized for the lift. The dollar saving realized to date by this fleet support is shown below.

DOLLARS SAVED BY USE OF AMPHIBIOUS SHIPPING

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Engineer Operations

During the month, Marine engineers continued to provide combat and combat service support to Free World forces in Quang Nam province through steady improvement of lines of communication, petroleum facilities, and existing cantonments. Additionally, III MAF received close combat support in the form of daily mine detection sweeps over 96 miles of road, production (from 11 expeditionary water points) of approximately 285,000 gallons of potable water each day, and weekly graduation of 120 students from the 1st Engineer Battalion mine warfare school, an effort which, when coupled with the 1st Engineers mobile training teams, has created a wide base of antimine and booby trap expertise at the lowest organizational levels.

On the 26th, the 7th Engineer Battalion initiated operations to upgrade a portion of Route 4 between Thuong Duc and Hoi An. The project, scheduled for August completion, will result in six miles of single-lane, all-weather road through an area subject to constant enemy depredation prior to the PIPESTONE CANYON land clearing operations last year. Solidification of this line of communication not only will provide a year-round outlet for local Vietnamese produce and commerce but also improve government influence and response to VC/NVA activity within the Thuong Duc Valley.

Fire Support Bases

An ancillary requirement of the artillery employment concept described in the Combat Operations chapter is the construction by close combat engineer elements of fire support bases (FSB) to back up wide-ranging infantry operations and the observation network commanding the major avenues of approach into the lowlands of Quang Nam province. Since the inception of the FSB concept, 1st Marine Division artillerymen have occupied 65 different fire support bases, often in remote locations demanding total reliance on helicopterborne displacement and resupply; during April, the 11th Marines provided fires from 12 separate positions throughout the province.

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Fire support base construction combines the advantages of economical employment of assets and rapid occupation by firing units. Initial planning by engineer, artillery, infantry, and aviation participants, in conjunction with a visual (usually helicopterborne) reconnaissance of the prospective FSB site, establishes a sequential schedule for rapid introduction of those elements needed to defend, clear, build, and fire from the new support base. The first echelon to be lifted into the site includes an engineer party of six to ten Marines, equipped with hand tools, power saws, and demolitions, and a security force - usually an infantry platoon. At touchdown, the security force deploys, while the engineers fan out to cut defensive fields of fire and blast fighting positions. Immediately following, a rough landing zone is cleared and prospective gun pits are cratered with explosives to speed follow-on bulldozing. When the LZ is sufficiently open, a Case 450 tractor (mini-dozer) is lifted in by CH-53 helicopter, followed immediately by a CH-46 carrying the dozer blade and a drum of diesel fuel. Within minutes, the blade is manhandled onto the tractor, which then clears the hilltop of debris and excavates the first gun pit. Simultaneously, a Case 580 combined scooploader and backhoe is helilifted in and preparation of the ammo berms begins. As soon as the gun pits are carved into the hilltop, on-call helicopters deliver artillery pieces, ammunition, fire direction facilities, and cannoneers, who are in position to answer calls-for-fire scant hours after insertion of the initial force. Subsequent construction of a permanent landing zone, trenchwork, bunkers, and obstacles progresses as the operational situation permits; artillery and infantry personnel, guided by engineer expertise, continually upgrade the new fire support base in both defensibility and livability, concurrently with their primary tasks. Thus, III MAF artillery, through interaction with infantry, aviation, and engineers, has demonstrated tactical mobility which transcends traditional concepts of deployment to fire against VC/NVA logistic installations and infiltration routes previously beyond range.

Aviation Logistics

April saw completion of the in-country CH-46 secure voice communication (KY-28) modification program (57 aircraft), an installation which permits air-ground traffic

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free from enemy monitoring; remaining CH-46s will be similarly modified as they undergo progressive aircraft rework (PAR) in Japan. At end-month, total 1st Wing aircraft assets, including those undergoing PAR or battle damage repair (BDR), were as shown herein.

STATUS OF 1ST WING AIRCRAFT: APRIL 1970

Aircraft Model	Total Assigned	PAR	BDR	Other	Total In-Country
A-4	26	1	0	0	25
TA-4	12	3	1	0	8
A-6	25	0	1	0	24
EA-6	11	0	0	0	11
F-4	62	16	2	1	43
RF-4	10	3	0	0	7
C-117	4	0	0	0	4
US-2	3	1	0	0	2
OV-10	18	0	1	0	17
AH-1	25	0	0	0	25
UH-1	43	6	0	0	37
CH-46	121	36	4	0	81
CH-53	20	0	0	0	20
TOTAL	380	66	9	1	304

0
1
0
0
1
2

NORS/NORM/OR

April saw slightly increased levels of operational readiness in the principal categories of 1st Wing aircraft; the marked improvement in A-6A availability was due to the end-March completion of a project which replaced the engine compressor bleed duct clamps.

The accompanying graphs display the NORS/NORM/OR (not operationally ready due to supply/maintenance and operationally ready) statistics for the major aircraft types presently assigned.

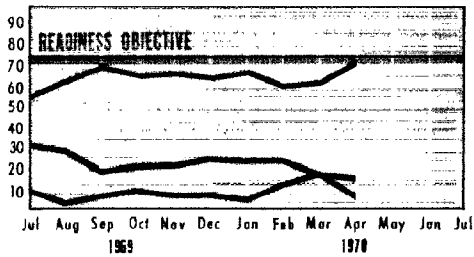
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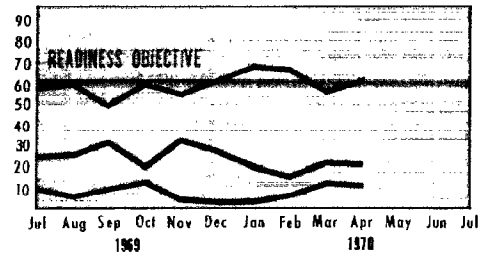
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NORS/NORM RATES - 1ST MARINE AIRCRAFT WING

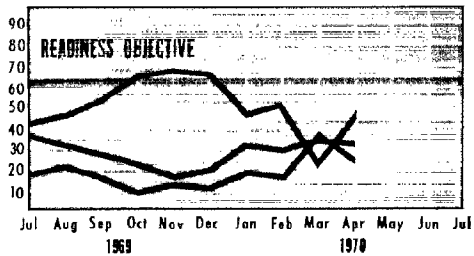
A-4 (ATTACK)



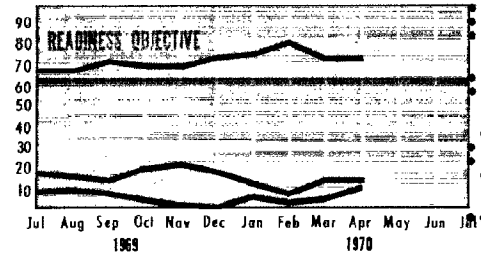
F-4 (FIGHTER-ATTACK)



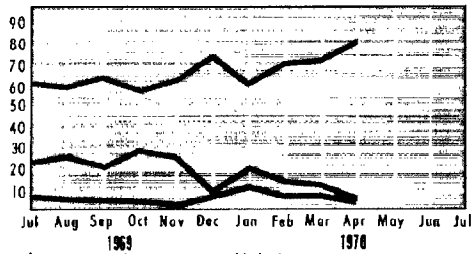
A-6A (ATTACK)



OV-10A (RECONNAISSANCE)

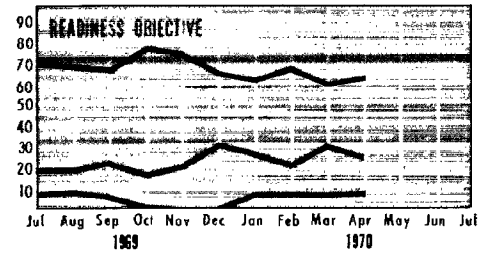


AH-1G (HELO) *

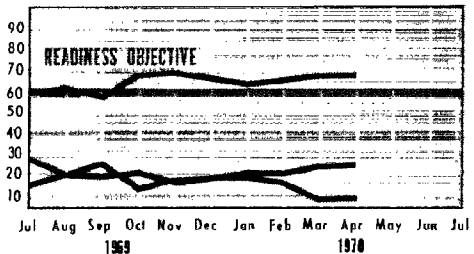


* Readiness Objective not established.

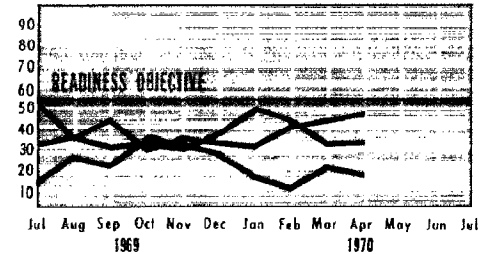
UH-1E (HELO)



CH-46 (HELO)



CH-53 (HELO)



NORS — NORM — READY —

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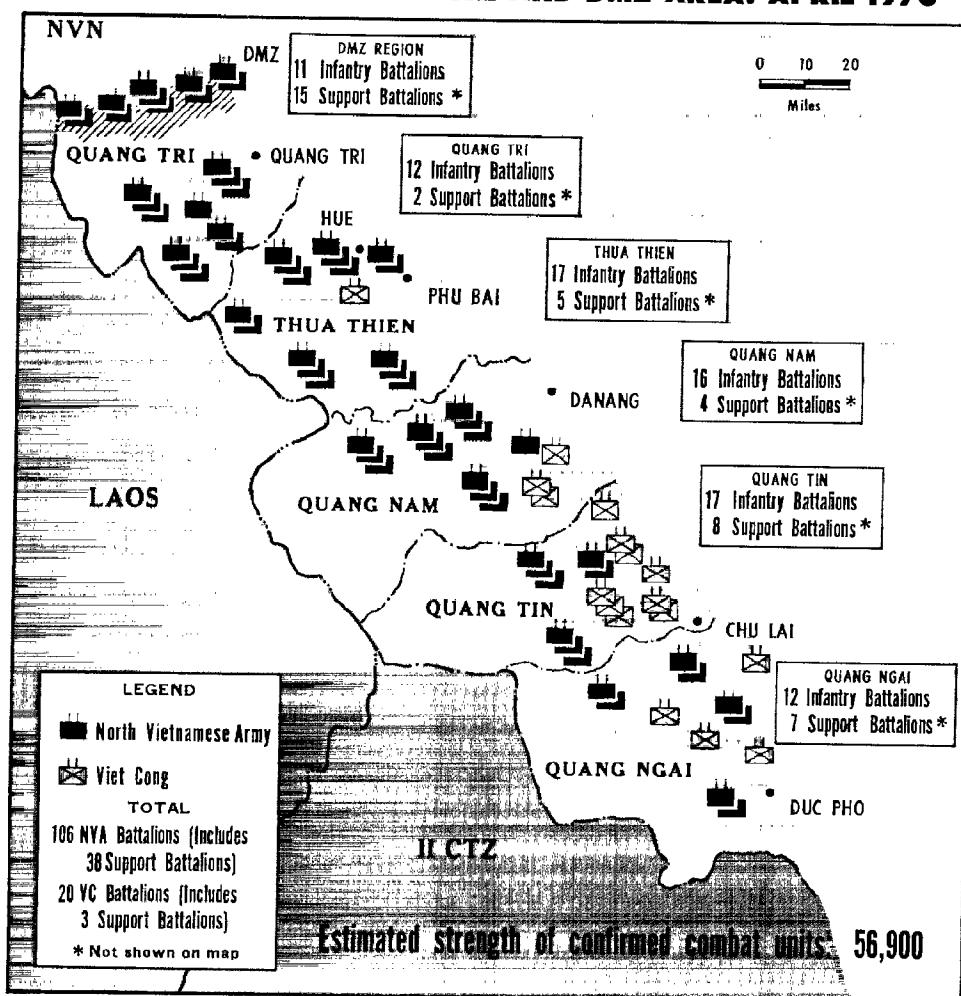
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STATISTICAL HIGHLIGHTS

1. Enemy Order of Battle

At end-April, enemy strength in I CTZ was an estimated 68,900, a total which included 12,000 guerrillas. Combat units committed against the zone consisted of 55 NVA, three Main Force, seven separate VC, and 20 NVA/VC sapper battalions. These units were supported by 11 rocket and rocket/artillery and six field artillery battalions, plus 24 other combat and combat service support units. In addition, 11 NVA infantry and two artillery regiments (28,400 soldiers) were deployed along the NVA, Laos, and II CTZ border regions. The map below portrays general locations of enemy battalions in I CTZ and the DMZ area.

ENEMY BATTALIONS IN I CTZ AND DMZ AREA: APRIL 1970



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2. ENEMY LOSSES TO III MAF

	<u>Killed</u>	<u>Captured</u>	<u>Weapons</u>
Marines	672	58	284
1970 III MAF			
Total*	5,120	244	1,495

3. MARINE OFFENSIVE OPERATIONS

<u>USMC</u>	<u>CAP</u>		<u>Cumulative 1970 Total</u>
4,566	6,741	Patrols	48,717
6,789	5,452	Ambushes	48,486
213		Company operations	1,106
675		Sniper posts	2,629
4,995		Fixed wing sorties	18,326
31,581		Helicopter sorties	118,918

4. III MAF STRENGTH

	<u>Off</u>	<u>USMC</u>	<u>Enl</u>	<u>Off</u>	<u>USN</u>	<u>Enl</u>
Danang	2,838	34,375		208	1,383	
Chu Lai	275	2,854		10	62	
Phu Bai	14	520		1	34	
DMZ area	0	10		0	1	
Quang Tri	11	326		1	22	
Total	3,138	38,085		220	1,502	

* Includes US Army totals through 8 March

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5. LOGISTICSa. SupplyClass I

(1000 rations/days of supply)

MCI

B rations

A rations

Danang139/3

386/8

357/7

Class II

(Supply requisitions)

Processed
Fill rateFLC
30,484
52%3d MGR
30,230
68%Class III and III(A) (bulk) (Marine Corps owned)
(1000 gallons/days of supply)Quang Tri
Danang
An HoaJP-4
196/8
148/1
31/5MOGAS
-
94/12
-DIESEL
-
163/7
-Class V and V(A) - Adequate to support operational commitments.b. Resupply Status to RVN(1) Surface Shipping Status

21,754 M/T

Received from CONUS (19,861 M/T)

Received from intra-WestPac (1,893 M/T)

(2) Air Shipping Status

215 S/T

Received from CONUS (50 S/T)

Received from intra-WestPac (165 S/T)

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c. Resupply Status within RVN(1) Surface Shipping Status 1,698 S/T

Danang to Chu Lai (318 S/T)
Other (1,380 S/T)

(2) Air Shipping Status (USMC and PACAF) 357 S/T

Danang to Chu Lai (257 S/T)
Danang to Phu Bai (8 S/T)
Other Intra-I CTZ APOEs (92 S/T)

d. Retrograde Cargo from RVN(1) Surface 11,310 M/T

MSTS conventional vessels (7,342 M/T)
Roll On/Roll Off vessels (3,968 M/T)

(2) Air 291 S/T

USMC (153 S/T)
MAC (138 S/T)

e. Medical and Dental Services(1) Medical

Patients admitted to III MAF facilities	1,259
Battle injury (423)	
Non-battle injury (267)	
Disease (569)	
Evacuated out-of-country	604
Deaths in III MAF facilities	35
Returned to duty	1,082
Hospitalized as of 30 April	914

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(2) Dental

Total procedures	86,934
Operative, crown, and bridge	43,554
Prosthetics	1,422
Oral surgery	6,674
Preventive dentistry	14,628
Number of sittings	9,772

f. Construction Projects

(1) Roads

159.8 miles were upgraded or maintained.

(2) Bridges

Four Class 60 bridges and one Class 15 bridge were constructed; five Class 60 bridges, one Class 20 bridge, and one footbridge were repaired/under repair. Five Class 60 tactical bridges and one footbridge were removed.

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